

Negotiating Aid : UK Funders, NGO's and South African Development

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Negotiating aid: UK funders, NGOs and South African development

Chapter 1: International aid, NGOs and development prospects

By Lisa Bornstein

1.1. Introduction

Debates over the role of international aid in development are heated and on-going. Continued poverty and international emergencies throughout the world call out for massive infusions of funds and other resources. At the same time, aid's track record is not impressive, and many observers are concerned that while foreign assistance can help in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, it is less effective in prompting long-term and sustainable development. Adding fuel to the debates are transitions in the way aid is transferred to recipients. National governments increasingly send their funding through complex routes, including at times the military, private companies and, most visibly, non-governmental organisations and charities. These latter organisations are thought to be better at handling aid and reaching needy recipients, and their communities. These non-governmental organisations (NGOs) mobilise funds worldwide and implement projects in selected countries, usually in conjunction with local organisations there. These international NGOs are accountable for their use of the funds, both in how they are used and the changes that they can effect. This report examines how some of these NGOs fare in their developmental endeavours.

The research contained in this report has its origin in important changes that we observed in the operations of non-governmental organisations working in Southern Africa. The University of Natal, now the University of KwaZulu-Natal, set up a research team to investigate the ways in which foreign funding was affecting such organisations. In parallel, researchers in London and Oxford were initiating a second phase of research examining development management in international organisations based in the United Kingdom. The researchers there, Tina Wallace and Jenny Chapman, were trying to decipher how NGOs in the United Kingdom were responding to a new way of conducting development work that was being introduced at the behest of the big funders. Among the new approaches was a move towards so-called rational management tools – logical frameworks in project planning, strategic planning, business planning, all linked to extensive monitoring and evaluation systems. The researchers here in South Africa, Lisa Bornstein, Terence Smith, Annsilla Nyar and Isaivani Hyman, also had experiences in the NGO world with similar tools and had worked with a variety of different donors and donor relationships. We thus embarked on a joint voyage to track how NGOs in our two countries, and also Uganda, were faring with emerging development tools and relationships.

Our central concern was that these tools seemed peripheral to the real business and challenges of development, but we needed to know more about their use. We wondered how fast these tools and techniques were spreading, and with what effects. Did this focus on planning make projects work better or have more impact on the ground? Were these tools supportive of, antithetical to or neutral vis-à-vis efforts to promote more transformative, participatory and human development orientated practice? Did these tools help generate better (whatever that might mean) relationships between South African NGOs (herein referred to as SA NGOS) and their funders?

While our initial concern was with tools and techniques, we rapidly (re)discovered that donors were requiring (or requesting) a wider range of operational changes in funded NGOs, and in their strategic focus, staff development, gender approaches, financial packaging, and advocacy, among others. We thus broadened our research to look at what precisely funders, especially those in the U.K., were asking of NGOs in South Africa, how NGOs were responding, and what outcomes could be identified for the organisations involved, their relationships, and ultimately the quality and impact of their development programs.

We were fortunate in obtaining funding from two international sources. The Nuffield Foundation in the United Kingdom financed the core of the South African research and the research meetings jointly attended by the three-country teams. The International Development Research Council (IDRC) in Canada helped with funding for individual research and writing contributions: the research projects conducted by Shelly Dill and Vicki Tallis, the contributions by Alan Kaplan and Carol-Ann Foulis, and related research assistant and direct expenses. Without the support of these institutions, and the patience and flexibility of those directly responsible for “managing the projects”, the research would not have been possible.

Likewise, this research grows out of the stories and information that people working within the field of development were willing to share with us. Their generous contribution of time, information, and contacts has left us with a clear mandate of recounting their experiences – both positive and negative – so that all can learn from them.

The report is in many ways the compilation of various voices. The research team itself changed over the four years between initially formulating the research and finally completing it; we additionally invited contributions from several people from NGO support organisations. There are thus contributions to the formal research from different individuals. The methodology employed was one in which we tried to meet with people occupying different roles in organisations – directors, board members, managers, line staff, fieldworkers, and with organisations located at various points along the route from initial – or back – funding for development to the communities identified as the ultimate beneficiaries of that funding, the route we call the *aid stream* or *aid chain*. This necessarily took us into different terrains. Geographically our research spanned several continents, from the UK and the US to rural and urban communities in South Africa. The research required examining diverse facets of the organisations themselves, finance, management, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting as well as less well charted areas of relationships, multiple accountabilities, and political advocacy and activism; some of these pushed our knowledge in new and challenging ways. And the research also took us across racial, class and gender divides and into questions of power relations as they played out in the relationships we set out to study and in the dynamics of the research itself.

The report is structured into eight chapters. This introductory chapter lays out the scope of the study and its principal findings for the South African funding recipients and their projects. (Key findings for the UK funders and UK-based NGOs are presented in the appendix.) The second chapter of the report reviews the changing position of NGOs in South Africa’s post-apartheid transition, wider information on social, political and economic conditions in the country, and, to the extent possible, overall patterns of development funding. This chapter also introduces the possibility of independent influences of management approaches. The third chapter summarises results from the

first round of interviews conducted in South Africa with local and international NGOs, and presents evidence derived from job advertisements on the changing activities and internal organisation of South African NGOs. The fourth chapter examines the idea of “partnerships” between funding and receiving NGOs, using data from our in-depth work with 22 NGOs and several “aid chain” studies. These studies trace funding conditions from their origins in the UK, through Northern NGOs to South African organisations and projects to explore how selected conditions and expectations formulated upstream affect downstream organisations, their staff and their development activities. The fifth chapter looks more closely at the use of rational management tools and their effects on participatory approaches. The sixth chapter uses an in-depth study of a single aid chain to explore understandings of gender, and questions of politics and power. The seventh chapter addresses a distinctive and key set of actors within the South African context, organisations dedicated to NGO training and organisational development. The eighth chapter, a concluding one, brings together our findings.

1.2 Description of the Research Project

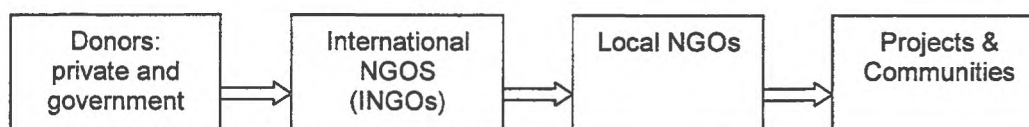
Between 1999 and 2003, an international team¹ undertook research to look at the impact of donors on NGOs in terms of management practices and other conditions attached to funding. The research project explores how the adoption of donor policies and procedures affects the way development is understood and addressed by NGOs. Conditions on funding are designed, in part, to increase accountability, effectiveness, and impact through better planning, heightened accountability, and tighter managerial control over development processes. The project investigates the potential contradictions between these practices and the widely claimed objectives of promoting participation and empowerment. There are three case study countries, the UK, South Africa and Uganda, that are the focus of this project.

Several definitions are important at the outset. ‘Donors’ is used interchangeably with the term *funders*, referring to all organisations that provide official or private development assistance. We have not addressed corporate sources of development funding, and the defined scope of the research largely excluded non-UK funders for all but the overview sections of the report. *Back donors* refers to institutional sources of funding, whether government (e.g. DFID) or private (e.g. Princess Diana Fund). *International NGOs* (INGOs) are non-governmental organisations headquartered outside of South Africa, while *UK NGOs* refers to those based in the United Kingdom regardless of whether or not they have *field headquarters (HQs)* or *offices* based in South Africa. By *South African NGOs* (SA NGOs) we include all non-governmental organisations “headquartered” in South Africa, though not all are formally incorporated or registered. Among these, our focus is on those primarily engaged in development, as opposed to welfare, work, although some organisations in our study do both. *Conditions* or *conditionalities* refers to requirements that funding recipients must adhere, regardless of whether they are relevant in pre-finance, project, or post-project phases, and whether they are stated explicitly or not. The *aid chain, stream* or *flow* refers to the series of organisations and actors involved in the process of moving funds from their initial

¹ The core team is comprised of Tina Wallace and Jenny Chapman from Oxford-Brookes University, Martin Kaleeba, John De Connick, and Rosemary Adong, Uganda and Lisa Bornstein, Isaivani Hyman, Annsilla Nyar, and Terence Smith, University of Natal. Our many thanks are extended to the staff, affiliates and beneficiaries of the many NGOs with which we met and to the representatives of the donor agencies. We also extend our thanks to the other researchers and practitioners who provided input into the South African research: Catherine Ogunmefun, Shelly Dill, Carol-Ann Foulis, and Alan Kaplan. In addition, we acknowledge DFID for the financial support provided to the research teams in Uganda and the UK.

institutional source to the targeted beneficiaries in the recipient area. A diagram of a simple aid chain is provided below.

Figure 1.1. A simple aid chain



Key research questions

Our central questions focused on uncovering the dynamics of power associated with aid disbursement in order to understand how funding conditions affected the ability of NGOs to perform better on any of these possible criteria: accountability, effectiveness, impact, learning/improvement, participation and empowerment. Specific research questions - many common to the three teams - are listed below:

Fig. 1.2. Specific research questions

- What conditions are associated with the disbursement of funding from donors (institutional, bi-lateral, NGOs)? How far do conditions and requirements influence and direct the work of South African NGOs? How much room is there for manoeuvre?
- How are changes in the policies and procedures of UK NGOs affecting their interactions with their South African counterparts? To what extent are SA NGOS adopting similar rational planning and management tools to those promoted in the UK, and elsewhere? What have been the influences behind patterns of diffusion and adaptation of these tools?
- Do current management approaches enhance the ability of local development actors to promote civil society organisations, community participation, and strong advocacy voices? Do they strengthen the work of SA NGOs to deliver sustainable and poverty-focused development?
- Specifically, have changing patterns, routes and conditions of funding affected the composition and development approaches of the NGO sector in SA? Can clear implications be traced for: SA NGOs' relations to communities; participation and empowerment; efficiency and effectiveness; partnership and local ownership; advocacy and strong civil societies; local knowledge/cross-cultural issues; empowerment; and upward and downward accountability?
- Can NGOs and donors hear the voices of local women and men and community based organisations? What are the mechanisms? How do these voices fit with the dominant paradigms of strategic planning, project management cycles and measurable impact indicators?
- To what other domestic pressures for change are SA NGOs responding? How do these interact with externally imposed agendas?
- What development visions, approaches and organisational approaches have emerged from SA specialist organisations and from SA projects? Is there evidence of learning – locally and internationally - from such experiences and voices? What channels appear useful to such learning processes?

These research questions provided the foundation for our research design and work. The overall design of the research is represented by an inverted triangle, with efforts in each country to provide an overall scan of the NGO sector and the context in which they

work, and deepen research of links between UK NGOs, the local NGOs they fund, and their projects (Figure 1.3).

Fig. 1.3. Overview of research design

- 1) **Context:** broad scan of secondary literature and studies of civil society in South Africa
- 2) **Donors – SA NGOs:** Work with 10-14 NGOs to understand their relationships to their funders.
- 3) **SA NGOs in-depth:** work with 3-4 SA NGOs to look at how management practices (and other donor-imposed conditions) influence work on the ground.
- 4) **Training & Support Institutions:** Work with 3-5 NGO training and support institutions to see how they influence NGO management practice.

The research methods employed included interviews, focus groups, documentation scans, literature reviews, surveys, and field visits. A more detailed description of the research methodology is provided in appendix 1 and Table 1.1 below.

In exploring the above questions, we have organised our report around a few methodological approaches and themes. One concern was to make sure that the links down the aid chain were carefully traced, such that requirements, expectations, understandings and responses could be documented at different organisational levels. Secondly, dynamics around funding from donors are among the many pressures addressed by SA NGOs; thus also needed was an understanding of the changing national conditions for NGOs and the way that donor pressures reinforced, ran in parallel to, or rendered less important other forces for change. Thirdly, UK donors are not among the most important sources of funding in the wider NGO sector in South Africa and we thus were interested in cross-checking how the experience of SA NGOs with UK-based counterparts compared to their experience with other funders. And finally, we found that specific issues addressed by SA NGOs could be best explored by drawing on the breadth of our information rather than on the specific aid chain relationship; such issues include emerging partnerships between donors and NGOs, the use of new management tools (such as logical frameworks and strategic planning) and their impact on development work on the ground, and the influence of donors in such areas as gender, advocacy, HIV/AIDS, and training.

Table 1.1 Research components and data sources

Research component	Principal information sources	Data sources/Organisations involved
Scan	John Hopkins study of civil society CORE/IDASA study of NGO sector Interviews with international NGOs in SA Job advertisement study	Representative samples for entire country 213 NGOs + 21 workshops 15 + participants in 3 workshops All 409 advertised development jobs in a national paper for 3 selected years
UK NGO-SA NGO relations	Interviews with UK NGOs in the UK and SA Interviews/fieldwork with SA NGOs	6 NGOs 22 organisations including 2 regional projects of UK NGOs
SA NGO Case studies	Interviews/documentation/fieldwork/visits with SA NGOs	8 organisations funded by 5 international NGOs (DFID funding) + CBO and NGO partners
SA NGO support organisations	Interviews/fieldwork/visits with SA NGOs Written contributions	Four organisations Representatives of two organisations

The remainder of the introduction summarises the key findings emerging out of our research

1.3 Donors, NGOs and development in South Africa

There are six related points that we highlight here from the research. They are further developed in subsequent parts of the report. Some of the key findings are: increasingly restricted funding accompanied by expanded donor conditions; a system rooted in uneven relationships that reinforces false claims around achievements, suppressed critique and fear in recipient NGOs; the adoption of structures, systems, policies and procedures that are peripheral, or even detrimental, to the real aims of development work; the enduring importance of personal judgements and relationships to funding and project management decisions, for better or worse; and challenging examples of organisations that have tried to place self-defined values and politics – not donor imposed conditions – at the centre of their development approach. The findings from the South African research suggest important parallels with the features of institutional donors' relationships with UK-based NGOs, described in the appendix. Each of the above points is briefly elaborated below.

- 1) Funding available to SA NGOs is less accessible overall, with funding for some sectors decreasing, funnelled through government, or directed to a new select group of recipient NGOs. As a consequence the NGO sector is becoming more fragmented. Highly professionalized and internationalised large organisations, and those in privileged sectors, are succeeding in accessing foreign funds while smaller, more grassroots-oriented and less formalised organisations cannot.
- 2) Donors increasingly dictate the terms SA NGOs must satisfy to access international funding. There is clear evidence that management practices are transferred to SA NGOs through conditions associated with funding. However often these conditions are not dictated by a single donor, well-meaning or not, and rather by the entire system of managing aid, in which many back donors and intermediary NGOs are using similar systems for project funding, monitoring, and impact assessment and placing similar types of conditions on funding.
- 3) The difficulty emerging from our findings is that expected improvements in NGO management and developmental impacts cannot be linked tightly, if at all, to such practices. While some respondents stated that management of their organisation's activities had improved through the use of such practices, many respondents found the requirements peripheral to their real work, confusing, redundant, or destructive. The logic of participation, project implementation, and long-term developmental improvements did not mesh well with the packaging of funding and logic of many of the new conditions.
- 4) There are distinct responses to such funding conditions:
 - a) In a few instances, SA NGOs have contested the donor requirements, suggested improvements, and, in several cases, insisted on new ways of operating. There are clear examples of SA organisations learning from each other outside of donor structured frameworks, and a few examples of Northern organisations willing to learn from South African ones.
 - b) Many SA NGOs are willing to accede to donor demands and are extremely concerned to demonstrate their effectiveness.

- c) Other SA NGOs agree to the terms but do not follow them, either because they do not have the capacity or because the requirements do not make sense to them.

Effects associated with acceding to the terms, whether or not carried out in practice, include a disjuncture between on-the-ground activities and what is packaged and produced for funders, with resulting negative effects on learning. While our research documents cases where donor conditions have pushed SA NGOs into self-described improvements, these are the exception not the rule.

- 5) While some donor conditions relate to better management in SA, others arise out of concerns to raise the profile and cost-effectiveness of the UK funders. Such organisational concerns and constraints, as well as other pressures on the funding organisations, are rarely communicated to the SA NGOs. Expectations that SA NGOs can move into high-profile areas, engage in advocacy and policy influence, and provide good “photo-ops” for UK fundraising are problematic for many recipients. While many organisations, in both countries, work to overcome the inherent inequality of the funding relationship and build partnerships, weak communication of organisational constraints, UK program managers who acted like “they knew best”, and unexplored differing expectations puts the basis for partnerships into question.
- 6) Personal ties and reflexive practice rather than formulaic management and programming approaches appear to underlie the more successful examples of funding, partnerships, and – less clearly – development impacts. Yet at the same time, there is false dichotomy between personalised and more objective, strategic approaches to programming. Throughout all our research, issues of gender, race, and class intersected with the funding and oversight (project) management processes. There were no funding processes that did not have a personal component.

The remainder of the report explores the evidence from South Africa on the changes in NGO development and management approaches, the impact of funders (especially those in the UK), and the outcomes for SA NGOs, their relationships and their developmental impacts.

Chapter 2. South African NGOs in Transition

By Lisa Bomstein and Terence Smith

2.1. Introduction

South Africa has a large and well-established NGO sector that played a key role in supporting the struggle against apartheid and in the country's transition to non-racial political democracy. However, in the transition period of the 1990s, and particularly after 1994, the South African NGO sector as a whole had to adapt to a very different environment, one in which both the identity and survival of many NGOs has been challenged.

Key factors underlying the NGO transition relate first and foremost to the turbulence and uncertainty of the domestic environment in which they operate. The end of apartheid has been accompanied by equally important shifts in economic and political spheres, a triple transition (Bratton and Landsberg, 1999) that has required multiple changes simultaneously. The direction of economic change has been less pro-poor than many hoped, with an emphasis on growth sidelining the immediate post 1994 focus on redistribution. NGOs have had to redefine their own identity, not as anti-apartheid or welfare organisations, but now in developmental terms and vis-à-vis a government ostensibly allied with them in their developmental objectives. Access to public funds, integration into government programmes, exposure to global markets and changeable exchange rates, new policy priorities, and both continued and emerging social needs (e.g. poverty, landlessness, HIV/AIDs) provide the backdrop to the repositioning undertaken by South African NGOs over the last decade.

International trends in NGO practice and donor priorities also shape the environment for local NGOs. The new language of development (World Bank, 1998, 2000 and 2001; DFID, 1999; OECD, 1997b) with its emphasis on good governance, an expanded role for a strengthened civil society, partnership with the South, and local ownership of development projects placed new demands on both public and non-profit organisations in recipient countries during the late 1990s and subsequent years. Moreover, new development practices and procedures have become routine among northern donors and NGOs, who often require the adoption of these procedures by their Southern partners. In South Africa, donors also had region-specific concerns, which ranged from working with anti-apartheid organisations to introduce accountability and transparency, building capacity in the newly legitimate government, pursuing developmental agendas at national and regional-levels, and (re-) establishing commercial links to the country.

Against this backdrop, it is important to examine the ways in which South African NGOs managed organisational and operational changes. At the outset of the research, we recognised that changes in management practices might allow local NGOs to survive as organisations in the turbulent and uncertain environment in which they existed. Donors, and new funding relations, could be a factor propelling specific management and organisational changes within NGOs; they could equally act as impediments, countering changes – for better or worse - that the new environment motivated. At the time, there was little information on the spread of the new management practises or recent donor impacts on NGO project/programme management. Also unknown were their implications for NGOs' traditional mission to service and empower poor and marginalised groups. The project intended to fill this important gap

There are three separate pieces that make up analysis of South African NGOs in transition. The first is a summary of diverse literature examining the developmental

challenges facing South African NGOs, studies on the composition and character of South Africa's "third sector", and, to the extent possible, information on the flow of aid; an early version of this material was published in *OD Debate* (Smith, 2001) and the journal *Public Administration and Development* (Bornstein, 2003), though the material presented here is substantially different. The second piece is based on our scan of international NGOs funding projects in South Africa (Smith and Bornstein, 2001), summarised and updated for this report. The third is a study of job advertisements for development organisations, used to confirm trends derived from the literature, our surveys and our interviews, and to direct attention to the perceived NGO needs for particular staff competencies.

2.2. NGOs and development challenges; constraints and opportunities

Ten years into the ANC's governing of South Africa, there is growing reflection on the nature and extent of change. While the formal apartheid system has ended, new sources of injustice have emerged, often against the wishes of those designing new policies and implementing new programs. Much of the literature on the South African NGO sector is becoming increasingly politicised and partisan. It is worthwhile to explore the multiple challenges faced by SA NGOs, and South Africans more generally, over the last decade, and to recognise the difficulties of the endeavours, the constraints rooted domestically, and those arising out of the interplay of donor-recipient relations.

South African NGOs confronted numerous challenges in the transition from apartheid. In the immediate post-apartheid period, a widely-touted challenge was a crisis of identity for the NGO sector (Habib and Taylor, 1999; Development Update, 2004). Prior to 1994, many NGOs defined themselves by the struggle for political and social justice and focused their activities on providing vital legal, welfare and developmental services to oppressed communities (Kotze, 1999:172). However, in the post-1994 period, established identities and roles as anti-apartheid organisations become less relevant (Habib and Taylor, 1999). NGOs struggled to create new identities, to establish a relationship with a democratic government at national and local levels, and to redefine their relationships to the wider community.

They did so within a new legal and financial context. The common law and statutory tradition in South Africa (Section 21 of the Companies Act of 1973/Trust Property Control Act of 1998) has long recognised the right of any citizen group to set up voluntary associations as legal persons, with broad operational scope, and no official registration requirements. A new Nonprofit Organisations Act, passed in 1997, allows for the registration of non-profit organisations (NPOs) and defines the non-profit sector's role in governance and delivery. The Act gives the State limited power over the NPO registration process, while assuring that the new law is in compliance with the right to association enshrined in the Bill of Rights. The most relevant advantages given to NPOs are access to considerable funding, as described below, and a privileged position as "a fourth branch" of the state (Russell and Swilling, 2002a: 76). Such a definition implies a redistribution of state power and a new system of participatory governance. However, as Russell and Swilling (2002a:76) continue, the danger of defining all NPOs into the public space for governance processes is that no room is left for action outside this space. The result may be the destructive co-optation of NPOs, or the closure of the vital spaces beyond the public space, in which many NPOs exist.

The South African government passed legislation to enable NPOs to take on an expanded role in governance and delivery. To allocate substantial fiscal resources to NPOs, three laws are of particular significance: the National Development Agency Act of

1998, the Lotteries Act of 1997 and the Taxation Laws Amendment Act of 2000. The first one insures direct budgetary allocation for the development of poor communities and the strengthening of the institutional capacity of civil society organisations involved in such process. The second consists of a fund comprising the proceeds from the lottery; and the third one exempts NPOs from income tax, and donors from donation tax when they make donations to what the Act defines as Public Benefit Organisations (PBO). To access these resources, the NPOs need to operate under a formal legal framework (entailing registration and funding requests among other procedures). Thus, NGOs, like other NPOs, have had to adjust to new avenues of funding, and to expanded legal requirements on their existence, in parallel with this expanded role in governance.

The new financial mechanisms relate to a second challenge for local NGOs after 1994, the dramatic changes in donor funding as international donors first shifted their financial support away from civil society organisations to the newly democratic government, and subsequently defined new priorities and requirements into which many SA NGOs did not fit. While official development assistance directed towards NGOs had recovered after a drop between 1995 and 1998, in the interim many organisations were forced to scale down, and some closed entirely. Government funds, expected to flow to civil society organisations, did not (see Smith, 2001; Development Update 2003 on NDA). Others organisations expanded their operations, consolidating partnerships with international funders, entering new sectoral and geographic areas, and investing in new or enhanced "human resources". By 2000, civil society organisations were increasingly reliant on fees for service provision, whether derived from services to government, private businesses or NGOs (Camay and Gordon, 2001). At the same time, some directors and senior staff entered government, the so-called "brain drain" for the sector in the immediate post-apartheid period (Smith, 2002; Interfund, 1998), with consequent challenges for leadership in NGOs. Research presented at the end of Chapter 2 provides evidence of the scale of the leadership gap. Other areas of skill shortages emerged, particularly around project management, finance, proposal writing and reporting, and around thematic areas of donor and national attention: gender, the environment, advocacy, and HIV/AIDs, and more recently renewed attention to poverty.

A third challenge facing South African NGOs is the continued, and in many cases, deepening hardship of most South Africans, as discussed below. The South African government's adherence to a broadly neo-liberal growth-oriented economic policy has perplexed and troubled many observers, both within and outside South Africa. While there have been areas of delivery to the poor on a massive scale (rural electrification, water systems, housing), there are also indications that:

- (a) serious issues of poverty, employment and livelihoods are not sufficiently addressed,
- (b) the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been attacked too late and with inadequate leadership, and
- (c) new forms of involuntary fragmentation and inequality are emerging to replace those of the apartheid era (cf. Bond, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Harrison et al, 2003; Pieterse, 2003).

The need to attack poverty, provide avenues for people to engage with the state and with each other, and transform the persistent structural inequalities into a more just, sustainable, and equitable system constitutes a dominant pressure on local NGOs.

Organisations are struggling with how best to address the needs of the South African poor. It may require that the NGOs forge stronger relationships with local communities and develop new ways of engaging with public and private actors. It may require new skills for some organisations – around many of the thematic areas highlighted by donors, or in other cases a better way of accessing resources. We would further suggest that NGOs will require a true willingness, and the intent, to grapple with what have been termed “wicked problems”, those problems that involve multiple stakeholder with different values, interests and understanding, where simple technical solutions are difficult to devise and impossible to implement, and where situations are changeable and outcomes often unpredictable (Webber and Rittel, 1968).

The fourth challenge outlined here is in many ways an outcome of the prior ones. The NGO sector itself is increasingly fragmented, with indications that professionalized formal NGOs have consolidated their operations and access to funding (governmental and international), but are not necessarily reaching those most in need (Bornstein, 2001, 2003). These professionalized and formal organisations are those addressed, for the most part, in this research project. However recent studies, especially the South African-managed John Hopkins Study of Civil Society in South Africa (Russell and Swilling, 2002a), suggest that there are over 52,000 community-based organisations that are informally organised and, as such, rarely access international resources, instead relying on local finance, volunteerism, networking and self-help. Sample surveys suggest further that most civil society organisations employ no more than 20 people, and most (75%) target ordinary citizens and workers at the grassroots level (Camay and Gordon, 2001), but there are also large multi-divisional organisations. There are also clear political, racial, gender, and ethnic divides fracturing the sector. This was most recently apparent in the reflections on “ten years after”, with debates over the ANC’s impact and on the level and extent of progress since 1994. Tolerance for critique has not been a strong point of the ANC leadership (Nel et al, 2000), and NGO staff that become vocal critics are risking their organisations access to public funds, contracts and approvals.

A fifth challenge, and the last one described here, relates to learning. While some of our research suggests that South African NGOs are conforming to donor pressures in ways that compromise their activities, befuddle their staff and beneficiaries, and result in inefficiencies, distortions and fear, we do document important innovations and successes. We are convinced that there are many other successes that we have missed, either because they were not recounted or because we explored relations among a defined set of funders and counterparts down the aid chain. A key challenge for the sector is to foster learning and value-based action, what Allan Kaplan later in the report refers to as intent and authenticity, in those engaged in development work and integrate such principles into development organisations. International organisations, through their funding, the insightful comments of informed project managers, and even the push towards new management techniques and tools can assist in the process; this research reports on some such efforts.

Poverty & development in South Africa

Although much is written about the developmental challenges facing South Africa, we here wish to highlight only three developmental dilemmas that we see as particularly crucial for the country: persistent inequality; insufficient employment; and HIV/AIDS.

Persistent inequality, with race and place of residence still important factors underlying patterns of wealth and poverty, is a crucial challenge for government and citizens alike.

Ten years after the end of apartheid, GINI coefficients – one of the most widely used indices of inequality within a country – remain consistently high. Despite reductions in racial discrimination, three-quarters of the top income decile are still white and 90% of those in bottom 6 deciles are black (Natrass and Swilling in Pieterse, 2003; May, 1999). Between 40 and 50 percent of the population are poor, by whatever measure is used (May, 1999:48). Gender inequality is also increasing and conditions for women, especially black rural women, show little if any improvement (Albertyn and Hassim, 2004; Bharat, et al 2001; May 1999). Improved provision of healthcare, housing and water systems is, apparently, offset by the ravages of lack of monetary income, gender-based violence, and HIV/AIDs. Overall development indicators are shown in Table 2.1.

Population (millions)	43.2	(2001)
Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (US\$)	2,900	(2001)
Life expectancy at birth (years)	48	(2000)
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	63	(2000)
Child malnutrition (% of children under 5)	9%	(1995+)
Illiteracy (% adults 15+)	14%	(2001)
Total debt/Gross Domestic Product	21.2%	(2001)

Sources: OECD, World Bank²

Note: Year data collected noted in brackets

Insufficient employment. Unemployment and underemployment are persistent features of the South African economy. Although the end of apartheid should have signalled an opportunity for previously excluded groups to enter new fields and occupations, formal job growth has not accompanied labour market expansion. Since 1994 an estimated half million formal jobs have been lost. Unemployment is estimated at 36%, with higher levels experienced by poorly educated, blacks, women, youth and rural residents.

Industry, in line with recommendations emanating from government and international consultant reports to enhance industrial competitiveness through increased labour market flexibility, is restructuring in ways that have shifted the types of jobs available: from formal to informal, union to non-union, and full-time to part-time or intermittent. The skills mix demanded and the location of work have similarly changed, with rural and unskilled workers most excluded, though trained workers also encounter difficulties in obtaining secure employment. For rural residents, access to land remains a problem but so are insufficient opportunities for more than subsistence agriculture. (Marais, 2001; Padayachee and Mitchie, 1998; Nel et al, 2000)

HIV/AIDs and attendant impacts. By the end of 2001, South Africa was the country with the highest number of HIV positive residents, 4.74 million people, in the world. One in nine South Africans was HIV positive, with a little over half (56 percent) women and most of working ages. Rates of infection have continued to rise, and mortality is expected to lower national life expectancy from xx in 1990 to xx by 20xx. The impacts of the pandemic are widespread, with the most immediate and direct effects on those who are ill and dying, their immediate family members and dependents. Older women, called in to care for the ill or for orphaned children, are also directly affected, as are other community structures, the health care system, and other economic and social spheres. Metropolitan Life estimates that by 2010, approximately 600,000 people will have died prematurely due to AIDS, and in some sectors – such as education – expected losses of

² The data in this table were sourced from country summaries available at www1.oecd.org/dac/html/aid-recipients.htm and www.worldbank.org/afr/ (accessed 28 May 2003).

trained individuals are modelled to have ripple effects throughout the economy and society.

By most accounts, the South African government, with President Mbeki at the lead, has offered contradictory and ineffective leadership in combating the pandemic, questioning the links between HIV and AIDS and refusing to authorise the use of drugs treatment for HIV positive individuals. Policy debates over HIV/AIDS have galvanised civil society organisations, of which the most prominent is the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) (CORE/IDASA, 2001:9-10; Achmat, 2002). TAC's efforts to highlight the potential of treating AIDS, allowing those with the syndrome to survive longer, has resulted in international campaigns to provide low-cost drugs to poor countries, and national campaigns and court cases to force government hospitals to provide AZT to pregnant women and newborns. Many other organisations (e.g. the National AIDS Co-ordinating Committee of South Africa (NACOSA³)), and individuals, including medical staff, have reoriented their work to address to needs of HIV/AIDS-affected populations, and in doing to have run counter to government policy and rhetoric. While the South African government now supports limited access to AZT and the purchase of low-cost drugs, the debates – and the official policies – reduced trust in the government and have proved a litmus test for government legitimacy.

In addition to these three key aspects of poverty and development patterns in South Africa, there are also institutional changes – within and outside of the government – that affect the way in which these challenges are addressed. The reform of the State following 1994 is designed to “bring government to the people.” The Constitution makes local government the key actor in promoting local development, linking residents’ aspirations with the programs, finance, and expertise to bring them to life.

Decentralisation, more participatory and developmental approaches within government, and greater attention to the potential of linkages to NGOs, the private sector and other governmental divisions are parts of the institutional reforms (Bornstein, 2000). Yet numerous studies suggest that such key elements of these new governance approaches fall short of their aims, continuing to feed into patterns of local elite dominance, to neglect alternative views and interest (such as those of women), and to create expectations that the institutions involved cannot meet (Bornstein, 2000; McEwan, 2003; Harrison et al, 2003).

Foreign aid, poverty and development in South Africa

International funds are an important component of the country's efforts to address poverty and inequality. Funds arrive in multiple forms (grants, loans, etc.), from different sources (multilateral agencies such as those of the United Nations, bi-lateral sources, private companies, and private charities), and with a variety of terms (e.g. prior conditions to be met, time frame, usage). In all cases, tracing actual quantities of money transferred is surprisingly difficult. Data on official development assistance (ODA), which one would expect would be relatively easy to detail, are presented in Table 2.2 below to demonstrate (a) the general scale of foreign aid flowing into South Africa, and (b) the impossibility of confirming what arrives. Data on foreign direct investment (FDI)

³ Some NGOs actively began addressing HIV/AIDS in the early 1990s (e.g. the National AIDS Co-ordinating Committee of South Africa (NACOSA)). Ironically several such organisations halted their programmes, including the Children's HIV/AIDS Model Programme and the HIV/AIDS programme of the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network, after 1994 when international donors started funding government instead of NGOs (Budlender, 1999).

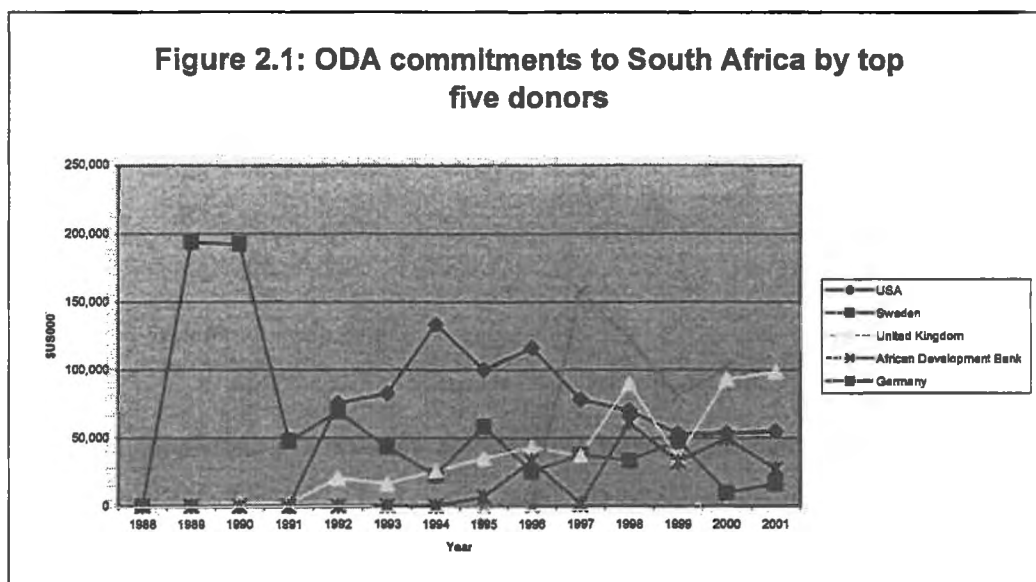
are provided for comparative purposes and show that FDI flows into the country are more than twice that of ODA.

Net ODA (US\$ million) (2001)	428
Bilateral share (gross ODA) (2001)	75%
Net ODA/GNI (2001)	0.4%
ODA per capita (US\$) (2001)	9.9
Foreign Direct Investment (US\$ million) (2000)	961

Source: OECD, 2001

Peart and Crothers (2003) analysis of official ODA to South Africa confirms overall impressions of trends in the volume and sectoral focus of aid to the country. In response to the transition to democratic government, there were substantial increases in commitments of ODA to South Africa in the second half of the 1990s. As the term of the Mandela-led government came to an end in 1999, commitment reduced significantly with some recovery since then. About 73 percent of South Africa's ODA is offered in the form of grants, and 23.5 percent in the form of technical assistance; of the total, about 14 percent is dedicated to investment in infrastructure.

Five donors account for almost 70 percent of South Africa's ODA commitments in recent years: the USA (19.7% of the total), Sweden (19.2%), the United Kingdom (12.0%), the African Development Bank (11.1%) and Germany (5.1%) (Peart and Crothers, 2003). Some donors, such as Sweden, played a prominent role during the years of anti-apartheid struggle and have since much reduced the volume of ODA. In terms of the sectoral distribution of ODA, Peart and Crothers note that a large proportion of ODA commitments (59.2%) have been directed at social sectors, particularly government, civil society and education.



Source: Peart and Crothers, 2003

Official development assistance (ODA) figures are usually based on pledged contributions from one government to another. Although useful in providing an indication of the volume of aid arriving in a single country and in tracking trends in overall assistance, all such figures should be treated with great caution, for several reasons. First, they are reported in terms of the cost to the donor, not their value to the recipient.

Second actual disbursements may diverge greatly from official commitment, and third, what is considered as development assistance is highly fluid (e.g. how tied aid or technical assistance are included may change) (Peart and Crothers, 2003).

The Development Co-operation Report II for South Africa (2000) provides data on ODA for the 1994-99 period. Over the five years, ODA of about 1,09 billion rands was pledged in the form of grants to South African civil society organisations; similar data for grants to government recipients show a total of slightly over 3,66 billion rands (Camay and Gordon, 2001). Expectations that government would funnel monies to civil society via the National Development Agency (formerly the Transitional National Development Trust) were not met as delays resulted in frustration, disruption of programs, downsizing, and in some cases, the closure of organisations (Bond, 2000; Camay and Gordon, 2001). The National Lotteries Trust, which began disbursing funds in 2001, seems to be operating with great efficiency and better, more transparent management.

Information on private flows of development aid is extremely difficult to find, and differ from one source to the next (Sogge, 1999). For aid flowing through non-governmental organisations or private charities, there is no central accounting of either committed funds or those spent in country; funds flowing through government agencies to NGOs can be tracked to a certain extent but much funding passes outside of government channels. In addition, available data are prone to difficulties similar to those arising with ODA. There are also indications that private flows of development aid derive from a wider range of geographic sources.

Important to note, nonetheless, is that aid tends to fluctuate for any particular donor, with direct implications for the sectors, organisations, and projects they directly support. Since donors do try to coordinate in such a way as to avoid overlap, reductions in funding – or increases – may lead to short-term changes for the agencies and organisations they fund. Patterns of change in ODA as depicted can also mask other processes, such as the substitution of one channel of funding for another, or issues of fungibility (in which ODA can lead not to an expansion of a particular sector, but the transfer of government funds to other areas not covered by ODA).

At the same time, external funding, whether from official or private sources, is filling funding gaps for civil society organisations. Although 75 percent of CORE/IDASA surveyed organisations received no government funding, private foundation funding was an important source of finance in almost 50 percent of the organisations surveyed (Camay and Gordon, 2001:28). Thus, as Bond (2001) also notes, although foreign aid represents less than 2 percent of the country's national budget, it plays a decisive role in shifting capital towards selected areas and organisations that might otherwise go unfunded.

2.3 Management practices as an independent source of change

A starting point of the research was that while flows of money are important, there may be less visible sources of influence on the way that development organisations function. The research by Wallace et al (1997) into the project and programme management practices of UK NGOs identified a clear trend towards the use of standardised management procedures across the UK NGO sector. In particular, they identified three new management practices that are used increasingly by UK NGOs across the broad spectrum of development work - Log Frame Analysis (LFA) and related rational planning tools, strategic planning, and evaluation. The reasons for the increased use of these new management practices are attributed to direct pressure from donors for greater accountability and transparency, as well as to the push coming from UK NGOs

themselves to "go for growth" (Wallace, 1997:36). Other work by Wallace has explored the rise of gender, environment, and sustainability requirements within organisations and in the funding of development projects/programmes. Gender and environment are important areas for investigation since past research suggests that they are handled quite differently in programme planning than in project implementation (cf. Goetz, 1997, 2002; Kepe, 1997; Leach, et al, 1997).

The research on UK NGOs suggested that their adoption of new procedures affects their development work and relationships with beneficiaries. These techniques may make NGOs more bureaucratic and hierarchical, and the language and culture of these management tools may not be appropriate or easily understood by staff and partners in the South. Equally important, Wallace et al (1997) argued that the use of management techniques such as LFA, strategic planning and evaluation by UK NGOs fundamentally contradicts the people-oriented, bottom-up approach to development to which many development organisations, especially NGOs, are now striving, an argument echoed by diverse researchers (Abraham, 2003; Eade, 2000; Earle, 2003; Gasper, 1997; Howes, 1992; Hulme, 1995; Wallace et al, 1997; Wallace, 1997; and Wield, 2000).

Many of the issues identified with regard to standardised development management in the UK NGO research are likely to be relevant to the South African NGO sector. Many of the conditions that prompted the use of tools such as strategic management, LFA and increased evaluation among UK NGOs are not entirely dissimilar to those experienced in South Africa. These include pressure from donors, a review by NGOs of their mandates and missions, and the concern by many NGOs to identify development niches in which they have particular strengths (Wallace, 1997:40). However, one important difference between UK and South African NGOs is that the shift among UK NGOs towards the use of these new management tools was prompted in large part by the need to manage the rapid growth that took place in the NGO sector since the mid-1980s. In South Africa, however, the opposite was true for at least some organisations; post-1994, many NGOs dramatically scaled-down their operations or focused on more specific areas of development, these changes occurring in parallel with the adoption of the new management practices. Changes in management practices are therefore more likely to be a response to pressures from international donors and the need for local NGOs to become leaner, better "branded" and more focused on core activities.

2.4 Conclusion

South Africa, and its people, has accomplished a tremendous amount in the past decade. The transition from an apartheid state system to a multi-racial democracy has been peaceful and marked by the extension of rights and opportunities to a much wider range of citizens than in the past. The transition has entailed fundamental shifts in government relationships with residents, community structures and civil society more broadly. State policies now call for consultation, though the various spheres are still poorly coordinated. A black middle-class has emerged, with black professionals in all sectors of the economy. The currency has gained strength over the last few years, and private inward investment has – albeit unevenly – continued. There have been dramatic improvements as well in the extension of services, such as health care, education, and electricity, to rural and township areas. Recent elections were the most peaceful yet, with higher levels of turnout and support for the ANC. All of these constitute signs of the stability of the country.

An emphasis on growth and delivery, in the midst of fundamental reworking of state structures and policies, has simultaneously meant that some longer-term development

objectives have been short-changed: housing development has usually been of poor quality and in peripheral locations (Harrison et al, 2003), job growth has been concentrated in the informal sector (Pieterse, 2004; Bond, 2004), poverty continues to be concentrated along racial lines, and wider objectives of environmental sustainability, gender equity, immigrant rights, and rights more generally have been sidelined, if not in rhetoric then in budget allocations (Budlender, 2002). HIV/AIDS and other health challenges (among them TB, hepatitis, malaria, and diarrhoea) strain government and community capacity.

Continued needs – whether around poverty, health, incomes, or rights – have placed South African NGOs in several quandaries. According to some donors, as a middle income (based on aggregate economic indicators), South Africa merits relatively modest support. Yet as one of the most unequal economies in the world, and one in which there is a possibility of attacking that inequality, many organisations opt to provide targeted support. For some of the donors, this situation has meant a focus on policy development, infrastructure, and poverty reduction, often via the government. For others, funding is constrained to narrowly-defined strategic areas. And for still others, funding is funnelled to their long-term partners based on relationships forged during the struggle years. As the government – according to many observers – moved away from its redistributive focus and towards a neo-liberal growth approach (Bond, 2000; Lester et al, 2000; Marais, 2001), donors have had to work closely with individual departments, specific places, and targeted organisations to assure that there will be poverty-related outcomes of their funding.

Meanwhile for local NGOs, the efforts to fast-track delivery of essential services, to democratise government, and to galvanise NGOs in support of the ANC's growth and development programmes have been accompanied by tensions over the many possible roles that NGOs play. NGOs may be expected to act as representatives of and advocates for marginalised peoples, as government watchdogs, as agents of delivery and training, among others. The transition period has meant, first, that NGOs, as organisations, have had to redefine their own roles, and second, do so in an environment where taking on multiple roles is not always feasible politically or financially. The definition of NGO relationship to government is a central challenge of the period, with funding, contracts, and policy elements all subjects of tension and debate. The broader literature – and our research – on NGOs in South Africa suggests that NGOs are narrowing their operational focus, and becoming either more commercial in their relations to government and beneficiaries or more adversarial towards the ANC government. Yet there are important exceptions of organisations that continued to define themselves primarily in terms of their processes at the community level.

Concerns regarding NGO relationships to international funders have arisen over funding volumes, routes and conditions. The research supports observations about the decline in direct funding for NGOs in the mid-1990s, donors' preference to give larger grants, and increasing conditions on programme content, financial management, implementation and reporting. New organisations and funders have entered the country, many of whom are engaged in donor forums or direct consultation with the government.

The effects of these multiple pressures, bottom-up needs, changing NGO-state-funder relationships, and tighter financial conditions, are the subject of the subsequent sections of the report. In terms of the organisational management practices of local NGOs, financial and organisational sustainability strategies and programme elements, such as poverty, community participation, gender and the environment, are examined.

Chapter 3. Overall trends in NGO management in South Africa

By Isaivani Hyman, Lisa Bornstein, Terence Smith, and Catherine Ogunmefun

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the report paints an overall picture of the project and organisational management practices and procedures South African NGOs are using, together with some preliminary indications of why they do so. The aims are to document the extent to which NGO management trends identified in the international literature also describe South African NGOs, deepen understanding of possible factors behind South African NGO practices and procedures, and to explore the perspectives of representatives of international and South African organisations on these issues.

Information derives from three separate studies: a preparatory set of interviews with representatives of a range of South African NGOs (only a few of which participated in later research phases or had UK funding links); interviews with directors and senior staff of international NGOs working in South Africa; and a study of advertisements for development jobs in a national paper.

To assure that we have a broad view of the issues, this chapter now turns to a study of overall patterns of changing NGO needs, as reflected in scans of NGOs. Our research focus is on specific tools, namely strategic planning, logical framework analysis (and allied project cycle management approaches), and monitoring systems. It is also on the underlying relationships of power and partnerships, though in the NGO scans respondents' comments were not probed and are not recounted in full; such extensive analysis is contained in chapters 4-7 of the report. As with other sections of the report, we keep the identities of all respondents and their organisations confidential except where the material is part of the public record (e.g. published interviews with NGO directors or job advertisements); mention in such cases does not mean that the individual or organisation participated in the research.

Material from the advertisement study permits, as well, a broader focus on organisational changes, at least as they relate to staffing. Job advertisements often specify competency areas, sectoral areas, or management tools. Though the study examines a sample of three years, some trends can be inferred and associations hypothesized, to be explored further in the in-depth analysis. Specific attention is also paid to how South African NGOs are using these techniques, and the extent to which these standardised techniques are compatible with bottom-up planning and community participation.

3.2 Documenting management & organisational trends

By Terence Smith, Lisa Bornstein, and Isaivani Hyman

Much of the following material is from previously released research reports (Smith and Bornstein, 2001), available from the authors. As such, key findings are summarised from, first, our initial scan of South African NGOs and second, our interviews with international NGOs. As these interviews constitute the early phases of our research, we focused on selected funding relations – power and partnerships – and selected management issues, funding patterns and the spread of rational management tools. Our selection of respondents is a random sample of organisations listed in the PRODDER directory of NGOs in South Africa; within this sample, our respondents include only those who were willing to be interviewed. At this phase of the research, we were concerned that not all respondents have links to UK funding sources.

SA NGOs: initial scan and interviews

Surprisingly little research in South Africa had looked at local NGO management practices. For this reason, in 1999, with IDRC funding, the School of Development Studies (SODS) at the University of Natal undertook a preparatory study of management practices in a sample of local development organisations. The research involved a questionnaire and interviews with the directors of fourteen development organisations based in KwaZulu-Natal. The organisations were of different sizes and involved in a wide range of development work, from basic service delivery, democracy education, rural and urban development to skills training. The questionnaire and interviews covered issues relating to the use of project management techniques (logframe analysis (LFA), strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation), organisational management (such as financial and organisational sustainability strategies), and organisational focus (such as approaches to poverty, community participation, gender and the environment). Questions about the influence of donors on the use by local NGOs of certain project and organisational management techniques were also included. Key findings of this research were that:

- The majority of South African development organisations interviewed are using new project and organisational management tools such as logframe analysis, ZOPP and strategic planning. Many systematically monitor and evaluate their programmes.
- Respondents mentioned donors as a motivating factor in their use of logframes, which some donors required for funding proposals. Respondents did not systematically attribute their use of other management techniques or the adoption of particular programme elements to the influence of donors.
- Based on self-reporting, most NGOs consider themselves to be particularly strong in community participation, and relatively weak or not focused on gender and the environment.
- Respondents saw the development sector as becoming increasingly professional, accountable, and commercial. They highlighted the competitive funding environment, increasing government reliance on contracting, and donor requirements as the underlying causes for such transformations.

Financial and organisational sustainability are important concerns for South African NGOs. The decrease in donor funding in the mid-1990s pushed NGOs to become more business-like in their approach to organisational management and to development work. This is manifest in a clear trend towards the adoption of income-generating activities such as consulting, contracting for government work, and the introduction of user fees for services delivered to communities. Reflecting the commercial orientation, non-profit corporations (section 21 corporations) were preferred as an alternative to a non-governmental organisational structure for some development work (the SODS sample included two section 21 corporations).

This preliminary research provided useful insight into what management procedures local NGOs are using and, to a lesser extent, why they are using them.

International NGOs in South Africa

These initial interviews were supplemented by interviews with 15 international NGOs (INGOs) working in South Africa (only a few of which participated in subsequent in-depth

fieldwork); the UK team conducted parallel interviews with staff from six organisations and three back-donors.

The participating international NGOs were: the African Medical and Research Foundation; Catholic Agency for Overseas Development; CARE South Africa; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; Charities Aid Foundation; Diakonia Sweden; Farm Africa; Habitat for Humanity International; HelpAge International; Oxfam Canada; Oxfam UK; Save the Children UK; Voluntary Service Overseas; Womankind; and World Vision of South Africa. We held additional discussions with representatives of Interfund, PACT, the Ford Foundation, the Non-profit Partnership, SANGOCO, The South African Grantmakers' Association, and numerous bi-lateral donors. Feedback from the numerous international NGO representatives who attended presentations in Johannesburg and Durban on our initial results further enriched our findings.

Summary results of this research with the international NGOs revolve around management tools and techniques; finance; strategic focus; and partnership, as detailed below.

Management tools and techniques:

- Most of the INGOs surveyed are using some form of logframe for project management, although some agencies use this tool far more extensively than others.
- All of the organisations have some system for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). A number of the respondents mentioned that they are currently revising and improving their M&E procedures.
- Most of the respondents said that the large institutional donors (especially DFID, the EU and USAID) had extremely difficult reporting and other management requirements that negatively affected their work.
- A number of the organisations had recently undertaken extensive strategic planning exercises

Strategic focus and finance:

- Most of the international organisations interviewed organised their work in South Africa around a number of common strategic themes, including HIV/AIDS, gender and advocacy.
- Based on strategic planning processes, many of the INGOs refocused their work in South Africa around particular themes and/or geographical areas.
- There appeared to be a trend towards increasingly restricted and retrospective funding for the international NGOs, changes pushed by their back donors (especially DFID around retrospective or invoice-based funding). Respondents noted that their donors are increasingly demanding that projects and programmes be co-financed.
- The INGOs tended to focus on capacity building and technical support instead of direct funding to "bricks and mortar" projects implemented by local NGOs.

Partnerships:

- The language of “partnerships” is widespread among INGOs in South Africa.
- Partnerships between INGOs and South African NGOs have become more structured and formal in recent years.
- Most of the INGO respondents claimed that their head offices do not exert a significant negative influence on them in terms of management requirements.
- The respondents did not think that they in turn imposed extensive or unreasonable management requirements on the local NGOs they work with (apart from basic reporting and accountability measures). However, they did admit that their application and reporting requirements for local NGOs generally have become more formal and complex in recent years.

These initial studies of 15 INGOs and 14 local organisations are the backdrop for the in-depth research we conducted around specific aid chains, organisations, and themes, as described in subsequent chapters of this report. Issues of power and influence introduced in these initial interviews were explored further as we spoke with a variety of people within a particular organisation and made more direct links – in our research approach – between funding organisations, and their conditions, expectation, and procedures, and those of recipients.

We also found that we needed to widen our research beyond our initial concern with management tools and partnerships. Thus in later phases of the research we addressed other conditions placed on funding namely: training and capacity-building requirements, a focus on gender or HIV/AIDs, the need for advocacy, fundraising, promotional and impact-assessment activities, and organisational development requirements (e.g. strategic planning, membership in umbrella or network associations). The subsequent chapters thus address in-depth research around specific issues and inter-organisational relationships.

We also were concerned to expand our understanding beyond the initial small samples. The IDASA/CORE study and the Johns Hopkins study of South African Civil Society (JHSACS) were likely to produce valuable information on the overall structure and orientation of the sector, as indeed they did (see above). We thus, in parallel, designed and carried out research to check on whether our initial findings could be generalised to the wider South African NGO sector. We did not seek to duplicate the IDASA/CORE and JHU's civil society study, with their survey of many NGO directors or detailed census of organisations present in selected communities. We sought instead a method of gaining insight into management and organisational changes occurring around and after political transitions for the broad range of NGOs spread throughout the country. Our approach was a study of job advertisements, as is described below.

3.3. Tracking Changing NGO practices through their Job Advertisements

By Catherine Ogunmefun, Isaivani Hyman and Lisa Bornstein

The study of job advertisements aimed to test a select number of observations drawn from the literature about NGOs in transition during the period 1994 to 2000. IDASA, Interfund, and Habib and Taylor (1999) had reported a shift in foreign funding from the NGOs (as was the trend in the apartheid era) to the democratic government. This was thought to have forced NGOs to compete for limited funds and become more donor-oriented to retain the funds already allocated to them. Increasing donor-orientation was

expected to entail a change in the focus of NGO activities toward internationally-defined priorities and/or changes in their management practices, tendencies that our initial interviews had also uncovered.

In order to examine some of these changes and possible donor influences, we scanned and analyzed NGO job advertisements to confirm broad trends in the NGO sector identified in the literature and the case studies of NGOs and their donors.

Methodology

The data collection process involved scanning job advertisements from a leading South African newspaper called the *Mail and Guardian* (formerly known as the Weekly Mail). The *Mail and Guardian* is a weekly newspaper that has a large advertisement section containing job vacancies within the development NGO sector. In order to examine the changes over the period of a decade, three years were selected, that is, 1992 (to represent the early transition to democracy), 1996 (transition to democracy) and 2000 (post-transition). Each edition of this newspaper during the aforementioned three years was scanned for development job advertisements. There were more than 300 relevant job advertisements listing 409 positions.

Advertisements were classified according to the following categories: job titles or positions listed, and the job descriptions, specific skills and experience required. Specific proficiencies required in project management (such management tools as Logical Framework Analysis (LFA), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Strategic Planning, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Project Cycle Management) were identified as was the focus of the organisation's work (e.g. gender, environment, water, health).

Limitations of the study and its methodology include potential bias originated from the selection of the *Mail and Guardian* as the data source, a more costly newspaper for advertising than regional ones, and the selection of only three years for analysis. The job requirements of smaller, less established, or regionally-focused NGOs may not be well reflected in our sample; the three years selected for analysis represent periods in South Africa's transition, and no effort was made to identify anomalies, turning points, or longer term trajectories in the trends identified.

Data Analysis

Table 3.1 in the appendix lists all development organisations with advertisement placed in two or three of the sampled years. The NGOs with advertisements in a single year are too numerous to reproduce here. Acronyms and organisations are listed in the appendix as well (see table 3.2).ⁱ

Although the list excludes organisations with adverts in only one of the three years, the partial list above provides interesting information on the overall diversity of organisations looking for staff. Most of these organisations listed in Table 3.1 are local NGOs; only four are international organisations (IDRC, OXFAM, USAID and VSO). Only four NGOs, all of them local, advertised in all three years. The four international organisations mentioned advertised in two of the three years, as did the other local NGOs listed above.

The data show that there were more advertisements in 1996, which is the period of transition to democracy. This provides evidence to confirm reports of a "leadership" and staffing crisis experienced in the NGO sector, in which many workers were lost to the government and private institutions (Habib and Taylor, 1999).

Most of the NGOs have operations focused on rural development. Some have other specific areas of specialisation, such as dispute resolution, AIDS prevention, education, democracy, land and women's rights and urban development. Most of these entities are non-governmental though not exclusively (e.g. USAID); there are also diverse organisational forms represented, with the majority established as non-governmental development organisations and others as Section 21 corporations, trusts and community-based organisations (CBOs). Only one religious NGO placed advertisements in two of the three years.

Types of positions advertised in the three years

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.1 below summarise the types of positions advertised in the M&G in the three years. Table 3.4 lists the types of positions for which NGOs advertised in 1992, 1996 and 2000. The majority of advertisements are for senior positions. For the three years studied, the overall number of advertisements for the posts of Director and Programme Co-ordinator were 73 and 72 respectively. These advertisements reflect the need for new leadership in the sector. It also suggests that NGOs look nationally (and indeed sometimes internationally) to fill their senior posts while relying on more locally-based networks for less senior positions.

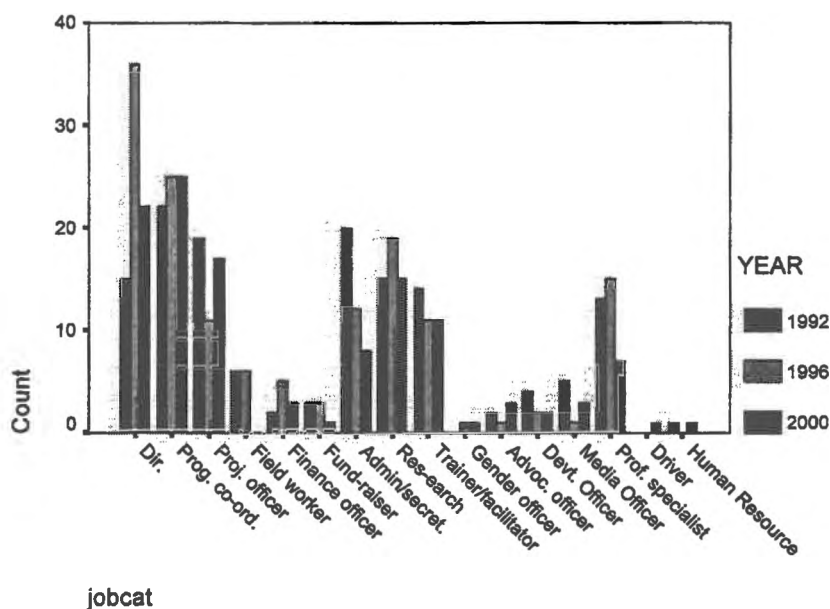
Other positions greatly in demand are those related to project management, research, administrative support, and training or facilitation. The table depicts heightened demand for professional specialists, however there is no clear concentrated demand in a single specialist area; the category encompasses a range of skills, from information to engineering and social work, and is better grouped with the gender, advocacy, and media specialists to suggest increased specialisation and professionalisation. Indeed, there are surprisingly few jobs listed in the areas of gender, advocacy, fundraising (development officer) or media given the emphasis placed on these skills and competencies by the UK based organisations and the South African NGO directors.

Positions	YEAR			Total
	1992	1996	2000	
Director	15	36	22	73
Programme Co-ordinator	22	25	25	72
Project Manager	19	11	17	47
Field Worker	6	6		12
Finance Manager	2	5	3	10
Fund-raiser	3	3	1	7
Admin/Secret	20	12	8	40
Researcher	15	19	15	49
Trainer/ Facilitator	14	11	11	36
Gender officer		1	1	2
Advocacy officer	2	1	3	6
Development officer	4	2	2	8
Media specialist	5	1	3	9
Professional specialist	13	15	7	35
Driver			1	1
Human Resources	1		1	2
Total	141	148	120	409

Figure 3.1 charts changes in jobs advertised over the three years for the specified job types. The only clear trend is the 1996 peak in demand for directors; the number of adverts for Director increased from 15 in 1992 to 36 in 1996 and later declined slightly to 22 in 2000. For Programme Co-ordinator, there was a slight increase from 22 in 1992 to 25 in both 1996 and 2000. Such an increase is not inconsistent with needs arising from the departure of senior staff – the so-called internal ‘brain drain’ – as skilled personnel moved into the public sector to assist the new post-apartheid government; senior staff may also have moved into private institutions, for a variety of reasons.⁴ Nonetheless the limited number of jobs advertised at this level suggests that leadership changes may be overstated in the literature, that organisations are seeking senior management internally (from existing staff), or, less likely, that organisations are using networks other than the national media to advertise their positions (more probable that they use the national media and other networks).

For several job categories, an increase in demand is observable for 1996. These are positions that could have been affected by the post-apartheid brain drain and the overall funding crisis within the sector. For example, when we group finance officer and fundraiser together, we see an increase in 1996 (but not when they are separate). Yet there were only a few advertisements for such positions, surprising given the decline in funding in the sector during that period.

Figure 3.1: Types of positions advertised in 1992, 1996 and 2000



⁴ Interviews with NGO staff and other key informants suggested multiple reasons for the departure of senior staff from NGOs. The draw of the ANC government and the possibility of influencing policy formulation from the inside was one important reason cited, and one mentioned by multiple informants. Some respondents also mentioned that gender and racial dynamics shifted in the post-apartheid period, and that white women – who had headed organisations prior to 1992 – felt that the organisations could be better represented or should be run by non-whites; this was mentioned by both men and women, black and white. Lower ranking staff also mentioned that some leaders left NGOs for more lucrative positions in the State or the private sector, propelled by both opportunities and the dearth of funding for NGOs.

There is concentrated demand in one job category – that of researchers – that we find entirely unexpected. Recent attention to research capacity within the NGO sector in South Africa is apparently arising out of real needs for researchers, though their specific role is not clear. Advertisements for researchers suggest that organisations are trying to better document their impact, and the dynamics of the problems that they seek to address. Research contributes to improved program design and proposals, and thereby to the organisation's efforts to obtain domestic and international funding. Research may also mask a number of other occupational functions, such as fundraising, donor relations, monitoring & evaluation, training, fieldwork, and advocacy.

Also surprising is the absence of demand in some categories. For example, in 2000, there were no advertisements placed for fieldworkers. This absence might be due to a change in terminology, the inclusion of such activities within other posts that entail fieldwork e.g. researcher or project manager, or – more worrisome – a redirection of NGO efforts away from direct activities in the field.

Examining possible longer-term trends over the period, no clear pattern emerges.ⁱⁱ There were 409 positions advertised over the three years. The job advertisements increased from 141 in 1992 to 148 in 1996, and later declined to 120 in 2000. Possible explanations for the decline include: the reported staff lost to NGOs in 1994-1996 may have been replaced with more long-term employees (conferring stability on the sector), reduced development activities and funding between 1996 and 2000 that translated into fewer jobs on offer, and tighter NGO finances against more costly advertising resulting in fewer advertisements in the *Mail and Guardian*.

Management Tools, Focus Areas and Skills

The scan of the advertisements did reveal shifts in the management tools, focus areas and skills that some NGOs required consistent with the hypotheses (and results) of the wider study.

Management tools

Table 3.4 summarises the management tools mentioned in the advertisements; demand for management tools increased over these three years. For instance, the demand for Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) and Project Cycle Management increased from 82 in 1992 to 146 in 2000. The demand for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) increased from 24 in 1992 to 72 in 2000. In 1992, the demand for tools such as strategic planning and business planning grew from 14 to, in 2000, 82 positions. Mention of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) also rose from four advertisements in 1992 to 16 in 2000.

TOOLS	YEAR		
	1992	1996	2000
LFA/ Project Cycle Mgmt	82	110	146
M&E	24	50	72
Strategic & business planning	14	60	82
PRA & other participatory skills	4	14	16
TOTAL	124	234	316

The dramatic rise in advertisements for staff skilled in project management, logical frameworks, monitoring & evaluation, strategic planning and business planning confirms the rapid expansion of these rational management systems and practices, and suggests that development organisations in South Africa recognised both their need for and shortage of staff skilled in these areas. The relatively modest demand for participatory skills is particularly striking in comparison.

Focus Areas

Table 3.5 shows the focus areas mentioned in the jobs advertised in the three years. An increase in demand for most focus areas is apparent, suggesting that NGOs prefer newly hired staff to arrive with some experience in specific areas, a sign of increasing specialisation and expertise. Also apparent between 1992 and 1996 is a dramatic increase in demand for staff in the areas of gender, environment, human rights and advocacy. For all but the latter, this demand jumped again in 2000. The specialisations requested reflect many of the primary themes and language used in international circles over the same period (gender after the Beijing conference, the environment after the Rio conference, the growing interest in right-based approaches, etc.). Demand for staff with a focus on HIV/AIDs, poverty or sustainability jumped most from 1996 to 2000, probably reflecting growing concerns in civil society to refocus national attention on HIV/AIDS, poverty and long term sustainable development. The focus areas mentioned in job advertisements in 2000 also parallel those mentioned frequently as areas of action in other surveys of the NGO sector, although training/education/capacity building, the most frequent response in a CORE/IDASA study, appears less prominent in this study (cf. Camay and Gordon, 2001:23).

Table 3.5: Focus Areas

FOCUS AREAS	YEAR		
	1992	1996	2000
Gender	4	16	20
Environment	0	14	26
Advocacy	4	20	18
Participation	4	18	4
Religion	2	8	2
Sustainability	0	0	8
Poverty	2	0	6
HIV/AIDS	10	4	18
Human Rights	0	14	22
TOTAL	26	94	124

The exceptions to the wider trend are surprising; job advertisements mentioning religion or participation show a clear peak in 1996 with a subsequent decline in 2000. Reasons behind the changes are unclear. There may be fewer development jobs in religious organisations (other NGOs may be taking on earlier functions), religious organisations may be using other channels for advertising posts, or explicit mention of faith-based hiring criteria may be excluded from job advertisements in newspapers (though clear on

web pages and in the hiring process). Causes for the dramatic shifts in the demand for staff skilled in participation (moving from 4 in 1992 to 18 in 1996 and back to 4 in 2000) are also hypothetical. While the pattern of demand may reflect a change in terminology – with a poverty focus becoming synonymous with a participatory approach – an equally possible explanation is one of the principal hypotheses of the wider research, namely that rational planning approaches mesh poorly, and supplant, participatory ones.

Specific Skill Areas

Mail & Guardian advertisements were grouped according to the specific skills mentioned (see Table 3.6). For the three years analysed, 1992, 1996 and 2000, an increase in the demand for skills such as proposal/ report writing, budgeting, marketing and policy development is apparent. There were many openings for staff with proposal and report writing skills: 118 posts in 1996 and 116 in 2000; this provides support for interview material documenting the staff time dedicated to such activities. There was high demand for staff skilled in finance (such as fundraising, income generation and financial management) in 1996 with 148 advertisements mentioning such qualifications. There was less demand in this area in 2000. Such numbers mask an important feature of the 1996 advertisements: given the financial difficulties of many NGOs during that period, advertisements called for multi-skilled individuals, with financial and sectoral or management expertise. The overall number of jobs was only slightly higher than in 1992 and 2000 (see appendix, table 3.1), however the rise in those skilled in project management and finance increased greatly; much of these were the senior staff who were expected to have multiple competencies. In addition, the organisations wanted sector-specialised employees who had many skills, thereby reducing the number of staff needed and saving on wage costs; this could be a coping strategy during the crisis period. (No assessment is made of the last category in Table 3.6, a residual one, since the skills lists are too disparate to consider as a group. Budgeting probably should be re-grouped with financial management, and policy development either excluded or kept separately.)

SKILLS	YEAR		
	1992	1996	2000
Fund-raising/ Financial mgmt	74	148	106
Income generation			
Proposal/Report Writing	56	118	116
Budgeting/Marketing/Policy Development	38	58	78
TOTAL	168	324	300

Other job characteristics

Next examined are the salary scale, timeframe of jobs and other observations made from the advertisements. Table 3.7 lists the numbers of posts advertised at what would be considered a high annual salary, over R150,000 per year. This salary scale is addressed because it provides an indication of whether development organisations are paying top money, nearly on par with the private sector, for qualified people and

because it is the one where salaries are listed (salary ranges were only detailed for 36 positions, of which about half can clearly be considered highly remunerated).

Salary scale and positions advertised	Number of positions
Director	4
Programme Coordinator	9
Researcher	2
Professional specialist	1
Trainer	1

Of the positions listed in Table 3.8, those associated with the highest salaries (above R200,000/year) were for employment within international governmental entities (e.g. USAID)

Table 3.8 shows the timeframe of the jobs advertised by the NGOs. NGOs specified the duration of only 50 of the jobs advertised. There is a concentration of short-term positions, lasting one year or less (23 positions). There is a second grouping of positions associated with projects and their cycles, in which employment is for two to three years (21 positions). There are relatively few jobs with a fixed term of more than three years (5 positions). While most of the jobs offer renewable contracts, such renewal is contingent on securing continued project funding, as well as more standard performance assessments.

Duration of jobs	Number of Jobs
Less than 1 year	12
1 year	11
1 – 2 years	1
2 years	11
2 – 3 years	2
3 years	8
3 – 4 years	3
4 years	2
Total	50

Other conditions mentioned in the advertisements are the number of years of experience wanted and benefits attached to the jobs advertised. On average, the NGOs request three years of prior work in the field, relatively little. Most of the advertisements offer the following benefits: a 13th cheque, medical aid, and contributions to a pension fund. Most

NGOs highlight their compliance with national laws as affirmative action employers. Familiarity with the South African NGO sector is one of the prerequisites mentioned by some of the NGOs.

Conclusion of the advertisement study

The analysis of advertisements of development jobs listed for three years (1992, 1996, and 2000) in a prominent national South African newspaper confirms many of the wider trends anecdotally reported in the South African NGO sector. Key findings of direct relevance to our wider study include the following:

- South African development organisations needed leadership (directors, programme managers) positions filled in the immediate post-apartheid period. The number of positions advertised in 1996 reflects the emergence of new organisations, major changes in the mission and identity of organisations, and the loss of skilled leaders to government policy departments during that period.
- Demand for people with skills in rational planning techniques increases dramatically. In parallel, demand decreased for staff with participatory skills or explicitly engaged in fieldwork.
- As reflected in the advertisements, there is a strong need for staff skilled in proposal writing, reporting, fund-raising and financial management.
- Demand for staff with specialised sectoral expertise increased, though at lower numbers than with managerial, fundraising and financial skills. The specific mix of qualifications varies by organisation and year. The most recent (2000) advertisements show growing demand for staff experienced in gender, environment, advocacy, human rights and HIV/AIDS.
- Project cycles affect staffing in at least some organisations, with a growing concentration of short-term positions of less than one year, and of two-three years (project-based).

3.4 Conclusion

Based on existing studies of the non-profit sector, a preliminary scan conducted with international NGOs, donors, and SA NGOs, and a study of the job advertisements for NGO staff, this part of the report highlighted a several key trends in the management practices of South African NGOs and their funders.

Formal NGOs involved in development represent an important, albeit limited, segment of the overall non-profit sector and those supported by international funders appear to be increasingly professional, employing the full range of standardised management tools including LFA, M&E, and strategic planning. International NGOs acting as conduits for funding acknowledge that the procedures for obtaining funding have become more rigorous and complex. However, SA NGO use of the tools and procedures link only loosely to INGO requirements; in feedback session and interviews most respondents said that SA NGO use of the tools also reflected other forces, namely improved management capacity, local-drivers for change, and prevailing practice, as opposed to explicit conditions on accessing funding. However, such preliminary conversations could neither explore the extent to which, or ways, NGOs employed the procedures, nor how staff understood their use.

The scan of NGO practices also suggested important shifts towards advocacy, gender, and HIV/AIDS in the work of SA NGOs, prompted by local needs and, importantly, by the emergence of these as strategic foci for international partners. Respondents acknowledged capacity difficulties for NGOs in these areas as well as with respect to financial management, fundraising, and research, with particular shortages experienced in different years. Shifts from a “bricks and mortar” focus towards advocacy, as reported in INGOs, did not appear strongly in the SA NGOs at this stage of the research. Likewise, few SA NGO respondents echoed INGO concerns regarding retrospective funding (which few had encountered) or greater financial oversight.

Chapter 4. Partnerships and chains of influence

By Annsilla Nyar, Lisa Bornstein and Isaivani Hyman

4.1. Introduction

The main aim of chapter 4 of the report is to explore the power dynamics operative in the aid chain. We do this by critically exploring the concept of partnership as it functions in practice. We also examine the reasons behind the use by South African NGOs of the development techniques and approaches documented above. In particular, this chapter uses aid chain studies – and other information from our in-depth work – to explore whether the main impetus for the use of specific procedures and techniques is coming from northern donors; alternatively, factors specific to the South African political transition, and the resulting environment in which NGOs find themselves, may be more important. Our concern is to qualify the nature of influence from the north: is the adoption of specific management practices a result of coercive demands placed upon unequal South African partners?; or is the influence indirect and driven, for example, by local interest in what are perceived as improved practices? Are Southern partners able to reject donor conditions that are either unworkable in South Africa or incompatible with the organisation's self-defined mission?

The chapter begins with a review of the data and aid chain approach. We then draw on the information from the in-depth work with 22 NGOs in our discussion of partnerships and influence. Aid chain studies illustrate both this influence and potential contradictions between donor requirements and locally-defined needs. Third, we use this same material to examine other elements of "partnerships", such as strategic fit and focus (with the example of advocacy), communication, and commitment.

Our data suggest that both donor pressure and internal factors have played a role in shaping development management in the South African NGO sector. At the same time, the South African case appears to provide some interesting twists. For example, South African NGOs have traditionally been, and continue to be, heavily dependent on donor funding. However, our preliminary investigations, as described above, suggested that many local NGOs do not perceive donors as having had a major influence on the new management procedures they have adopted. We hypothesised at the outset that NGO respondents might initially have been cautious in discussing their donor relationships with us; indeed, in-depth interviews with NGO staff uncovered other dimensions of donor-NGO relationships in South Africa, as presented in this chapter.

Those other dimensions suggested that donor relationships with recipient NGOs were not always instances of successful imposition of requirements and demands. Rather we found that donors influenced only selected management practices of local NGOs, and that imposition led to unexpected ways of using the new systems, far from the reality of project implementation or the stated "advantages" of the new procedures. Finally, we found that there were interesting and important examples of both South African and UK organisations that challenged prevailing wisdoms, and worked flexibly, responsively, and seemingly effectively.

4.2. Data sources

The organisations involved in the case study research represent a range of types. Information from 22 organisations working in South Africa provide the data for this and subsequent chapters; the preparatory scan, advertisement study and feedback sessions described previously entailed work with additional organisations. While we name only a

few of the organisations participating in the in-depth research, their general characteristics are as follows.

There were six international organisations acting as intermediaries for funding from larger U.K. institutional donors and foundations involved with our case study research. Representatives of these organisations were interviewed in South Africa, the U.K., and – in two cases – further afield. Three of these organisations were small, with annual incomes of less than £2m and usually less than 20 staff. Three were very large, with annual incomes of over £100m, operations throughout the world, and in several cases, allied organisations headquartered in other advanced industrial countries. Only one of the UK organisations studied in-depth was faith-based, a very large INGOs that supports faith-based organisations in South Africa and elsewhere. The organisations listed by name in Table 4.1 represent only those organisations with sufficient numbers of partners to allow for their confidentiality.

Table 4.1 Number of SA-based NGOs participating in the research by UK donor or NGO intermediary

Funding organisation	Number of local counterparts (NGOs or implementing entities)
Comic Relief	2
DFID	8 *
CAFOD	2
CARE	5
Christian Aid	3
Oxfam (UK and others)	2
Small UK NGO 1	2
Small UK NGO 2	4
Small International Network NGO	1

* At least eight organisations in the study had DFID funding. Others may have received DFID funds through other intermediary funding entities (e.g. SA government entities)

Organisations with which we conducted in-depth research in South Africa are categorised in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below, first by function (NGO-support versus project-based) and then by size (employees and annual operating costs/revenues), year established (pre and post-1994), number of donors, and geographical and sectoral focus of work.

Table 4.2 NGO support organisations participating in the research

Total number in research	4
Size	4 Small
Origin	2 South African, established prior to 1994 1 South African, established post 1994 1 international affiliate, established post 1994
Geographical scope of work	2 in South Africa + world 1 in South Africa + elsewhere in Africa 1 in South Africa only
Donors	4 Multiple donors

NGO support organisations, those providing assistance to other NGOs with management, strategic planning, organisational development and staff training, are described in Table 4.2. Information from our research with these organisations was used in several ways: to inform our understanding of INGO-SA NGO relationships; to explore the needs and adjustments of SA NGOs (as reported to or observed by support organisation staff); and to specifically examine the role of these organisations in the SA NGO environment.

Table 4.3 contains information on the remaining organisations that participated in our aid chain and in-depth research. These project-oriented NGOs are funded by the organisations listed in Table 4.1. Names of the organisations are not provided here to protect the confidentiality of the respondents. Pseudonyms are used in the text, and in some cases the sectoral foci of the organisations are changed in the text (but are accurately listed here).

Table 4.3 Other SA-based NGOs participating in the case study research	
Type of organisations	Project-oriented NGOs
Total number in research	18
Size	10 small* 4 medium 2 large 2 regional projects of an INGO * The organisations include 2 small networks, 1 medium network, and 1 large network organisation (networks are defined as organisations set up to co-ordinate efforts by a group of SA NGOs or CBOs)
Origin	<u>Established prior to 1994:</u> 11 SA NGOs 1 SA network NGO <u>established after 1994:</u> 1 SA NGO 3 SA networks 2 regional projects of an INGO
Geographical scope	9 rural, 1 urban, 8 both 14 work in a single province, 2 in multiple provinces, & 2 regionally
Sectoral focus (top two defined areas)	8 land issues & agriculture 5 capacity building (with 3 of these mentioning advocacy) 5 gender 2 community development 2 economic justice, credit & savings 2 natural resources 1 HIV/AIDs 1 literacy 1 housing 2 faith-based
Donors	2 single donor 16 multiple donors

The study included eighteen project-based organisations linked into funding relationships with UK-based donors. As compared to the overall profile of non-profits in South Africa documented in the John Hopkins University (JHU) study (Russell and Swilling, 2002a, 2002b and 2002c), our sample had a number of biases. First we confined our in-depth research to established and formalised organisations with UK funding and as a consequence we excluded organisations that were extremely small,

informally organised, and reliant completely on voluntary labour. Thus while the JHU study found 40% of non-profits had been founded post-1994 and the vast majority had very few employees, our sample has only 34% recently founded organisations and almost all had at least 5 employees. Indeed, while several of the organisations involved in our study changed their staff contingent over the course of the research, the majority of the NGOs were small, with staff equivalent to 14 or fewer full-time employees, 4 were medium with between 15 and 29 employees and the remainder were large organisations, with more than 30 employees. Our sample also is slightly biased to organisations focusing their work on a single province and working in rural areas.

In terms of sectoral focus, the JHU study and a study of all organisations listed in the PRODDER directory of NGOs use slightly different categories than we employed (Russell and Swilling, 2002a). There are 21 categories used to classify NGO work including: culture and recreation; religion; health; education and research; social services; environment; development and housing; advocacy and politics; philanthropic intermediaries and voluntarism promotion; international; and business and unions. As our focus was on organisations involved in only a few of these categories, and since several of the participating organisations could be classified in several ways (housing and advocacy for example) or not at all (e.g. gender), we chose to report on their focus area as the respondents – or organisational literature (e.g. annual reports, fundraising documents) – described them.

Almost all of the organisations involved in our research had multiple sources of funding. This point is important. While an effort is made to trace patterns of influence down from a single funder (i.e. moving from DFID requirements to those of the UK based NGO receiving the funds and transferring them to partner organisations in South Africa), the aid chain may look quite different, and quite confusing, from the perspective of the beneficiary organisations in South Africa. They may have between three and 10 different funders, each with distinct project descriptions, reporting requirements, and conditions. The SA NGOs may also be members of more than one NGO network, again with differing objectives from the association and different facets of the organisation strengthened or highlighted via that relationship. Employees in a SA NGO may not know who are their direct funders, let alone the organisations that are further up their multiple aid chains. (Similarly, staff at UK NGO may have only vague ideas of the ultimate beneficiaries of their aid if there are many intervening organisations linked in a complex chain, or web, of relationships.) Distinguishing levels of influence are problematic, yet remain crucial. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the differing perspectives on the aid chain.

In the following chapters of this report we trace six funding paths. The aid chain studies represent the work of three different groups of researchers, with supervision by Lisa Bornstein. Shelly Dill carried out the first case study, which looks at efforts to introduce a sustainable livelihoods approach, as part of her Master's degree. Isaivani Hyman took the lead on researching and writing the next three case studies, with input – towards research and writing – from the rest of the core research team. Carol-Ann Foulis carried out the initial field research and writing of the fourth case study, which examines gender and advocacy; Annsilla Nyar conducted follow-up research and, in the UK, Tina Wallace interviewed INGO directors; analysis and writing was by Carol-Ann and Lisa Bornstein. Vicki Tallis researched and prepared the longer case study, presented in chapter 6, which examines gender policies and gender mainstreaming; the section here is a summary of a longer chapter from her stellar doctoral work, based on her long and in-depth association with these organisations as a consultant and researcher.

Figure 4.1 Perspective on aid chain starting from the UK NGO

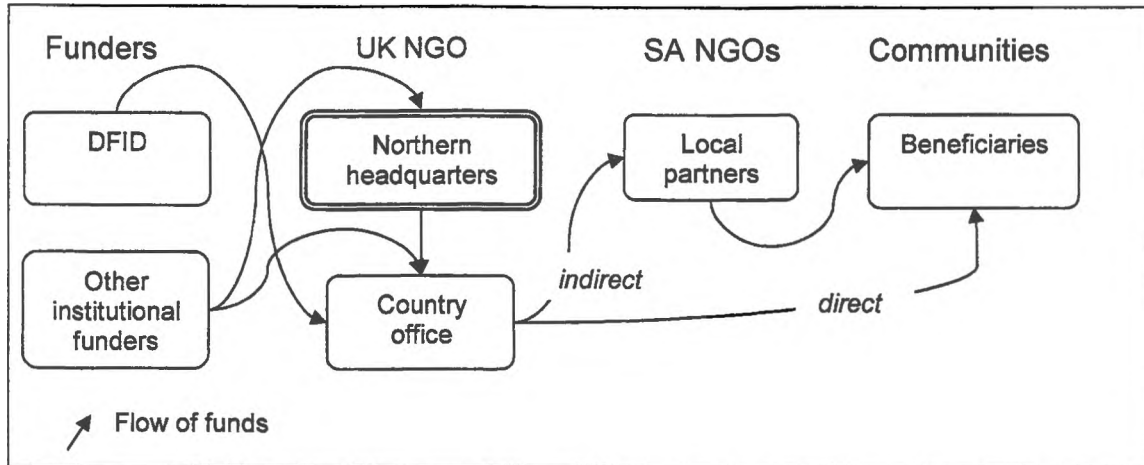
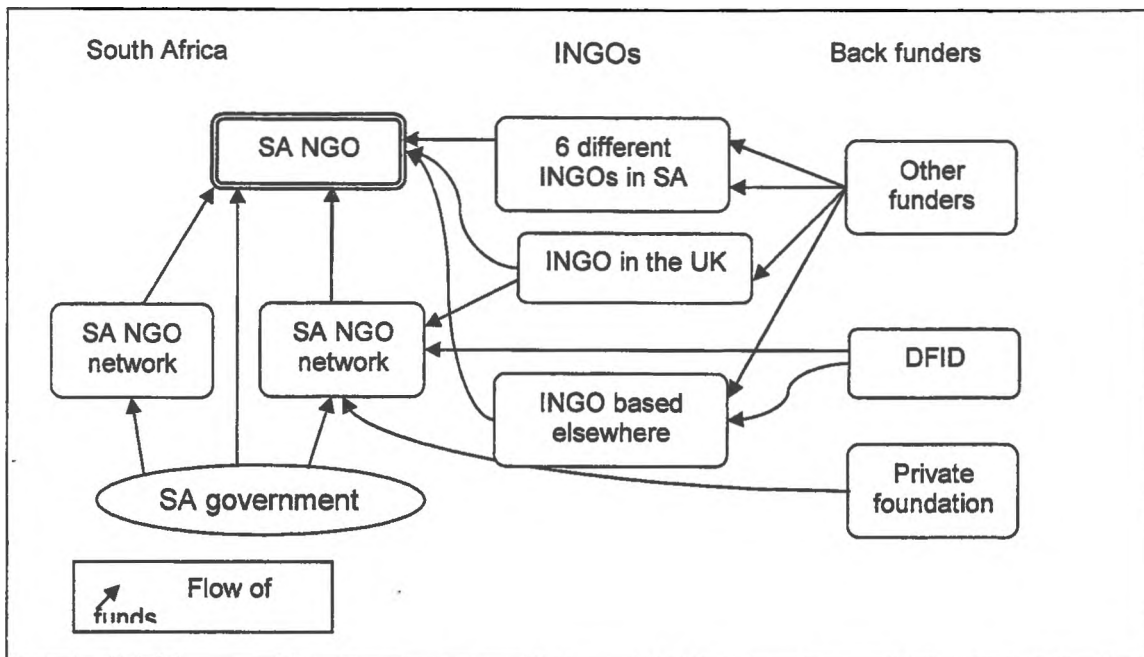


Figure 4.2 Perspective on aid chain starting from the SA NGO



4.3. Partnerships

There are many different understandings of partnerships, from the generalised push away from government delivery of public goods to include private actors (e.g. public-private partnerships) that is seen throughout many European, North American and African countries to the specific contractual agreements reached by differing parties to a development project. DFID funds partnership programmes at the level of local government and community-based organisations. The existence of partnerships is a factor considered in approval of NGO funding for development projects.

Our focus is on the partnerships that emerge between intermediary NGOs funded, in our study, in the UK and similar South African NGOs. We include formal partnerships, those in which the rights and responsibilities of the different parties are spelled out with legal standing, and those that are more informal. In both cases, our aim was to explore how representatives at each organisational level understood the partnership, and the power relations structured into that partnership.

As with many other development concepts, the language of partnerships masks multiple interests (Casper, 1996; Edwards et al, 2001; Fowler, 2000; Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 1998; Lindenberg et al, 2002; Lister, 2000; Moseley-Williams, 1994). In Lindenberg and Bryant's study of recent changes in global relief, they found, for example, that senior NGO managers used "partnership" to describe very different relations: those at the centre of our analysis; agencies providing services to a project; organisations providing financing; subgroups of donor agencies; networks of Southern NGOs; alliances, etc. (Lindenberg et al, 2002:158-9). Casper (1996) and Martella et al (1997) outline a range of partnership types along continuums of equal (equivalent) to unequal relationships, and extensive to limited participation by the Southern NGO. Development partnerships may be little more than business relationships in which, as Kajese (1987) notes, there is a senior and junior partner or, worse yet, a "horse/rider" relationship. Or development partnership may strive towards a relationship in which, working with shared values and aims, each entity brings complementary skills and organisational attributes that strengthen their work.

In general, the move towards partnerships emerges out of a concern to increase the effectiveness of development efforts through increased local participation and ownership. International organisations are thought to benefit from local partners through the latter's greater knowledge and understanding of local conditions, their oft-held ability to communicate with diverse local actors, their ability to garner support – or even scale-up activities – through local networks and channels, and the perceived likelihood that projects will be sustained over longer periods if local organisations are involved intimately in the work. Partnerships may foster a "sense of ownership" over the project by recipients and/or local entities, contributing to project success, however defined. Meanwhile, local organisations benefit from partnership with international organisations in diverse ways. They may have greater assurance of access to the skills, finance, and other resources needed for widespread change (Edwards and Hulme, 1995), either directly from their international partner or through the prestige and legitimacy conferred through association. Partnerships may contribute to "scaling-up" of activities, assisting a local NGO in expanding operations, duplicating them elsewhere or effecting policy change through advocacy and lobbying (Edwards and Hulme, 1992). Indeed, as Trudeau (1999: 2) notes "partnerships with international organisations are perceived to be an effective way to develop local capacity, improve participation and raise accountability of local NGOs while at the same time improving the living conditions of local people".

Yet even with the above listed potential advantages of partnerships, publicised commitments to partnerships may far outpace substantive changes towards a more equal relationship between funders and recipients (Fowler, 1998). Part of the explanation for this gap derives from differing understandings of and interests in partnership. For an organisation reliant on public donations through a sponsorship programme, for example, a partnership may be most immediately useful for publicity and fund-raising. Such an orientation may have implications for the type of partnership that emerges, its duration and the conditions associated with it: for example, the priority may

be on supply of photographs and details of recipients. In contrast, for organisations that offer service delivery via “Southern partners”, there may be much greater need to control and manage partner operations associated with implementation than in other cases.

Partnerships are also simply difficult to develop, foundering on operational, political and social difficulties (Lindenberg et al, 2002: 159). At a minimum, partnerships require sufficiently shared organisational values, programmatic aims, and inter-personal communication to permit joint work. For a more reciprocal relationship, the organisations involved must find ways to inter-relate that minimise the potential for coercion fostered by the imbalance in financial resources. Trust, long-term commitments, learning, and such concrete actions as involvement of “southern” partners in the Northern partners’ decision-making, organisational development, and program definition (and *vice versa*) are possible elements of greater reciprocity. And all this must be done within the constraints of wider funding, with limited timeframes and specified deliverables.

Given the multiple interpretations and interests associated with partnerships we opted to extend more deeply than permitted by the questions about partnerships posed in the first round of interviews. We first explored how engagement with foreign funding organisations affected the identity and operational focus of SA-NGOs and then looked carefully at the commitment, communication and accountability of each party within the partnership, speaking with different members of the organisations involved. We also, through interviews, field visits, and review of NGO documents, explored whether and how partnerships affected the capacity of South African NGOs to connect to the ultimate beneficiaries of development, the subject of chapter 5.

Partnership in our sample NGOs

As noted above, partnership is a highly contested term in the development vocabulary. Used to describe an ideal relational state between donor and funding recipient, partnerships are often associated with such virtues as equality, respect and mutuality. The reality of donor-recipient relationships is somewhat different from this idealised portrait, as our research documents. Donor-recipient relationships play out within a fundamental power imbalance, one that often becomes skewed towards dependency and mistrust. Our case studies have had to separate out positive donor-NGO relationships versus problematic relationships. Both vertical and horizontal partnerships are explored here.

Partnership is mediated by many of the factors described earlier, e.g. that donors can shift their funding agendas; that funding categories are not generic enough to address the needs of communities; that funding will not usually cover pilot projects or other experiments; and that donors want organisations to plan years in advance, even though this meshes poorly with financial and developmental realities. In other words, the conceptual notion of ‘partnership’, as a relationship encompassing a set of idealised characteristics, must be offset against the very practical constraints of the power dynamics imposed by the donor-recipient relationship: ‘the rules’ of the funding game are set fundamentally by donors, which generates a primary constraint on the equality of the two partners.

In this section we first present several aid chain case studies to illustrate various facets of the aid relationship, the questions of NGO identity, commitment, communication, and accountability associated with partnerships. Our concerns revolve around the following dimensions of these themes:

- *NGO identity*: foreign funding organisations have the potential to affect the identity and operational focus of SA-NGOs, either directly – through the availability of funding for certain programmes or explicit requests for programme or organisational developments – or indirectly. The extent to which such changes are welcomed or anticipated by SA organisations is crucial to the success and equivalence of the partnership, and ultimately the developmental impact of the organisation.
- *Commitment*: the commitment of different parties to a partnership may take radically different forms as described above. Equally important is the content of these partnerships and expectations of each party to it. Is it defined primarily by a funding relationship, a concern to maximise capacity for delivery or political influence, by a model of organisational empowerment and capacity building, or by a mutual learning approach? The quality of communication (below), mutual governance, and willingness to support the partner – perhaps in unanticipated ways – are elements examined as part of commitment.
- *Communication*: the form of communication – periodic reports, frequent phone calls, personal visits, reports, etc. – is important, as is the quality of such communication. Is there mutual understanding, respect and trust? Does communication foster deeper understanding between the parties, a sense of the successes and difficulties encountered in the field, and the possibility of learning from the development process?
- *Accountability*: The funding relationship establishes new lines of accountability that may shift a SA NGO's focus from its beneficiaries and local stakeholders to those that provide funding (Edwards et al, 1995 and 1996; Fowler, 1996; Fox, 1994; Sogge, 1995). Moreover, the way in which NGO performance is measured is crucial. Is it in reports on the basis of quantitative milestones and performance indicators in a rigid logframe, a pre-established standard emerging from international NGO accords or programmes, a contingency approach emphasising complexity and responsiveness, or one in which local-participation and ownership are primary? With whom is such information shared? And with what later consequences?

We place our discussion of these facets of partnerships within the wider debate over development management and our questions about the rise of new management techniques and organisational forms. Indeed, the case studies also illustrate other dimensions of aid relationships, which will be drawn out in this and subsequent chapters.

Three aid chains

Although most of the 22 NGOs involved in our in-depth research were selected because of their involvement in one or more of the six aid chains under study, conceptions of partnership and commitment differed greatly. One of the intermediary INGOs had established an international network, of which the SA NGO was a full and legal partner. The relationship revolved around common values and objectives, and shared opportunities for training and information exchange. However, as shown in *Aid chain 2* (SA-Network) below, the local partner expected more. Respondents from several other NGOs – both South African and UK-based – referred to the other parties in the funding relationship as “partners”, but in many cases this seemed for lack of better terminology. Partners was a kinder way of referring to the ‘donor’ (which was used virtually interchangeably with ‘partner’ by South African respondents) or ‘recipient’ or ‘beneficiary’

organisation (awkward terms, potentially confused with individual beneficiaries, and almost never used by SA NGO respondents).

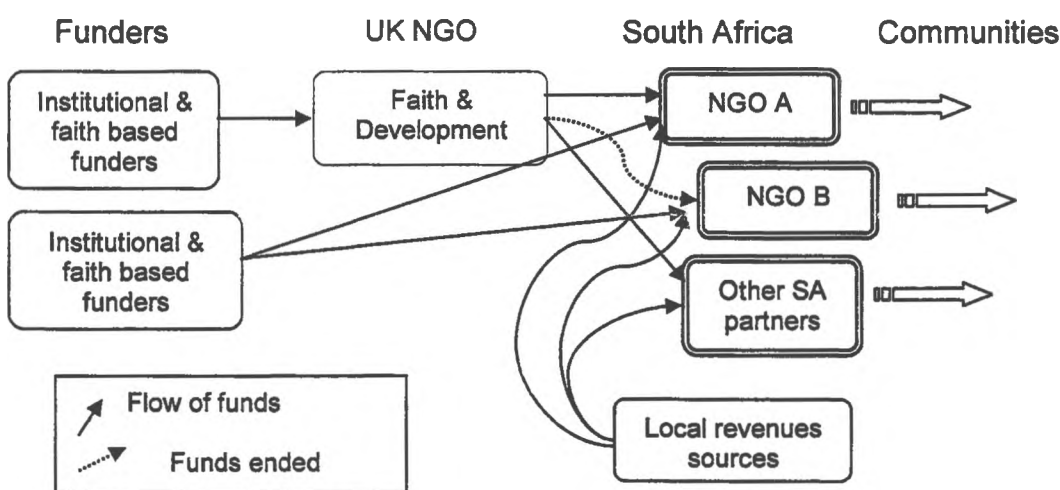
Two aid chains are discussed here in terms of the nature of partnership and the importance of discretion in managing the aid chain. Many of the supposed improvements in aid management revolve around the systematisation of the tools used to plan, implement, steer, and assess a project. Anyone, ostensibly, can pick up a project's logframe and grasp the core elements of what is planned and how they fit together. Likewise, a monitoring and evaluation schedule, with milestones, targets, and indicators to be tracked, outlines the criteria by which a project's progress and success will be managed. All such management tools and techniques represent efforts to make development management more objective, thereby facilitating the spread of information about the project, increasing accountability and easing the strains on project managers. What our research suggests is that the rise in rational-management tools has not reduced the need for discretion, subjective assessment, and personal involvement in the least; development management remains intensely personal.

Aid chain 1: Faith & Development, and Partners

By Isaivani Hyman; Research by Lisa Bornstein, Isaivani Hyman and Terence Smith

Faith & Development⁵ is an international NGO with operations in many countries. Partnership is a core element in the organisation's approach to development and one that they "take seriously". One aspect of the priority given to partnership was avoidance of headquarter coercion of the partners and the promotion of a more equal relationship. A by-product of the partnership approach spilled over into our research. When we contacted Faith & Development to find out who their partners were in South Africa, Faith & Development was resistant to providing that information. Their preference was to inform their partners of the research and have the partners voluntarily contact the researchers; not surprisingly, this generated little response, with only one local partner contacting the research team. Contact with some of Faith & Development's partners through the team's donor networks resulted in another two partners expressing interest in participating in the research.

Figure 4.3 Aid chain for Faith & Development



⁵ Pseudonym.

Ultimately, three partners participated in more in-depth interviews within this research project, of which two are discussed here. They were two quite different NGOs in a number of respects. NGO A was a well-established faith-based NGO that had a large budget and large staff complement. The organisation worked with its church membership around issues of economic development, democracy, HIV/AIDS and other priority issues. NGO B was an economic development NGO that had downsized over the years in terms of staff and budget. While Faith & Development provided one source of funds, both NGOs had funding from faith-based organisations and foundation outside of the UK and some locally-generated revenue. In general NGO B had more restricted funding sources than did NGO A.

Both NGOs were umbrella NGOs operating out of a single province and had long-standing relationships with Faith & Development. However, while Faith & Development's relationship with NGO A was ongoing, it had terminated its relationship with NGO B. Also the nature of the relationship was quite different. The donor seemed to enjoy a supportive and consultative relationship (that could somewhat be characterised as a partnership) with NGO A, but appeared to handle its ten-year relationship with NGO B disdainfully and, as one of our researchers opined, rather "irresponsibly".

Interviews with staff members from NGO B revealed that their relationship with Faith & Development was primarily around project funding. Contact was otherwise limited. Interviewees complained that Faith & Development would only make yearly project visits to the head office and did not demonstrate much interest or commitment to going out to the field. The donor was not particularly supportive of the NGO in any other way than the funds.

There seems to be a great deal of disappointment among all the staff interviewed about the termination of the funding from Faith & Development. Staff members are not clear why funding ended. Faith & Development had made a project visit but, according to the Programme Manager, there was no mention of the termination of funding. Later the Director received a letter from the regional Programme Manager for Faith & Development stating that funding would end because the organisation preferred to use "its limited resources in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic." According to the NGO respondents, there was no discussion or negotiation of its HIV/AIDS programme or how the NGO could work towards meeting these criteria. The Director expressed concern that this view of HIV/AIDS was divorced from the issue of poverty alleviation, the focus of NGO B's work.

Local staff felt misunderstood and resentful. Fieldworkers explained their perspective as follows:

We are involved [with HIV/AIDS] because most of our members are affected. We try to run workshops. Sometimes we even bring in people from Health to run the workshops. But sometimes donors want you to run the project yourself. They want you to focus on that. It doesn't mean that we are not making our members in the community aware of it or that we are not talking about it.

[It] doesn't mean that all organisations must run a workshop or have a project on HIV/AIDS because they are already organisations doing it. We can network with the organisations already doing it and bring them in to run the workshops. We must have the knowledge but not have it as a project.

The NGO staff felt that they were addressing HIV/AIDSs and doing so in ways that were effective, using complementary resources available from the public sector and other

NGOs. They interpreted their donor's requirements as unfair and uninformed, contrary to what they saw as both locally-driven needs and cost-effective practice.

Apart from its new HIV/AIDS focus, Faith & Development advanced another reason for terminating its funding relationship with NGO B. According to the Programme Manager, Faith & Development wanted to direct their funding to emerging NGOs and thought that NGO B had reached a stage where they could function on their own. A letter from Faith & Development expresses certainty that the Director will be successful with local fundraising, apparently without consideration of the context for such fundraising. Both NGO A and B expressed their disappointment and frustration with the lack of local funding sources.

In the case of NGO B, Faith & Development appears to have handled "ten years of partnership" in a surprising manner. There was no consultation, negotiation or adequate explanation for the withdrawal of funds. Most of all, the sustainability of the NGO was not given much consideration, with responsibility passed to local fundraising.

In a follow-up informal interview with the international Programme Manager, some doubts arose as to what actually happened. He expressed his concern that there might have been financial mismanagement. He suggested that donors might have been concerned about the management of funds. He noted that the organisation does "shift funds around" when necessary, and had been criticised for doing so in an evaluation report closely guarded by the management of the organisation. While many organisations find that they need some flexibility in moving funds from one line-item (cost area) to another, donors differ greatly in their willingness to approve such transfers, and retain the right to demand that any significant deviation from the approved budget be pre-approved. The NGO Programme Manager, when asked whether Faith & Development had been concerned about mismanagement, indicated that the donor had not explicitly stated so or made any queries in this regard. However, his various comments throughout the interviews about the financial irregularities created doubt around this issue.

In contrast, Faith & Development's relationship with NGO A has evolved positively over time. NGO A has enjoyed ongoing support from Faith & Development in various ways. Recently, two senior staff members from the NGO attended a Faith & Development exposure visit to learn how to conduct local fundraising. They attended meetings and observed how Faith & Development conducts public fundraising. The approach to NGO A in terms of support for local fundraising is in direct contrast to Faith & Development's approach to NGO B, where Faith & Development clearly left the NGO to its own devices.

NGO A's relationship with Faith & Development cannot, however, be characterised as an ideal partnership, as is illustrated by Faith & Development's approach to the issue of gender and more specifically, the two partners' perception of it. NGO B indicated that their need to address gender issues was influenced by both donors and the reality on the ground. They noted that Faith & Development had recommended that the NGO have a gender policy but did not strongly push for it.

NGO A, on the other hand, felt that Faith & Development had almost demanded a gender policy from them. Staff explained that it was not that they were opposed to having a gender policy but they felt that they were "held to ransom". There was a feeling that "either you had a gender policy or you would say goodbye to the funding". Faith & Development gave the NGO some examples of gender indicators to use in the projects. According to the Director, "it wasn't difficult for us actually to establish a gender policy. There was no resistance to it but there was a feeling of perhaps wanting to resist simply

because we were being told to do it, made to do it.” NGO A did end up devising a gender policy that was acceptable to Faith & Development. However, staff resented the coercion.

NGO A respondents also noted that Faith & Development is generally becoming more rigorous in its requirements. They said that the donor also seems to be much more concerned with impact assessment than in prior years. This, according to them, was also an observed trend with another of their religious-based funders. Indeed, many of these funding organisations were now using systems that emphasised impact assessment and other evaluative techniques; such trends were driven by the need to show effectiveness to the public who donate funds, and – at times – to their institutional donors. Importantly, respondents in the two NGOs offered no explanation of why Faith & Development was increasingly rigorous in its procedures and requirements; such pressures on the funder were not communicated to local partners.

In considering Faith & Development’s approach and relationship with the above two partners, several questions arise:

- Why did Faith & Development adopt different strategies and attitudes towards these two organisations?
- It is often said that in the donor world, who you know matters. This issue of connections and influence came up often in interviews. Did personality or reputation of the NGOs (among donors) matter?
- How important is the issue of race in considering this case study? NGO A had a white Director while NGO B had a black Director.
- Whether or not NGO B mismanaged funds and warranted Faith & Development terminating its funding relationship with the organisation, why was this exit not more open, and ethical? What is the extent of a donor’s responsibility for communication? To whom are they accountable?

Aid chain 2: SA-Network and Network International⁶

By Isaivani Hyman; research by Isaivani Hyman and Terence Smith.

This case study is quite different from the others dealt with in this research project. The INGO (Network International, pseudonym) is an international network and the SA NGO (SA-Network, pseudonym) is a bona fide member. In many respects, SA-Network is the face of Network International. In other words, SA-Network’s achievements would be Network International’s achievements.

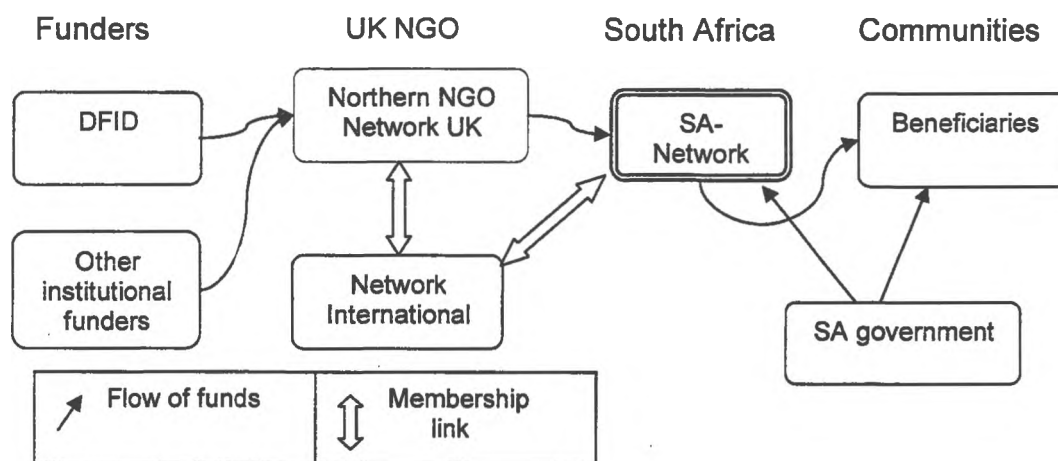
Network International currently has 62 member organisations, with a head office in London and regional offices in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. The network has a defined target group, the elderly. The organisation’s work with the elderly is divided into four broad categories: development of their membership, projects, crisis support and advocacy.

Network International viewed the elderly in South Africa as less disadvantaged than the elderly in other countries so its programme concentrated on building the capacity of existing organisations instead of setting up new projects. As well, their vision is that this capacity-building process would take about five years and then their members (of which

⁶ Unlike most of the other organisations that were interviewed, these NGOs had no concerns about confidentiality. Names are disguised because other organisations are kept anonymous.

there are two in South Africa) would be in a position to take on the facilitative role that Network International plays in South Africa. This vision is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, in view of the resources available to and the level of capacity in the member organisation studied, the timeframe is ambitious. Secondly, the member organisation seems unaware that Network International is retreating from its role in South Africa. While such an exit strategy may need reconsideration, it also has clear implications both for network membership and for partnership more generally.

Figure 4.4 Aid chain for SA-Network



The SA member NGO was experiencing severe financial constraints at the time of our fieldwork. The organisation was retrenching staff in response to the end of a funding cycle and a lack of alternative resources to keep a project running. As with many organisations, SA-Network has expanded and contracted according to its funding opportunities. While Network International respondents saw the South African organisation as a bona fide member of the network, interviews with staff and beneficiaries of the South African organisation showed that they view Network International as a donor and are grateful for whatever opportunities come their way because of their association.

Formed in the 1970s by a group of women concerned with the lack of services for Black senior citizens, SA-Network became a formal institution in 1982. The original focus of activities was social services for the elderly in the three townships. Later these activities extended to literacy services in these areas. The relationship with Network International began in 1990 when SA-Network first sent a funding proposal to them. Network International made a project visit and decided to fund the organisation for R50000 towards a homecare project. Once the programme was established, Network International further assisted the organisation by training staff in a train-the-trainer homecare programme. Thereafter, they assisted by providing the organisation with materials and small grants to set up a training programme on homecare for family members of the frail elderly.

Network International's relationship with SA-Network ceased to be a direct funding one at that point. Instead, Network International began to provide supportive assistance in helping the organisation identify its needs and access other funding. In 1996, Network International assisted SA-Network to conduct a participatory needs assessment with the

elderly in one township to determine what programmes the organisation should implement in response. At the time, the Department of Welfare had decided to subsidise the luncheon clubs run there as full-time service centres and required upgrading of the programmes. Much to everyone's surprise, participants prioritised literacy training. They saw it as a means to improve their lives, participate fully in society, access information and prevent exploitation. Network International was able to source funding from DFID and a UK based NGO for the entire project for three years. Throughout the project, Network International assisted with various different processes including report writing, and setting up partnerships and the monitoring and evaluation process. However, once funding for the literacy project ended, SA-Network had sole responsibility for keeping the project afloat.

Although the funding relationship between Network International and SA-Network ended, the partnership evolved. As a full-fledged member of Network International, SA-Network is entitled to participate in international workshops and training programmes. The Project Manager of SA-Network describes these opportunities as "empowering" and providing "a sense of belonging". Recently, she attended workshops in Europe and elsewhere in Africa and found them to be important networking opportunities and learning experiences. SA-Network has the expectation that Network International will continue to assist in accessing external funding for specific projects. However, as mentioned above, Network International foresees a lesser role for itself in South Africa. At a feedback workshop held in London in March 2003, a Network International employee indicated that some bridging funds had been disbursed to SA-Network; it was unclear how long this was intended to assist. The Network International employee seemed quite unsympathetic to the plight of the learners. He was adamant that SA-Network was aware that funding was going to be temporary and should have sought out alternatives.

Apart from Network International, no other international donors fund SA-Network. The Project Manager thought that other donors feel that the organisation has sufficient support from Network International. Thus, SA-Network finds itself in "a catch-22." Efforts have shifted to sourcing funding locally, however, without much success. In the end, SA-Network was not able to sustain the literacy project in its original form.

During the funding period, there were six learning centres, run by 12 Facilitators and a Coordinator. Once funding terminated, the project reduced to four learning centres where six Facilitators ran classes twice a week. Since then, the organisation had undergone some dramatic changes due to funding constraints. The literacy project has almost shut down. At the organisation's AGM in July 2002, an announcement was made that there were no longer funds to continue with the project. SA-Network decided to keep a few classes going till Christmas when they hoped "people would be more generous". There was only one remaining paid employee for the project, the Coordinator. Some of the literacy facilitators remained on as volunteers but others had moved on either because they could not cover the transport costs to get to the classes or because of other jobs. The organisation also undertook other retrenchments; from an original staff complement of 40, the organisation was down to 23 staff.

The current primary source of funding is the Department of Welfare that subsidises 75% of the social services programme. Creative stretching of this funding permitted coverage of the literacy and homecare projects as well. The National Lotteries Board allocated some funding – albeit short-term – for SA-Network's literacy and homecare projects. The management of SA-Network seems to have a remarkable ability of

running their organisation with minimal funding. A key driving force is the spirit of volunteerism, even amongst staff with nominal salaries.

While the funding relationship between Network International and SA-Network has been inconsistent, Network International has been committed to the transfer of technical expertise to SA-Network. In addition to inviting SA-Network to participate in workshops and work with the network on policy development, Network International sends personnel to train SA-Network staff on homecare, for example, and the international Programme Manager works closely with SA-Network staff on various different tasks.

Network International offered considerable assistance to SA-Network in the report writing process. The Network International Programme Manager would essentially help to formulate the report. There was no standard format that SA-Network was expected to follow, but the Network International Programme Manager would come to provide guidance. In the first year of the literacy project funding arrangement, SA-Network's Project Manager would write a report and send it to the Network International Johannesburg offices until, according to her, they realised that SA-Network was the only organisation that was in a funding relationship with Network International. They then decided to provide assistance by working together on the report-writing process.

Network International, in turn, has their own responsibilities to their back donors. The Network International head office in London requires monthly financial and narrative reports. There is no standard format for reporting to them. However, different donors have different guidelines. The Network International's Regional Programme Manager who does the actual reporting to DFID argues that DFID's requirements are "very strenuous". While they may try to be thorough, it sometimes seems to her that they are "splitting hairs". Information gathered from meetings and report-writing processes with SA-Network is translated into detailed and complicated reports to DFID.

The Network International's Programme Manager acknowledges that it is sometimes confusing to partners whether Network International should be viewed solely as a donor. She feels that they need to understand that Network International also has to get money from their own donors. Problems arise with their partners when, as a funding conduit, they have to be responsible to their own donors and require the cooperation of their partners in order to do so. This pressure can strain relationships with members/partners. For example, Network International enjoys a good relationship with SA-Network. However, before funds can be disbursed, there are usually strict reporting requirements. In these instances, network members may not have understood that a donor can be "very fussy" and that that complying with their requirements is of crucial importance. Instead, they may have thought that Network International was being unduly hard and demanding of them, not realizing that Network International is accountable to its own donors.

The experience of Network International and SA-Network highlights the complexity of partnerships and underlines both the importance and limits of communication. From a straightforward, relatively hands-off funding relationship, the two organisations moved towards a more co-operative stance (e.g. working on reports together) to an on-going structured and formal partnership (membership). There are extremely positive aspects of the relationship that can be characterised as a partnership: local contributions to policy-making for the overall organisation, joint participation in international workshops, and close collaboration – and dialogue – between South African and international staff around programme elements.

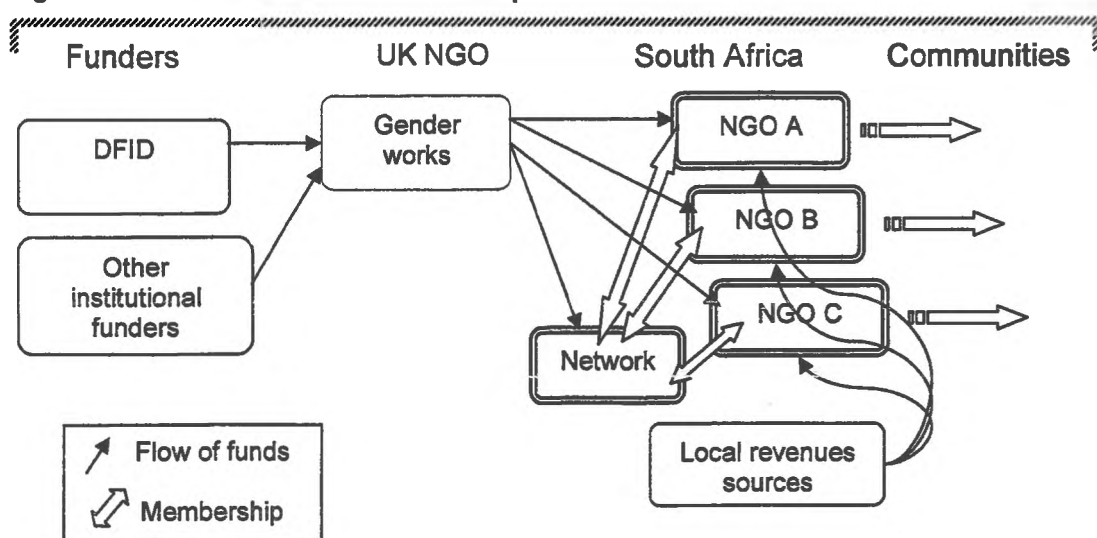
At the same time, other elements of partnership remained problematic: expectations of the relationship differed; intentions regarding future funding were not adequately communicated; priorities thought to be common were not; and external pressures faced by each partner were not fully comprehended by the other. Report-writing, an obligation for both parties, was seen by SA-Network staff as a burden imposed by Network International. Expectations by Network International's back funders, coupled with the initial inexperience of the South African organisation, meant re-working of reported results to fit the criteria and format required. Yet, in this area, there was progress, with an effort by Network International to work with the single partner to improve their ability to report in the form needed by donors. Indeed, as with other human relationships, organisational partnerships are facilitated by exclusivity, which permits greater time and energy to be dedicated to the partner and reduces pressures for change from a similarly placed organisation. In the case of report-writing exclusivity contributed to the international partner's willingness to engage closely with the partner. However, the case study demonstrates clearly the risks associated with such a strategy; the perception by other potential funders that local needs were "covered" compromised efforts by SA-Network to obtain funding. In sum, there are notable differences between the effort and the ability to divorce funding from other partnership dimensions.

Aid chain 3. GenderWorks: partnership, advocacy and networking

By Carol-Ann Foulis, Annsilla Nyar and Lisa Bornstein

Gender is the primary focus area of the organisations linked into the aid chain discussed in this case. The international NGO Gender Works (pseudonym) has funding from several institutional back donors in the UK and, in turn, finances organisations in the South (see Fig 4.4). In addition to strategic areas that define the goals and action areas for the organisation, there are also operational guidelines that clearly spell out the way programmes should function. Key to discussion here are concerns that grassroots work be linked to advocacy, together with an emphasis on collaboration with existing Southern organisations, mutual learning, and long-term development.

Fig 4.4. Aid chain for Gender Works and partners



Gender Works is generally seen by its South African "partners" as a good funder: "fabulous", "unique", "flexible", "responsive", supportive, straightforward, and involved.

Furthermore, the director of Gender Works has indicated that she wishes to establish a different kind of relationship that goes beyond 'donor-recipient' to include solidarity work. Yet even in a largely positive relationship, tensions around expectations, agendas, trust, and communication arise.

Staff at the UK headquarters interviewed by Tina Wallace expressed concern that they were being forced to pass on more rigid programme approaches to their "partners" in the South. Backfunder insistence on logframes and quantifiable indicators must be passed on to the South African organisations. According to the director of Gender Works, "often partners cannot understand the questions and many of them cannot really do logframes despite training. So Gender Works does their logframes, which of course undermines participation and partnership. DFID ask for indicators for each NGO in a large project so they have to work out individual NGO indicators, but this undermines the notion of joint work."

Similar dynamics characterise preparation of reports for donors. Partners may write parts of the report and send them via international programme co-ordinators and programme officers to the department responsible for programme funding. Responsibility for reporting varies depending on "the nature of the project, the staff involved and partner capacity." Smaller organisations tend not to be particularly good at report-writing, and Gender Works has to augment their documents. Tailoring of information to the requirements of different funder imposes costs in staff time and energy, an observation echoed by South African NGO directors.

Drawing further from interviews at Gender Works, the director felt that they kept apologising to their partners. Staff members felt pressured; they wished to provide support but they also had to make administrative demands, which meant they had conflicting roles. They felt they have good overall relations with their partners, but they have to spend time querying detail and accounts and have less time on development than they would like. This changes the way the organisation is seen and the nature of the relationships they wish to develop. They fear these real pressures are sometimes leading to negative changing relationships.

From the perspective of the partner organisations, rigid reporting and financial frameworks are but one area of tension and concern. In one organisation, donors' different reporting requirements were experienced as a frustration, albeit not a major one. The organisation was proactively trying to address this issue and was planning to have a 'roundtable' with its donors to harmonise different requirements. The director there saw the shift by donors towards more rigorous financial reporting, and the insistence on certain standards for the audited reports, as a good thing. Likewise, logframes were not considered an important source of tension or concern. Although the NGOs had different back funders, South African respondents did not attribute particularly problematic reporting or financial requirements to specific donors.

While Gender Works staff were concerned with reporting, their partners were more concerned about agenda-setting, capacity, and downward accountability. One director told us that the international programme manager had prompted substantial reflection and a later re-orientation of the local NGO's activities via a simple open-ended question. Another manager mentioned that the organisation had undertaken a participatory monitoring and assessment approach that entailed interviews with hundreds of rural residents; Gender Works was completely supportive. In another organisation, a widening of the geographic scope of the organisation's activities resulted in changes in membership, and resulting shifts in community needs and priorities. Long-term staff and

board members felt that the donor could be counted on to engage with new challenges, to discuss the implications and to work collaboratively towards appropriate structures and programmes that bridged the needs of the multiple stakeholders. The director was concerned about staff capacity, and the multiple accountabilities implied by the changing relationships.

In other cases, the donor was viewed as taking a more directive rather than supportive role. For example, several of the organisations receiving financing from Gender Works mentioned a new programming initiative, one that was to bring them together around common advocacy issues. A partnership, with corresponding structures, was outlined as a possible framework to support the joint advocacy work. The idea of working in partnership was introduced by Gender Works in 2001, when Gender Works called its partners together and asked 'how do you feel about working together?' The final decision was to go ahead with the idea, although representatives from the local organisations feared, for example, a loss of identity in the partnership. Three phases were outlined: a pilot phase, then a provincial campaign and finally a national campaign.

Responses to the initiative are instructive. A coordinator involved in the project viewed the 'partnership' as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, and a not very effective means at that; in her words, "I will finish the campaign despite the partnership." There were a number of tensions and difficulties associated with this partnership – some rooted in the differing interests of rural and urban membership – and when the research was conducted in 2002, no partnership agreement had been signed.

According to those interviewed, some of the problems associated with the partnership included: the difficulty of coordinating the interests and diversity of five partner organisations; changing representation from the partner organisations, such that people's understandings of the objectives kept changing; different understandings of what was meant by a 'pilot' phase; one of the partner organisations providing little support; another partner organisations being located outside of the province; and a starting assumption (on the part of the funder) that "we are all Gender Work's partners and therefore will easily work together."

The funder had considerable power in the management of the partnership. According to one interviewee, the network only came together when the funder was there. Another example was recounted: the international programme officer 'noticed' that the partnership was in disagreement, met with partners individually, and made decisions to clarify and give direction to the partnership. This occurs in a context in which leadership and management of the partnership at a local level appeared to be absent. The coordinator locally responsible for the partnership saw her role as that of a project manager, not as a facilitator. There was frustration at partnership meetings because no-one chaired them; there was 'no partnership boss'. Moreover, the skill base was weak; although the donor had hosted a workshop on 'managing partnerships', the coordinator had no background in development or management, she received no specific training in partnerships, and there was no money in the budget for activities aimed at building and maintaining the partnership.

Again, one can understand the motivations of the various individuals involved. In the seeming absence of local capacity and leadership, an international manager steps in to "support" staff through initial hurdles. However, uncertainty over the agenda and the costs of engaging in joint work (in addition to the "regular" and "core" tasks of each organisation) meant that, for at least some respondents, the donor was "calling the

shots." As a follow-up, further discussion among the various parties involved seemingly resolved the tensions and uncertainties over the programme.

4.4. Discussion

By Lisa Bornstein, Annsilla Nyar and Isaivani Hyman

The following discussion draws upon the aid chains detailed above and information from the other NGOs involved in our in-depth and aid chain research. Discussion is organised around the themes set out above: NGO identity, commitment, communication and accountability.

Partnerships and NGO Identity

Given the wider context of transition, and the many forces pushing local organisations to become more technical and less political in orientation, the ways in which international partners affect the identity of South African NGOs are worth understanding. Our findings suggest that partners indeed have influence.

Several SA NGO respondents expressed quite candidly that they have become donor-oriented. As one NGO worker indicated, "we are just following the money" and in the process accepting the accompanying prescriptions of donors. At another NGO someone noted that "(donors) will just tell you this is what we're funding now" and NGOs are just expected to comply. Other respondents in South Africa observed that having staff – whether at the level of the director or lower – that tracked changing donor priorities, and language, contributed to the likelihood of tapping funding opportunities. In other cases, funding was contingent on joining a network or partnership that promoted a particular approach to development, defining the development problem to be addressed in a specific way and the methods of attacking it. Respondents repeatedly commented on requirements to include specific programme elements even though they remained unconvinced that they were appropriate.

NGOs often feel pressured to change or alter their strategic focus according to shifting donor priorities. Staff may feel powerless to resist this pressure because of their dependency on donor funding and their need not to jeopardise it. Donor action around HIV/AIDS is a useful example, because it demonstrates both the importance of donor support for a neglected area and the risks in over-stepping the boundaries of facilitation towards out-right coercion. Both perspectives are discussed below (see Box 4.1).

Box 4.1. HIV/AIDS Case Study

By Annsilla Nyar

The issue of HIV/AIDS was a persistent refrain throughout the fieldwork. HIV/AIDS has impacted powerfully upon the NGO sector, entailing complex changes in the funding relationship between donor and recipient. These multifaceted changes have been complicated by the overriding socio-political context provided by the policy and attitude of the South African government toward HIV/AIDS. Some factors include the refusal of the presidency to recognise the link between HIV and AIDS and the debate around the provision of anti-retroviral drugs. Thus HIV/AIDS has become a deeply controversial and polarizing issue, coloured by criticism, misperception and skepticism. This climate of extreme sensitivity has filtered down to the NGO sector in several concrete ways, in a manner which clearly exposes the innate contradictions and complexities of the donor-recipient funding relationship.

Among the case study NGOs interviewed, there was a general feeling that donors have responded to the urgency of the crisis through their recognition of the primacy of the

issue to developmental work. One NGO said: "Donors have recognised the issue more so than NGOs." The role of donors in pushing an HIV/AIDS agenda is recognised and, in certain cases, appreciated.

But this recognition takes different forms. At its most positive, three case study NGOs said that their donors were instrumental in allowing them the necessary space to incorporate HIV/AIDS into their work. For one urban housing NGO, two of its donors helped bring other urban development NGOs together in an HIV/AIDS project. The main donor invested in capacity building workshops with the consortium of urban development NGOs. This donor also facilitated the capacity building workshop.

A gender based violence NGO felt that its primary donor, a large UK-based funding organisation, helped them recognise the need to 'mainstream' HIV/AIDS into their work in a very concrete way. This donor had contacted the NGO in a reaction to the UK press carrying a news item about the murder of a South African HIV/AIDS activist, Gugu Dlamini. Dlamini was murdered for courageously revealing her HIV status. This donor encouraged the NGO to see the relationship between HIV/AIDS and violence against women. This prompted a process of reflection on the part of the NGO partner, which all along had been working in the arena of gender-based violence and had not made the connection. This intervention by their donor was viewed in a very positive light by the NGO partner in terms of further developing and enhancing their work.

The majority of the case study NGOs expressed the view, to differing degrees, that their donors expected them (in the words of a gender-based violence NGO) to "simply jump on to the HIV/AIDS bandwagon." A respondent from another NGO echoed, "all the donors want to hear about is HIV/AIDS" and further stated "there is such pressure on NGOs to take up this issue, even if it's not our strategic focus." At one rural development NGO, staff felt that HIV/AIDS was a "conditionality", that they had been coerced into giving HIV/AIDS priority, and that there had been great pressure to 'mainstream' the issue into their work (one of its donors held a workshop for this very purpose). This NGO felt that its donor placed them in an awkward position.

Other organisations have strategies towards AIDS that differ from those preferred by funders. As a NGO manager explained, "sometimes donors want you ... to focus on HIV/AIDS" and to "run a workshop or have a project on HIV/AIDS because all other organisations are doing it." However, he continued, not doing so "does not mean that we are not making our members in the community aware of it or that we are not talking about it." He observes that "donors (are) not prepared to understand the specifics of HIV/AIDS from the point of view of our strategic focus".

The level of donor interest in HIV/AIDS was critiqued by several NGOs. Respondents cited examples to show that donors are interested in the issue at a superficial level and as such do not appreciate the full nuanced complexity of HIV/AIDS. For example, one urban housing NGO commented that "donors are only interested in education, awareness and orphans. It is easier for donors to justify help to orphans, than to housing. There are new ways of accommodating HIV/AIDS within the built environment. There are so many ways that housing can potentially contribute toward the spread of HIV and in that way it's quite controversial". At other NGOs, respondents were concerned that donors were adopting a conservative approach to HIV/AIDS focusing largely on prevention and not as much on care and treatment.

Several donors were seen as capitalising on the success and high profile of the Treatment Action Campaign (see chapter 2), using Southern campaigning successes to promote both fundraising and their own organisation's image.

Gender programming entailed similar dynamics to that of HIV/AIDS. In response to donor requests, several organisations developed gender policies, though in only a couple of cases did these policies become integral to the organisation itself and its operations. Donors required that funded organisations send staff to training sessions around gender, and that reporting be gender sensitive. For some organisations, the focus on gender was welcome, and gave marginalised voices support. However, as Vicki Tallis discusses in Chapter 6, when a gender focus is imposed by funders, it is highly unlikely that there will be the commitment needed to undertake programmes that challenge the status quo. Similarly, where gender is treated as a technical problem, amenable to mechanistic solution, at best some of women's practical needs will be addressed.

A further example of inappropriate donor pressures is provided in Box 2.

Box 4.2. Donors and local realities

By Isaivani Hyman

One major complaint that NGOs had was that donors are often ignorant of the context and realities that they have to work with. Donors' well-meaning suggestions, often perceived as coercion (because of vulnerability around funding), can be impractical. As an example, one NGO had economic empowerment (at a very simple and practical level) as the focus of activities. People would run local savings schemes for immediate needs such as buying furniture or paying off school fees. The donor visited these small projects and suggested that local people would benefit more if the focus of these activities were entrepreneurial. The NGO acknowledged the value of the suggestion by changing the focus of the project to "improving businesses and accumulating wealth."

Local people were encouraged to start small income-generating projects such as sewing and chicken-farming. Training programmes were initiated to facilitate the set-up and coordination of such projects. The donor further suggested that the project become more regulated and formalised and indicated that there was funding available to hire office-based savings facilitators (his idea). The staff of the NGO went along with the donor's idea, although they later told us they had not seen the value of it. Despite finding the donor friendly and approachable, they were still too intimidated to challenge him.

The new approach was rife with problems. Project participants wanted to save money for personal needs and continued to do so despite the new entrepreneurial focus. Staff acknowledged the limitations to how entrepreneurial relatively isolated rural people could become; they needed considerable capacity-building to become entrepreneurs, marketing opportunities were limited, and organisational resources were scant. Finally, the whole process of securing loans for entrepreneurial projects ended up trapping people into personal debt; the donor was strict about upholding its policy of entering into contracts with individuals rather than with groups (for its purposes of minimizing risk). Irrespective of the values of the NGO and its beneficiaries, an individualist approach towards development emerged instead of one that fostered interdependence and mutual support.

There were instances where donor requirements or recommendations led to changes welcomed by the funded organisations. The donor's inquiry regarding planned responses to Gugu Dlamini's murder "moved the organisation to respond and get involved with the issue of HIV/AIDS. (The) questioning set a whole process in motion."

The organisation eventually developed an HIV/AIDS focus within its programmes (see Box 4.1).

Of course, the push to fall into line with donor agendas may not be felt to lead to substantive changes, though there are effects. NGOs may include programme components, or use a language, that they know is in line with donor strategic priorities. One NGO employee cynically said that: "The joke now is that if you want funding, you have to make sure you include the words "sustainable livelihoods." NGOs may also include programme components, such as gender, capacity-building or HIV/AIDs, simply in response to donor pressures regardless of capacity to or interest in pursuing it. Indeed, some NGO staff experienced the concept of partnership as mere rhetoric, "a word to make the donors more comfortable", as one SA NGO respondent quipped. In such cases, respondents thought the donor-led changes were cosmetic, part of the game of tapping into funding. (Our research suggests that adopting new components or techniques may lead to changes in activities, debates, procedures and attitudes. See chapter 5 on M&E and 6 on gender.)

In other cases, donors requested major changes in the organisational structure of partner NGOs. Interviews with INGOs based in the U.K., as well as with organisations in South Africa, revealed a shift in strategies to enhance the impact of development interventions. INGOs supported networks and umbrella organisations, and emphasised policy influence and advocacy in their programming. Partners were urged to form into networks of local NGOs, to work with (to be formed) umbrella organisations and to set up joint advocacy initiatives. Box 4.3 explores whether such networks help build partnerships and enhance local NGO capabilities.

Box 4.3. Horizontal partnerships and the search for impact

By Lisa Bornstein

Donors to South Africa began to push for the formation of NGO networks during the years of anti-apartheid struggle, as one means to "scale-up" their influence and impact. The trend has continued and deepened. Favoured strategies of the INGOs include support to networks and umbrella organisations, and greater emphasis on advocacy and policy influence. Formation of networks and partnerships comprised of local NGOs is, at least in theory, a means of achieving greater equivalence between local organisations and their international partners, and heightens the possibility of sustained actions. Such networks have the potential to satisfy many of the short-comings of individual member NGOs: scarce human resources, restricted scale and reach of operations, limited access to external resources, and limited impact and influence. When acting as conduits for funding, report and training, umbrella organisations reduce transaction costs for the international donor, an additional, and often fundamental, benefit. INGOs also increasingly include promoting partners' advocacy capacity in their own strategic plans.

South African NGO respondents said that donor support to horizontal partnerships had led to organisational changes. In some case, these new links in the aid chain handled reporting, with a potential reduction in the reporting entailed by individual NGOs. Respondents positively cited the possibility to learn from other actors in the sector. However, a number of staff members, from different organisations, observed that these networks presumed a commonality of purpose that did not exist. Organisations within these networks had distinct political and ideological stances, programmatic and operational approaches, and community and government ties. As noted in Box 4.4 below, they also had different training needs.

The search for policy and advocacy impact is also problematic in its content. The difficulty is that advocacy is treated as a black box. What is to be advocated, with what policy content and through what political processes, is not specified. Moreover, advocacy is presumed to operate in a pluralistic, stable society, one where the articulation of interests will generate policy debate and reform, not sectionalism or open conflict. Advocacy is seen as influence and not as politics, since politics is a 'no fly zone' for most aid agencies and NGOs. More directly, for donors and upstream INGOS, a "hands off" policy towards advocacy may result in the articulation of claims and positions counter to their own. The politics of such advocacy and policy interventions sits uneasily with the uncritical promotion of these aims as simple "scaling up" of past INGO interventions.

The alternatives currently pursued are interesting. Upstream organisations and donors can opt to intervene in the process through extensive training and 'capacity building' (e.g. on issues of gender, human rights, or the environment). Organisations with a history of volunteer placements have linked placement to advocacy promotion, while other INGOS have provided technical assistants or short-term experts to their South African counterparts. Other funders and INGOS have formed strategic partnerships between "like-minded and sympathetic" INGOS and South African NGOs (e.g. around HIV/AIDS, child rights, and development training). The support targeted to these local organisations is hoped to generate commitment to a shared cause and agenda for action.

In other organisations, respondents were adamant that donors did not influence the agenda because the NGOs outright refused such influence. "We can reject donors who try to change our work", stated one director and continued by stating that if they try to change "this, that and the other...the organisation does not have to comply with these suggestions. The organisation does not have to apply for funding from people like that."

The director of one organisation described adopting a particular approach to donors, of servicing them, being open to them and "allowing them in", while at the same time being very clear on where the NGO (as an organisation) was prepared to compromise. The director said: "What we do with our donors is that we share, we don't pretend what we are not - we are highly self-critical." In one instance, she was told by a donor not to include a specific activity in the proposal, that people in the States 'would not be interested in this'. She was clear: "Our goal is about collective action, building the voice" and included the activity. She spoke about the shift within the development terrain to the language of 'rural livelihoods' and possible implications for the organisation. Her response was that irrespective of donor expectations "we wouldn't want to change our focus on campaigning, organising, the collective action, the giving of (our members) a voice. This is the identifying face/feature of our organisation." When asked how they were able to do this without fear of the repercussions, the director responded that:

We do believe in what we are doing, that what we do is important, not because it makes us important but because it serves a need, and is contributing to (development). This makes us confident about the kind of support we can muster.

Distinctions emerged in the responses of different organisations: those that were larger, and more professionalized, experienced, and financially secure were often more capable of outright rejection of donor demands; others were more dependent and compliant. A stronger negotiating position vis-à-vis donors was also linked to the following staff attitudes and experiences:

- The attitude that 'fundings need us - sometimes more than we need them'
- The attitude that the organisation is contributing something substantial and has a core vision, mission and set of operational principles
- The experience of being with a funding organisation and having recipients refuse funds on the grounds that it would take them in a direction in which they did not want to go
- The experience of starting development projects without any outside assistance and only much later approaching foreign donors for funds
- The experience of exchanging with other NGOs possible tactics and strategies for dealing with donors and strengthening organisational coherence

Partnerships and commitment

The above aid chains and examples depict very different types of partnerships. At one end of the spectrum are the organisations for which the link is primarily financial, and the acquiescence to donor agendas a tactic to obtain funding support. At the other end, several respondents, from both ends of the aid chain, referred to their partners in ways that implied long-term supportive relationships and a certain level of reciprocity. In these cases, NGO representatives emphasised the importance of organisational "coherence", "vision", "authenticity" and "integrity".

Key in all of these relationships is the issue of mutuality and a common understanding of the nature of the partnership. While a "partnership" around funding may not involve opportunities for shared learning, if all parties understand this limitation then, our research suggest, the relationship can proceed relatively smoothly. If however expectations of what the partnership entails – e.g. level and types of commitment – differ dramatically then problems arise, revealing many of the contradictions around the partnership itself.

Attitudes around capacity-building are instructive, given that for many international NGOs, and donors, efforts to strengthen indigenous organisations have replaced 'brick and mortar projects' or 'direct implementation.' As is explored in Box 4.4, partners may have very different understandings of capacity-building and of its place in a partnership.

Box 4.4 Partnerships and Capacity-building

By Lisa Bornstein

Many international NGOs enter into partnerships with the aim of empowering their partners, and one mechanism to do so is capacity building. NGO capacity-building is also part of wider aims of bi-lateral aid – to bolster the ability of civil society to play an active role in society, promoting both democratic governance and development. As with partnerships, the meaning of capacity-building is elusive; defined in many ways, such competing meanings are rarely interrogated (for exceptions on South Africa, see Seeking, 2001).

Capacity-building activities can focus on strengthening the partner NGOs itself and on the communities with which they work. In both cases, there may be tensions over the direction of capacity building and the nature of partners' commitments to it. Distinct understandings of the role of capacity-building within the partnership were evident in the Network International aid chain, capacity-building was a central component of the partnership agreement; opportunities for exchange of information and training were offered to international partners in their home countries and abroad. Likewise at Faith &

Development the developmental strategy was one of empowering local organisations through capacity building and then moving on to support other worthy – and more needy – organisations. While there may have been multiple reasons for cutting off financial support to a partner, the justification of a fixed-term for capacity-building was neither understood by the local partner, nor matched with its capacity to access alternative funding for its programmes. Other observers have noted that the tendency is for one-year capacity building projects (Atack, 1999; Seekings, 2001), while capacity-building, whether of individuals or organisations, is a long-term process.

The content of capacity-building may also be the subject of debate. At one urban development NGO, staff were required to attend courses on financial and project management suited for emerging NGOs, even though the organisation had been in existence for many years, managed million dollar projects, and had specialised staff dedicated to such tasks. In another instance, staff from all the organisations involved in a network were trained in a single, donor-selected, approach to project management (see Aid chain 6, chapter 6), although some participants would have preferred an introduction to alternative approaches. In another case, an organisation working on HIV/AIDS for many years found the donor workshop too basic, noting that "donors need to disaggregate the levels of capacity of their different partners" for their courses. Respondents noted that programmed capacity-building workshops may "distract from the real work that needed to be done". They also noted that attendance is usually neither negotiable nor forced; as one director observed, "given the funding climate, if a funder says to you 'we're having a three day workshop on AIDS policies, please send two people, one male and one female', you would be very stupid to say sorry we can't come."

The absence of support for specific needs was also noted. For instance, the introduction of the advocacy network among Gender Works' South African partners was not accompanied by training on the dynamics of developing and running an advocacy network. Smaller NGOs needed help with their national registration as non-profit organisations. Donors, understandably perhaps, prioritised training in the financial systems they used internally, or oft-neglected issues such as gender.

Yet these priorities were problematic at multiple levels. The training conducted was often inadequate: pitched incorrectly (too elementary or too difficult); relying on too narrow an approach to a topic (e.g. that in line with the donor organisation's approach) to allow participants to understand how it related to their own approaches, or to alternative ones; or too dismissive of the difficulties in employing the techniques (e.g. cross-cultural differences, organisational barriers, resource shortages). International managers and trainers alike observed that even with the training, and satisfaction of the formal requirements of capacity-building, many participants still could not manage the techniques. This was true for projects in all sectors, from agricultural and land reform to income generation to gender.

A further difficulty is that capacity-building is difficult to measure, and serious assessment is rarely conducted (Seekings, 2001). Indicators of capacity-building in project logframes were confined to the number of training sessions held, the number of participants and percentage women, and – in a couple cases – a last-day assessment of "knowledge" gained. Race, age, and class were not enumerated. Practical competence was rarely included in assessment (except through project outcomes such as 'financial management system is functioning by x date' or 'gender policy is formally adopted'). In such an approach, the politics of organisational choices, of who participates or how a policy is framed, are subordinated to a binary system of outcome

achieved or not. Again, in such terrain, donors, trainers, directors and staff may depart with distinct understandings of the capacities built and their importance to the NGOs overall work.

While donors and INGOs pushed for project-related outputs, some respondents suggested that the entire approach to capacity-building be rethought. Donors could be more helpful, and better partners, by enhancing the staff complement rather than the skills of existing staff, said one respondent: "If [donors] truly wish to be partners, then they could help us by having staff placements from donor agencies. Skills locally are very expensive. For example, we would like a land surveyor and a lawyer but they cost too much."

As with SA-Network, several other case study NGOs found that their donors were committing funds for limited timeframes and at levels decreasing over time. US AID, among other back funders, seeks to assure the sustainability of funded NGOs by "weaning" them of support (counterpart funding and local contributions are similar mechanisms aimed at sustainability). One SA NGO director described the effects of such policies as follows: "Most of the donors now have what they call a 'decreasing clause' in their contracts – this year they fund 100%, next year 75%, following year 50% etc. It's their way of exiting at the end. We had to see where we have to cut... The outcome was that we shifted from a programmatic approach to a more project-specific approach."⁷

The project approach has direct implications for capacity-building as it relates to overall development impacts, the empowerment of civil society institutions or rural communities. Many of our respondents, in both SA and international organisations, were concerned about how partnerships contributed to the objective of empowerment. At one large INGO working directly with two rural communities, the programme director explained that changing organisational priorities and frameworks, coupled with the timeframes imposed by project-based funding, prohibited real capacity-building on the ground. A change in development frameworks (gender one year, then sustainable livelihoods, then rights-based) meant that projects had to be re-worked to satisfy the head office in the UK. Meanwhile project based funding meant delivery within a tight time-frame. The resulting 'stop-start' pattern of implementation undermined the community's trust in the programme officer and the programme. The tight time-frames and lack of certain long-term funding were out of line with the incremental change of a capacity-building approach.

There is also a question of targeting. International funders select who to fund and with whom to enter into partnership. Donors may be committed to partners, and support them with training and funds, but ultimately they are choosing their partners, and there are many who are not chosen. Some argue, as does Julie Hearn (1999, 2000, 2001), that the chosen are those that support the *status quo*, a point also made by Oldfield (2001) and Seekings (2001), who note that support for civics has declined while capacity building in NGOs and government has risen. Certainly those that are more

⁷ A project approach also was thought to more easily attract funding, rather than trying to sell "broad programmes with overhead costs". The decreases in financing built into project agreements coincided with an internal assessment that *programmes* were not working very effectively; after strategic planning exercises, the NGO began to "introduce cost recovery mechanisms, "be more cautious about expenditure", "use timesheets for projects", and "find effective project managers".

professionalized and established more easily access funding internationally, suggesting that donors help shape important transformations in the structure of civil society.

While the partnership may be formal, built out of a long history of exchange, or of recent and temporary formation, determination of the length and form of mutual commitments is a central dilemma. Some Southern partners are less than satisfied by their partnerships with their Northern counterparts, as reflected in the following quote:

The relationship is just about sending reports and getting money. There is no partnership. Most of our donors only visit once a year anyway, or even once every two years.

For other respondents, acknowledging that reaching equivalence in partnerships may be idealistic is paralleled by recognition of the positive relationships forged with some donors. As one manager noted,

The concept of "partnerships" is a fairly artificial term. There isn't equality, but [some] donors are trying harder to create a spirit of partnership.

One of the ways in which greater equivalence and mutuality can be achieved is through expanded participation of Southern partners in the decision-making for and governance of the relationship. There are numerous examples from the case studies. In one instance, the director of a large and established regional NGO meets twice a year with his numerous donors to discuss changing policies, programmes, and development challenges. He says that his various donors are eager to learn from each other and welcome the opportunity to come together even though such an even entails considerable time. They have jointly agreed on a single reporting format that his organisation can use with all of them; and they have discussed the possibility of different kinds of assessment exercise (including one of donor performance). In another case, questions from a South African director have prompted donors to reconsider their funding policies, and expand them to include new categories.

At the same time, representatives of the South African NGOs generally did not participate in the governance of their UK partner NGOs; they did not sit on boards, attend strategic planning exercises, negotiate with back donors on their own behalf, or even necessarily have copies of the reports sent to such donors on their projects. Our hypothesis is that equivalence and mutuality are assisted by simpler aid chains, or by those in which back donors are either able to come to the table too or place few restrictions on their intermediaries. Where there are intermediary NGOs accountable to a fairly rigid back donor, fundamental renegotiation of power imbalances is made much more difficult.

Yet even in cases where INGOs were bound into contractually defined relationships around a project, an INGO project manager could create a relationship characterised by trust and learning. As demonstrated in the Gender Works aid chain, presented above, a more proactive relationship can be forged. Or institutional structures can develop, such as with SA-Network (see also the PEOPLE aid chain in Chapter 5), that give on-going rights and responsibilities to those in the partnership. Yet often, even in these relationships, the power of Northern partners to tie financing to certain conditions, or to end it, tilted the balance of the partnership away from Southern partners. For many Southern partners, such actions come to the crux of the partnership: are both parties to the relationship committed to each other? Are they clear on their mutual rights and responsibilities? Do they understand the conditions under which the relationship will end?

Partnerships and communication

Communication is one of the key elements underlying successful partnerships. Yet there is no formula for the form and content of such communication. Indeed, given that these partnerships involve people with different cultural, national, and class backgrounds, the challenges in effecting cross-cultural communication – in which common understandings are conveyed – are considerable.

The specific difficulties can be experienced quite personally and profoundly. Respondents from SA NGOs revealed deep levels of anxiety over their funding relationships and quality of communication. To take the case of report-writing, SA respondents' statements that "I'm not good at writing" or "my English is bad" reflect their concern that they do not measure up to the standards set by their donors. Project staff in one organisation said that their initial experiences of report writing, at a personal level, were stressful, 'like writing a letter to the school inspector'. Staff felt that they might be "judged", that donors "might misunderstand me" and that they were not sure of donor expectations vis-à-vis report writing. There is usually a great deal of worry over communication, especially to either meet donor standards or to be convincing about funding worthiness. Lack of confidence in mastery of English, or of required formats, or current jargon, are real concerns. Also possible is that satisfying donor expectations is difficult under any circumstances. Staff at another case study NGO noted the challenge of "trying to communicate to someone six thousand miles away about the difference you are making on a piece of paper." Proposal and reporting formats may be complicated and unclear, or may rely on measures that correspond poorly with staff members' understanding of project accomplishments and difficulties (see Chapter 5).

Moreover, the power imbalance between funders and recipient NGOs means that when a UK project manager communicates information or concern, or simply poses a question, it may imply much more, interpreted as a request for example (Sogge, 2002). The quote given in Box 4.3, that one would be foolish not to attend to a donor's request of attendance, is indicative of the way funding recipients interpret the power behind seemingly simple statements.

As a consequence South African partners may acquiesce to donors' requests, even for substantive shifts in organisational structure or programmatic focus. To make such acquiescence into a more meaningful relationship, one SA NGO employee said:

Donors must try to make us understand their policy. A donor may want you to shift your policy but there must be more effort to convince me and make me understand why. They can't just impose change. Every organisation has its own aims and vision.

However, donors often do not feel that they have to account for their decisions. The Faith & Development aid chain above described the termination of funding with very little advance warning. No mention was made of the funding cut in a field visit from the donor. Instead the information was communicated via letter and as a done deal. In repeated instances, South African respondents told us that they had little understanding of the constraints and opportunities faced by the funders – many had trouble differentiating practices among them – and our UK-based interviews confirmed that the INGO rarely communicated such information. Lack of a sense of accountability downwards is one component; personal discomfort with acknowledging organisational constraints, conveying disappointing information, or communicating more generally also may contribute.

The examples of Faith & Development and its partners, like that of other aid chains studied, additionally shows that a single INGO may forge very different relationships with its partners in the South. In the case of Gender Works, we encountered a similar dynamic: a new project director received sufficiently frequent communications from the international project manager to feel "watched" and worried about the donor's trust and confidence in her abilities; other partners found this same manager's collaborative, facilitative and involved style non-intrusive. Box 4.5 examines how personal style and comfort zones intersect with international partnerships.

Box 4.5 Donors and NGO leadership

By Annsilla Nyar and Lisa Bornstein

The rapid staff turnover and 'brain drain' of top tier NGO staff into government in the mid-1990s left an uncomfortable and disempowering vacuum within organisations. More recently, several of the organisations under study lost their directors, seemingly because directors and staff felt that the initial transition had been consolidated and that the "mantle" needed to pass to younger and in many cases, non-white, leaders.

This raises the important issue of relationship-building and trust between donors and NGOs. For example, what happens after the departure of an influential and powerful figurehead - the NGO director - who usually plays the key role in obtaining organisational funding and has formed personal relationships with donors in the course of the organisation's history?

In one case, a SA NGO was plunged into a funding crisis after the departure of the Director because successive directors were unable to develop as much influence with donors and could not access new funding. In two other cases, the arrival of a new director prompted caution on the part of their international funders. Programme managers were more watchful, programmed more visits, called or sent e-mails more frequently, and otherwise were tighter around deadlines and program milestones. At least one new director felt that this close contact was an imposition, and one that reflected lack of trust and confidence, a relatively accurate reading of the situation. However, as international programme managers observe, new leaders do have to prove themselves, to donors as well as to the organisation and local stakeholders. Close contact is, in the view of some, an appropriate response to a shift in leadership, carrying with it the possibility of developing greater knowledge, dialogue and, eventually perhaps even trust.

A related and pertinent question is what kinds of leaders are donors seeking? In two case study organisations, respondents stated that donors preferred to fund organisations run by a particular kind of manager or director, that is, "lawyers, directors, white people". Another South African Director stated that "Donors want people who can relate to them on the same intellectual level...they seem to like local people, but donors need to understand that there's a real gap between people at a grassroots level and getting these people functioning at a management level." Similarly, another director echoed the sentiment that donors prefer organisations led by people who can relate easily to the donors (e.g. shared similar class and educational backgrounds), but also noted that donors sought out organisations with black leadership. One can attribute such a "desire" for black-led partner organisation to values and support for the historically disadvantaged or, more cynically, as a product of publicity and fund-raising concerns.

Changes in leadership – like other aspects of the funding and development process - are thus imbued with the dynamics of the funding relationship, and with the equally important

dynamics of personal relations, biases, preferences, and prejudice. Regardless of intention, relations are interpreted in terms of trust, of race, gender and class (among other factors), and of simple preferences for different individuals and their styles.

A crucial component in the emergence of working relationships between representatives of international and South African organisations was the age and experience of the programme managers in the international organisations. Young and new staff, who came full of ideas and directives, were viewed with disdain and frustration by South African staff, who frequently had many more years of experience in development, knew the local context, and had gone through numerous prior managers. These newcomers, "who lack the wisdom that comes with experience", stood in contrast to managers and international staff with a long history in the region, proven commitment to anti-apartheid efforts, and long-standing friendships. One director describes earlier managers as bringing "great wisdom to the organisation" and another as bringing "conceptual clarity; she notes that "things have now changed" with "young and inexperienced" staff now "the trend in the funding field."

Younger staff faced difficulties within both international and the South African organisations. Young, female, and urban staff recounted the multiple barriers they faced in obtaining respect and carrying out their work. This was particularly true for staff of local organisations working in rural areas, where a young, unmarried woman (or man) had little status, despite her "education."

Respondents also mentioned as important to the emerging relationships a common political-economic understanding of development problems. Where INGO and NGO staff understood in similar ways constraints imposed by, for example, wider agricultural trade policies or back donor procedures, relationships could proceed more easily. It was widely felt that donors have a limited understanding of the broader political and socio-economic South African environment.

Again the importance of common languages and discourse, sufficient to permit learning and exchange, was underlined. Such a focus on common approaches carries with it the risk that organisational relationships emerge only within established "comfort zones". Such concerns become even more important given the current trends towards more frequent turnover and fewer field visits for the INGOs and the current process of founding directors and other upper-level managers departing from SA organisations.

There are multiple implications arising from the simple observation of different relationships emerging out of a single INGO. First, it suggests that the experience and skill of INGO managers are crucial to understanding the quality of the relationships and the projects that emerge (see Box 4). In these two organisations, the international manager explained seeming heavy oversight or abrupt termination of funding as rooted in concerns over the competence, in the first case, or the probity, in the second, of the project manager. While both such actions generated resentment on the part of the recipients, such a reaction was rooted in real communication, albeit not expressly stated. Second, it suggests that competence in Southern NGOs is, at times, matched with trust and exchange by dedicated INGO managers – such relationships are built over time, and can easily be undermined by a change in manager or policy focus at either end of the aid chain. Third, however, such cases simultaneously show the limits to such communication; would NGO B have been more capable of finding other sources of funding and sustaining its programme had Faith & Development representatives given some indication of concerns and shifting priorities during or immediately after the evaluation mission? Could the second manager have managed to provide support that

was less threatening and intrusive while still maintaining close watch on progress? Could discussion of concerns assisted in the process of establishing more trustful, equal and authentic relations?

Accountability

A standard definition of accountability is "the means by which individuals and organisations report to a recognised authority, or authorities, and are held responsible for their actions" (Edwards and Hulme, 1996: 9). As noted above, the funding relationship may shift the focus of a NGO's accountability from beneficiaries to upstream funders (Edwards et al, 1995 and 1996; Fowler, 1996; Fox, 1992; Sogge, 1995; Wallace et al, 2004). A primary difficulty is that the relationship with donors is explicit and contractual while that with beneficiaries is not. With the push towards rational management tools, NGOs know the targets against which funders will measure the quality, effectiveness, and impact of NGO activities. In contrast, downstream expectations may be vague, unrealistic or, reflecting the reality of divisions and multiple interests in communities, quite diverse and fragmented. As Dorothea Hilhorst (2002:204) observes, local communities may lack effective mechanisms of representation and there may be no recourse if expectations are not met. Drawing on Hirschmann (1970), she concludes that

For accountability to be effective, 'authorities must have either a 'voice' (to enforce change in the desired direction) or an exit (to sever the relationship). In practice, beneficiaries often have neither. (Hilhorst, 2002:204)

Accountability may also be more functional in focus, examining for instance the honesty and efficiency of implementation, or more strategic, looking at impact and effectiveness, and be conducted through formal or informal mechanisms (Edwards and Hulme, 1996:9). Rarely, observers contend, do donors look at second and third-order impacts (Uphoff, 1996), those that occur down the line (in time and personal relations) from the funded project, a point made again by Alan Kaplan in Chapter 7. Measurement of either performance or impact is also quite difficult; indicator systems generally presume direct causal links ('the project produced this effect') while others argue that non-linear and complex processes come together to produce effects, often in unpredictable ways (Marsden et al, 1994; Fowler, 1996). Saltmarshe et al (2002), among others, further contends that the use of rational management tools pushes accountability upwards and towards a focus on outputs.

Some of the South African partnerships foundered on differing definitions of what was needed, what should be accounted for. There are several concrete issues that case study NGOs identify as problem areas within their donor relationships. For example, there is a specific emphasis by donors on outcomes and impact, which does not always make for a complementary 'fit' with the complex, uneven nature of developmental work. The systems of reporting and monitoring often presume that the development process is linear, predictable and can be planned, as opposed to views that see it as marked by contingency, complexity and uncertainty. As one case study NGO employee states:

The problem is timeframes. Can one make a meaningful difference in project-based timeframes?

The same respondent continues,

How do we translate the success stories in a language donors can understand and that they can capture in their reports? This focus on outcomes means that like it or not, you are pushed in a certain direction of where they are thinking.

This NGO respondent acknowledges that to translate “success” into the language of accountability sometimes means changing the way in which data are captured; also, indicators that are easier to quantify are more likely to be employed.

Reporting is discussed in Chapter 5 however one additional point is directly relevant to the dynamics of partnerships. Trust is undermined when local NGOs put time into report-writing, without any corresponding feedback on the work that they have done or even an indication that their reports have been read. As one NGO states, “we feel that reporting is just an administrative requirement. Because donors come asking the kinds of questions that they would know the answers to if they’d read the reports.” It was further stated “they manage to combine very demanding rigorous requirements for reporting, for project proposals and budgeting with extraordinary inefficiency on their part. So they’re expecting partners to be absolutely perfect in every respect while they themselves are very very far from perfect.”

4.5. Conclusions

The research on partnerships incorporated a variety of organisational types, from small project-oriented NGOs working at the grassroots level to larger established organisations linked into multiple partnerships both within and outside of South Africa. The forms of partnerships under study also varied greatly: some were around funds, some excluded funding and focused on capacity building; some were built around formal common agendas and others not. Our research suggests that there are factors that assist the functioning of partnerships – clarity on the basis for the partnership (funds, capacity), discussion rather than directives, face-to-face contact and project managers who are willing to learn. Yet even with attention to such dynamics the issue of finance is problematic (see also chapter 7 on SCAPE).

The push for advocacy, networks and capacity-building, all of which are important, were found to generate difficulties for recipient NGOs. The content of such programmes, and the need for additional support in getting the structures in place to undertake such agendas more effectively, require attention within the partnership.

There are also enduring difficulties with simple process of communication. As cited in the chapter, numerous respondents commented on the difficulty of communicating their experiences, concerns and successes, whether because of language, reporting formats, time constraints or anxiety. Likewise, we found – by talking to multiple participants in a single relationship – that people did not always “hear” what was being said; questions were interpreted as demands, requests were not attended, feedback was not provided.

Partnerships may be a way to improve development practice. Certainly the types of collaborative work described in programme documents and development texts sounds attractive, and some respondents described extremely positive relationship with selected funders (e.g. Gender Work) or positive experiences around particular aspects of the relationship. They are not, however, a panacea. Greater attention to the ways in which authority and trust are constructed within a partnership is crucial if they are to contribute better more effective practice.

Chapter 5. Rational management and participatory human development

By Isaivani Hyman, Shelly Dill, Annsilla Nyar and Lisa Bornstein

5.1. Introduction

As discussed in earlier chapters of this report, the ever-mounting pressures for accountability, cost-effectiveness and impact in the aid industry and development sector have resulted in the emergence of management procedures and tools that prioritise the measurable, and are tightly structured, neatly packaged and methodical. These procedures include logical frameworks, associated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, strategic planning and strict reporting requirements. Our initial research (see chapter 3) found that NGOs in South Africa were increasingly familiar with these procedures and prompted to use them as conditions of obtaining funding. Central questions for research into the use in South African NGOs of such rational planning techniques are:

- To what extent has their use been shaped by needs and priorities on the ground and not simply donor agendas and practices?
- Does their use in managing organisational development and projects inhibit the NGOs' ability to take on participatory, rights-based or other people-centred approaches?
- How and to what extent can their use be associated with improvements in the quality of NGOs' performance and impact?

The following discussion explores these questions through two detailed studies of specific aid chains, our overall findings from the NGO research, and a deeper look at the role of M&E.

5.2. Management Procedures

Many of the management procedures that were documented as emerging practice in the UK NGOs (Wallace, 1997; Wallace and Chapman, 2004), and elsewhere (Gasper, 2001; Coleman, 1992) are increasingly important to and pervasive among NGOs in South Africa. What follows is an analysis of some of these trends in the South African context. Almost all of the NGOs in our research used some form of the tools in question. Only one organisation said that it had not undertaken strategic planning; and only one did not employ any type of project planning matrix or logical framework. All organisations had M&E and reporting systems in place.

Logical Frameworks

The Logical Framework Approach (LFA) emerged in the 1970s, created by USAID to facilitate project appraisals (Howes, 1992: 381). The approach has since become common practice among project/programme planners and coordinators, as described by Wallace (1997) and others.

As described in Bornstein (2001; 2003), the logical framework (also called a logframe, project planning matrix, or LFA) is a simple tool, a matrix that summarises the key elements of a project or programme (see Fig 5.1). A vertical logic links inputs to outputs, to objectives – the project elements – in a series of 'if-then' logical steps: if inputs 'a' are done, then activities 'b' will be produced, if activities 'b-d' are done, then objective 'a' will be produced, etc. For example, in a agricultural project the logic might be: if training in

seed storage is done, facilities constructed and follow-up support given, then farmers will reduce seed loss, contributing to increased agricultural output (among other benefits), and ultimately greater food security.

A horizontal logic links the project elements to indicators of project success, information (verification) sources, and assumptions; this logic frames a series of project management tasks related to project control, steering, monitoring, information gathering, and risk assessment. In the example just provided, information on the timing and adequacy of provision of training, the construction of facilities, seed storage, agricultural output and food security would be needed to monitor implementation and impacts. The logframe as a tool thus is designed to provide a concise overview of a project, its intervention strategy, its expected outcomes, and its requirements for assessment and information. The tool highlights areas of management responsibility and identifies both potential contributions and risks that may arise from the wider project environment.

Figure 5.1 Components of a logical framework matrix (logframe or LFA)

	Narrative summary	Indicators (OVIs)	Means of verification	Assumptions
wider aim / goal				
project purpose				
outputs / results				
activities				
inputs				

Researchers have identified potential merits and problems with the approach (see Fig 5.2). Among the perceived advantage of LFAs is that they aid communication among stakeholders because key elements of a project can be represented on one sheet of paper. From this perspective, stakeholders, funders, and staff are more likely to be clear on the aims of the project and the ways activities are linked to achievement of those aims. Secondly, the LFA leads directly to impact evaluation; the specification of logical links between indicators and means of verification is the primary feature that enables this process. Lastly, by building into the logframe consideration of external factors that are beyond the organisation's control (assumptions), the LFA encourages both bounded responsibility for outcomes and some assessment of the wider environment and prevailing social dynamics.

On the other hand, the limitations of the approach are numerous. Howes (1992) provides one of the earliest published critiques of LFAs and it is worthwhile to review his observations. Howes contends that translating a framework that emerged from corporate America into one that has utility for the developing world has been fundamentally problematic. As Howes (1992: 383) notes, the framework does not have poor people or addressing poverty as a central concern. None of the provisions explicitly demonstrate this. As well, the LFAs represent a type of "blueprint approach" in which there may be little room for participation and worldviews of other stakeholders; while some organisations have tried to detail more participatory approaches to project

matrix design as in the German ZOPP (objectives oriented planning), people may find the language of the LFA and its linear structure difficult or incompatible with their cultural frameworks or understanding of development.

Figure 5.2 Strengths and weakness of logical frameworks

Strengths	Weaknesses
Key information in one document	May be difficult and time-consuming to construct
Checks internal logic of plan	Obliges simplification of complex ideas and relationships
Ensures links between goals, objectives & strategies	Unrealistic targets may lead to disappointment
Project objectives explicit	Problem analysis may be too negative
Assumptions stated & factors critical to success identified	Project managers may be too rigid in focus on targets and indicators
Encourages people to consider their expectations & how they can be achieved	May be less suitable for small management teams or projects
M&E is introduced early	Quantitative assessment of progress favoured
	Logic is hierarchical & linear

Indeed, one of the important criticisms of the approach is that it reflects a worldview in which development is mechanistic and characterised by linear causality. Progress in this view is a question of achieving the specified steps. In contrast, in the world of development much activity is process-oriented and outcomes are the product of multiple forces. Thus, it is not so easy to attribute outputs to well-designed and methodical inputs. Even if multiple causes are acknowledged, the logframe rests on a convergent model of assessment, wherein the focus is on the intended effect (Brinkerhoff and Tuthill, 1997). Left out of such mindsets is careful consideration, or measurement, of unintended and secondary effects. The tightly structured frameworks with its predetermined goals make it difficult to incorporate or adjust for any possibilities of deviation (Howes, 1992: 391).

Finally, Howes (1992: 393) cautions that the uncritical and widespread adoption of a blueprint or management tool type of approach such as the LFA may stifle innovation and suppress local initiatives. Equally problematic will be the resultant trend away from such long-term processes as institution and team building towards more short-term and easily quantifiable type projects. Numerous other observers have echoed these observations (cf. Appasamy, 1983; Baker, 2000; Bornstein, 2003; Brinkerhoff and Tuthill, 1987; Brinkerhoff, 2003; Coleman, 1992; Cracknell, 2000; Fowler, 1995; Gasper, 2000; Howes, 1992; Kapoor, 2002; Wallace, 1997; Weiss, 1998; Wiggins and Shields, 1995; World Bank, 2002) although some see the flaws arising out of the applications of the tools rather than with any inherent biases in them.

Gasper's (2001) reflections on the 'state of knowledge' regarding logframes and their effects is particularly useful. He argues that assessments of logframes must move beyond simple 'good/bad' judgments of the tool – a form of essentialism in his view – to consideration of how they work, and what tendencies they promote, in theory, in the worlds of contemporary practice and in alternative development systems. While logframes may be prone to misuse and abuse (Gasper, 2001:18-19), he argues that we need to think carefully about how we assess them: which data, which comparisons, which forms and styles of LFA, and with what style of assessment?

Our approach here is two-fold. We first examine the range of ways in which logframes have been introduced into South African NGOs and, relying on feedback from individuals located at different levels of the NGOs, take a general learning approach to their use in project design, project implementation, and M&E. Second, we take the examples of two organisations that adopted radically different approaches to the logframe: one tried to use it within a 'business environment' as a means to better communicate with funders and obtain grants; the second tried to use it as an integral component within a bottom-up participatory development approach.

5.3. Rational Management Tools in South African NGOs

All but one of the South African NGOs involved in our in-depth studies used some form of a Logical Framework Approach or project planning matrix. Our analysis begins with 14 of the 22 NGOs; the aid chains studies in the second part of the chapter present the experience of the remaining NGOs.

After describing how why different organisations use LFAs, discussion turns to how they are used, they perceived impact on the organisation, staff, and their work on the ground, and finally the perceived benefits and weaknesses of LFAs. SA NGO experiences and staff understandings of M&E, reporting and strategic planning are similarly presented. Attention then turns to the two aid chain studies. Subsequent analysis explores the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter.

How NGOs are working with logframes

Of the fourteen case study organisations, only one did not work directly with logframes. Most of organisations used logframes because of their donors' expectations. For example, the EU and DFID, either as direct funders or through their intermediaries, expect NGOs to use orthodox logical framework applications.

The one NGO that did not use a LFA was accountable to an INGO with back-funding from an institutional donor in the UK. To satisfy this back donor, the INGO translated its local aid relationship into a logframe for appraisal, monitoring and evaluation. In order to do this, the intermediary donor/NGO had to work very closely with the local NGO to ensure that indicators were monitored and sufficient information was collected to report on progress. Thus even though the local SA NGO did not use LFA in this case, a logframe's logic (held between the INGO and back donor) still guided elements of project design, information gathering, and assessment.

In the majority of cases, there was an overall sense from staff that NGOs were not making constant reference to the logframes. Initially, considerable time and energy would have been spent on drafting the frameworks, which would then be referred to when necessary to compile the required update reports. Funding proposals that were available for review usually did not have logframes attached. The assumption was that these would be submitted upon request from donors.

NGO staff members' familiarity with logframes varied greatly. While numerous organisations had had special training in logframes during the mid-1990s, during the period of our research such training was usually part of wider management and organisational development exercises, or given because the NGO requested assistance, and then usually with a wider participatory planning framework (as used by GTZ or DANCED). Instead of widespread familiarity with the techniques, certain staff in the organisation were given responsibility for proposal preparation, and reporting against logframes (either the director or a specific individual), consultants were hired to draft or fine-tune the planning matrix, or partners internationally would assist (again either

together with the local partner or in a specialised division, sending drafts back to South Africa for 'consultation and approval').

In another case, that of a NGO support organisation with staff proficient in logframe and other project planning techniques, their funded projects are not now tied to logframes. Yet staff described how the language of planning matrices has been useful:

"We don't use it ourselves but I think where we do use it is in our thinking. We use that language, where we say we've got this idea for a programme, what are the development goals, what is our immediate objective, who is our target group, what are we trying to get them to do, what could our output be about."

In using the terminology of objective, outcomes, and activities, or indicators and means of verification, all present understand what is meant. Such examples show the complex ways in which the approach has permeated development thinking.

Application of LFA at various levels of the organisation

Partly because of its complexity and because it is so difficult to translate and communicate to field staff, many organisations have not fully integrated its use within the entire organisation. In most instances, the framework is not used beyond the office or management level as the following quotes demonstrate:

For us, as a development tool, logframes are not carried through to the field level. For our staff it is quite confusing.

[We] modified the framework within training...LFAs were introduced but had to be simplified because it was too challenging.

[We] find it to be a useful tool, but it fails dismally at the community level and only works with office staff.

In many cases, organisations have set up systems where field staff plan and monitor activities, according to workable or simplified indicators. Thereafter, Directors and Programme Managers translate this information into logframes. Challenge arise, however, where there are gaps in information; such was the case with one Director who expressed frustration at "filling in the boxes" and fulfilling the donor "need" that the NGO "puts down exactly what it is we do".

For the most part, interviewees expressed ambivalence about LFAs. They acknowledged the value of the approach in terms of organizing and thinking clearly, but complained about its inflexibility, its tendency to be reductionist, and its complicated nature. None of the interviewees regarded the framework as an indispensable part of their work.

LFA and the whole idea of "planning tools" evoked extreme reactions from some of our respondents. One director expressed outrage at the notion of rationally planning development to such an extent. On the other extreme was an organisation that had unwittingly adopted such a framework. In this instance, the organisation's Programme Manager claimed no knowledge of it or of its use within the organisation. A documentation scan revealed otherwise. Thus, LFAs have permeated the world of NGOs in one way or another.

Negotiating the use of logframes

Given staff ambivalence – or hostility – to logframes, we asked respondents to comment on their ability to negotiate with donors around LFA requirements. Again, our findings cover the entire spectrum from outright resistance to unwitting compliance.

Some organisations claimed they were able to reject the imposition of LFA and resist pressure from donors. As the Director of one of these organisations noted:

...We do not use tools! And no, donor requirements don't influence our work at all...We refuse to use logframes. Logframes are an iniquitous, dangerous, reductive trap...[S]ome people don't have a choice. LFA is a military planning tool.

A subsequent interview with the Director revealed that while the organisation had not adopted an orthodox version of the tool, staff members were using it in some form or another.

An interviewee from another training organisation noted that "We hate the word 'tools'" and indicated that they do not submit proposals in terms of LFA. However, as a training organisation staff have directed significant energy to NGOs and donors requests for training on the use of LFA. It is no coincidence that organisations such as these, that are aware of their choices and have opted to not use the framework, are relatively well-resourced, aware of alternative development approaches and have a diversified funding base.

On the other hand, the organisation that is using LFA and is unaware of it is an organisation that has tended to be extremely donor-oriented and dependent on donor funds and has been pulled in different directions by various donors because of this vulnerability. Indeed the use of LFA has been imposed upon them. The organisation's Programme Manager who does all programme planning, the liaising, preparing of proposals and reporting to donors indicated that his organisation did not use logframes. However, a review of a programme plan and report to the donor revealed that the organisation was employing an application of LFA. For example, the plan was organised into a table with the following categories: "activity", "expected outcomes", "indicators", and "schedule". Thus, the approach was adopted with a lack of awareness or training about its purpose, use or implications. What is unclear is whether the LFA had effects: was it a document setting out binding targets for which the organisation was accountable or was it a meaningless accompaniment, appended to satisfy requirements and nothing more. In either case, the LFA was not benefiting project management.

One of the organisations interviewed was proactive in its response to donors' expectations around LFA. The organisation observed a strong push amongst its various donors to use forms of LFA as a basic planning method. To meet all its donors various requirements and reshape proposals to these specific requirements was found to be a difficult and cumbersome task. It was for this reason that the organisation approached a training agency to assist them with developing a single proposal and accompanying reporting format. The end result was that all of its donors were convinced to accept the revised format, which turned out to be a "watered-down" logframe that the organisation itself found acceptable to work within.

While some organisations use orthodox LFAs to report to donors like DFID and the EU, many of the organisations have adapted the frameworks to their particular needs. For instance at one organisation, a staff member explained that proposals are not strict LFAs but they "are in a results-based format" with "a work-plan which lists target groups, objectives, inputs and outputs," the "elements of logframes." The comments reflect familiarity with the logframe and how their proposals differ.

In another organisation, we were told that "Logframes are the basis for our plans, although we adapt them." And in still another case, "The [organisation] currently doesn't

use logframes. [We] recognise the key elements such as monitoring and evaluation, key objectives and implementation. These elements will be included in...our plans."

There are several interpretations of non-orthodox preparation of project planning documents, all of which had some support from our fieldwork. It may be that donors, and INGOs, are beginning to be more flexible in the formats that they will accept for projects from the South; interviews with donors, INGOs and SA NGOs indicated that some donors are proceeding in this way. It may also be that donors remain committed to their specified LFA formats and that INGOs are investing time in changing documentation from their Southern partners to fit these requirements. Our interviews provided evidence of this possibility as well. Several INGO representatives cited their Southern partners' limited capacity for LFA preparation, the need to bring together materials from several partners to report on a programme or joint project (requiring reworking of the initial drafts), or even fears that the LFAs would negatively affect their partners, requiring energies better spent on projects themselves.

Perceived benefits of LFA

As already mentioned, most SA NGO respondents were ambivalent about the LFA. In all but one case, even those who were strongly critical found some value in its use. Staff cited them as useful for organizing, structuring, and summarizing project and for and being rigorous about objectives as illustrated by the following quotes:

[LFA] has a lot of useful aspects to it that can assist one to become more rigorous in one's work and be clearer about objectives.

[We] used to work on the system of Management by Objectives. LFA is better, the focus on outcome is important. In the past, planning was much too focussed on activities...LFA puts the emphasis where it should be.

It [has] some useful elements, such as listing tasks to achieve along with stated outputs.

Respondents thought that LFAs were particularly useful for donors. LFAs ease project appraisal – "[L]og frames summarise the need and help donors understand the need quickly." Logframes concisely convey selected aspects of a proposed project, permitting rapid initial review of proposal. Of course, numerous commentators have noted that LFAs, as easily manipulated and restructured versions of the project, do not give a complete portrayal of the project, often leave out essential pieces or impose a logic that is not possible, and have not been shown to lead to better selection of projects to fund.⁸

While several South African NGO respondents found LFAs useful in later project phases, there was no consensus on their benefits, as shown in the following quotes:

[LFAs] are useful monitoring tools. They are useful for clarity on project objectives and are also convenient for reporting to donors as they provide information at a glance.

I think it is a great tool for designing and planning. Once you designed and planned though, I think many things can happen. And it can be very difficult to report against that format when things haven't gone according to plan.

⁸ Donors could conduct a very interesting study by grouping funded projects appraised on the basis of detailed requirements and project planning matrices against those funded on the basis of other criteria (long-term trust or proven track-record, need of the intended beneficiaries, narrative proposals, etc.) and comparing their "success".

LFA has been useful in that it promotes a rigorous and disciplined approach to managing projects. However, not everything can go into a framework. While it is useful for structuring and planning, a lot of qualitative stuff has to be captured and reflected differently [in reporting].

As shown in the above comments, positive aspects of LFAs were described in the same breath as negative ones. Wholehearted advocacy of the LFA was rare and confined to managers of organisations with a strong commitment to the techniques, such as those described in the livelihoods aid chain later in this chapter.

Criticisms of LFA

Most respondents had an easier time articulating their reservations about the use of logframes. As mentioned above, many organisations had to adapt and simplify these frameworks. So, for example, some organisations just extract and work with elements of the framework.

Respondents said they have found LFA a “complicated” and “cumbersome” tool. Staff at a NGO support organisations said that training in LFA takes approximately five full days, and even afterwards, as INGO managers noted, trainees may still not be capable of working with donor requirements.

SA NGO respondents also complained that the logframe tended to reduce organisations to projects, notably LFAs “didn’t incorporate institutional complexity” and the “dimension of qualitative progress was absent”. One interviewee observed that it has reduced the number of people handling reporting as well. Whereas in the past, there may have been two or three programme officers involved in evaluation, this has now been reduced and centralised in the hands of one person who does the “number-crunching”. In other cases, reporting has increased. Some organisations submit reports in terms of the logframe, but staff also prepare a narrative report (regardless of whether it is required) to capture qualitative developments.

Some organisations were critical of the lack of flexibility of the logframe. One respondent said that when conditions shift and the nature of the programmes change, it is difficult to make the changes in the framework. Indeed, the political context for many of these NGOs is quite unstable and respondents said that it is not always possible to reflect this or make the necessary adjustments in a logframe. Some of the organisations felt that their work was too complex to translate into basic logframe indicators.

Another interesting finding about the logframes was that they tended to encourage dishonesty, as is discussed extensively in the section on M&E. For example, some people indicated that what they reported on did not necessarily reflect what was happening in the field. Also, some felt the pressure of demonstrating change from report to report whereas change on the ground was difficult to effect quickly. So they went ahead with “doctoring the reports” despite what was experienced on the ground. One NGO director admitted that when they sat down to prepare the logframe under time pressures, they “didn’t have the luxury of sitting down with stakeholders so they just cooked up assumptions about them”. Some have expressed that logframes are very easy to manipulate. As one interviewee suggested,

[you] set targets lower than you can achieve... [this] makes your performance look better and impresses funders.

Monitoring and Evaluation in the South African NGOs

There has been a clear recognition of the need to monitor and ensure effectiveness at various stages of the project cycle and to market the implementing organisation to the donor. In the planning and design, the introduction of rational management with particular M&E styles. Distinguishing simply two M&E derived from a project logframe or "blueprint" approach and a process and participatory approach (see Fig 5.3).

Table 5
Type
Info
E

Figure 5.3: Monitoring and Evaluation in a Blueprint versus a Process Approach

	Blueprint Approach	Process Approach
Scope	Achievement of goals	Institutional growth
	Quantitative	Qualitative
Purpose	To determine results of project and lessons for the future	To redefine objectives and improve implementation
Timing	After completion	During project
Done by	Staff and outsiders	Staff and participants
Done for	Management plus funding agency, planners	Project management and participants

Source: Howes, M. (1992: 388)

In an approach in which M&E tightly follows the structure of the logframe, indicators associated with implementation (activities and outcomes) are monitored and those associated with achievement of goals and objectives are addressed in periodic and end-of-project evaluations. The information systems needed for monitoring and evaluation can largely be established at the outset of the project since the activities and effects to be addressed are presumed known (they are those detailed in the project plan). The process approach, a divergent one, takes a wider view, since it is assumed that the project is situated on shifting sands; possibilities and constraints may change; so may needs; there may be unintended effect and unexpected influences. In such approaches, the focus has shifted to ensuring that beneficiaries of service articulate their needs and take ownership of projects. NGO personnel should facilitate rather than act as experts. Beneficiaries may participate extensively in M&E in this process approach. While Howes associates the process approach with community and staff involvement, participatory M&E has also been introduced into projects working with logical frameworks. An analysis of findings in the South African NGO experience reveals that although there is a clear recognition of the need to ensure more participation, overall this shift has been slow to effect.

All the organisations within this study had some form of monitoring and evaluation, in some cases simple, in others quite sophisticated. Evaluations were conducted either externally, internally or both. However, the majority of case study NGOs had their evaluations conducted externally. This is illustrated in table 5.1 below:

In many instances (at least 43%), evaluations and impact assessments were done at the request of donors. In one case, an NGO that had multiple funders pre-empted any requests from donors for an evaluation by commissioning evaluations on a three-yearly basis. A few organisations recognised the importance of having participatory monitoring and evaluation systems and tried to institute such mechanisms.

Table 5.1: Internal versus External Evaluations

Type of Evaluation	No. of Organisations	Percentage
Internal	7	50
External	9	64
Both	6	43
Unknown	4	29

We encountered examples of relatively successful participatory monitoring. In one case, local people, including a board member, comprehensively evaluated a NGOs programme over several months. One of the evaluators (who subsequently joined the staff) described the participatory process and emphasised the importance of it in building ownership of the recommendations:

We used the process to form a picture of the organisation along the way, building peoples' convictions and not just us [the evaluators] coming up with recommendations under sterile conditions. We presented findings, listened to people, took into account the capacity of the organisation...because bodies and minds in the organisation need to make something happen.

Although the researchers asked to review all relevant NGO documentation, including evaluations, only one of the organisations was forthcoming with their evaluation reports (see Chapter 6). This raises questions about transparency and the lack of trust within the sector. NGOs do not want to be viewed as vulnerable or perceived in a negative light perhaps because competition for funding is an over-arching concern. Since access to evaluation reports was limited, it is difficult to comment on the trends in this regard. However, there were a few issues that emerged around monitoring and evaluation systems.

The need to demonstrate impact is a primary concern for NGOs as it is an important marketing tool and medium through which confidence in the organisation from donors and clients can be boosted. As one Director noted:

We struggle to monitor impact. But it's ultimately the impact that we are able to demonstrate that attracts us more work...so we are continuously looking to see how we show impact.

The training or OD institutions reported several requests to assist organisations with evaluations, most of which were donor-funded. The attitude towards monitoring and evaluation varied amongst the organisations. Some merely just mechanically went about it as something that needed to be done. Others wanted to really engage with the process, and wanted to have input into who the evaluators were and how these processes were conducted. As one Director noted:

We need to choose an evaluator who will understand our work – who will not just look at processes, the human organisational structures that have been created and see these as achievements.

As expected, the organisations that were relatively well established and financed were able to conduct regular external evaluations – usually once every few years or at the request of donors. The internal monitoring and evaluation process within organisations usually involved team or supervision meetings with reporting systems to monitor progress.

Integrating monitoring and evaluation systems throughout the levels of the organisation has not been problem free. For example, one NGO introduced a simple reporting tool to

monitor progress at field level, intended to feed into a larger six monthly report to donors. It was in the form of a timesheet and included sections for activities and outputs. The NGO field staff experienced many difficulties with this report. Even those staff that had education levels beyond high school had problems with it because they found it difficult to reflect their experiences in such a manner. They needed training and ongoing support to work with these forms, with unclear benefits for the quality of their work.

SA NGOs and Reporting

Reporting is a key obligation on the part of NGOs to their funders. It is the medium through which they demonstrate accountability and update donors on the progress and important developments surrounding the funded project. Considering that the head offices of donor organisations are normally based overseas in developed countries and project visits from donors are generally few and far between, reports are the primary means of communication and feedback. It is common practice for reporting guidelines, procedures and periods to be outlined and agreed upon at the beginning of the funding relationship and as part of the funding contract. As well, funding that is disbursed in tranches is contingent upon reports being sent out on time before release of the next tranche. Of all the management procedures, the pressure to report comprehensively and on time appears to have the strongest incentive and penalty.

Among South African NGOs, the pressure to report according to donor expectations was felt throughout the organisational levels. The process of reporting and managing donors was also found to require considerable staff time and energy. At the field level, people expressed lack of confidence about their reporting. They were concerned about either communicating in English when it is their second language or about appropriately expressing themselves for fear of being misjudged or misunderstood (see chapter 4). At the office or management level, many respondents emphasised that reporting was tedious and time-consuming. One organisation tracked the number of hours spent on donor-related matters (whether reporting or attending workshops and meetings) and found that it consumed 230 hours in less than a month. A project manager from another organisation observed that reporting to donors now consumed 60% of his time while in the past he had spent most of his time on programmes. Staff at both organisations felt that they were in too vulnerable a position to express these concerns to donors.

Many NGO respondents expressed frustration at complying with different reporting requirements from different donors. As mentioned earlier, one organisation managed to take a proactive stance on negotiating a standard reporting format with their donors. This system appeared to have worked well for the organisation in question. Another organisation merely incorporated their donor reporting requirements into one big package. However they noted that donors still asked for information already contained in that package, evidence that they had not read it.

There was the perception and in some cases admission from donors, that the six-monthly reports went largely unread. As such, there usually was no feedback from donors. NGOs were frustrated about all the time and effort spent in compiling these reports only to have them collect dust on a desk.

Some NGO managers explained that the complexity of their work made it very difficult to report against donors' indicators. This proved to be extremely frustrating for them. As one interviewee noted:

Consultants seem to be the only ones benefiting from complicated reporting and application requirements... There needs to be a middle path between donors'

interests and the NGOs' interests...Building relationships and not just systems is key.

No doubt, the purpose of this type of reporting is questionable when donors do not read them, and NGOs do them simply to comply with donor requirements and not necessarily to reflect their work on the ground.

One of the observations about balancing reporting requirements with the actual situation in the field was that there is a considerable pressure to demonstrate progress from report to report. Considering that most reporting is done on a six-monthly basis, the type of progress that donors may be looking for is difficult to achieve in such a short space of time. Some of the organisations are able to re-negotiate with donors around timeframes but then are faced with the additional problem of having unspent funds at the end of a funding period. Thus, NGOs not only face the pressure of fundraising but also that of hanging onto the funds already disbursed.

South African NGOs and Strategic Planning

Strategic planning moves beyond the focus at project level to an overall concern with organisation development (Wallace, 1997). The primary concern here is with relevance to a wider context and responsiveness to the dynamism of local stakeholder needs. As with the other techniques, approaches to strategic planning vary from those that are formulaic to those that are flexible.

Wallace (1997: 40-41) noted that NGOs have employed strategic planning in different ways, something that is evident in the South African research as well. Some NGOs have used a top-down approach in instituting plans while others have employed more participatory approaches. In the former case, this has been experienced as an imposition on staff and in the latter case, strategic planning has become a time-consuming and complex procedure. There has been recognition that strategic planning processes have value in organisations as they contribute to team building, having clear direction, being more focussed and making necessary changes. However, there have also been concerns about having to deal with conflict and new tensions generated by the process.

Research in the South African context has shown that many NGOs have recognised the value of strategic planning to organisation development and positioning themselves in relation to donors and other stakeholders in the wider context. With the exception of one organisation, most of the NGOs (93%) interviewed undertook a strategic planning exercise. The organisation that was not undertaking such an exercise claimed that that it was engaging in such a process on a yearly basis. However the interviews revealed that this process was actually being confused with a yearly operational plan. Respondents from one of the OD institutions observed that this confusion was a common problem among the NGOs that they assisted with strategic planning.

According to many of the NGOs, the emergence of strategic planning processes could be attributed to donor requirements. They resented that donors seemed eager for five-year plans and long-term planning in general while many of the NGOs grappled with immediate financial crises and the constant dynamism of organisational and beneficiary needs. However, most office staff recognised that strategic planning exercises are important for organisational development.

Attitudes about the benefits from strategic planning reveal a certain level of confusion about its functions and potential benefits. At an organisation that was experiencing a leadership and financial crisis, managers described the strategic planning exercise as crucial in consolidating and re-establishing its mission and identity. Yet staff

simultaneously said that they did not expect any major shifts in the values, mission or identity of the organisation. Instead the process was about validating the organisations previous orientation; opportunities for serious reflection and around team-building may have emerged but they were not part of the manager's expectations.

Respondent NGOs varied in how they conducted their strategic processes. Many organisations opted to use external consultants (South African and international) to lead the process. In a couple cases staff members structured the exercises. For organisations that were local affiliates of an international NGO, strategic planning was led by the INGOs specialised staff or external consultants.

One of the OD organisations recognised the importance of building strategic thinking throughout the organisation on a continual basis as opposed to relegating it to an event. So although the actual strategic planning exercise occurred once in three years, the strategic thinking was an on-going basis and was more formally structured to occur once quarterly. There was a clear shift to move the responsibility from a single leader out laterally to other staff.

There were several other trends that emerged around the issue of strategic planning. Firstly, there was the recognition among many of the NGOs that the process needed to be more participatory than it was. People felt that it should not be confined to the boardroom but taken to the field. The other observed trend was that much of the focus of the strategic planning exercises was the issue of sustainability, cost-effectiveness and attracting more donor funds. Third, the strategic planning process was viewed as important in giving focus and direction in terms of the organisation's work, as well team-building. And finally, respondents acknowledged a diversity of approaches to strategic planning rather than a single best practice.

Of all the tools and techniques investigated, strategic planning and related processes appeared to be the least contentious or problematic. Staff seemed to find value in the process and to be adapting it to the particular needs and requirements of the organisations.

South African NGOs have embraced the new donor-inspired management practices, whether happily so or not. The concern is at what cost. NGOs are now faced with having to manage the tensions of complying with donor requirements, dealing with threats to sustainability and being responsive to the needs of project participants. Inevitably, some aspects will suffer. The most disturbing trend is that the commitment and responsibility to project participants appears to be the one that is easily compromised.

5.4. Rational management tools along the aid chain

Discussion now turns to two different case studies. The first case study examines efforts to marry rational management with a participatory and human-centred development approach. The study details the way the merged approach is understood by staff at different organisational points along the aid chain and in practice at the community-level. The authors point out that even the rational management approach is meant to serve two distinct functions: assisting in the design of projects that are feasible and oriented towards the intended impacts; and assisting in management of the resulting projects (such that timely adjustments are made to assure implementation, participating actors are held responsible for producing the specified actions, etc.). Examining these two management functions, and their interaction with participatory practices, allows analysis

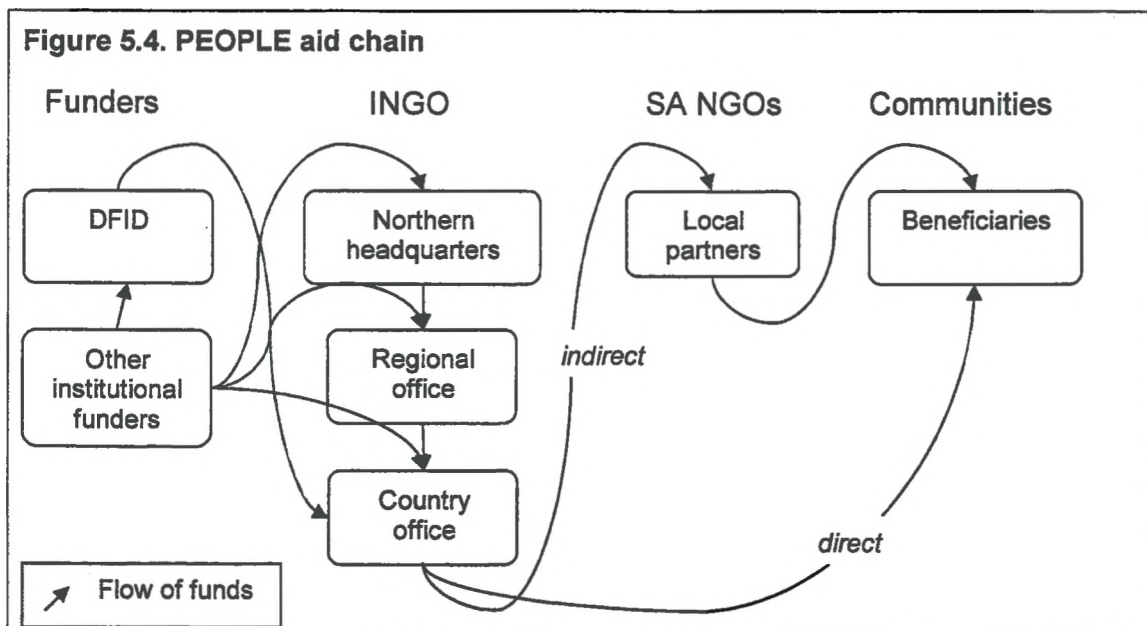
of the contradictions emerging from an innovative effort to bring together the strengths of the different development approaches.

The second case study examines the experience of one NGO with rational management. During an isolated period the organisation, which had emerged out of a strong commitment to work for poor communities, had a new director who relied heavily on a 'business' model of management. This case study, though focused more at the level of the SA NGO, allows consideration of the use of a range of rational management tools.

Aid chain 4: PEOPLE, participation and management techniques

By Shelly Dill

This case study examines the formulation and spread of a particular development approach, here entitled livelihood programming (LP), from the headquarter level in the North to country offices in South Africa and partner organisations. The aid chain is complex: DFID funding, UK NGOs, international NGOs based outside the UK, INGOs based in South Africa and South African NGOs and CBOs (see Fig 5.4). The involvement of international NGOs based outside the UK is somewhat atypical of the organisations studied.



Empirical research for this case study was carried out by Shelly Dill, with analysis and write-up by Shelly Dill and Lisa Bornstein. Following a three-month internship with the livelihood unit in the organisation's headquarters, Shelly Dill conducted field research with the organisation's regional and South Africa offices, and with various partner organisations throughout South Africa. Personal work experience, key informant interviews, surveys and on-site observation were sources of information. At each site, core and field staff were interviewed or surveyed. In total, 16 personal interviews and 24 surveys were carried out during 2001.

PEOPLE and livelihood programming

During the last decade PEOPLE introduced a new model to development that attempted to marry rational management and planning techniques with a people-centred approach to household security. Although there was initial disagreement within PEOPLE over the LP framework, during the early 1990s staff at headquarters refined the LP approach and by the mid-1990s, the organisation had officially adopted LP as its programming framework. The implementation of LP brought about a re-vamping of PEOPLE headquarters in the north and a heavy push on country offices in the south to incorporate or even superimpose LP in their programs. PEOPLE is thus an excellent organisation in which to study the transfer of development concepts and procedures. PEOPLE's LP approach draws on and expands the entitlement approaches to household food security formulated by Amartya Sen and others. Secure households are those able to acquire adequate food, health, shelter, minimal levels of income, basic education and community participation. According to those in PEOPLE's international offices, such a focus has the potential to dramatically reform and improve past approaches by the organisation.

The LP framework is PEOPLE's attempt to address the pitfalls of past development projects. The objectives of PEOPLE's LP model are numerous. LP is based on a people centred development approach, which attempts to involve the community and its stakeholders. Operationally, the approach is to discern community needs and desires prior to project design. The community is to take an active role in the design process. A holistic, integrated and flexible framework rather than a preset sector focus is meant to encourage NGOs to respond to the pressing needs of beneficiaries, and to avoid focusing only on those sectors where they have the most expertise. Participation, empowerment and partnership are principles integral to the approach.

A stated goal of the LP approach is to improve the organisation's ability to target the poorest and most vulnerable households in a community. Senior respondents in the organisation explained that by examining a community and a household's overall livelihood, a program can be more comprehensive in scope. Additionally, they hoped that with the use of LP and by working with partners they could better coordinate projects in similar geographic areas and avoid repetition. Finally, the respondents and program documents suggested that the use of LP throughout the project cycle would lead to increased levels of monitoring and evaluation, which would in turn allow PEOPLE to successfully demonstrate its results in the field and increase the efficiency level of its programs.

However, while the promise of LP is clear, and the principles and aims laudatory, research in South Africa suggests many of the past pitfalls still plague current project operations. Moreover, there are new problems emerging that an LP approach, at least as currently employed, is unlikely to resolve. Some of these difficulties could be remedied, or at least moderated, if greater attention was paid to the dynamics of LP diffusion and implementation. Other problems, as the evidence below suggests, will require a more fundamental reassessment of the existing aid system and the unequal 'partnerships' fostered therein.

Livelihood programming: A single jewel or a faceted surface?

Our analysis of the LP framework started with the recognition that although LP was presented as an integrated approach, in practice there are three distinct ways in which the framework is used and understood. LP can be understood as a participatory methodology, a management strategy, a project cycle tool, or as a combination of these.

Analysing LP in several contexts exposes the myth that LP is simply an integrated 'programmatically framework'. Additionally, it helps to address one of the major questions of this research: whether rational management techniques and people centred approaches can be merged successfully in practice.

LP is used by NGOs as a framework to combine flexible learning approaches with management based tools. Understanding LP as a participatory methodology links it to a people-centred approach whereas viewing LP as a management strategy or a project cycle tool aligns the framework with a management-based philosophy. Therefore, it is necessary to probe the ways LP is used and how each way is received and understood in the field. By doing this systematically, both the 'success' of PEOPLE's LP programming and the tension inherent in merging people centred development approaches with management-based strategies can be observed.

Additionally, examining LP in relation to donors and partner implementation reveals how the framework is transferred from organisation to organisation, the rationale behind the transfer and whether or not the transfer of programming ideology is successful. Ultimately, the different ways LP is understood, used and transferred is bound within the dynamics of the aid chain. Therefore, the overarching goal is to examine the aid chain system using PEOPLE's LP programming framework from a headquarter level in the north to its use in South Africa.

Livelihood programming as a participatory methodology

LP is a programming framework not a methodology. LP uses different methodologies to gather information needed for design of a project. However, the field research shows that some South African program and field staff understand LP only as a package of participatory techniques. Overall, employees make little distinction between LP as a framework for understanding households and their livelihoods, and as a set of tools for collecting information from the community. These misunderstandings of LP mean that what the staff actually understands and engages in is participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) under the guise of LP.

One reason for this confusion is that while most staff received some type of training on LP, they describe this training as making LP more perplexing. Competent LP training takes a commitment of time and expertise that many senior staff find difficult to provide. The deepest understanding of LP seems to come from the regional office and one or two top members of the country office. Most national employees lack understanding of PEOPLE's overall LP initiative; there are thus few individuals who can act as trainers and even then, the limited time dedicated to training is not accompanied by any follow-up. Staff trained in LP find it used only for limited purposes or not at all. Initial community assessments, easily equated with PRA, were seemingly the major learning outcome of the training and the only element of the participatory framework used consistently. Additionally, while PRA is a valuable set of techniques, it also represents the reduction of a broad framework for community involvement in all aspects of the project's conception, implementation, outcomes and assessment to a much more circumscribed and mechanistic approach to participatory inputs and human development. There is an over-riding assumption that by using the prescribed methodologies typical problems associated with conducting problems at the local level will be eliminated, or at least reduced; however, as described in Box 5.1, such methodologies do not eliminate the politics of development processes.

Box 5.1 Local constraints to livelihood programming

By Shelly Dill

Livelihood programming aims to intimately involve local communities in the process of designing and implementing locally relevant projects. Much research focuses on the level of project design and NGO offices in preventing or promoting participatory practices. Fieldworker input is usually examined in terms of levels of training with participatory techniques; personal attitudes and organisational incentives may be as important as training and techniques. Local staff are often ambivalent about working with extensive participatory approaches. Pragmatically they describe community leaders as a potential problem because of attempts of traditional leaders acting as gatekeepers (a comment repeated in other case study organisations). There are also fears that the process is too extractive from communities, demanding inputs of time, energy and resources without sufficient pay-back. Additionally, local partner organisation staff feel threatened by LP because it may expose that they do not understand the communities in which they work. For example, an LP assessment conducted by PEOPLE SA and a local CBO uncovered a rift within the community over the work in which the CBO had been involved; the community chief asked both PEOPLE and CBO staff to leave the area as a consequence. In another case, the assessment uncovered that there were two CBOs working in the area; PEOPLE's partner CBO had no knowledge of the other organisation, an active one, despite working in the community for three years. Additionally, respondents explained that the LP assessment could result in definition of an important local need in a sector in which the partner CBO had no expertise, generating concern among local staff that the CBO could easily discredit itself. Local staff also fear raising community expectations upon the CBO if they identified important needs within the area without the means to address them.

Livelihood programming as a Management Strategy

LP can also be understood as a management strategy, a way of encouraging coherence across the dispersed offices, projects and partners linked to PEOPLE and its funding. Adoption of LP as the international programming approach to be introduced in all country offices and with all partners implies a unified vision of an organisation that may not be echoed or understood in country offices, partner organisations or recipient communities. There are dangers inherent in any major overhaul of management initiated from headquarters, even while such reforms have the potential to greatly improve effectiveness and efficiency. One danger is that, as Goldsmith (1996: 1431) writes, "The methods of strategic management are supposed to encourage creative problem-solving, but the methods can also become ends in themselves, to the disregard of what they are supposed to accomplish". There is also the danger that in the absence of substantive inputs from country, field and project level staff, new management approaches will be perceived as an effort by Northern development experts to transmit their own vision of development to the south (c.f. Moseley-Williams, 1994: 78).

In the case of PEOPLE, by advocating for LP, headquarters can encourage inclusion of key elements within programs and maintain greater control over their country office activities. Acceptance for the LP approach may have been mixed for this reason. The field research revealed that in general, employees feel that the LP framework has been a top down process. Original purveyors of LP argue that LP was developed in the field, even in Southern Africa, and was then negotiated to the top. However, regardless of the origin of LP within PEOPLE, the sentiment of country office staff affects the way LP is implemented. Only a small number of staff said they personally feel ownership over LP.

While there are those within PEOPLE that truly believe in the approach, there are others who do not support the LP framework.

Of those that are critical of LP, many believe the framework is inflexible, ineffective and fails to reach the poorest. Some staff members commented that LP appears to be operational in theory but in the field it is often unable to deliver upon its claims of improvement. They cite the lack of finances, time, community commitment and adequate staff capacity as key constraints at different sites. They also have mixed feelings regarding LP because they have yet to be able to see concrete results due to the lengthy process and lack of examples within the region. In this regard, one respondent said, our international partner "assumed people would hook into LP sooner and they have not."

On the other hand, some organisations have embraced the use of LP and adapted it to fit their own needs. These organisations claim that using the LP framework helps them to plan projects that are effective, promotes better targeting, and provides accurate information about the needs of the community. To their credit, these organisations appear committed to truly learning about the communities they are working in. They also appear to have enough funding and staff capacity to engage in this type of programming.

To some, LP is a programming framework that headquarters can put on paper to discuss how it has improved its programming. However, the success in the field is less than clear.

LP as a Project Cycle Tool

Finally, LP can be viewed as a project cycle tool. Breaking LP down into elements, as in the program or project cycle, is common in PEOPLE rhetoric. The LP approach, while incorporating participatory perspectives and attention to multiple determinants of household security, relies heavily on project cycles management techniques and objectives- or result-based programming. Once a potential project concept is identified it should be formulated in a way in which there is direct coherence between inputs and outcomes, with clear stages, milestones and targets that can be monitored and assessed.

Employees are introduced to LP as an approach that you can and should use throughout the project. However, the research found that in many programs, LP is used in the field for an initial assessment and then is neglected. Staff at PEOPLE's South African country office involved in training in partner organisations found this to be a repeated problem, a challenge also acknowledged in several internal assessments and training materials. One such document states that while some attempts to superimpose a livelihoods approach over existing programs were successful "in many other cases this resulted in extensive information gathering and analytical exercises which overwhelmed staff with data, but resulted in little real change in actual project implementation" (source kept anonymous).

Likewise, although theoretically there should be little difficulty in introducing LP into an on-going project – and many senior and field staff advocate for such a practice – the research found that this is rarely done. LP claims to have improved monitoring and evaluating within the project cycle are similarly not fully supported by the field research; monitoring did not consistently cover specified elements of the projects and problems within the project were not always addressed in a timely manner. (Such findings suggest that there are problems with expectations of comprehensive coverage, the on-

going relevance of all project elements, and the possibility of intervening quickly and solving all emerging problems.)

Some PEOPLE employees identify the linear service delivery approach of the project cycle as an impediment to adoption of the framework. Howes (1992: 381) explains that in this automatic process, "the proper management of inputs then sets in motion a linear sequence of causes and effects, which leads automatically to the intended impacts". Understanding LP in rigid project cycle terms sets the framework at odds with its claims of flexibility, community-involvement and a learning-oriented approach.

As the introduction of LP at the beginning of a project is both time-consuming and costly, ideally there should be (a) integration of the new approach throughout the program, which is not occurring, and/or (b) distinct benefits from those initial inputs. Looking at the former option, we can ask, why isn't LP used after the initial community assessment, pre-design phase? Looking at the latter option, we can ask: How effective is LP when it is only used in initial phases of the project cycle?

By analysing different interpretations of LP, a clear tension emerges. These varied ways of understanding LP send mixed messages to staff. Individuals become confused about LP's purpose and meaning, and therefore unwilling to adopt LP. LP, as currently designed, fails to achieve all it claims because the ideologies and tools within the framework counteract one another. Regarding the experimentation of using rational management tools in the context of participatory and learning approaches, PEOPLE's experience with the LP programmatic framework shows that this fused process has led to confusion, and to restricted implementation of the approach in the field.

Aid Chain 5. Kapa Housing Project⁹

By Isaivani Hyman and Terence Smith; additional research by Lisa Bornstein and Annsilla Nyar

The Kapa Housing Project (KHP) is an example of an organisation that has been able to attract multiple funders through its membership in a network. The organisation has been in existence for over twenty years and has been a strong advocate for housing needs for the poor. It has a diverse funding base. Apart from key donors such as the European Union, Oxfam Canada, CIDA, DFID, HIVOS, Interfund, USAID, and CAFOD, KHP raises funds through hiring out staff services, local donors and the state housing subsidy (see Fig. 5.5).

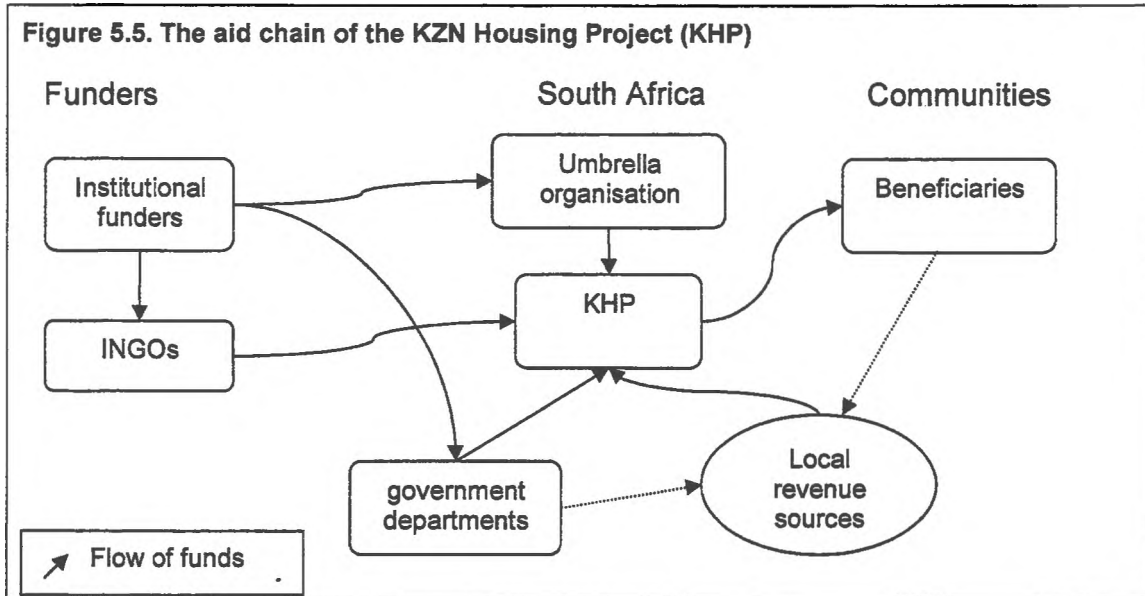
According to one respondent, KHP has proven to be a "highly sustainable" organisation with the caveat of "as far as NGO sustainability goes, which is always a relatively insecure situation". In its close to twenty years of operation, the organisation has never retrenched staff. He acknowledged though that the organisation could always be more secure with greater levels of reserve or access to endowments that would support recurring costs. He believes that donors perceive the organisation as a reliable partner.

Recently the organisation passed through a crisis in leadership as first one director and then the replacement resigned. The first director, a founding one, had worked closely with staff over many years to improve physical conditions in poor neighbourhoods. The dominant vision was one of working for the poor, and using employees' valuable expertise to make that possible. Professional staff – many of whom were trained architects and engineers who could demand higher salaries in the private sector – felt positive about their contributions to social change and equity. However, as time passed, leadership and staff recognised the need for more participatory approaches and a

⁹ Pseudonym

broader approach to the built environment. The NGO began to experiment with more community-based approaches, including participatory assessments, implementation and feedback, and work with local leadership and decision-making structures.

Figure 5.5. The aid chain of the KZN Housing Project (KHP)



Meanwhile, in conjunction with grants from international funds, donors placed new requirements on KHP. One donor urged formation of an umbrella organisation for NGOs nationwide working in the sector; the resulting entity acted as a conduit for proposals and funds, an intermediary between KHP and certain donors. As a result, KHP does not have a direct relationship with many of its donors. The intermediary organisation liaises with donors. However, donors do make project visits and outline their requirements. Managers of projects funded through the network submit their reports to the umbrella organisations for compilation with those of other partner NGOs and eventual submission. KHP also generates funds by directly approaching from other international funders and by implementing government projects.

When the founding director left, the board decided on a new director with substantial experience in the private sector. The director was accustomed to working with business plans, keeping an idea on productivity and the bottom line, and actively seeking out new clients. Our research team spoke with the director and with other staff before, during, and after the period of the new director's tenure. Office documents, including proposals, reports, logframes, and assessments, were available to the research team; a researcher also accompanied KHP to "the field".

Rational management, local realities and learning

Logical frameworks, associated M&E and reporting, and donor-compatible accounting systems were used extensively at KHP. One of the roles of the umbrella organisation was to assure that all reporting (financial and programme) was in the appropriate format to comply with donor requirements. If reports were submitted in alternative formats, staff at the umbrella organisation would request additional information from KHP. The benefits of these systems were not easily apparent.

Looking at relationships to one donor, for instance the European Union (EU), staff observed that the EU's reporting requirements were complex and demanding. The EU required quarterly financial reports and reports measuring project progress against

specific indicators. They also required six monthly narrative reports. The quarterly progress reports involved providing data on a substantial number of indicators, and the reporting timeframes were very strict. The reports were quite broad covering habitable environments, governance, and sustainable livelihoods/ economic development activity.

Reports related to the EU contract would go through the intermediary umbrella organisation. Each individual member of the organisation would send a report to a head office where it would be compiled into one comprehensive report that would be submitted to the EU every six months. This task was a demanding one as it involved synthesizing a large number of indicators from members' reports. All members were required to use the same reporting format and found it challenging to get reports done properly and on time. The umbrella office would often complain that the quality of members' reports was inadequate. They felt that members did not understand the donor expectations of the umbrella office. Donors had pushed for the creation of the intermediary umbrella organisation because, as the new director recounted, it eased their transaction costs to deal with just one funding recipient and sector-wide impacts could be more easily assessed.

Although the joint reports had certain benefits, they did not replace direct donor oversight of KHP or ease reporting for local NGOs. USAID also had very rigorous reporting requirements. As part of the funding relationship, USAID would send auditors to KHP to assess capacity for financial management. The project coordinator at KHP was required to submit six-monthly reports to USAID, a narrative one that outlines the successes of the project and a financial report. She observed that while these requirements were not cumbersome and demanding at the project level, she expected that they would be when the umbrella office has to compile its consolidated report. Interestingly, Interfund, a local funder, was identified as having the strictest reporting requirements of KHP's donors. The donor required six-monthly audited financial reports (this may reflect local concern over the high-profile cases of corruption and financial irregularities in SA NGOs in 1998).

Where possible, KHP would use the reporting formats and indicators of one donor to report to others. Staff acknowledged that it is difficult and expensive to adapt donor requirements into learning for KHP. They received little feedback on the content of the reports from their funders, and the intermediary organisation's feedback revolved around satisfying requirements of format rather than the quality of work. Staff also admitted that sometimes reporting does not reflect what actually happens on the ground. In light of the complexity of KHP's work, they contend that it is not always possible to encapsulate their activities, achievements and context using donors' indicators. They emphasised that one important way forward is that donors need more contact with partners and that annual donor visits were not enough. Membership in an umbrella organisation made the links to donors even more tenuous, and added an additional level of potential misrepresentation into the process.

The new director, though familiar with business approaches, was divided in her support for the rigid rational management tools. She pushed for more quantifiable indicators from the staff to meet donor requirements and show impact. But she also acknowledged that managers had to translate the progress reports and comments from local people into the formats required. In her view, expecting community members to think in the categories of the reports was unrealistic and inappropriate. The director also described the use of logical frameworks and related reporting formats as 'good business practice', satisfying the 'client' regardless of the ultimate usefulness. Indeed, she had a clear preference for business plans, with their detailed activities, timeframes, and individual

responsibilities, to the less practical logframes, though she thought that they were complementary tools.

Reporting to the EU was thus not very useful to KHP. Based on the EU's reporting indicators, for instance, it was not possible to show what had or had not been achieved, as some of them were inappropriate; KHP was in the midst of trying to refine those indicators again. Reporting took skilled staff from their real responsibilities to those at which they were not necessarily very good. In response, and based on internal assessment of time use, the director opted to centralise responsibility for dealing with donors, assigning a single person to handle proposal writing, reporting and donor relations. That too, had negative repercussions, removing the responsibility for representing achievements and difficulties from those intimately involved in implementation. There was limited learning from the monitoring and reports, and problems translating local realities into the formats of the reports.

Strategic processes and organisational change

In the view of many KHP staff, the appointment of the last director proved to be a "disastrous experiment". The director attempted to install a new vision for the organisation that, according to staff, fell more into a private-sector delivery agency paradigm as opposed to a people-centred one. As part of this paradigm shift, the director had encouraged a much stronger focus on outputs and quantitative data. The decision to appoint this particular director was costly, creating instability and conflict within the organisation; several staff members decided to leave the organisation. Staff felt that this transition in the organisation did more harm than good and that the experiment with more rigid output orientation was a "futile diversion."

The experience did allow staff, and our research team, to reflect on the balance between external and internal pressures on NGOs, and the role of strategic planning. According to a KHP manager, one of the main lessons from the experience was the KHP's board lack of a vision for the organisation, highlighted by their choosing, and backing, a director with a vision that was a drastic departure from the original one. It also demonstrated a need for further development of the board. The manager suggested that in light of these developments, "support from donors in terms of improved governance would be a useful intervention". Whatever strategic processes had occurred prior to the appointment of the director had not provided enough direction and clarity to keep organisational coherence around the core values of a people-centred, delivery and equity orientation,

Other respondents felt, in retrospect, that though a diversion from their work, the experience had forced the organisation to go back to basics, to re-establish and clarify values, principles and a development paradigm. They needed to go through the exercise of verifying whether the old vision was still the correct vision. At the time, the organisation had placed an advertisement in the *Mail & Guardian* for an external facilitator to assist with "change management" and a strategic planning process. This process was expected to take between six to nine months. Staff did not envisage a dramatic departure from the original vision and values.

An expectation of continuity is at odds with the realities on the ground described by managers, the shifting wider terrain, and an orientation towards organisational growth. The choice of the second director reflected an effort to achieve balance between responding to donor requirements and those of the communities they serve. For the organisation the choice was too much oriented towards donors and business rationalities. Staff say that their ultimate commitment is to communities: "we won't be

dictated to by donors." At the same time, the organisation encounters numerous constraints rooted in donor's funding practices and priorities. For example, managers noted that donors' funding categories do not cover some community needs, such as surveys, needs assessments and baseline studies that are valuable to their work. As well, KHP has had very little access to money for research because donors are sceptical of funding studies. They also find it difficult to access money for pilot projects. KHP has observed that most donors now do not like funding small projects since they think they require too much effort and high administration costs.

Another source of frustration is that donors tend to want KHP to plan years in advance. KHP staff find long-term planning very difficult to do within the context of a rapidly changing local policy environment and complex community factors. Also, "working properly with communities takes time", which respondents thought was not well accommodated in some donors' requirements and expectations for delivery. Despite demands for forward planning, KHP finds it difficult to get multi-year funding from donors.

As is typical of many NGOs, the organisation has recently been in and out of financial crises. It is currently surviving financially through its professional staff fees. There is an agreement with professional staff that they will be paid salaries below professional rates and they will use the difference from the professional fees charged to government to cover costs donors do not finance, such as overheads, research, and legal fees to support evicted communities. There is also a fair amount of contract-based work that includes partnerships with local government in relation to housing and municipal services.

One of the managers interviewed observed that the contract work is an area that has to be evaluated more closely. He believes that the organisation may rely too heavily on this avenue. It may also constrain the organisation's ability to exercise an independent voice. Many NGOs are faced with this dilemma of having to find alternative means of raising funds – often through contracting out to government or the private sector – without comprising their values and identity.¹⁰

These examples suggest that even while staff expressed their commitment to the "past vision" and orientation of the organisation there are both new constraints and opportunities are likely to require consideration in strategically thinking about the future. In this case, the need for strategic planning is an outcome of an organisational crisis of local construction, though greatly influenced by pressures from different directions.

Donors and organisational change

The case study of SA-Network in chapter 4 highlighted the risks and benefits associated with a NGO relationship to a single funder. KHP's experience shows some consequences of relationships with multiple funders and intermediaries. The organisation, through its diversified revenue streams and staggered funding cycles, has been able to sustain itself relatively well. The organisation has combined a set of professional skills with a social vision and commitment that has resulted in both on-going demand for its contributions and innovative programming. Well-educated staff, allocation of a single staff person to "donor management" functions (e.g. proposal and

¹⁰ In another organisation studied, efforts to combine consulting with grassroots advocacy proved problematic when staff found themselves responsible for implementing policy that they were publicly pressuring to change. Moreover, the organisation's vocal stance on certain government policies led to official mistrust in the organisation and the end of consulting contracts.

report writing), and effective programming has allowed for continued access to international and national funds. The organisation has been able to cover the costs of many “un-fundable” activities through professional service fees and, though difficult, has obtained funding for innovative pilot programs. Yet the number of organisations involved means that considerable time and effort is dedicated to donors in the form of reports, training sessions, meetings, and other communications. Multiple reporting frameworks were costly, contributed little to learning, and poorly reflected activities, progress and difficulties on the ground. Likewise, donor requirements related to the umbrella organisations – discussed elsewhere in the report – added a level of organisational complexity for local organisations that was not matched, according to respondents, by additional effectiveness in synergies or learning.

While the addition of the umbrella organisation and the formation of the sector-based network implied major organisational change at the behest of donor, these were events of the past. Contemporary organisational change and crisis were only indirectly linked to donor actions. Choices by board members, staff and leadership, could have been quite different, reflecting greater responsiveness to community-level or internal stakeholders than to upstream donors.

5.5. Discussion

Participation is central of all NGO these days, though there is great variation in the depth of commitment to participatory processes, and the ability to move from general principles to participatory practice. The new ethos within the development field proposes a people-centred approach where the target group or recipients of service are involved in all stages of a project, from needs assessment to design, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The idea is to give local people voice by incorporating their knowledge and values. Another vital aspect of participatory approaches is that they facilitate monitoring of projects. By keeping feedback channels open, especially from the bottom upwards through the organisation, projects may be adjusted and adapted and hopefully rendered more effective overall (Mikkelsen, 1995).

Participation can take many forms and be defined in various ways depending on its objective. Mikkelsen (1995: 63) distinguishes between instrumental participation and transformational participation; others similarly divide approaches between those focused on participation as a means (efficiency) and end (equity and empowerment) (see Cleaver, 2002). In the former situation, participation is encouraged with a view to attaining predetermined objectives. Project participants are contributors to the project and not key actors or beneficiaries. Transformational participation, on the other hand, refers to situations where participation itself is an objective and is viewed as key to such intangible and immeasurable results as interdependence or self-reliance. An important observation by Mikkelsen (1995) is that while transformation participation predominates on paper and in development discourse, it is instrumental participation that predominates in practice.

Power dynamics are central to how participation is enacted. White (1996: 6) raises the important point that, “Sharing through participation does not necessarily mean sharing in power”. So while local people tend to be engaged in an instrumental participation, this generally does not extend beyond the level of implementation. To be truly participatory, project participants have to be involved at decision-making and management level as well, a point made repeatedly in the vast planning and development literature. Too often, this is merely given lip service. For example, while structures and processes may

appear to involve local people in decision-making, the reality is that their contributions end up being marginalised, ignored or manipulated.

Even when there are good intentions and a genuine will to institute a participatory paradigm, problems and tensions may be encountered (Mayoux, 1995: 241). Firstly, the need for consensus among participants around needs and aims may prove to be an insurmountable barrier in view of the many competing interests and divides within the 'community.' Secondly, participatory processes are costly in terms of time and resources. Finally, the power differential between donor and recipient or service-provider and client is a fundamental barrier to full participation and an on-going source of tension.

Craig and Porter (1997: 229) suggest that participation and effective management are "deeply contradictory". While the goal of the former is to share power and decision-making, the latter is premised on centralised control and predetermined objectives. Furthermore, the authority and expression of local people's interests will be limited. Only those interests that are relevant to the project will carry weight. In addition, Craig and Porter (1997:231) note that:

People who are best at expressing themselves within the high moral and technical frame of the project will thus have greater influence. This is why educated elites and males tend to expect and get a greater portion of the project's resources to flow in their direction.

In such a view, the growing influence of rational management procedures and tools such as the logical frameworks mean that management is becoming more technical, centralised into fewer hands, and seemingly inflexible.

Rational Management Procedures and Participatory Practice among South Africa NGOs

Participation has emerged as an important buzzword in the South African case study research. All the organisations involved in the research acknowledged the importance of participation whether in interviews or NGO documentation. The research revealed several examples of how the new management practices and donor-orientation of NGOs have interacted with participatory processes.

The PEOPLE aid chain above suggests that organisations trying to use rational management procedures within a people-centred participatory orientation may encounter enormous difficulties. In that case, the multiple functions and attributes of a particular 'integrated' approach to development proved to be insufficiently integrated, and management, project design and participatory practices were used in discrete, and therefore not ideal, ways. Inadequacies in the implementation of the approach and resistance to its use at many levels compounded the problems.

In the KHP case, logframe based systems of monitoring meant that reporting was abstracted from the real experiences and needs of the communities where KHP worked. Communities were insulated from the process, with participatory practices pursued at the community level and rationally managed ones at the office. Managers were caught between these two systems, with fundamental tensions emerging around orientation, learning and the meaning of their work.

Neither case, however, proves that rational systems are antithetical to participatory ones, instead suggesting that the two seem to work in parallel. A summary of our findings on participatory development in the other South African NGOs under study further illustrates the difficulty of making a decisive link. Our incertitude comes from our

research material – which suggest that rational management tools are among many factors that impede participation – and from our limited work at the community level.¹¹ We divide the discussion into tensions around specific management tools, donor interactions with partners, levels of organisational commitment to participation, and project design and packaging.

Donor requirements impede participatory processes

Similar to the KHP case, donor priorities and imperatives were observed to hinder participatory processes in several organisations. Local staff perceived donor agendas as impinging on the room for transformational participation. One respondent summarised the tension in the following question: “how can we be people-centred, when we are pushed [by donors] to be output and delivery-oriented?” Another respondent observed that the “strong focus on delivery...meant that those NGOs which are not delivery-focussed are not counted as performing”.

Respondents expressed frustration at how donor practices cause them to lose credibility and trust among their project participants. They cited as particularly problematic the way in which their commitment to respond to the needs of their beneficiaries is undermined by strict restrictions on project content. Local people participate in initial project phases and determine their project requests. However, in practice, the priorities of local people are translated into proposals, and are “chopped and changed by donors” according to their own funding priorities. Respondents explained that “project staff are left with the daunting task of having to explain why members needs weren’t given priority.”

Field-level respondents were aware that accountability was a pressing concern and donors’ requirements were getting stricter though none spoke explicitly of rational management procedures. Fieldworkers described how each field visit involved an exchange of written reports accounting for field activities from field staff and volunteers to the visiting office staff member. Field staff described the training in which they had to participate in order to perform their reporting and administration duties. Some clearly were not confident about whether they were meeting the standards. As one respondent noted:

The responsibility for reporting was...borne by the volunteer representative (often a secretary or treasurer) of the local group project. The highly formalised

¹¹ The research project was limited in its reach to the community level. Our primary contacts in the SA NGOs were staff at management level. These staff members were the usual point of entry to the organisation and tended to control the researchers’ access (whether intentionally or because the researcher would rely on the particular staff member for such guidance). Although field visits and informal discussions with local project participants were undertaken, these opportunities were scarce because of time constraints and logistics. Contact with these participants was usually short and superficial, and staff members were generally present, possibly creating a barrier to open discussion. Also, unless the researcher is immersed in the organisation over time, it is difficult to get a sense of how communication systems work and to confirm whether what actually happened on the ground is reflected in reports and vice-versa. This type of ethnographic study was not possible within the framework of this project, although the PEOPLE (this chapter) and GLP (chapter 6) aid chain studies come closest. Another concern is that project participants tended to be highly sensitized to visits from donors, consultants and researchers. Visits were generally undertaken to field sites that were in closest proximity to the head office suggesting that other outsiders would most likely be taken to these sites as well. As such, there was little opportunity for eliciting spontaneous responses and observing situations that were not “performed” for visitors.

meeting procedures were also evidence of the growing standardisation, professionalism and influence of management procedures. Even in the most rural of areas, there would be a chair presiding over a meeting according to a prepared agenda, with a secretary taking minutes and a treasurer who would account for the finances.

The management and reporting requirements advocated by donors have been criticised for being overly time-consuming. These functions alone have been found to divert valuable time away from work on the field. One of the interviewees was "saddened" that fulfilling donor reporting requirements consumed so much of his time that his role in developing programmes and working closely with project participants had diminished. Fieldworkers also complained of the daunting and time-consuming nature of administrative requirements. In many of the case study NGOs, people at all levels were conscience of the need to attract funding and impress donors; knowledge about operational aspects of the organisation was less apparent through the ranks. Thus, it almost seems that NGOs spend considerable time and energy to raise funds to sustain themselves and then spend more time trying to fulfil the requirements to keep the funding flowing. The preoccupation with funding and sustainability overshadows the needs and priorities of project participants.

A further difficulty for human-centred development approaches arises out of the linearity and rationality associated with the logical frameworks and associated tools. There is a tendency for international managers to want "tangible" results, those that can be seen and measured. Such a bias is built into the structure of the logical frameworks' M&E approach, with its emphasis on detailed and 'objectively verifiable' indicators. A participatory approach to development may mean that some objectives are not set prior to commencing, and that there are qualitative and interpretative assessments that are of crucial importance. One respondent explained the dilemma as follows: "The quantitative orientation of it gets in the way...[since] programmes are really process-driven. If you don't include quantity, you are failing the donor, but quality is the missing element there... Not everybody is logical or left-brained."

Donors are not participatory in their interactions with local partners

Another criticism of donors is that they seemed to prefer to relate more to staff and particularly at management level. So while donors strongly push for participation and expect that this be demonstrated at all levels of the organisation they tend to keep their distance from the grassroots. As one interviewee pointed out:

"I would say donors do appear to want people who can relate to them on an equal intellectual level. This obviously sounds really arrogant but there is an advantage to that in that while funders like local people, locals often can't place the local in the broader context. The picture gets distorted. It's difficult to 'get both'. Donors have to understand that there's a real gap between people at a grassroots level and getting those people functioning at a management level."

Respondents at the office and field level described funders' perceived preference for contact with senior office staff, or unwillingness to visit field sites, as indications of disinterest in participation. They interpreted a lack of inclusive discussion with staff at all levels of the organisation as a sign that participation was not taken seriously. They mentioned donors who rarely visited the recipient NGO and cases of 'project visits' where the donor showed no interest in going to the field to interact with the local people involved. Respondents thought that more frequent field visits, and visits that took donor

representatives away from sites located in close proximity to the largest cities, were important.

Lack of consultation around elements of project design, funding difficulties or project expectations was also interpreted by some respondents as inadequate commitment to participatory principles. Since consultation – and inclusive decision-making ideally – are central to participatory ethos the lack of equality around funding made some directors and managers uncomfortable. This was particularly true where the organisations had strong formal statements of partnership and participation yet difficulties in communication or personal linkages.

Organisations may lack commitment or capabilities to be participatory

Weak organisational commitment to participation, at all points in the aid chain, may preclude participatory practice. In some cases, local NGOs experience donor's participatory principles as rhetoric and "buzzwords", with either little support for or pressure on the NGO to engage in such practices. Likewise, SA NGOs at times package their projects within the "participatory" framework even when they are not.

Donors have been criticised for not prioritizing the needs of project participants enough. The ethical responsibility of donors has been called into question by one of the case study NGOs. This particular organisation initiated literacy classes for senior citizens that were deprived of an education during the apartheid era. Yet interactions between the INGO and SA NGO around the project suggest that donor priorities related to management, strategic orientation, and impact were placed before those of the beneficiaries (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Beneficiary or organisational priorities

By Isaivani Hyman

Literacy classes for senior citizens who were deprived of an education during the apartheid era were seen as a novel idea, interesting research opportunity and suitable pilot project in the 1990s. Three years of funding, secured via an intermediary organisation from a back donor, provided for approximately 80 learners, all over 50 years of age. There was a great deal of media attention and interest; the project was an example of a successful partnership among a donor, a higher learning institution and a community-based project. However, once the three year funding cycle ended, there were no local alternative sources of funding. The donor moved on to support other emerging NGOs, in line with its strategic priorities. The literacy project had to shutdown.

This case study raises questions about the extent of responsibility borne by donors. Literacy was well funded in the apartheid era when education was viewed as a political struggle. However, in the democratic era, donors abandoned the sector and government has not given it priority. Initial interest in the project emerged, perhaps, because as a pilot it served as an important case study for the international donor. However, a respondent posed the following questions: "It is all very nice for donors to fund projects. But it ... becomes a question of ethics. Was it nice to start in the first place or not? What happens to the 75 year old and even 80 year old learner who for the first time is holding a pen in his hand or for the first time is able to go and vote? Literacy training is a long process. It is more than the mechanics of reading and writing. There are emotional effects."

Indeed anguish is apparent in one 78 year old learner's observation: "the main thing I'm worried about is the closing of classes. If they stop it, where can we learn? We'll just die blind!"

Overall, despite feeling abandoned and desperate to continue their classes, the learners were still grateful to the donor for starting such a project in the first place. They clearly felt that the progress made was worthwhile and would not have happened were it not for the donor funds.

Some SA NGOs, meanwhile, appeared so heavily oriented towards donors that the development of the local people associated with the organisation had been stifled. In one case, although the NGO claimed to have participatory structures and processes, its commitment to properly instituting participatory development was not apparent. A review of the donor documentation and the recipient organisation's proposals and profiles showed that participation was a key objective and feature of the funding relationship and of the organisations themselves.

A key funding criteria of the donor was that:

Projects should encourage and enable the full participation of poor people in both the project itself and in wider social and political processes

The donor also affirmed in a policy document that it

... will continue to influence and achieve demonstrable changes in the unjust and unequal power relationships and systems, structures and processes that discriminate against the poor...

The NGO also highlighted its commitment to participation on paper. In its annual report the organisation described its "participatory and community-driven approaches". One of the key strategies highlighted in the document was "community-driven programme design, implementation and monitoring". Also, in its funding proposal the organisation described its philosophy and approach, including the following provision:

Participatory capacity and capability development enhances informed direction and realistic rural empowerment

Despite the documentation, commitment to participatory development was weak. Staff members held tightly onto many of the activities and responsibilities that volunteers could easily have fulfilled, and the management had no will to change it. So for example, with an HIV/AIDS education programme, staff members were sent for training while the volunteer network was completely excluded. One of the community project visits was most telling. A staff member working closely with project participants over time observed that they had not made much progress in their twenty years of association with the organisation. Although funding had been spent and accounted for, peoples' lives had not changed much. The respondent was hard pressed to say with certainty that they had benefited from contact with the NGO in any way, no matter how small or intangible.

Similar dynamics were observed in other cases. In one field visit a project that looked excellent on paper was found to have a handful of participants, all women linked to a local leader, who retained a key decision-making role in the project. Some NGOs seem to foster the dependency amongst their project participants in order to justify their jobs and existence. Equally problematic is the tendency for much of the funding from donors to get drained by overhead costs and salaries.

Within the sample involved in this research project, there were also examples of organisations that empowered their beneficiaries. For instance, one NGO moved from a centralised structure to a more participatory one. Initially, this organisation's head office handled management, operations and finances for the community organisations based in rural areas. Later, the organisation decided to train the volunteer management teams to run the local projects while the head office served as a funding conduit and organised capacity-building workshops and ongoing support.

These positive and negative examples should not be taken to dismiss the participatory work done by many of the organisations (including the ones just described). Rather, these examples suggest that the documentation – either of front-end principles or post-facto reports – may differ greatly from practice. Equally important is that donor influences or not, NGO commitment to participatory development is problematic.

Project design and packaging

Donor practices seem to have had a significant influence on the size or scale of projects. In their funding proposals, organisations outline large-scale projects that gloss over local specific contexts and needs. In the case of one NGO, the local projects were envisaged with different elements because they were located in vastly different regions; but these were all packaged into a single HIV/AIDS funding proposal because that was the funding priority of the donor at the time. As noted in the KHP study, donors generally do not prioritise assisting organisations with research, needs assessment, and small projects.

As noted in chapter 4, the project and project cycle focus pushed by donors is often “out of sync” with the reality on the ground. One interviewee observed that projects in themselves are not developmental. The time constraints of project funding, normally three or five year cycles, and the linearity of frameworks were found to be completely unworkable on the ground. Although it has eluded the donor world, in the NGO world there is a common understanding that development takes time and never proceeds smoothly. All of the fieldworkers interviewed described situations where getting people to meet at a specified time is difficult enough, let alone ensuring that project objectives are achieved. Meetings normally compete with other priorities such as pension or grant payment days, family needs, and taking refuge from inclement weather.

An additional dynamic documented in the research is that the donor or funding-orientation of NGOs tends to exclude rather than promote participation of beneficiary communities. For example, although some projects or community groups serviced by the NGOs may be worthy, they may not fall under funding criteria of donors and therefore receive less attention. As one interviewee pointed out,

“...there's a saying that each NGO has their 'blue chip' communities...you keep going back to that community because you know you will be successful, which will mean you will continue to attract funds...”

5.6. Conclusion

An objective of the research project was to assess the impact of rational management procedures on participation and practice, and also to determine whether and how such procedures are integrated throughout the levels of the organisation. The material presented in this chapter represents our findings related to the three questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, namely,

- To what extent has the use of rational management tools been shaped by needs and priorities on the ground and not simply donor agendas and practices?

- Does their use in managing organisational development and projects inhibit the NGOs' ability to take on participatory, rights-based or other people-centred approaches?
- How and to what extent can their use be associated with improvements in the quality of NGOs' performance and impact?

Our findings are not conclusive. Certainly donor requirements are the most important factor motivating SA NGOs to use logical frameworks and tightly associated M&E and reporting systems. While numerous managers and directors mentioned certain benefits associated with their use, only one respondent suggested that the logframe was a particularly good tool. Instead, respondents saw it as flawed tool, and one among many.

More interesting perhaps is the ways in which organisations were working to adapt the rational tools, using the language of logframes without the matrix, including participatory elements, or attaching narrative reports to the quantitative indicators. While some organisations tried to contain the rational approaches to those specialised staff, directors, and select managers responsible for contact with donor, we also encountered efforts to use it extensively within participatory approaches. There was no one explanation for the strategy taken: in one case it was the attitude of leadership, in another the approach taken by the international partners; and in still others a process of adapting the tools through trial-and-error. Again, we can conclude that ultimately the tools are shaped by needs and priorities of the organisation, as they interact with those of beneficiaries and donors, of course within a complex setting of unequal power and negotiating capacity.

With respect to the impacts of rational management techniques on participatory, rights-based or other people-centred approaches, our finding suggest that there are element of the techniques that tend to complicate such orientations. A project structure and outputs orientation is difficult to combine with a learning or 'bottom-up' approach. Monitoring and reporting formats did not capture the realities of the development process on the ground, and were generally too complicated for use by field staff and recipient communities. At the same time, staff felt they risked penalties for not reaching milestones and targets. The tools thus failed to reveal problems or contribute to learning, and presumably contributed little to the kinds of mid-stream adjustments that they meant to assist.

In sum, when we take a step backwards and assess rational management tools in downstream organisations, there is no clear and decisive advantages associated with their use. No distinctive improvements in development practice can be associated with their use. Our findings suggest that logframes can be useful in getting NGO staff – and stakeholders – to think about cause- and effect relationships assumed in a project's design, and in considering information requirements early on. In later phases, and in application to M&E, the many disadvantages encountered with logframes suggest caution in their use, and the need to consider alternative approaches. Strategic planning as employed in the case study NGOs varied from one organisation to the next, though most respondents found it useful; again, such diversity in practices suggests that donor requirements that NGOs conduct such exercise assure nothing in terms of future planning, strategic positioning, or sustainability. International partners would do better to discuss and negotiate the types of organisational development most needed in the NGO – or in the partnership – and work from there.

Chapter 6. Gender and aid: Power and negotiation in gender mainstreaming

By Vicci Tallis

Editor's introduction: *The previous two chapters explored partnership and participation, and related themes, with illustrations from our aid chains and in-depth NGO research. This chapter uses the material from one aid chain to tease out the way power is negotiated and key development concepts understood by different actors in the aid relationship. Like the People aid chain presented in Chapter 5, this case study examines the numerous links in a complex aid chain, looking both vertically and horizontally. However unlike the PEOPLE case, where lack of adherence to a new approach stemmed principally from perhaps its packaging, or presentation to local partners and communities, or inherent weaknesses in the approach, in the chapter here power and conditions are negotiated much more openly. The material in this chapter thus allows us to interrogate the ways in which at least one set of aid organisations worked with a complex, politically-rooted concept, both at the level of ideas, procedures and practices.*

6.1. Introduction

This case study explores the influence of a donor organisation operating in South Africa on understandings of, and action around, gender inequality and its role in increasing vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. There are many international donors funding HIV and AIDS in South Africa; this case study focuses on the aid chain associated with the HIV and AIDS Gender Link Programme (GLP) [pseudonym], which aims, amongst other things, to support the integration of gender into the work of partner organisations. The programme was selected because of the reputation of the organisations involved, their history with gender programming, and the personal experiences of the researcher, which resulted in a particular understanding of the agencies that make up the aid chain to which GLP is linked, in-depth knowledge of the gender processes adopted and facilitated by GLP, and a willingness by those interviewed to be open and transparent in their reflections.

The background and structure of the GLP is presented to highlight the seven levels of the aid chain. The role of donors is explored with a focus on who is pushing the gendered agenda. Finally GLP's approach to integrating gender - "gender mainstreaming" - is discussed in relation to two key challenges: the use and meaning of the terms "gender" and "mainstream" and whether organisations have the capacity to integrate gender in the technical way that is required by donors.

The aid chain

The GLP started as an initiative of several international NGOs with a common concern to contribute to reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS and promoting tolerance and respect for those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. Creative, dynamic, relevant and appropriate measures were sought, and the approach adopted was to be multisectoral (not health based), rights-based, and attentive to gender integration in all interventions. Civil society, especially community based and non-governmental organisations, were key targets for capacity enhancement.

GLP funded a dozen organisations involved in HIV and AIDS work. These NGOs and CBOs were selected to match with GLPs' own priorities regarding strategic priorities, geographic location, and sectoral strengths (e.g. capacity building, service delivery and advocacy). GLP provided for backstopping (backup support) and training to NGO and CBO staff around programme management skills and HIV and AIDS mainstreaming, skills seen as gaps in the South African civil society response that formed a barrier to effective prevention and care.

A second phase of the project envisioned an expanded number of “partners” in a wider geographic area and a shift in the conceptual framework to highlight the organisation’s strategic themes: strategic areas related to prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, integrated community-base care, and promotion of the rights of those affected directly by HIV and AIDS. Funded organisations are “assigned” to one of the strategic themes, although many organisations have activities spanning more than one theme. While gender is still seen as a cross-cutting issue, it is only explicitly mentioned in one strategic area, which could imply that it is not equally important to the other thematic areas.

The GLP aid chain can be represented seven levels, depicted below (see Figure 6.1):

Figure 6.1. Levels in the GLP aid chain

Level one: Back donors (e.g. DFID, CIDA) in different countries, including governments, who fund the different INGOs. The South African office and partners do not often interface with the back donors.

Level two: The INGOs, each of which contributes a different amount to GLP, although this does not appear to affect the decision making powers. There are 5 INGO’s in the programme.

Level three: The International Programme Committee, made up of one representative from each of the contributing INGOs, informs the programme in terms of overall strategy and direction as well as reviewing progress and contributing to problem solving. Local staff, level four below, attend programme committee meetings to provide information but not necessarily to make decisions.

Level four: An Advisory Board comprised of South African experts was set up at the beginning of the programme to ensure local participation in overall strategic direction of the programme. The structure is made up of local experts with experience in human rights, gender and HIV and AIDS as well as women living with HIV and AIDS. An evaluation of GLP suggested that the local expertise on the Committee was under-utilised and should be more involved in shaping the programme.

Level five: The GLP South African office employs a small number of local people (1-5) to oversee and manage the programme. The 3 coordinators of the South African office have varying degrees of experience and skills.

Level six: At present there are over 15 partners, some working nationally and others in the targeted geographical areas. Most are involved in service delivery, with a few others involved in capacity building or advocacy work.

Level 7: GLP partners work with both functional and geographical communities. Geographical communities include women, men and children in cities, townships, villages and rural areas. Functional communities, include sectors such as youth, women, men in soccer. Some partners work directly with other NGO’s and CBO’s and others with policy and decision makers.

Research conducted for this case study entailed interviews with people at levels 2 – 6, review of internal and external evaluations, vision, policy and planning documents, reports and partner-produced documentation, and participant-observation at GLP meetings.

6.2. Defining the role of donors

The primary role of a donor is to provide money for specific activities or programmes. GLP has, relatively speaking, small amounts of money to give to partners. However, funds were initially committed to partners for a three year period, renewable annually, and most organisations have been taken into the second three-year phase of funding. The funding climate has changed radically, with continued funding contingent on demonstration of progress and impact. This change is explained by those who drive the agenda as increasing accountability and the need for evidence that expected results are achieved. In the funding environment, ‘lack of capacity’ has been identified as the key barrier to effectiveness, impact, and development. Deeper structural causes for the failure of development are seldom articulated.

Likewise, the INGOs recognize that long-term sustainable impacts are unlikely if funding is directed only to small independent projects; an emphasis on advocacy is seen as one way to promote long-term change and impact. The placement of money thus is seldom the only role for donors. Two key additional roles are in the areas of capacity-building and advocacy programs, as discussed below.

For many donors a critical role is providing 'technical assistance' or capacity building. The role of donors in capacity building is a contentious issue debated in the literature and increasingly in civil society. As noted by Seekings (2001) the issue of capacity building has been at the core of donor support for CBO's for a long time. Capacity building is articulated by donors as an investment in helping achieve long-term goals. Unclear, however, is whose long term goals the capacity building serves. According to Seekings (2001:5) the key objective of capacity building is to focus on building the organization, and not only the individual, to develop "new forms of action on a sustained and sustainable basis"; capacity building is a "profoundly political activity". Key questions include who develops the capacity building agenda, who determines who builds capacity and how capacity is built.

Capacity building needs are often *defined* by the donor, and frequently centre on enabling organisations to fit into the management and reporting approaches proposed by the donor. International donors may use their own staff – often from the North – to provide capacity building support or sometimes local consultants, again often identified by the donor, provide the "technical support". According to one such consultant, even though the capacity builder is a local consultant, the donor is their client and it is the donor needs, specifications and terms of reference that shapes the agenda. In cases where donors encourage their partners to identify and articulate their own capacity building needs, they usually do not cede control over either decision-making or the actual capacity building process to the partner.

GLP have a strong, stated emphasis on capacity building. In the first phase, the aim was to enable local organisations to, in a short space of time, drive their own agendas and work in ways that would impact most effectively HIV and AIDS. This strategy was implemented via the funding of capacity building organisations to provide support to other local organisations. For example, GLP initiated an 18 month capacity building process led by a partnership of local consultants. Three training foci were set, based on an in-house situational analysis and the South African National AIDS Review. However, the consultants had space to, and did, deviate substantially from the original plan. Furthermore, GLP funded specialist organisations dedicated to enhancing the capacity of NGOs and CBOs to address gender and HIV and AIDS.

By the second phase, this approach changed to a directly implemented, technical and externally led process as noted in the GLP strategic plan:

Programme strategies will produce a number of outputs in order to achieve the stated objectives. These will include: partners having the technical and organisational capacities they need to work effectively; a curriculum on Rights-Based Approaches to HIV and AIDS; at least two Community Learning Sites; two Good Practice Guides and skills building workshops based on the lessons learned under each objective; and GLP external relations and advocacy initiatives.

The thrust of the programme has been short term contracts with consultants, both local and international, to do specific pieces of capacity building; it is not as a coherent process with room for change. The result has been a series of capacity building workshops and the use of partner platforms as spaces to address the donor identified themes.

Similar dynamics are apparent in the area of advocacy. In South Africa, prior to democracy, international civil society donors provided funds to South African organisations as a sign of solidarity with them in their struggles for equality and freedom. The international organisations lobbied globally for the goals of their South African partners to be advanced. This relationship constituted a crucial ancillary and non-financial role for international civil society donors: advocacy and activism on behalf of and in solidarity with the agendas, struggles, of local people and their organisations. Advocacy continues as a key function for INGOs linked to GLP. Advocacy tends to take three forms: direct advocacy work by the INGOs themselves in their country of origin and in their international office; indirect advocacy via the funding of “overseas” partners involved in advocacy; and direct influence on the agendas of partners, for example, to change organisations’ approaches, such as raising gender consciousness or shifting the range of issues addressed. This last form of influence may be stated or un-stated. These advocacy strategies may be intertwined. GLP funds two local organisations involved in advocacy around human rights. One organisation specifically addresses gender issues, while the other has attempted to integrate gender into their various advocacy campaigns. GLP have, from the outset, promoted gender as a critical component of any HIV and AIDS programme, and have directly encouraged partners to address gender inequality, as is elaborated in the following sub-section.

Power and partnerships

The relationship between donor and funded organisation is essentially one of power. As Kabeer (1994) notes, all institutions are relations of power. However, more careful analysis, based on specific organisational relationships, is needed to understand how power is deployed and with what consequences. Control over human bodies, physical and financial resources, and, important, rule-setting ideology confers power (Batilwala, noted in Kabeer 1994) all of which may enter into the funding relationship.

Donor organisations can, and do, wield power over those organisations they fund, in respect to what the organisation does, how it does it and how success is measured. Power is also evident in the “ownership” of ideas, materials and programmes that are developed. Often copyright rests with the donor and not the partner, or donors claim the success and learning of a particular project or organisation as their own. The ultimate power lies in the fact that the donor can pull the plug on the funding.

Hypothetically donor and funded NGOs can work together more as equals. Such a relationship would require an upfront negotiation of power, acknowledgement of the different contributions each party brings to the process, methods to make the relationship less hierarchical and a built in, neutral accountability mechanism.

GLP view their relationships with funded organisations as “partnerships”. According to Fowler (2001:6) a partnership should “help set a consensus framework within which different parties and their interests can be negotiated”. As such, a partnership could imply mutuality, interdependence, power-balance, and fairness. Given the nature of the relationship between funder and recipient, it is critical to acknowledge and then discuss the issue of power and to analyse whether such relationships can be “equal” and whether they can be viewed as a partnership.

Crucial to such a discussion is to debate what is valued in the partnership. During the research a senior GLP staff member questioned whether the partnership can be an equal relationship when one partner has the money. The funded NGO’s expertise, understanding of and relationship with communities and ability to deliver, the very reasons why the organisation received funding in the first place] were not – in the respondent’s mind - given equal value to the monetary input. Similar findings were noted in interviews with other organisations (see chapter 4 on partnerships and Smith and Bornstein (2001)).

So while the donor articulates the relationship as a partnership, the possibility of an equal partnership is ruled out. This is illustrated in the following example. In 2002, GLP organised a two-day capacity building workshop to build skills in monitoring and evaluation using as an example the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) as a possible tool. In early 2003, at a forum bringing together GLP staff and partners, LFA was again presented; South African partners began to realise that this was a management requirement of GLP, rather than an option as they had assumed. One partner organisation argued that: the LFA was not the only tool for planning; based on their experience of using it they had problems with its linear nature and rigidity; and they already had plans to use alternative, more qualitative frameworks. This was turned down by GLP on the grounds that use of the LFA had become a management requirement and that in attending the capacity building workshop, partners had endorsed the plan. An intense debate ensued between the one organisation and the donor, with the facilitator, a GLP consultant, interjecting and accusing the organisation of "not being fair" to the donor by insisting on using an alternative method for monitoring and evaluation. This was challenged by the partner organisation, drawing on an earlier discussion about power in the partnership. The organisation stated that their understanding of partnership workshop, with the designated time for discussions and debates, gave the impression that GLP was opening up space in which the relationship between donor and partners could be developed through open and honest dialogue; this could include disagreeing with each other. After a "cooling off period" GLP finally agreed to allow the organisation to use an alternative planning, monitoring and evaluation framework.

It is important to note that though this particular organisation was able to challenge the donor, not all are so able. The interpretation of the silence of most of the partners is that many organisations are not comfortable with disagreeing with donors for fear of losing support, not "biting the hand that feeds". In this instance, other organisations did not take part in the discussions partly because, as was later explained, they view GLP as a "good donor", did not want to appear "ungrateful", did not want to incur the wrath of the facilitator and were unfamiliar with alternative approaches to monitoring and evaluation. These, this last dynamics are an outcome of an exclusive focus on LFA and derivative M&E approaches at the capacity-building workshop.

Individuals within the organisation under discussion had a history of challenging donors in general and GLP in particular, and had previous internal debates about role and influence of donors. Although the debate in the meeting was tense and unpleasant, the organisation's representatives did not fear that GLP would stop funding them. Subsequently, other NGOs approached GLP to use similar qualitative methods but were told they were unable to do so.

Whose agenda is gender?

There has been extensive debate and discussion around who pushes the gender agenda. For example, some writers acknowledge that gender has been heavily promoted in international development circles by gender policy advocates, who represent a relatively small group of bilateral agencies, such as CIDA and SIDA, sometimes leading to accusations of a donor driven agenda. However Himmelstrand (1997) notes that with the absence of guiding policies produced by governments at

country level, donors have been “forced” to write their own WID/GAD strategies.¹² Such strategies are limited in scope, often not based on the context into which they will be implemented. They are products of the donors’ biases and planned programmes. Jackson (1998) questions who can express women’s gender interests and how legitimate it is for “outsiders”, such as development agencies, to impose concepts such as the separate interests of gender and the subordination of women in the face of apparent disregard of local contexts and cultures.

In exploring the relationship between donor and funded organisations, in this case GLP and their partners, it emerges that donors influence the local development agenda, and that of their partners through their funding strategy, management requirements, advocacy strategies to change issues and through capacity building, using donor conceptualised frameworks, ideologies and approaches. This is clearly not a neutral, apolitical process or relationship. This section provides a deeper analysis of the influence that donors in general and GLP in particular, have on funded organizations, especially in relation to addressing gender. We look at how donors push for specific approaches to gender and, secondly, the mechanisms by which they effect that influence.

Money and resources allows donors power over partners, and donors have subtle and not so subtle ways of directing the aid process (Macdonald, 1994; Hulme and Edwards, 1997). Donors will want to influence change on the basis of their own ideological position. For example, the international organisations in this case study have a long history of working for gender justice and this is explicit in their approach to HIV and AIDS: addressing gender is critical to effective programming.

Given that the influence of donors is a reality it is vital to examine *how* they influence partners – both the process of influencing and the mechanisms used to effect their influence. In terms of the process of influencing gender integration some key issues are: whether the intention to influence is stated or unstated, is it top down, negotiated or participatory, and is funding dependant on addressing gender. If the donor approaches gender in a feminist way the reality of power will be recognised and negotiated. The fundamental question is whether organisations *want* to integrate gender. In other words, do funded NGOs have a choice? Is it acceptable to “force” gender mainstreaming or should it be a more organic process?

According to Geisler, et al (1999), insisting on gender may result in a “ritualistic and meaningless insertion of gender paragraphs which have no consequence on actual project performance”. Similarly, Wallace (1998) notes that donor promoted approaches to gender often risk treating highly political processes as ones that can be produced on demand, as a simple consequence of adding up inputs.¹³

In such cases, questions arise about the appropriate role for donors in the capacity building of their partners. Macdonald (1994) notes that even if the donor organisation has established credibility, whether donors should create spaces for dialogue is still open to question. Who influences the pace and direction of the dialogue? What is the most appropriate role of the donor in support and capacity building?

A critical part of the research was to understand the role that both staff (international and local) and partners felt GLP played or should play in influencing gender integration. A

¹² Organisations were expected to outline their own approach to promoting gender equality, whether within a Women in Development (WID) or Gender and Development (GAD) perspective, two of the dominant international approaches [Moser 1993].

¹³ Editor’s note: Other case studies in this report reflect both of these dynamics, of treating highly political processes in mechanistic ways and of including project elements as essential components of a development practice in a ritualistic, and non-meaningful way.

staff member at one of the international funding organisations in the GLP aid chain noted that gender mainstreaming, or the integration of gender as a donor driven process, "cannot be escaped but can be done sensitively". According to her, their approach is transparent and negotiates power from the outset of the relationship, long before funding is received. Partners know that they are expected to address gender inequality; the donor has a set of guidelines, which are shared with partners. While the organisation does not "do capacity building", they facilitate dialogue between partners by bringing them together to discuss gender.

Down the aid chain, GLP's approach is somewhat different. For example, in September 2003, GLP held a "Gender Mainstreaming" workshop. A gender "expert" from one of the INGO partner organisations facilitated the programme. Local organisations were listed in the programme documents, and a local partner organisation was asked to co-facilitate. However, local participation was requested once the programme had already been drafted, and thus seemed, according to one partner NGO respondent, like "window dressing". During the workshop two donor driven themes were identified as critical: "community resilience" and greater involvement of people living with HIV and AIDS. The assumption was that organisations were not aware of and were not already involving people with HIV. Moreover, partners were not given an opportunity to define for themselves the issues that they thought were critical.

Partners' responses to GLPs role in influencing their work on gender were mixed. One person interviewed noted that they know that GLP is "gender sensitive but that they do not push the line". Another respondent noted that GLP did not push the gender agenda hard enough and that there was something lacking in their approach. Generally GLP were seen as "good funders" who are flexible and prepared to fund broadly. While they do "insist" that partners look at gender, this is acceptable to most of the partners.

The research interviews reflected on GLP's strategies to mainstream gender by asking partners and staff how GLP address the issue of gender. Specifically, respondents were asked about the following:

- Proposal procedures that included specific gender questions or a gender checklist that has to be completed when applying for funds
- NGO staff attendance at partner platforms or workshops addressing gender issues
- Site visits by funders or their representatives for monitoring and support where specific questions around gender are asked
- Funding of specific organisations that deal with gender and HIV and AIDS
- Use of gender sensitive indicators in monitoring and evaluation.
- Outcomes of the gender focus that were seen as positive

Responses to the various questions were generally that gender elements had been included at various stages of the grant-making process. Specific questions in the funding proposal process addressed gender, SA NGO staff were expected to attend a two day training workshop, and site visits by funders – or evaluators – explicitly looked at gender issues.

Evaluations of the GLP have examined partnership, management/leadership, and governance. According to the resulting documents, GLP was a pioneer in linking gender to HIV and AIDS in South Africa, and enabled partners to develop strong sensitivity to the subject. For example, following a partner platform on gender, one participant

remarked, "I thought good gender practice involves putting women in executive positions. Now I know that it is about a lot more than that." Partners were positive about GLP's strong guidance in relation to gender. The external evaluation found that gender issues were integrated into GLP's monitoring visits and capacity building workshops, and into partners' indicators of success.

The evaluations also identified measures to improve gender mainstreaming, which were subsequently incorporated into strategic plans and programmes. Such measures included: requiring potential partners to include a gender analysis in the problem description of their project proposal; requiring partners to develop gender-sensitive strategies and indicators that reflect a gender analysis for their project; enabling partners to acquire the knowledge, skills and resources that they need in order to mainstream gender into their work; focusing on gender issues, in both partners' projects and organisations, in quarterly monitoring visits and reporting mechanisms, and internal and external evaluations; and monitoring and evaluating GLPs own performance in achieving gender equity.

These objectives demonstrate a clear plan to highlight gender. At the same time, they are mechanistic and focus more on the technical and less on the political. Such an approach requires that partners and GLP have specific gender expertise. The research shows that this expertise largely does not exist. As one example, although partners should have indicators that reflect a gender analysis for their project, GLP have no clear indicators of "successful" gender mainstreaming. While indicators may not be the best way to measure success, there are clear indicators for all other objectives of the programme; the lack of gendered indicators is thus telling.

Indeed, gendered indicators are also not apparent in most of the partner organisations. Organisations are addressing gender issues often because of the demands of the epidemic and not because the organisation uses a gender discourse and lens. Indicators are quantitative not qualitative, poorly adapted to the specifics of programmes and their dimensions, and limited to immediate observable impacts, as opposed to the longer term structural and strategic changes associated with fundamental shifts in power relations. For example, a partner organisation has three GLP funded programmes: a peer educator project, home-based care and a youth programme. The peer educator programme targets single, low-income women, many of whom are sex-workers, and addresses women's practical interests. However, an analysis of the indicators show that gender power relations and the realities of women's lives are not taken into account. In fact, the indicators are the same as those for the youth programme. The organisation disaggregates indicators that are used to monitor success by gender, however the indicators include quantifiable measures that in no way address the realities of women's lives.

Understanding of gender as a social construction involving both men and women, and programming for both, is also contentious. In one case, a SA NGO had a home based care program in multiple communities, none of which had any men involved; according to a respondent, the programme thus did not challenge the societal role of women as "carers". In another case, GLP funded a consultant to assist in the development of an organisational policy that included gender. Respondents from the organisation see the resulting policy as a qualified success: "The role of GLP was to introduce gender issues, although the target was women. Now we feel we need to include men to stop feelings of resentment". This statement highlights that while staff appreciates GLP's support, gender (or the perceived focus on women) remains a donor driven process, with the organisation having to deal with the consequences – in this case the feelings of male

resentment. The experience clearly illustrates that when gender mainstreaming is seen as a technical process, and does not address personal and political elements the results may not benefit the organisation or community. Gender mainstreaming is addressed more fully in the following section.

Other gender projects initiated by GLP were perceived as fully successful. Respondents mentioned funding of a publication looking at women and HIV and AIDS, one-day workshops on the issue, and consultation around key gender issues. Agreement among the various organisations involved that there was need for a more enduring structure to permit discussion of different approaches to HIV and AIDS led to the emergence of a collective forum, which has persisted for more than 5 years.

6.3. Challenges of gender mainstreaming

A look at how gender mainstreaming, as the approach GLP, and many donors, have used to promote a gendered approach in funded organisations, is addressed by various organisations in the aid chain highlights both issues of power and of impact. Differing understandings of "gender", "mainstream", and "capacity" are the focus of discussion.

Definitions of "gender" and the "mainstream"

The meaning of gender is contested and thus the interpretation of how to address gender issues varies across discourses. Common to most definitions is a focus on gender as socially constructed roles and responsibilities that are assigned to men and women. The feminist interpretation of gender sees as central an understanding of the unequal power relationships between men and women. Thus, in the "non-feminist" definitions and approaches, gender is descriptive, focusing on the different roles and responsibilities of women and men, but does not challenge the power imbalance (Razavi and Miller quoted in Baden and Goetz 1998). In contrast, in feminist approaches the key concern is power dynamics that oppress women and add to their vulnerability. A feminist approach to gender sees gender as a *political* issue that is about power, seeking to bring the private into the public arena of debate and action. High priority is given to helping women transform the prevailing power dynamics. (Helzner and Shepard, 1997:175). Obstacles that inhibit the full implementation of a feminist perspective as opposed to simply a gendered one include bureaucracies, religion, ideological differences and the complex personal politics of gender (Goetz 1997, Standt 1997, 1998, Kabeer 1997). Helzner and Shepard (1997:175) argue that "attempts to change the status quo with regard to gender relations are fraught with political difficulties because the consciousness of unjust gender dynamics and the commitment to change them are simply not widespread."

Such observations suggest that a focus on gender in programmes is often not sufficient. Even where gender discourse has been introduced, gender has been redefined to conform to institutional imperatives (Goetz, 1997; Wallace, 1998). Watered down programming has included using gender to side-step a focus on women and the radical policy implications of overcoming women's lack of privilege (Razavi and Miller in Baden and Goetz 1998:21). Baden and Goetz (1998) similarly caution that in some policy applications gender has lost its feminist political content. The key then, as Goetz (1997) notes, is a concern with gender justice as a core value when analysing institutions and organisations and making proposals for change.

The integration of gender into policies and programmes is referred to as mainstreaming. The term mainstreaming was popularised with the adoption of the Beijing Platform of

Action in 1995, a call for significant changes over and above adding programmes for women. Gender equality was the overall goal. Two levels of mainstreaming have been identified. *Internal mainstreaming* ensures gender equality policies and programmes are put in place within the organisation. Policy addresses the extent to which gender equity is enshrined in the principles, philosophy, institutional arrangements of the organisation. Training and capacity building are important policy issues. *External mainstreaming* focuses on the integration of gender into the core purpose of the organisation. In the GLP aid chain, this is done through the identification of key issues that impact on gender and HIV and AIDS. These issues are then addressed through service delivery, including projects and programmes implemented by the GLP.

All organisations consist of culture, rules and outcomes. In a patriarchal society this means that organisations are more than likely modelled on male values and attitudes, and that this represents the mainstream. Thin (1995) thus cautions against the term "mainstreaming". He states that it is important not to take the mainstream either as desirable or at face value for in many instances the mainstream is patriarchal in nature. Despite this caution, the concept of mainstreaming - as an effort to bring marginalised voices into the mainstream - provides a framework to systematically challenge this status quo.

Mainstreaming gender entails both technical and political processes, and requires shifts in institutional structures, organisational culture, ways of thinking, and resource allocations. For mainstreaming to lead to change, conscientisation at a personal level is also required (Cavanagh 2001). However, in many instances, "gender mainstreaming" as a concept has been diminished from its original meaning. This "watering down" is linked to the emphasis increasingly placed on the technical aspects of gender mainstreaming, using frameworks and tools that can detract from the political dimension of the process and its outcomes. For example, gender audits focus on quantifying the number of women and men in a given position, or reached by a particular programme. Less attention is placed on women's actual meaningful participation.

A key challenge to the GLP programme is the integration of gender at all levels of the aid chain. While one donor may be committed to gender mainstreaming, another may not be as committed. The same may go for back-donors, who also have different interests and strategic issues. By the time money is placed with partners, the interpretation of gender and what it means to "integrate or mainstream" has gone through five levels. A further possible barrier to the success of gender programmes is that the partners themselves may not have either the skills to mainstream gender within the organisation, or the inclination and will to do so.

Indeed, we must ask, as does Geister et al (1999): what is the benefit of gender mainstreaming for target populations? Does mainstreaming actually change the way target groups and stakeholders are dealt with at the project level? The research confirmed observations made by other researchers, that often gender mainstreaming is made into the goal itself, rather than being a means to the goal of gender equity (Jahan 1997). Success of programmes and progress in gender mainstreaming can only be measured at the field level. Although deep ethnographic studies of beneficiary communities and projects were not conducted for GLP, there are qualitative indications

of limited success, as illustrated by the concern of one respondent that “the gender framework of the programme has not always been strongly maintained in practice.”¹⁴

Several of the donors in the GLP aid chain use the Women in Development (WID)/Gender and development (GAD) terminology to articulate their understanding of gender. For example, organisations funded by some of the donors were encouraged to address both the strategic interests of women and their practical needs, following on Moser’s (1991) distinction. However, given that different interpretations of gender and the mainstream are evident at various levels of the aid chain, results and expectations may be different, as described below.

One of the level one donors, a back donor (see figure 6.1), has had a Gender and Development Policy since 1997, when the organisation shifted from exclusively addressing women’s needs to a broader gender approach that considers roles, needs and opportunities available to women and men. This gender perspective is to be integrated throughout the aid policy; they will fund organisations that fulfil certain criteria and hold those recipient organisations accountable should they, in turn, fund others.

Practical gender needs may, however, overshadow attention to strategic interests, as noted in an evaluation of programmes funded by the level one donor. The evaluation found that in over half of the activities evaluated women’s practical needs had been addressed. Information sufficient to assess impact on strategic concerns, such as participation in decision-making, was lacking.¹⁵

A level two donor’s (INGOs) understanding of gender is located within a GAD framework that also acknowledges cultural diversity. The framework, formalised in a policy document, emerged out of a consultative process within the organisation (not with partners). The aim of the policy is to apply an understanding of gender relations in both development theory and practice, to ensure that women, as well as men, control their own lives and achieve basic rights within sustainable environment. An awareness of gender relations in grant-making means that the donor will encourage partners’ efforts to change practices which are considered to be harmful or discriminatory. Likewise, projects will not be funded if they will have a serious negative impact on women. However, the notion of serious negative impact is not fully articulated in the policy and there are no guidelines. Therefore decisions regarding funding are left up to the field staff to determine. Their responses will obviously be based on their own understanding of gender, which may not be as complete as those who drew up the policy.

The organisation seeks to develop its capacity for gender analysis as an integral part of their methodology in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes, both in the “field” and in home offices. Mainstreaming gender is an important policy objective and is outlined as ensuring that gender analysis and planning informs all of an agency’s actions, including “policy formulation, agenda setting,

¹⁴ Editorial note: See also Goetz, 2001 for a fascinating study of field workers and gender in India. Several other case studies in South Africa entailed interviewing and observing fieldworkers; some of the difficulties with working with gender are presented in Chapter 5 above. {LB}

¹⁵ Editorial note: There are multiple explanations for such an absence of information: insufficient attention to strategic needs – the rationale provided in the evaluation document (and also noted by Hunt, 2000); the difficulty in measuring such changes generally and specifically within the timeframe of projects; and finally the logic of programming to make sure that evaluations are positive, whereby indicators of project implementation are selected that can be measured and show success, and programming then follows suit. {LB}

planning, human resource management, programme management, information management and resource allocation”.

International staff acknowledged that the process of moving from policy to programme has been a slow. Analysing the definitions of gender and gender mainstreaming, it is obvious that the mainstreaming process is technical and not a political process. This policy was only shared by partners at the end of 2003, at the Gender Mainstreaming workshop, and it is unclear as to how it is to be interpreted by GLP and partners.

At a second INGO, internal policy states that projects focusing on women will be singled out for funding. Organisations should attempt to address both the strategic interests of women and their practical needs. However, evaluation documents again highlight that in many cases organisations are unable to proceed beyond practical needs, which as the INGO acknowledges, do not really challenge the status quo. The INGO has thus chosen to work proactively with partners to share lessons learned by more successful partners.

Within South Africa there is little evidence of local benefits from the policy development processes of donors and INGOs. The GLP South African office has not taken part in the policy discussions of the first INGO and the vast experience of the second INGO has also not been absorbed. Local staff noted difficulties in gender mainstreaming internally and it appears that no one person is really pushing a gendered agenda beyond the need for partners to acknowledge the link between gender and HIV and AIDS and to provide gender disaggregated data. Local staff members’ understanding and experience of working on gender issues has differed over time and this difference in expertise was reflected in partners’ experience of the help provided to them by GLP staff. GLP addresses gender in terms of difference and does not – in policy or programme documents – discuss gender inequality using power discourse.

Many partners have a similar understanding of gender to GLP of addressing difference and not fundamental power relations. This is not necessarily an example of GLP’s influence as partners may have got to this point themselves. For many organisations addressing gender is done because of women’s increased vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. Some partners noted that GLP must be more explicit about why they need to include gender issues in order to make the issues more real. A general trend in HIV and AIDS work has been that highlighting gender inequality as a fundamental cause of rising HIV has allowed a shift in focus from women, to women and men, with the shift finally back to men. This is certainly true of some of the partner organisations. There is also an assumption that working with men constitutes a gendered response without thinking through the content and process of such programmes and whether they address power and inequality.

GLP Involvement in capacity building

Understandings of the organisational capacity and staff capabilities needed to implement gendered approaches also vary among and within the various organisations in the GLP aid chain. As a general framework, UNDP (2000) identifies the following knowledge, skills and attitudes as central to gender mainstreaming capacity:

- Conceptual clarity on mainstreaming in general and gender mainstreaming in particular
- Socio-economic and policy analysis
- Organisational and project cycle entry points for gender mainstreaming, i.e. creating and seizing opportunities

- Process management and advocacy skills
- Strategic planning and strategy development
- Information management and communication

While many individuals and organisations are committed to mainstreaming gender at a policy, programme and project level, they may lack the necessary planning skills and tools. Another school of thought questions the need for tools and guidelines, toolkits and manuals. For the tools to be successful they must be “conceptualised together with users and must be sector specific” (Razavi and Miller quoted in Jackson 1997:175). According to Jackson “the procedures of gender mainstreaming - gender guidelines, gender training programme and gender toolkits cannot be relied upon to deliver WID/gender objectives; nor should the pressure for institutional change be conceptualised as deriving entirely from organised external pressure groups such as donors” (1997:175).

At a minimum, capacity to apply a technical approach to mainstreaming is needed by both GLP staff and partners. Key objectives of the level 2 and level 3 INGO organisations are to explore gender issues with all staff and counterparts and be responsible for adequate support including, where appropriate, assisting with strategies, recommendations and appropriate training. The strategy, in theory, includes a comprehensive programme of training in practical skills, especially in relation to doing a gender analysis for home office and field staff.

The research suggests, however, that GLP staff have not tapped into the resources and experiences from local organisations, the head office or other INGOs involved in the programme. There is a clear need to build GLP staff capacity. One GLP staff member, for example, recounted that his work with GLP was the “first time I viewed gender as a serious issue.” Likewise, at the partner platform in 2003, GLP staff stated that there is little expertise in GLP to forward the gendered agenda. Interestingly, there was no acknowledgement that perhaps the expertise exists in some of the partners!

Instead the focus has been on building capacity of the level 6 partners, be they capacity building, advocacy or service delivery organisations. GLP has made efforts to build capacity in partners in the following ways:

- The use of external consultants, for example to offer training to partners or to assist in the drawing up of policy.
- Site visits at which questions around gender aim to prompt reflection on gender issues. According to partners, this has been less effective in recent years than previously.
- Partner platforms, which bring partners together to share learning and provide capacity building around selected issues

Funding to support the creation of a new organisation involved in capacity building around gender and HIV and AIDS is clearly seen as an important strategy by GLP. During the first three years of funding the resulting organization, now a GLP partner, produced training materials, conducted mainstreaming training, produced newsletters and held forums dedicated to specific gender and AIDS issues. According to respondents, the organisations aims to adopt a more critical position, moving away from mainstreaming and towards plans to “focus on consciousness-raising and to harness energy to advocacy issues, giving a voice to gender issues and challenging the lack of

progress made." At the centre of the emerging analysis is and understanding and re-definition of power.

Most of the other partners interviewed expressed lack of confidence in their capacity to address properly gender issues and highlighted the need for support, which the new GLP funded organisation, for example, could offer. For example, at the Gender Mainstreaming workshop, in one small group discussion, NGO representatives were unable to articulate any success they had in addressing gender: in fact, some said they had done "nothing" about gender. However, when a participant from a partner organisation probed further, people were able to articulate some successes, which indicated that the participants were in some way intimidated or did not properly understand what was asked of them.

Over and above the "technical" challenges of gender mainstreaming, partners noted specific challenges in addressing gender in the context of HIV. This included difficulties in dealing with the link between gender and culture, especially in addressing the contradictions between them. This is a common issue and was also noted by the respondents in the Smith and Bornstein (2001) study. Challenging gender oppression is often in direct opposition to cultural practices which may be patriarchal including, for example, wife inheritance, women's lack of property and inheritance rights, and virginity testing.

The powerlessness of women was also viewed as a challenge difficult to overcome. Organisations viewed the economic empowerment of women as one solution. One of the GLP partners has power and well-being as central to its gender and diversity programme and is involved in promoting a different approach. This may be a model that others could adopt in the future; GLP could play a role in offering opportunities to share innovative gendered approaches to dealing with HIV and AIDS.

6.4. Conclusion

Donor behaviour is profoundly political, with both the role and relationship reflecting the power dynamics between the funder and the funded. International NGO donor agencies are becoming more mindful of the power issues, however they are increasingly bound by the demands of back donors that, also increasingly, are linked to so called evidence based interventions and specific notions of what constitutes 'success' and 'impact'. The increasing pressure for this kind of outcome is shifted onto the partner, with donors introducing stricter management requirements and increasingly, more technocratic approaches to measure success. GLP was no exception, introducing more management requirements and a much tighter capacity building programme based on their own conceptual frameworks, assumptions and language, thereby progressively constricting the space that partners have for setting their own agendas.

Hulme and Edwards (1997) suggest that the relationship of power and influence is not one sided. They suggest that current debates in donor agencies around good governance and participation provide a platform for questioning the nature of participation and politics from a feminist perspective. Negotiating power with the donor may not be easy but it is possible. Organisations being funded need greater consciousness about the power they do have, an increase in the level of dialogue on a one-to-one basis between partner organisation and donor, and collective action by an organised civil society, especially the NGO sector. Only through such changes can greater discussion of potential donor domination emerge, be challenged and renegotiated.

Aside from documenting influence and variations in organisational agendas within the GLP aid chain and addressing the donor role in capacity, the research showed that GLP had successes in promoting a technical gendered approach to HIV and AIDS in the last 5 years. Successes, as outlined by representatives of level 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 organisations, include:

- Thinking about, discussing, debating and analysing the interface between gender and AIDS. This was at a time when there was much rhetoric about the interface but few examples of organisations that were actually getting to grips with how to work on it.
- Supporting the establishment of a new organisation, which is involved in bringing AIDS and gender organisations together to debate the issues and design appropriate responses.
- Capacity building for partner organisations interested in working more effectively on gender and HIV and AIDS. For example, providing checklists to integrate gender into organisational and programmatic processes, and helping put together funding proposals and implement monitoring systems.

The stated aim of GLP is to improve the response to HIV and AIDS in the country while addressing gender. GLP initially led the way in this regard and has attempted to keep gender on their agenda in more recent years, but essentially, have lost momentum and are at risk of losing the gains they have made. The GLP response has been to increasingly build a technocratic approach to gender – at least in the policy. Gender training in mainstreaming tools must be seen as both a political and a technical process. This calls for process work at a personal and collective level to raise consciousness and build solidarity for gender justice work as well as build practical, technical skills. Over-reliance on traditional gender mainstreaming tools and frameworks, and/or hastily conceptualised and short term activities and events constitutes a mechanistic approach which may yield cosmetic results, and little depth.

The critical challenges for donors which are promoting a gendered rights-based approach to HIV and AIDS are:

- Dealing with the lived realities of women, men and children
- Ensuring full participation of women, especially women on the margins
- Gender transformation as a goal
- Power as central to the analysis and response
- Working at a personal level to facilitate consciousness raising
- Defining a gendered response
- A coordinated response that is multi-levelled, multi-faceted and multi-sectoral
- Institutionalising both gender and HIV and AIDS (Tallis 2002)

GLP, its partners, and donors to South Africa, especially those international NGOs that articulate their commitment to working in solidarity with local organisations, are faced with the challenge of making these elements an integral part of their value systems, thinking and approach and consequently, their strategy. The rhetoric as well as the genuine intention to “do something” about gender is apparent, but the research suggests that more could be done, and importantly what is being done could be more effective

with more meaningful partnership and a mix of technical and political elements to gendering.

Chapter 7. Negotiation, learning and differentiation in South African NGOs

By Lisa Bornstein with contributions from Isaivani Hyman and Allan Kaplan; research by Lisa Bornstein, Isaivani Hyman and Annsilla Nyar

7.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the characteristics of organisations that have been better able to negotiate power with donors. This is done in three ways. First, distinctive aspects of the South African development context are highlighted as they relate to filtering of development ideas and approaches. Second, the section reports on research conducted with organisations involved in building the capacity of SA NGOs to undertake organisational development, strategic processes, programme planning and project management. The concern is to understand how development management practices are filtered up and down the aid chain and the role of specialist training organisations in that process of knowledge construction and consolidation. Third, the influence of foreign and government funding is linked to increasing differentiation within the NGO sector; a brief outline of four types of organisations is present.

South African development practitioners are unusual in that, looking across the sector, there is a tremendous knowledge at many different levels. While many developing countries have local development practitioners whose expertise is rooted in extensive practice and familiarity with local dynamics and conditions, or alternatively those trained and working within dominant frameworks, South Africa has a particularly deep and broad knowledge base. The legacies of the struggle (including the experience of returning exiles), the country's relative wealth (which has allowed for excellent schooling for some, access to local resources, etc.), and a national government that is committed publicly to tackling poverty and inequality all contribute to a distinctive environment for development practice. (The absence of debt and the lack of explicit conditionalities on official development assistance may also play a role.)

South African development practitioners include those who have international connections, national political influence (for funds and policy), and familiarity with a range of development approaches, concepts and theoretical groundings. Of course there are also those whose primary strengths rest in their commitment to change, and their dedication to the people with whom they work. The combination is a rich one, in which there are tremendous opportunities for learning, experimentation and reflection.

A few key aspects of this environment are listed below:

1. There are a number of locally-driven bodies that bring together NGOs and other organisations for participation in national and local governance (e.g. the South African national NGO Coalition (SANGOCO), South African Local Grantmakers Association (SALGA)). In addition to other activities, such organisations have formulated Codes of Ethics and Practice to which non-profits and grantmakers are expected to adhere (cf. Interfund, 1998).
2. There are research and advocacy bodies, both in and outside of universities, that focus on the non-profit sector (e.g. IDASA/CORE¹⁶, CCS) and many others than for years have looked at development policies and local institutions (e.g.

¹⁶ The Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), The Co-operative for research and Education (CORE),

CPS, CSDS). Current initiatives seek to strengthen research capacity within non-profits through linkages with universities and other research centres.

3. Many funding organisations – national and international – support the exchange of information on NGOs, funders and development practice with publications, seminars, roundtables, conferences, and research initiatives (e.g. *Interfund and Development Update*)
4. There are numerous South African trainers and support organisations available to work with NGOs located within the country, in addition to the many initiatives and resources available from abroad. Several of the South African support organisations, both within and outside of university setting, also create possibilities for sector-wide learning through retreats, special seminars, and diverse publications. In addition, there is a long list of locally-based consultants available to work with NGOs.
5. The post-apartheid transition and continued developmental challenges, together with the many positive features of governance and society in South Africa (standard of living, stable government, etc.), constitute an attractive environment for international organisations interested in effecting change. While many NGOs experienced difficulties accessing funds (especially as compared to the struggle period), considerable funds are flowing into South Africa for both standard and alternative development initiatives.
6. Activist and grassroots initiatives are important arenas for public involvement and debate. Unions are strong, public debate spans a wide range of political perspectives, and local activism has brought important changes – even in recent years – to government policy and international relations (e.g. around HIV/AIDs and pricing and availability of anti-retrovirals and other drug regimes).

Knowledge generated within this environment can in no way be described a simple transmission of expertise constructed in the “North.” Many practitioners think seriously about the ways in which development practice is changing and the ways it can be improved. Funders also enter into these discussions, and while there are organisations governed by the home office policies, there are also individuals and organisations willing to back less familiar practices and exchanges. This chapter looks at the distinctive contributions of NGO support and training organisations to knowledge, practice, and organisational structures emerging in South Africa. The focus is on three organisations, CDRA, OLIVE, and Sedibeng, and one project involving three additional organisations, SCAPE.

7.2. Specialist OD and training organisations

Many depictions of the aid chain presume that ideas are passed in tandem with funding in a linear fashion, from donors, through intermediaries, to the ultimate beneficiaries at the community level. Moreover, the management tools mentioned above are said to be particularly prone to application in a linear top-down manner. Their use and spread are argued to constrain possibilities for trust as the basis of the funding relationship, participation as the root of programme elements, and empowerment as a central development aim (Wallace et al, 1997; Gasper, 2000; Chambers 1994).

While these are powerful critiques, both of the aid industry as currently structured and of the specific effects of management approaches on non-profit organisations in developing countries, little is actually known about how these techniques have spread, how they are employed, and with what effects. For example, while funding chains are a powerful

source of influence, contradictions between upwards and downwards accountabilities, between management control and participatory tendencies, and between internal needs and external pressures are experienced in most NGOs (Edwards 1999; Bornstein 2001). Such contradictions can be felt at many points (directors, head offices, project managers, field staff), may be resolved (or not) in different ways, and have uncertain implications for NGOs, all points made elsewhere in the report. These are the types of debates that this research report has examined in detail.

This section examines the ways in which specialist training and organisational development (OD) organisations in South Africa influence the transfer of management knowledge and, ultimately, the practice and impacts of development. Specialist organisations vary greatly, from those that are home-grown, those linked into progressive development networks worldwide, and those that are more dependent on the aid industry itself. All the specialist agencies modify the training information received, filtering and reframing it to local realities as understood by the trainers. Some training organisations develop their own materials, using a range of materials and examples; other organisations rely heavily on training materials developed and provided by major institutional donors (USAID, GTZ, DFID) or large charities and non-profits (Oxfam-GB, Save the Children, CARE); other specialist trainers sit within the organisational structure of larger donors (GTZ's gender department and project cycle management divisions). Some trainers clearly frame material and approaches within the norms and values of specific donors, while others actively contest ways in which the aid relationships can dictate more managerial or more subordinate roles for local development NGOs.

Not all countries have specialist training and OD organisations. Others have so many such organisations that their influence cannot be determined. South Africa has only a handful of training and OD organisations that serve the NGO sector, are not based within universities, and are acknowledged as dominating the field (key informants mention only 4-6 such organisations). Some of these organisations have been conduits for the spread of specific management techniques and all have acted as nodes for the discussion and consolidation of NGO approaches towards development. Their role, at both theoretical and empirical levels, throws into question any simple depiction of global domination and imposition of management approaches. Instead we must explore what ideas of "good practice" are promoted by these organisations, the genealogies of those ideas, the modifications made to them by "trainers" and "trainees", and their use in development practice.

These are ambitious tasks, at which this section of the report makes an initial foray. In studying the four organisations, our focus was both descriptive (outlining their aims, organisational structure, activities, training materials, assessment procedures, and modifications) and interpretative (how do staff describe their aims, interpret their impact, and assess what works). The methodology borrows on skills used in corporate interviewing, organisational development and training assessments, and but also breaks ground in trying to develop ways of tracking the use and modifications made to such management tools as logframes, M&E systems, gender matrices, and impact assessments. The breath of our coverage, and the disdain that some respondents showed for all such tools, made difficult comparable depth of analysis for each organisation, an acknowledged limitation of the data at this point in time. Moreover, no attempt was made to assess the impact or effectiveness of the various training and OD support approaches; our attention is on the range or approaches present in the sector,

and the introduction of techniques, tools, and perspectives into dialogue and practice among development practitioners.

Even with these caveats, the research findings are powerful: specialist management organisations in South Africa have played a crucial role in modifying existing management approaches – those promoted by aid agencies, international NGOs, and foundations – to include more locally relevant approaches and more local knowledge and expertise. Some of the organisations have placed themselves at the forefront of management practice globally by defining alternatives to the dominant development management approaches of the aid industry and promoting these alternatives internationally. Other organisations, though acting primarily as vehicles for the transfer of international practice, have participated sufficiently in the South African debates over development management to negotiate and adopt radically different elements of the standard approaches.

Material to support our findings is contained in a separate paper and case study write-ups; only key findings are presented here. In the last ten pages of this section, an interview with Alan Kaplan, the founding director of CDRA, one of the OD organisations under study, is presented in which he outlines some of the distinctive features of the organisation and its influence on development thinking.

7.3. Four training and OD entities in South Africa

Four OD and NGO support organisations/entities were willing to engage with our research project. Sedibeng is a newer organisation that emerged out of a USAID initiative to build NGO capacity. Based in Johannesburg, it has links to Witswatersrand University (granting certificates) and provides OD and training services to government and civil society. The second example, SCAPE, recently emerged out of an international initiative, this one prompted by a US-based NGO, CARE International. Its self-defined mission is to assist local NGOs with capacity-building around sustainable development, participation, and project/program management. Though a “project” bringing together three NGOs, SCAPE has many features of an organisation onto itself, and is largely treated as such within our discussion. Olive, based in Durban, and CDRA, based in Cape Town are organisations with established reputations in the field of OD. Both organisations are seen as reflecting seriously on their own work and their role in the wider NGO sector. All four training and support entities concentrate their activities in South Africa and consult elsewhere in Africa; two organisations also consult to European NGOs and donors.

Sedibeng Centre for Organisational Effectiveness (Sedibeng)

Sedibeng emerged out of a US AID sponsored initiative, PACT-SA, to build the capacity of South African non-profit organisations through training and consultation programmes. PACT (Private Agencies Collaborating Together) has been operating since the 1980s and has set up offices in over seventeen countries. In South Africa, PACT built upon its international experience in designing training programmes in financial and project management, and in formulating its work with NGO consortia. Sedibeng portrays PACT/Sedibeng as having significant influence on the non-profit sector. Sedibeng’s website describes PACT-SA’s role in establishing SANGOCO, for example, as “a pioneering” one, with provision of “substantial technical and financial support” to many of its provincial structures in their initial phases. Likewise, those people listed as past trainees include members of parliament, OD consultants, and heads of leading non-governmental and governmental bodies associated with NGOs.

In 1997, PACT-SA transferred its activities to a South African entity, Sedibeng, the transfer itself an indication of the local capacity that had been built. Sedibeng now offers short-courses in fundraising, financial management, organisational governance (Board development), project management, strategic planning, labour relations and facilitation skills (training for trainers). Staff also conduct consultation with client NGOs around organisational and board development. In describing Sedibeng's strengths, the director, Reuben Mogano, mentioned that as a black-run local organisation Sedibeng "speaks the language" of and is particularly able to connect to the community of NGOs that it serves.

Perhaps because of its origins, Sedibeng is much more oriented towards a business approach to OD and training than the other three entities discussed here. Sedibeng staff is therefore relatively comfortable with rational management approaches, if not satisfied with specific tools. The director explained, for example, that one of the problems with current approaches used by NGOs is that they rely on OD models and management techniques, including logframes, that the private sector found flawed years ago. He pointed to emerging trends in business – corporate governance and social accountability – as directions that NGOs should explore.

There was a strong concern with impact assessment at the time of our research. The director described Sedibeng's organisational aim as contributing to the elimination of poverty reduction through its capacity-building activities. An assessment of the organisation's impact was underway when the research team did a second round of interviews at Sedibeng. The assessment had emerged as a priority following Sedibeng's participation in focus group meetings with other OD and capacity building organisations. As described in a concept paper, there was no "explicit vision about how discreet projects or interventions contributed towards the progressive realisation of the over-arching purpose of poverty eradication." The document continues, "The lack of collective and shared vision around "capacity building" was a sad reflection of the relative absence of dialogue amongst the 'OD sector organisations' and compartmentalised approach towards addressing the human resources development needs of the non-profit sector broadly." Sedibeng Centre took the initiative in conducting an assessment that could serve as a platform for a sector-wide conceptual and implementation framework for capacity-building towards poverty eradication.

The director was struggling with how that assessment could be done. He said, "We have reconciled ourselves to the belief that development activities aren't immediately measurable, and only have long-term impacts, but we need to have a way to measure performance." Using social accounting approaches, and communicating with organisations that had been trained, the director thought that they "be able to demonstrate something that is objectively verifiable". One year into the process, staff found that social accounting process was demanding more time and resources than they had anticipated and were wondering whether their expectations of benefits from assessment had been inflated (Mathabela, 2002). At the same time, they thought that keeping the organisation's focus on the ultimate ends of the work was of crucial importance.

Sedibeng's strategic approach was also quite distinct from the other support entities studied. Sedibeng's clients come from government as well as NGOs/CBOs. Sedibeng has an agreement with the University of Witwatersrand and offers accredited training towards a university certificates in OD & strategic management and in management development, which also draws in the general public. Still, the majority of Sedibeng's courses are "needs-driven", responding to specific clients' requests. Tensions sometimes arise over who determines the content, length and target-groups for capacity

building or consultations. Donors may set the overall parameters for course content but trainers emphasised that course participants were the ones whose needs had to be satisfied. Problems arose, however, when funders or NGOs allocated insufficient time for a course or a consultative process.

The training approach draws on “bits and pieces of everything, from everywhere, based on similar values with nothing uniquely European, American, Africa”. While our analysis of Sedibeng’s work is limited (we conducted only three interviews with staff and attended none of the training sessions), we were able to review training materials and discuss approaches. Sedibeng has a core of 7 staff and additional consultant trainers. In speaking with one of the trainers, she emphasised that course content and techniques are quite flexible. They teach how to work with logframes, for example, but might do so drawing on facilitation techniques that get participants to reflect on who they are in an organisation. They have resource materials but trainers are given leeway on how they organise their courses. They might introduce colour work, or storytelling, techniques used by Olive. Likewise, staff drew on their own professional development and training experience for examples, and worked with course participants around their own situations. Importantly, the trainers, though of varied backgrounds, had contact with other OD organisations; they attended courses run by CDRA for practitioners and conducted joint work, at times, with other support organisations. Exchange among the OD and NGO support organisations came through other conduits as well including the focus groups mentioned above, membership in common NGO consortia, and use of the same consultants for their own internal processes of change and development.

Staff expected that participants could master the material, though there were observations that language made their use more difficult; differentiating between goals and objectives, for instance, is difficult in English and even more so for those whose first language is not English or when the material is translated into local languages. Rather than the emphasis on precise definitions of terminology, one trainer highlighted the importance of making connections and assuring that communication was flowing both ways. In a telling comment on her own learning and skills, she observed that “her expanding repertoire of metaphors” was the most important development in her ability to work with others.

Sedibeng is a fascinating example of an organisation that is working largely with dominant paradigms of development and development management. Even so, there are adjustments made to dominant practices to make them more accessible and relevant to those trained.

SCAPE (Strengthening Capacities for Transforming Relationships and Exercising Rights Program)

SCAPE is a joint initiative bringing together three partners, CARE-South Africa (the country office of CARE International), Tihavhama Training Initiative (TTI) and the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition (ECNGOC). Although SCAPE does not have the established reputation of the other three organisations discussed, partnerships with NGO consortia have heightened its visibility and likely access to NGOs.

ECNGOC is the provincial affiliate of SANGOCO, with more than 300 members throughout the Eastern Cape. Tihavhama Training Initiative is also a membership organisation, based in the Northern Province, and provides training, OD and other capacity building support to its more than 60 member NGOs. Both membership organisations had been working in partnership with Olive. Partnership with CARE offered an opportunity to work with NGOs around livelihoods and rights, an area in which

TTI was already working. For CARE, the partnership facilitated access to a large network of NGOs based in particularly poor regions of the country. All three organisations found that it was easier to get funding as a partnership than individually. The resulting program is funded by DFID and has finished its three-year pilot stage and begun full programming.

SCAPE is an interesting example of an organisation that is working with participatory approaches, organisational development, and rational management tools. While not enough time has passed to assess well how SCAPE's capacity-building is affecting the organisations with which it works, the use of rational management tools and experience of partnership illustrate important tensions in development and training relationships.

SCAPE works from a self-declared household livelihood and rights based approach. The overall concept is that SCAPE, through its three partners, will work with local organisations to better address livelihood concerns. The approach can entail work around better understanding of and relations with beneficiary communities and/or better organisational capacity (OD, sustainability, fundraising, programming, etc.) of local civil society organisations (CSO). Later improvements in capacity revolve around engaging with government and other civil society.

Rational management tools

SCAPE, as a programme, engages with rational management tools in three important ways. First, there is the programme itself, which uses rational management approaches to structure and present the component elements of SCAPE. Second, specific 'outputs' and activities entail training local organisations in the use of logical frameworks and related project management tools. Third, local organisations may also work with SCAPE around OD, using strategic planning and adapted LFAs in monitoring. Each of these is discussed briefly.

The descriptions, publicly available on the SCAPE website, immediately reveal the influences of a LFA approach to project planning. SCAPE itself is formulated in a logical framework and project planning format. There is a vision and a statement of principles and values, which are followed by a supergoal, goal, purpose, and six outputs. For example, the supergoal is "improved household livelihood security for poor people in South Africa", with the purpose "to demonstrate improved capacities of SA civil society, engaging effectively with government, to support communities in exercising their rights and addressing livelihood priorities". The six outputs for South African civil society organisations (CSOs) that follow are divided into, in our words, effective management; effective livelihood and right-based programmes; productive civil society networks; productive CSO-government partnerships; successful replication of SCAPE strategies; and, more generally, learning from SCAPE for pro-poor programmes elsewhere in South Africa.

For an NGO or other civil society organisation (CSO) seeking support or involvement there are six steps to be followed, with an emphasis on either organisational or programme development. In the case of an organisational focus, initial steps include assessment, a change strategy, and progress towards that strategy, corresponding to the first two outputs in the matrix. Even the summary document on SCAPE, in its six pages, mentions that the definition of a longer term strategy for change should be accompanied by a "clear set of outputs to be achieved over a two to three year period, with a set of key periodic benchmarks". Progress towards change, i.e. implementation of the plan, should be monitored and reviewed. Implied as well is that all CSOs should

have – and therefore be able to examine – a vision, mission, structure and function clearly delineated

The programme focus, output two, is “likely to involve a participatory livelihood assessment exercise that allows an organisation to evaluate its existing programming activities and/or look at the potential for new activities with communities.” The livelihood assessment, SCAPE’s chosen assessment methodology, relies on some techniques derived from PRA and others developed locally by the three lead partners. While further activities are not detailed beyond the need for baselines and participatory design exercise for pilot activities, plans will need to be formulated and monitored in subsequent steps. Throughout, the documents there is a tension between the linear progression through steps and the recognition of developmental needs shown in caveats (‘not all organisations will reach this step’), acknowledgement of differing needs (e.g. choice between an institutional and a programmatic focus) and emphasis on participation.

In conversations with Sarah Hugow, the director of ECNGOC, and Penny Ward, the programme director at CARE, SCAPE’s reliance on LFA, as a tool to “guide the programme”, was made clear. However, LFA was not fully workable. In training of community organisations, trainers modified the framework, explaining that they were trying “to assist people to identify purpose and objectives that inform programme, not just counting things to show impact.” In the end, although LFAs were introduced, “they had to be simplified because it was too challenging”. SCAPE now uses a community based project management approach adapted from the LFA so that communities can understand it and a Meta-plan technique that, while similar to LFA, is also simpler. SCAPE leadership strongly support the modified approach as is apparent in the following comment by the ECNGOC director:

LFA has been useful in that it promotes a rigorous and disciplined approach to managing projects. However, not everything can go into a framework. While it is useful for structuring and planning, a lot of qualitative stuff has to be captured and reflected differently. The SCAPE LFA is the best example of a log frame that works at both levels.

SCAPE monitors the progress of CSOs that have reached step 2 against logframe indicators for its own reporting to DFID. SCAPE uses a Clyde tracking system, monitoring progress against plans, which CSOs are supposed to manage once they reach a specified step (4). To impart flexibility and better assure that the CSOs are capable of their undertakings, SCAPE relies on a principle of ‘equity of effort’. The principle is “designed to make sure that the project only moves as fast as organisation is prepared to move.” Only once a participating organisation is past step 3 – meaning that it has a change plan – can it apply for limited funding to pilot activities that are related to plan. Grants are not for operational expenses and only for the planned activities. At the time of the interviews, SCAPE had two grantees, one working on a community-based savings scheme and the other on a maintenance system. This means that, to this point, there are few organisations monitoring their own change plans.

Training reflects this merging of rational management and participatory approaches. The partner NGOs receive many requests from local organisations for training in project management, especially logframes and project planning matrices. There are also requests for assistance with strategic planning, fundraising, and advocacy. And SCAPE works with the CSOs around institutional assessments, change plans and project management. Much of the content, then, of training relates to rational management tools.

The philosophy of training and learning draws more on participatory and OD-informed approaches. CARE's programme director described the working principles for training as "participatory" and reliant on "mutual accountability" in which "people are responsible for their own learning". Understanding the purpose of the training – at individual and organisational levels – is a key element as reflected in the following comment: "When organisations are applying to go to leadership training or monitoring & evaluation or conflict management workshop, they need to demonstrate where that need came from, whether that be assessments or livelihoods framework. They need to indicate who is going to attend and why."

Training is linked to the step model and seen as iterative and on-going. Training is often split into modules; practical work based on the situation in the CSO is conducted between modules, a tactic used in many training programmes in South Africa. As in the other organisations discussed in this chapter, local CSOs were urged to send participants "in pairs or threes ... to ensure that there is support and that organisational work (putting organisational pairs together)" is possible. CARE's programme director explained that "it is a way of ensuring that learning gets embedded in the organisation, it helps to do shorter technical inputs and then longer term practical stuff or having opportunity to test that out back in the organisation." To aid learning and accountability, SCAPE also encourages junior and senior staff from the CSO to attend the same workshop.

The content and techniques of the training are customised to the needs of the particular group. Trainers are to assure that the OD and programme material are integrated, and that there is adequate facilitation and group support. However the basic principle is "identify the group first and then design training thereafter." OLIVE facilitated the first SCAPE Leadership Development Programme and many of the techniques employed later drew on OLIVE's approaches. These techniques draw on facilitation and adult learning techniques from around the world, but, as ECNGOC's director believes, "adapted and made appropriate for the local context." Respondents mentioned the use of talking partners (a "buddy" with whom you can discuss material or problems), colour work (for individual reflection), visioning and storytelling (allowing visualisation of a situation), appreciative techniques (examining organisational and individual strengths), SPIRALS and 'theatre of the oppressed' techniques (to address past trauma), and physical expression (to communicate emotions and internal concepts), all facilitation, conflict resolution and OD approaches used by Olive.

According to SCAPE leadership, participants generally are receptive to the techniques:

The facilitator has awareness and respect for where people are. Nothing is compulsory. If people don't want to participate, they can play other roles like observe and feedback. Most people are open to giving it a go at least once. They find it enjoyable.

Sometimes initial responses to a technique were negative even though facilitators found it useful, as is evident in the following comments relating to colour work:

Initially participants hate that approach. I often had early messages about not being able to draw. This could be regarded as an indicator of peoples' confidence and inability to synthesise information. If you monitor the difference in colour work from say Module 1 as compared to Module 4, you see the difference in people's...ability to synthesise information. It is often about practice; it is not always verbal.

As with UK-based workshops, training is recorded on flipcharts. However, the diversity of techniques employed, and their use over the extended training of a development project is not typical of UK based project planning or management training, or even, for the most part, organisation development exercises.

Partnership & DFID

Tensions around UK-based approaches to development and those constructed locally also emerge around the concept of the partnership. The partnership in this case was an effort at a more equivalent relationship where the various NGOs each brought complementary and distinctive qualities to the joint effort. CARE did not want to be lead partner and opted to exclude a donor-grantee relationship from the partnership. CARE is not a donor, and no funds flow through CARE to the other partners. CARE-UK and CARE-SA do have more financial reporting responsibilities to DFID than the other organisations, and this has proved a pivotal issue.

A brief history of the partnership is as follows. CARE was experimenting with livelihoods approaches in the region and Tihavama participated in a pilot project. Based on recognition of common values, the two organisations began to work on the details of the SCAPE programme, a process that took three years. Tihavama was also working in partnership with Olive and ECNGOC, and ECNGOC also became involved in the planning for SCAPE. CARE then approached DFID for funding, and the partnership CARE, Tihavama, and ECNGOC were awarded an accountable grant, one apart from the existing programmes. However, relations with DFID have not been easy for numerous reasons.

According to CARE respondents, "DFID finds the structure of CARE confusing." CARE has a decentralised structure, which means there is no one person who "knows everything and can make all decisions." CARE's programme director concludes that DFID would prefer a simpler, more standard relationship but SCAPE instead complicates the funding relationship, and ultimately this generates problems for the SCAPE partnership. The director explained that DFID treated CARE as the senior partner because CARE had signed the contract. That CARE had approached DFID initially and was an international organisation while the other partners were local probably heightened DFID's differentiation of the partners. DFID "often requested meetings in the absence of the partners" saying that "they don't want a huge team present at their meetings." Not surprisingly this generated tensions in the partnership and led SCAPE members to conclude that "DFID didn't really understand partnership or the nature of this partnership."

The ECNGOC director echoes these observations. In her words, "The relationship with DFID has been problematic. DFID's focus has been on CARE as the fiduciary partner. It has been a struggle for the partners to get DFID to respect the partnership and the equality of partners. They regard CARE as the true partner and the others as implementers."

The director's response to the problem illustrates the ways in which the organisation incorporates a sense of efficacy. She sees positive aspects of DFID's stance, noting that the donor is "critically engaged". Moreover, "their questions have been helpful in helping us explain and justify what we do", and SCAPE has been forced to be "on their toes" and "more focused and rigorous". The three partners, meanwhile, work well together. External evaluations reported that the South African partners thought they "were very valued by CARE" and that they "had equal say" even though CARE had the contract.

From the die of DFID, concerns to identify a senior and ultimately responsible partner are institutionally rooted. DFID itself is a complex, fluid and inaccessible organisation. Depending on the advisor, programmes can receive stronger or weaker support, and be better or less understood. The programme manager for SCAPE is "quite a junior person", perhaps lacking in some of the skills needed to manage a complex and innovatively structured programme. The social development advisor in DFID SA is the main link for SCAPE. CARE is working with the advisor to try to "reach an agreement...about the most efficient way of doing things." SCAPE leadership explain that shifts within DFID over the course of developing SCAPE have further complicated relations since the programme, "designed under different priorities", finds it difficult to address all the emerging ones. For example, as a civil society strengthening programme, SCAPE has been pressured to expand its work with government, the focus of most DFID programmes. SCAPE takes civil society organisations as the entry point and finds it "difficult to negotiate where the boundaries are within the programme." SCAPE has also been forced to package its programme into a logframe format to meet DFID's proposal requirement (which may help explain why a participatory and developmental programme is being meshed with a rational one).

SCAPE is poised at the edge of many different developmental divides. SCAPE is attempting to work with rational project management tools in a wider participatory right-based framework. International tools and techniques are being employed, in adapted fashion, and directed to the local level, often to very small organisations and junior staff. SCAPE attempts to build a partnership based on equivalence and mutuality while receiving funding from an international organisation with clear guidelines on programme priorities and established ways of working with INGO and local counterparts. In taking on these challenges, SCAPE may encounter entrenched practices, rigid tools, and unbendable institutions. At the same time, SCAPE also may require rethinking our accepted notions of what can work.

Olive (Organisation Development and Training)

By Isaivani Hyman and Lisa Bornstein

In 1993, when Olive was established, the NGO sector was facing the radical shift in orientation from resistance to the apartheid state towards working with a new democratic government in a developmental role. Although there was a need for organisational development during South Africa's transition to democracy, and for specific assistance around leadership skills, effective management and participation, there were relatively few organisations and consultants doing such work in the country. As the founding director Davine Thaw observed, Olive, "the organisation that is needed", helped to fill the gap.

Olive's history is summarised in *Seven Years On*, a recently published document that traces Olive's development and activities from 1993. Organised around an iterative action learning cycle, a model used with clients and participants in Olive's learning programmes, *Seven Years On* analyses the organisation according to phases in a spiral: "pioneer", "rational-creative", "flirting with integration" and, not covered in the history, a recent "transformation" phase. This structure reflects important shifts both in the internal structure of Olive and in its interactions with the external worlds of donors, "clients", and other NGOs.

In its first seven years of existence, OLIVE worked with 210 clients. Interventions undertaken with NGOs included: OD processes; organisation evaluations and other

assessment processes; on-going and long term change processes; strategic work; facilitation of planning processes; ZOPP/LFA training; other training workshops (e.g. human resources, management); and individual consultations and mentoring.

As with Olive's own maturation, Olive's work with NGOs can be categorised according to distinct phases. In the period 1993 to 1995, much of the work focused on capacity-building within NGOs to help them meet the challenges of a transition to democracy. The period 1996 to 1998 saw many organisations facing sustainability issues; management training, development of policies and systems, LFAs and project planning became important areas for Olive interventions, as described further below. Requests from the trade unions increased. OLIVE engaged, as well, with organisations calling for longer term and intensive whole systems OD processes. From 1998 onwards, Olive began working with the new generation of NGOs (and NGO work) focused on rights rather than needs, addressing, for example, the HIV/AIDS crisis, abuse of women and children, the environment, children's rights, gay rights and conflict resolution.

There were three broad trends that emerged in Olive's work over the 1990s. First, regional and international work increased, from 1995 onwards in Southern Africa (including Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Namibia and Swaziland) and then, from 1998, overseas (including Poland, Kazakhstan, Germany, Denmark, Malaysia, Thailand and Brazil). These interventions ranged from training in project planning and facilitation to consulting on a simulation game for NGO financing, evaluations and OD processes. The second trend was that OLIVE began to favour longer-term interventions with clients. The focus shifted to developing relationships and making a sustained impact. From working with each client an average of once per year in 1994, in 1999 each client was worked with on an average of two occasions. Lastly, the number of clients increased significantly over time. In its first year OLIVE undertook 26 interventions and by the year 2000, this increased to 106 interventions. As the OD team changed in numbers and composition over the years, the capacity and depth of Olive's work with clients has also changed.

With these broad phases and trends as a backdrop, discussion now turns to Olive's approach to development practice, rational management approaches, and learning. The information is derived from interviews and discussions with seven people who had worked or were working with OLIVE, review of public and internal documentation, and attendance at one training session. The amount of material available to us, and quality of our respondents' insights, far exceeds what we can capture in these brief pages.

Ideas of good practice

Olive, like some practitioners at CDRA, works from an action learning perspective. Unlike CDRA, Olive has worked more closely with established and internationally advocated project management tools.

One staff member described Olive's role as helping an organisation to become "better able to work with the challenges it confronts". In undertaking this process, Olive does not rely on any single set of techniques or skills. As an OD practitioner explained, Olive tries to provide "unique responses to unique situations." Olive works with individuals and groups of people in organisations in processes that help them to think through their own questions and to find their own answers. Rather than a rely on a "package", the process is to "sit with [NGO clients] and try to hear what their own questions are about their own situations and, being together, try to design a process that will meet those needs." Staff describe themselves as facilitators and practitioners, not as experts or professionals.

Interestingly, in all of the responses around development work and organisational mission, Olive staff emphasised the interplay between the individual and the organisation. Unlike many of the NGOs and literature discussed in this report, the discussion emerging out of Olive treated organisations as made up of individuals, with organisational change reliant on people moving from their established habits and attitudes (a point also relevant to the discussion of CDRA).

Rational tools and training

Olive has a fascinating and complex engagement with management tools such as the logframe and strategic planning. Olive, from very early on, became involved in training organisations in the use of project planning tools such as the logframe. Importantly, perhaps, Olive's approach to logframes came from a more participatory and project cycle approach, informed by the German ZOPP, than that typically employed in the UK. Strategic planning exercises have also been a regular event, and are seen as important and useful to the maturation of the organisation. Olive's experience thus provides us with chance to assess how 'tools' taught and used in practice differ from those advocated by UK donors and to explore some of their effects.

From very early on in its history, Olive has offered training and facilitation in the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). Davine Thaw was part of a small group that, with the assistance of Interfund, attended a ZOPP (objectives oriented project planning) course in Zimbabwe in mid-1994, run by the German development agency. With Davine bringing the new skills and information back to Durban, Olive ran its first training course on project planning later that year. Participants included representatives from NGOs in and around Durban. Within a short period of time, two further courses took place, supported by Interfund, that introduced NGOs in the education and human rights field to project planning and a series of courses were run around the country for adult education NGOs supported by the World University Service – South Africa.

Olive found itself as one of the few organisations that provided training in project planning in South Africa, and this precisely when more and more donors began to introduce LFA to local NGOs as a requirement for funding. Donors were intensifying their demand for accountability from NGOs, particularly in the wake of the discovery of corruption in a few NGOs. There was a new need to "logframe everything" for particular donors. Many NGOs interpreted this call for accountability as a desire for greater "professionalism" and began to go about the work of "professionalizing".

Olive responded to an increase in requests for human resources work with clients in the form of management training and the development of policies and systems. The organisation ran many Logical Framework workshops and facilitated a number of planning processes. Much technical work (systems, planning, etc.) was done during this time, as organisations attempted to get up to speed with the ways of working required by their donors and the continuously shifting environment. OLIVE was also still being called upon to facilitate a number of strategic processes and assist organisations to determine their future direction. Through their donor partner initiative, OLIVE supported many organisations to assess options for their future sustainability.

Olive learned from working with Durban-based NGOs from 1995, and with an international audience from 1997 onwards. While there were debates over the meaning and usefulness of the logframe, both among Olive staff and between Olive and other NGOs, Olive's position was that the project planning should be done flexibly, adapting tools, formats, and procedures to the needs and capacities of the local context.

In 1998, Olive published the *Project Planning for Development Handbook*, which may be the only English-language ZOPP/LFA manual written by and for NGOs. In addition to explaining seven steps in project planning, the manual provides examples of various tools (e.g. a stakeholder matrix, problem or objectives tree, or project planning matrix) completed on the basis of local examples. Participatory approaches were at the core of the process. Olive's ZOPP practice shifted over the years as the development context evolved, client needs changed and new people joined the Olive's training and facilitation team.

According to Michael Randel (ex-Olive practitioner and leader around Olive's LFA work for over 3-4 years), the introduction of ZOPP into Olive turned out to be a surprising catalyst. It allowed Olive to develop a service for the many NGOs who were expressing a need for information and skills to develop project plans. He writes,

It helped us to sharpen our thinking about planning, about projects, and about interventions, which has carried over into other work in Olive. It provided an opportunity to learn and work with NGO professionals and consultants from around the country, expanding Olive's associate programme. We learned a lot about managing training courses and learning experiences taking place on a modular basis in distant places, lessons we have frequently been able to apply since that time. And the ZOPP courses provided a way to start training in facilitation skills...

Randel reflected that perhaps they were fortunate that early attempts to regulate their training in ZOPP by offering public courses never took off, as it gave Olive the opportunity to work inside many local NGOs, tailoring the training to address their particular needs. From learning enough about ZOPP in order to write a proposal, NGOs began asking for assistance in developing an organisation-wide approach to planning. And from planning to implementation...and to the questions that working with projects and more rigorous reporting requirements raised for the organisation as a whole.

Randel acknowledges the role of donors, but never describes their ideas as circumscribing Olive's approach or practices. In his descriptions he notes their willingness to finance Olive and not their influence on the thinking and practice of Olive. Other staff drew our attention to the way in which Davine Thaw engaged with donors, as an equal, ready to learn and share learning. Donors would stop by to converse with her as an opportunity to explore changes in the wider environment or NGO strategies, and not simply about an Olive project they were funding.

International donors also created opportunities for Olive to work with international colleagues and a space for ongoing learning around LFA training for new members of the Olive staff. Peter Lukey of DANCED provided his views on Olive as facilitator of ZOPP training. DANCED wanted its South African partners trained in ZOPP to overcome problems associated with poor planning, and to ensure that ownership of the project rested with project implementers and beneficiaries. In South Africa, as elsewhere on the continent, the Danes were experimenting with the twinning of local and Danish service providers; the joint work was thought to ensure a common approach. The ideal South African service provider, from the Danish perspective, was one like Olive, with a working knowledge of LFA and also practically involved in other civil society empowerment support. According to Lukey, the impacts of this training, although "difficult to measure", have included, on the DANCED side, increased staff understanding of the methodology and sensitivity as to why 'DANCED supported projects take so long to develop'. Meanwhile, for the partner organisations, the training

seemed to result in: clearer project logic and an obvious understanding of this logic; an obvious use of consultants as consultants and not gurus; clearer progress reporting; and far more heated defense of the draft Project Documents by the project implementers.

Olive continues to offer courses and training on LFA (however this is not the focus of most of their interventions). Staff feel the training is effective in transmitting the techniques: "Organisations understand what it is once they've been through our training programme. We've had very good feedback." However, Olive practitioners also recognise the limitations of the approach even when used in a participatory way, highlighting the investment of a week-long training workshop, and the ways events are blocked out in projects despite knowledge that "development doesn't just take three years." To address these limitations, trainers work with material that participants bring from their own projects and try to use the training as "an opportunity for people to reflect on their development practice". As with other NGO support activities at Olive, there is a strong preference for an on-going relationship, in which Olive can work with the organisation as it and its needs evolve.

In sum, LFA/ZOPP training has been an important component of Olive's activities, though the methodologies have been clarified and adjusted based on experience with ZOPP, with DANCED, and training and training participants. While the ideas may have originated in the North, they did not remain unchanged. To the contrary, Olive staff went on to run courses elsewhere in world, and to partner up with original donors, thereby transmitting in turn some of the learning generated in South Africa. Olive ran the original course for SCAPE in the Eastern Cape, and worked closely with two of the three SCAPE partners, again providing a "local" version of the techniques when an international one could have been used. Continued training in these techniques does not mean that critical perspective and debate has been suspended; staff find, for example, that the project format of LFA/ZOPP is non-developmental, and that the LFA is difficult to use for reporting when implementation does not proceed as planned. While the use of a participatory approach to logframe construction can result in better projects, Olive – as an OD provider – focuses on "what else needs to be changed in order to realise what want to achieve."

Strategic planning and positioning

Strategic planning has been extremely important to Olive though it has not been the type of strategic planning described by Tina Wallace in 1997, or by any of the strategic planning gurus. Strategic thinking is, according to Olive staff, simply needed to responding to the organisation's evolution and change. At the same time, staff share an understanding of what constitutes as strategic plan and its importance to thinking about the positioning of the NGO. One of our respondents noted, for example, that "Having three year strategic plans are necessary to look at things like sustainability" and that NGOs often confuse a yearly operational plan with a strategic one.

Examining the ways in which strategic planning tools have been adapted and used by Olive, internally and in training, shows reliance on many of the techniques used worldwide. Olive has published a manual on strategic processes – a tool box of sorts – in which stakeholder analysis, organisational scans and the like are described. As with the project planning manual, Olive's approach is that NGOs will need to assess which tools are likely to be of use and try them out, adapting them if needed.

In contrast to the SCAPE programme, in which organisational assessments and longer-term strategic plans are a required and integral step, the OD practitioners at Olive

emphasised how assessments will depend on the agenda for change. The process was explained as follows:

If we do have an evaluation we try to make it as participatory as possible where we really try to understand with that organisation....you could say to an organisation, 'what new ideas have you got that you want to test, let's design evaluations around that. Let's see if you had to implement this particular idea what would you need to change inside your organisation.' We try to go very much on a self-facilitated assessment approach.

Olive staff seem to have an aversion to technicist language; "We hate the word 'tools!'" said a current director. She indicated that they work with frameworks like phases of organisation development and what happens at each stage. They also work with the living systems model – how to understand an organisation, impact, outputs, inputs - and work with a technical, conceptual and social model. She continued,

Our key deep model that we hope permeates inside the organisation and the work we do is action learning and following from that, adult learning. Any process that you participated in that OLIVE has facilitated will hopefully increase your awareness about how you learn as a person, having a deeper consciousness of having an experience, how to reflect on it and then to pull the lessons on it and then to plan to do something differently.

It is unclear how such an approach meshes with donors' expectation of NGOs. Donors in South Africa seemed more concerned that funded NGOs had undergone some kind of strategic planning than that they had gone through a specific set of steps or exercises. Yet they also asked NGOs to document a mission, a statement of values, a long-term strategy for sustainability, and an analysis of stakeholder buy-in, all specific products albeit possible to produce in range of ways. Thus while certain conditions rest on strategic thinking and planning, it is much more difficult to draw a direct line between donor requirements and specific ways of working strategically.

The case cited above, of Olive contributing to SCAPE's initial training raises interesting questions that, unfortunately, we cannot answer at this time. SCAPE's project documentation emphasises participation, the need to work within an NGO or CBO's capacity and timeframe, and the importance of setting milestones for strategic change (measurable) and monitoring progress towards them. How has Olive, through its training and past work with TTI and ECNGOC, affected the balance among these facets of the approach? Does the SCAPE material reveal how the project partners have understood Olive's input? Or as posited above, does it more reflect CARE's or DFID's perspective?

In its internal strategic processes, Olive conducts regular exercises and has tried to build strategic thinking into day-to-day operations. There is an internal strategic planning process approximately once in three years. During the year, there are regular quarterly reviews to help staff build strategic thinking throughout the year. With recent reorganisation within Olive, following the founding director's departure, there are now three strategic leadership teams that cover the three main areas of an organisation's life: resources, learning and relationships. Each team "is not a doing team, it is rather an informing team and think-thank team". In the past, the OD team led by Davine Thaw did much of the strategic thinking. In the new team approach, membership is not on functional lines. So, for example, the physical/financial resources team includes the Office Manager, the OD Manager, another OD practitioner, the Finance Manager, and Finance Assistant. Each person expressed his/her interest in participating and the

mandate was accepted. In both the regularly scheduled exercises and the more frequent team work, OD practitioners can have an opportunity to reflect on their positions within the organisation and the strategic implications of their work.

Learning

Strategic thinking is one component of a wider emphasis on learning and reflection at Olive. Lost in the discussion of techniques and tools are the energy that is present at Olive and the level of discussion, debate and creativity in which staff engage. The emphasis on learning – and the type of responsibility and risk-taking that has fostered are worth exploring.

There was an early emphasis on learning within the organisation, and the form and structure of learning evolved over time. Initially, as a new organisation in an emerging field, OD work was “diverse and eclectic” and the OD practitioners were engaged with learning along with clients and creating new methods as they went along. An internship programme to bring in black practitioners was introduced. By 1995, when the organisation began to divide management responsibilities around functional areas, learning was given recognition in the form of a manager for learning programmes. This position was meant to insure that internal learning needs were given attention. This was done on two levels: individual learning objectives/mentoring and organizing the whole organisation/team learning opportunities (“At Homes”). Olive staff could choose to meet with a mentor or learning partner and set learning and/or work objectives. The formalised internship programme was done away with in recognition that OD practitioners, given the nature of their work, had to learn continuously.

Olive's “At Home” periods, two days per month, were dedicated to organisation-wide and team opportunities for learning. In addition, 3 to 4 weekends away were organised for personal and organisational development work. In many cases, facilitators were brought in from outside the organisation to conduct training. Some of the topics included anti-bias work, personal biographies, storytelling and writing, working with integrity, organisational culture, support work, conflict resolution, strategic life management, mentoring, meditation, spirituality at the workplace, human resources practice, globalisation and membership-based organisations. The Ford Foundation committed a great deal of support at this time to Olive's internal learning.

Olive thus moved from internships (targeting historically disadvantaged or novices), to generalised learning in the form of mentoring and group-work (‘at home’). In the process space was created to work seriously with learning. Feedback from peers, donors and trainees fed into the process, as did individual reflection. Olive began to experiment with new forms of management such as “mandated leadership” in which individuals propose to take responsibility for some initiative and receive feedback from their team members about whether they believe in and would support the offer to do the work. The volunteer can then decide, or not, to take on ownership and responsibility for the mandated work. In such an approach, leadership is taken on the basis of individual will and interest, supported by the team with which the new leader works.

Olive staff have had to deal with difficult issues around the organisation's own dynamics that are present in all organisation but not always addressed or worked on with intent to transform. Olive staff began to grapple more directly with issues of leadership, hierarchy, power and relationships, including race and gender tensions. Divisions and tensions between the OD and support teams were acknowledged; teams attempted “cross-learning” to understand each other's roles and functions within the organisation. In essence,

Staff moved beyond the illusion of the 'happy-family-all-together' that often persists long after the pioneer phase is past. They are facing each other with more honesty and integrity and all are getting better at stating where they are, what they need, and what they are able to offer the organisation. Thus, all contribute to Olive's journey towards maturity.

Another key element of the emphasis on learning is an effort to use publishing to open up spaces to think seriously about OD. Olive operates from the belief that the strategic value of publishing is in its contribution to the building of a discourse around organisation development (OD). The publications seek to build a set of concepts, patterns and theories that represent OD as a serious and valued practice. Publications enable this message to reach a wider audience than Olive's client base. OLIVE produces editions of its magazine/journal *ODdebate*, book-length publications (*Project Planning for Development* and *Planning for Implementation*), practically-oriented *Ideas for Change*, and two series of Working Papers: *AVOCADO* (A Very Open Collection About Developing Organisations) and *MULBERRY* (Much Unread Literature Bearing Extraordinarily Rich and Relevant Yields). It also serves as a distributor for the Human Awareness Programme (now defunct), Liberty Life Foundation and Interfund publications, as well as *Ideas for a Change*. Subscriptions average at around 160-190 and publications generate an income of roughly R80 000 to R100 000 a year.

In view of the emphasis on process and experiential learning, OLIVE refers to training courses as Learning Programmes. OLIVE offers two Learning Programmes. The first, the Leadership Development Programme is aimed at leaders and managers of NGOs. The second, the Facilitator Development Programme is aimed at facilitators and project/programme managers in organisations. In reviewing the learning programmes, it is apparent that the targeting and content of the programmes changes over time in response to assessments of current needs and feedback of the courses. At times, for example, Olive has targeted established managers, top leadership or, as presently being considered, new leaders in smaller organisations. Assuring that learning is held within the client NGOs means that Olive "always asks for two people" to participate in a leadership development course. As was explained, "Any training should produce some change. If you go back to introduce new ideas, you'll meet with some resistance but if there are two of them, then you can at least support each other." Moreover, our respondent added, "if we trained one person and they leave within the next two months, then the sustainability is a problem. .

As a final point around learning, Olive is interesting in the specific ways the organisation has structured itself around learning. This is not a generalised 'we want to learn' but a focused, conscious, and action-oriented endeavour. It is also apparent, in the discussions with staff and review of the publications, that there is a serious effort to grapple with learning, and other aspects of Olive's work, in a politically-attuned and relevant way, attentive to power between donors and NGOs (though perhaps see it as more amenable to change than may be), and to those who require OD support (e.g. unions, rights based groups, certain government divisions).

Community Development Resources Association (CDRA)

Our discussion of CDRA is confined to an initial introduction followed by a longer piece by Allan Kaplan, the founding director of CDRA (he has since left the organisation). Allan's contribution gives us his personal interpretation of events and organisational dynamics; we do not present other material drawn from interviews with CDRA staff,

clients and workshop participants, or CDRA writings, all of which could have provided different views on the organisation.

CDRA was established in 1987 out of concerns that organisations working politically did not have sufficient organisational experience. Over the past twenty-five years, CDRA has worked with organisations in Southern Africa and elsewhere to build the capacity of organisations and individuals engaged in development and social transformation work. The focus is on improving learning in the organisation and better directing that learning towards improved action.

A starting point for CDRA is that “the more understanding an organisation has, the more capacity it has.” CDRA thus works closely with managers, directors, consultants, and other development practitioners on organisational and individual development; they do this through research, publications, courses, and consultancies. CDRA also works with donors directly on commissioned work.

CDRA does not have a particular methodology or set of techniques that it uses in its organisational development work or its training. There are, however, strong conceptual orientations that guide the work. Key elements include action learning and Steiner-influenced approaches to organisational development. A second related concept is that of a learning organisation. James Taylor, the current director of CDRA, defines a learning organisation as one “which builds and improves its own practice by consciously and continually devising and developing the means to draw learning from its own (and other’s) experience” (Taylor, 1998). While all organisations experience learning, in Taylor’s view, to be a ‘learning organisation’ there must be intent and commitment to the process, the use of experience as the basis of learning, an ability to put new knowledge and learning into improved practice, and a cumulative spiral of organisational development rooted in a balance among reflection, learning and action.

CDRA has forged a particularly positive relationship with its donors, a relationship summed up as “remarkable” and “amazing” and described in Allan’s piece below. Donors currently fund about 75 percent of CDRA’s activities. The remainder is covered by the fees charged for consulting services. CDRA has no UK-funders, though CDRA does provide consulting services to UK-based NGOs. CDRA has also moved from an initial position of reliance on a single funder to a diversified set of funders. Importantly, CDRA has core funding for its own operations (not project-based); it has also set up a reserve fund that generates annual revenues that are used to cover some of CDRA’s activities.

There are two specific features about CDRA that are not reflected in the following contribution from Allan Kaplan. First, like Olive, CDRA has taken its own learning and experience and published books, manuals, web-based think pieces, and articles on action learning, development practice, participation, fieldwork, conflict, etc. Second, as part of its training programme, CDRA offers two courses of particular interest. The first is a course in facilitation of organisational development, directed at NGO staff, in which three six-day modules are combined with “back home” projects to allow for learning and translation of that learning into organisational change. The second course is of particular interest to the themes of this chapter; CDRA offers a six-week course for organisational development practitioners, an opportunity to reflect on their personal experience, and explore new ways of thinking and understanding their work. The course thus brings together representatives of the NGO training and support organisations from across South Africa and, with participants from other parts of the world and from other

development profession, allows for sharing of knowledge, learning, ideas, and techniques, and for the establishment of personal relationships within the sector.

7.4. Reflections on CDRA: from authentic practice to authentic donor – relations? By Allan Kaplan

An exchange with ALLAN KAPLAN (former director of CDRA)

The idea of getting contributions from development practitioners – especially from those involved in organisational development work – emerged in the initial planning phases of the project. Subsequent discussions with practitioners at CDRA and OLIVE culminated in a series of discussions with Allan by various members of our research team. (The founding director of OLIVE and practitioners there helped our project in other ways.) The following pages represent Allan's responses to general questions raised by the research team during early 2003.

Researcher: CDRA has a voice, within the development world, far in excess of its size. Can you describe the essence of this message and some of its implications?

AK: In the first place, the development sector has always taken an engineering approach to the world; it has seen the object of its endeavours as a thing which can be manipulated, a thing which can be controlled. Under this assumption, it seeks to analyse the thing, and then provide inputs which, it presumes to predict, will lead to relevant outputs. In other words, it assumes that the correct inputs will lead, in a more or less linear way, from cause to the predicted effect. It thus seeks to do to, and on behalf of, others, where the other is 'controllable', and where the effect will be on the other and not on the one who intervenes.

CDRA has always regarded the 'object' of development endeavours as a living being - whether it be an individual, organisation, community or social situation - which means that it has its own inherent development process, or movement, into which we intervene. Therefore development work can never assume linearity; we always have to deal with aspects of another being's process which defy any attempts at analysis or prediction, or control. We cannot perform engineering operations on others as if they were things; we can only walk alongside, anticipate, respond, and keep adapting our interventions as the situation changes. This demands that we are at home with ambiguity and uncertainty; it demands that we treat the object of our endeavours with the kind of respect and love which we would apply to a loved one (which is already a radical departure from current development practice); and it demands that we accept, and welcome, the changes that will take place in ourselves if our development work bears any fruit.

Development work is entirely about relationships. We are a significant part of the relationship. We cannot separate ourselves from the other; while conventional development work presumes to do exactly this. Conventional development work, in recent years, has become far more amenable to concepts of participation and ownership, but still generally as a means to an end; the success of the development project is often assumed to depend on, for example, participation. For CDRA, concepts like participation and ownership are not a means to an end but are the end in themselves; if we can achieve participation and ownership we have done all that we can possibly hope to do.

As well, CDRA has always placed a high premium on the concept of practice. Most development organisations and projects are content to rest with aims and objectives and

strategies and indicators for success; they seldom look deeply enough at their methodologies for achieving these, their on-the-ground practice in the field. Too little time is spent interrogating that practice, and improving it. This takes us to the question of learning. More and more development organisations pay lip-service to the concept of the learning organisation, but very few organisations actually engage in rigorous and continuous processes of self-critique, around methodology and practice, in order to improve action. For CDRA, given the ambiguous and uncertain and participatory (with respect to the intervener as well) nature of development, the only real guarantee of good practice is adequate ongoing learning; we have always seen rigorous learning and self-critique as the only true and relevant form of accountability, for a development organisation or practitioner. Yet those who fund development, who spend so much energy demanding compliance to their criteria for accountability, seldom are prepared to provide funds for such learning to take place. And even less frequently do they engage in such processes themselves.

Which in a way takes us back to something I said earlier: effective development practice demands that we ourselves, as the ones who intervene, are prepared to change and develop. The refusal to fund, and engage with, real processes of learning (not external evaluations, which we all know have only a limited amount to do with learning) is a mark of the cynicism with which many donors and their counterparts approach development work. It is not simply a question of not knowing any better; it's an indication that most of those who engage with development do not themselves see any point or necessity to their own development. And what could be more cynical than that?

Researcher: *That kind of very strong statement is probably what has contributed to CDRA's reputation for not bowing to the kinds of conditionalities imposed by donors. It is a privileged position for an NGO to be in - not to have to feel overly grateful to the hand that feeds it. Is CDRA's strong message not compromised through this privileged position; I mean, other NGOs may feel that their circumstances do not allow them to take as strong a position, or make as strong a critique?*

AK: If CDRA's position is seen as privileged, then yes, I guess it must compromise the message. So it feels important to set the record straight. CDRA has benefited from core (institutional) funding, from receiving funding for its own learning processes, and from remarkable relationships with many of its donors. But it has never been privileged in the sense of having been born into these circumstances, or having been lucky. It has won these circumstances through struggle, through commitment to a vision of development practice and through a rigorous authenticity.

It has never compromised on its vision, not because it has never been forced to, but because when it has been forced it refused to cooperate. For CDRA, compromise has never felt worth it; we have always known that if we're forced to compromise to too great an extent then we would rather throw in the towel and do something else with our lives. What's the point of engaging with development work when you're compromising to such an extent that you're not really doing it anyway? There have been donors who have tried to bend us into the project mode of operation, and we have refused their money, not because we had alternative sources but because then the game would not be worth the candle.

Strategic coherence, for CDRA, has always been paramount; and it has refused project funding except on grounds when it would not compromise this stance. The vehemence of CDRA's argument, and its inherent rationality, has often forced donors' hands simply because it has refused the conventional wisdom which has it that NGO's, as beggars,

cannot be choosers. We have demanded an intelligent relationship with our donors, and we have been rewarded by having intelligent donors, who are often even prepared to go against the dictates of their agencies, and who have sometimes, as a result, had an instructive influence on the funding policies of their agencies. This is the way things work; it is the approach CDRA has always taken, also with those whom it serves. You have the ability to influence your world; don't think of yourself as a pawn in the game of others. This is a deep underlying message contained within CDRA's approach to development and organisational work, and it plays itself out as much with our donor relationships as it does in our work with 'clients'.

Development, for CDRA, is essentially about people; it is work performed in the realm of relationships. It has everything to do with authenticity; anything less is technique, which brings us back to the engineering approach. CDRA has carried that approach, that way of being, perhaps, into its relationships with its donors. It has always tried to relate from a place of authenticity - transparency, honesty, equality, rigour - and it has been rewarded through having authentic relationships with donors. Where this has failed, it has simply failed, and we have fallen out of relationship, and we have moved on. But it's very dangerous for NGOs to think that they are subservient, unable to influence. The truth is, I believe, that it is that very thinking which creates the subservience. I find it remarkable that the higher you go in the donor hierarchy, the more the donors themselves will complain that 'their hands are tied'. The closer to the centre, the closer to the source of power, it seems, the more powerless people become. This is a dynamic which CDRA has been obliged to explore in some depth. In the development world, it sometimes feels as though everyone thinks of themselves as a pawn. The only way to move beyond this dynamic is to move beyond it . . . and not sit around waiting for circumstances to change.

CDRA has always assumed that it has something to contribute. This is another reason for the different dynamic with donors. CDRA has had funding for its learning processes partly because it has engaged seriously with those processes and has tried to share its learnings - unadulterated, transparent and honest - with the outside world. Thus it has proved the value of the funding, not by ticking off quantitative indicators in a logical framework but by making sense. It's surprising (or not) how much sense it makes, to make sense!

If CDRA is regarded as privileged, it reflects quite frighteningly on donor practice with respect to other organisations. When CDRA started, it had the benefit of meeting an intelligent donor whose agency allowed him space to respond flexibly and differently to specific and unique situations. This set CDRA's ball rolling, it is true. If this is seen as privileged, then donors have only themselves to blame. And if NGO's retreat from vociferously challenging the practice of the agencies which provide their life blood, then they too have only themselves to blame. There are other things to do in life; we do not have to choose to remain in abusive relationships.

Researcher: How much of this relationship with donors had to do with you?

AK: A lot of it had to do with me, just as I set my stamp on CDRA more generally. This is the way it is with leadership, particularly with respect to the founder. Even in what I have been saying to you in the last while, it's difficult for me sometimes to discern clearly what is CDRA and what is me. If CDRA had had a different founder, surely it would have been different. So perhaps, yes, it was not simply CDRA, but my own approach, which created a certain set of relationships with donors. But I'm not sure that the question, put like that, is helpful. Within CDRA, I have been blessed with a remarkable

group of colleagues. They are equally the reason why our funding relationships have been so healthy; but once again, you could ask the question - how much of the fact that CDRA has been graced with remarkable development workers has had to do with me? The question doesn't seem to take us very far, and in fact masks some perhaps more relevant considerations.

What is relevant is the demand for authenticity in relationship with respect to both myself and the other (in this case the donor). What is relevant is the refusal to accept that which does not make sense, simply because one is told that that's the way it is. What is important is always to critique practice, firstly your own - both for authenticity and because by doing so you begin to know what to look for in others - and secondly the practice of those you come into contact with, including donors. What is important is not to set donors up as some kind of holy cow; and by refusing to do so you help them too, because they are beset on all sides by their own holy cows. What is important is to recognise that donors are as much part of the game as those they fund; they too need to be challenged to look to their own development, they too need to be confronted with their own contradictions. What is important is to recognise that donors are as clueless as the rest of us when it comes to understanding good development practice, and not to be intimidated by them, or to be seduced into thinking that they must be privy to some higher knowledge just because they have more money; their wealth is directly related to the lack of wealth amongst the communities we work with. What is important is to look to your own strategic coherence, your own practice and methodology, and not to bow to pressure to run disparate and fragmented projects just because this is the tool used by donors to pass the money around. What is important is to develop authentic means of accountability, and not simply to complain about donor practice in this regard. What is important is to hone your own analysis and practice so that you have the means and integrity with which to challenge donors. What is important is to recognise that donors are part of the problem; but what is equally important is to recognise that you (we) are as much part of the problem, and to strive to move beyond this. And what is also important is to give credit where credit is due, recognise and respect good donor practice when you see it, and let them know when you do see it, as much as you need to critique when you don't. This is a basic component of a healthy relationship.

CDRA, and CDRA's donor relationships, are not simply a function of my role. From the very beginning, in CDRA, we paid close attention to our own learning processes. It took years to create the institutional conditions in which this would thrive. But we never gave in to the kind of indolence, lethargy, resistance which besets so many organisations when they try to implement deep learning processes. For the last however many years CDRA has spent perhaps 20 percent of its time on its own learning. This is relatively unheard of in the development sector. But development organisations are performing tasks which most commercial organisations would stumble over; it takes a wily intelligence and a flexible rigour and a deep sense of principle coupled by the ability to let go of holy cows, to engage in a successful development practice. The time CDRA has spent on learning has generated not only a stable institutional practice but also a group of resilient and rigorous practitioners, who developed themselves to carry CDRA as much as I ever did.

Researcher: *CDRA has achieved a significant degree of what may be termed 'brand-share', in the development world. Did you deliberately set out to create an image of the organisation which would 'sell' in the sense of raising funds?*

AK: We were looking to create an organisation with character. An organisation which has a particular and strong character necessarily has coherence - its vision is reflected

in its strategies which are reflected in its practices which are reflected in its organisational processes and functioning which is reflected in the image (right through to logo) which is presented to the world. The importance for CDRA was that it had a strong and recognisable character; the issue was never one of creating an image. If it is to be authentic, then the character of an institute carries the image, rather than the other way round. And if a character is strong enough to carry an image, then you reap the consequences of that, both for better and for worse.

Researcher: *So given your remarks about character, and the strength of your message and the funding relationships you've fought for, what impact do you think you've had, generally and on other NGO service organisations?*

AK: How does one really measure impact? Many years ago, before CDRA, as a fieldworker in the rural village of Wupperthal (Cape Province of South Africa), a visitor passing through gave me a book called *The Developing Organisation*, by Bernard Lievegoed, a Dutchman who, in the 1950s, founded an organisation called the Nederlands Pedagogical Institute. This book revolutionised my thinking. Though it was written for, and out of, what he referred to as post-industrial society, and though I was working in what almost amounted to pre-industrial society, I absorbed these ideas and began to work with them in the situation I found myself in. Later, these ideas formed the basis of the CDRA's practice (not to mention that of many other development consultancies in other parts of the world). Lievegoed died before CDRA was founded. If someone had asked him what impact he had had, he clearly would never have mentioned me or the CDRA. Yet equally clearly he had a tremendous impact on an entire area of work that he had never thought of. So how do we measure impact?

Our timeframes are too short. And in any case, our current penchant for evaluating impact is too linear and too discrete. CDRA works largely in the realm of ideas and in the realm of inner development, because these are the areas that lead change, these are the areas that really have impact. CDRA itself is nothing more than an idea. And how do we measure the results of such ideas? By the visible signs of changed behaviour? But Lievegoed would have seen no sign of this in me before he died. If a fieldworker in an NGO which CDRA has worked with changes 'as a result', but her organisation does not change, and she moves on, and the organisation loses its best worker, has CDRA had a valuable impact? (And what do those words 'as a result' mean anyway; there are so many influences impacting the fieldworker's life, how can we separate CDRA's from the rest?) If a donor sees the value of what CDRA is saying, but is unable to shift the bureaucracy he works for, has CDRA had an impact? Would you change your answer if you discovered that some years later the donor founded a new international think-tank? Or found himself back in the field, in a developing country, having chosen the move after many years of working as a donor out of Europe?

I think CDRA has had tremendous impact. I could tell you many stories of real organisational and individual change which has resulted from CDRA's intervention. I could tell you stories about the shifts that have happened for individuals, and the organisations they belong to, as a result of CDRA's formation (training) programmes. I could tell you about the numbers of inspired responses CDRA gets to its writings; how many people claim to carry CDRA's Annual Reports around with them, and CDRA's books. I could tell you about the number of development programmes at both university and other levels which use CDRA's writings and ideas. I could tell you that before CDRA the terms capacity building and organisation development were entirely absent

within the development world of southern and east Africa, whereas now the concepts and the practitioners are ubiquitous throughout the region. I could tell you that CDRA's particular 'take' on capacity building and organisation development - and development practice generally - are recognised as a unique contribution throughout the world, and valued for this.

I could quote you the number of hits that CDRA's website gets daily. But this would only go to show the absurdity of this whole exercise. What are 'hits' anyway? What impact does one hit have? Someone makes a hit, reads a few lines and moves on. Someone else prints what they have read and passes it on to thirty others. All thirty revolutionise their lives. No, none of them are the least effected by what they've read. Who knows? A brilliant but enigmatic writer, Owen Barfield, once remarked that he would rather his books were read deeply and used continuously by a few than that they were read superficially by many and then put back on the shelf. This is a very difficult angle for the development sector even to begin to get a grip on; we demand instant and visible and quantifiable and replicable results, else no money next year (but no-one could replicate Owen Barfield).

I think CDRA has had tremendous impact on many people. But CDRA's voice and message is often regarded as complex, controversial; certainly it is trying to push against the self-imposed boundaries which frame our current thinking. This is its value, but it also inevitably makes for depth rather than breadth with respect to its impact. Yet this is precisely what CDRA would want. At the same time, there are many more people who have never heard of CDRA, and others who have rejected CDRA's arguments. Who knows?

I know this. I know that many people have heard CDRA's message, and that its message has found its way into the heart of many NGOs, service organisations and consultancies included yet always only aspects of its message, never the full complexity. This is as it should be; I would prefer people to take an idea and allow it to mingle with other ideas in their developing understanding, than to swallow a package and emulate it in practice. In any event, I work in the former way, which seems, after all, to be most like a developmental way. An authentic development practice has to be honed as an inner practice, not imported from without.

Researcher: *Then you would have a similar response to a question about your impact on donors?*

AK: Well, yes; but its even more complicated in this arena. There are donors who have really changed their practice, or adapted aspects of it, in response to contact with CDRA. For example, they have begun providing funding for capacity building, organisation development, and learning processes, alongside more conventional funding, and without being asked for it. Or becoming more programme oriented, rather than project; or more institutionally oriented, rather than programme. They are responding to different criteria for evaluation; accepting and encouraging new kinds of evaluation - learning processes involving self-critique, for example, and not simply external assessments and judgements. But the truth is, far more donors have not changed at all, than have. Actually it is even worse than this.

The more I see of donor practice, generally, the more I despair. After so many years of trying to get the basics of an alternative approach across, one which asks development practitioners to take the living nature of their 'audience' seriously enough to begin to build an approach and a practice which is capable of responding to such living process with respect, dignity and a measure of truth, the donor community generally - and there

are of course exceptions – is moving in the opposite direction. There is: greater quantification, greater emphasis on fragmented projects, more rigid adherence to the new fashions emanating from the north (till the fashion changes, and rigid adherence gives way to sudden break, without due warning); greater emphasis on control, on bureaucratic forms of 'accountability', and less emphasis on learning, on methodology, on genuine interrogation of practice; greater intransigence, less contact with smaller ventures on the ground; greater conformity, and less openness to experimentation; more and more jargon - like replicability, like sustainability - without due interrogation of what these terms may really mean; greater emphasis on material product, less emphasis on the power of idea and inner transformation as development tools; greater allegiance to their masters at the centre, less collaboration with the people on the margins; a spurious connection to an outdated science with little recognition that development work may be a creative art; and finally, a remarkably dogged adherence to their own organisational procedures takes the place of logic and strategy, despite their protestations to the contrary.

There are few who claim that CDRA's ideas are misguided; people generally love the alternative picture of possibility which CDRA presents. But there are very very few donors who take the ideas seriously enough to actually work with them. This is largely because the ideas centre around the need for change with respect to those with power, not simply those without; and as I said earlier, donors do not see themselves as the subject of change. The level of cynicism which has crept into the development sector is profound.

Researcher: *You mentioned a minute ago that donors pay less attention than necessary to logic and strategy. Surely the current reliance, or focus, on the logical framework instrument (LFA) is an example of respect for 'logic and strategy'. Yet CDRA's approach seems to be at variance with the LFA as a tool. Could we close this interview with a few words about the LFA, as it seems such a central focus of donor practice, yet remains controversial amongst grantees?*

AK: When I speak of logic I am not referring to the logic of physical, material bodies, which would be an engineering logic, and where the LFA would make perfect sense. Logic would seem to imply for me that you adapt your approach to the kind of phenomenon being approached. When you approach living organisms, you have to discover the logic which is inherent to the functioning of those organisms, not simply apply a logic which you learned from dealing with dead matter. The LFA has nothing whatsoever to do with assisting the intervention into the development process of living organisms; it is a tool of the military, of engineering and business, it implies linear predictability, and a 'manipulation and control' mindset. It has nothing whatsoever to do with facilitation.

Proponents of the LFA would disagree of course. They will hasten to say that the LFA is valuable precisely because there are so many unpredictable variables in any development endeavour, and here is a tool which allows one to manage the complexity. There are many responses one could make to this - that the tool fragments and complexifies, rather than assisting the intervenor to get to the heart of the matter; that it demands more time than the development work it is supposed to assist; that it forces grantees to jump through hoops which satisfy donors rather than the object of their endeavours. And so on. But I would focus on the following.

The LFA distances, rather than brings you closer to the issue or community at hand. When you read an LFA - assuming you can do so without your mind wandering off into

whatever fantasy grabs your fancy - it is really hard to get a feel for the situation being addressed. No fieldworker, faced with the situation, would ever tell the story in this way. Indeed, there is no story with the LFA; the story, the whole, that which holds the whole situation together, the essential dynamics and patterns and relationships - all this is precisely what gets lost. What you have is fragmented bits of information. The logic of the living dynamic of a developing organism or situation is exactly what gets lost. You're left with...well, like the specifications for a motorbike. Would you ever get a sense of what it's like to ride a motorbike, or a particular bike rather than a different one, from reading the specs of the two different bikes? The LFA assumes that development work is like fixing a motorbike; we need the manual. But there is no manual for development work. If you were trying to make right a friendship which had gone wrong, would you use a manual?

The LFA is a tool favoured precisely by those people who are somehow involved with development but who are not directly engaged with it in the field. The LFA does not bring you closer but sets you apart. The essence of a good development practice, CDRA has always believed, is intimacy and engagement; the entering into real relationship, together. The LFA is the tool of choice for those who are so far away - in many senses, not just geographically - that they must search for a substitute for the real thing. What the tie is for the businessman, or the weapon for the soldier, the LFA is for the development bureaucrat. It has no value for development work as such.

One of the greatest problems of the LFA is that it seeks to predict outcomes before the development work has been engaged with. This goes to the heart of CDRA's 'alternative' approach, which indicates that development is unpredictable, and that it opens things up, rather than closing them down to pre-set criteria. But, you may say, if we cannot strategise, what is the value of our interventions, and how can we even begin to hold the intervener accountable?

We can indeed strategise; but prediction and pre-set indicators are the means of those who are not engaged with a development practice. For those who are, anticipation, responsiveness and a 'knowledgeable reading' - rather than pre-set indicators - are the kinds of faculties or capacities to be honed. The LFA cannot hold development work accountable; it simply placates the organisational procedures of donors. Real conversation between donor and grantee would yield far more 'truth'. The LFA does not simply take the place of real conversation; it prevents it.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has summarised a few aspects of selected organisations providing support to the wider NGO community in South Africa. NGO training and support organisations span the spectrum, from those working within dominant paradigms of development management to those posing radical alternatives. In this conclusion, we explore the impact of these organisations on wider civil society structures. We begin with an overview of how we see fragmentation within the NGO sector. We then conclude with a few points regarding the extent to which NGO support organisations have contributed to distinctive South African approaches to development practice and organisations.

As was initially mentioned in Part 2 of the report, one can distinguish different types of NGOs based on their relationships with donors, the state and grassroots communities. Changes in funding patterns, and the ability of organisations to access funds, suggest

that selected organisations are being incorporated into the international aid industry, with continued exclusion and neglect characterising other organisations, groups, and issues.

Four different types of NGOs, as defined by their relationships to their funders, can be distinguished, as follows:

1. Smaller, less formal NGOs and CBOs that receive no funding from international source

There are countless smaller NGOs and CBOs that are not linked into international funding flows or that are linked into government funding relationships. These organisations were not the focus of this study (see Habib and Kotze, 2003; Swilling and Russell, 2001).

2. Smaller organisations that must comply with donor demands and struggle to do so

Many smaller NGOs and CBOs, especially those that are rural-based, are struggling to cope with the new management practices and conditionalities. Considerable field evidence indicates that in many small organisations staff weakly understand the frameworks and tools with which they are now required to work. Field workers proudly showed us completed monitoring sheets that were incomprehensible. Managers told us that there was no monitoring system when one existed, at least on paper. Often they were unfamiliar with the carefully prepared mission statements, strategic plans, and project rationales. Even upper level managers and directors admitted that, in several cases, projects came back from the INGOs and donors substantially changed, to the point that they no longer recognised the project as their own. INGO representatives explained that they received reports and proposals in formats that they could not use, and were forced to modify them to fulfil the requirements of their own current or potential donors.

In the initial phases of our research, DFID's move towards retrospective funding – in which funds are only disbursed against invoices of past expenses – was of great concern. Our fear was that smaller and less well-resourced organisations would not have the reserves to front costs and then wait for reimbursement. We encountered few cases of retrospective funding in the SA NGOs we studied however organisations have indeed suffered due to delays in donors disbursing funds; according to one respondent's information, in his sector alone, one organisation had to dismiss half of its workforce, another had to close, and another was at risk. More widespread were issues related to the contradictions around funding timeframes and commitments, as described in point form below:

- Some donors push for NGOs to undertake medium to long-term programming however NGOs highlight that they work in a national context of uncertain funding streams and complex changing development needs
- Several donors change their “partners” periodically, or reduce and cease funding to them, because of concerns to spread their resources, support emerging organisations, follow strategic priorities, or reinforce recipients' self-sufficiency and financial sustainability; local NGOs staff do not always “hear” such plans – for multiple reasons - and contend that such practices are problematic, especially given the increasingly competitive environment for external funding, the discourse of partnership, and the lack of negotiation around money
- Time frames for funding and financial reporting were usually both short and rigid, and meshed poorly with the logic of project development and implementation

- Funds are allocated to project-linked activities and outputs, while other organisational priorities, perhaps crucial to project success, organisational sustainability, or enhanced impact, are not funded (e.g. pilot projects, research on community needs, and baseline studies)
- Many funders are reluctant to allow NGOs to maintain reserve funds (though such assets permit much greater financial stability and can cover both unexpected or un-fundable expenses)

3. *Professional and larger NGOs that accede to and then work around the conditions that accompany their funding.*

There is strong evidence that more established and experienced NGOs are attempting to manipulate the conditions placed on their funding and confine their effects to the office level. A few illustrative examples are provided here, drawing on discussions in the body of the report:

- they prepare their monitoring reports in the office according to the specified outputs or milestones, with only weak or tangential links to information gathered at the project level
- their funding is based on logframes or strategic foci that, again, are not translated downwards to field staff or project beneficiaries
- they fudge on financial reports, often because there is no way to accurately report on funds spent in time to meet reporting deadlines, and stretch funding categories to include activities essential to project success that were not funded

Also apparent are efforts to work with funders to reduce hardships associated with new management practices. For example, NGOs have tried to co-ordinate the format of reports, so that a single report will serve all the funders. Funders have also responded to NGO requests for further training on new programme elements, such as partnerships, networking, and gender policies. And several INGOs described how they modified reports, or took last-minute financial statements, to better reconcile real-world constraints with the demands of back donors.

The problem is that many of the research findings indicate that the management tools and practices employed by many funders are not producing the desired effects – projects are not better managed, outputs are not more assured, and information and learning are not promoted. To the contrary, there seem to be strong incentives to “bend the truth” and “creatively work the system.” There is evidence that the efforts to enhance impact are ineffective and, even worse, may be pernicious, distorting reality, obstructing learning, and establishing time frames and approaches that simply do not work.

4. *Organisations - large or small – that challenge donors and negotiate with them*

There is a smaller group of NGOs that are redefining relationships with their funders. Many of these are in the organisational development (OD sector) or have benefited from longer-term positive relationships with one or two funders. For example, a number of these NGOs have insisted on the need for capital reserve funds, from which they can draw interest to cover core costs or pilot projects. Many funders refused to finance projects when the organisation had such resources. Several NGOs refused to accept funding altogether under those conditions. The funders returned and after several years of negotiation have agreed to provide project funding with the understanding that NGOs would continue to maintain their investment reserves.

The NGO support organisations, and other organisations that have worked with innovative donors or challenged the more rigid ones, have had an important effect on the arena for debate and experimentation. The organisations described in this chapter span a range of approaches to development. Experimentation, in theory and practice, in South Africa is wide, as the organisations described here illustrate. If part of what can prompt change is having people seriously engage with debates about the way development should be organised and conducted, and the role of individuals and organisations within it, South Africa has a good discussion going.

The NGO support organisations have done more than effect the terrain of debate. They certainly have assisted organisations to rethink their own course, on the one hand, and to gain more proficiency in dominant techniques, on the other. Donors have changed practices in response to some of their encounters with these organisations, and local NGOs have taken up new agendas – reserve funds, rights-based approaches, and campaigning, corporate responsibility – with local examples to bolster their efforts. These support organisations extend, of course, beyond the NGO community to unions, government, CBOs, grantmakers and others.

One of the OD practitioners, in describing the skills that helped in her work, mentioned one that is of particular relevance. She says,

Listening, really, really, really listening. You listen at three levels. Listen for the head: what are the ideas and knowledge that is there?...Listen for the heart: what are the feelings, the emotions that you are working with? Listen for the will: Is there energy and will that you can work with, to shift whatever,,, is stuck or to try to do something new?

In our discussions with the practitioners at these organisations, and with the staff at other NGOs, we have tried to listen. Our learning is summarised in the next and concluding chapter.

Chapter 8. Power and resistance in development management and practice

By Lisa Bornstein

8.1. Introduction

This concluding chapter summarises some of the findings of the report, explores implications for our understanding of different types of aid chain relations, and discusses issues of fear and confidentiality that emerged in the course of the research.

Our research found that many bilateral donors and INGOs have adopted rational planning techniques (logical frameworks, output- or results-oriented project planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, etc.) for both their internal operations and as requirements for organisations requesting funding. Likewise, many of these international organisations have adopted new "standards" for their development activities and the organisations they fund. They may require, at least on paper, that recipient organisations be attentive to impacts on the environment, gender, good governance, HIV/AIDS, conflict and equity. Many funders and INGOs are also imposing new systems of financial management, such as retrospective, matching, and more project-specific funding.

Research into changes in the areas of finance, rational planning, and organisational development suggest, at one level, that organisations improve program efficiency to the detriment of participation, focus on outputs although losing flexibility and responsiveness, and please donors at the expense of local people. Examples were provided above to support this observation. These clear outcomes of the adoption of the new techniques apply for the majority of South African organisations

At a deeper level, however, our research indicates that the contradictions can be resolved at different points along the aid chain and in ways that obscure direct causality between management techniques and the success (or weaknesses) of projects and programs. Moreover, some organisations – either through supportive, long-term and respectful relations with their South African partners or through the imposition of new codes of conduct and development standards – appear to play an important role in reinforcing and promoting people-centred development.

8.2. Power in the aid chain

Findings around four organisational issues are described below: the use of rational planning tools, the push for local participation in project design and implementation, the effort to enhance impact, and the emerging trends in the financing of recipient NGOs. Many of these findings were first drafted in a paper for the ISTR regional-Africa conference and were subsequently published in the journal *Public Administration & Development* (Bornstein, 2003).

Rational planning and irrational reporting

The research, as discussed in chapters 3, 5 and 6, found that logframes, as an example of rational planning tools, were used widely in development practice, from the South African NGOs upward along the aid chain. Managers at all levels described the logframe in terms similar to those of its advocates: as a useful way of encapsulating a project, checking on the coherence of project design, and specifying objectives that could then be cross-checked against wider organisational aims and priorities. Logframes provide benchmarks and a structure for monitoring implementation and impacts. Criticisms of

logframes related more to the style of management they promoted than to possible consequences for either program content or participatory processes. Respondents noted, for instance, that the logframe is “technicist,” “sterile” and “has no soul.”

Despite claims to the contrary, some field staff and project managers indicated that logframes could produce confusion rather than clarity and generate assessment processes unrelated to real project issues. A few project managers, for example, said that they did not understand the project logframes, and that donors had criticised them for reporting on activities that differed in title from those on the original proposal. Other examples mentioned include incomprehensible logframe-derived monitoring sheets and others that reduced documentation of progress to a single numeric rating, with no space to note difficulties, adjustments and lessons learned. Such evidence and examples suggest that logframes can function to sideline the politics and messiness of development itself, reinforcing (and generating) mechanistic views of the development processes in which inputs automatically lead to the specified outputs.

Nonetheless, the gist of the comments, particularly from directors and other staff of South African NGOs, suggest that power relations are not as expected or theorised. Rather than being managed by logframes, some managers claimed that they managed the logframes. Directors stated that they packaged their projects and wrote their logframes in ways that matched donor funding priorities. Other directors, distressed to find their programs no longer fell within donors’ strategic objectives, were able to change the language and repackage program elements to “create a fit.” Many organisations used the logframe as a basis for progress reports, in accordance with the requirements of donors. One director told us, however, that the reports were constructed in the office, off community-based monitoring processes and field staff inputs that were not tied to the outputs specified in the logframe. Such comments indicate that tools like logframes – in at least some organisations – are contained to the office level, with recipient communities largely insulated from negative encroachments on participatory processes.

Indeed, contradictions associated with logframes emerged most visibly within the office and around reporting. Directors and managers uniformly described a trend towards increased reporting requirements in tangent with the use of rational planning tools. While our respondents in both INGOs and South African NGOs recognised the need for reporting to assure accountability and identify problem areas, South African NGO staff mentioned specific concerns. Directors noted that they received little feedback on reports and several mentioned that they suspected that their reports went unread, as we indeed confirmed. Many directors also noted the “irrationality” of reporting requirements, with a “significant diversion” of skilled staff’s efforts from important work to a task they were ill equipped to perform. Numerous directors described how, with multiple funders for a single set of projects, they were obliged to prepare a different report for each one, complete with separate forms and time-frames.

As noted above, not all South African NGO directors accepted the “irrationality” of reporting, though most felt that they had few alternatives. We cited examples in the reports of directors who negotiated more useful or less time-intensive reporting formats, and other organisations where evaluation was accompanied by joint – donor and NGO – reflection on how work was proceeding (unfortunately that case did not involve UK-based funders). In other cases, NGO respondents recognised that the INGOs were also constrained - “one senses that they too are under pressure and they are trying not to put pressure on us but they have to” - although details regarding that pressure were scarce. In summary, any potential improvements in management to be derived from logframes and related rational planning tools were, according to many respondents, offset by the

irrationality of their use in monitoring and reporting. Resolution of the resulting contradictions entailed working within the system – and manipulating it, or confining it to the office, or reallocating staff to its management – or in a few cases, confronting it through innovative and more collaborative relations with selected donors.

Institutionalised and bounded participation

A second area of tension relates to efforts by donors and INGOs to build participation into their programs. Typically this takes one of several forms: participatory project identification and design; inputs by local beneficiaries into project implementation or decisions over the distribution of financial benefits, if generated; and, lastly, extensive participation throughout project cycle management. Looking at this last option, ostensibly the one most committed to participatory bottom-up development, our research indicated that South African NGOs encounter numerous barriers to the institutionalisation of extensive participation (see especially chapter 5). These barriers included the SA NGO's inability to guarantee funding for community-identified projects, and reliance on time-bound outputs orientated project-based funding; neither accorded well with the politics and messiness of on-the-ground development work. Commitment and adequate training were additional challenges. Respondents from several organisations further noted that reliance on contracted work – a common strategy for economic survival in South Africa – usually precludes any meaningful commitment to participatory planning. Instead, project management tends to be driven by the timeframes, resources, and aims of the contracting agency. As a result, participation is used selectively, in those projects less subject to the bottom line.

In the PEOPLE aid chain (chapter 5), participatory program planning was the underlying policy framework for the organisation and partner organisations, and field staff required extensive training in participatory methods. Despite this training, both internal and partner staff often exhibited a weak ability to differentiate participatory skills from sectoral program elements and varied greatly in their abilities to bring the techniques into communities. Staff reported that community members showed uneven interest in the participatory approaches promoted, finding the language and techniques difficult, and the program outcomes uncertain.

Many of those involved in these projects, throughout the aid chain, reported a commitment to participation. Nonetheless, the rationalities of aid effectiveness and programmatic coherence for INGOs and their funders means that in all but a few instances appropriate areas for intervention and programming were established, and others defined as off-limits. The formalisation and institutionalisation of participation was partial and generated fundamental conflicts between locally generated priorities and upstream strategic concerns. While rational management tools may compound many of the problems in moving towards participatory approaches, our findings suggest that the difficulties with techniques were experienced indirectly, in the way the tools reinforced existing biases towards output and time-delineated projects as a means of development.

The search for impact

A concern to demonstrate impact and effectiveness was a third major force shaping NGO development practice in South Africa and elsewhere (see Chapter 4). Both the UK and SA NGOs emphasised the need to enhance the impact of development interventions. INGOs actively push for the formation of networks and umbrella organisations, and promoted their partners' entry into advocacy and lobbying. Several

funders preferred umbrella organisations and sectoral networks as conduits for their funding, both as a means to devolve management functions and administrative costs downwards and to “build local capacity” at a sectoral level. Institutional donors, meanwhile, evinced a strategic preference to contribute to policy formulation (e.g. sector-wide programming, and more recently the poverty reduction strategy plans); greater impact could thus be coupled with, in their own terms, greater local ownership of resulting programs.

South African NGO respondents stated that the donor support to networks and umbrella organisations had led to sector-wide inputs, new intermediaries with responsibility for liaising with donors, and exchanges with others active in similar areas. Benefits to the NGOs from membership in the networks were uncertain; according to South African respondents, learning and co-operation was limited by member NGOs’ distinct political and ideological stances, programmatic and operational approaches, and community and government ties. At the same time, the sector-wide networks at times widened the gulf between funding and recipient organisations, and introduced another level of potential misunderstanding and translation into communications.

The push from INGOs and other donors to form networks further revealed tensions around power and impact. SA NGO staff felt compelled to accept these pressures towards collaboration, even when INGO staff were – in their own terms – merely exploring the idea. Setting up new organisational structures, and identifying programmes to pursue in common, generated tensions around staff time, capacity building needs and accommodation of donor requests versus responsiveness to locally-defined priorities.

The search for policy and advocacy impact is also problematic. The difficulty is that funders cannot dictate how their Southern partners will address advocacy. They cannot easily specify what should be advocated and how. Moreover, as noted in chapter 4, INGOs presume that advocacy and lobbying will generate policy debate and reform, not sectionalism or open conflict; but positive outcomes are not assured, either at a societal or organisational level¹⁷. A push for advocacy - as a generic category - cannot grapple with politics, only with influence.

An additional danger is that donors and upstream INGOs’ “hands off” policy towards advocacy may result in their partners articulating claims and positions with which they do not agree. As a consequence, donors intervene in the process through extensive training and ‘capacity building’ (e.g. on issues of gender, human rights, or the environment). They link placements of volunteer, technical assistants or short-term experts to advocacy promotion. Other funders have opted to pursue their advocacy work with South African NGOs with a proven track record of activism (e.g. TAC) or those with which they have had long-term partnerships around critical issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, child rights, and economic justice). . In each case, greater selectivity and inputs into the growth of local organisations are hoped to breed loyalty to a shared cause and vision of development.

Financial packaging

The structuring of finance has distinct implications for SA NGOs and their development practice. Many donors and INGOs are adopting new approaches to finance to address

¹⁷ In a case not cited in the body of the report, a move towards advocacy around violence against women generated internal conflict within an organisation struggling with questions over focus (rural/urban and women/men & women).

their concerns regarding accountability and aid effectiveness. Two measures discussed in the report were the widespread trend to pay “project” rather than “core” costs, and a more recent tendency towards “retrospective” or “invoice-based” finance.

As an established practice, project-based funding most prejudices those organisations that are relatively small with inexperienced staff. Project managers who have not gained the skills to, for instance, “bury” core costs within project-based proposals complain that key functions necessary to the organisation are not funded. However, even large organisations with experienced managers find that there are essential activities that are difficult to fund: organisational development, research, pilot and more experimental approaches, and longer-term impact analysis were among activities mentioned.

Donors’ reluctance to provide core funding goes to the centre of debates over partnerships. Donors typically attempt to couch their reluctance for core funding in terms of concerns about the sustainability of organisations, e.g. not wanting to be the only, or the major donor, to any particular organisation because of fears of generating over-reliance and dependency. South African NGO respondents argued, however, that the unwillingness to fund core costs can be interpreted as a powerful manifestation of a lack of trust by northern donors in organisations in the south, that giving discretionary money to a South African NGO will inevitably lead to wastage or corruption. Such a belief, of course, is the very antithesis of the kind of relationships needed for partnerships (Smith and Bornstein, 2001).

Retrospective funding is even more powerful in its differentiation among potential “partners” in the South. Since funds are released upon approval of submitted invoices, only organisations with sufficient capital to back implementation can accept such terms. Smaller, poorly capitalised, and new organisations are immediately excluded. Organisations that are capable of operating on an invoice basis find that retrospective funding exacerbates dependence on the timeliness of disbursements – truly a precarious position.

NGO respondents described numerous strategies for managing more restrictive donor approaches to funding. As is clear in the report, donors did not always dictate the terms for their financial ties to NGOs. A number of South African NGO and INGO staff stated their preferences for working with certain donors. Preferred funders tended to fall among the private aid foundations or those with whom the organisation had worked for substantial time. Some South African NGO directors refused funding from certain donors, or re-negotiated the terms. Several organisations would only accept funding if there were provisions for core activities, or for reinvestment funds, and after turning down the donors several times finally achieved agreements on their own terms.

Moreover, staff of South African NGOs can have significantly different perceptions of the same donors. For example, one director said the following about working with US AID: “They manage to combine very demanding, rigorous requirements for reporting, and for project proposals and budgeting, with extraordinary inefficiency on their part.” In contrast, managers at some other organisations said that US AID, though bureaucratic, was extremely clear about requirements and this made it relatively easy to work with them.

Again, as with previous examples, procedures designed to enhance control, accountability, and effectiveness potentially carry high costs. Access to international funding is more restrictive, excluding smaller, less capitalised organisations, such as local grassroots organisations, community-based organisations, and small NGOs. For South African NGOs that accept the new terms, key functions may go unfunded and

exposure to risk may increase. An experienced NGO manager can manipulate funding flows to cover some core costs. But only through diversification of the organisation's financial base, or through successful proposals to less restrictive funders, can organisations access discretionary funds.

8.3. Implications for the South African NGO sector

In exploring the implications of the research into development management and standards in the South African aid chain, it became clear that donor and INGO policies towards development practice have affected the structure of civil society at various levels.

At the overall level of South African civil society, the shift towards rational planning, strategic priorities, advocacy and policy, and more restrictive funding has resulted in a new set of boundaries that differentiate the formal NGO sector. Some NGOs are increasingly formalised, professionalized, and integrated into global aid chains. Though dependent on their benefactors, and subject to potential shifts in funding areas, these organisations appear increasingly capable of managing aid within the confines of the existing aid system. As Julie Hearn (2001:44) writes, "the section of civil society which has actively engaged with the dominant national development project . . . is invariably amongst the most well-funded, is almost completely donor dependent, and tends to identify itself self-consciously via the new language of 'civil society'".

There are also a number of smaller organisations, of varying histories, that continue to do well, based on either sectoral specialisation or strong alliances with sympathetic funders. For the remainder of the formal NGOs, and for those that are less formal or more closely aligned to the community level, the international aid system provides scant financial resources; influence is instead through wider policy and research initiatives, and limited training programs. In sum, the multiplication of donor requirements, both substantive and procedural, and their greater complexity and sophistication, have created a gap between large professional NGOs and others.

Shifts in the sectoral and geographic coverage of funded NGOs are also apparent. Directors of South African NGOs were clear that the programmatic focus of INGOs dictated their chances of receiving funding. Some sectors, not favoured by current South African government policy, seem to have been equally neglected by international aid; adult literacy is a case in point (Hyman, 2001). International support to HIV/AIDS prevention, advocacy, research, and care organisations has, in contrast, bolstered organisations neglected by the State. There are thus two sides (at least) to the strategic focusing of the INGOs and institutional donors: they may, if it falls within their priorities, help civil society organisations or they may equally leave South African NGOs to their own recourse if this programmatic focus is not in line. As donor priorities shift, so too may the coverage and representation that South African NGOs provide.

At a macro-level as well, the attention to policy influence and advocacy is both intriguing and highly problematic. Premised, as these interventions are, on a vision of consensus-producing pluralistic policy debate, the rise of advocacy as a "required outcome" of selected INGOs activities carries with it the potential to create new spaces for previously silenced voices. The expression of new interests, perhaps better linked into a global or transnational network of allies, is a possible outcome. The rise of umbrella organisations and networks similarly generates the possibility of more powerful advocates on behalf of a better-organised third sector. Yet the de-politicisation of these processes, and the neglect of the way such organisations are situated within South African power relations,

also creates substantial risks, both for the advocacy and impact projects, and for their wider political outcomes.

The standards and practices associated with the aid chain also have effects at the meso-level of organisations themselves. It is at this level that the research suggests the contradictions arising from new standards and techniques are most severe. The rise of umbrella organisations and networks creates a new level of accountability and organisational complexity for South African NGOs. Likewise, strategic planning requirements, logframes, and M&E systems entail a professionalization of organisations and the acquisition of specialised knowledge. Systems to improve accountability to upstream funders and to demonstrate effectiveness are increasingly heavy.

In parallel, greater financial uncertainty – whether arising from an inability to access State or international monies or from the new restrictions on the use of international aid – means that multiple strategies to diversify and stabilise income sources have become imperative for many South African NGOs. In some cases this has meant that they establish closer relationships to INGOs. In other cases, South African NGOs have redefined their relationships to the State, market and “community”, taking on government contract work, providing services to the private sector or charging user fees to community “clients.” Some organisations have experimented with their legal status (becoming non-profit “companies”), while others have used labour as a variable cost, down-sizing and relying more heavily on short-term contracted staff when work loads increase.

The research also shows that there are substantial efforts to change the terrain of debate, and of practice, when incompatibilities with developmental or organisational objectives arise. Attempts to resolve conflicts between the logic of different systems (as with reporting and use of professional staff or participatory processes), manipulate the system (e.g., with respect to program content or reporting), work with allies (as around advocacy and finance), and confront the most restrictive aspects of development management standards were all observed.

Micro-level impacts of these conditions and practices are also apparent. Contradictions related to participation versus strategic focus are, at times, resolved through practices that work to obfuscate the problem, and frame participation within the preset boundaries of acceptable interventions. Tensions between the requirements of participatory local level processes and the specific language and targets of the logframe were, in several cases, resolved by insulating the beneficiary communities from that logical reporting rationality. Such contradictions between the demands of donors and the realities of development activities and relationships foster deceit, fear, and silence. Office staff reword fieldworkers reports to meet donor formats, INGOs reframe community defined demands to fit into their strategic areas and back donors’ funding categories, and project plans underestimate outputs to assure achievement of targets, and finessed budgets accommodate costs that cannot be covered elsewhere. Yet people know that they are not being fully honest; they know that funds may be cut if there are any doubts regarding probity or competence; and therefore no one comments on the blemishes on the emperor’s bare body.

NGOs as authentic actors choosing their funders

Challenges to this system exist, and the South African NGO sector is a fascinating, complex and, we believe, internationally important example of the different ways NGOs can work with aid. Within the sector there are clear instances of local Southern organisations that have changed thinking around development, and corresponding

practices. While many donors and intermediary NGO employees still think about learning as a process that flows from North to South, many of the innovations in NGO practice are arising out of careful and serious self-reflection and organisational awareness from those based in the South.

While organisational integrity, or in Allan's words authenticity, is essential, selectivity in donors – the willingness to take the risks for turning down funding - is equally important, as was emphasised by respondents quoted earlier in the report. For some organisations, however clear they may be on values, mission and authenticity, such a risk is seen as too great; lack of alternative revenues, communities and employees expectant of the funds, or absence of support from key stakeholders, may make refusal impossible. Moreover, even if selective, there have been many observations about different types of funders and grant-making practices. What is most notable about NGO reports on their funders is the level of ambiguity. NGO staff differ greatly in who they pinpoint as the desirable funders.

Nonetheless, certain types of funding practices have been described as positive, as follows:

- *Funders that put time into building a relationship with partners.*

In South Africa, these are less likely to be in the form of a formal partnership or membership agreement (though they do exist). These relationships are characterised by frequent visits or calls, e-mails, feedback, interest in the field results, and are built over time on the basis of personal relationships.

- *Funders willing to listen, engage with requests and ideas, and explore possibilities*

Desirable funders were those willing to engage in open two-way communication, even around difficult issues, and to respond to queries and requests with "let's see" instead of "it is against the rules". Respondents also mentioned experience (which can bring wisdom) and an understanding of the local context as useful attributes of international programme staff.

- *Stability and predictability in the funding relationship*

Several respondents highlighted the importance of on-going relationships with donors, and an ability to count on support – whether in finance or other forms. Others noted that clarity in procedures and expectations was important, regardless of whether the relationship was simply one of funds and "easy to manage"¹⁸ or whether a more personal and informed connection emerged.

There are risks currently facing such relationships, a few of which are:

- Turnover of staff among South Africa NGOs and among Northern NGOs and donors;
- Requirements that Northern NGOs must pass to partners without adequate discussion of their implications, appropriateness, and potential for modification;

¹⁸ Such arrangements are often accompanied by conditions that undermine NGO efforts to isolate their funding terms from operations and program/project level activities (as noted elsewhere in the report).

- Changing priorities and the need for support from local constituencies (e.g. marketing) that turn visits, for example, into displays instead of opportunities to learn and listen; and,
- Inadequate communication of debates and pressures from Northern NGOs to partners in South Africa.

8.4. Dynamics of the research process

There have also been interesting results and insights into funding relationships that have arisen from the research process itself. Here we turn to four key issues related to those we researched: access; confidentiality; fear; and use of information.

Access to the organisations with which we wanted to work was difficult. Often we had to make repeated phone calls to establish initial contact or to secure interviews. Sometimes we did not succeed or staff decided not to continue (often because they were in vulnerable position at the time or in the midst of a period of intense work). People were busy, and also cautious about the research. In one case, a UK organisation participating in the research refused to give us the names of their South African partners, insisting instead on contacting them directly about the research and indicating that they could – or not – choose to contact us. None of them, not surprisingly, did. As it turns out, we already knew some of the partners through our own networks and several of the organisations did agree to participate. However, we have no idea how representative they are of the overall partners and, as researchers, feel that the staff of the partner organisations should have had the chance to decide independently – based on contact with us – whether or not to participate, as other organisations did.

Confidentiality was an important issue for many respondents. Almost all did not want to be directly quoted. Most wanted all comments disassociated from their organisation. A few, though agreeing that the material drawn from interviews, field visits, and office documents could be used, did not want their organisation even mentioned as a participant in the research project.

We attribute the concerns about access and confidentiality to a high level of fear about the repercussions of the research on funding. People were very concerned that information not “get back” to their funders or to their recipients, in the case of intermediaries. Such fear, incidentally, made presentation of our findings more difficult; while we mention few names, staff recognising their own organisation in the text may be able to identify linked organisations and individuals, though we have done our best to keep sensitive information confidential.

There were also concerns that the information be put to use. Quotes from field notes illustrate this point:

Box 8.1 An exchange

Researcher: When I first approached XX for an interview, XX asked a lot of questions about the purpose of the research, who would read it and what kind of impact it would make....She explained her need to find out this information.

XX respondent: I'm often a bit worried about research projects that are about excavating information that potentially have no benefit to those that you're excavating information from. And there are always different kinds of interest served in having certain kinds of information. It is just important for me to know where your will is and your interest lies before we start sharing a whole lot of our experiences. Our experience is unique and something that shouldn't just be given away with no kind of sense of...if this information

is going to influence things for the better, then great, we choose to use our time to spend talking about our experiences if we know it might have some meaning for the NGO sector.

As researchers, we share our respondent's concerns, and very much hope that the research will lead to better understanding of current funding and management practices, their effects, and possibilities for more just and effective approaches.

8.5. Concluding points

It is worthwhile, in conclusion, reproducing the six main observations arising from this research

- 1) Funding available to SA NGOs is less accessible overall, with funding for some sectors decreasing, funnelled through government, or directed to a new select group of recipient NGOs. As a consequence the NGO sector is becoming more fragmented, with highly professionalized and internationalised large organisations succeeding in accessing foreign funds while smaller, more grassroots-oriented and less formalised organisations cannot.
- 2) Donors increasingly dictate the terms SA NGOs must satisfy to access international funding. There is clear evidence that management practices are transferred to SA NGOs through conditions associated with funding. However often these conditions are not dictated by a single donor, well-meaning or not, and rather by the entire system of managing aid, in which many back donors and intermediary NGOs are using similar systems for project funding, monitoring, and impact assessment and placing similar types of conditions on funding.
- 3) The difficulty emerging from our findings is that expected improvements in NGO management and developmental impacts cannot be linked tightly, if at all, to such practices. While some respondents stated that management of their organisation's activities had improved through the use of such practices, many respondents found the requirements peripheral to their real work, confusing, redundant, or destructive. The logic of participation, project implementation, and long-term developmental improvements did not mesh well with the packaging of funding and logic of many of the new conditions.
- 4) There are distinct responses to such funding conditions:
 - d) In a few instances, SA NGOs have contested the donor requirements, suggested improvements, and, in several cases, insisted on new ways of operating. There are clear examples of SA organisations learning from each other outside of donor structured frameworks, and a few examples of Northern organisations willing to learn from South African ones.
 - e) Many SA NGOs are willing to accede to donor demands and are extremely concerned to demonstrate their effectiveness.
 - f) Other SA NGOs agree to the terms but do not follow them, either because they do not have the capacity or because the requirements do not make sense to them.

Effects associated with acceding to the terms, whether or not carried out in practice, include a disjuncture between on-the-ground activities and what is packaged and produced for funders, with resulting negative effects on learning.

While our research documents cases where donor conditions have pushed SA NGOs into self-described improvements, these are the exception not the rule.

- 5) While some donor conditions relate to better management in SA, others arise out of concerns to raise the profile and cost-effectiveness of the UK funders. Such organisational concerns and constraints, as well as other pressures on the funding organisations, are rarely communicated to the SA NGOs. Expectations that SA NGOs can move into high-profile areas, engage in advocacy and policy influence, and provide good “photo-ops” for UK fundraising are problematic for many recipients. While many organisations, in both countries, work to overcome the inherent inequality of the funding relationship and build partnerships, weak communication of organisational constraints, UK program managers who acted like “they knew best”, and unexplored differing expectations puts the basis for partnerships into question.
- 6) Personal ties and reflexive practice rather than formulaic management and programming approaches appear to underlie the more successful examples of funding, partnerships, and – less clearly – development impacts. Yet at the same time, there is false dichotomy between personalised and more objective, strategic approaches to programming. Throughout all our research, issues of gender, race, and class intersected with the funding and oversight (project) management processes. There were no funding processes that did not have a personal component.

Just as the aid chains with which we started our analysis are complex, the types of relationships, and their impacts on development itself are difficult to reduce to a simple set of observations. We have highlighted a number of trends – captured at a particular time based on limited work with a limited number of organisations – that we find dominant in the NGO sector in South Africa. There are numerous exceptions to these trends, and our research uncovered cases of exemplary practice by INGOs, and others of questionable use, not all of which could be recounted in this report. Yet our concluding message is that our gaze should not focus exclusively on tools and procedures as a means to improve development practice and its outcomes. The rational approaches to development, in sidelining politics, people, and communication, treat development as mechanistic and controllable activity, one in which inputs can produce the planned outputs. Rather than producing development, such approaches put development practitioner’s commitment to change at odds with coercive tools. We instead need to think seriously about such difficult challenges as how to learn and translate learning into action, how to communicate – across cultures and power divides, and how to make a difference in working towards a more just and equitable world. We need to put our energy in thinking how to create authentic and meaningful development practice.

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Appendix

Donors and NGOs in the UK¹⁹

Although this report focuses on findings from the South African portion of the research, a brief overview of the UK findings is provided here. The UK portion of the research had among its objectives the aim of detailing how back donor requirements affected UK NGOs. UK NGOs are important intermediaries in the flow of aid from initial sources to South African organisations and communities; an understanding of the ways in which UK NGOs are constrained, or have their "hands tied", is essential to the analysis of how they transmit or not conditions to their South African counterparts. These findings thus highlight (a) parallels in the experience of NGOs here and there and (b) links between the policies and requirements of the large institutional donors and the conditions imposed on South African development NGOs.

The UK based research team, Tina Wallace and Jenny Chapman, interviewed various UK donors (including the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union, the Community Fund, Comic Relief and small foundations such as Nuffield and Barings) and over 15 UK NGOs of different sizes and purposes. Some of the UK NGOs, in turn, are donors to NGOs in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa.

There are four related points arising from the research that we present here. First, the overall funding available to UK NGOs is decreasing. Second, despite the diminishing funds, donors have increasing influence over UK NGOs with respect to all aspects of development practice. To access restricted funding, UK NGOs are willing to accede to donor demands and are extremely concerned to demonstrate their effectiveness. Yet this is difficult to do. As a result, the third point, a number of pernicious effects are emerging in the NGOs, including exaggerated claims of impact, reluctance to challenge the donor requirements, and, as in South Africa, interest in maintaining secrecy rather than transparency. These various trends combine to produce an environment in which, our fourth point, donor demands, regardless of their positive or negative impacts, are transferred uncritically onto those organisations funded by UK NGOs. Further details on these four observations are provided below.

Funds available to UK NGOs are diminishing; small & medium-sized NGOs are negatively affected

Several factors are contributing to the decline in funding available to UK NGOs. One central feature is a change in the way that DFID and the EU fund development work. Their funding for contract work in specific countries is increasing; however this funding is accessed through tenders and is only open to large NGOs with incomes of over £15 million per annum. Rather than rely on NGOs, DFID has increasingly shifted to government-to-government funding. The Civil Society Challenge Fund is now the only DFID source of project funding for NGOs. Available monies through this fund are more limited than in the larger Joint Funding Scheme that it replaced, and the new fund emphasises advocacy and a rights' approach to development, excluding many agencies deemed to be only doing basic service delivery.

¹⁹ Initial findings contained in a report by Tina Wallace (Project Leader) of Oxford Brookes University entitled "Trends in UK NGOs: A Research Note", January 2003 and are summarised here by Lisa Bornstein.

Meanwhile, in addition to moving towards tender-based contract work, the EU has adopted policies that restrict NGO access to grants. In 2000-2001 many UK NGOs suddenly found themselves without funding when the EU, citing a shortage of funding, ceased new grants. Although the EU has since resumed its programme, it now operates via a rolling series of bids around themes determined by the EU. These bids are advertised with little advance warning throughout the year, the timeline for applying is short, and the bids are complex. The new process favours large NGOs or coalitions of NGOs since many previously funded NGOs lack the staff to track opportunities and prepare bids, or work outside of the designated themes.

While changes in DFID and EU policies result in constraints on their funds for NGOs, alternative sources have also become more restricted. Two important sources of funding for UK NGOs – the national lottery and the private foundations – have suffered their own revenue losses. For example, the volume of lottery funding, now known as the Community Fund, has fallen significantly because of the declining popularity of the lottery itself in the UK. Private foundations, small donor trust funds, and NGO capital reserves have all suffered from the fall in stock market values in recent years. The only alternative source of funding for many small and medium sized NGOs is Comic Relief, which has experienced an increase in its funds.

Donor Influence over UK NGOs is increasing

In parallel to the reduced volume of funding available to UK NGOs, there are increasing requirements for accessing funds. Mentioned above are requirements on NGO size and thematic focus for tenders and grants via DFID and EU. There are other areas in which donor demands have expanded. DFID requires logframes for all Civil Society Challenge funding, and contracts are tightly regulated and defined. Strategic plans, policies around gender, advocacy and conflict, detailed reporting, tight and difficult-to-change budgets, and retrospective funding now are all part of most DFID funding packages. Although the EU has always been a bureaucratic and relatively inflexible funder, over the years the Community Fund increased its conditions for funding and the application form expanded. As the Community Fund and, increasingly, Comic Relief rely on external assessors there is a tendency to focus on quantitative issues that can be checked rather than the more difficult qualitative issues.

The reduction in alternative sources of funding, whether from private foundations and trusts or NGO capital reserves, has contributed to heightened donor influence over UK NGOs. The foundations are often more responsive to NGO requests and more prepared to take risks than other donors, and falling foundation funding and NGO reserves remove important sources of flexible non-targeted funding. In the absence of these flexible funds, NGOs must attempt to comply with the requirements of the larger donors.

Indeed, as funding becomes tighter, competition increases. Competition appears to exacerbate some of the existing deficiencies and problems in the NGO sector in the UK, and allows donors to increasingly set the agenda and place conditions on those receiving funding.

There are associated negative consequences: exaggerated claims, silenced critique, and secrecy

Associated with the reduced funding and expanded conditions is the rise in NGO policies and practices to demonstrate effectiveness. One spin off is the mushrooming of claims that UK NGOs make about what they can do with relatively small amounts of money. They strive to meet the ever growing demands of donors that they are able to do hands-

on work and advocacy, to make linkages and network, to build organisations, to promote partnerships, to be innovative, and to work with the private and public sectors. And there is an upward spiral of claims in order to secure funding. Reporting then becomes a process of proving these myriad claims were met.

Another effect is the adoption of donor tools, again uncritically. While UK NGO staff may voice concerns privately about the impact of many of these tools, they have been publicly embraced. Indeed they are often at the heart of the training and capacity building programmes undertaken by UK NGOs in the south. Because they need the funding, UK NGOs' critiques of donor conditions remain largely unvoiced.

Indeed, one of the most alarming consequences is the fear and secrecy which seems to pervade the entire 'aid system'. The hallmark of doing research with UK NGOs is the requests for confidentiality. Respondents do not wish to damage the NGO's image with either their donors or the wider public by sharing openly issues of failure and problems. The secrecy means that failures, successes, risks and solutions are not discussed.

UK NGOs transfer donor demands onto the "southern" organisations they fund

The conditions that donors place on UK NGOs are passed down to their partner organisations. Increasingly NGOs and CBOs wanting funding in South Africa and Uganda are expected to conform to a set of structures, systems, policies and procedures set in the UK (or other donor countries). Detailed donor demands for reporting are passed down to the next level, as are the onerous budgeting requirements. What is true for the majority of UK NGOs in relation to their donors then becomes true at the next level when they become the donors passing on these demands to the "southern" organisations with which they work.

The risks are many. Tools and procedures may distort the funded organisations and divert staff away from working responsively with local people; this in turn risks the commitment to sustainability through real participation, local ownership and changes to inequalities that keep so many poor. The many conditions may force the Africa-based NGOs to resemble their donor NGOs and each other, squeezing out the diversity and range of possibilities in civil societies in different cultures and contexts. Fear rooted in financial dependence may impede learning and challenges to the new structures and procedures may remain unvoiced.

Discussions with UK NGOs and donors suggest that many of these risks are already the reality. For example, UK NGO representatives note that questions raised by southern partners about these pressures to conform to externally set criteria are often not passed back to donors. Evaluations or learning that raise real questions about the emerging way of working and NGOs' ability to meet all their claims, or which highlight real weaknesses in organisational processes or development work, are not shared.

Phase 1 Research: participating "Northern" NGOs

African Medical and Research Foundation	HelpAge International
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development	Oxfam Canada
CARE South Africa & CARE International	Oxfam UK
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Save the Children UK
Charities Aid Foundation	Voluntary Service Overseas
Diakonia Sweden	Womankind
Farm Africa	World Vision of South Africa
Habitat for Humanity International	

Chapter 3 Newspaper advertisement study

Table 3.1: Organisations with advertisements in more than one year

ORGANISATION	YEAR			Total
	1992	1996	2000	
AFRA	5	1		6
AIDS foundation	1		1	2
Alexandra Clinic	4	2		6
BESG	3	2	1	6
Black Sash	1	4	2	7
CASE	1	2	2	5
CBDP	4	1		5
CCATC	1	1		2
CRIC	3	1		4
DAG		5	2	7
EDT	1	1		2
ESP	2	2		4
GAP		1	5	6
HRC		4	1	5
IDASA	3	3	1	7
IDRC		3	2	5
IMMSA	4	1		5
Mvula Trust		2	3	5
NLC	5	3		8
NLP	1	4		5
NPPHCH	4	1		5
Operation Hunger	2	4		6
OXFAM	1	1		2
Peoples Dialogue		1	1	2
POWA		2	1	3
Rape Crisis		2	1	3
RSS		1	2	3
SACC	2	1		3
SCAT		2	2	4
SCLC	1	1		2
TRAC	1		1	2
Triangle Project		1	1	2
USAID		4	4	8
USN		2	2	4
VSO		1	3	4
WUS	1	1		2

Table 3.2 List of organisations and acronyms in table 3.1 (organisations with adverts in the M&G)

AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
AIDS Foundation	AIDS Foundation of South Africa
Alexandra Clinic	Alexandra Clinic and the Institute of Urban Primary Health care
BESG	Built Environment Support Group
Black Sash	Women For Human Right: The Black Sash
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CBDP	Community Based Development Programme
CCATC	Community Counselling and Training Centre
CRIC	Careers Research and Information Centre
DAG	Development Action Group
EDT	Educare Development Trust
ESP	Education Support Project
GAP	Gender Advocacy Programme
HRC	Human Rights Committee of South Africa
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IMSSA	Independent Mediation Service of South Africa
Mvula Trust	
NLC	National Land Committee
NLP	National Language Project
NPPHCN	National Programme Primary health Care Network
Operation Hunger	
OXFAM	
People's Dialogue	
POWA	People Opposing Women Abuse
Rape Crisis	
RSS	Rural Support Services
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SCAT	Social Change Assistance Trust
SCLC	Southern Cape Land Committee
TRAC	Transvaal Rural Action Committee
Triangle Project	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USN	Urban Sector Network
VSO	Voluntary Service Network
WUS	World University Service

ⁱⁱ The chi-square tests reveal that there is no significant change in the type of jobs advertised in the three years (0.05 significance level). Results of the Chi-Square Tests are reproduced below:

	Value	df	Asymmetrical Significance.(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35.560	30	.223
Likelihood Ratio	41.279	30	.082
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.722	1	.099
N of Valid Cases	409		

a. 27 cells (56.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.29.



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