

NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID

Desk analysis: Civil Society for Accountable Governance 2005-9

Final report

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This is a final draft of the report submitted by Nordic Consulting Group to NCA as a partial deliverable of the TOR for “Desk analysis of NCA’s Portfolio on Civil Society for Accountable Governance 2005-9”.

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Acronyms

| | |
|----------|---|
| AACC | African Conference of Churches |
| ACT | Action by Churches Together |
| AEN | <i>Aide de l'Église Norvégienne</i> |
| AFRODAD | African Forum and Network for Debt and Development |
| AMSS | <i>L'Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel</i> |
| ASSADDEC | <i>Association Sahélienne d'Appui au Développement Décentralisé</i> |
| CoS | Church of Sweden |
| CSAG | Civil Society for Accountable Governance |
| CCM | Christian Council of Mozambique |
| DCA | Dan-Church Aid |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| ECOS | European Coalition on Oil in Sudan |
| EU | European Union |
| EURODAD | European network on debt and development |
| EWLA | Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association |
| GATS | General Agreement on Trade in Services |
| GFATM | Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria |
| GLT | Grassroots Leadership Training |
| GREFFA | <i>Groupe de Recherche d'Etude de Formation Femme – Action</i> |
| GSP | General Strategic Plan |
| HRGG | Human Rights and Good Governance |
| IGA | Income-generating activities |
| IOCC | International Orthodox Christian Charities |
| LWF | Lutheran World Federation |
| NCA | Norwegian Church Aid |
| PAF | <i>Participation accrue des femmes en vie politique</i> |
| RDRS | Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service |
| SEM | Spirit in Education Movement |
| SLUG | The Norwegian Coalition for Cancellation of Third World Debt (<i>Slett u-landsgjelda</i>) |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UMCOR | United Methodist Committee on Relief |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |
| WILDAF | Women in Law and Development in Africa |

1 Executive Summary

1. The report in hand is the result of a desk study and analysis of six projects within the Norwegian Church Aid's thematic area of Civil Society for Accountable Governance (CSAG).

1.1 Brief background

- 2 As a follow-up of the quantitative desk study of Civil Society for Accountable Governance conducted by Nordic Consulting Group (NCG) in end of 2009, NCA decided to further analyse the medium and long-term outcomes of the accountable governance program, and thus commissioned an in-depth desk study of six selected projects. Each of the projects was classified according to the priority areas of the CSAG thematic area: a) Community Development, b) Local Government, c) Economic Justice, d) Legal Framework, e) Gender and f) Capacity-building. The selection of the six projects was conducted by NCA.
- 3 The main purpose of the desk analysis was to analyze the results and achievements on an outcome level, i.e. which effects and changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors have been recorded among the duty-bearers and rightsholders in the six selected projects. The outcomes were analysed along NCA's key indicators of achievements: participation and equity.¹ A secondary purpose was to provide input on challenges and recommendations to NCA for how to improve the reporting on results on an outcome level.

1.2 Key findings along the TOR

- 4 NCA's focus on Civil Society for Accountable Governance is encompassing many elements and broad terms. As opposed to for example, the thematic area of HIV/AIDS or Water/Sanitation, promoting governance via civil society is not a sector, but cuts across many sectors, i.e. accountable governance can be promoted via health, education and livelihoods as long as the implementing actors are civil society organisations.
- 5 The broadness of CSAG seems to have led confusion as to what to report on. This is seen in the six projects studied; the two first case studies (community-development in Burma and local government in Bangladesh) do not differ greatly from each other. Although the first project is expected to provide results on how people are mobilized for accessing and claiming their rights to livelihoods and basic services, and the second on how local government is held accountable, both project reports spend substantial time on elaborating on activities and outputs (number and types of trainings). Both reports struggle with **documenting the outcomes of the trainings** – what kind of changes and effects in society do the trainings lead to, i.e. reporting and analyzing on outcomes instead of only the measurable outputs.

¹ The third result indicator, protection was of less relevance to the development projects.

- 6 Gender analysis is mainly limited to gender-disaggregated data, i.e. number of males and females attending the specific activities. What would be of great interest from a civil society perspective is **how** the partner (or NCA) have facilitated the participation of the under-represented sex', what steps have been taken to ensure that women can participate in the public events or organizational issues and which barriers have been identified (for example baby-sitting facilities, meetings held during daytime instead of evenings).
- 7 The Mali case study on increasing women's political participation the processes of how to engage women from becoming active in politics is excellently described. The *Participation accrue des femmes en vie politique* (PAF) project has directly contributed to a more than ten times increase in women elected for the local councils, school and health committees. A gap noticed in the reporting is that other development partners' interventions are not described, and thus the reader is left wondering how much of the change can be ascribed to other partners, and how much to NCA. For reporting on outcomes, NCA always has to ask the question: what would the situation be if NCA and partners had not intervened? (creating a contrafactual analysis).
- 8 Linked to the above, a key finding with regards to NCA reporting format and style is that NCA's contribution to obtaining results and outcomes is not clearly communicated in the reviewed projects. Often NCA efforts ('value-added') can be read between the lines, but not how NCA contributed to promoting the results with the partners. There is a gap between what is achieved at partner level and what NCA *aims* at achieving in the country or regional plans and what is reported in the annual reports.
- 9 This gap seems to be linked to a weakness in NCA partnership approach; there are no existing guidelines for how to work with partners in themes like; promoting internal democratic governance, strengthening their ability to mobilize communities, for FBOs to take on larger social, political and economic responsibilities etc. NCA's understanding of organizational development has included mainly financial management and administrative issues, not 'soft components' like community mobilization, processes of holding leaders accountable to their constituency etc, or in other words, how can NCA accompany their partners more effectively.
- 10 One example, the project Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) implemented by Spirit in Education Movement (SEM) has been able to document great outcomes as a result of the training of more than 300 alumni. The alumni become leaders, entrepreneurs and facilitators of community development initiatives. Although the external evaluation of the project (from 2010) could not state exactly that it has an effect of poverty reduction, the evaluation documented the effects that it has had on enabling communities to cater for their own needs (self-reliance). Results at partner level are thus clearly documented, but there is no direct reference to what NCA has brought to the partnership. Engaging more with the Act Alliance, could lead to an increased NCA's value added in total, but might also reduce the visibility of the organisation vis-à-vis the donor.

- 11 The result indicators of participation and equity are found to be very useful for reflecting on the equal access of beneficiaries/rightsholders to the services provided by NCA's partners although there is a risk of overlap between the two. As an example, when applying these indicators to the highly successful illegitimate debt campaign, the campaign is found to have a deficit in participation of stakeholders from recipient developing countries.

1.3 Main recommendations

- 12 NCA is advised to clarify and simplify the reporting formats for the thematic area of civil society for accountable governance;
- Intervention could be classified as functions of civil society; service-delivery holding government accountable, partners to government, watchdog function etc.
 - Focus on defining what an outcome is through training and discussions.
- 13 NCA's partnership approach need to be further developed and refined; guidelines for how to work with partners in strengthening their organizational capacity, community mobilization, churches' social responsibilities etc. NCA might consider moving more towards an **accompaniment approach** in priority countries.
- 14 Linked to the Partnership approach; continue to assist the church-based partners in their role of taking on social, economic and political responsibility. Depending on the context and available political space in the country of intervention, NCA needs to carefully consider where it can make a difference, and invest in the church partners (i.e. link up with advocacy and policy department in NCA) in order to support the churches to transform themselves from being pure humanitarian or service-delivering agencies to real voices for defending and protecting the vulnerable and the poor.
- 15 Related to the Partnership approach, NCA could consider developing a toolbox for good practices related to accountable governance including how to conduct social audits, public hearings, use of media in promoting women (or other groups with less representation), intergenerational dialogues in raising awareness of sensitive issues like women's rights and GBV, but also issues related to financial transparency and accountability of duty-bearers towards their constituencies.
- 16 Documentation of governance practices (not only good, but also the weak ones) need to be developed and shared with donors, including the Norwegian Embassy that NCA has a strategic partnership with in many countries (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola etc) on how NCA works with governance; analysis of stakeholders' involvement, risks involved of focusing on governance and human rights.
- 17 Trying to learn from Ethiopia and the risk analysis there. The critical question is which channels and tools should NCA utilize for promoting good governance in Ethiopia? How to balance between working with the Norwegian embassy and other donors and the local church-based partners. NCA is encouraged to analyse the events and its own role in what led to the closing down of the work with human rights and good governance with funding from

the Embassy, for future learning in how to work with promoting HRGG in such volatile and repressive environment. Such analysis could include assessing the relationship between funding mechanisms (donor consortium and pooled funding) and what is the most effective way of influencing government's human rights and governance agenda. In addition, NCA could reflect on how to assist the partners in building up a platform for income-generating activities in order to be resilient towards government clamp-downs on the civil society space.

- 18 NCA need to enhance the focus on learning – and that NCA is a learning organization. There is a tendency in NCA to consider evaluations and reviews as tools for initiating or ending projects, not for actually drawing lessons from these studies. In order to enhance the learning aspects, the competence in how to order evaluations and reports must be upgraded; for example the timing of reviews is crucial. In order to have time to learn from an evaluation it must be mid-term or early on in the project cycle. Evaluating a project after it is finished is only interesting for documenting results for a historical purpose.
- 19 Building the advocacy capacity of core partners (churches and FBOs) is greatly needed and would require a separate strategy and working modalities. NCA Policy Department could consider working along two tracks; one is training advocacy officers in NCA country offices and secondly, based on the successes of the illegitimate debt campaign, select a small number of core partners and countries to pilot a joint advocacy/campaigning project following the same 'success criteria' as in the illegitimate debt campaign; clearly defined objective of the campaign, engage a broad spectre of partners and target specific authorities and decision-makers.

2. Background

Norwegian Church Aid's (NCA) General Strategic Plan (GSP) for the period 2005 – 2009 aimed at achieving results within five thematic areas:

- ✓ Civil Society for Accountable **Governance** (CSAG)
- ✓ Faith Communities Address **HIV and Aids**
- ✓ Communities for Fresh **Water and Safe Sanitation**
- ✓ Men and Women Address **Gender-Based Violence**
- ✓ Regions for **Conflict Transformation and Peace** Building (CTPB)

Now that the GLS has been – or is in the process² of being completed, NCA is reporting on the achievements of the GSP period. As part of that work, NCA commissioned several desk studies of the different thematic areas.

² The GSP has been extended to 2010. The new Global Strategy(GLS) will be effective as of 1st January 2011 to 2015.

The desk study of CSAG (NCG, 2010) provided an overview of all projects that had been funded within the theme focusing on the quantitative aspects. As a follow-up of the desk study, NCA decided to conduct an in-depth desk analysis of selected projects within the Civil Society for Accountable Governance thematic area.

2.1 Purpose and scope of review

According to the Terms of Reference, the main purpose and *first priority* of the Desk Analysis is to analyze the results and achievements on outcome level (for the period 2005-2009) of six projects.

The six selected projects were chosen from each of the sub-categories of the CSAG thematic area: 1) community development, 2) local government, 3) economic justice, 4) legal framework, 5) Gender and 6) Capacity-building. The selection of the projects was conducted by NCA.

When analyzing the outcomes and results of the projects, the TOR asked that special focus be given to NCA's three key Indicators of Achievements as set out in the GSP 2005-2009: **Participation, Equity** and where relevant Protection.

The second priority of the TOR is: Give input on challenges and recommendations for improvement of NCA reporting on results at outcome level in the area of CSAG.

The review focuses on the current NCA Strategy period from 2005 to 2009.

2.2 Approach and Methodology

The main tool for collecting data on the outcomes of the projects has been desk studies of available documentation from NCA as well as external sources available on internet. For some of the projects, the consultant has interviewed key persons involved in the projects; either by email, phone or direct interactions.

2.3 Limitations/obstacles

Being a desk study, the limitations are self-explanatory; findings are based almost purely on the self-reporting of NCA and the partners. Findings are not validated or cross-checked through a multiple of sources as would be the case in a field-based evaluation or review. The consultant has based some of the analysis on her previous knowledge of NCA programs and working modalities.³

³ Notably; Evaluation of the Great Lakes Program (Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo) focused on Conflict Transformation and Accountable Governance (2007) by Nora Ingdal and Erik Kasucku, and Outcome Evaluation of NCA Balkans 2005-9 (2010) by Nora Ingdal, Ana Popovicki and Roberta Ibattici.

3 Context – NCA understanding of CSAG

3.1 Definitions – GSP

NCA's views accountable governance and broad democratic participation as **preconditions** for eradicating poverty, building sustainable communities and upholding human dignity (GSP). Based on that analysis, a focus on "Civil Society for Accountable Governance" is meant to complement NCA work in improving peoples' daily lives by mobilising civil society to fight for the rights of the disadvantaged, poor and vulnerable.

Although NCA does not clearly define civil society in the GSP, the consultant will adhere to following broad definition; Civil society⁴ includes community-based organizations, traditional leaders, implementing NGOs, unions, business associations, religious organizations, independent media, student groups, cooperatives, and other associational groupings.

Civil society is often viewed to have 3 main roles and functions:

- An **advocate** for the interests of its constituencies.
- A **partner** with government in **service delivery** in education, health and other sectors.
- A **watchdog over government**.

NCA sees its role to support core partners in playing all of the three above roles. NCA's core partners are often church networks or diaconal agencies, faith-based organisations (FBOs) and other civil society organisations. NCA aims to support these partners to they can "**empower** the poor and vulnerable groups with a view to civic and political participation and to work actively for improving systems of constitutional checks and balances, e.g. through separating the power of the executive, legislative (parliament) and judiciary branches of government" (GSP).

Political space is therefore an important issue for NCA. The GSP states that, in many countries where Norwegian Church Aid works, civil society needs to:

- make more efficient use of the existing **political space** in order to influence policies in favour of the rights of the poor and vulnerable
- make the existing political space **more open and transparent**

⁴ The Center for Civil Society of the London School of Economics provides the following definition: "Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups." <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction.htm>

- claim **new political space** in national, regional and global arenas in order to give poor and vulnerable people a stronger voice in the decisions that affect their lives

Based on the analysis of civil society's role and functions, which strategies and/or way of working (modalities) does NCA apply with its multitude of partners to empower people?

Referring to the GSP, the following strategies were highlighted:

- cooperation between civil society **organisations**, local and national **governments**
- **linkages** between i) core partners' programmes for the rights-based empowerment of poor populations, ii) provision of basic services and iii) national policies and programmes for provision of basic services
- the empowerment of poor and vulnerable populations with regard to their **civic and political involvement**, placing particular emphasis on participation of women, youth, minorities and indigenous peoples
- the **people-centred monitoring of policies and budgets for poverty reduction** (including monitoring for gender bias)
- economic justice initiatives for sustainable debt burdens, the cancellation of illegitimate debts, trade justice and the regulation of market actors by national governments
- support **access to sustainable food security** through national and international governments regulations
- church and society uniting to **induce elected officials and civil servants to "play by the rules"**, address corruption and engage in dialogue with poor and vulnerable constituents
- the **use of communication technology and the media** to improve access to information for poor populations so as to make their voices heard

3.2 Operationalisation of CSAG

When reporting on the GSP period 2005-9, NCA's Thematic Advisory Division refined and translated the above strategies (the "HOW") into six main sub-categories within CSAG in 2007:

1. Community development; focus on sustainable livelihood and integrated rural development as an entry point for peoples' empowerment and development of participatory citizenship.
2. Local government; initiatives to empower citizens to engage in local governance and holding governments accountable for improved access to quality of basic services.
3. Economic justice: advocacy for pro-poor political, trade, debt, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and accountable governance of natural resources, including people-centred budget monitoring.
4. Legal framework; projects and efforts that work to balance the different interest, addressing discrimination and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups.
5. Gender; programs that address patriarchal and decision making structures and traditions within faith-based organizations and society.

6. Capacity-building; projects supporting training in financial management, RBA, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and other efforts aimed at building the capacity of NCA partners in empowering its constituencies.⁵

The main results from the CSAG study (NCG, 2010) showed that, the largest category where NCA supports its partners is **addressing local government** for ensuring people's access to improved basic services (category 2). During the last five years (2005-9), NCA has channelled 165 million NOK to this area. The second largest is capacity-building of NCA and partners (around 119 million NOK), followed by community development, gender, economic justice and legal framework.

There has been a great increase in funding for the CSAG thematic area; whereas in 2005, NCA channelled 38 million NOK to this area, in 2009, the total funding over five years had increased to 160 million. For gender, power and governance there has been a ten times increase in funding allocated; from 930.000 NOK in 2005 to more than 13 million NOK in 2008. There are geographic differences; Africa is the geographic region that has the strongest focus on gender and governance followed by Asia, while in Latin-America and Europe there are hardly any projects that have been classified in this category. Also in the global and international development policy programs there is only one project classified in the gender, power and governance category.

4 Outcomes

4.1 Community Development - Burma

NCA definition of Community Development Programs (CDP) has a focus on sustainable livelihood and integrated rural development as an entry point for peoples' empowerment and development of participatory citizenship. Projects included here are aimed at covering the very basic needs. There tends here to be a rural perspective.

Project:

Grassroots Leadership Training Programme - For People from Burma

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Partner: | Spirit in Education Movement |
| Other partners/donors | SCIAF, CCFD, Cafod, SwissAid, AFSC, Diakonia, Oxfam (GB), Troicare, TdH |
| Country | Burma |
| Donor: | MFA funded (PID 14481) |

Overall goal: To facilitate grassroots communities and organisations, the Buddhist Sangha and members of all other faiths to actively play a key role in the development process to make a healthy civil society in Burma

⁵ In the Desk Study, it was found that NCA also charged expenses related to NCA operational costs of external offices to this program.

NCA partner in this project is the *Spirit in Education Movement (SEM)*, an alternative college founded in 1995 with roots to the Thai NGO *Sathirakoses Nagapratchee Foundation (SNF)* led by Sulak Sivaraksa.⁶ Sivaraksa has been working for social justice in South-East Asia since the late 1960s.

NCA has funded SEM for a long time and support projects in Laos, Thailand and Burma. Working with marginalised groups, the Grassroots Leadership Training (GLT) initiative has specialised in short term courses and follow-up courses to empower communities to become self-reliant. SEM focuses on “self-help while preserving the cultural integrity of people and a healthy environment. Marginalised communities are assisted to preserve their indigenous knowledge and resources while complementing it with new and innovative technologies.”⁷ Although being mainly a Buddhist organisation, SEM applies a multi-faith spiritual understanding and mutual respect and trains Christians as well as Buddhists, rural dwellers and city people (NCA report).

GLT has been working since 1996 and gained enormous recognition and respect for its role as a change agent socially mobilising people, according to the study by Benini (Benini, 2001).

The expected outcomes of this project were:

- a. To enable potential and existing community leaders to increase livelihoods, cut out exploitation and enhance quality of life through sustainable development initiatives by training alumni to run GLT type courses in Burma and continuing capacity building activities including a 3-month GLT training in Thailand and backstopping where required.
- b. To decentralize power structures, facilitate sustainable development at the grassroots and pave the way for local NGOs in the long term by building a framework of 6 zone coordinators in geographical regions supporting GLT alumni with small project fund and networking with other areas.
- c. To support inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation in development work in Burma and encourage peace building by ensuring that GLT activities bring together participants of different ethnicities, genders and religions in a variety of networking activities.

Key planned activities to obtain the three goals are; training of 60 GLT trainers, recruiting and training six zone coordinators (this was a new element from the previous phase indicating a wish for a more decentralized outreach and management), providing funds for small projects, mentoring of partner organizations, and regional cross-exchange projects between Burma and Thailand.

Assessment of outcomes (along indicators of participation, equity, and protection, if relevant):

Based on the self-reporting of SEM, NCA’s travel and monitoring reports and an external evaluation, this project is able to document substantial outcomes with regards to the capacity-building of the

⁶ Other sister organizations to SNF apart from SEM are International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Thai Inter-religious Commission for Development, Wongsanit Ashram etc. www.sulak-sivaraksa.org

⁷ Wendy R. Tyndale (2006), *Visions of Development – Faith-Based Initiatives*, Ashgate Publishing, England. P.128

trainees and local partners involved, especially taking into consideration the very challenging context the partner is working in (Burma). The main conclusion from the External evaluation (Ratana Tosakul et al, 2010) is that the work of SEM through the GLT programme has **contributed significantly to the development of civil society from below in Myanmar.**⁸

SEM has produced approximately 310 GLT alumni. Those who have attended the GLT programme are perceived as having a good orientation and reputation for doing community development work. The alumni are working actively to promote the well-being of the poor and marginalized rural and urban as an individual project, freelance, or affiliated with their respective organizations across the country, some having run successful GLT type course inside Burma, such as Kayah-GLT courses. Those GLT alumni work to empower local communities and strengthen grassroots civil society albeit difficult political situation of the country (Tosakul et al).

Based on the report, the main contribution of SEM GLT is community capacity building, not poverty reduction (as data was not collected on household levels). SEM has empowered local community in Burma through human resource development, community organization and management. In Burma, the current political situation has deprived people from having an opportunity to expose into critical ideas of development and practice, and to be equipped with proper knowledge and skills for doing development work effectively.

The GLT programme pioneers social engagement of the Sangha. In addition, the GLT has strong support for inter-religious and inter-ethnic collaboration for community based projects. Besides, GLT female alumni are strong and are stepping up to more prominent roles in community based projects/ organizations.

Community based projects run by GLT alumni have reflected different cross-cutting themes, such as gender awareness, ecological awareness, engaged spirituality, social justice, and participation as thoroughly demonstrated in chapter four. Also, plans of alumni for activity collaboration with other alumni projects have reflected the idea of participation and diversity in terms of working with inter-ethnic and inter religious groups.

The outcomes thus seem to be good and in accordance with plans. However, without looking at costs, it is hard to assess whether the outcomes are cost-efficient. The annual budget of the GLT program in 2008 was ca 500,000 USD (16 million Baht), while for 2009, the budget was reduced to almost the half (260,000 USD). According to the audit report for the year ending 31 January 2009, NCA was the largest donor to the GLT program (\$82,000), around one third of the funds.⁹ Donors that had pulled out in 2009 compared to 2008 were: Irish Troicare, American Friends Service Committee, SwissAid and SCIAF. NCA's fund for 2008 was not utilised due different unforeseen events (including Burmese authorities clamp-down on SEM's emergency activities related to the Nargis cyclone) and SEM had requested to transfer the funds to 2009.

⁸ Although Ratana Tosakul et al. refer to the country as 'Myanmar', this desk analysis will adhere to NCA's terminology of "Burma".

⁹ The other donors mentioned in the Audit report 2009 were: CCFD (\$74.000), CAFOED (\$38.500), Diakonia, Oxfam, and Terre des Hommes.

At any rate, assessing outputs (310 GLT alumni, specific project activities) with inputs (around half million USD annually), there would be an expectation of better recorded outcomes.

Applying the indicators of participation and equity (fairness, equality in accessibility) to this program, there are positive achievements at how the trainees are selected (merit-based and competition), gender “quotas”¹⁰ are applied to ensure that women are recruited and included.

The reports from SEM-GLT provide gender-disaggregated data, i.e. number of males and females. There is a majority of males involved in the project, although the number of females has in recent year, according to self-reporting of GLT, increased by 30%. Still three quarters of the direct beneficiaries are males.

An aspect missing in the gender perspective is HOW the partner has facilitated women’s access to the opportunities of participation in the GLTs. For NCA to learn about how GLT has managed to increase the participation of women by 30% it would have been interesting to read if GLT employed any particular facilitation or efforts to get females included.

Ethnic minorities participate in the project. But the reports from partner do not provide data broken down on numbers of ethnic or religious minorities involved. Also, the mechanisms for selecting the different ethnic communities are not stated.

One potential gap found is that the GLT program is managed from Thailand at SEM’s headquarters and the overhead costs for the head office administration is at least 20% (with a prudent calculation of Thailand office costs, administration and monitoring & evaluation the total is 55,000 USD out of a total budget of 260,000). This is a relatively high overhead compared to how much of the funding remains in Burma.

Adding to that, a finding from the external evaluation “although there is already participatory decision making and communication between SEM Thailand and Myanmar, there are still some areas where not all staffs were consulted in the process.” (page 187), and “there is a need for establishing a clear organizational structure and management of SEM-Myanmar office and clarifying the boundary of zone coordinators’ roles and responsibilities in relation to the Yangon office” (ibid).

Concluding in the evaluation, the team recommends; “For the Thai side, SEM role as back-stopper and project management is currently in need to facilitate the decentralized zone coordination structure, which has been put in place since 2007. As SEM-Thailand plans to eventually transfer its back-stopping role to Myanmar office, there is an urgent need to strengthen management capacity of Myanmar staffs in all aspects – technical, intellectual and spiritual.”

For NCA applying a participatory approach, this could be an opening of working and offering assistance to the GLT program.

Issues noted in reporting:

¹⁰ This term is not utilized by SEM, but the fact that GLT has aimed for 30% women makes it a ‘quota’.

- NCA's value-added apart from the financial contribution, i.e. partnership approach, capacity-building, faith-based visions etc is not mentioned. Annual report to MFA for year 2008-9 states that NCA is not satisfied with the financial reporting of SEM and that NCA intends to focus on that. In addition, the Country Plan for Burma (revised 2007) states that NCA has since 2000 taken an active role in advocating for Burma in Norway and internationally on issues related to the humanitarian situation and the international community's policies towards the military regime. Despite that, no particular advocacy issues are mentioned in the CP.
- SEM provides institutional audited accounts to NCA and other donors. This is very important when it is such a large and multi-funded program. What is not clear however is how NCA's fund is spent, is it a basket funding or does NCA require separate project funding?
- There is activity-based reporting with hardly any analysis of outcomes and impact. However, the external evaluation seems to be a serious effort at documenting the impact of SEM's 12 years experience of running GLT and tracking GLT alumni.
- The external evaluation (2010) has some methodological weaknesses; it is stated to be an external evaluation, but the data from the field (response to questionnaires) are collected by the GLT's own zone coordinators something which could be seen as being a conflict of interest (zone coordinators are collected data on the performance of the program that they have implemented themselves). Secondly, some of the case studies in the almost 200 page evaluation report is written by people who are deeply involved in the projects. For learning about projects this is useful, but then it would be better to call it 'internal learning' rather than an external evaluation.
- As the project has been funded by a multiple range of donors for a number of years, it could also have been expected that the external evaluation had an assessment of cost-efficiency.

Summing up the outcomes found on the community development aspects, the GLT seems to have an impact on building the "soft" components of the civil society infrastructure on the grassroots, although not fully utilising livelihoods as an entry point to the communities – it seems rather like the multi-faith and tolerant religious credibility of SEM is opening doors to the communities, not using the livelihoods project components as door-openers.

4.2 Local Governance - Bangladesh

Initiatives in this category aims at empowering citizens to get engaged in local governance and hold governments accountable to their duties by claiming for improved access to basic services. During the desk study (NCG, 2009), it was found that projects that fall into this category are those that focus on empowerment using methods of communication, media, education and training on rights when addressing local government. Projects that do not have a specific advocacy component for addressing local government are supposed to be excluded from this category.

The case study selected by NCA in this category is a well-established partner of the ACT alliance, the RDRS in Bangladesh. The *Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services* (RDRS) which was established as an emergency response to the Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971 when thousands of refugees fled. RDRS started up as a field program of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), but was transformed to an autonomous organisation in 1997. RDRS derives from the two regions in the northwest of Bangladesh Rangpur and Dinajpur, today however RDRS works across 46 sub-districts (upazila) out of 490 and with 357 unions.¹¹

| Project: | Empowering the Poor Through Federations Phase II |
|-------------------|---|
| National Partner: | RDRS Bangladesh |
| Other partners | Consortium: Dan-Church Aid (lead partner), Finn-Church Aid (FCA), Church of Sweden (CoS) and NCA |
| Country | Bangladesh |
| Donor: | EU funds, Norad (PID 11483), FCA and COS |
| Funds | Total budget 2,5 million EURO (1,5 million from EU) over 4 years (2008-2011), 500.000 NOK annually 2003-7 (Norad, NCA own fund) |

The overall goal of phase II of this project is to **empower the rural poor to claim their rights by way of critical engagement with local government, through representative, effective and well-governed community-based organisations.**

For the current project phase (2008-2011)¹² funded by EU and Norad/NCA own funds, the number of sub-districts of the project increased to 51. Federations are umbrella organisations linking clusters of community-based organisations together. To contribute to enhance sustainability, an objective of the programme during phase 1 (2003-2007) and phase 2 has been to get the Federations registered as independent organizations with the local government. 187 Federations out of 353 Federations have registration with government, including 14 that were registered during 2008-2009.

Expected results:

1. Expansion of the constituency and increased intensity of collective power of the poor by **strengthening old federations** and the formation of **new federations** (in new districts) alongside regional and national promotion of CBOs

¹¹ Information from the organisation's website; www.rdrsbangla.net

¹² The project is built on a previous phase of the project "Federation Capacity-Building and Social Mobilisation" funded by EU from 2003-7.

2. Increase in Union Federations adopting and complying with an agreed constitution and democratic practice while establishing and promoting diversity and gender equality
3. Improved organisational **accountability and transparency** through capacity-building of leaders
4. Enhanced activism and engagement with **duty-bearers** on various social and related vulnerability issues, especially women's rights, among Federation membership and wider rural community

Assessment of outcomes

Assessing the overall reported outcomes, this project is found to have undergone an interesting development of learning from previous projects, and by logically building on the strengths and weaknesses have designed new phases of developing the Union Federations. Along the development, the partner seems to have adopted a range of good practices related to accountable governance such as the use of public hearings and social audits (a new indicator was for example that 50 % federations should undergo social audits).

Assessing how the indicators of participation and equity are reported on, in the current project phase, RDRS has aimed for at least 40% of women representation in the executive committees. This represents an increase from earlier (but percentage of increase not stated). Female **leadership** in the federations is another issue reported on (not as an indicator, although they could); and 18 female chairs in 2007 (out of total 270 Federations), this had increased to 59 in 2008 (out of total 310 Federations) and 104 in 2009 (out of a total of 353 Federations). The 353 unions however are organised in purely women or men's unions, in addition, the current project phase established 130 youth wings. Although the groups are single-sex groups, women have been encouraged to run for the leadership, there is a 30% quota in the executive committee. Including women and youth are important elements for countering the democratic deficits in the traditionally male-dominated unions.

According to the annual report for 2009, the partner stated that there has been an increase in representation of women in federation leadership (women fill 63% positions in the Executive Committees of the federations). And the inclusion of people from different minority groups has also begun. There are now 1460, disabled: 1266, adibashi: 1165, and extreme poor members in the federations (AR, page 14).

The underlying assumption of increasing women's representation at local governance level is that it would lead to "greater attention to pro-poor issues in local decision-making, service delivery and resource allocation" (NCA revised Bangladesh country plan, 2007). RDRS is well aware of the fact that providing women with access to decision-making levels in a federation is not enough to get women into politics, and thus the partner organised exposure visits to state offices where women hold position of power.¹³ This was an interesting activity to promote and encourage women leadership.

¹³ Described in detail, 2008 Narrative Report, page 29.

According to RDRS (2008), many of the female leaders were preparing to run for the planned UP elections in 2009, which were postponed to 2010.¹⁴ The postponements have affected the partners work as voter education and different tools and activities for mobilising men and women to vote, have also been postponed.

The RDRS narrative report does not discuss the challenges and potential conflicts that arise when traditional (male) power structures are challenged. It could be useful for NCA to learn more about how the partner handles disgruntled husbands or other male and female family members who are not satisfied that their women have become politically active. A presentation by RDRS¹⁵ states that there is “resistance towards NGOs by social/ religious conservatives as these are considered as promoting western ideas including enhanced role of women”, and thus RDRS is clearly reflecting on different levels of resistance towards their work.

Enhanced activism with duty-bearers on social issues, especially women’s rights is – from NCA’s perspective in this study the **most interesting expected outcome**. Perhaps because it is too early to report on any effects, but in the 2008 report RDRS mainly refers to number of units/participants trained in advocacy work, TOT, information-gathering etc. and not **how** participants have been mobilised to be activists. RDRS is ambitious and has indicated that at least 100 federation members would be elected in local elections and other committees in the period.

The 2008 report states that 44 Federations organised public hearings on issues like UP budget preparations, role and responsibilities of UP and quality education. For the purpose of this desk analysis we were searching for more details as to how these public hearings were performed.

RDRS clearly has ambitions for conducting more such activities because one of the new indicators included in the 2008-11 plan is to monitor the **percentage of increase in state allocation of resources for the poor**, and that budgets reflect awareness of women and other marginalised groups rights. These kinds of indicators require substantial resources for monitoring, but if done it will have a great impact in terms of documenting that the partner works in a results-based management.

RDRS also planned to organise a national and regional conference (in 2008) to support the concept and practise of community-based organisations’ role in holding decision-makers accountable but this event was postponed to 2009. According to the annual report for 2009, the partner organised local district workshops and one regional (note that the planned idea of a conference was changed without any comments on that). Reporting on the outcomes of this conference, the partner states that “in the district level workshops some problems of the poor people were solved immediately” and that “the gaps between the government and the general people were reduced” (AR, page 12). These two examples are important outcomes (i.e. changes in people’s attitudes towards local government, and could have been much more elaborated.

¹⁴ The 2009 report stated that the planned UP elections (which there were considerable hopes towards increasing the number of women in leadership positions) were postponed to 2010.

¹⁵ “BANGLADESH FEDERATIONS: Move towards a Rights-Based RDRS” - PP-presentation-what is new in Phase 2008-2011, Consortium Members Meeting, 24th Oct 2007, Copenhagen

General comments:

- Very high quality of RDRS/DCA reports to EU, good baselines and statistics (to the extent that the quantitative data, ex number of federation members, unions, participants etc overshadow the qualitative outcome)
- Cost-efficient aspects of project have not been considered due to lack of access to audited reports.
- A 'most significant' outcome could probably be useful as a tool to get the partner to reports on changes in the duty-bearers – especially those at local government level, positions and views on women and youth rights, would be useful to track one case from being raised at the grassroots level and how RDRS follows it up to a higher decision-making governance level. RDRS could describe the process of holding the decision-makers accountable.
- RDRS narrative report (2008) has a section in the end of the report entitled "examples of good work" with cases of how the rightsholders have been able to reclaim khash land. It seems though that the cases reported are mainly individuals that have been assisted by RDRS (and not groups) that have changed policies or had an impact on a broader level.
- Program is found to have strong sustainability aspects due to investments in staff capacity and internal democratic governance. These are important as the federations can be 'role models' for other organisations, something which increases the citizens' expectations of accountability and transparency from their organisations.
- Report contains less focus on analysis of potential tensions that arrives from working with promoting women's rights. Is the partner worried about sharing challenges involved?
- Based on the reports, it would seem that the partner still has some way to go before it has internalised fully how to work in a RBA, i.e. empowering people requires more than training, it requires an accompaniment approach in how to follow cases all the way through the political governance systems.

NCA's value-added; NCA's regional representation in Sri Lanka regularly monitors the progress of activities and maintains a dialogue with NCA's two partners in Bangladesh (the other one being the Christian Commission for Development (CCD)).

NCA visits RDRS and CCDB annually and participates in biannual meetings between the partners and related agencies. Coordinated follow-ups by the various European sister organisations put less demand on individual monitoring visits by each agency. The next evaluation of RDRS was scheduled for 2008, but according to the EU Application there will be an end-of-project evaluation in 2011.

The support to RDRS fits with NCA's overall profile of supporting international ecumenical network.

But, it is not clear what exactly NCA brings into this partnership (apart from one or two annual visits to the partner). Here it could be noted that NCA has had a long relationship with RDRS which includes not only funding in the DCA-led consortium, but NCA has sent youth volunteers via the Communication for Change and recently RDRS is a partner in the Climate Change initiative.

Summing up; according to the category that this project is classified under, it would have been expected to find more outcomes on how the NCA partner is working with holding duty bearers at local government level accountable to the citizens. The available reports from RDRS has a stronger focus on internal governance issues (inside the Federation) than external (targeting public decision-makers) governance, and in future dialogues between NCA and the partner it would have been interesting to learn more about the outcomes of this project on ordinary people's perceptions and attitudes towards government.

4.3 Economic Justice – Illegitimate Debt Campaign

The category of economic justice includes various initiatives that advocate for pro-poor political and economic policies on trade, debt, management of natural resources, including people-centred budget monitoring, and corporate social responsibility. NCA works with governments, private corporations and civil society. The NCA-driven Campaign against of illegitimate debts in the period 2005-9 was chosen as a case study for this desk analysis.¹⁶

| Project: | Campaign against illegitimate debt |
|------------------------|--|
| National Partner: | NCA implemented with Changemaker and SLUG |
| International partners | Various (EURODAD, Oxfam, AFRODAD, Jubilee South, CoS, LWF, ACT, EJM, UNCTAD) |
| Country | Mainly Norway |
| Costs | Difficult to estimate exact amounts |
| Donor: | NCA own funds, Sivsam/KOMIN, Fredskorpset, Norad |

The Campaign against (illegitimate¹⁷) debt was initiated in 1989 when NCA decided to start lobbying on the subject of debt cancellation. Since then it has passed through different stages according to political developments. Among the first large campaigns was the church-based **Jubilee 2000** calling for liberation of people from economic injustice, which received more than 100.000 signatories in Norway and 24 millions globally. After the Jubilee 2000 campaign in second half of 1990s, the campaign on illegitimate debt started from 2000 and onwards. Following the campaigns comprehensive debt cancellations were given for the poorest countries in the early years after the millennium.¹⁸

NCA's Department of Development Policy is in charge of developing the policies for NCA's campaigning, advocacy and lobbying, in close cooperation with other departments in the organisation. The Debt Campaign is the only of the six case studies in this report that does not report to the International Department. The Policy department targets the work mainly towards Norwegian politicians, decision-makers and public opinion, while taking part in global campaigns and alliances with NCA's resource partners, regional and national networks.¹⁹

¹⁶ The budget-monitoring project in Mozambique analysed in section 4.6 could also have been included here.

¹⁷ The term illegitimate was adopted later, in 2003, and was an achievement in itself.

¹⁸ Most of this section is taken from, NCA (2010), *An inspiring story of the cancellation of debt for the developing countries*. www.nca.no

¹⁹ Based on interview with Jostein Hole, Advisor, Global Economy, Department for Development Policy in NCA.

The overall goal of the illegitimate debt campaign was: NCA should contribute to change Norwegian and international policy so that illegitimate debt is cancelled and future illegitimate lending is avoided.

Expected results for years 2005-9:

1. **Movement Building:** Support and strengthen alliances with organisations, movement and networks that work on illegitimate debt with the aim developing joint campaigns.
2. **Development of positions:** Develop common positions on and definitions of illegitimate debt that are operational.
3. **Documentation:** Develop convincing research material on illegitimate debt, both on a general level and with regards to case studies.
4. **Campaign development:** Develop, in close dialogue with debt campaigners in the North and the South, campaign strategies on odious debt (dictator debt) and illegitimate debt.
5. **Advocacy:** Involve in advocacy towards national and global decision makers, including the Norwegian government, authorities in other countries, the United Nations, and the IFIs.

Results

The Campaign against illegitimate debt has achieved remarkable results in the previous period of the Parliament (2005-9).²⁰ Assessing the above planned results (which are more strategies and tools), the consultant analysed the outcomes on three levels:²¹

- a. Most of the debt owed by poor countries to Norway has been cancelled (correspond to overall goal of the campaign)
- b. Norway has contributed to speeding up the international initiatives for cancelling the debts (corresponds to results numbers 2-5)
- c. The principles of illegitimate debt and responsible credits are recognised by Norway and brought up on the international agenda (corresponds to results numbers 2-5).

One of NCA's key demands early on was related to Norway's so-called marine debt, originating from the Norwegian Shipping Export Campaign 1976-80. While previously cancellation of Norway's illegitimate debt had been focused on the developing countries inability to pay the debt (unsustainability aspects), the new principle that NCA and partners brought forward was the circumstances under which the loan had been given and creditors' responsibility when lending to regimes, dictators and other governments that do not serve the best interests of its public. The terms odious debt and illegitimate debt (which was a weaker legal reference than odious debt) were thus introduced to try and build a consensus on terminology for more effective advocacy and campaigning.

Running up to the Norwegian parliamentary elections in 2005, NCA and partners initiated first the the "Dictator Debt Campaign" in 2003-4, followed by the campaign, **Make Poverty History**, which

²⁰ The political platform of NCA's Policy Department adheres to the Parliament's election periods, and not NCA's strategy period. Thus the current political platform is valid from 2009-2013, while NCA's new strategy will be for the period 2011-2014.

²¹ The three levels outcomes are taken from NCA's own analysis from the website (2010), *An inspiring history*.

was supported by politicians and celebrities.²² When a coalition of the Labour Party, Socialist Left and Centre party won the elections, the most radical anti-debt policies ever were enacted by the new government. A great victory for NCA and partners was reached in 2006 when the government took a **unilateral decision of cancelling debt for half billion NOK** owed by developing countries to Norway related to the Ship Export Campaign, under which 156 vessels and ship's equipment totalling NOK 3.7 billion were exported to 21 countries (via Norwegian Guarantee Institute for Export Credits' (GIEK)).²³ Already in 1989, an external evaluation commissioned by the Brundtland government concluded that the loans had been given based on inadequate needs and risk assessments, and this kind of lending should not be repeated. As a creditor, Norway acknowledged its partial responsibility towards the lending countries (including Ecuador, Egypt, Jamaica, Peru, and Sierra Leone; Sudan and Burma/Myanmar were under a different scheme). The Norwegian cancellation was a unilateral decision outside the Paris Club of creditor countries, and MFA stressed that the particular case was a one-off debt relief policy measure. All future debt forgiveness would be effected through multilaterally coordinated debt relief operations.²⁴

However, the unilateral decision attracted attention internationally. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights²⁵ sent an Independent Expert to find out more about the Norwegian experience. It also received considerable attention in the Paris Club of OECD creditors where Norway's decision was considered quite controversial from the creditors' point of view. After his visit in 2008 he referred to the role of Norway as **unique** in the process of cancelling illegitimate debt and encouraged other countries to **learn** especially with regards to the **strong level of dialogue between government and civil society**. According to the analysis of OHCHR, one of the key success factors of the CSO's advocacy efforts was the "close engagement with a broad spectrum of government bodies and political parties, both those in powers and **particularly those in opposition** who may find it easier to support politically sensitive positions."²⁶

After having received considerable recognition for the concept of illegitimate/odious debt, NCA moved on (in cooperation with SLUG and Changemaker) with a new campaign in Norway called "There should be rules against this!" referring to the large number of irresponsible lending from rich to poor countries. More than 11.000 signatories were collected. Part of the campaign was to organize a seminar with Church of Sweden (CoS) and LWF (see below).

Another indicator of the recognition of the Campaign's key concept of illegitimate debt was their integration into the Norwegian government's political platform for the period 2009-13 (Soria Moria

²² Both at that time, prime minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, and candidate for the opposition parties, Jens Stoltenberg, and the Crown Prince supported the campaign in public.

²³ This decision followed years of campaigning on the issue, but in particular it was the result of an intense campaign called "Si unnskyld Solheim" (Say you are sorry, Development Cooperation Minister Solheim) that NCA, SLUG and Changemaker did in 2006 with this specific goal (source: NCA Policy Dept).

²⁴ MFA (2006), Press Release No 118/06 02.10.06, Cancellation of debts incurred as a result of the Norwegian Ship Export Campaign (1976-80).

²⁵ The visit was conducted by OHCHR's independent expert, Mr. Cephias Lumina, who was appointed 'Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights' by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2008.

²⁶ OHCHR (2009), *UN expert urges countries to acknowledge shared responsibility for debt, drawing lessons from Norway and Ecuador*. Press release, 12 May 2009

II). The government promises to work for “international debt cancellation mechanisms for dealing with illegitimate debt, a binding international legal framework for responsible loans and conducting a Norwegian debt audit” (*my translation*, page 11). A confirmation of the policies already in place was when the government promised not to charge the costs of the debt cancellation on the development aid budget (*ibid*).

As seen from the above, NCA has to a large extent achieved its goals of a) contributing to Norway cancelling its debts to developing countries, b) speeding up the international debate by lifting the example of Norway’s unilateral decision globally. This has clearly had an impact on the international debate in UN and civil society fora; c) principles of illegitimate debt and responsible credits being recognized internationally, is closely linked to the two other results. A specific result indicator is the fact that UN is working on developing criteria for illegitimate debt.

Strategies

In 2005, the NCA Leader Team established an inter-departmental working group that would come up with recommendations on how NCA could build stronger global alliances/campaign activities on illegitimate debt. The working group, which was established before the current GSP, consists of the head of the Thematic Advisory Division, an advisor from the thematic unit, one from the policy department and one from NCA’s youth movement, *Changemaker*.²⁷

The background for the working group was, according to the 2005 Memo, a recognition of that there were disagreements within the Jubilee movement as to which strategies to adopt; while some (mainly the Southern) groups spoke out against the sole focus on the unsustainability of the debt, others (mainly Northern) felt a need to address the issue of illegitimate debt stronger. In order to build a stronger knowledge-base for developing the policies, NCA commissioned with SLUG, a study “Defining Illegitimate Debt” and later a “debt tribunal” was organised.²⁸

According to NCA the focus on illegitimate debt was developed by Southern social movements and debt campaigners as a reaction *against* what they perceived as the more “charity” approach of Jubilee 2000 “forgive us our debts” etc. In year 2000 this was a very controversial and radical position mainly taken by Southern groups. NCA was among the first Northern development agency that started using this notion and brought it forward in our campaigning. An important part of the work, in addition to campaign towards the Norwegian government, has been to push other Northern groups to take on this “Southern” perspective (source: interview with NCA Policy Dept). Because this desk study did not interview other key stakeholders, we were unable to validate the extent of NCA’s unique role in pushing other Northern NGOs towards a Southern agenda.

However, as seen above on the five planned results area, cooperating strategies were planned for both Nordic and global partners on all phases of implementing the Campaign. NCA worked with partners on identifying issues by providing arenas for partners to meet, it conducted joint research, developed joint positions, and joint campaigning and advocacy. The results of the cooperation strategies for 2005-9 are impressive and too many to list. Below is a selection of results:

²⁷ Based on interview with Jostein Hole, Advisor, Global Economy, Department for Development Policy in NCA.

²⁸ Most of this section from NCA (2005), Recommendations from NCA working group on illegitimate debt.

Memo from WG to Head Gunstein Instefjord.

- In 2007-2008 NCA organized a major international symposium on illegitimate debt with government ministers from Norway, Ecuador and Liberia, academics, lawyers, UN and World Bank officials, church leaders and civil society, with the Church of Sweden and Lutheran World Federation.²⁹ It was also an important fora for NCA to connect the work of core partners like LWF and the work of resource partners such as AFRODAD, EURODAD and Jubilee South. ³⁰

- As part of result area b) of influencing international initiatives, NCA has attended several meetings and seminars with the World Bank, such as the Roundtable on illegitimate debt and responsible lending (Washington D.C April 2008). NCA and partners also managed to get the concept of illegitimate debt into Norway's presentation in UNCTAD XII (in Accra, April 2008), Norway's presentation at the UN high-level conference on the financial crisis (in New York, June 2009), and gave a presentation on a UNDP meeting in New York (May 2008).

An important strategy mentioned in the 2005 Memo is how NCA can **integrate the work with illegitimate debt in cooperation with partners, especially partners in the Civil society for Accountable Governance program**. However, based on the available documentation from NCA, this seems to be the area where there are least reported outcomes. Resource partners in the countries studied in this desk analysis (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mali, Bangladesh and Burma) were not found to have been included in the work so far (more on this below). However, according to NCA, countries and partners in Southern Africa, Latin America and in countries such as Indonesia/Philippines have been focused more on.

Assessment of outcomes along NCA indicators of participation and equity

Measuring the outcomes reported on the global level such as movement building, i.e. strengthening alliances with organizations that work on illegitimate debt with the aim of developing joint campaigns is more difficult. Much of NCA's work to achieve this goal is with networks and considered to be long-term processes. The NCA reports do not describe the outcomes obtained, for example, it is not clear from the reports whether there exists a global anti-debt movement. Based on oral information from NCA, it is clear that such a movement exists..

Assessing the outcomes of the campaign along the indicators of participation and equity, an immediate challenge arises to the stakeholders' analysis; on which levels should stakeholders in recipient countries be involved? For the illegitimate debt campaign, NCA's work has been targeting Norwegian authorities, and thus by working through partners like SLUG, Changemaker and involving the Norwegian churches, there is a relatively broad participation from men and women, young and old, and from different geographical parts of the country (campaigns have been launched from north to south of Norway). The main partners whom NCA has worked with closely (and supported financially) are Eurodad, Church of Sweden, Jubilee South in Asia, Latin America and Africa, AFRODAD and Economic Justice Network (NCA has an FK-exchange program), LWF (which has a program on

²⁹ NCA Avdelingsrapporter; joint letters from CoS and NCA in the fall of 2007 and joint meeting with CoS/LWF on "Wipe out illegitimate debt" in October 2008.

³⁰ NCA Avdelingsrapporter; joint letters from CoS and NCA in the fall of 2007 and joint meeting with CoS/LWF on "Wipe out illegitimate debt" in October 2008.

illegitimate debt based in Latin-America), Freedom From Debt Coalition in the Philippines and IBON (Philippines and Indonesia). Part of NCA's work has been aimed at connecting resource partners like AFRODAD and Jubilee South with NCA partners like EJM (representing church councils in Southern Africa). NCA core partners like the orthodox or evangelical churches of Ethiopia, or CCM in Mozambique have not (yet) been targeted in the policy work.

General comments:

- The log frame and matrix defining results and expected outputs (developed by the Dept of Policy Development) is only for the period 2006-7 (not completed for 2008-9), while the reporting on results is only from 2007 and onwards (no reports for years 2005-6).³¹
- The reports (avdelingsrapporter) for 2007 and onwards are very useful for getting an overview of what has been achieved. Compared with standards of other Norwegian CSOs (example Forum, NPA, Save the Children, NRC) NCA has developed good plans that would serve as a useful platform for the next strategy period.
- Knowing how difficult it is to plan for advocacy initiatives (ref. discussion above) the attempts to plan in this project is commendable.
- Not possible to assess efficiency of the outcomes as the Department does not report on costs for the specific campaigns. However it should be noted that NCA has been able to capitalise on additional resources (such as Fredskorpset participants) to complement and top-up funding from NCA (for salaries and running costs) and MFA (for specific campaigns).

For future recommendations, NCA could consider to which extent it should do more pro-poor policy and advocacy work for economic justice with **core partners** in selected countries. Building advocacy capacity among church- and faith-based partners is greatly needed in order to lift issues from local to decision-making levels. This is also documented in the other case studies. If NCA decides to work more with the traditional core church-based partners, it can consider **training economic justice advocacy officers** in selected NCA country or regional offices. Such advocacy officers should ideally be from the country/region and be familiar with the local context and issues. In order to be focused, NCA would do well in carefully selecting the themes and topics – in close cooperation with NCA local partners - within the NCA Political Platform 2009-2013 (Trade/WTO, Climate, International finance institution, debts and development finance, CSR, Women's rights, HIV/AIDS, Arms trade/small arms, Resources/extractive industries and Water).

Although NCA aims at harmonising the approach within the ACT Alliance, it is cautioned against trying to include too many actors in the beginning. This study would rather propose a small-scale, pilot in the first years; select a few countries and themes to work on. As seen in the Case Study on CCM in Mozambique (chapter 4.6) it is important that the local churches are involved and have an **ownership** in such a pilot.

Summing up; The tangible results achieved in this campaign are impressive: NCA has been able to move ground and change concepts/definitions and made real changes in the economic situation for affected countries which had the debts cancelled. NCA has worked mainly with resource partners

³¹ The consultant did not access reports for 2005-6 (NCA avdelingsplaner – rapporter).

and networks in developing joint position papers and campaigns. There are considerable potentials for working more with the traditional NCA church- and faith-based core partners, but this would require a change in the current strategy and working modality. Based on the successes achieved so far, this study would recommend that NCA consider strengthening the links between the programme and policy departments by piloting a selection of themes linked with countries/regions.

4.4 Legal framework - Ethiopia

The case study selected for review in the category of promoting civil society for accountable governance through legal frameworks is the Good Governance and Human Rights (HRGG) project in Ethiopia.

| Project: Local CSOs working on Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance | |
|---|--|
| National Partner(s): | Action Professional Associations for People (APAP), Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA), Human Rights Council (HRC) formerly known as Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), Forum For Social Studies (FSS), Inter African Group (IAG), Transparency Ethiopia (TE), Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Union (CETU), Amudeas formerly known as African Initiatives for a Democratic World Order (AIDWO), Woreda & Community Capacity Building Forum (WCCDF) formerly known as Management Development Forum (MDF), EOC – DICAC and EECMY-DASC |
| Other partners | Royal Norwegian Embassy, Addis- is a donor, do we need to reflect that rather than simply saying partner? |
| Country | Ethiopia |
| Costs | Ca 5 million NOK annually (2006-9), in total more than 20 million NOK |
| Donor: | Donors' consortium wherein NCA takes part |

NCA started working in Ethiopia in 1974 as a response to the famine. Over the years NCA's involvement went from emergencies to development projects partly self-implemented and via two key faith-based partners; the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC).³² Currently NCA supports 40 projects implemented in most parts of the country in thematic areas of water, food security, emergency response, peace building and inter religious community dialogue, gender including FGM and HIV issues.

In 2006, NCA entered into a strategic partnership with the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) in Addis Abeba on promoting good governance and human rights. Until 2006, NCA's country programs focused mainly on food security, emergency, water and sanitation, health (HIV/AIDS and FGM), education and peace and reconciliation through the churches (CAPLAN, 2005). The new partnership with the Embassy which entailed support to (13-17) organizations represented a new way of working

³² The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and Organization for Social Services for AIDS (OSSA) have also been long-term partners for NCA in Ethiopia

in NCA's work for human rights and governance with secular-based organizations and legal agencies. Until 2006, NCA had supported civic education and election training via the church-based partners, so when NCA started with 17 organizations and 19 projects in 2007 as a pilot project with the RNE, it expanded and increased NCA's work and experience in new sectors.

Due to the new law in Ethiopia on Charities and Societies (CSO law)³³ NCA and partners have undergone a serious revision and repositioning of their strategic and operational plans. The new law, which was enacted in February 2009 (and implemented one year later), require all Ethiopian CSOs to re-register as Ethiopian, Ethiopian Resident or Foreign organization. The new CSO law prohibits actual foreign NGOs from engaging in activities pertaining to human rights, women's rights, children's rights, disability rights, conflict resolution or democratic issues. Good governance was originally part of the draft law, but was taken out of the final draft (NCA interview). But also local NGOs that receive more than ten percent of their funding from foreign sources are considered "foreign" (Ethiopian Resident in effect having same status as foreign charities and societies) for the purposes of the law. An Ethiopian based CSO must be able to obtain 90% of its annual income from a local fund for its operation in order to work in the areas of advocating for human rights, conflict resolution etc. while if the CSOs choose to work within service-delivery it is required to raise 10% of local income. The government contends that the CSO law is necessary to "improve transparency and accountability and promote indigenous organizations".

However, according to Human Rights Watch³⁴, "the rationale behind the law, as laid out in an EPRDF newsletter and described to Human Rights Watch staff by government officials, is more insidious and essentially equates nongovernmental organizations with political parties, ...and restrict foreign influence in Ethiopia's "developmental democracy."³⁵ In May 2010, Ethiopia conducted its elections and the government was re-elected.

Almost all of NCA partners have revised their work and re-registered as Ethiopian resident charities to comply with the new legal framework, and in order to be able to continue to receive funds from NCA or other external donors. On the other hand, three of NCA partners; Human Rights Council (HRC) formerly known as Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), Ethiopian Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA) and Transparency Ethiopia (TE) have determined to remain local and continue to be engaged in human rights and good governance related programmes, thereby strategizing to generate income locally. While they were able to reregister in December 2009, EHRCO had to close six offices and was operating with only its core staff. EWLA reduced its work force from 60 to 13.³⁶ NCA has re-registered as a foreign charity.

Overall goal (2006-9)

³³ Proclamation to Provide for the Regulation and Registration of Charities and Societies, No. 621/2009, available at [www.crdaethiopia.org/Documents/Charities%20and%20Societies%20Legislation%20\(Final%20Version\)-Negarit%20Newspaper.pdf](http://www.crdaethiopia.org/Documents/Charities%20and%20Societies%20Legislation%20(Final%20Version)-Negarit%20Newspaper.pdf)

³⁴ International human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) are now effectively barred from working in Ethiopia because the CSO law requires mandatory registration and the acquisition of legal personality and license from the Charities and Society Agency.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Watch's Analysis of Ethiopia's Draft CSO Law (Oct. 13, 2008), available at www.hrw.org/legacy/pub/2008/africa/HRW.NGO.Law.Analysis.pdf.

³⁶ Information from US State Department 2009 Human Rights Report, section 4.

Promoting human rights particularly of the rights of vulnerable groups such as children, women and the poor; and enhancing the culture of democracy and good governance.

Expected results:

1. Human Rights Violations monitored and reported (watchdog function)
2. Ensuring access to justice for the poor and vulnerable groups (legal services)
3. Action oriented researches & public discussions for policy formulation and amendment (electronic, print, TV and radio, and workshops and conferences utilized).
4. Local Capacity Building through trainings and professional advices

The project is the largest among the case studies analysed.

Assessment of outcomes

Already in the annual report (2006)NCA could report on good results on the four areas of projects being implemented; several hundred people had participated in trainings on human rights, democracy, advocacy, good governance and conflict resolution and the rule of law. In 2007, almost 10.000 complaints of human rights violations such as extra judicial killings, torture and illegal detention were investigated and reported by NCA's partner organizations, more than 30,000 were trained on civic and human rights education in its Women Empowerment Program, and a large number of research reports were disseminated and discussed on issues like the right to education, 'the right to health', 'the right to housing' and the right to food; and on the following themes to assist advocacy on the rights of women: "Post-divorce Maintenance, The Situation of Women Prisoners in Ethiopia, Research on Sexual Harassment and The Role of Private Prosecution in Criminal Cases." Other studies focused on the basic governance structure of the country "Decentralization in Ethiopia", "Impunity and ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia" and 'the media situation in Ethiopia'. Four of the NCA partners established the Network of Ethiopian Human Rights Defenders (NEHRD) to join hands on human rights education, monitoring and advocacy and developed teaching manuals on HRGG, Peace Building and Women Empowerment that were printed in Amharic, English and Oromiffa (AR, 2007). NEHRD was not a sustainable initiative and was closed down after short time.

Many other individual activities were implemented; capacity-building, awareness raising, education programmes, public discussion forums, trainings, media messages etc – activities that are typically very hard to measure the outcomes, i.e. the changes on the medium to long-term. While other activities were more tangible, programmes aimed at rendering protection of human rights, legal aid services for those unable to afford lawyers fee and monitoring of human rights violations.

Findings from the external evaluation 2008 (Hailegebriel et al) confirmed that most of the projects contributed significantly to **increased local participation, awareness on human rights and civic education, access to justice, availing policy alternatives, conducting researches** etc. Although the budget was substantial (five million NOK annually), gaps were found between goals setting and realistic planning compared to available human and financial resources. A good gender and age-balance was found in the projects.

The evaluation report from June 2008 stressed the importance of NCA and partners to come up with concrete strategies for how to sustain their organisations in the volatile political environment and scarcity of financial resources. The evaluators were surprised that NCA and partners did not "take

into account or give a fair analysis on the perception of the government towards CSO and the policy and legal direction that might follow” even in the program documents that were prepared after 2005. According to the evaluation it could seem like NCA was not sufficiently analysing risks associated with its increased focus on HRGG and developing survival strategies while the political space in Ethiopia was shrinking post-2005 elections. According to NCA, there was a fair analysis in the CSP of NCA and there were a number of discussions with partners on this issue although not all documents should dwell on this issue in detail.

While the official Norwegian development assistance was until 2009 channelled mainly through the UN system and Norwegian NGOs, after the new Law, the Embassy “redirected more of its assistance through direct government-to-government support”³⁷ The strategic partnership between the Embassy and NCA-E might continue for a second phase.

It is of course, impossible to assess to which extent there was a casual link between the Embassy’s strong support for strong human rights NGOs (like EWLA and EHRO) that long had been a torn in the side of the Ethiopian government and the developments that culminated with the new CSO law closing down almost all activities in the HRGG field. However, it would be in NCA’s interest to try and analyse the events and its own role in it for future learning in how to work with promoting HRGG in such volatile and repressive environments like in Ethiopia.

Issues to consider when working in countries with political suppression and limited civil society space (like Zimbabwe, Egypt, Russia, Syria etc):

- Carefully assess whether donor consortium and pooled funding is the most effective way of influencing government’s human rights and governance agenda. Donor harmonization is a double-edged sword; on the one hand it can lead to increased pressure against the country which will lead it to open more space for the civil society actors; on the other hand (as seems to have been the case in Ethiopia) it can have a reverse effect of limiting the space as the regime finds the donors interventions too threatening. Balance between advocating too strongly on a broad spectrum on legal, social and economic rights, including anti-corruption work, like NCA was doing. Might be too intimidating for regimes that do not want to have a focus.
- Analyse how promoting good governance can be done in a subtle and indirect way through providing basic services (ref. case study on Burma).

For the new program 2010 and onwards, NCA can no longer be engaged in promoting human rights and accountable governance as before, however the 2009 report states carefully that NCA “would keep its commitment of serving the community with other development projects while keeping on practicing accountable governance in its own structure and operation, and encourage its partners to do the same.” (AR, 2009) However two of NCA’s partners got a taste of how the law will be implemented, when they received their license, bank accounts were frozen, although the funds were from pre-existing grants and the law was not due to take effect until February 2010. Recently the partners got permission to withdraw 10% of the fund in their account for immediate running costs.

³⁷ www.norway.org.et/News_and_events/DevelopmentCooperation/Development-Cooperation/strategy_paper/

Other comments:

- Interesting tools utilised in Ethiopia were; Intergenerational knowledge transfer forums,
- Reporting not very detailed and thus difficult to understand the full extent of the issues being discussed. According to NCA-E, the reason for very brief reporting is the reporting format from HO Oslo. The reports that NCA-E send for the Norwegian Embassy is more detailed than what is sent to Oslo office.

Summing up, NCA's partnership with the Embassy and strong focus in HRGG represented a new way for NCA to work in the post-2005 (and pre-2010) elections' environment in Ethiopia. NCA has been working in Ethiopia for 35 years and is therefore assumed to possess an in-depth knowledge of the context. The consultant would thus assume that the risks involved in the area were carefully considered beforehand and found worthwhile. Based on the available country reports it is not possible to deduct any key learning from NCA's HRGG experience in Ethiopia, something which is a result of the limited format for the report, but this is highly relevant for NCA's future conflict-sensitive programming in politically volatile settings like Ethiopia, Burma, Russia and Zimbabwe. Reflecting on the experience in interviews, the NCA country representative believes that one lesson from this is to prepare the partners better for different scenarios, i.e. partners could be funded in developing platforms to keep them going if/when political space shrinks. The Ethiopian organisations that have survived in the current situation are those who had some income-generating initiatives.

In the current situation, NCA is trying find room for exerting the political space and working mainly with the church-based partner working on peace and reconciliation. The Ministry of Federal Affairs is in charge of religious affairs, so the churches are allowed to work with peace and reconciliation, but to which extent NCA can continue to fund them is not clear.

4.5 Gender – Mali

In the category of gender NCA aims at supporting or implementing programs that address patriarchal and decision making structures and traditions within FBOs and in society. The project chosen for the desk analysis is implemented in Mali by NCA in cooperation with Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) as the technical partner and a wide range of civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organisations in the three northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Project: | Increased political participation of women in North Mali – <i>Participation Accrue des Femmes (PAF)</i> |
| National Partner: | Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF – FEDDAI) and more than 30 local NGOs, CSO |
| International partners | GLD – Governance Local Democracy Group (Helvetas, SNV, Diakonia) |
| Country | 3 northern regions of Mali (Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu) |
| Year (s) | 2007-2009 |
| Donor: | Norad |
| Funds | Total 860.000 NOK |

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. The Human Development Report 2009 ranks Mali number 178 out of 182 countries and only 20% of the population is literate. NCA started working in the country in 1984 with humanitarian and emergency assistance. In the last 15 years, the program has been transformed from being largely self-implementing to working via civil society and faith-based partners. The main focus is on livelihoods security in the drylands zones, education and literacy, governance and gender-based violence.

The constitution in Mali provides equal opportunities to women and men for taking part in public life, while in practice women are excluded from decision-making positions in the public sphere at all levels (national, regional and local) due to social and religious traditions. In the Northern regions the participation of women is even lower than at the national level; in the 2004 elections, 12% of the candidates in country as whole were women, while in the north the number was 12%.

Based on the democratic deficit of women in politics, NCA started the process of designing the “Increased political participation of women program” (**PAF**) in 2006.³⁸ The first step was establishing a baseline of women’s participation and a mapping of existing local organisations that could be potential partners. Based on the mapping, NCA issued an international tender seeking institutions/agencies with the necessary technical competence for capacity-building of the local organisations in training of women’s political participation. WILDAF – Mali, which is a professional agency specialised in matters of law, governance and human rights established in 1995, won the bid (NCA, 2007).

³⁸ Information in this section is based on the NCA Program Document, 2007, and an interview with NCA’s Coordinator of monitoring and evaluation, Mr Ousman Diallo, 24.03.2010 in Oslo. Mr Diallo was previously based three years in Gao as a project officer for NCA.

NCA decided that the program would be implemented in the three geographic areas of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu. In order to identify the most suitable local implementing partners' public tenders were issued (via the newspaper) in Gao and Timbuktu (but not Kidal), and local partners selected: the Malian Association for Survival in the Sahel (AMSS)³⁹ in charge of the Timbuktu region, ASSADDEC⁴⁰ in charge of the Kidal region and GREFFA in Gao region.⁴¹

NCA then signed a tripartite partnership with WILDAF-Mali and the local partners. Thus, the PAF program which was planned for three years from 2007-9, got started in three regions, six circles and in 16 municipalities. The governance system in Mali consists of four levels; districts, regions, circles and communes (municipalities).

The expected impact of the program was to extend the democratic process from the top of the state down to community level, to promote development through local participation and empowerment of people in the formulation, implementation of frameworks for monitoring and evaluation; and participate in the exercise of power between the state and communities.

The specific expected results were that in December 2009 (after the elections):

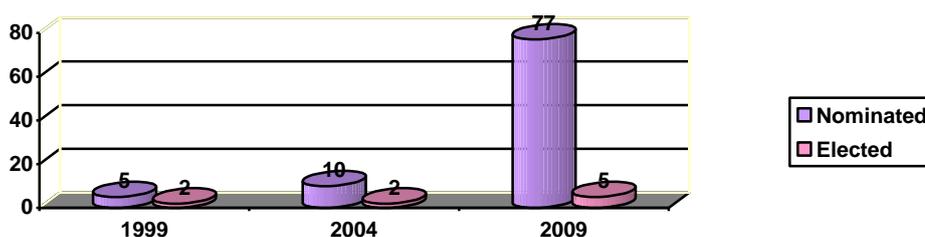
1. the participation of women in northern Mali in public debates on the local District Development and delivery of basic services will increase in quality
2. the representation of women in the decision-making bodies at the community level and within the CT will be increased.

In addition, NCA stated clearly that organising the women were a key goal in itself.

Assessment of outcomes

Before assessing the outcomes, let us first state the measurable results that were achieved in the elections 2009.

Figure 1 Women nominated and elected to the CT from 4 municipalities in Kidal



As seen in the above table, there was a great increase in number of women nominated in the 2009 elections, a total of 77 female candidates managed to get on the lists in the 4 municipalities

³⁹ *Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel* (AMSS) was established in 1991 in Bamako when the American Quakers decided to pull-out and 'nationalise' the program. The Quakers had worked in Mali since 1975.

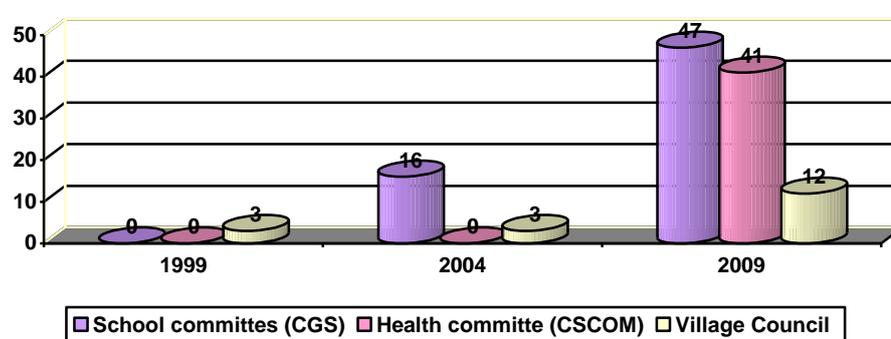
⁴⁰ *Association Sahélienne d'Appui au Développement Décentralisé* (ASSADDEC) established in 2002 in Kidal and works mainly with literacy and education programs.

⁴¹ *Groupe de Recherche d'Etude de Formation Femme – Action* (GREFFA) was established in 1994 and works with organizing and educating women to involve them in development. GREFFA is a NGO for and by women.

(Timbuktu, Tessalit, Aguel-hoc and Anefif) targeted by NCA's partners. Although the number of females elected was only 5 candidates (15% of candidates), it still represents a more than 50% increase compared to 2004. Below, some of the candidates and involved stakeholders analyse and discuss why they didn't manage to achieve more women elected.

On the level of the local council, there was an impressive increase in women taking decision-making positions at the local level in four selected municipalities in Kidal.⁴² After the 2009 elections almost 50 women were elected to the local school committees, 44 women in the health committees and 42 women will from 2009 be meeting in the meetings in the local councils. Taken into consideration that there has not been any female participation in the health committees, the results must be stated to be very positive.

Figure 2 Women elected to local committees and councils in 4 municipalities of Kidal



The model that the partners in Mali used is well described in the NCA documents; First before the elections: a) **Identify and empower women, through potential candidates**, then b) **negotiate the inclusion of women candidates on the lists of political parties** by creating awareness among people on the need for the participation of women in the community forums of decision making and management, also advocacy / lobbying with the political parties for the inclusion of women on candidate lists with political parties.

During elections, negotiate the inclusion of women at the top of list, and when the lists are ready, c) **monitor the final lists to ensure that women hold the positions obtained**. The project partners closely monitored the lists to make sure that they were not changed in the last minute, and in cooperation with the local radio they spread the news if one political party removed a woman from the list. Also during elections, massive mobilisation and awareness-raising of the need for women to go out and vote for the political parties that had placed women on top places on their lists.

Then after the elections, support the women who were elected to the posts in identifying their training needs, develop and implement a training program; and coordinating a system of exchange between the councillors at local, district and regional level in order to boost the morale of the councillors.

⁴² Statistics included in the Capitalisation summary (NCA, 2010) did not include information about the other 12 municipalities.

As a part of the monitoring and summing up, NCA and its partners stated that they would make **an audit of civil rights at municipal level** and within women's organizations; and keep up the advocacy, and lobbying efforts for the effective participation of women in decision-making at national, regional, local and community (NCA, 2010)

Develop and implement a strategy to capitalize on the experience gained: The national workshop organized by a group of NGOs on strategies for increased participation of women in public life has shown the urgent need to build on the successes and failures of these approaches. In addition, NCA intends to review the program to determine its comparative advantages in the process of strengthening a group excluded from the enjoyment of rights.

Now, assessing to which extent these remarkable achievements can be ascribed to the efforts of NCA's partners is - of course – a difficult task as it would imply a study of all other initiatives targeted at mobilizing women for running for offices in these municipalities. It is also a question of causality. NCA's narrative reports do not refer to other initiatives or programs in the targeted communities, but the Mali Country Plan (2007) refers to the **Governance Local Democracy Group (GLD)** which consist of like-minded donors (SNV, Helvetas, Diakonia), and thus it can be assumed that there are other like-minded projects that might take part of the credit for the achievements.

For the NCA partners, the planned results was not just to have women represented in decision-making levels, but also ensure that they take part in public debates. Thus, a range of activities were organised to support women's group in awareness-raising of how the political system functions, and how they can intervene to make their voice heard. Here one needs to take into consideration that the democratic space in Mali is traditionally dominated by (male) leaders and elites from the higher economic classes who do not easily accept changes and losing their powers to people from lower economic classes, former slaves and ethnic minorities.

In order to involve women in Northern Mali, NCA, according to the reports did try and involve religious leaders. One of the Muslim Imam's is reported to see the link between poverty and involvement in politics;

As a religious leader I am consulted on a lot of problems whose causes are most often linked to poor economic situation of women in society. We must help women out of poverty glaring source of sins. A very poor woman is exposed to the temptations of the street. What religion calls for the working woman is the full agreement of her husband for family happiness. Unmarried women are free to practice as they want within the limits imposed on them by religion. I asked political parties to position women on the lists. I have also asked any married woman who has the consent of her husband to fight to run for the posts. Women's poverty must be fought!

Involving religious leaders as a group and in an organised way has not taken place yet.⁴³ It seems that NCA is not working with any FBOs in Mali (NCA, 2007) and has a small number of core partners. A success indicator worth noting is that NCA's partners signed a partnership agreement with local radio stations for broadcasting messages. The advertisements in local languages were specific awareness

⁴³ Interview Mr Ousman Diallo 24.03.0

messages for a better representation of women in municipal councils and community bodies in making decisions. The dissemination of messages in local languages (Songhai Tamasheq), seems to have been crucial to the success of the program.

Another successful enterprise seems to be the partnership that has been developed WILDAF and the three locally based NGOs. In NCA's terminology WILDAF is a *resource partner*, utilised for training and capacity-building, while ASSEDEC is a core partner (the other two partners are not listed in NCA's country plan, but might be included in the next strategy period). The NCA reports do not provide much information about how the partnership has worked, if there has been any cross-learning among the tripartites, but in the plan there is a component which calls for mutual visits to be made to the women after they have been elected by other elected women.

One of the women sharing her experiences in the *Capitalisation* states: I am a pure product of this program. It is mainly the awareness that market, women from different political parties have argued at the level of other political parties to register their sisters and this strategy has been effective. So what went wrong? Two years is not enough. If the program had started earlier, women would have been better equipped to face the obstacles. Women were left out in municipalities where the men had already made their party list. Gao received 5 out of 29 counsellors in the region as compared to one counsellor in the previous elections, so it was a good step forward.

According this woman's evaluation, the strength of the program was especially the trainings provided [by WILDAF] within the framework of participation of women in public life, the weakness was that it came a bit late to Gao (NCA 2010:31).

Other comments:

- Project documents, budgets and audited accounts are very clear and seem well-managed. Easy to track and follow expenses.
- Capitalisation Summary (NCA, 2010) might be considered translated to English in order to enlarge the audience outside the francophone part, as it is very interesting and useful reading for others working with promoting women in politics.
- More information on other like-minded initiatives could have been included in order to try and assess NCA's contributions compared to others.

Summing up: Although it might be early to fully assess the outcomes, i.e. the medium-term changes that have taken place in society, due to this brief two-year program, there is no doubt that so many new women entering politics at local level will cause changes in the society. The achievements of increased female participation in politics are indeed impressive, especially looking at the limited funding that has been invested (860.000 NOK). The cooperation with the radio stations in mobilizing women as well as monitoring the nomination processes of the political parties is very creative and deserves to be lifted up as a potential best practice in NCA's CSAG program.

In the current phase, it is **crucial that NCA continue to support the efforts of the local organisations in order to protect the achievements.**

4.6 Capacity-building –Mozambique

In the category of assessing the outcomes of NCA’s efforts at building capacity among partner organisations, NCA chose a project that was implemented by the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM)⁴⁴ from 2006-8. CCM has been key partner in various peace consolidation processes under the *Turning Arms into Ploughshares* Program in Maputo.⁴⁵ CCM has worked a lot on civil education, and election observations and even established an Election Observatory.

Project:

Community Participation in Municipal Budget Monitoring

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| National Partner: | Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) |
| Other partners | Fair Share (Western Cape) as resource partner and Economic Justice Network (EJN) |
| Country | Mozambique |
| Donor: | Norad |

The project “Community Participation in Municipal Budget Monitoring” was launched as a pilot program in 2006 on how to use budget monitoring at the local level. The pilot was a partnership between CCM as the main partner with training and expertise support from other regional NCA partners, Fair Share at Western Cape University in South Africa and Economic Justice Network (EJN) in addition to NCA.

Overall goal:

To engage the Churches and local communities to interact with Municipal authorities in order to build transparency and accountability.

Expected results:

- Strengthening community participation in and ownership of municipal government and focusing on Fundamental Rights, and how these rights could be used to foster participation and ownership,
- Using municipal plans and budgets to hold local and national government accountable for poverty reduction in poor communities.

The initiative was piloted in six municipalities (Manihica, Xai-Xai, Maxixe, Vilankulos, Montepuez and Mocimboa da Praia). The project facilitated the establishment of forums for training, discussion and

⁴⁴CCM was founded in 1948 as a religious association composed of 21 national churches. The council began direct involvement in conflict management and reconciliation between the RENAMO movement and the Mozambique government during the civil war.

⁴⁵ After the war, CCM established a Department of Peace, Justice and Reconciliation for disarmament, which led to the Turning Arms into Ploughshares or TAE Project (*Transformação de Armas em Enxadas*). The TAE project collected over 200,000 weapons, ammunitions, and explosives from 1995-2001 by trading guns for tools (sewing machines, bicycles, ploughs etc.)

debate with the purpose of influencing the formulating and implementation of policies in the field of social-economic justice and civic education. The planned model of intervention contained 8 steps:

1. Project launch
2. Identification and selection of local trainers
3. Training of local trainers on module one
4. Community workshops
5. Reflection
6. Training of communities on module 2.
7. Community workshops.
8. Reflection.

Assessment of outcomes (along indicators of participation and equity)⁴⁶:

Based on the desk study of available documents, the pilot project recorded positive effects on the local level in the beginning. An initial review conducted by NCA showed increased interest by trained participants to mobilize and engage communities and local municipalities, some of the trained participants were officially invited by the local authorities to sit in the planning and budgeting committees to ensure that the people also have a voice in the running of matters important to their day to day lives.⁴⁷ NCA staff monitoring the early phase also recorded incidents where the local authorities (mayor) were held accountable by members of the church community.

However, the challenges and problems were larger than the positive effects recorded in this project. According to the external evaluation (2009) which assessed the project along three parameters (internal governance, project effectiveness and political acceptance of the initiative), the project had not achieved the planned goals in any of the three result areas.

Lessons learnt that can be deducted from the evaluation along with other documents:

1. Careful analysis of the context must be undertaken before engaging in a challenging civil society programs such as budget monitoring in Mozambique. In general, budget monitoring is a challenging tool because it questions and monitors those in power, and those who have vested interests in not sharing information.
2. After conducting the careful analysis of the context, and its potential partners, with special focus on the strength and independence of the potential partners, depending on the outcome of the assessment, NCA can decide whether to work through partners taking on an accompaniment approach, self-implement or chose a combination of the two approaches.
3. In the case of the CCM project, according to the progress report from Fair Share, the partners (including NCA) did the above two steps; it conducted a baseline study of the areas of intervention for the budget monitoring⁴⁸ in cooperation with CCM. However, Fair Share warned

⁴⁶ Please note that cost-efficient aspects of project have not been considered due to lack of access to financial reports or audited accounts of CCM. Also, lack of knowledge about the costs of the project affects the consultant's ability to draw conclusions on what could have been expected at an outcome level.

⁴⁷ NCA Mozambique_Country_programme_report_2008_final, page 3.

⁴⁸ Chapter 4, page 8-10, in Faire Share Progress Report, Dec. 2005.

against what would happen if CCM did not take full ownership of the project⁴⁹ and asked if “has CCM demonstrated an ability to provide the required coordination, management and leadership for the project”, as s/he was clearly concerned about the lack of leadership and management in CCM towards the project. Reflecting afterwards on what could have been done different, NCA believed that a closer monitoring and accompaniment approach towards the partner could have provided the necessary backstopping and support.

4. A lesson learnt is therefore that it is not sufficient with a baseline/in-depth context analysis, but NCA has to ensure that the analysis is **conducted by the implementing partner itself**.
5. According to the evaluation, insufficient time was spent on planning and involving the stakeholders, dialoguing with local authorities etc. The result of the lack of participation in the preparatory phase led to the failure of the pilot project. Insufficient ownership to the budget monitoring was found among the CCM leadership.
6. One of the main contributions from Faire Share was to further develop the “Learning Guide” that had been used in South Africa context and adjust it to Mozambican reality. Already in the early phase CCM reported⁵⁰ that there were challenges related to the communication between Fair Share and CCM recognizing that the contexts (South Africa – Mozambique) were so different with regards to politics, language and culture.

According to CCM’s point of view, there seems to be an agreement that the major challenge to the development of the learning activity was the lack of active participation of CCM due to weak capacity in the partner. As a result, the learning guide lacked contextualization and locally based case studies. Though the local trainers were encouraged to relate and adjust the content to their respective municipalities, there is no strategy to monitor the implementation at local level.

The other challenge that is closely linked to the above is **a lack of a focused capacity building programme for CCM**. This is made necessary by the fact the CCM is the ultimate custodians of the project and have the responsibility to champion the key activities of the project. Furthermore, if CCM continue to remain on the periphery of the project, its future sustainability is significantly threatened. It is therefore imperative that a structured capacity building programme is developed to ensure that CCM develops the knowledge and skills to conceptualise, plan, implement, monitor and review a national programme on budget advocacy and monitoring.⁵¹

Capacity-building efforts

⁴⁹ Faire Share (2006), “Reflection from Fair Share 041206” (the document does not have an address for neither sender or recipient, but it seems to be written by the Fair Share trainer who was involved, to NCA and other partners)

⁵⁰ CCM 2007, Civic Education and Good Governance program report, page 5.

⁵¹ Page 7/14, Annual report Social Economic Justice, CCM 2007.

When NCA and partners decided to stop the pilot, an important discussion arose on NCA about how to handle this; should NCA pull-out of the project due to the lack of ownership in CCM to the project or stay engaged with CCM but with different tools or means?

For the purpose of this desk analysis which is for NCA to learn how it can improve its capacity-building efforts towards the partners, Fair Share asked already in 2005 if **CCM received adequate support from other partners to implement the project plans.**⁵²

On behalf of a number of donor agencies (NCA and sister organizations), Swedish Diakonia took on the task to do close follow-up and monitoring of CCM Head Office in 2008. They hired a consultant to work with the finance department in CCM to get them up to speed administration wise and finance wise. This was a heavy task and a constant uphill struggle, but apparently it was successful as CCM actually ended the year by doing some critically needed adjustments in the organizational structure, and has now recruited a new finance person to reinforce that side of the administration.

NCA's financial manager (based in NCA's office in South Africa) work closely with CCM's branch office in Cabo Delgado, supported the purchase of accounting software and training the financial staff. Upon a request by the Cabo Delgado branch NCA will also assist with training the leadership and staff in how to work with the communities.

Another issue that might be relevant in the CCM – NCA partnership is; how does NCA assist church-based partners in the transformation (or expansion) from being purely humanitarian or service-delivering agencies to working in a rights-based way. CCM is a highly respected and recognised organisation for its role in the peacebuilding process of Mozambique's post-conflict phase, however – conducting budget monitoring of local municipalities requires different expertise, capacities and understanding than collecting arms and conducting election observations etc. NCA might look into its own tools and partnership approach in this regard: how did NCA capacitate CCM to run this project? NCA employed an interesting and commendable model; it entered into partnership with regional resource organisations (Fair Share) to support the local partner (CCM). Although Fair Share's project manager cautioned already in December 2005 that Fair Share is **not the implementing agent for the CCM**, this seemed to be one of the causes of the project's failure; CCM was unable to take full ownership and implement the activities.

Summing up, the pilot project was aimed at building the capacity of CCM in empowering its constituencies, i.e. the members of the local churches to become more active in monitoring the local governments' budgets. The pilot was not successful. According to available documents, the main reasons for the failure could be found in the insufficient planning phase which did not consult with key stakeholders like the top leadership of the church. Adding to that, the consultant assumes that

⁵² Ibid, page 4.

there is a chance here that CCM was not fully convinced⁵³ about the project in the first place, but felt obliged to move on with the project as there was great enthusiasm for the project both by NCA's representative and South-African partner.

A lesson learnt here seems to be that when **replicating a project from one context** (Kwa-Zulu-Natal with EJM and FS) to another, **careful analysis of the context, stakeholders, supporters and potential 'spoilers' need to be mapped** before designing the program. Important indicators for assessing outcomes should be **ownership and participation**.

To the credit of this project it should be highlighted that the intention of the pilot program was to test out the program, and when results were not forthcoming in the planned way, the pilot was stopped and not further developed.

This should not mean however that the program is not worth continuing or exploring further, external or internal factors that impeded the pilot to succeed in 2006-8 might be overcome if NCA wants to try again. The main challenge is to engage with the churches so that they support the idea of churches taking on a role of budget monitoring and holding governments accountable.

The project's main objective was **monitoring and holding local government accountable** and thus it is **crucial that the local partner's governance** was up to standards. When CCM started having problems in the internal governance, NCA (and other partners) took a break from the partnership and started working with Capo Delgado branch. CCM has been one of NCA's strategic partners in Mozambique under the partnership agreement with the Norwegian Embassy.⁵⁴

On a final note, NCA can learn from the partnership approach in this pilot. According to NCA representatives reflecting on what could have been done differently, a more 'hands on' approach including elements of accompaniment, might have given CCM the necessary support needed in implementing this project. If NCA is to adopt a more accompaniment-like approach towards the partners, sufficient human resources need to be allocated as this approach is much more time-consuming than the current approach.

⁵³ The lack of ownership from CCM side to the project was indicated in their report 2007 which stated "... CCM staff also must make an effort to *own* the process but first must leave Fair Share team act and then take over the process", page 5.

⁵⁴ CCM headquarters internal challenges were noted by NCA in Memo/Minutes from meeting with Norad 17.06.2008. In order to avoid paying funds directly to CCM HQ, NCA (Nina/Gwen) in 2006 decided that in order not to stall the provincial governance work, funding would be transferred direct to Cabo Delgado's account. The local NCA program manager cautioned against this solution in the above-mentioned memo.

5. Overall assessment: NCA reporting on results – strengths and challenges

This desk analysis has provided a range of strong results and outcomes within CSAG and documented how different entry points (service-delivery, income-generation, human rights monitoring, local elections, budget monitoring etc) can mobilize ordinary people to see themselves as rightsholders and able citizens in their local communities. Moving the rightsholders one level up, and working with them to start asking questions towards the duty-bearers – whether they are churches, local authorities or government – is a more long-term effect that was also found to take place in some projects.

However, one of the main challenges identified in this desk analysis for reporting on outcomes is the lack of jointly agreed upon definitions on what an outcome is, how do we describe it accurately and (if possible) document it. This analysis has adhered to the definition used for example by Norad (Results-Based management, 2009) which describe outcomes as the effects and changes that take place (in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours) due to the project interventions. Documenting such changes require an analysis of how the situation would have been if the project has *not* taken place (creating a contrafactual situation) and this is often outside the scope of small projects. Still, raising the awareness in NCA on the meaning and understanding of outcomes would probably contribute to the reporting on outcomes from the country offices.

Advocacy for promoting accountable governance in-country and/or Norway: a key challenge with working in a rights-based way is the balance between being an active advocate and lobbyist (either directly or through partners) in the recipient country and in Norway. For countries in this study like Burma and Ethiopia, NCA and partners have to be very careful in their advocacy efforts due to the lack of political space. In Ethiopia, the whole Human Rights and Good Governance program was ended due to the authorities' introduction of the new CSO law that prevents organisations that work with advocacy to receive foreign funding. In this case, NCA has opted for a 'pull-back' from the whole sector but continuing to promote accountable governance but via different channels and entry points. By working through the core, church-based partners linked to the Orthodox Church and the Evangelical church, NCA will search for ways of engaging the rightsholders – but in a much more subtle way. The case study on Ethiopia illustrates how risky and "threatening" working with legal issues such as human rights monitoring and providing vulnerable groups access to legal services can be to authoritarian regimes. NCA's comparative advantage is an integrated approach consisting of both service-delivery and advocacy with the church- and faith-based partners (not purely human rights work, and this needs to be taken into consideration when planning for the next phase in Ethiopia (and similar countries with repressive regimes).

For the NCA implemented campaign on cancelling developing countries' illegitimate debt, NCA's Policy Department has successfully lobbied and worked with resource partners and networks in NCA countries of work, but less with the Core church- or faith-based partners. Here there are great potentials for exploring further the room for joint work.

An important strategy from 2005 was how NCA can **integrate the work with illegitimate debt in cooperation with partners, especially partners in the Civil society for Accountable Governance program**. But this seems to be the area where there are least reported outcomes. Resource partners

in the countries studied in this desk analysis (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Mali, Bangladesh and Burma) were not found to have been included in the work so far.

In Mozambique, NCA and international partners tried to work with the Church Council in people-centred budget-monitoring of local authorities, but the project ended after the pilot phase (2006-8). It is not straightforward to assess exactly “what went wrong” in the project based on available documentation, but this consultant would suggest that great learnings could be forthcoming if NCA encouraged the country offices to report more on ‘what have you learnt from this experience’, or ‘what would you have done differently if you had started the project all over again’.

On gender analysis, the project reports reviewed did not discuss to any extent **the challenges and potential conflicts that arise when traditional (male) power structures are challenged**. This is very interesting and again, if challenges are discussed one can learn from them, but if the challenges are not openly shared (due to perhaps fear that if problems are lifted, it would equal a stop to the project) it is more difficult to learn from them. RDRS has experience here that could be of interest for other partners.

Promoting women into local politics in Mali seems to have given very good results already after two years and with limited funding. The model utilised in Mali for getting women mobilised, nominated and finally elected to the local councils are well described in the reports from NCA’s Mali country office and an experience that other countries can learn from, including an innovative use of local media.

For a thematic area like civil society for accountable governance, ensuring good development practices is therefore inherent to the overall goal. NCA has a strong focus on financial management and anti-corruption practices on a policy level, but these policies do not seem to be operationalised into practical tools for working with partners. For example NCA could collect best practices of accountable governance and provide the NCA country offices with a toolbox of approaches to chose from and apply with the partners.

Integrating the key NCA indicators of participation and equity into a “Partnership approach manual” would probably assist in increasing the understanding among both NCA country offices and partners about the need to spend sufficient time for planning and involving the stakeholders, dialoguing with local authorities etc. In the case study on Mozambique for example, the lack of participation in the preparatory phase seemed to be one of the main causes for the failure of the pilot project. Although the budget monitoring project was a highly commendable efforts, a lesson learnt seems to be that when replicating a project from one context (Kwa-Zulu-Natal with EJM and FS) to another, careful analysis of the context, stakeholders, supporters and potential ‘spoilers’ need to be mapped before designing the program. Important indicators for assessing outcomes should be ownership and participation.

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Annex I - Terms of Reference

DESK ANALYSIS OF NORWEGIAN CHURCH AID'S CIVIL SOCIETY FOR ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO JANUARY 2005 – NOVEMBER 2009.

1. Background

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is one of the largest Norwegian International Development Agencies. It is a church based diaconal organization, which works with long-term development assistance, emergency relief and advocacy across the globe. NCA shares a vision of a just world and work respectively with people and organizations of all faiths. As such, NCA empowers right holders, and strive to achieve human dignity for all regardless of race, nationality, gender, political persuasion or religious beliefs.

One of NCA's five thematic Priorities is "Civil Society for Accountable Governance". Accountable governance and broad democratic participation constitute preconditions for eradicating poverty, building sustainable communities and upholding human dignity. In many countries where Norwegian Church Aid works, civil society needs to:

- make more efficient use of the existing political space in order to influence policies in favour of the rights of the poor and vulnerable
- make the existing political space more open and transparent
- claim new political space in national, regional and global arenas in order to give poor and vulnerable people a stronger voice in the decisions that affect their lives

Church networks and civil society organisations represent broad constituencies, including the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. In addition, churches have traditionally performed essential roles with regard to the provision of basic services, such as health care and education. In many regions of the world churches have proven themselves to be especially effective agents for providing basic services to the poorest groups in society. One of the main challenges to service providers is ensuring that service delivery is supplemented by efforts seeking to empower the poor to claim these services as basic rights. Recent focus on national poverty reduction strategies provides new opportunities for constructive policy engagement between civil society and government at the national and local level.

Norwegian Church Aid is rooted in a Scandinavian tradition of promoting cooperation among state, market and civil society actors as a valuable and preferred model for social development. Norwegian Church Aid acts through churches and other civil society partners who possess extensive experience in service delivery and the empowerment of poor people. Through *Civil Society for Accountable Governance*, Norwegian Church Aid wishes to share its experience in this field. Norwegian Church Aid also wishes to support partners in their efforts to achieve better and more accountable governance, as well as to enhance the role of government in the protection of the interests and rights of all citizens. These efforts aim to strengthen the influence of civil society organisations on local, national and international policies with a view to securing basic rights for poor populations, and to support the Millennium Development Goal of building global partnerships for sustainable development.

1.1 Norwegian Church Aid's Focus *Norwegian Church Aid's Focus*

Within this thematic priority, will support core partners in their efforts that aim to empower poor and vulnerable groups with a view to civic and political participation and to work actively for improving systems of constitutional checks and balances, e.g. through separating the power of the executive, legislative (parliament) and judiciary branches of government.

Norwegian Church Aid will therefore focus on:

- cooperation between civil society organisations, local and national governments

- linkages between i) core partners' programmes for the rights-based empowerment of poor populations, ii) provision of basic services and iii) national policies and programmes for provision of basic services
- the empowerment of poor and vulnerable populations with regard to their civic and political involvement, placing particular emphasis on participation of women, youth, minorities and indigenous peoples
- the people-centred monitoring of policies and budgets for poverty reduction (including monitoring for gender bias)
- economic justice initiatives for sustainable debt burdens, the cancellation of illegitimate debts, trade justice and the regulation of market actors by national governments
- support access to sustainable food security through national and international governments regulations
- church and society uniting to induce elected officials and civil servants to "play by the rules", address corruption and engage in dialogue with poor and vulnerable constituents
- the use of communication technology and the media to improve access to information for poor populations so as to make their voices heard

2. Reasons for the evaluation

A major motivation for the evaluation is a commitment to the principles of accountability and transparency. NCA's *Global Strategic Plan (GSP) 2005-2009* states that a thorough documentation of **results** and **lessons learned** should be provided for the five thematic priorities and for the focus and priority countries during the 5-year GSP's period. This will enable NCA to assess and improve its performance and to **demonstrate** its **relevance, legitimacy, efficiency, sustainability** and **effectiveness** to its stakeholders. On this basis NCA is undertaking a global thematic evaluation of its work with partners on "**Civil Society for Accountable Governance**".

3. Scope of Desk Analysis

The desk analysis will look at selected projects in NCA's Accountable Governance portfolio during the time in question and address the following tasks:

First priority: Analyze the results and achievements on outcome level (for the period 2005-2009) of six projects (one project per each of the six categories).

Special focus should be given to the NCA's three key Indicators of Achievements as set out in the GSP 2005-2009 (Chapter 5.4) Participation, Equity and where relevant Protection.

Second priority: Give input on challenges and recommendations for improvement of NCA reporting on results at outcome level in the area of Civil Society for Accountable governance.

The tasks will be undertaken under the supervision of the advisors on Recourses and Finance Merete Skjelsbæk.

4. Documents to cover

Project documents, plans, reports and if possible evaluations reports from the projects

Desk study mapping done of the whole NCA portfolio on Civil Society for Accountable Governance by NCG February 2010.

Identify complementary information needed, through further reporting and/or interviews (Phone or Skype) with NCA staff or partners.

5. Deliveries

The end product should be a report that summaries main results (outcome or impact) and recommendations.

6. Time frame:

11 days and completed by 31 March 2010.

7. Payments:

Upon agreement with the selected consultant.