

# VICE VERSA

journalism on  
global development

# Shift the power!

Local  
ownership  
of the global  
agenda

**Mouthpiece of the West**  
*civil society under pressure*

**A local support base**  
*enhances legitimacy of NGOs in the Global South*



## Editorial



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This special was created in  
 collaboration with **Wilde Ganzen Foundation**

**For this special edition** of *Vice Versa* I went to Kenya myself, and witnessed the total transformation of Nkoilale. The community, who live close to the entrance to the Maasai Mara Park, took the initiative to set up several different projects to promote education and healthcare and to increase their income. Community members contributed their time or the proceeds from selling their livestock. 'A culture has arisen of doing things yourself and not wanting to be dependent on outsiders', one of the driving forces of this change, Nelson Ole Kiorokor, told me with pride. That culture has made the community resilient; no longer will they be led down the garden path by corrupt politicians or administrators.

This edition is filled with stories of change from organisations and communities from the Global South who are taking steps towards reducing their dependence on international donors – gaining the capacity for domestic resource mobilisation, to use a bit of jargon. This method is a good fit for international cooperation in 2019: the local organisation itself takes a leading role in the project and is accountable to the people it serves, rather than to the Western NGO that funds its work.

**The call to** transform the power balance in development cooperation is growing ever louder. Everyone seems to agree that the time has come for more local leadership. There's even a movement gaining steam under the hashtag #ShiftThePower. Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands' Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, also appears to be thinking along these lines. In her *Investeren in perspectief* ('Investing in prospects') policy memo, she calls for continued support for civil society organisations and for African, Asian and Latin American organisations to gain ownership of their projects. In the minister's vision, Dutch organisations will play a different role, focused more on innovation, connection, and influence at an international level.

Her message is supported by Southern organisations that appear in this publication. They go so far as to call on our minister to make it compulsory for Northern organisations to collaborate with Southern partners and to work to achieve direct funding for Southern organisations.

In practice, that might not be easy. Western NGOs have an institutional interest in maintaining a relationship of dependency with their Southern partners. What's more, the language and tendering culture used in the sector tends to thwart opportunities for local organisations to gain direct funding from governments and key international donors. Development cooperation seems to have become a competition to write the best grant proposal, using all the right 'donor-speak'.

Southern organisations face structural barriers to getting access to financing. Because in general Western NGOs and businesses have more capital, more staff and more experience in writing funding applications, local organisations often miss out and calls for greater Southern ownership ring hollow. The development sector tries to sound inclusive, using nice-sounding slogans like 'Leave no one behind', but in practice it is actually an exclusive club.

**We hope that** this special edition, published in cooperation with Wilde Ganzen Foundation – a leader in reflecting on and acting in the spirit of new power relationships – will spark in-depth discussion of this *power shift*. There is also another, very practical and urgent reason: civil society is under pressure around the globe. Governments are doing their best to clip the wings of critical organisations by branding them as the mouthpiece of the West and setting ever narrower restrictions on the receipt of foreign financing. This makes local fundraising activities and mobilising a strong local community/local support base more important than ever. Let the debate begin.

**Marc Broere**

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# The importance of local support

Author: Siri Lijfering

Civil society is under pressure around the globe. Governments are trying to clip the wings of critical organisations by branding them as a mouthpiece of the West and setting ever narrower restrictions on the receipt of foreign financing. This makes local fundraising activities and mobilising a strong local support base more important than ever. The question is: is the development sector ready for that?



In 2013, Russian bird-watchers' association Crane Homeland received a letter stating: 'You have been classed as a "foreign agent"'. Of course this message came as a shock to the dedicated protectors of the country's crane population, but it also sent a clear signal to the rest of Russian civil society: literally no one can escape the long arm of Moscow. Since 2012, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Russia have had to register as 'foreign agents' if they want to receive money from overseas or take part in 'political activities'.

The brand of 'foreign agent', with its clear Cold War connotations, not only implies that the organisation in question is a Western spy; it also often comes with heavy administrative expenses and fines. When the Russian election monitor Golos won the prestigious Andrei Sakharov Freedom Award from the Norwegian Helsinki committee without having registered as a foreign agent, they got a \$10,000 fine (around €8,800). Even though Golos had refused the prize money, the organisation was persecuted and now finds it hard to stay afloat. As Golos' director Lilia Shibanova despairingly put it, 'I really hope we don't win another prize, because that could be the end of us.'

It's not only in Russia that democratic achievements are under pressure – the space civil society has in which to manoeuvre is shrinking all around the world. At his inauguration early this year, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro declared war on civil society organisations by suspending all collaborative projects and placing NGOs under close supervision. In Zimbabwe, violence has been used to silence civil movements, while in Turkey several leaders of civil society organisations have been arrested on the charge of treason. Even in India, 'the world's largest democracy', critical NGOs are branded 'enemies of the state' and face intimidation.

The 2019 *State of Civil Society Report*, published annually by the international alliance of civil society organisations CIVICUS, reveals that these developments are part of a broader trend the organisation describes as 'the crackdown on civil society'. According to the report, no fewer than 109 countries have placed serious restrictions on the use of public spaces. 'This means that only 4% of the global population live in a country where people are free to organise themselves and to speak out,' says CIVICUS chief networks officer Amy Taylor. Taylor explains that this situation is the result of many years of civil society losing power. 'A few years ago there was still hope, and even a certain amount of optimism; following the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement, it seemed civil society was gaining ground and as if authoritarian regimes were on their last legs. Now we realise that this was just the first fight in a much larger battle.'

A key weapon in that battle may be domestic resource mobilisation: all forms of giving – whether in money, in time or in kind – contributed by the local community itself. British non-profit research, training and consultancy organisation INTRAC recently published a study commissioned by the Civic Engagement Alliance which shows that there is a positive relationship between local fundraising and the space for civil society. Researcher for INTRAC

Dr. Emmanuel Kumi believes that this is mainly a result of the increased legitimacy that comes with local fundraising. 'Because most local organisations are dependent on Western funding, their agenda is largely determined by the interests and priorities of their donors. That has separated many local organisations from reality and from the people they claim to represent, which makes it easier for governments to dismiss them as a mouthpiece of the West. To raise funds locally, organisations have to root deeper into society and become accountable to that society for the choices they make.' In Kumi's view, this makes organisations more credible representatives of local interests, which in turn puts them in a stronger negotiating position with the government. Greenpeace International experienced this in India in 2015, when the organisation found itself on the Modi government's blacklist, accused of 'misusing foreign funds' in its opposition to the construction of a coal power plant in the Sundarban area. This caused large numbers of Indians to join the organisation to show the government that Greenpeace International did in fact represent local interests. Thanks to this large-scale mobilisation of the local population, Greenpeace was able to counter the accusation of foreign influence.

**'If the new middle class would donate 0.5% of their income to the charity, then by 2030 there would be an extra \$350 billion available for development cooperation'**

Deputy director of the Wilde Ganzen Foundation, a Dutch NGO, Robert Wiggers sees this example as illustrative of the importance of legitimacy that a strong local support base can provide. 'History has taught us that true change can only come from society itself. Women's suffrage, the eight-hour workday, these were all fought for and won by people who were directly affected. It is no different now when we talk about protecting the Amazon in Brazil or women's rights in India; these campaigns can only succeed if they are supported by people who personally endure the consequences of the oppression and rights violations. They have a right to speak, and they in turn can hold governments accountable for protecting their rights.' Wiggers sees local fundraising as a crucial factor in mobilising a local support base. 'If people from the community





Demonstration for the murder of Honduran activist Berta Cáceres

into donations, there's huge potential there,' she says enthusiastically. 'If the new middle class would donate 0.5% of their income to the charity – that's less than the average British household gives – then by 2030 there would be an extra \$350 billion available for international development. You could really make a big difference with that kind of money!'

The World Giving Index, published annually by CAF, shows that this prediction is actually quite achievable. The report reveals that philanthropy in middle- and low-income countries has increased significantly in recent years. Especially the category 'helping a stranger' - donating to people who are not relatives or friends of the donor - is considerably on the up in emerging economies. Four of the top 20 most generous countries worldwide are in Africa, nine out of ten South Africans 'contributed to society' in the past year, and Brazil has more young people than ever who are actively engaged in a social movement.

Another remarkable finding of the report is the country at the top of the index: Indonesia. The country achieves the best average score in the three categories CAF identifies – helping a stranger, donating to charity, and devoting time to volunteer work – and therefore may call itself the most generous giver of 2018. In Milson's view, this debunks the great misconception that it is only rich countries that donate. 'People in every country have the potential and the will to contribute. It's up to civil society to build on that.'

**In addition to the emerging middle class**, the new generation of rich people whose wealth was not inherited are a key target for local fundraising. Philanthropy is hot in emerging economies. Africa, Asia and Latin America are all producing more and more wealthy philanthropists. The Nigerian billionaire Aliko 'Cement King' Dangote, Azim Premji in India and the Mexican telecommunications magnate Carlos Slim Helú all set aside a substantial share of their capital each year for philanthropy, and it looks as if there's still a lot of room for growth.

According to a recent study published by Capgemini, there are 168,000 millionaires in Africa alone, with a combined wealth of \$1.7 trillion. 'Corporate giving' and the launch of social enterprises is also on the rise in emerging economies, and many countries are seeing a growth in social enterprise. 'The new CSR culture [corporate social responsibility, Ed.] is making businesses increasingly willing to contribute to civil society organisations,' Kumi says, 'and social enterprises share a lot of the same motivations.' Although Kumi warns organisations not to allow themselves to be led too much by the interests of businesses and philanthropists, he does emphasise the potential of this strategy for local fundraising that is currently underexploited.

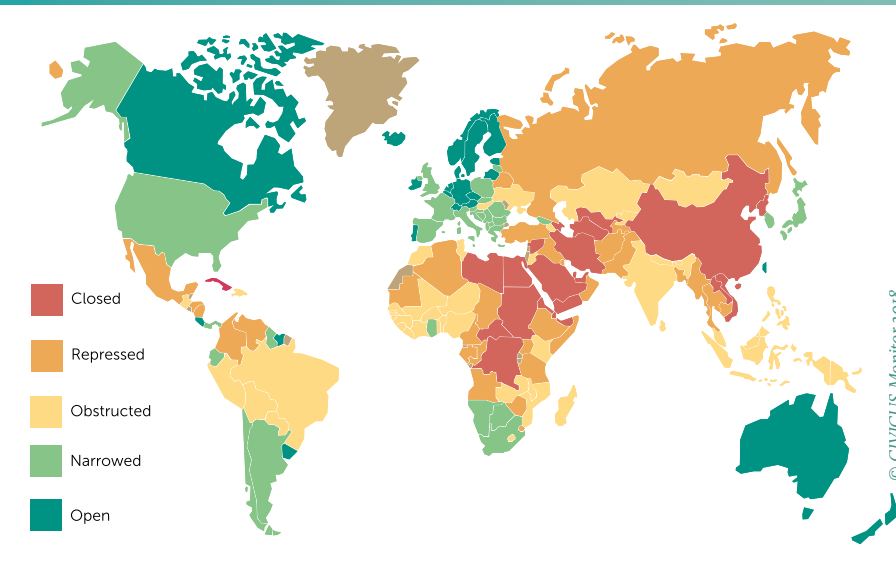
Organisations are also becoming increasingly creative in the way they mobilise funds. In Latin America, the principle of the sharing economy is being used to distribute scarce resources between civil society organisations. As Taylor from CIVICUS explains, 'One organisation might have a great web developer, while another can offer translation services or access to an expensive licence for online evaluation software. Sharing these resources reduces organisations' overheads, which enables them to spend their money on the actual projects.' Organisations are also increasingly taking advantage of the new technological possibilities offered by crowdfunding and crowdsourcing platforms for issues that are otherwise difficult to finance. One example of this is the platform The Crowd Versus, a

itself contribute to a civil society organisation, they get a sense of ownership and they will be more likely to propagate the aims of that organisation.' In addition to local fundraising, Kumi believes we should not underestimate the importance of non-financial contributions. He sees the engagement of local volunteers as an important aspect of increasing organisations' legitimacy. 'As an organisation, when you work with volunteers you bring in part of the community. That gives you greater insight into the interests of the group you're representing, and they in turn can recruit more support for the organisation in the community.' Moreover, Kumi says, having a large body of volunteers can also contribute to the sustainability of local organisations. 'Many local NGOs are funded on a project-by-project basis. As long as a project is active, staff can be hired to carry out the various activities. However, when the project is concluded and the funding dries up, organisations are not able to extend their employees contracts. Volunteers offer the organisation a certain level of continuity and stability, giving both government and society a signal that 'We are here to stay'.

Finally, Wiggers adds, the diversification in financing that comes with increased local fundraising also makes organisations less vulnerable to changing policy priorities and cuts to Western aid budgets. 'There's less money available, particularly for civil society organisations in middle-income countries, because the general idea is: "these countries should be able to manage on their own". However, three-quarters of the world's poor now live in countries classified as middle-income and this is where civil society is increasingly under threat. For this reason, Wiggers urges the development sector to start investing in finding alternative sources of funding now, to secure sustainability of their work and international development at large.

**The time is now** to get involved in this effort, states Ashleigh Milson, campaign manager for the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). 'We are seeing a strongly-growing middle class in emerging economies. The Brookings Institution predicts that the middle class will grow to 2.4 billion people by 2030. If organisations can translate this growth

### Tracking Civic Space



### Restrictions on freedom around the world

In recent years, civil society has come under increasing pressure almost everywhere in the world. The global alliance for civil society organisations CIVICUS has demonstrated that the space for civil society has been closed or repressed, or that obstacles to free association have been erected, in as many as 109 of the 195 countries studied. Currently, six out of ten people live in countries with severe restrictions on the use of public space.

Amnesty International also expressed concern in its recent report *Laws Designed to Silence: The Global Crackdown on Civil Society Organizations*. The report covers 50 countries that either already have anti-NGO legislation in place or are about to pass such legislation, and it shows how NGOs are finding it increasingly difficult to organise and to speak out against authoritarian regimes for fear of repercussions. Most of these organisations are fighting for women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, LGBT rights, the rights of migrants and refugees, and environmental rights.

crowdfunding platform that raises money to pay for court cases to challenge businesses or governments that violate human rights. Digital currencies such as Bitcoin are also being deployed more often to donate money to local organisations operating in regions such as the Middle East and North Africa that are dealing with increasingly strict monitoring of monetary flows.

**The sky is the limit**, it seems, for domestic resource mobilisation. So why is the full potential of local fundraising still not being tapped? Kristen McGeeney from the International Centre for Not for Profit Law (ICNL) ascribes this partly to the lack of favourable infrastructure and an enabling environment for philanthropy. 'People in many countries are willing to donate to good causes, but local organisations face serious barriers that prevent them from accessing these funds. For example, civil society organisations in Jordan have to go to the government a month in advance to get permission to hold a fundraising campaign. These kinds of bureaucratic hurdles cause serious delays to fundraising, which can have a big impact on funding for urgent projects like emergency aid.' Moreover, local organisations are discouraged from raising their own funds by other legal requirements governments placed on NGOs, such as time-consuming registration procedures and burdensome reporting requirements. In McGeeney's view, this only increases the importance of investing in a clear legal framework for local fundraising and raising awareness of relevant legislation among local organisations. 'If organisations have a better understanding of the legal framework, they can more effectively hold governments to account for their social responsibilities,' McGeeney argues, 'and they can engage the authorities with the organisation's goals by demonstrating how investing in public goods can also bring benefits to the government. This is a case where more knowledge really is more power.'

It is also important to Wiggers for the leadership of local fund-raising to rest firmly in the hands of actors in the Global South. That means that international organisations should stay out

of the local fundraising market, as their involvement reduces the potential funds local organisations could raise. International organisations can put more resources into fundraising, thereby outcompeting their Southern partners. Wiggers also stresses the negative effect this can have on the organisations' image. 'International NGOs are often associated with large-scale campaigns, luxury hotels, big salaries, and expensive cars. And because international organisations rarely publish their results locally, people don't have a clear picture of how effective their work is. So when these organisations ask the population for money they lack credibility. That damages not only people's trust in development cooperation but also fundraising chances of organisations in the Global South.'

Local organisations could also be better placed to take advantage of the local culture of giving. Milson: 'Our research has shown us that giving is something very emotional and personal. You feel a connection to the cause you're giving to, and you have faith that your money will be well spent. Because local organisations have stronger roots in the community, they are often better placed to understand what's going on in that community and can tailor their



# Stories of Change

appeal to the giving culture.' Kumi has seen this in his research in Ghana. 'Helping each other and giving money is something that is deeply rooted in African culture, but it mostly happens on an informal level: an uncle needs money for an operation, or someone donates money to buy school books for their young cousin. This kind of giving has a reciprocal character – if you ever need money, you can approach the same people – and it reinforces social capital. When development organisations ask for money, that giving is not linked to a clear return, and people don't have a clear view of where that money is going. Local organisations should therefore have the space to invest in a relationship of trust with potential donors, and to show how a contribution can make a real difference.' To achieve this, Wiggers believes that local organisations also need the financial space to attract donors. 'Most NGOs in the Global South are still financed on a project-by-project basis, and every last penny has to be accounted for. However, mobilising support and raising funds locally cost both time and money, which is why it's so crucial for organisations in the Global South to gain access to money that they can spend as they see fit. That way they can work on strengthening the organisation's presence in the community, in their own way.'

## NGOs have an institutional interest in maintaining a relationship of dependency with their Southern partners

In Wiggers' view, this transition also requires an investment in building the local fundraising capacity of Southern organisations. 'Fundraising is an art; local organisations need a completely different set of skills from what is usually asked of them, because these things are usually done by their Northern partners.' The Wilde Ganzen Foundation launched the *Change the Game Academy* (CtGA) to help local organisations develop these skills. In collaboration with partner organisations CESE in Brazil, the Kenya Community Development Foundation in Kenya and the Smile Foundation in India, the CtGA has designed training programmes focused on fundraising and mobilising civil society. Local instructors in 12 countries have been trained to offer both these courses and the necessary coaching. Local organisations anywhere in the world can take an online course, free of charge, and – in the countries with qualified local trainers – they can supplement this with traditional classroom teaching paid for independently or through subsidies.

During these training programmes, organisations learn skills such as writing a fundraising plan, communicating more effectively with their supporters, and conducting a thorough context analysis. More



An interactive training in Kenya on local fundraising hosted by the Change the Game Academy

than 900 organisations have already taken part in a CtGA course. In Wiggers' view, one key outcome from the courses is that the organisations are not only gaining knowledge; they are also gaining more confidence in their own ability to mobilise local support. He recently saw an example of this effect in Ethiopia, where the training enabled farmers' cooperatives to hold policymakers accountable for their promise to invest in local infrastructure and to convince the regional authorities to supply better-quality seed potatoes for the upcoming growing season.

The programme has also achieved positive evaluation results in Kenya, Burkina Faso and India, and most organisations saw a big difference in the income they received from local fundraising in just one year. Wiggers believes that this shows how short-term support and encouragement for local leadership can tap the great potential of local fundraising, but that is also the crux of the matter: 'NGOs have an institutional interest in maintaining a relationship of dependency with their partner organisations, so that the money comes to them first and they can keep their own organisations going.' I see that as a fundamental flaw in international development.' This means that, in addition to creating favourable legislative conditions and an enabling environment for philanthropy, domestic resource mobilisation also calls for a transformation in the development sector itself. International organisations must take on more of a facilitating role and put more trust in their partners in the Global South. Taylor agrees, adding: 'International organisations have to critically examine what their added value is in this changing world, and find the best way for them to add that value. They are uniquely placed to bring different social movements together so they can learn from each other and not have to keep reinventing the wheel, but it's important for them to take a step back in terms of mobilising civil society, so the campaign is really rooted in the community itself.'

Rather than setting up a committee to decide what the world should be like in 2030, Taylor believes organisations should pay closer attention to where the energy is right now, and work out how best to support the people and social movements who want to bring about change. Wiggers endorses that suggestion: 'Times may change, but solidarity is of all times; our job working in the development sector is to work out how we can best promote that solidarity.' ●

## A community-driven initiative



**By supporting orphans and children with a disability in their own communities, KidsCare Kenya helps them play a valuable role in society.** Author: Sanne van Grafhorst

In Kenya, parents of disabled children often anxiously hide these children away. They receive no medical care, don't go to school, and are believed to bring dishonour to their families. The assumption is that they simply have no place in society. KidsCare takes a totally different approach. The organisation, based in the south of Kenya, promotes the idea that, with the right support, these children can play a valuable role in society. That's why they offer children with a physical or mental disability care at home. They also offer other home care programmes for orphans and children living in extreme poverty. In total, more than 2,000 children receive support.

The social workers who visit children at home are an essential part of the programme, according to Willem Malaba, sustainability coordinator. 'They maintain a relationship with a household for three years. They look at what is needed, and they set goals together with the children's parents or carers.' Poor families receive temporary financial support, but they also benefit from assistance in finding activities that can help them support themselves. 'They invest the money in things like chickens or goats. They can sell the milk and eggs and breed the animals.'

Disabled children receive regular therapy, while their parents are offered advice about proper nutrition and exercises. 'The therapy and exercises at home have a huge effect. Children with cerebral palsy have learned how to relax their muscles for the very first time.'

In setting up home care programmes, the staff of the organisation are increasingly looking for sources of financial support and resources within their own region. 'That way we're in a stronger position when a big international donor pulls out.' At the moment, 80% of their income is sourced from overseas and 20% comes from Kenya. The goal is to reverse these percentages.

To achieve that aim, the organisation is raising its profile by

Throughout this special edition, you can find six 'stories of change' about organisations and cooperatives from the global South that are taking steps to reduce their dependence on international donors. They all took a training programme offered by Wilde Ganzen Foundation's *Change the Game Academy*, where they developed their communication skills, gained in self-confidence, and increased their ability to raise funds in their own country.

posting photographs and the results of projects on its website. One recent Twitter post read: 'After six months of help from KidsCare, these families now have iron roofs on their houses and their children can go to school.' Marketing and communication plans have also been drafted as part of the long-term strategy KidsCare has mapped out. 'To stimulate sustainable development, you have to work on many different things at the same time', Malaba says. 'You can't look at local fundraising and the mobilisation of support as two separate issues. As well as raising money, you have to be able to bring together village leaders, tribal leaders, parents, and NGOs who have shared objectives.'

**80% of the income is sourced from overseas, with 20% coming from Kenya. The goal is to reverse these percentages**

KidsCare also works with partners such as the national and provincial government, women's cooperatives, the Red Cross, and the Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK). 'We can't do everything on our own, so we need to combine our different areas of expertise. When our social workers see that a child needs a special chair or an operation, we bring in APDK because they specialise in supporting people with a disability.'

It is important for the initiative to have the support of the community. The organisation will soon open six school units for children with a mental disability. Before the project took shape, parents and village elders were invited to share ideas and have a say in the project. 'One thing they asked was whether we could build a boarding school, because some children live far away and their parents can't bring them here every day. We don't have the funds for that right now, but we're doing our best to find partners who can help us solve this problem. That makes people respect us and really see KidsCare as their organisation.' ●



# Brazilian NGOs

find their  
fighting spirit  
in the face of  
political  
headwinds

**Extreme right-wing President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro made it a campaign promise: to put an end to 'all kinds of activism'. The need is greater than ever for civil society organisations to lobby and find solidarity now that the political winds have shifted. 'We're already seeing more synergy between organisations. It has forced us to communicate better with the general public.'**

Author: Wies Ubags

The newly-minted president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, got straight down to business on 2 January: on his very first day in office he signed Decree 870/2019, assigning supervision of NGOs' activities to the government. This decree conflicts with Article 5 of the Constitution, which states that citizens are free to set up independent organisations without state monitoring. Leading international human rights organisation Human Rights Watch expressed concern at the power the decree gives the government to monitor any organisation it chooses – without saying exactly what it is monitoring. The fact that the officer charged with this supervision, Carlo Alberto dos Santos Cruz, is a military general has only added to the concerns of the left-wing opposition and organisations representing Brazil's civil society.

President Bolsonaro is well known for his controversial statements about women, indigenous and black people and sexual minorities. He once told a female left-wing Member of Parliament that she was too ugly for him to rape her. He has also stated that he would rather want his son be a thief than a homosexual. On the subject of non-governmental organisations, when speaking to the Hebrew Club in Rio de Janeiro in 2017 Bolsonaro said that, if elected, he would refuse to send any more money to NGOs. 'Those good-for-nothings will just have to

do some work', he added. After his victory in the first round of the presidential elections on 7 October 2018, Bolsonaro hammered the point home that he would put an end to 'all kinds of activism' in Brazil. The president has said that all ideology must be removed from education, the implication being: all left-wing ideology. One thing that got Bolsonaro elected was his promise to make a radical break with the politics of left-wing presidents Lula and Rousseff.

The unease is even greater among indigenous peoples and descendants of enslaved Africans who live on land which is acknowledged by the state, over which they have full control and where no external actors are allowed to carry out economic activities. The president targeted these groups when he reinforced his Decree 870/2019 on Twitter: 'More than 15% of the nation's territory has been set aside for Indians and black people. Fewer than a million people

actually live in these isolated places in Brazil, abused and manipulated by NGOs. We are going to integrate these citizens into society and value all Brazilians.'

During his election campaign, Bolsonaro expressed an intention to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. In Brazil, leaving forests intact is the most obvious way to contribute to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as there is little polluting industry in the country. Bolsonaro has now backtracked on this and has not withdrawn from the Agreement, but he does want to escape from the straitjacket of hard and fast agreements, using the argument that the global population has to be fed and that Brazil plays an important role in feeding them. That is more important to him than preserving the rainforest. Large swathes of Brazil's forests have been lost to a variety of activities, especially soy cultivation for use in products such as livestock feed.

## Bolsonaro sees Brazil's contribution to feeding the global population as more important than preserving the rainforest

In Santarem, in the eastern part of Brazil's Amazon region, which is famous for its breathtakingly beautiful river beaches that give it the name 'Brazil's Caribbean', they know all about that. When asked about the biggest problems for indigenous people in the area, Leilane Sousa de Vasconcelos of the Borari people (around 1,100 people) answers: 'In our region, around the Tapajós river, large infrastructural projects such as hydroelectric dams, a port, roads and min-

ing are planned. The agricultural sector also has its eye on our land; this region is seeing a real soy boom. There have already been conflicts over land and the use of agricultural toxins in the crops.'

However, indigenous people are engaging in resistance all across Brazil. Last January they organised a great day of protest, the Red Day, to draw attention to the dangers they face. They have been threatened by illegal logging, illegal mining and agricultural expansion for a long time, but they fear that this will only get worse under Bolsonaro. The slogan 'Indigenous blood: not one drop more' resounded across the country, together with 'Stop the genocide in Brazil. Bolsonaro, protect the indigenous territories'. The indigenous people of Brazil also received support from overseas.

Leilane Sousa de Vasconcelos in Santarem knows that the need is greater than ever to organise and come together to fight for



Protest against a mine disaster that polluted the Doce River © CESE



people's rights and interests – and to learn how to keep your organisation going – now that the political winds have changed. She is part of a small women's collective, Suraras do Tapajós (the most important tributary of the Amazon river, Ed.), whose 30 members work to achieve recognition for the traditional lifestyle of indigenous people in the rainforest, protection for the environment, and the empowerment of women. The collective is also vocal in joint discussions about land-use plans and other matters. Founded in 2016, it is a young organisation that is gradually growing to become a professional club with an email address, logo, and bank account. 'We even have a music group that uses indigenous music to make our voices heard outside our own area', Sousa says proudly.

Not only do the women defend indigenous people's rights, they also talk about violence within their own communities. 200 women recently attended an event on that theme, to listen to speakers and to take part in workshops to promote self-confidence. All this was financed by the national fund She, which supports projects that aim to increase women's rights.

**The fledgling Suraras do Tapajós** is a volunteer organisation with the ambition to become more professional, and its members are working with larger NGOs to raise their

profile and better defend their interests. The women are currently managing with small-scale fundraising campaigns such as bingo or a bazaar where they sell homemade food and craft items. This is an important way to keep the organisation going, but they welcome external support.

One of Suraras' partners is the Coordination of the Indigenous Organisations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB), which is based in the Amazon metropolitan area of Manaus and is the largest indigenous organisation in Brazil. Together with COIAB and eight other indigenous organisations, Suraras do Tapajós attended a *Change the Game Academy* course with the CESE NGO in Salvador that covered topics such as the need to raise funds locally to make sure your organisation is not dependent on a single donor, how an NGO can use communication to draw attention to its goal, and how to organise events.

**CESE is an ecumenically-inspired** NGO that helps other organisations with institutional consolidation. Director Sônia Mota explains that around 300 of these collaborative projects take place every year, involving larger organisations such as the well-known Landless Movement (MST), which includes 350,000 families and which is also under fire from the Bolsonaro administration. The movement calls for the fairer distribution of land in Brazil and occupies unused

land. MST is the largest producer of organic rice in Latin America. Because of its goals, Bolsonaro branded MST a terrorist organisation. Since Bolsonaro's election, several MST encampments have been set on fire. MST national leader João Stédile explained in the *El País Brasil* newspaper how a landowner in the federal state of Paraíba had two leaders of MST killed by three hitmen.

CESE also supports small organisations of farmers, fishermen, indigenous people, disabled people, homeless people, and descendants of enslaved people. The main objective is to help these people stand up for their rights and to support their communication, fundraising, and project management. CESE itself has a strong international network and is supported by organisations such as Wilde Ganzen Foundation in the Netherlands, the Ford Foundation in the United States, the European Union, and Terre des Hommes in Switzerland. Mota explains that CESE can only receive subsidies from the Brazilian authorities for specific projects for which CESE can compete with other organisations for government funds. Her organisation would like to support many more NGOs in the country. 'We receive around 700 requests every year. In an effort to do more, we continue to submit project proposals to other financiers and we keep organising activities to encourage the general public to make donations.'

**According to** the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), there are more than 800,000 NGOs in Brazil. Figures from Abong, the Brazilian umbrella organisation for NGOs, show that only 30% of these NGOs receive government support. Mauri Cruz, one of the executive directors of Abong, sees it as reasonable for those organisations to be accountable for how they spend the money they receive, but the government should stay out of the policies and activities of the NGOs. 'According to the Constitution, civil society organisations have the right to defend their interests as they see fit.'

But that's not the only right under threat: as Sônia Mota from CESE explains, it goes much deeper. 'We have direct experience of organisations and people who stand up for human rights being criminalised. Not just through physical threats, but also by damaging our reputation with people like potential sponsors by spreading social media rumours, making it harder for us to raise money. It's a big challenge for us, and we

predict that the hostility will only increase in the coming months.'

For Leilane Sousa from Suraras do Tapajós, one of the most ominous developments is that President Bolsonaro has transferred the registration and administration of indigenous territories to the Ministry of Agriculture, one of the sectors the indigenous people are most suspicious of. As if that wasn't enough, a military general, Franklimberg de Freitas, has been appointed director of Funai, the highest ranked institution for indigenous matters in the Brazilian government. 'Right now there are at least 14 indigenous territories where the agricultural sector has invaded, where illegal logging is taking place or where mines are being opened illegally', Sousa says. 'Community leaders are being threatened.' This had been going on for some time, but Sousa says it has got worse since Bolsonaro won the elections. 'We're still a very young organisation, but it is precisely at this time that we have a duty to our ancestors to defend our territories.'

**'We predict that the hostility will only increase in the coming months'**

**Some large NGOs**, including Abong, have called on politicians in the capital, Brasília, to set up a Front for the Defence of Democracy. Decree 870, which states that the government is responsible for monitoring civil society organisations and their international contacts, was the biggest trigger for this call. In the words of a letter signed by 25 organisations and delivered to the members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, 'Persecution through criminalisation is a familiar strategy used by authoritarian governments to weaken the opposition'. On 12 February, an event was held in the House of Representatives which was attended by 50 predominantly left-wing Members of Congress. There are 513 seats in the House of Representatives, and 81 in the Senate. The support of at least a third of all Members of Congress – 198 people – is needed if civil society organisations and the politicians who support them are to gain any official clout in Congress. The organisa-



President Jair Bolsonaro

tions, including Abong, that instigated the initiative confirm that they are continuing to lobby for more Members to lend their support.

Executive director Mauri Cruz of Abong stresses that it is in the interest of a bigger lobbying force of Brazilian NGOs to be able to continue to do their work in safe, dignified conditions. 'Under the left-wing administrations of Lula and Dilma Rousseff we fell off the radar of many international organisations, because things were going so well in Brazil. There was no longer any need to help us. But now the situation is totally different, and we have to get to work on renewing those contacts. Democracy in Brazil is under threat. The government could even go so far as to block international funding streams to NGOs. There's no doubt that the situation is going to get worse.'

There is already strong support for NGOs from the political left, but Cruz also sees opportunities to gain supporters in the right-wing and more conservative parties. 'When you look at Bolsonaro's supporter base, you see that it is made up of several different blocs: conservatives who oppose abortion, neoliberals whose priority is getting the economy going, and so on. They don't all have the same interests; sometimes they actually argue with each other. There's room there for us to recruit support through targeted lobbying.'

Cruz points to the fact that the threat is not only national, but also regional. 'Several

states, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, have elected administrators who use the same language as Bolsonaro. They oppose policies that focus on helping the underprivileged, and this is going to have consequences for social policy budgets. Financial cuts are going to be made; at some point the money will run out and the projects will have to stop: culture, healthcare for indigenous people, education in the quilombos (the territories of the descendants of enslaved people, Ed.). These are things that are important, things that are dependent on the political will of administrators.'

In spite of the setbacks, Sônia Mota and Leila Sousa de Vasconcelos are hopeful for the future. Mota feels that the current negative climate is also reinforcing cooperation between NGOs: 'We're already seeing more synergy between organisations. It has forced us to communicate better with the general public to raise awareness of the importance of defending human rights. This could be the key moment when people gain more sympathy for human rights, and – who knows? – even become more engaged themselves.'

Leilane Sousa finds it difficult to remain optimistic in such a grim political climate: 'But we have to keep believing that we can change this reality. We have to bear in mind that although it may not be an easy path, it's the right one. We have to organise ourselves and link up with other social organisations, so we can better defend our indigenous territories.' ●

#### Protests in Salvador







# Shift the power!

*Sisonke March at the International Sex Worker Rights Day in Cape Town, South Africa*

**The call to shift the power balance in international development is growing ever louder. Everyone seems to agree that the time has come for more ownership for the Global South and local leadership. But in reality that's easier said than done. What will it take for this call to be heard?**

**Author: Siri Lijfering**

There was great consternation in Dutch politics in 1995, when Costa Rican pressure groups wanted to protest against a further expansion of Schiphol Airport. The campaign was part of the sustainable development agreements the Netherlands had signed a year earlier with Bhutan, Benin and Costa Rica to exchange knowledge about both socioeconomic and environmental issues. The initiative, started by Minister for Development Cooperation at the time Jan Pronk, was an experiment in creating a more equal form of international cooperation. The guiding principle was that not only could countries learn from each other, they could also hold each other accountable for unsustainable behaviour. 'We're a nation of schoolmasters, constantly criticising other countries. It's good for us to be confronted with the occasional question from another country about whether we are doing things right,' said Pronk in a 1998 interview with *NRC Handelsblad*, defending his decision to take this approach.

However, when the Bhutanese decided to invest in the conservation of Dutch wetlands and Costa Rica expressed criticism of the plans to expand Schiphol, Dutch politicians screamed blue murder: 'How dare these countries criticise our agriculture and interfere in our economic policy?' The VVD and CDA parties in particular dismissed the agreements as unnecessary foreign meddling. The Netherlands soon withdrew from the agreements, and in the end Pronk's party colleague Eveline Herfkens terminated the initiative. The prediction Pronk made in the *NRC* interview – 'If it fails, it will be clear that the time was not right' – was proved painfully accurate.

Now, 25 years later, Pronk's call for greater equality and a more level playing field in development cooperation seems to be getting a

new lease of life. The current Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Sigrid Kaag, has written in a policy memo that 'Dutch development cooperation policy must more clearly support local ownership of African, Asian and Latin American organisations.' The call for greater equality in development cooperation is also becoming louder at an international level.

2016 even saw the launch of the hashtag #ShiftThePower, which began as a battle cry but has since grown to become a platform where people ask questions and share inspiring initiatives about power shifts in the development sector. The #ShiftThePower Twitter page has now been viewed more than 40 million times. But what exactly does shifting the power entail? How does it work in practice, and what challenges do organisations face in implementing it? We put these questions to four people whose organisations work on these issues every day.

**Jenny Hodgson**, director of the Global Fund for Community Foundations (GFCF) – a South African organisation that offers local foundations financing, advice and networking opportunities – and the instigator of the #ShiftThePower movement, sees local philanthropy, also known as community philanthropy, as the key to a more equal development sector. 'When we talk about philanthropy, we're usually talking about the richest 1% of the global population who set aside part of their capital for social causes,' Hodgson says, 'but we forget the 99% of people who also have a contribution to make.' 'Local philanthropy works on the principle that everyone has something to contribute in terms of time, money, knowledge or social networks and that, together, these investments can increase the community's ownership and voice.'

Within this framework, in Hodgson's view, local philanthropy is more than just an alternative source of funding; it's about the impact an individual contribution can have. 'Even if people only contribute one dollar. In financial terms that might not mean much, but it has a real social impact. It means that people believe in the goal and they've decided they want to contribute to it. That's an important form of acceptance and confidence that is crucial to the success of any development project.'

Hodgson cites the example of a local foundation that received support from GFCF to stand up for the rights of the Dalit community, the lowest caste in India, also known as 'the untouchables'. 'When the local organisation managed to mobilise a lot of people, they were more effective in bringing the issue to the attention of the government because the social pressure made it impossible to ignore it any longer.'

'Community philanthropy can turn development cooperation on its head,' Hodgson claims, 'because we no longer see the people the programmes are intended to help as "target groups" or "beneficiaries", but rather as joint investors in their own development. That's a very different starting point, one that focuses on these people's own power to change things. That generates a lot more energy. That way participation and local ownership are no longer boxes for an organisation to tick so as you meet your project requirements; it's something in the DNA of the organisation itself.'

**Betteke de Gaay Fortman**, who has spent the past 12 years at the head of the Karuna Foundation in the Netherlands, is fully in agreement with Hodgson on this issue. Karuna's motto is: People develop themselves. De Gaay Fortman goes on to set out the conditions that

have to be met to make this a reality: 'Philanthropy from outside the community has to be temporary, and ultimately it has to become redundant. The responsibility has to be returned to governments,' she says firmly.

**'In everything we do, we always ask ourselves: "could this ultimately be managed locally?"'**

According to De Gaay Fortman, one of the greatest misconceptions in the development sector is that governments cannot or do not want to contribute to the development of their citizens. 'In our projects we always collaborate with the local government. That ensures that the project is managed locally, so that when the project's financing stops, the changes last.' Karuna Foundation projects require the local government to make a substantial contribution. 'At first that was a difficult message to sell,' De Gaay Fortman recalls. 'In the early days they often said: "But you're an aid organisation. Doesn't that mean you'll finance the projects?"' Now, 12 years on, governments actually say that they're glad to contribute, because that gives them the sense that the project is also their project.'

*Social Change Assistance Trust (South Africa) uses an Appreciative Inquiry process for social change*





When it comes to shifting the power, De Gaay Fortman believes that it is not only the benefit of local ownership and leadership that should be transferred, but also the responsibilities that come with that ownership. This point of view can sometimes bring about difficult situations. 'In one of our projects, we encountered a local authority that failed to honour its obligation to pay. Then we had a difficult choice to make: should we let these local leaders get away with it, or should we pull the plug? Ethically it was very difficult, because you feel you're leaving people behind, but ultimately we opted for the latter.' This earned the organisation the respect of local leaders, and taught them a very valuable lesson: 'When it comes to transferring power, you have to stick to your guns, otherwise no one will take you seriously and nothing will change.'

The organisation also adheres to this philosophy in its relationship with local partner Karuna Nepal, which has operated as an independent organisation since 2016. 'In everything we do, we always ask ourselves: "could this ultimately be managed locally?" The more decentralised the decision-making, the better.' An important aspect of this, in De Gaay Fortman's view, is not being afraid to let go. 'After the 2015 earthquake, more and more donors found their

way directly to Karuna Nepal and they were overwhelmed with requests. That was when we realised that they had outgrown us. From that moment on, our role changed dramatically: from an employer and source of funding to a partner sharing knowledge and our network. Karuna Nepal also asked us to make sure they stay mission-driven and keep their focus.' Although she is aware that 'a relationship based on giving can never be a fully equal relationship', De Gaay Fortman says 'we can make the collaboration as equal as possible and remain alert to potential inequalities'.

**In 2015 Ibrahim-Tanko Amidu won** the Global Partnership Award for Leadership in Social Accountability for his work with the STAR Ghana programme, an intermediary fund that passed on money from donors such as DfID, DANIDA, the EU and USAID to Ghanaian NGOs. Since late last year he has headed the STAR Ghana Foundation, a local spin-off from the international programme of the same name.

According to Amidu, launching an independent organisation was an important step towards increasing local ownership. 'We are now a 100% Ghanaian organisation; for Ghanaians, by Ghanaians. As a donor fund, we were very dependent on policy priorities set in the West, which can change according to the way the political winds are blowing. That made it difficult for us to respond to local issues and build a connection with the community. A lot of people saw us as an extension of the West,' Amidu admits. 'Now that we are a locally-registered organisation with a local member base, we're getting back to our roots and we can rebuild the trust we lost.'

Amidu believes that, in order to achieve this, people need to feel that the organisation represents them and to see their interests and ideals reflected in the organisation's projects. 'Only then will people really commit to your organisation,' Amidu says. 'It's especially important to have strong support for politically sensitive issues such as LGBTQ rights. That makes it harder for governments to question the legitimacy of the issue and dismiss your organisation as a mouthpiece of the West. Timing is crucial too. If local organisations mobilise strong local support during election campaigns, governments will have no choice but to listen to them, as they're dealing with potential voters. Then supporting an organisation is no longer just something people do because they want to get into heaven; it also becomes a political act.' Amidu believes it's important to emphasise this aspect and to make people aware of their civil rights. 'Most people pay little or no tax, which gives them the idea that they don't have a lot to do with policy decisions. Presenting giving as a form of political activism makes people much more engaged with their society, which gives them much greater motivation to bring about change.'

Moreover, in Amidu's view, transferring power to organisations in the Global South makes for much more effective deployment of local organisations. 'Local partners' main role is often to implement projects devised in the West. But these organisations have their own ideas and could come up with much better and more innovative solutions than international organisations can. What's more, in the traditional structure local organisations often feel used: they do all the work, while the Northern organisation takes all the glory. This feeds a relationship of dependency that will ultimately diminish not only the motivation of local organisations but also the sustainability of development cooperation itself.'



Sex workers organisation Sisonke strives to combat the stigma of sex work in South Africa

**In 2012 the red umbrella**, which has been the key symbol of resistance against violence and discrimination in sex work since the international protest march in Venice in 2001, also came to represent the Red Umbrella Fund. This organisation fights for the rights of sex workers around the world. Nadia van der Linde, the Dutch coordinator of the fund, explains that it arose from a four-year discussion between financiers and activists. 'When interviewed, sex worker organisations said that donor funding often fails to reach the right people and that they would like to have a say in where the money goes, something they never get the chance to do in their day-to-day work.'

To this end, an advisory board was set up with at least 80% of its members being made up of sex workers from different countries around the world who jointly assess proposals and decide which organisations to fund. 'Instead of the usual "who pays the piper calls the tune", it is now the people on the ground who decide how to spend the money, whether to fund childcare for the children of sex workers in Argentina or to provide health advice to sex workers with HIV. This is also known as participatory grant-making,' Van der Linde explains. 'Why should we fly someone all the way from the Netherlands to see what is needed elsewhere, when we already have great eyes and ears in the field? And who knows better where funds can make the biggest difference than people living the same experience? They are the real experts.'

The subsidies the organisation pays out are also exclusively earmarked for groups and networks led by sex workers themselves, whether those groups are new or established, organised formally or informally, registered or not. The groups are free to use the money flexibly. 'Because it's important to sex workers that the priorities or

**Then supporting an organisation is no longer just something people do because they want to get into heaven; it also becomes a political act**



The inspire2Care programme strengthens mother and child care in Nepal



The deaf Adhikari runs a sewing workshop in his local village



strategies are not decided by us at the fund but by the groups themselves, our subsidies can be flexibly adapted over time. That means they can always be used in the most relevant and effective way. If there's an emergency, there can be a quick response. If there is suddenly a need to influence a potential policy, action can be taken right away.'

Van der Linde believes that this way of working means programmes can be better tailored to the local context. 'We can't always fully understand the complexity from over here. Things that seem like a good idea from our perspective can actually have the opposite effect in practice.' Van der Linde recalls that when the annual budgets were being set, there was a discussion about whether more of the funds should be reserved for Southern organisations. 'It was actually the sex workers from the Global South who opposed this when it was discussed. They said that it was important to them to have strong sex worker movements in countries like the Netherlands and America. Because they can use the momentum of those movements and give them as an example when lobbying with their own government. We would never have thought of that ourselves.'

## 'Development cooperation seems to have become a competition to write the best grant proposal using all the right "donor-speak"'

A recurring element in all four stories is that the way the current development sector is organised is actually getting in the way of structural change. Hodgson sees the financing structure as an example of a strong force that is counteracting the principle of the transfer of power. 'Instead of looking at what the community itself needs and what is already available, international donors put a big bag of money on the table and say: "We've got this much money available for this specific issue over a period of this many years." That has made development cooperation a competition to write the best grant proposal, using all the right "donor-speak", to free up money for a project designed in the West, instead of having a valuable discussion about what is really needed.'

Amidu agrees: 'International NGOs have created a lot of suspicion between local organisations, because they made them compete with each other for overseas funding. This actively discouraged collaboration, even though that's exactly what we need in the fight to reclaim our space in society.'



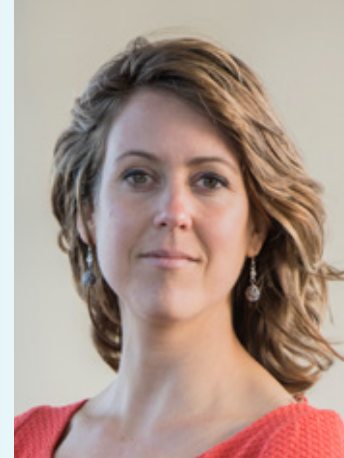
People in Ghana protest against genetically modified food

Hodgson also sees competition as a reason why international organisations themselves fail to change. 'Organisations have confused their own survival with the actual goal for which they were founded: eradicating poverty around the world. Most organisations have only got bigger over the years, which means they have less oversight over how they operate. It's easy for abuses of power to lurk in situations like this, as we saw recently with the scandals surrounding Oxfam and Save the Children.' De Gaay Fortman agrees. 'Every sector has its bad apples, but these things are more likely to happen when there are uninterested capital flows. If both the ownership and the accountability rest with the local population, there is a lot more social control and it's easier to prevent these situations.'

Finally, in De Gaay Fortman's view, both the recipient and the giver suffer from a kind of 'aid addiction'. 'People working in the development sector want to do good and help people. Transferring power means recognising that you are no longer needed, and that you might also be less important than you'd like to be. That can be hard to accept.' Van der Linde recognises this situation in her meetings with top philanthropists. 'The world of philanthropy is a world of money and power. When you suggest a model that transfers that power to the Global South, you suddenly find that your suggestions fall on deaf ears.'

'Shifting the power is very radical, and it must not become just an empty slogan,' De Gaay Fortman concludes. 'Many organisations claim to support leadership in the Global South – it sounds so nice and progressive. But in the end, all the important decisions are still made at the head offices in the North, and nothing really changes.'

In this regard, for Hodgson, shifting the power requires organisations to break out of old ways of thinking and the colonial mindset – 'we know what other people need better than they do' – that is still a deeply-rooted feature of international development. Hodgson believes that the development sector needs to think creatively about how to design a new system that builds on the power that is already present – the power available within the local community as well as that of civil society organisations. Amidu agrees, and adds: 'You're not going to change unequal power relationships overnight. Shifting the power is therefore not the end goal, but it's a constant process of negotiation.' ●



Ellen Mangnus

# Mutual Dependence

When Ellen Mangnus decided to support her former research assistant in Mali with a monthly donation, she had to face an unpleasant reality: a development relationship is, by definition, a relationship of dependence. How do you sustain a relationship like that?

For the past few months I've been getting pessimistic messages from my former research assistant, Salif, in Mali. A few years ago, Salif helped me collect data for my PhD research. After we finished our collaboration he completed a master's degree in Nigeria, with a good job waiting for him when he returned to Mali. At least, so he thought. The reality was a bitter disappointment: the NGO where Salif was supposed to start working had closed its Bamako office. Salif has now been job-hunting for eleven long months, and with a young family to feed that's a big worry. After receiving so many despairing messages, I decided to support Salif by sending him money each month. But then you have to ask yourself some questions. Should I ask him to draw up a spending plan? I'd actually prefer the money to go towards English lessons or a training course. Should I make that a condition? Maybe I should encourage him to start a small business...

Ultimately I decided to trust him to find the most meaningful way to spend the money. That said, I don't transfer the money until after Eid – what if he used it to buy a sheep?

Is that the healthy intervention of a donor who wants to make sure her money is well spent, or is it an example of Western arrogance? Either way, I'm uncomfortable with it. I honestly don't know what would be the best thing to spend the money on. Maybe slaughtering a sheep and distributing the meat would actually be an effective way for Salif to reinforce his local network or thank his sponsors.

So I leave it to him. He's in control. Still, our relationship has changed. Every message I get from him ends with a thousand blessings and a eulogy for my angelic goodness.

Money and good intentions are like water and fire. You often need the former to make the latter a reality, but in many cases it leads to unwanted dependency.

'Where there is inequality between the outsider and the person affected, where wealth meets poverty, you get dependency,' Stevo Akkerman wrote a year ago in *Trouw*. So a development relationship is, by definition, a relationship of dependence. But that doesn't have to mean that all the power is in the hands of the wealthy side.

I am reminded of writer Paul Theroux's novel *The Lower River*, which tells the story of 60-year-old Ellis Hock who returns to the

village where he did development work in his twenties. Throughout his long, dull life he's dreamed of going back to Malabo, and when he and his wife separate he decides to follow his dream. It all ends in a big disappointment with a macabre twist in its tail. The school is a ruin, the nurses' station is no longer in use, and most of his old friends have been claimed by AIDS. A clever village leader convinces him to keep giving money to good causes, such as rebuilding the school and buying medicines for a sick villager. Basically, the only purpose for Ellis's existence in Malabo is as a source of money. Every time he makes a donation he buys the illusion that he is building relationships, but in fact the opposite is true: to the villagers he will always be an outsider.

## 'Money and good intentions are like water and fire'

It's a caricature of an old, naive benefactor who has built himself an unrealistic ideal of Africa as a paradise and is faced with the reality of a barbarous people who symbolise a corrupt, rotten Sub-Saharan Africa. To me, that image is lacking in nuance.

Yet, it is a good demonstration of how money leads to powerlessness. You're incapable of building something together as equals. The giver/receiver relationship is either alluring to the giver or, as in *The Lower River*, a way to sneakily rip him off. Neither of these outcomes involves working towards sustainable development.

I'd like to see NGOs in the Global South that are independent of the North. That's my idea of a promising path towards more balanced leadership and cooperation. Because if development collaboration perpetuates relationships based on dependence, let's make them relationships of mutual dependence.





# Making the transition from invisibility to a strong market position

**Farmers in the Oromia region of Ethiopia struggled with their weak negotiating position for many years – until they realised that the solution to their problems was already within their reach.**

Author: [Sanne van Grafhorst](#)

Every farmer in the agricultural sector knows that good planning is indispensable. Sowing your grain or planting your potatoes at the right time can have a huge effect on the size and success of the harvest. For the farmers in Oromia, the rainy season is the key period when their crops need to grow and flourish. That means they have to sow, plant, fertilise and care for the crops at just the right time. But for a long time these farmers, despite often being united in a cooperative, had no influence on the start of the production process.

'Farmers have to rely on input from various different actors,' Bikila Ambaw explains. He works at the Development Expertise Center, an NGO in Addis Ababa that trained many farmers' cooperatives through the Change the Game Academy training programme on how to stand up for their own interests. This training programme is one component of the Strategic Partnership Programme that is being implemented in Ethiopia under the leadership of ICCO. 'Businesses, unions and government-appointed "development agents" supply seeds, fertiliser, and pesticides. By no means all of them are familiar with the agricultural sector, so farmers often don't get the input at the right time.' The consequences are clear: if farmers have to grow crops at less fertile times, they get disappointing harvests.

But that wasn't the only obstacle in the way of the cooperatives. They also had to rely on intermediaries to sell their products, and these intermediaries agreed prices with the buyers without consulting the farmers. Not only did the potato growers get a low price for their products; they also had no information whatsoever about the other market players.

The training programme helped the cooperatives identify the problems that were hampering their businesses, and they worked

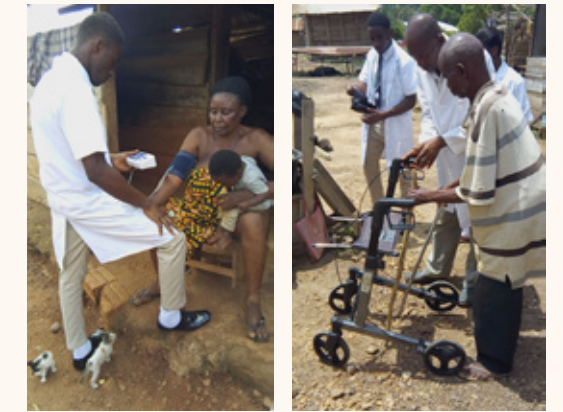
on their negotiating skills. Next, they entered into dialogue with the local government and the regional office for agricultural and rural development. Ambaw explains: 'We asked them: how can the government help farmers to achieve a better market position?' The government promised to get supplies to the farmers on time in future. What's more, the head of the office for agricultural and rural development also wrote to several universities in Oromia asking them to purchase potatoes for the students' meals.

**Since the farmers took the courageous step of negotiating directly with the buyers, their selling prices have risen by between 10% and 20%**

The progress they had made in terms of self-confidence and communication skills during the training programme also emboldened the farmers to negotiate directly with the buyers, without the need for outside intervention. That bore immediate fruit: since then, the farmers have enjoyed price increases of between 10% and 20%. These positive results have motivated other dissatisfied farmers to rejoin the cooperative, further strengthening the group's negotiating position.

Of course, recent successes don't cancel out all the challenges the farmers face. The poorest of them still find it difficult to get a loan from the bank, because of high interest rates and terms and conditions such as security. Many young farmers don't know where they can learn farming skills. The potato growers are also focusing their attention on these issues, partnering with organisations that offer agricultural training courses. Additionally, in return for a soft loan, wealthier farmers are making agricultural plots available to colleagues who have no land of their own.

From their former invisible position in the production chain, the farmers have managed to ensure that they are now both seen and heard. As Ambaw puts it, 'They are becoming an increasingly powerful market player.' ●



# What's absolutely essential to good healthcare? A stable, independent energy system

**This Ghanaian rehabilitation centre has found a sustainable, energy-friendly solution to the country's frequent power cuts: solar panels.**

Author: [Sanne van Grafhorst](#)

Imagine learning to walk again after having a leg amputated, or reducing joint pains: at the Hope for Children and Aged Rehabilitation Center, older people and disabled children are rediscovering their future. The activities at this rehabilitation centre in Sunyani, in western Ghana, include making prosthetics and orthoses. People can also go there for physiotherapy, as well as for items such as walking sticks and wheelchairs.

However, power cuts cause problems almost every day, director Charles Mensah says. As the demand for electricity in Ghana is greater than the country's capacity, the electricity grid is very unstable. This has disastrous effects on healthcare: when there is a power cut it is impossible to complete prosthetics on time or carry out physiotherapy treatments.

So the rehabilitation centre came up with a solution: to install solar panels to secure the building's power supply. This means that the organisation no longer has to fall back on an emergency power generator that burns a lot of diesel, which is harmful to the environment. The project will cost a total of €25,000. Although the centre initially approached international donors, the organisation has managed to raise €8,000 locally. Mensah explains: 'We realised that international aid makes us dependent. If that funding drops off – as is happening more and more – our projects will immediately grind to a halt, so we have to attract more small-scale donors and increase local support.'

Individuals and businesses in the region are acutely aware of the need to build an energy system that operates independently of the national electricity grid. International donors may well be able to imagine power cuts, but the actual impact is felt by the people for whom this is a reality – which can spur them to make a contribution, Mensah says.

'We also need money for a residential centre where patients can stay for a longer period, for instance for physiotherapy or elderly

care. As it stands, either they travel to and fro or we visit them in the community.' That means that valuable time is currently being lost that could be used to benefit the patients.

The organisation is carefully considering where to go to ask for help. 'Before we take our message to the streets, we make a profile of potential donors in the region,' Mensah says. The organisation looks at websites, activities and comments in the media to estimate which businesses place a greater emphasis on social responsibility. Do they already sponsor another NGO? Do they emphasise the importance of education and healthcare? Then they may well be willing to support the centre. 'Of the 20 businesses we were initially looking at, there are maybe five left on the list.'

**The centre raises funds locally in an effort to become less dependent on unpredictable donations**

Mensah has seen that collaborations are mainly brought about through dialogue. 'It's only when you speak to people face to face that you can convince them that their money is in good hands with you. That's how we've managed to create connections with organisations like a Rotary Club and the Newmont Ghana mining company.'

It is anything but easy to raise funds locally. 'We're not the only organisation that needs money; there's a lot of competition. And talks have broken down with a lot of businesses because they want something in return for their donations – for example, for us to promote their products.' And yet the organisation is still determined to keep searching until they have attracted enough individuals and companies. 'There's a good reason why the first word in our name is "hope".'

To keep loyal donors actively engaged, Mensah encourages them to visit the centre. 'The Rotary Club recently came to see us. Of course we send them our financial statements, but it's much better if they can see with their own eyes how their money is helping patients.' ●



# Power and service



**Sadly, the power conferred by money and connections is still a major factor in non-governmental development cooperation, Fons van der Velden argues. This is an obstacle to a truly equal relationship with partners from the Global South, even though that is precisely the key to legitimacy and success.**

Author: Fons van der Velden

**25 years ago**, when I left my post as the manager of a government-subsidised co-financing organisation, I published an article in the magazine *Derde Wereld* ('Third World') entitled *'Tien dilemma's bij particuliere ontwikkelingssamenwerking'* ('Ten dilemmas in non-governmental development cooperation') in which I drew on my practical experience to discuss some of the pitfalls of philanthropy. The article brings up a complex web of interrelated dilemmas: whether to focus on project-based aid or political lobbying; how to reach the 'poorest of the poor'; interference or blank cheques; partners or parties; whether to work with intermediaries or grassroots organisations; the right level of aid; whether or not to take over functions that are the responsibility of the state; quality or quantity; realistic or optimistic imagery; whether to focus on non-governmental and/or multilateral and bilateral aid. In closing, I argued for a thorough reorientation of the aid provided by non-governmental development organisations. Of course, I was not alone in putting forward that argument at the time: similar calls were also coming from organisations such as the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Cultuur en Ontwikkeling (Netherlands Association for Culture and Development), which was arguing for a shift in focus from 'intervention' to a true 'exchange' based on equality and reciprocity.

**Wilde Ganzen Foundation deserves respect** for its support for small, concrete projects in low- and middle-income countries over more than 60 years, its support for the professionalisation of development organisations within the Netherlands itself, and its contribution to global citizenship in the Netherlands. With an emphasis on strengthening Southern grassroots organisations' local fundraising activities and their ability to present arguments and influence policy, Wilde Ganzen Foundation leads the field when it comes to innovation in development cooperation. However, such an approach may not be enough to achieve fundamental change. In 2019, non-governmental development cooperation still faces five largely interrelated challenges.

**The first and probably** greatest challenge: many organisations continue to struggle to respond appropriately to the major paradigm shifts of recent decades. I'll give three examples. First, a lot of work done by non-governmental organisations is still positioned within the traditional North-South dichotomy, despite the fact that the big challenges – climate, migration, security – are the same around the world, even if they manifest in different ways at a local level. In addition, many organisations still follow the principle that 'we' are the 'experts' who should take development to those people 'there' – an example of this is terminology such as *developing countries*, *target groups*, and *empowerment*. British historian and Africa expert Basil Davidson (*Africa and the Curse of the Nation state*, 1994) rightly reminded us more than 25 years ago that it is ridiculous to think that solutions to the problems of a continent like Africa should come from outside. Moreover, the ethical question that underpins such an approach has still yet to be answered. Finally, many organisations seem not to have noticed that in many countries the traditional triangle of state - civil society - business community no longer reflects reality: a horde of hybrid organisations have sprung up in recent decades that specifically work in the spaces between these three pillars.

**The second challenge:** following an initial focus on workforce and technical assistance (sending out Dutch experts), over the past two or three decades the key term has been 'capacity building', in combination with project financing. However, most countries have now largely solved the problem of a shortage of capacity, in both absolute and relative terms. Commentators like Robert Chambers have pointed out a major misunderstanding at the core of this approach: people may be poor and disenfranchised, but in general they do have the necessary capacities. It is a seriously under-appreciated fact that the history, knowledge and experience of local organisations is often preferable to external 'expertise'. The problem is that many non-governmental organisations do not focus enough on the capabilities in a country, and have had too little training to be able to identify them. They import their own strategies, models, and tools. This approach often leads to disciplining and de-politicisation; the leading agenda is an external one, not the people's own concerns. It is also largely focused on satisfying system requirements in the aid provision chain – such as providing partner organisations with equipment in order to meet donors' reporting requirements. This bears little relationship to true capacity building. Moreover, Dutch organisations – which in reality often contribute to the problems in the aid chain – are generally immune to these issues.

**A third challenge** is to treat organisations from low- and middle-income countries as equal partners, with relationships based on reciprocity. In my view that challenge is rarely overcome, and that is one of the greatest tragedies in modern non-governmental development cooperation. Many development projects and programmes are still created in a fairly one-sided way, from the Netherlands; Southern partners may be consulted, but the result is not the product of genuine co-creation.

Davidson argues that part of the racist colonial ideology is the idea that 'From now on Africans should do what they are told, and their countries should be "developed" for them.' You won't hear it worded quite that directly today, but in my view Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe is right to comment that 'Europeans are startlingly

incapable of acknowledging equality in others, especially in Africans' (afterword to *Arrow of God*, 2007). Even in the government-funded 'partnerships' in the *Samenspraak en Tegenspraak* ('Dialogue and Dissent') programme, Southern partners are often brought in as subcontractors rather than as independent partners who play a fully-fledged, equal, reciprocal role right from the start. Additionally, despite the decentralisation frameworks of many large non-governmental organisations, their local 'field' offices are often still run by Dutch directors.

**Research has shown** that, between 2007 and 2012, an international development organisation would spend on average more than a million US dollars on influencing policy with respect to G8/G20 events. Is that a lot? Is it too much? I couldn't say. That's the crux of the matter: there is a general lack of a conclusive theory on efficiency – the fourth challenge. In the 'Investeren in perspectief' ('Investing in prospects') policy memo, Minister Kaag expresses an intention to sign contracts with Southern organisations without the intervention of Dutch non-governmental organisations. Not unexpectedly, not all the reactions from the members of industry association Partos were positive.

Minister Kaag was right to indirectly query the value of Dutch non-governmental organisations, which often desperately and unjustifiably cling to their position in the 'aid chain', even though in many cases promoting direct South-South contacts seems to be more efficient and more effective.

**'Management of transparency and accountability to the people for whom subsidies are received are often substandard'**

**Over the course of the past 60 years**, the focus in large non-governmental organisations' assessment of funding applications has shifted from good intentions to *'results-based management'*: identifying and justifying results. There's nothing inherently wrong with that. In theory, the implementing organisation should focus on accountability to three groups: to the communities in whose name they receive subsidies; to their fellow institutions, civil society and the government in the country where the organisation operates; and to donors. Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) of projects and programmes has really taken off in recent decades; throughout the acute layoffs that have taken a toll on the big Dutch non-governmental development organisations in recent years, it is mainly PME staff who have been able to survive.



# Stories of Change

Looking at this from a distance, you have to conclude that in most cases the focus has come to be placed on accountability to donors. This has often led to artificial standardisation and political disciplining. Management of transparency and accountability to end users (the people for whom subsidies are received) is often substandard. Moreover, most organisations have been unsuccessful in connecting their monitoring and evaluation organically with the systematic acquisition and recording of learning experiences. As a Kenyan colleague recently put it, the current state of affairs seems more like an extractive transaction process than actual co-creation.

Monitoring and Evaluation strategies (M&E) are mainly designed in the North with only limited input from Southern partners, with the result that M&E financiers mostly ask questions from their own cultural, political and institutional perspective rather than on the basis of the actual needs and learning issues of the people who implement and use the projects. The argument is often put forward that Southern partners have no tradition of M&E, but the M&E tradition that is supposedly absent is generally one formulated in terms of Northern organisations' own development jargon.

**‘The way non-governmental development organisations behave is reminiscent of the orchestra on the Titanic: just keep on playing and pretend there’s nothing wrong’**

**Notwithstanding all appreciation** and respect for the generally very committed and well-intentioned Dutch non-governmental development organisations, both large and small, and their attempts at reform, the conclusion is unavoidable: a great many challenges have yet to be resolved. Most organisations still face fundamental challenges in policy; recognising their partners' existing capacities; quality of relationships; inefficiencies in the aid chain; accountability for results. A lack of reflection on these challenges and innovation to resolve them is reducing support from the people of the Netherlands. The legitimacy and moral authority of large government-subsidised non-governmental development organisations have come under increasing pressure in recent years.

The comparison may be unfortunate, but the way non-governmental development organisations behave is reminiscent of the orchestra on the Titanic: just keep on playing and pretend there's nothing wrong. Worse: critical reflections from colleagues within the organisation are dismissed as unsportsmanlike, soiling their own nest and/or politically undesirable. So be it. Einstein once said that we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them. This is also true of the non-governmental development sector: unfortunately, significant innovation can generally not be expected of the larger organisations. As is so often the

case, reform is most likely to be initiated on the periphery, where dependence on government funding is low and the institutional interests are smaller and less complex. This is a unique opportunity for Wilde Ganzen Foundation to make a difference.

The limited capacity to innovate is not only linked to non-governmental development organisations' generally limited capacity for learning and adaptation; I believe it is also connected to the issue of power and service. Power is the oxygen of every relationship, and it can of course be obtained from a variety of sources. I believe that the power conferred by money and connections is sadly still a major factor in non-governmental development cooperation. The promotion and strengthening of local fund-raising activities and capabilities are important conditions for fundamental change in the aid chain, but on their own they are unfortunately not enough. In general, replacing an overseas subsidy provider with a local version rarely leads to fundamental changes in the relationship between giver and recipient (it should also be noted in this context that local fund-raising is actually nothing new: poor people have been supporting each other for centuries; they are the greatest philanthropists, both locally and internationally).

**When he resigned** from the General Diaconal Council back in 1988, P. Douwes wondered: 'Can I, as a white person, as a wealthy person, as a man, as part of the power structure, really show solidarity with the victims of that structure?' In his opinion, changes in power relationships can only have positive effects if the power is conceived as *power by proxy*. The power is no longer vested in the user himself or herself; it has been granted to that user. 'When power is granted by proxy, it demolishes the idea that "might makes right"'. Because then the power of the strong party is no longer its own; it belongs to someone else, and it is not the stronger person's own power that is decisive, but rather how he relates to the other person.'

A second contemplation concerns the *form* the support takes. In my view, commentators such as Professor Gert van Dijk are right to highlight the limits of the subsidy strategy, mainly because it erodes the dignity of the recipient, leads to dependency, and is unsustainable. Wilde Ganzen Foundation and similar organisations could also consider using innovative forms of support such as social impact bonds, social capital through social investment funds and bank loans with favourable terms and conditions.

This kind of approach, that both focuses on the relationship between giver and recipient and uses innovative funding modalities, requires a fundamental shift in the internal culture of non-governmental development organisations both large and small, and it also calls for a strategic repositioning. Leaders and employees can no longer base their position of power on who they are, what they do, and the forms of power to which they have access, but rather on genuinely serving the people they are trying to serve, both in the Netherlands and in low- and middle-income countries. This transforms raw power into the power to serve. ●

*Fons van der Velden is the Director of Context, international cooperation.*



## Residents take projects to the next level



**Projects have a greater chance of success when they join forces with the existing leadership in a village, the Indian Village Renewal Organisation argues.**

**Author: Sanne van Grafhorst**

'It takes a village to raise a child', as the saying goes. The meaning is clear: factors besides the parents play a role in the growth and development of a child. The same is true for the development of a community, according to *Village Renewal Organisation*, an NGO that works in three districts of the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. The organisation helps local communities set up projects for a range of groups (children, women, young people, people with a disability) and in various fields (economics, education, sanitation, housing, and employment).

A community can only really flourish when it has encouragement from all sides, explains Director General Narasimha Reddy. Residents also have to play an active role. 'We talk to them about the problems they're facing. Maybe there's no school in the village, or there are no facilities for people with chronic illnesses. Then we ask the question: what role can you, yourselves, play?'

A key way to stimulate sustainable development, Reddy explains, is to strengthen a village's existing institutions, such as savings groups, farmers' cooperatives, and women's associations. They already play an active role in the community and can help take the projects to the next level. 'Residents form a village development committee in cooperation with members of the community. One group monitors education projects, another monitors sanitation programmes, and another group might supervise agricultural activities. Because they've taken on the responsibility, they're more likely to continue the work after we leave.'

Projects last an average of three to five years. There is a significant focus on agricultural activities, as the organisation believes they offer a lot of potential for sustainable economic growth. A project was recently set up to encourage farmers to

start an organic business and to use only natural nutrients: urine and manure produced by cows. Before sowing the grain they mix it with cow manure and water. The mixture contains nutrients and helps promote micro-organism activity in the soil. As Reddy explains, 'The seed can survive even when there's very little rain. That's an important development, because this region often faces droughts.' Because farmers hardly need to spend any money on the production process, they can pay off their debts – an essential factor in a country where many growers have towering debts.

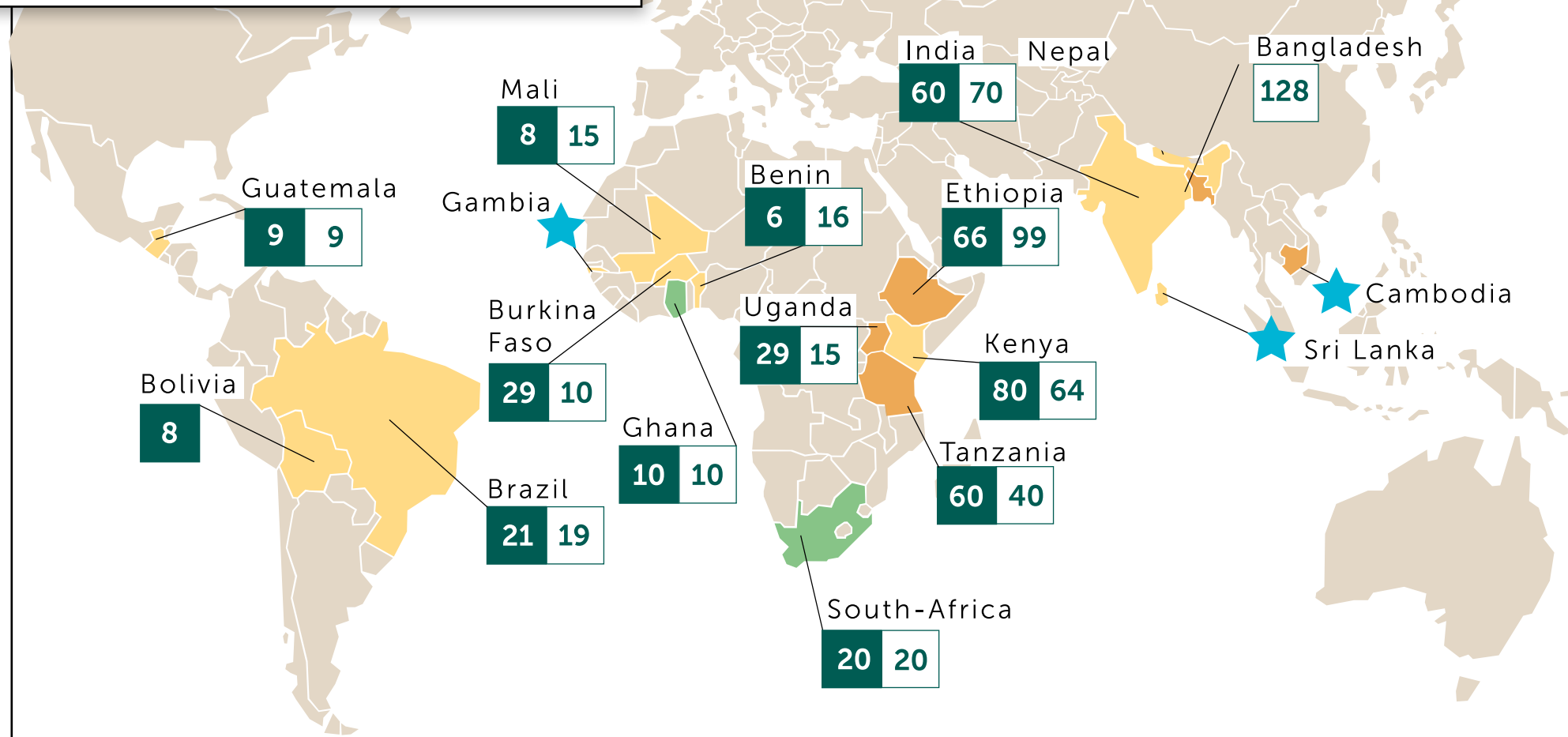
**A community can only really flourish when it has encouragement from all sides**

Village Renewal Organisation seeks out support from local authorities and large companies when it is planning projects. They are legally obliged to set aside part of their profits to meet their corporate social responsibility. 'For instance, we approach software companies or timber factories with a concrete case: this is the number of children in the village who need money for educational materials. With their help, those children can continue their education. If not, they will probably drop out.' If the businesses agree, the organisation produces proof that the money is being well spent. 'They can inspect the finances, and we use school reports to show how the pupils are progressing.'

Reddy admits that it is never easy to get money from the local government. 'Administrators often don't trust us at first. They see the effects of our presence: villagers are more aware of their rights and have become more confident. That means they go to the authorities to ask why there's no new access road to the village or why no new well has been dug.' Cooperation is usually only possible once the administrators have visited the village and seen for themselves the issues residents are facing. 'Those visits get them thinking: why is this NGO helping the village, when that's really our responsibility?' ●

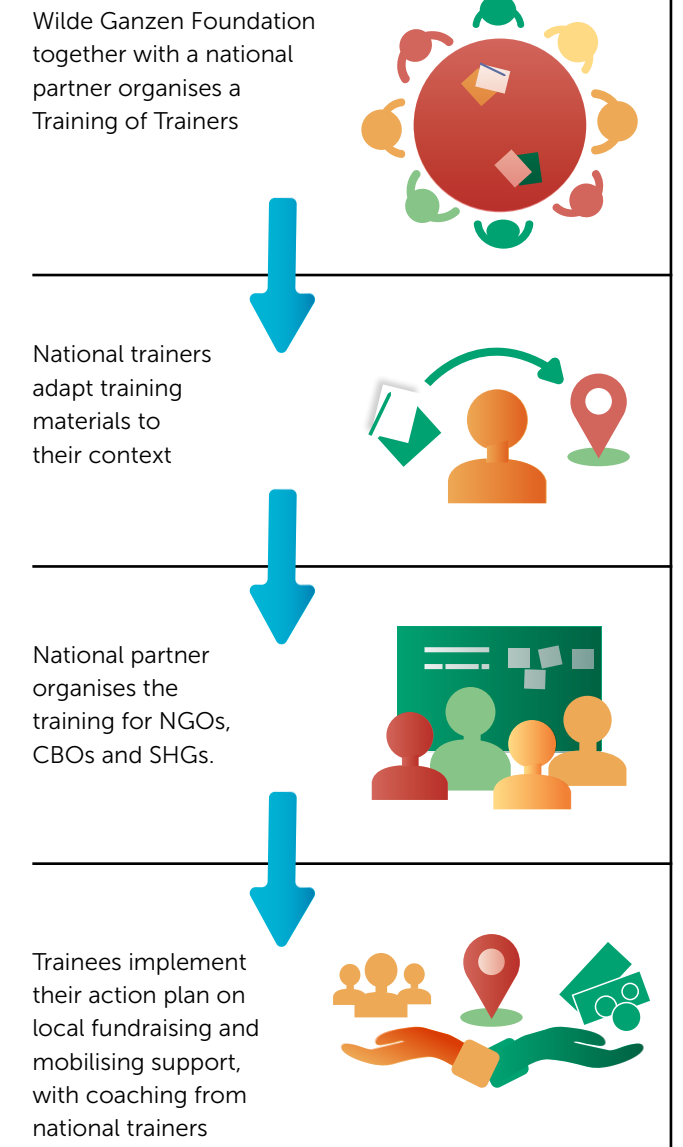


# CHANGE THE GAME ACADEMY



- Brazil**  
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- Ghana**  
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- Ethiopia**  
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- South-Africa**  
RB
- Sri Lanka**  
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- India**  
Smile Foundation
- Nepal**  
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- Kenya**  
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- Burkina Faso**  
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## Capacity Building Model



### Why change the game?

- Domestic resource mobilisation leads to:
- For CSOs:**
- Diversified funding base, less dependency on foreign funding
  - More local support, legitimacy and a stronger voice
- For communities:**
- Increase of local ownership and bottom-up change
  - More funds available

### Change the Game Academy is co-created by:

- Wilde Ganzen Foundation - Netherlands
  - Kenya Community Development Foundation - Kenya
  - CESE - Brazil
  - Smile Foundation - India
- 

### Civic Engagement Alliance

Within the Civic Engagement Alliance, NGOs/CBOs/Self Help Groups and women's groups in **8** countries have been trained through Change the Game Academy to hold local duty-bearers accountable and to raise funds locally.

### Online learning

- 11** interactive E-learning modules on Mobilising Support and Local Fundraising
- In total **59** hours of online learning
- Free access
- Available in English, Spanish, French & Portuguese
- 40** toolkits
- 88** inspiring examples of social changemakers
- Online community Facebook followers: **300.000**





# 'It all starts with knowing your rights'

Raphael Obonyo

**Corruption has wormed its way into every level of Kenyan society. With a comparatively young population and a sound constitution to protect the citizens, the country has the ingredients for change. But how do you achieve that change?**  
A report.

Author: Marc Broere

With his energetic tread, Raphael Obonyo enters the garden of the hotel where we are meeting, ten minutes early. This Kenyan is one of the most recognisable youth leaders and an expert on youth unemployment, with an impressive list of achievements on his website. Obonyo worked his way up from the slums and is now a popular, award-winning speaker and author, both in his own country and around the world. He can claim several resounding successes in mobilising young people in Korogocho, the large Nairobi slum where he himself grew up, to stand up for their rights. 'Young people often used to be arrested by the police for no reason and thrown in prison', he says. 'The officers wanted the young people or their parents to pay for their release. This practice went on for years, and everyone seemed to have gotten used to it.'

Until Obonyo broke this cycle. He started mobilising young people to come together to demonstrate at the police station. He got the media and human rights lawyers involved, and had a booklet on civil rights printed and distributed among young people. Thanks to that booklet, young people learned that the police had no right to

arrest them for being unemployed and on the street. 'We're seeing a new generation who will no longer accept this behaviour from the police', Obonyo says firmly. 'Officers started being afraid because we were keeping a close eye on them. Slowly but surely, we began to see a change in the neighbourhood and the police left us alone. And all because we knew our rights.'

## 'Young people don't see a strong link between elections and their own development opportunities'

Obonyo constantly repeats it during the interview: it's all about knowing your rights. Kenya passed a new constitution in 2010. 'As well as decentralising power to the provinces, this constitution is firmly based on rights. For example, the old constitution still talked about youth development as a charity, as the government doing you a favour. In the new constitution, it's a right, so it can be claimed. The constitution makes it mandatory for the government to provide education and jobs. The problem is that the majority of our young people don't know that.'

When Obonyo talks about young people, he's referring to the 18–35 age group. This age group makes up 36% of the Kenyan population – an enormous group with the potential to demand change in the country. At the same time, according to Obonyo, the people in this group do not take full advantage of this opportunity. 'Many young people have lost faith in the political system', he explains. 'At the time of the last elections I was involved in a large-scale study of young people and their voting habits. We found that a majority were not interested in voting. Elections were always really important to my parents: they would get up at 3 a.m. to join the long queue outside the polling station. For the younger generation today, that's not the case. They still don't see a strong connection between elections and the effect those elections can have on their own development opportunities and their chances of finding a job.'

Another issue in Kenya, Obonyo explains, is the perception of what is good and bad. 'Four out of ten stories in the newspaper are about corruption. Practically everyone thinks corruption is just part of our society. People think you have to be corrupt to get anywhere in life.'

In Obonyo's view, young Kenyans' role models are revealing. 'When they conducted a survey among Kenyan young people about who they saw as their greatest role model, Governor Sonko of Nairobi won by a mile. He has lots of money, drives flashy cars, and maintains a very high-profile, luxurious lifestyle. A lot of young people dream of being just like him. I think what we really need are role

models who are not like that. There are so many positive examples of people who are different, people who try to change their community from within. It's just that there's still no critical mass to really challenge the status quo in this country.'

Building that critical mass is easier said than done. 'You need engagement, patience, and courage', says Obonyo. 'You're operating within a corrupt political system where politicians have spent decades getting used to making uninformed voters dependent on them by handing out small sums of money and gifts at election time. We have to show in every possible way that we will no longer accept that.'

He shares another example of a concrete success: 'In Kenya we have the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP), which allocates money to local authorities to provide public services such as roads, electricity, and healthcare facilities. These services never arrived in Korogocho. We followed the money, and concluded that local politicians and administrators had taken the funds for themselves. So we mobilised the community and took the authorities to court. The judge ruled in our favour and retroactively awarded us 8 million shillings (over €70,000, Ed.). This money was used to install street lighting and a lighting column, which has created a much stronger feeling of security in the neighbourhood. Joint action is the only way to turn things around.'

'We have to redefine "normal" in Kenya', says Obonyo, 'so people don't see politicians or administrators who steal as the norm, but rather people who live honestly. I think we're currently in a transition period. In ten years' time, politicians won't be able to get away with buying votes with gifts at election time and then leaving the people to their own devices and stealing from them for the next few years. In ten years time, a politician will have to tell a proper, coherent story. Change doesn't happen on its own. It has to be created before it can really happen.'

Raphael Obonyo at a meeting on youth unemployment





**Another organisation working for serious change** is the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF). This organisation, led by Janet Mawiyoo, is based in a modern office building. A big screen by the reception desk displays a slide show of projects supported by KCDF. Most of these projects are half funded by the local population, and KCDF doubles their investment.

We spoke with Mawiyoo six years ago, about new legislation on NGOs that hung like a black cloud over civil society at that time. The proposed law stated that Kenyan organisations would no longer be able to obtain more than 15% of their funding from overseas. This threat now seems to have been shelved, partly thanks to a lobby group of civil society organisations brought together by KCDF. The controversial provision was eliminated from the law.

The conflict over the law is an illustration of the love-hate relationship between the Kenyan government and civil society. According to Mawiyoo, NGOs that work on projects in healthcare and education are popular with the government. 'They contribute to the development of Kenya itself.' Another group she sees getting government support are NGOs, mainly from Western countries, that organise events to which government employees are invited and for which those employees are financially recompensed.

Mawiyoo calls this a 'really sad situation'. 'This is counterproductive for organisations like us, that don't pay attendees as a matter of principle. Now a situation has been created in which many administrators will only go to events where they get paid, even though it's their job to attend. I think NGOs that pay people from the government to attend events are openly facilitating corruption in our country. The definition of corruption is influencing someone's

opinion by giving them money, and that's exactly what's happening in these situations.'

So which NGOs does Mawiyoo think are unpopular with the government? Organisations that prioritise accountability; ones that ask critical questions about how government funds are spent and want the government to show greater transparency; and those which scrutinise what happens in public tenders for big construction projects. Not to mention the human rights organisations that highlight issues such as police brutality. 'These are all things that will get you on the front pages of the newspapers', according to Mawiyoo.

## 'When the World Bank upgraded Kenya to a middle-income country, a lot of Kenyan organisations' funding dried up'

**Civil society is under pressure** in many countries. Mawiyoo believes that that is also the case in Kenya, but that it is less due to government repression. 'In 2014 the World Bank upgraded Kenya to a middle-income country. Because Western donors often only focus on low-income countries, a lot of Kenyan organisations' funding dried up and the NGO sector hit a rough patch.' She points to her neighbours, an organisation involved in combating HIV/AIDS. 'There are only two people working there now; a few years ago there were 25.'

Mawiyoo feels that Western donors acted irresponsibly by leaving abruptly and not offering to help their partner organisations reduce their dependence on external financing. That said, in her view the Kenyan organisations also too easily allowed themselves to become dependent on the previous situation. 'At times it seemed like the money was going to pile up to the skies. I sometimes say cynically that Kenyan NGOs were the very best customers for our banks and estate agents. I don't think they would have hired such expensive offices if the money had been raised in their own local area instead of from Western donors.'

Now that Kenyan NGOs are forced to raise their primary funds locally, according to Mawiyoo, it's a different story. 'You're directly accountable to local donors and the business community here. You have to have a good website and make sure your message appeals to ordinary Kenyans. That's very different from writing funding applications in the jargon of international organisations and tailoring your applications to those organisations' priorities. We help organisations get their own business activities in order and improve their branding.'

**Raphael Obonyo's story** is a familiar one for Mawiyoo. 'He's absolutely right that it's about raising awareness, and that people don't see the link between the leaders they elect and the influence these leaders have on what happens to our country. Right now, at election time politicians go to a market and buy everyone a bag of sugar. When you're very poor, you think that's a good politician. I think we need a structural debate in Kenya about the kind of leaders we want, and the values they should support. Now the discussion among poor people is mostly about which leader gives the most gifts.'

Mawiyoo believes that it's all closely connected to poverty. 'When you're living below the poverty line and you don't know where your next meal is coming from, you're susceptible to manipulation. It's only once people have escaped the worst poverty that they can concern themselves with things like leadership. Imagine you've managed to work your way out of the worst poverty, and you want to sell tomatoes. Then when election time comes around you can tell politicians that you need a way to market your tomatoes, and that the person who finds that way will win your vote.'

She sees countless examples among her own partner organisations that give her hope for her country's future. 'People are standing up for themselves everywhere, and it's getting harder and harder to exploit them. There are a lot of great initiatives that can be scaled up for use in other regions, or even at a national level.'

**One of the initiatives** Mawiyoo is referring to is the Nkoilale Community Development Organisation (NCDO). Nkoilale is a community of 10,000 people in a small settlement and the surrounding Maasai bomas, located about 20 km from the entrance to the Maasai Mara wildlife reserve. The community's main sources of income are pastoral farming and tourism.

We are greeted by the driving forces behind NCDO, Dickson Ntika and Nelson Ole Kiorokor. In a single afternoon, we witness what Ntika calls the 'total transformation' this community has experienced. We visit the health centre, the taps for clean water, the schools, and a centre that has just opened and now offers space where women make craft products. The community initiated the various projects themselves and the people contributed, whether in time or through the sale of livestock, to making them a reality. This contribution was then doubled by KCDF. 'A culture has arisen of doing things yourself and not wanting to be dependent on outsiders', Ole Kiorokor explains with pride.

In clear language, and with a refreshing absence of jargon, both gentlemen discuss their strategy. 'We always identify a problem together, as a community, and then we get to work on it', Ntika explains. It was easy to agree on the top priority: education. 'We started by building a few extra classrooms and a place for the head teacher to sleep. Then we had the idea of building branches of the school closer to the more far-flung communities. Children often have to walk a long way and cross the river to get to school, and there are elephants and lions in the area. That can put them in danger. The number of school children in Nkoilale has risen from 200 to 1,900 over the past ten years.'

'Next we tackled the issue of clean water', Ole Kiorokor adds. 'Women and children used to have to walk to the river to fetch water. The animals near the water made that journey dangerous, and the animals also defecated in the water. We found a secure water source and have since installed ten water taps with pipes.'

Next on the list was healthcare. 'Because we didn't have a health



Dickson Ntika and Nelson Ole Kiorokor of NCDO



The community contributed by selling part of their livestock



Financial contribution by the local community

Janet Mawiyoo, president of KCDF





centre, women used to have to go all the way to Narok to give birth. That's 80 km away. In the first six weeks of 2019 there were 12 births in the health centre we built. People can also go there for other medical care.'

Ntika picks up the thread: 'Now we're focusing on economic development. We're working with the livestock farmers to see how their animals can become more productive and to find better ways to market their products, and in January we started a centre where women make traditional craft items that we can then sell to tourists.'

Ntika and Ole Kiorokor were exceptions in their community, because they attended secondary school and then went on to complete a professional qualification in tourism (Ole Kiorokor) and obtain a university degree in Nairobi (Ntika). 'Now there are 300 young people from our community who either are studying or have studied at secondary school or university or for a professional qualification', says Ole Kiorokor. 'That's brought about lasting change in our community. All these people bring new knowledge. The level of awareness and knowledge in Nkoilale is so much higher than ten years ago.'

These are impressive stories, but isn't NCDO really doing things the Kenyan government ought to be responsible for? They both have to laugh at the question. 'That's very true', Ole Kiorokor says. 'But if you wait for the government to do something, you'll be waiting till you waste away, while the suffering goes on.'

Pius Ambaisi (28), Eunice Mwaura (23) and Collins Ambuchi (30)



© Eunice Mwaura

But, Ntika adds, they have had a definite influence on the government. 'The government has officially accredited the schools and the health centre, and is currently paying the salaries of the teachers and the medical staff.'

Above all, they have noticed a change in the attitude of administrators and local politicians towards their community. 'The member of the national parliament for our district always says, with a smile, that he has to take a different approach in Nkoilale from the other communities in this region. He can't bamboozle us with empty promises. He can see that this is a community where people work together. If you're capable of managing your own development, you can approach your member of parliament and the local authorities from a completely different position.'

One evening, three friends and colleagues came together to share with me their vision for change in Kenya. Eunice Mwaura (23), Collins Ambuchi (30) and Pius Ambaisi (28) work at one of Nairobi's big modern shopping malls, and Mwaura is also studying business economics at university in the evenings. It's an animated evening. Where one of them sees positive developments, another is more pessimistic; whereas one wants to join a campaign to bring about change, another believes that change will only be possible for their grandchildren.

But on one thing they all agree: the corruption in the country is making life very difficult right now, for their generation. Ambuchi summarises the sense of frustration: 'Public funds are constantly being stolen, and no one holds the government accountable. Big projects like roads often have to stop halfway through because the money has run out. If that money had been used for what it was intended for, a lot of people would have jobs now because these construction projects need workers.'

But the system also demoralises people and throws up obstacles on a smaller scale, as Mwaura illustrates with examples from their own work. She and Pius Ambaisi work at the shopping mall's customer service desk. 'When a position became available in the financial department, no one even considered promoting Pius, despite the fact that he's worked here for years, knows the business through and through, and even has a master's degree in Finance. They opted for someone who only started in customer service four months before, but who had a relative on the company's management board.'

'That reduces the value of your diploma, because it's not the most important factor when you're looking for a job or a promotion. And why should you bother studying for four years, if your father has an important job or you have an influential uncle or another relative somewhere who can just give you an important position? Everything in Kenyan society works through short cuts.'

Collins Ambuchi, who holds a professional qualification in interior design, is the activist of the group. His inspiration is the well-known activist and artist Boniface Mwangi, whose controversial campaigns have made him a thorn in the government's side. A few years ago, when members of parliament wanted to give themselves a pay rise, he created an artwork featuring pigs, portraying the politicians as greedy animals. So far, Ambuchi has not taken part in any of Mwangi's demonstrations or campaigns. 'Most of them are on Mondays, when I have to work. If they were on Sundays I'd join him.'

Pius Ambaisi bursts out laughing. 'Then you're not really motivated, or you'd take the time off! Personally, I think real change won't

happen till our grandchildren are grown up. Change is a gradual process, and we're more traditional than we realise. When I was studying in Eldoret, there was a really good candidate to chair the student council. But his ethnic background was Luo, which was unacceptable to the Kalenjins who make up the majority of the student body. So the students thought along ethnic lines to decide who would get what position on the committee of the student council. This old mentality also wins out in our generation over real substance and change, even for the doctors and engineers of the future.'

Ambuchi shakes his head. 'I don't want to wait for our grandchildren. 30 years is a long time to suffer. We have to do it ourselves. If we place the burden on the shoulders of the next generation, they will ask us why we did nothing.'

## 'If we place the burden on the shoulders of the next generation, they will ask us why we did nothing'

**His name has already come up:** Boniface Mwangi. We are introduced to him by Patriciah Mutheu Musenyi, one of the exponents of the new generation of politicians in Kenya. She wants to change the political culture of her country and is a member of the County Assembly of Nairobi. In the car on the way to visit Kenya's most famous activist, she gives a mini lecture on Kenyan society. Three families in Kenya own 50% of all the wealth: the Moi, Kenyatta, and Koinange families. She has noticed that the government mainly invests in large shopping malls and higher-end housing developments. She wonders how logical this choice is, since only 100,000 Kenyans have more than \$10,000 in their bank accounts and a majority of the population are aged under 30. Not to mention that youth unemployment is at 60%. 'Where is the market for these projects?' she wonders aloud.

She goes on to explain that her country imports rice from India and second-hand clothing from China, most of the hotels are owned by Indians, the roads are built by the Chinese, the petrol stations are largely owned by Somali immigrants, real estate projects are implemented by Chinese companies and, last but not least, fertile agricultural land is being used by Dutch flower growers. 'This is not a policy that will help a country progress. Anyone can get a permit to start a project in Kenya, as long as you adapt to the system.'

The walls of Mwangi's office are filled with campaign posters. We have to wait a long time to see him, and even when he does dash in there's no time for a long interview. Mwangi is organising



Boniface Mwangi

a memorial for human rights activist Carol Mwaathi Ochieng, who died under suspicious circumstances.

In the end we talk for ten minutes in the car on the way to Uhuru Park, where a few hundred people have gathered. Mwangi explains that he has a large online following: he has more than 1.2 million Twitter followers. 'But it's less visible offline. People are afraid to protest because of the terrible police brutality.' He says that people have been shot during protests, and people have been attacked with tear gas and arrested. 'That stops a lot of people from going out on the streets. We usually campaign with a few hundred people, a thousand if we're lucky.'

In spite of this, Mwangi generates a lot of publicity thanks to his dramatic artworks, such as the aforementioned pigs and the use of striking masks. Does the government see him as a serious threat, or mostly as a clown? 'They definitely don't see me as a clown. If they did, I wouldn't get death threats and they wouldn't send a battalion of police officers armed with tear gas.' He resolutely refused an invitation to meet with President Uhuru Kenyatta. 'That was just a PR stunt.'

**Patriciah Mutheu Musenyi smiles.** 'I told you Boniface can be extreme.' While we wait for the memorial service to begin, she explains that she sees civic and citizenship education as the key to a new Kenya. She argues that it should be taught to children from the fourth year of primary school, to make sure young people know what the constitution says and know their rights. She sums it up as follows: 'What you really need is a thousand well-informed young people in every province of our country. That's 47,000 informed young people who know their rights. That would start real change in this country, I promise you.'

There are countless little seeds of change scattered across the nation of Kenya. Their growth will be unstoppable in the years to come, as they bear fruit all across the fertile ground of Kenya. ●



# Dutch politicians discuss the future of development cooperation

Author: Hans Ariëns

**What can we do to create more space for activists and NGOs? We put that question to three Dutch Members of Parliament who are spokespeople for development cooperation: Joël Voordewind (the Christian Union, CU), Anne Kuik (Christian Democratic Appeal, CDA), and Kirsten van den Hul (Labour Party, PvdA). 'A strong civil society is at the heart of my work as a Member of Parliament.'**

Joël Voordewind (CU)



There was no real indignation from the international community when, in the autumn of 2018, the government of Burundi declared all 130 foreign NGOs illegal. They were suspended for three months, within which they had to prove that they respect the laws of the land. President Nkurunziza, a deeply committed Christian, was seen as the hope of the West when he came to power in 2005 – and he is still referred to as 'democratic'.

'Elections are not the only barometer of good governance. It may be even more important to strengthen the rule of law. When the majority is oppressing minorities, how much is democracy really worth?', Member of Parliament for the Christian Union Joël Voordewind asks. Restrictions on civil society are not just a feature of dictatorships; a supposedly civilised country like India is also guilty. In that country, this past autumn, Amnesty International and Greenpeace had their offices raided. Human rights activists and media organisations that do not support the government are even under threat in 'the land of the free' and some Eastern European countries, adds Kirsten van den Hul, Member of Parliament for PvdA, who speaks of 'a scary trend'.

You don't have to look far to find issues to add to the list. Van den Hul expressed criticism of the lack of a Western response to the budget negotiations for overseas trade and development cooperation in November 2018. 'Hundreds of human rights activists died last year, as well as environmental activists, people fighting for women's rights, and other heroes and heroines who refused to be silenced. They deserve our support. From Burundi to Bangladesh, the EU too often plays a reactionary role when activists are being repressed.' Labour unions in Bangladesh are anything but free, she explains, and the government is making life difficult for the organisation behind the Bangladesh Accord that is intended to improve safety in garment factories. 'It's a unique agreement between businesses and labour unions. If the organisation has to close its doors, the safety situation for garment workers will only get worse. We can't let that happen.' Member of Parliament for CDA Anne Kuik has also felt a chill wind of narrow personal interests and repression that is making it difficult for NGOs around the world to do their work. 'The global political climate is increasingly about "putting your own country first" and building an imaginary wall', she said during the budget debate.

**How do you support activists and NGOs as they try to stay afloat and stand up for women, LGBTI-issues, religious minorities, indigenous peoples, our forests, and the climate?** 'I don't have the ultimate solution; that would be pretty arrogant', Kuik says. 'There isn't just one single solution to put a stop to the restrictions on civil society.'

Our embassies and NGOs can play an important role – they have connections at all levels of society. At the ambassadors' congress in January, I asked: What do you need from us to be able to stand up for civil organisations? They didn't have a ready answer, because the problem has many different layers. Wherever activists are imprisoned, embassies and NGOs do their best to get people out, but tackling the restrictions in a more general sense is more complicated.'

Kuik sees coordinated action as the most beneficial option, both within Europe and preferably more broadly. 'The Netherlands can do so much, but we need that extra volume to really achieve an effective front. We have to form coalitions. And then there's another issue: if China and Russia continue to invest in countries governed by repressive regimes, and we – rightly – only do business under certain conditions, there's no comparison between those positions of power.'

Her colleague Van den Hul went to the Parliamentary debate on the policy memo of Sigrid Kaag, Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, with an ambitious 'manifesto': a focus on the capacity for change. One element of this manifesto is a European Early Warning Shrinking Space System. 'The EU has to respond in a much more alert way', she says. 'The restriction of civic space often happens gradually. The Netherlands could play a leading role, bringing countries together – and a system like that could be constructed at no extra cost.'

She is calling for embassies to gather more knowledge about how to support local civil society concerns. Embassies need to build relationships with human rights defenders and play a proactive role in their dealings with local authorities and the business community. That is happening at the moment, to a certain extent, but Van den Hul believes it depends too much on individual ambassadors.

**'We often talk about international corporate social responsibility, but what does that mean when labour unions aren't allowed to hold demonstrations?'**

**Voicing support is all well and good**, but is enough donor money actually reaching the organisations that are under pressure? Joël Voordewind is positive about the tools at the Cabinet's disposal: the Human Rights Fund, the embassy projects, and the strategic partnerships within the Dialogue and Dissent programme, a civil society subsidy framework. 'When the current Cabinet was being formed, I pushed for Dialogue and Dissent to go ahead and for 25% of the budget to be dedicated to strengthening civil society. What we really have to do is get back to 0.7% of GDP, and we're not there yet.'

As part of that, Voordewind believes that there needs to be a special focus – and dedicated funds – on persecuted ethnic and religious minorities such as Christians in Pakistan and India, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, and the Uyghurs in China. Anne Kuik agrees



Anne Kuik (CDA)

that the religious factor is important. 'Living in a secular society, we often underestimate the importance of religion. In many parts of the world, to achieve change you need to get religious leaders on your side – they have informal authority.'

**NGOs' activism** is something these politicians really care about. Voordewind's efforts on behalf of asylum-seeking children are well known, but he is also concerned about child labour and the persecution of Christians. Kuik's portfolio includes tackling human trafficking and prostitution, whether in refugee camps or in Amsterdam's Red Light district. She also works to protect young girls, for instance by combating child marriages. In December of last year, in response to the proposal she put forward together with D66 party spokesman Achraf Bouali, the Second Chamber decided to dedicate €7 million to this cause. Most of these funds will go to the Girls Not Brides partnership.

Like Voordewind, Van den Hul has an NGO background, and she is not afraid to speak up for women's rights: 'Women's rights activism is for life.' For her, a strong civil society is at the heart of her work as a Member of Parliament. 'It's a prerequisite for everything we discuss in this place. 'We often talk about international corporate social responsibility, for example. But what does that mean when activists are silenced and labour unions aren't allowed to hold demonstrations? You can talk all you want about OECD guidelines, but no one is monitoring them.'

'We're only seeing the tip of the iceberg when it comes to repression. The murder of critical Saudi journalist Khashoggi in Istanbul dominated global news, but there are many more journalists and activists languishing in cells or unable to do their work for all kinds of reasons. Under dictatorial regimes like those of Sisi, Erdogan and Putin, it's often the women's organisations that bear the brunt of repression, under the guise of anti-terrorism measures. Just look at Amal Fathy in Egypt, who was sentenced to two years in prison because she – a victim – raised the issue of sexual violence.'

**Van den Hul reserves** her strongest criticism for what the current Cabinet is doing to support civil society. Human rights fade into the background as soon as trade interests come up, she says. 'Human





Kirsten van de Hul (PvdA)

rights are essential for a better, fairer world. Too often, all the talk is about economic interests. Whenever a diplomatic encounter takes place, people need to consciously consider whether to talk about human rights – and, if so, how’, she states in her manifesto. For her, the worst example of this is a smiling Mark Rutte having his photograph taken with Brazilian president Bolsonaro in Davos. Rutte emphasised that Brazil can once again ‘offer opportunities’ to the Dutch business community. ‘This is happening while the gay member of congress Jean Wyllys had to leave Brazil because of concerns for his life, the rainforest is in danger of being cut down, and indigenous peoples’ rights are being ground into the dust.’

## Ultimately, development organisations need to make themselves redundant

In Van den Hul’s view, even Minister Kaag’s ‘Investeren in perspectief’ (‘Investing in prospects’) policy memo fails to answer the crucial question: how can we make sure that the development we are aiming to achieve gets the space it needs? ‘All social change has one fundamental prerequisite: the status quo must be remodeled. That’s only possible through bottom-up action.’ She calls on leaders to strengthen local organisations. ‘Too often, financial support still fails to reach the grassroots organisations who know what is needed in the local area. Access to financing for organisations for marginalised groups such as women, the LGBTI community and ethnic minorities can and must be improved.’ Dutch NGOs also pay too little attention to these organisations that don’t fit the strategic partnership mould.

If real change has to come from below, what role can Western organisations play? Voordewind and Kuik are more positive than Van den Hul on this point, too. ‘The partnerships of Dialogue and Dissent offer us the opportunity to address inequality, including in

middle-income countries’, says Voordewind. ‘Within that collaboration, you can look beyond a country’s GDP or Human Development Index and zoom in on the skewed relationship between the Dalits in India and the rich upper class. Together with their partners, social organisations are really good at reaching the world’s poorest people. I recently saw in Lebanon how NGOs can gain access to all levels of society. They find Syrian refugees hiding in huts they’ve built themselves or in apartments that are way too expensive. And in a country like Sudan, where we have resolved not to work with al-Bashir – who has been called to appear before the International Criminal Court – we can offer aid through the Dutch NGOs in the Dutch Relief Alliance and their local partners.’

Her involvement in tackling human trafficking and prostitution caused Kuik to be faced with a clearly negative role played by a Western NGO: the sexual abuse of employees of an aid organisation in Haiti. ‘Maybe we can’t get rid of all the suffering and abuse in the world, but the question is: what are organisations doing to prevent it and tackle it transparently? There is now an awareness that the power differential between the provider and the recipient of aid can carry a risk, especially in crisis situations. How do you respond when something happens? I do see self-criticism; steps are being taken to improve integrity. The challenge is still to translate that from words on paper into the culture itself.’

At the same time, she is aware that transparency about these issues is important to achieve broad support for Dutch development cooperation. ‘I also made that point during the budget negotiations: make sure citizens are engaged. Tell them about your achievements. I try to make a connection to one of my other areas of work, senior secondary vocational education (MBO). Get Dutch MBO students to do work placements in developing countries – that’s good for both sides. It’s an exchange of expertise, and it gives our MBO students an idea of what life is like in the Global South.’

Giving Southern NGOs more of a voice is one of MP Van den Hul’s greatest ambitions – her predecessor Roelof van Laar submitted a motion to that end in 2015 – but she still sees a role for Western NGOs. ‘It is a great goal to have more Southern lead agencies in consortia, and under Minister Ploumen we have seen some progress in collaboration with local organisations. But several of the grassroots organisations I speak to still see a role for Western NGOs. They offer legitimacy, and sometimes also protection. Others have stressed that they want a more equal partnership; there’s still some way to go in that area.’

‘The conditions for the subsidy framework need to be adjusted, and there may be a need for more small-scale subsidy arrangements and tailored programmes. Right now the bar is too high, and you have to really know your way around. Then you get the usual suspects every time.’

The concept of domestic resource mobilisation (seeking financing in the country itself) is interesting to the MPs, but it is not yet one of their – or the Chamber’s – key priorities.

Ultimately, says Van den Hul, development organisations need to make themselves redundant. ‘Is it an illusion to think that will happen in my lifetime? I hope not. Right now they still have an important role to play. I’ve worked in the South myself, and seen how hard it is to get Dutch policy makers and the Dutch public to listen to stories from “far away”. That’s what advocates are for. You constantly have to fight to keep the focus on development cooperation.’ ●

## A ‘giving culture’ is something you create yourself



The Association for Small African Project in Burkina Faso noticed that, for a long time, social projects were only set up by foreign NGOs. That needed to change. With a great deal of patience, confidence and participation, the NGO is now trying to inspire local engagement.

Author: Sanne van Graffhorst

If your homeland doesn’t have a giving culture right now, that doesn’t mean you can’t change that culture. That is the philosophy of Odile Sawadogo Teri, director of the Association for Small African Projects (ASAP). This foundation sets up healthcare, education and economic projects and other initiatives in rural villages in western Burkina Faso. The interrelated nature of the foundation’s areas of work strengthens the village as a whole: an education project will only be a success if the children are healthy, and an agricultural activity will yield a better harvest if residents learn how to combat soil contamination.

‘For a long time, these kinds of projects were only set up by foreign NGOs’, Sawadogo Teri explains. ‘We have to change that. We need local engagement and funds, not just because having multiple sources of income makes an organisation stronger, but also because it sets an example for the community: it’s better to take the reins yourself than to wait for help from outside.’ Last year, ASAP managed to raise €7,500 by selling bronze statues and locally-made products such as soap, honey, and sumbala (a local spice) at trade fairs and through its webshop. ‘That money helps us cover our operating costs, but it’s not enough to finance projects.’

In an effort to attract businesses and philanthropists, the foundation is doing its best to raise its online profile. They post reports and videos on Facebook and YouTube, featuring key figures such as teachers who request financial support to build extra classrooms. ‘This has brought in several donations, and people have come to visit our projects.’ The website also highlights all the pro-

jects, including a clear outline of the importance of the activity, its objectives, and what is needed in order to achieve those objectives.

Private individuals and businesses can support the foundation by transferring money online, and there is also the option to give gifts to villagers through the website. For €5, you can sponsor a mosquito net to help a person protect himself or herself against malaria mosquitoes. The residents themselves contribute €1.50 per mosquito net. A pack of reusable sanitary towels costs €12, of which €8 comes from the donor and €4 is contributed by the woman who receives the products.

## ‘It’s better to take the reins yourself than to wait for help from outside’

The villagers’ engagement is at the core of the projects. When a toilet with stone walls is installed, villagers build the walls themselves, and they also make a personal contribution to the planting of a cashew tree. Projects that are set up without support from the community rarely have a long-term impact, says Sawadogo Teri. ‘They’re not in line with the interests of the village. In one of the places where we’re active, a water tap installed by someone from overseas is hardly ever used. The women preferred to fetch their water from further away, which gave them time to have a good chat.’

That is not to say that the mobilisation of the village happens automatically. ‘In many cases people lack the gene for social enterprise.’ Something that’s just as unhelpful is that there are rumours in some villages about scammers and fake organisations that came to collect money for projects and then disappeared without a trace. ‘So you need a basis for trust that will encourage people to dare to invest their money or time. One important aspect is that they have a say and can inspect financial reports, so it’s clear what the money is used for.’ Another keyword is patience. Ultimately, ASAP believes, one village after another will realise the importance of local engagement and projects rooted in the community itself. ●



# Sponsors from the global South are redefining how we see philanthropy



Is philanthropy just for the Bill and Melinda Gateses of this world? A meeting with these eight remarkable benefactors from 'The Global South' brings it home to you: philanthropy is no longer the exclusive preserve of generous givers and large sums of money from the West. **Author: Lizan Nijkraak**

## 1. Mo Ibrahim 'Classic' player (Sudan)

This influential British-Sudanese billionaire (estimated wealth: 1.2 billion dollars; over 1 billion euro) is the founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. The former electrical engineering academic has built a gigantic mobile phone network in Africa: MSI Cellular – later Celtel International – which now reaches a third of Africa's population. Since 2006, through his foundation, Ibrahim has focused entirely on investments and philanthropy. His mission: to combat corruption across the African continent and promote 'good governance' and democracy. 'I run an activist foundation', he explains in an interview with *Foreign Affairs*. 'Democracy – it's dreadful, but it's the least terrible system we have.' He sees democratic values being sabotaged in Africa. 'The constitution should be sacred – and long presidential terms should be impossible. But that's not how it works in a lot of African countries: we just change the rules.' Ibrahim's foundation publishes an annual ranking for good governance, and at set times the organisation awards a financial prize to former African presidents who have the stature of an 'exceptional leader'. The *Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership* is worth 5 million dollars and is paid out over a period of ten years. It is the world's largest private prize. Nelson Mandela won the prize, as did Ellen Johnson Sirleaf from Liberia, the first female president in all of Africa, who rebuilt her country after its civil war.

## 2. Noëlla Coursaris Musunka Model philanthropist (Congo)

'No one bridges the gap between the worlds of philanthropy and fashion like Noëlla Coursaris Musunka', *Vogue* wrote in 2017. Coursaris moves in international philanthropic circles that are dominated by big earners from the worlds of popular music (Bono) and business (Bill Gates). But that's not how her story began. Coursaris first saw the light of day in the Democratic Republic of Congo ('Congo'). Her father died suddenly when she was five years old and her mother, who didn't have the means to support Coursaris, sent her to live with family in Belgium. They had virtually no contact. When she was 18, Coursaris returned to her mother. She took part in a local modelling competition, and in no time she was an international supermodel; her photographs appeared in magazines such as *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*. In 2007 she founded *Malaika* (Swahili for 'Angel'), a local organisation that initially focused on promoting education for girls but which later grew into a support organisation for the entire community of the disadvantaged village of Kalebuka in Congo, close to Coursaris' birthplace. 'When I saw the conditions my mother was living in, I decided to give something back', says Coursaris in a video on her website; 'not just to her, but to the whole community I was born into.' Malaika's greatest achievements: the construction of a school for more than 300 girls and a community centre that offers education and healthcare to – in the organisation's own estimation – around 7,000 people every year. What's more, the organisation has dug 17 wells to provide 30,000 people with clean water. Since late 2017 Coursaris has been an ambassador for the *Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria* – and one of the most sought-after speakers about girls' education. She is a popular guest at conferences, such as the 2018 World Economic Forum in Davos.

## 3. Nassef en Naguib Sawiris Island billionaires (Egypt)

The brothers Nassef and Naguib Sawiris dominate *The World's Richest Arabs 2018* list. Each brother was born with a silver spoon in his mouth: their father, Onsi Sawiris, owns Orascom, Egypt's first multinational working in the construction industry, telecommunication, and technology. The brothers inherited their father's conglomerate and his capital. Nassef Sawiris tops the list of richest Arabs (estimated wealth: \$6.6 billion), while brother Naguib is in sixth place at \$4 billion. To put that into perspective: each of them has a larger estimated individual net capital than US president Donald Trump (\$3.1 billion). In 2001 the Sawiris family founded the *Sawiris Foundation for Social Development*, which mainly works to promote youth employment, entrepreneurship, and education in Egypt. But that's not all. In recent years Naguib Sawiris has attracted global attention thanks to his plan to buy ten Greek islands to house more than 100,000 refugees. He wanted to relieve the pressure on the overcrowded refugee camps on Lesbos and Moria and improve the standard of living for refugees, most of whom are from Syria. Sawiris approached Greek Prime Minister Tsipras and UNHCR with a list of 23 private islands he could secure to achieve his goal; he had found that the owners were willing to sell the islands. But Tsipras ignored Sawiris' offer and consistently refused to comment on the proposal. In early 2017 Sawiris openly accused the president of ignoring him, claiming he had heard nothing from Tsipras in the 18 months since their initial meeting. His good intentions had been thwarted, his ego wounded. 'It's the first time in my life that I've got an idea in my head and it hasn't come to fruition,' Sawiris told *The National*.

## 4. Olajumoke Adenowo Architect of leadership (Nigeria)

From child prodigy to Nigeria's 'Starchitect'. Olajumoke Adenowo began studying architecture when she was just 14 years old. At 25 she started her own company. Adenowo's work has had an iconic influence on Nigeria's impressive urban landscape. *The Guardian* has christened her 'the face of architecture in Nigeria'. She has more than 70 structures to her name, from huge auditoriums to government buildings. But it doesn't stop there: for 20 years now, Adenowo has been fighting to achieve 'transformative' leadership because she sees so much young – largely female – potential going to waste in patriarchal Nigeria. Adenowo started the *Awesome Treasures Foundation*, which claims to have already reached 11,000 young people and women through events and training programmes. Her mission: to inspire girls to pursue their dreams and break out of traditional gender roles. Elizabeth Paul, a former vegetable seller who could barely pay her rent, woke up her internal 'sleeping lion' during one *Awesome Treasures* training course. She took a leap of faith and started an upholstery business; her business is still going strong, and she now owns her own home. Adenowo also hosts a weekly radio show in Nigeria, called *Voice of Change* (VOC). Each episode includes a ten-minute pep talk in which she encourages her audience to take control of their lives. The title of one episode is 'The power of vision', and another is called 'What football can teach us about leadership'. Adenowo is keen to develop a VOC mentality, as former Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende might say. Each episode of the show reaches 15 million listeners. And Adenowo's personal ambition? Nothing less than to design an Eiffel Tower or Empire State Building for Nigeria: 'a building that defines Nigeria's identity.'

## 5. Patrice Motsepe Mining billionaire (South Africa)

He is South Africa's first black billionaire (estimated wealth: \$2.65 billion). Patrice Motsepe's father owned a small supermarket near the mines, and his shop became popular among black miners. Motsepe was in the right place at the right time. Soon after Nelson Mandela was elected president in 1994, his government began promoting and subsidising black entrepreneurs. Motsepe, who had graduated from law school and was working as a partner in the *Bowman Gilfillan* law firm, seized this opportunity and founded *Future Mining*, a business that extracted gold dust from the mines. His smart business sense in negotiations over mine shafts soon made him a rich man. He founded *African Rainbow Minerals*, which expanded to become a mining conglomerate with interests in platinum, gold, and coal. In 2013, Motsepe announced that he was giving away half his wealth to improve the lives of poor South Africans.

## South Africa's first black billionaire

He signed *The Giving Pledge*, an initiative dreamt up by Warren Buffett and Bill Gates that challenges billionaires to donate half their capital to philanthropic causes. More than 189 billionaires have already agreed to take part. Motsepe was inspired by the spirit of 'ubuntu' and 'botho', African philosophies that prioritise the community and solidarity with underprivileged people. 'I came into contact with ubuntu at an early age', Motsepe told South African media organisation IOL. 'When I was seven, I saw my mother at work in our supermarket. She gave free vegetables to poor members of our community.'





## This Muslim philanthropist has dedicated his life to continuous charity

### 6. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw Brewed by women (India)

She prefers the title of 'compassionate capitalist' to 'philanthropist'. In her mind, philanthropy has an image of treating symptoms: focusing on the short term instead of finding structural solutions. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is India's richest woman and the founder of India's first and largest biotech company, *BioCon Limited*. As an ambitious woman in traditional India, she faced a lot of hurdles. Being a girl, she was not eligible for a scholarship to study medicine, so she obtained her bachelor's degree in zoology instead – but her real dream lay elsewhere. Shaw decided to follow her father into the world of malting and brewing and left for Victoria, Australia, where she trained as a brewer at Federation University. When she started looking for a job as a brewer in Bangalore, she was told that a brewery was no place for a woman. She gained work experience in Australia and Ireland; in Ireland she worked for Biocon Biochemicals Limited, where they use enzymes for brewing as well as for food packaging and the textile industry. When she was 25, Shaw returned to India to set up a sister company. She hired a shed to carry out her first tests in processing enzymes. Her smart export tactics and ability to spot gaps in the Indian market helped her develop her company into a fully-fledged biopharmaceutical firm. Shaw founded the *Biocon Foundation* in 2004 to further her mission of making healthcare accessible to people in India's poor rural areas by setting up clinics that offer free consultations and *screenings*. The data this foundation collects makes it possible to offer good-quality, accessible healthcare to large groups of marginalised Indians. When Shaw's best friend died of cancer after a long ordeal, she decided she would also focus on research into that condition. One initiative in that direction was the construction of the Mazumdar-Shaw cancer centre in Bangalore in 2009, which has the capacity for almost 1,500 people. She joined *The Giving Pledge* in 2015.

### 7. Zeal Akaraiwai Hospital angel/liberator (Nigeria)

Hospital employees always perk up when they see his Mercedes approaching. Businessman and consultant Zeal Akaraiwai – nicknamed 'The Angel' – has a settled ritual in his collaborative efforts with various hospitals in Lagos. He peels himself off the sticky leather seat of his Mercedes, steps out of the car, and heads for Reception. There, he finds 'the list': an A4 sheet showing the names of all the people who have been discharged from the hospital but who cannot go home until they have paid their hospital bills. This so-called 'hospital detention' is also a known phenomenon in Congo, Kenya, Ghana, and Cameroon. Zeal chats with the patients, and the nurses quickly bring him up to speed in the hospital corridors. He pays the bills and takes his leave, only to return at set times to follow the same script.

### 'The Angel' who pays people's healthcare bills, to liberate them from 'hospital detention'

This ritual, which springs from a sense of justice and which has been featured on the BBC, is his contribution to people in a country where only 5% of the population has health insurance. That makes Akaraiwai angry. 'The fact that someone like me is needed to liberate people from the hospital speaks volumes about the injustice in the system', he told the BBC. Patients who have been declared well are free to leave after Zeal's visit. He asks for no compensation, no 'thank you' or further contact; as he says, he just hopes that people will remember the moment an angel passed by their bed and 'unlocked the gates to their life'.

### 8. Anwar Khan Muslim philanthropist (Bangladesh)

He is a shining example in the world of Muslim charity. Carrying almost nothing – just the \$1,800 he had collected and some early pension money – Anwar Khan travelled to the refugee camps in Bangladesh with the bare bones of a plan to maybe help a few people. He had heard horror stories about the impoverished conditions in which hundreds of thousands of stateless Pakistanis, the Urdu-speaking minority, were living there. The camps date from 1971 when, after a bloody conflict with West Pakistan, East Pakistan was declared an independent country: Bangladesh. Unwelcome in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Urdu-speaking community was omitted from that resolution and banished to refugee camps. Khan was shocked by what he found. As a consequence of his journey, in 2004 he founded OBAT Helpers, an organisation that sets up education and microcredit programmes to help families become self-sufficient. 'Khan is one of those people who redefine the classic concept of philanthropy', says Shariq Siddiqui, deputy director of the *Muslim Philanthropy Initiative*. 'He's not a rich man with a foundation – he's a middle-class man with good intentions who can make a small contribution.' Khan is a Muslim. Islam teaches that everyone who can should give 2.5% of their wealth to the poor and needy: the 'Zakat'. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. There is also the custom of 'Sadaqah', which encourages Muslims to give voluntarily to others – whatever the sum of money or value of an object. One of a Muslim's most important legacies is 'continuous charity', and Khan has dedicated his life to this goal. As Siddiqui says, 'With 1.6 billion people worldwide, the potential scope of Islamic philanthropy is unparalleled.' ●



Qader Shafiq

# How can the diaspora play a greater role in Dutch development cooperation?

In this difficult time of global inequality, geopolitical tensions, climate change and worldwide efforts to deal with refugees and migration, there's a real need for a coherent and inclusive policy on international cooperation. Whereas, in the past, Dutch development cooperation efforts mainly focused on combating poverty, the focus has now shifted towards 'preventing inequality, conflict and migration, in line with Dutch trade and investment interests', as the policy memo for overseas trade and development cooperation puts it. But the new policy ambitions will only succeed if the right lessons are learned from the past, and if there is a push to build an inclusive collaboration with the diaspora in the Netherlands.

Tens of thousands of people who had to flee their own countries have sought to build a new home in the Netherlands in recent decades, with the result that today the Netherlands is home to multiple generations of Dutch people whose backgrounds include countries that are the focus of Dutch development cooperation. Members of this diaspora include professionals with the ability to combine expertise and experience in diverse domains with an unmatched understanding of the local situation.

That makes the diaspora a source of intellectual capital. These networks have been able to integrate into a new society and gain a new form of social capital without losing touch with contacts and developments in their country of origin. Both Dutch and international NGOs past and present have often argued that the diaspora is organised along ethnic or political lines, so their efforts won't be accepted in their countries of origin.

Bringing up an argument like that a priori makes it impossible to take an objective approach to the efforts of the diaspora. However much well-intentioned action the diaspora may take to promote developments in their country of origin, the big NGOs will always be looking for ulterior motives. The effect of this is that the professional capacity of the diaspora is under-used, and people forget that the intellectual capital these men and women have built up is inextricably linked to their dreams for socioeconomic and political development in their countries of origin.

In February 2002, former Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Evelien Herfkens organised a conference to examine the Dutch contribution to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The conference provided a platform to both Dutch and Afghan professionals, who made concrete proposals and recommendations regarding issues such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and democratisation. These recommendations were underpinned by the intentions of Afghans living in the

Netherlands who were keen to help implement these programmes.

The participation of this specific diaspora in the reconstruction of Afghanistan could have made a real contribution to the democratic foundation of development in their country of origin. Unfortunately, the Afghans' ambitions lost out to the dominance of Dutch NGOs' existing local partners on the scene. New initiatives were blocked by local NGOs, many of which had ties to the interests of regional political groups, and by international NGOs pursuing their own agendas. International organisations that were responsible for implementing Dutch development cooperation efforts followed their own established patterns and programmes, until the ambitions of the Afghan diaspora were lost and their hopes for their homeland were ignored in the decision-making surrounding the reconstruction process. If the Dutch international collaboration had engaged with members of the diaspora and really used their expertise, that could have prevented a huge waste of resources.

I was approached some years ago by Afghan youth organisations who were seeking my support. These young people were students who had taken the initiative to set up a nationwide association so they could use their expertise to help rebuild Afghanistan. It was their infectious energy that made me decide to support them.

At an Afghanistan Day conference in 2012, these young people showed that they were fully capable of cooperating across ethnic and political lines. The conference was the catalyst for a variety of initiatives, including the KEIHAN Foundation. This foundation, made up predominantly of medical students and doctors with an Afghan background, organises exchange programmes and acts as a bridge between knowledge institutes in Afghanistan and the Netherlands. Despite the fears of the established institutions, ethnic and political interests have presented no obstacle whatsoever.

From our base in Bureau Wijland, together with a diverse range of partners, we are working to mobilise experts from various different diaspora communities. This means we can stop Dutch policy on international cooperation being overtaken by the tendency to take things for granted and by the rigid rationale of the technocrats in the international cooperation sector. Engaging the diaspora with the Netherlands' international cooperation policy helps new Dutch citizens integrate successfully. With their mission, vision and multifaceted knowledge and expertise, they have the potential to enrich that policy, and their engagement will bring some much-needed interculturalisation to the sector. The ultimate goal? To build a better world, for everyone.



# The uneven playing field of development cooperation

Publicly, the call for direct funding for organisations in the Global South is receiving ever more attention. In practice, however, the development language and tender culture seems to work against local organisations. As long as there is no level playing field, the promise of more local ownership and leadership is a hollow one.

Author: Siri Lijfering

## Jargon in development cooperation

~~The proposals are assessed on the extent to which it can be guaranteed that the projects financed by the DFCD fit within the delimitation of the Theory of Change in this subsidy policy framework, including an elaboration of the way in which projects financed by the fund manager lead to the outputs, outcomes and impact to be achieved. – Subsidy framework for the Dutch Fund for Climate and Development~~

*'A central aspect of our Theory of Change is the empowerment of stakeholders through the facilitation of co-creation processes in order to generate innovative and inclusive financing models for marginalised groups.'*

**Did you understand all that?** If so, chances are you either work for or are otherwise involved with a Dutch NGO or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 'Although jargon is not unique to international development, that is where the negative consequences of the use of jargon are most evident,' wrote consultant Floyd Whaley in an opinion piece for the *Asian Development blog*. That is because, Whaley argues, although inclusion and equality should be the core values of development cooperation, this kind of language actually promotes exclusion and discrimination. 'Producing reports that are laden with development jargon and technical language is the equivalent of writing in a secret code that can only be read by the wealthy, powerful and educated. In short, using jargon discriminates against the poor. The original meaning of the word jargon, derived from the French *gargon*, is apt: 1. unintelligible language; 2. the twittering of birds.'

'The way knowledge is generated, legitimised and shared determines the rules of the game, and thereby also how development programmes are set up,' argues Bram Büscher, professor and chair of the Sociology of Development and Change group at Wageningen University. 'For example, the overwhelming majority of research in and about developing countries is carried out by Western researchers, and 95% of the literature about development cooperation is produced by European and American research institutes.' According to Büscher, this means that people from developing coun-

tries rarely get the opportunity to identify problems in their own context, let alone in their own language. 'The lingua franca in academia and in development cooperation is still English. This means that people for whom English is neither their first nor their second language are not taken seriously, despite the fact that they often know best what is going on and what is necessary to instigate development.'

Büscher also sees the Western influence on development cooperation in the use of corporate jargon in the discussion around development, as a result of the increasing prominence of the aid and trade agenda. These days everything has to be innovative, scalable, and motivated by financial and social returns. It is common for NGOs to be asked to provide the 'business case' for their proposed project when applying for funds. In Büscher's view, this is also reflected in the programmes that ultimately win grant funding. 'Where the money goes is determined by the language used. If tenders ask about the "financial sustainability of the proposed model", that implies that projects that will eventually be able to pay their own way will be preferred over a project that is mainly focused on its social impact, such as access to education and healthcare. As a result international development becomes guided by market capitalist ideas, where it is all about economic growth rather than social impact.'

International organisations are generally more at home with this terminology, which makes it easier for them to include the necessary language and buzz words to get funding. Büscher concludes that this puts local organisations at a disadvantage before they have even started.

**But the language** and the specific development jargon used in tenders are not the only obstacles that create an uneven playing field for organisations in the Global South, as Saskia Brand, consultant at MDF Training & Consultancy, knows all too well. In 2015 she collaborated with a North African organisation to apply for a subsidy in the second round of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women programme, better known as FLOW-II. The FLOW programme was set up to bolster the position of women around the world in three areas: combating violence against women, promoting women's participation in political governance, and

## Jargon in development cooperation

~~Given the topics to be addressed and the collaboration between public and private parties in partnerships, the targets may be achieved through interventions focused on the realisation of preconditional requirements. Such requirements may include institutional capacity reinforcement or interventions based on revenue models in case of market failure or too significant risks. A combination of these two types of interventions is also permissible. For both types of intervention, there must be clear added value from the collaboration between the public and private sector in a PPP. – Decision of the Fonds Duurzaam Water ('Fund for Sustainable Water', FDW) 2017~~

supporting women's economic independence and self-reliance.

In contrast with the first FLOW grant, the funds in the second round were also open to Dutch organisations, and the budget had grown from an average of €2.4 million per project to between €5 million and €15 million. Brand remembers how this also noticeably increased the complexity of the application requirements. Applicants had to submit evidence of significant additional financial resources, Brand recalls. 'This meant that the organisation had to obtain permission letters from potential partners before they had even entered into an official partnership.' They also had to conceptualise everything in advance, as well as submitting a planning and justifying everything using IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) indicators. In Brand's view, this was where the ministry had it all wrong: 'Especially when you're working with a network of activists in conflict zones or fragile states, you cannot plan everything to the minute or budget to the last decimal place. What you need is a huge amount of flexibility to be able to respond to changing circumstances.'

'Even Dutch subsidy experts thought the FLOW-II requirements were complicated. How were local organisations with much less capacity supposed to satisfy all those criteria? At that point, you know that as a donor you are asking too much.' Two thirds of the total 265 applications failed to meet

the threshold and ended up in the waste paper basket without anyone ever looking at their actual content. 'Assuming other organisations put the same amount of time into the application as we did, that represents a total investment of 26,500 working days, or 120 working years, with costs ranging from €12 million to €20 million.' Brand sighs. 'It's such a waste. When the government puts out a tender, it should consider: "What am I asking of organisations? Is it really necessary to make them write hundreds of pages, or could we manage with less?"'

Brand believes it is important to learn from the mistakes that were made with FLOW-II. 'Of the €93 million the ministry had available, the majority of the allocated subsidies went to large Dutch, Western European and American organisations, none of which had the fight for women's rights as their core business.' In Brand's view, this shows that a level playing field will not happen on its own – you have to actively create and facilitate it. Bearing that in mind, Brand calls for a clear distinction to be made in tenders for international and national organisations in the Global South. 'You could include it explicitly in the criteria, or put out tenders for smaller sums that wouldn't be interesting to big organisations but that could give local organisations a boost.'

She also believes that the tender processes should become more iterative, focusing on the relationship being created between the donor and the recipient. This could be



# Stories of Change

achieved by dividing the tender process into separate phases, and in the first phase only requiring organisations to show that they meet the threshold criteria. This could prevent a lot of time and money going to waste. Brand also feels that there should be less emphasis on financial criteria, and that tenders should look more closely at organisations' local representation. The embassies could play an important role in this. 'In general, embassies have a better idea of which actors are truly locally embedded. They can also play a role in building networks, which encourages organisations to work together instead of having to compete with each other.'

In that regard, Brand is cautiously optimistic about the 'Investeren in perspectief' ('Investing in prospects') policy memo, presented by Minister Kaag, which explicitly mentions the need for local ownership and leadership in the Global South. 'But,' she warns, 'the devil, as always, is in the details.'

According to Marinka Wijngaard, policy officer at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Leading from the South programme (LFS) that was launched in 2017 is a major step towards making these intentions a reality. 'As a ministry, we have actively considered how to make sure that feminist women's rights organisations in the South – which we would really like to support – don't fall by the wayside, as was partly the case with FLOW-II.' Wijngaard explains that the requirements set in a tender largely determine which organisations become top of the list in the selection process. 'That is why it is important to look first at what your objectives are and to prioritise the context. Then you decide who you feel can best implement these programmes, and you adjust the criteria accordingly. That way, you don't just get the usual suspects; you create the space for innovative initiatives and local voices.'

The LFS programme has made €40 million available, which is being invested through four intermediary organisations in Southern women's rights organisations: the Women's Fund Asia (WFA) in Asia, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) in Africa and the Middle East, the Fondo Mujeres del Sur (FMS) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the FIMI Indigenous Women's Fund (AYNI) to support the rights of indigenous women worldwide. According to Wijngaard, working with these regional partners is crucial to the success of the pro-

## The worldwide uneven playing field

Organisations in the Global South face structural barriers to gaining access to financing all around the world. That was the conclusion of CIVICUS (the alliance of civil society organisations) and social enterprise Innpactia, following their investigation into more than 6,000 subsidy tenders that were opened to organisations working in South America in the past five years. Of all the funds made available to organisations working in South America, only 3% of the money was exclusively open to local organisations. The investigation shows that, in the other 97%, local organisations were competing with international NGOs and businesses in 74% and 71% of cases, respectively. Because these actors generally have more capital, more staff to work on the applications and more experience in writing funding applications, local organisations often missed out.

Another illustrative example of the uneven playing field for organisations in the Global South is the EU call Ending drought emergencies that was put out in Kenya in October 2018. Every single member of the consortium was required to produce a track record of a comparable programme worth €1.5 million from the past five years. This put the funding beyond the reach of many Kenyan organisations. At the last minute – in the final week before the deadline, when most of the relationships had already been negotiated – the EU changed these conditions, but by then it was too late for many organisations from the South to apply.

These examples illustrate how the uneven playing field often also results in an uneven allocation of funding for development cooperation. This conclusion is supported by the data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): only 1.5% of the total funding available for official development assistance (ODA) was awarded directly to Southern organisations.

gramme. 'These organisations are all firmly rooted in the regional feminist movement, which gives them a good idea of how best to use the funding to create the greatest impact.' Wijngaard believes that this also makes it possible for the funds to make a significant contribution to strengthening civil society in the local area: 'By investing directly in women's rights organisations in the South, the Dutch government is sending an important message that we support these movements, and that the women's rights organisations themselves have a key voice in the specific projects. That's how we're contributing to changing power structures and gender equality.'

To facilitate greater Southern ownership and control, Wijngaard underscores the importance of increasing cooperation between donors. 'At the moment organisations sometimes receive financing from eight different donors, which means that they have to write eight different evaluation reports. This costs organisations a lot of time and can distract from the important work they are doing, making it ultimately harder to spend the money efficiently and effectively.' That's why the Netherlands

is sharing lessons learned from the LFS programme with other donors, to create greater synergy. In Wijngaard's view, in order to finance organisations in the Global South directly you have to supplement the regular programme funding by opening up funds to develop skills within those organisations, such as drafting work plans, writing reports, and carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities. 'We are promoting local leadership, because we feel the context and the change we want to create have to take centre stage,' Wijngaard says. 'If you do that, you'll be much more likely to start in "the Global South", and direct funding will become more important.' 'But,' Wijngaard warns, 'we should be careful not to act as if that suddenly pits the North against the South. Dutch development organisations definitely have a contribution to make. Development cooperation also involves regional and global change, and many different actors have a role to play there. The key is to encourage a diverse range of organisations that are involved in development cooperation, so everyone can use their individual strengths to work towards a better world.' ●

## Education: the **best weapon** in the fight against violence

**In the slums of the Ugandan city of Jinja, residents and businesses have joined forces to set up educational projects to combat violence and crime.**

Author: **Sanne van Grafhorst**

What is the best weapon in the fight against violence? Education. That's the answer given by the Non-Violence Project Uganda, an organisation that works to prevent and reduce youth violence. The initiative was begun by 27-year-old Eddy Balina in response to the violence that is rife in his home town of Jinja. In this Eastern Ugandan city he regularly witnessed fights between young people, drug abuse, and violent school strikes.

The Non-Violence Project uses extracurricular programmes at 157 schools to encourage young people to seek out peaceful alternatives to conflict. And there are more than enough of those, as Balina explains: 'It's better to listen to each other, work together or find a compromise. Or they can decide to put their energy into something else, such as sport, music, or art.'

Young people are also offered courses in entrepreneurship, which is important since one of the causes of violence among Ugandan young people is the high rate of unemployment. 'When young people are unemployed, they can become frustrated. Then there's a chance that they start taking drugs and get involved in crime. A good education is the best guarantee for a good future.'

But how do you reach the children who don't receive any education? That's a big group in Jinja, so in 2016 the organisation decided to set up a community school in the Budhumbuli slum. The first lessons were taught in a church to keep costs as low as possible, but that solution was not suitable in the long term: over time the group grew too large for the building. 'We needed a proper school environment. But where were we going to find the resources for that?' The organisation found the answer in the slum itself. 'We started a conversation with the community to find out what they could offer.' That conversation yielded a plot of land and people who could build the school, and a management committee made up of villagers was set up to monitor the quality of the teaching. 'The committee includes a teacher representa-



tive, a religious representative, and a representative of the parents. Each member has a voice and can contribute to decisions about the future of the school.'

The 'Great Hope Junior School' now has 130 pupils and five teachers. The school is funded by financial contributions from religious leaders, local businesses such as UIFC (an institute that offers therapy focused on relationship problems and conflict), and parents. Balina stresses the importance of engaging the parents with the initiative: schools set up by international organisations in surrounding villages were often prone to failure. 'Parents didn't feel a connection, because they had no input. With us, they do: in their final evaluation, parents have let us know that they'd like us to improve the classrooms and make the playground bigger.'

**It can be good for a bank that promotes children's savings accounts to support a project that discourages drug use among young people**

The concept of connectedness is also at the heart of the search for local donors, because these donors are crucial to the organisation: 'There hasn't always been enough money to carry out all the activities we planned. We've had to learn to look at what resources are available locally.' They have organised events such as a fundraising breakfast to attract businesses and politicians. They take time beforehand to think about who the projects might appeal to. It can boost the image of a bank that promotes children's savings accounts if it supports a project that aims to discourage drug use among young people. 'The same applies to a soft drink company that wants to appeal to young people and would be keen to be associated with a school.' Cooperation has now put down such strong roots in the community that residents volunteer their own resources without being asked. The organisation is currently working to erect a fence around the school. You need a lot of water to make cement. 'So', Balina explains, 'one of the parents offered to let us use his well free of charge.' ●



# Golden tips for Minister Kaag

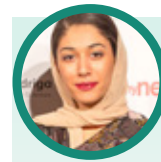
**To:** Minister Sigrid Kaag

**From:** 4 Southern civil society organisations

**Subject:** Greater ownership. But how?

Minister Kaag is working hard to develop a new civil society subsidy framework. Her aim is to pass greater ownership to Southern NGOs, giving them more legitimacy, and she also sees a new role for Dutch organisations. *Vice Versa* asked four Southern organisations what they think of this plan, and what their one golden tip would be for our minister.

Author: Lizan Nijkrake



**Hajer Sharief**, co-founder of Together We Build It, an NGO that works to increase the participation of young people and women in Libya's peace process.

**'Make it compulsory for Northern organisations to collaborate with Southern partners'**

Hajer Sharief does not mince her words during our telephone call. 'If the Dutch government doesn't change the subsidy criteria, I promise you that – still – not one Libyan NGO will satisfy the conditions to compete for funding.' The biggest stumbling block in Libya is the set of requirements for financial management. 'Libya is a conflict zone. We have barely any infrastructure; no one has access to a bank account', Sharief explains, 'so we can't receive any direct funds.' In her view, many donors see financial management as the most important criterion for collaboration. 'And it is important, don't get me wrong. But donors label the lack of a bank account as a weakness, even though that doesn't say anything about how we do our work. We've had a great track record ever since the organisation was founded in 2011.'

What can Kaag do about this? 'Be open to using cash. Or work with us to find another way, by having an international organisation manage the money. We're already doing that, for instance through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', Sharief says. She laughs. 'It's so interesting that in giving these examples I'm arguing against my own call for Southern ownership, because we still need an international organisation to do our work.'

That brings her to her most important tip for Kaag: 'The dynamics within the collaboration are incredibly important. The minister can do something about that. Right now, a Northern organisation receives money, then that organisation makes decisions about the partners, strategy and allocation of funds, for example to us. Change that. Make it compulsory for Northern organisations to collaborate with Southern partners. Make the relationship equal. So if something goes wrong we can say: come on, we're a partner, not a subcontractor. You don't control all the money – you can't just replace us.'



**Pooven Moodley**, director of NaturalJustice in South Africa, a human rights organisation that works with communities to increase social and ecological justice in ten African countries, with smaller projects in Asia and South America.

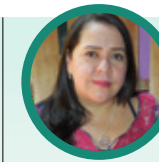
**'Work towards direct financing for established Southern organisations'**

Pooven Moodley actively joined the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa when he was 13 years old. That laid the foundations of his belief in making changes from the bottom up. 'My core value is that local communities hold their own rulers accountable. They can implement change,' he says. 'The question for countries that want to help them is: how are you going to stand behind those people with a good support structure?'

He brings up the problem of large NGOs, for which he himself worked in various African offices from the 1990s. 'Those organisations have a huge number of employees and infrastructures in Europe. That costs a lot of money, and it erodes the trust of a lot of African activists; they feel that all that money could be better used in supporting their fight.'

At the same time, Moodley does see value in the organisations. 'They've built up expertise and relationships in Southern countries over the years. They keep their finger on the pulse for donors; you can't just kick them out all in one go. The Dutch government couldn't possibly maintain contact with every community.'

He advises Kaag to adapt the Dutch subsidy framework to improve outreach to local communities. 'Make it compulsory for Dutch organisations to work together with an established Southern partner,' he says. 'Then you've got a fairly direct line from the financier to the local community. Over time you can remove the Dutch organisation, as long as the Southern partner has proved itself to be reliable. Then the Dutch government would fund that partner directly. Work towards that.'



**Carla López Cabrera**, director of Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres (FCAM) in Nicaragua, a feminist fund that supports local women's rights movements in Central America.

**'Sacrifice your privilege: give Southern organisations more of a voice in setting priorities'**

FCAM was the only Southern coordinator of one of Minister Ploum's 25 strategic partnerships with the NGO community: the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA). Carla López Cabrera is positive about the experience with GAGGA, which also includes the Northern organisations Both ENDS and Mama Cash: 'We created a true partnership. The journey wasn't always easy, but the result is worth a lot.' Many relationships between organisations from the global North and South are not so equal, López Cabrera says. 'I say that with a great deal of respect – Northern organisations definitely have a role to play. But some of them don't manage to create an equal relationship with their Southern counterparts. They set the tone in deciding on the ideas', she says. 'Then Southern partners get the sense that they're just being hired to do the work. Those Northern organisations need to reflect on their privilege and power.' Her recommendation for Kaag is to give Southern organisations more of a voice in determining the subsidy frameworks and priorities, as she does with 'her' FCAM, a feminist fund that distributes money among local women's movements in Central America. 'We don't have to keep our power for ourselves. That doesn't tally with the mission of our organisation.' FCAM has an inclusive procedure for grant applications that brings applicants and financiers together at an early stage to work out their strategies. 'We give a voice to the movements themselves; they're best placed to know what they need. We've been doing that for 15 years, right from the start. That's one way to change the power structures.'



**Makena Mwobobia**, director of ActionAid International Kenya, which fights to free the world from poverty and inequality.

**'Make sure Dutch policy doesn't facilitate tax evasion'**

ActionAid International is part of the Fair, Green and Global Alliance (FGG), within which it works with five other organisations to achieve just and sustainable societies – not in the least in Kenya. FGG acts as a strategic partner, financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 'The programme is crucial for improving the position of many Kenyan women', Mwobobia says.

What is its greatest factor for success? 'Its strong local roots, in combination with the link to the global community.' She goes on to explain: 'We work in 18 of Kenya's 47 subregions and have a local, Kenyan management team. Thanks to our knowledge of the local context, we can help women set up their own organisations. ActionAid is also a big international player, with offices in 45 countries. We learn from strategies tried in other countries and put local women in touch with each other.'

Mwobobia would encourage Kaag to add a new priority: 'Make sure Dutch policy doesn't facilitate tax evasion and human rights violations, for instance by Dutch companies. We have an active campaign in Kenya, the Tax Justice Campaign, that we are using to fight against the way international businesses get let off paying their taxes. Right now Kenya is missing out on a great deal of tax income. If we didn't lose those billions of Kenyan shillings, those funds could be used to support Southern organisations and domestic resource mobilisation.'

What role does she dream of for Kaag? 'The minister can put pressure on our government at an international level, so they don't make deals that facilitate tax evasion. Kaag could also support the watchdog role of local groups by investing in their lobbying activities. The beauty of Southern leadership is in the citizens' scrutiny when their governments fail.' ●



# If you want to realise change you need a secure environment'



**Giving the Global South more of a voice in international development sounds great – but what does that actually mean? It involves flexible and unfettered funding for Southern organisations, but above all: a focus on power structures. 'This isn't just about money, it's about making it possible for people to do what is important to them at that moment. That's ownership!'**

**Author:** Marc Broere  
**Photographer:** Leonard Fäustle

We met with three people at the Royal Tropical Institute (Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, KIT) in Amsterdam, where *Vice Versa* is based, to take stock of this edition. The KIT is a fitting location for the meeting, as it has been able to transform itself from a colonial institute into a breeding ground for organisations and social enterprises that are on an innovative path towards a sustainable, just world. We talked for over an hour about a complex subject that has many different layers and nuances: giving the Global South more ownership and more of a voice in the international development agenda. After all, what does that actually mean?

Laila Ait Baali kicks off the session. She is the political coordinator of WO=MEN, the gender platform in the Netherlands that actively lobbies for women's rights and gender equality organisations, especially Southern organisations, to be given easier access to Dutch funding. 'The first thing that comes to my mind is that you have to have an equal relationship. You have to enter into a partnership as true equals, and not from the perspective of one party being dependent on the other.'

The next to speak is Kees de Jong, who has been director of Wilde Ganzen Foundation since 2018. 'For me, it's mainly about *how* you cooperate with each other. I argue for *collaborative leadership*: shared

leadership based on the talents and the specific added value each person or organisation brings to the table. Then it's not the case that one organisation takes the lead in everything because all the money and accountability flows through them, but rather that you can share that role.'

And, finally, Danielle Hirsch, director of Both ENDS and one of the most outspoken voices in Dutch civil society. 'I agree with what the others have said, but we have to be careful not to frame this issue too much as a South-North discussion. To me, that's too limited. There are partnerships between organisations in the Netherlands, too, where the relationship is not equal. In my view it's always about building a collaboration in which each partner is able – and above all is not afraid – to take the lead; so you can do what you believe in within the collaboration.'

**'Too often, right now, who pays the piper calls the tune. That makes it difficult to build an equal partnership'**

The next logical question is: when you look at how international cooperation is currently organised, is it based on cooperation between equals? Kees de Jong thinks it is not: 'Too often, right now, who pays the piper calls the tune. That power differential makes it difficult to achieve equal cooperation. I do think the Dutch government has taken a big step forward with the Samenspraak en Tegenspraak ["Dialogue and Dissent"] programme, because that's a strategic partnership between various different parties in which everyone plays a different role. But I'd like to see it go even further. I think it'd be good for future subsidy frameworks to include more indicators referring back to the collaboration itself, and for different sides to have more autonomy in how they use the money from that collaboration. There should also be a small pot of money available for flexible support for small local organisations. That would mean fewer subcontractors and more co-creation.'

According to Laila Ait Baali, 'When you look at the different funds, you realise that it's much easier for organisations that are already in a good financial position to gain access to funding. That directly influences power relationships within civil society. It's all inextricably linked to the way the Ministry of Foreign Affairs approaches tenders, how the threshold criteria are determined, and how they measure quality. A *one size fits all* financing system won't get the best results for women's rights and gender equality. Local organisations and networks in the South often lack the capacity to effectively manage everything they need to, despite the fact that these are often the same networks that have been fighting for women's rights and gender equality for years and that have success-

fully put these issues on the political agenda. Now they're falling through the cracks, and that's a crying shame.'

Danielle Hirsch stresses that international cooperation is about changing international power structures. 'We've got a system in which power is, by definition, not equally distributed. Every organisation needs to really look at its own power – or powerlessness – and at the role it plays in propping up power systems.' She believes that this is a much more fundamental question than the discussion about *how* funding streams reach the Global South, whether through direct financing or through a Dutch NGO acting as intermediary.

Hirsch also brings up the big NGOs in low- and middle-income countries that hold a key position in local civil society, but which have no interest whatsoever in challenging the power structures in their country. 'These organisations are in a perfect position to receive money directly from Western governments because their affairs are perfectly in order, but they're not going to break down those power structures.'

**So what should be done?** The speakers all praise the Samenspraak en Tegenspraak programme, which could serve as the blueprint for the first step towards more equal relationships. In this programme, the Dutch government is not a traditional donor and does not set the rules, but rather opens 'strategic partnerships' with 25 alliances and organisations in which everyone comes together to use their own positions and expertise to support local organisations to run campaigns, exert influence, and claim their rights.

Laila Ait Baali







Kees de Jong

trade, and climate. Right now Samenspraak en Tegenspraak is still the odd one out, when it should really be the guiding principle for other funds from the ministry. It's the flexibility that really appeals to me. With sensitive issues like women's rights, activists can take two steps forwards and then the next day they take three steps back. I think it's great that the ministry has had the courage to take this step, that they realise that success is not linear, and they're not afraid to tell that to the Second Chamber. They're willing to say: this is Dutch taxpayers' money, and we can't guarantee that it will totally improve social security in a country in four years' time, but we have the courage to make the investment. A good, convincing narrative will help them get this through the Second Chamber.'

## 'The end user barely has a say in the aid system'

**Another area of agreement** for the three interviewees is their concern about the decline of civil society around the world. Danielle Hirsch sees environmental activists being threatened and even killed, and her partner organisations are facing increasing obstacles to their work; Laila Ait Baali talks about how frighteningly close opposition to women's rights is coming to Europe's borders, and even crossing into the continent; and, with Wilde Ganzen Foundation, Kees de Jong is aiming to help local organisations become less dependent on overseas donors to ensure that they can no longer be dismissed as 'foreign agents' because their funding comes from abroad.

'Money from private donors helps them show the government a united front', he says. 'And because it involves potential voters, a government is more likely to listen and to be a lot more cautious than they would be with a Western NGO they can easily dismiss as an interloper. People in our sector are always talking about independence, but you have to be serious about promoting financial independence and strengthening local fundraising capacity.'

'I also believe in grassroots organisations where the ownership lies with the local community itself', De Jong continues, 'and where that local organisation is accountable to the community itself and not just to the Western donor. If you have that kind of accountability, you give the people the chance to have their say and give you feedback. Right now, the end user barely has a say in the aid system. Incidentally, I think Dutch organisations should be more accountable to their donors and to Dutch people, too; they have to make it clear what they are doing to change the world's power structures. That way you also secure broad support in the Netherlands. The Dutch government has made some unhelpful budget cuts in this area and needs to bring that help back – if you work towards achieving broad social support, that will ultimately increase political and financial support for development cooperation. If you don't do that, you end up in a vicious circle.'

However, Danielle Hirsch has had negative experiences with local fundraising. 'We also tried to raise money locally for activist-led

funds. But these are often precisely the organisations that go against the interests of a country's biggest earners. So local philanthropy – you actually see this in the US, too – doesn't necessarily amplify the most critical voice. It just doesn't work. Take Brazil, for example. A president has been elected, by a big majority, who is saying almost everything my partners don't want to hear. He represents a very big group of people who will never donate money to the organisations you support, such as indigenous peoples' organisations.'

Kees de Jong responds: 'There are actually three lines: the local philanthropists, the new middle class, and well-established local communities. To our amazement, what we've seen in low- and middle-income countries is that it's actually the local community that makes the greatest contribution. These are poor people who are very close to the situation and who claim real ownership of their own organisations. A good example is Burkina Faso, a really poor country. There's no local philanthropic sector or middle class there, but the communities have shown that they can do a great deal, both through volunteer work and financially.'

Hirsch nods. 'I think that last thing you mentioned is really important, that you need to look at how people are rooted in their community. A community shows that it is the people who actually live in a place who have deep-rooted reasons to make real changes.'

Laila Ait Baali adds a caveat: 'Of course it would be amazing if that were possible everywhere, but that's actually not the case. Just look at a country like Libya, or other countries in the MENA region. The people there are always thrilled when they get finance from the Netherlands to help them speak out. They need simple things like an office, a telephone, and an internet connection – basic things so they can do their day-to-day work. They'd rather have local financing, too, to help them do their work, but that's not possible when a country is at war. They need flexible financing, and that can be much easier for donors like the Netherlands to budget for.'

Danielle Hirsch nods. 'The organisations we work with often have very little money. They are usually staffed by volunteers, and they are founded as a response to things like large-scale "development projects" that affect their community. These are local initiatives that need maybe €2,500 to tell their story in English, for example, and they can't find that money. It's often about being able to get money quickly to pay for little things to solve problems. That is often what makes the difference between taking a local fight to the next level or remaining stuck in the current argument.'

'So this calls for flexibility', De Jong says. 'Exactly', Hirsch agrees, 'and money with no strings attached. And this isn't just about money, it's about making it possible for people to do what is important to them at that moment. That's ownership! The funding structure of international cooperation needs to respond to that.'

Ait Baali nods enthusiastically. 'Everyone needs each other in the shrinking space available to civil society; that means both Western and Southern NGOs. We also have to prevent a schism arising between civil society organisations. But diversity pays, not least in civil society. One effect budget cuts had on civil society is that there had to be cutbacks. When you look at the global movement to see who needs that extra bit of support to be able to stand on their own two feet, you often find that it's the Southern women's rights and gender equality organisations. Everyone is doing really amazing work, but how can you empower each other more, and really listen to what other people need?' De Jong adds: 'That means that you have to keep reinventing the roles and look at what you have to offer.'

'Yes,' says Hirsch, 'and that's why it's good that there's a debate, but you shouldn't really characterise it in a polarising frame about whether or not Southern organisations should obtain direct funding. No one benefits from that, in my view. A while ago, Oxfam International asked its Southern partners for their opinion of this situation. The answer they gave to Western NGOs was: "You should just stay away from here. We'll sort it out locally. You go and set your own house in order." To me, that's an important message. If we sort out how we treat people and the environment in the Netherlands, that will make our partners happy, too.'

'So let's structure that discussion so it's safe for everyone involved. Because it's also difficult for Southern organisations to express any criticism of their Northern partners while they're still financially dependent on them. You have to create security if you want to achieve change. I worry about that sometimes when I hear the tone of the debate; it's easy to get polarised because it's all about funding. You'll probably achieve some change that way, but you won't stay strong if you don't keep an eye on cohesion in the collective of civil society organisations.'

De Jong nods, and emphasises the importance of broad support one last time. 'The discussion about legitimacy is inextricably linked with the discussion about broad support. If local organisations have the support of the people they represent – whether that be by becoming members, donating or volunteering – there's a better chance that the government will see, hear, and acknowledge them. There's a similar connection in the Netherlands. In order to safeguard long-term practical and financial support for international cooperation, it's crucial to strengthen support among civil society in the Netherlands.' ●

Danielle Hirsch







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