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Civil Society Capacity Building: An Approach in Uganda

Kees Groenendijk

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Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific
AFARD	Agency For Accelerated Rural Development
BPA	Best Practice Award
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CfP	Call for Proposals
CIVICUS	No abbreviation: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CONOB	Coalition on Non Government Organisation's (Amendment) Bill
CSCBP	Civil Society Capacity Building Programme
CSD	Civil Society Diamond
CSP	Country Strategic Paper
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSSC	Civil Society Steering Committee
DENIVA	Development Network for Indigenous Associations
ECCA	Empower Children and Communities Against Abuse
ECD	European Commission Delegation
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
FA	Financing Agreement
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GoU	Government of Uganda
IDFA	Iganga District Farmers' Association
IFI	International Financial Institutes
IO	Intermediary Organisation
IP	Intermediary Person
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
IRDI	Integrated Rural Development Initiative
KADIFA	Kasese District Farmers Association
KAWIDA	Kamwenge Women for Integrating Dis-Abled
KADO	Kamugu Development Organisation
KIIDA	Kitgum Integrated Initiative for Development Action
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
MTR	Mid Term Review
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory and Development Services
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NAYODEP	Nagongera Youth Development Programme
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Assistance for Development
NSA	Non State Actor
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OCA(T)	Organisational Capacity Assessment (Tool)

OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PRMT	Participatory Resource Monitoring Tool
QuAM	Quality Assurance (Certification) Mechanism
TAP	Teso Aids Programme
TERREWODE	The Association for the Re-orientation and Rehabilitation of Teso Women for Development
THETA	Traditional and Modern Health Practitioners together against AIDS and other diseases
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VAD	Voluntary Action for Development
VEDCO	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns

Executive Summary

The Civil Society Capacity Building Programme (CSCBP) in Uganda has been an explorative journey through the fascinating landscape of Ugandan civil society. It succeeded to a satisfactory extent in fulfilling its purpose and accomplishing in several instances more than was stipulated under the required result areas.

The present state of affairs regarding civil society in Uganda needs to be perceived, among others, in its historical context. In the same sense the CSCBP needs to be perceived against the backdrop of a history that started more than 10 years ago. The Cotonou Agreement, confirming a partnership between countries in the ACP region, recognised the civil society role in development, which was substantiated by allowing up to a maximum of 15% of EU development assistance to be allocated to civil society initiatives. Uganda was a frontrunner in this and 3% of the EU support budget in the 9th EDF was earmarked for support to civil society organizations, which resulted in the CSCBP.

The reasons for supporting civil society to have a more pronounced role in the development process are most probably to be found in its potential for or actual contributions towards good governance and hence indirectly to economic performance.

A bit less than 50% of all the Programme's financial resources went into grants. These were allocated through a Call for Proposals. The Programme attempted to build in principles for equity; equity of access to funding, of geographic access and of access to skills applied in the formulation of proposals. The grant management process was executed with a dual objective. Firstly, it was to manage in a participatory manner the project implementations and fund flows, but secondly and equally important, to be part of the capacity building process, as it was a major component in the Programme. The grants provided for the grantee organisations, guarantee a long term strategic relationship and partnership necessary for capacity building.

A first Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA 1) of the grantees was undertaken in May and June 2006 through the Intermediary Organizations (hereinafter, IO). Two years later, OCA 2 was executed by an external evaluator. The differences between OCA 1 and OCA 2 were analysed and the comparison provided information about the effects and impacts of the capacity building approach. The intermediary organisation as an element in the capacity building program is a model that can work, as has been demonstrated in the CSCBP.

Participation in the policy dialogue can and should take place at local (district and sub-county) level as well as at the national level. Additionally, although trying to influence the policy making process is useful, this is not the only area of legitimate action for civil society and is neither proven to be the most important, although many support programmes to civil society appear to take this as an almost automatic point of departure. Many Civil Society Organizations (hereinafter, CSOs) legitimately perform service delivery projects, sometimes complementing governmental services or operating in niches they themselves have defined. Moreover, perhaps the most lasting impact of a vigorous civil society is its enhancement of a culture of engaged citizenship, on which all other activities can subsequently be built. Unfortunately, few projects designed to "strengthen civil society" actually measure this aspect.

There are some positive indications and signals that CSOs are engaging more frequently and meaningfully with the government and donors. However, the position of the government remains ambivalent. The government appears to be reasonably prepared to provide opportunities for civil society participation and consultation in policy making and even legislative processes, but it also appears to reserve exclusivity of decision making on final policies, disregarding citizens' preferences as expressed in the consultation process. This "pseudo-democracy" results in high levels of

disappointment within population and their representative bodies and is questionable from the long term strategic governmental perspective.

The intra civil society coordination has been enhanced and quite a few measures have been implemented for an improved structural arrangement (i.e. new strategic plan, National NGO Forum), and network standards in the certification QuAM (Quality Assurance Mechanism). Increased involvement in policy dialogue was manifested in the creation of the National Development Plan, in which seventeen sector policy papers were developed by civil society.

The Programme provided a few contributions to the capacity building international debate. It has demonstrated that grants with a proper grant management approach, can provide an excellent point of entry and build a long-term relation with grantee organisations, which as a significant impact in capacity building. Secondly, it has provided an approach that enabled large scale simultaneous capacity building, based on addressing generic capacity issues. Also, the programme has contributed to measure impacts of its capacity building strategy by systematically applying an organisational capacity assessment methodology. Lastly, as we will see below, important experiences have been gained and lessons learned in experimenting with intermediary organisations for the delivery of capacity building to grantee organisations.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Civil society and development

For the sake of simplicity, development can be considered to have three aspects or dimensions: economic, social and political. Although these dimensions are interlinked there is a tendency with International Financial Institutes (IFI) to place the emphasis on the economic dimension. As from the early 1990s the aspect of (good) governance appeared, particularly initiated by the World Bank, but soon established firmly in the global development dialogue. However, when there are no financial resources available it is hard, even in a reasonable governance environment, to create a well functioning health sector, or even to establish effective and efficient local governments.

There is little, if any, conclusive evidence on countries, in which civil society is more advanced, have developed or are developing faster than countries with an immature civil society. Apparently civil society does not really facilitate countries to develop faster and it even does not guarantee, in case of economic growth, that social and political dimensions will follow in a balanced manner. However it can, without guarantee and only under certain conditions, positively contribute to this balancing. Part of the answer to the question on why civil society needs to be supported is found in the fact that civil society has become a factor to reckon within many countries and represents an economic force with a significant interest.

In the last two or three decades, the global NGO sector has significantly developed. Nowadays, there are over 50 thousand international NGOs and millions of different NGOs. In the 1970s, northern countries increasingly started allocating part of their budgets to development aid, so a niche for NGOs to offer development services and access these available resources emerged. There were already a few NGOs that operated internationally, but in the 1980s the phenomenon of International NGOs significantly increased. Many of those were created to take share of international assistance resources, without a real foundation mission or history in the country where they originated. In the slipstream of INGOs, which needed local partners, many developing countries lived their own rather amazing NGO explosion.

The NGO development is donor driven to a large extent, which casts a shade of doubt on the moral validity of the argument that civil society in many countries is weak since it depends on external funding. At least part of civil society appears due to external resources from the same parties who use it as a weakness indicator. Additionally, the funding market has been extended by resources from private foundations of extremely rich people and of companies, as well as subscriptions to development organisations, legacies and direct contributions from society. The above illustrates that resources made available from developed countries accelerated civil society development in developing countries. Without entering into the political implications of the above, it contributed to the creation of a societal force to reckon with. It is also a fact that this phenomenon is relatively young, so it is not fair to expect that civil society is already a full fledged actor in the development process.

A major challenge of INGOs and global civil society is to demonstrate what their contribution to the development process remains on balancing the development dimensions (economic, social, political). Additionally, in a global context in which state role and influence on service delivery is declining and there is an increasing privatisation process, civil society needs to regroup and rethink their strategy towards accountability. In addition to 'holding government accountable', civil society may have to consider ways to hold national and international corporations accountable. In other words, it increasingly needs to engage with the market.

1.2. Civil society organizations: demand for good government

Donors appear to be rather convinced that supporting civil society can promote democracy in less favourable governance environments. However, they sometimes overlook the fact that in their own countries, civil society developed because of well-established and secure spaces within a positive democratic environment.

In a governance system in which people at the bottom of the societal hierarchy have information about their entitlements (rights), they are able to assess and agree among themselves what their needs are, and which ways they can translate them into demands using the right channels. This refers to what some call 'grassroots democracy' and (local) government 'downward accountability', both assuming that if demands are expressed at community level there will be ways in which those can travel all the way to the central governmental (and donor) levels. There is little one can bring against an assumption like this. Most countries, including Uganda, have a constitution that firmly supports equity of access to health, education, ways to make a living, justice etc. The realities of life may be different, however.

The present chapter will go over a few of the issues that surface in this regard.

It is a legitimate question, although beyond the scope of this paper, whether to support civil society, which constitutes only a fraction of the total aid provided to Africa, as the most effective way of assisting developing countries. A 1% increase of Africa's share in world exports would bring in an approximate US Dollar 100 billion, which is around 5 times what the continent receives in aid. Much aid is concentrating on infrastructure or support to agriculture as perceived necessary conditions for development. Better trade conditions for developing countries constitute a sufficient condition for development and, as illustrated above, could generate the required capital flows. But that means less international influence of donor countries, more competition in their own markets, and more complicated processes of acquiring political credibility from the North. Without this necessary condition fulfilled, development will have difficulty to occur, but with the condition fulfilled it is not guaranteed to occur.

Better governance, democracy and downward governmental accountability do not necessarily contribute to increased per capita incomes and better access for social services. However, bad governance can definitely ruin a country, which constitutes a reason to avoid or improve it through programs like CSCBP.

In this context it is stated by quite a few that one of civil society´s mission is to 'hold the government accountable'. However, if one opts to hold the government accountable it is wise to be prepared to be held accountable oneself. Thus, it is also important how CSO are perceived as if they are considered to be accountable organisations themselves. In the Ugandan context the accountability agenda is only partially addressed. Addressing and redressing (abusive) power has at least 3 aspects: a) power needs to be transparently exercised, b) it needs to be forced to justify its acts, and c) they need to be (the threat of) sanctions in case the first two accountability aspects do not function or do render unsatisfactory results. It is this latter capacity that is not easily exercised by civil society in Uganda. Not only because of civil society weaknesses, but partially because the government itself has created accountability agencies that function to a limited degree (parliament, Inspectorate General of Government, Public Procurement and Disposal Authority, etc.).

1.3. Civil Society situation and NGO legislation in Uganda

The following quote dated 1998, indicates the origin and the rapid growth of NGO activities in Uganda: *"Foreign and indigenous NGO have flooded Uganda since the National Resistance Army stormed Kampala in 1986. The invasion of*

NGO has impacted on almost every sector of Ugandan life and every region of Uganda, although some districts have higher concentrations of NGO such as Rakai (badly hit by the AIDS virus), Luwero and Kampala. The flood of NGO and NGO activities has produced varying degrees of both cynicism and optimism".

In 1986 there were 160 NGOs. This number had increased to 3.500 in 2000 and to 5.200 in 2004. At the moment, NGO Uganda Board confirms that there are more than 7.000 registered NGOs in the country. Over a period of 22 years the number of registered NGOs in Uganda increased by around 5000%, or a factor 50. This happened in the context of a potentially restrictive legal environment and in the absence of an NGO policy. Due to its dimension, civil society is a factor to reckon within Uganda by either the government of Uganda and development partners.

A Johns Hopkins Project carried out in year 2000 developed a comparative of non-profit sectors in 36 different countries, where about 45% were developed countries and 55% developing or transitional countries, including Uganda. A few striking results of the study are as follows: Firstly, civil society constituted a major economic force in these countries. By 2000 they represented US $ 1.3 trillion expenditures or 5.4% of the combined GDP of all the countries. To understand the dimension of this, if civil society in these 36 countries were a separate national economy it would be the seventh economy in the world, ahead of Italy, Canada, Russia and Spain and just behind France and the UK.

Civil society in these countries employs an average of 4.4% of the economically active population or about 1 out of 20 economically active persons. It is estimated for Uganda that civil society employs around 2.3% of the economically active population (1% as paid staff and 1.3% on a (semi) voluntary basis). Regarding "employment", Ugandan civil society occupies place 23 out of 36. In the score on a global civil society index that includes three main factors (capacity, sustainability and impact) Uganda occupies the 17th place, before countries like Japan, Italy, Kenya, Brazil and India and just behind South Africa, Tanzania, Argentina, Spain and Germany.

Although Uganda is less poor than it was 20 years ago it remains to be a poor country, where corruption is rampant. The effectiveness of state services, however, has improved significantly. The legal environment is not as enabling as it could be and government, until today, has maintained an ambivalent attitude towards allowable advocacy activities for CSO. Public cautions from government officials towards CSO to stay away from what it considers the political arena are still common and frequent.

Ugandan civil society is perceived by many as heavily networked. At around year 2000, 72% of those organisations registered at the NGO Board belonged to a network or umbrella organisation. During a survey conducted for CIVICUS in Eastern Uganda in 2004-05, the participating organisations said that more than 60% of their organisations belonged to at least one network either at national, regional or district level. Observations from CSCBP itself supported by other studies estimated that in 2005-6 NGO district networks exist in approximately 80% of them. Other research confirms that 30-40% of NGOs are connected to international networks.

After the NRM took power in 1986 the NGO sector started developing the need to exchange ideas an avoid duplication of efforts, which created a degree of informal networking. In the 1990s, advocacy was added to the NGO agenda, pushed at some state, by donors. There was no doubt donors perceived an opportunity to contribute to their (democratisation) agenda through civil society. However, the rise of advocacy to prominence was probably mainly due to a global development in ways governance was practiced.

It is important to recognise that NGO legislation in any country is to be seen as part of a wider political and governance context. Civil society in Uganda, following the draft of a bill in 2001 seeking to amend the 1989 NGO statute, expressed its concern with the proposed amendment to the existing legislation. Spontaneous NGO action resulted

in a campaign challenging many aspects of the proposed bill. While the bill remained "sleeping" in Parliament, NGOs developed an "Alternative NGO Bill" in 2004. Not only the NGO community, but also international donors were deeply concerned about the legislation, as regularly expressed in the period between 2000 and 2006. Not until 2007, the government entered into a dialogue with NGO on the Regulations to the Act. However, it didn't take its recommendations nor include it as regulation. Between 2000 and 2008, NGO community in Uganda expressed its concerns about the proposed legislation widely and repeatedly, but was basically kept in the dark. During this period the number of NGO in Uganda significantly increased by more than 100%, reaching an approximate number of 4.000. In April 2006 the NGO bill that had been sleeping in Parliament since 2000, suddenly and silently converted into an Act without pre-announcement, being called NGO Registration (Amendment) Act.

The concerns and alternatives brought forward by NGOs were perceived in many circles as reasonable and justified, but this did not restrain Parliament on 7th April 2006 from passing the Bill into an Act of Parliament on 25th May 2006 and thus became law.

NGOs reacted by re-establishing CONOB (Coalition on Non Government Organisation's (Amendment) Bill), which included a number of Steering Committee members in addition to other CSO representatives. Previously CONOB had been instrumental in the formulation of the "Alternative NGO Bill". The activities of this group, that met frequently immediately after 7th April 2006, resulted in several petitions and the publication of a booklet that elaborately highlighted the implications of the NGO Registration (Amendment) Act 2006 resulting in 'narrowing space for NGO operations in Uganda'.

Civil Society in general, and NGOs in particular, expressed their deep concern about the new law: *"The NGO amendment bill considered in its totality represents a roll back on the constitutional guarantees of freedom and liberty guaranteed under the 1995 constitution."* CSCBP acted as an observer in the CONOB meetings, in order to develop a first hand feeling on the civil society reactions to the new legislation.

Some interesting questions regarding the "NGO operating environment" may be asked, such as: does it really matter what the operating environment is? And how difficult and tricky is it in Uganda?. Donors, national NGOs and programmes, are all concerned about the NGO operating environment and legislation as it is a key element for its daily and regular operations. There are some crucial factors within the operating environment such as governmental policies that guide their existence, operations and development as well as the legal framework for the organisational formats they opt to utilise (association, limited liability company without profit objective, association, etc). Other elements in the operating environment like press freedom, the media role, freedom of association, governmental intelligence and security bodies roles, law and order maintenance, the private (for profit) sector, human rights situation, and a rather large number of other elements, certainly constitute other important aspects.

The Regulations to the new Act, were however not yet revised, they still were the Regulations of 1990, accompanying the NGO Statute of 1989, which provided a point of entry for negotiations between civil society and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA).

CSCBP was instrumental in providing modest financial and logistics support to (amongst others) civil society in accessing this option and in the course of 2007 the MoIA appeared to open up venues for a constructive dialogue on the Regulations.

The National NGO Forum and a number of other CSOs had been working diligently to get access to the process of reformulating the Regulations, which is the prerogative of the MoIA. As a consequence a new set of Regulations,

already presented to Parliament, was withdrawn by the MoIA. Additionally a number of meetings between civil society representatives and legal and technical personnel of the MoIA took place on the Regulations. The result of this is still pending, although the dialogue between CSOs and MoIA did not continue beyond 3 or 4 meetings and did not conclude with a mutually accepted proposed new set of Regulations.

The ambivalence of the government in its dealing with civil society is illustrated in this example. On the one hand there appears to be a degree of governmental preparedness to enter into a dialogue with CSOs, while on the other, when the final stages of concepts are reached the government isolates itself from civil society to take unilateral final decisions on content and direction. The last status of the Regulations, which are among the most contested and most restrictive parts of the new NGO law, is unknown at the time of writing this paper. It is unclear to what extent the MoIA has incorporated concerns and proposals of civil society into the set of Regulations that will be presented to Parliament.

In Uganda, as long as you are a service delivery oriented NGO it is possible to operate relatively undisturbed. The trouble may start if you get too involved in advocacy on major policy and political issues. In September 2006, DENIVA coordinated the application of the civil society indexing in Uganda. The research team concluded that civil society is at a crossroads, as it was included in the CIVICUS publication that contained many country reports: *"As in many other African countries, Ugandan civil society organizations have overwhelmingly focused on service delivery activities and largely refrained from becoming involved in the more political terrain of advocacy and governance. However, taking a more dedicated approach to policy engagement and advocacy could provide crucial for civil society's sustainability and for the future of social justice in a country where multiparty democracy was only introduced in February 2006."* Both government and civil society appear to see their mutual role with an emphasis on collaboration rather than confrontation. This may be a reflection of the relatively low level of 'political activism' in Ugandan civil society as well as the historical CSO role in service delivery.

CSO "refrained" from advocacy and governance involvement and stopped involving in these areas. This is partially explained by the post-independence history of the country. The relation of civil society with the state has been characterized by collaboration rather than confrontation. A "fear factor" on the side of civil society organisations was identified towards getting involved in policy making and politics. According to the report, civil society organizations increasingly see advocacy work as necessary. There is, however, lack of government clarity on what constitutes allowable advocacy, especially when NGOs stray in the political arena. In combination with an impeding legal framework attitude this often causes NGOs to "self-censure" their activities.

As it will be further explained later in the following area, the CSCBP worked in this area, having as its fifth result: *"National Regulation Framework: A National Regulation Framework to facilitate CSO involvement in the development process is supported. Such a national regulation framework is supposed to guide the relations between Government and the CSOs. The framework should facilitate and improve the participation of CSOs in the PEAP and the involvement of CSOs in local government policy making, implementation and monitoring at the district level and below."* (Financing Agreement)

Responsible for the implementation of this component was the Office of the Prime Minister, based on a Programme that was to a good degree developed by the PMU (Programme Management Unit) and the EC Delegation (the latter mainly for the budget sections). The OPM embarked on a process that already in its early stages took the direction of developing an NGO Policy, which was justified due to the absence of such policy. The process was implemented within the boundaries of the available resources, in a rather comprehensive participatory manner in which district administrations and NGOs had opportunity to participate, as well as national level stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, the senior bureaucracy, NGO Board, national CSOs and donors.

After many revisions the draft policy had taken shape and was presented and accepted in a national workshop with all stakeholders represented and with the presence of the Prime Minister. With the resulting draft NGO Policy there was a fair degree of satisfaction, optimism and buy-in within civil society. However, after the national stakeholders' workshop, the policy was reviewed again by the NGO Board and the MoIA, while both had an earlier opportunity for their inputs. A number of new elements were unilaterally introduced in the draft policy already accepted by all stakeholders. These constituted a measure of control and monitoring by district and more local authorities with which there is a degree of discontent and discomfort within civil society. The fairly open original draft policy was tightened up, without maintenance of the drafting approach based on consultation. The draft NGO Policy will hopefully be presented to Cabinet by the MoIA for approval but with the above unilateral amended content, neither agreed nor accepted, nor formally known, by the direct stakeholders: NGOs.

Whether the government is genuinely and sincerely attempting to find ways for inclusion of civil society in the development of a policy as well as legislative framework and just stumbling over the inherent autocracy of the governmental, not to say governance, system or whether the government is window dressing as regards participatory models of decision making is left for other observers to conclude.

The experience of CSCBP is that there exists a considerable potential -only partly discovered and utilized- within civil society in Uganda. Civil society in non-Kampala areas deserves systematic further attention in this regard, being a good enough reason for supporting civil society. Civil society in Uganda as it is perceived nowadays is at least partly an 'imported' civil society model, mainly consisting of NGO. It neglects more traditional forms of civil society organization, and this aspect deserves serious research.

Chapter 2:

The CSCBP Program

2.1. Introduction

The Civil Society Capacity Building Programme (CSCBP) ran from February 2005 until December 2008. It is important to indicate that the main "implementation phase", from 1st August 2005 until 28th June 2008, was, at 2 years and 11 months, extremely short for a programme as ambitious as the CSCBP.

The **overall objective** of the programme is "that government and donor policies and programmes are increasingly responsive to the demands of the more vulnerable sections of the population." The overarching objective is poverty alleviation.

The **purpose** of the programme is that "CSO are enabled to engage with government, the private sector and donor agencies in the development process." The civil society support programme is essentially a capacity building approach.

For the "implementation phase" the country was divided in 8 geographic regions, called "clusters". The intent was to provide equity of access for grant applicants as well as to ease the grantee and grant management challenge for the PMU (Programme Management Unit). For this reason 8 intermediary organisations (IO), each covering one cluster, were selected to assist the PMU with the grants management and the capacity building of the grantees.

To achieve the above, five result areas were identified:

1. **Institutional Development of CSOs:** Participating apex organizations and networks are more accountable and representative, and there is improved coordination and networking amongst them.
2. **Empowerment:** Local populations, particularly vulnerable groups in selected districts, are empowered through CSO activities and become increasingly involved in resource planning and monitoring.
3. **Advocacy and lobbying:** CSOs have improved their capacity to advocate and lobby on issues affecting the poor.
4. **Appropriate services:** CSOs have an improved capacity to deliver services appropriate to the poor.
5. **National regulation framework:** A national regulation framework has been developed to facilitate CSO-government relations and CSO involvement in the development process.

A capacity building approach based on an extensive Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) of all grantees was developed twice during the program. One of the purposes of the OCA was to provide the baseline for the organisational status of the grantees in order to be able to measure the impact of the capacity building, and other, interventions, at the end of the *'implementation phase'* by executing a second OCA.

Numerous activities, mostly with inclusion of the CSSC (Civil Society Steering Committee), which represented a cross section of national network organisations, were directed at civil society as a whole to enhance its participation and effectiveness in the policy dialogue and to improve its networking and coordination. The Programme refrained

in that particular context from classic capacity building of national networks and adopted, instead, an indirect approach towards capacity building based on offering "platforms and spaces" for civil society actors to use for their own information gathering, strategising, policy and decision making.

The CSCBP *"in the first place accepted a broad based component approach to civil society. It did not necessarily exclude any organizations that described or perceived themselves as a civil society organization."* The working definition given above possesses an intrinsic "moral blindness", which necessitated the additional application of result and value oriented operational principles. There are organizations who claim to be civil society organizations while it is clear that they are actually rather "uncivil" organizations who instead of delivering "public goods" or working for "common interests" may strive for "private benefits", sometimes at the costs of individuals, groups, communities or other organizations.

2.2. Civil society engagement strategy

The CSCBP appears in its design to be aiming to address a number of democratization aspects. Downward accountability (particularly at local level), advocacy and lobbying are some of them. The aim of these strategies was influencing decision making of vulnerable groups and promoting access to their rights. Finally, the programme is supposed to contribute to the creation of a more conducive "operating environment" for CSO.

The program has also covered a number of interrelated issues to better CSO like promoting credible, accountable, transparent CSO, enabling environment for CSO, getting access to the policy making process, and offering policy alternatives.

The CSCBP approach was rather ambitious considering an actual operational phase of less than 3 years with a relatively small budget. If we call civil society a sector (which is questionable) it was expected that the programme would develop a sector of more than 7,000 autonomous organizations, and better relations and effectively engaged with other sectors such as government and private sector. The required governmental policies and legislation, as well as procedures and systems for interaction, were supposed to be implemented. Additionally, civil society was to be empowered and effectively access to their rights. On top of this, the programme was supposed to bend governmental and donor policies towards more relevance for vulnerable populations.

A programme like CSCBP could connect to civil society development process in Uganda that has been unfolding over the last decades. For example, the QuAM (Quality Assurance (Certification) Mechanism) can be perceived as an attempt towards NGO sector self-regulation, mostly initiated by the sector itself. When CSCBP started, the QuAM development was fairly well advanced for autonomous NGO and a, probably sensible, contribution the Programme could make to the process was the introduction of standards for NGO networks. The Programme jumped on a train fuelled by NGO dynamics that was already moving.

The CSCBP has been more effectively engaged with donors and government than with private sector. With few exceptions, the interest for engagement with the latter is rather limited. Civil society and private sector dynamics in a global context are complex and at least partly unexplored. Even in more developed countries relations between civil society and private sector are often in their infancy. There appear to be possibly contradicting dynamics between obtaining corporate funding and advocating for corporate responsibilities. Although CSCBP recognised the importance of engagement between CSO and private companies, and there were some interventions on building bridges between the two sectors, the engagement with the private sector was not made the first priority of the Programme.

An important reason, also stipulated by the Final Evaluation Mission, was that the assumptions that this leads to better engagement of civil society in the development process are unproven. Instead, for national level networks an approach was implemented that provided the CSO interact on issues regarding the status and effectiveness of civil society and come up with approaches or solutions that they themselves perceived as the most optimal. Solutions offered by relative outsiders such as a capacity building programme would not easily have created the buy-in and drive towards positive change at that level.

2.3. Capacity building strategy

Additional reason supporting this participatory approach through networks was that Uganda civil society weaknesses would not be optimally addressed by focussing capacity building efforts on a number of individual organisations or individual leaders. The challenge for the Programme was, therefore, to define an approach on capacity building directly addressed to civil society in a more holistic sense (not being an exclusively but an accessible support to civil society), and also to avoid getting stranded in workshops without tangible outcomes.

Organisational "capacity building" is a complex, often confusing, subject that touches not only on operational issues but also on the central values and philosophy of an agency. Like "civil society", it is a term that requires some clarification, since all too often it is used more as a slogan than a concept that has a clear, common understanding behind it. In this regard it is useful to first define "capacity" in the way it has been interpreted in the CSCBP.

A generally accepted definition of capacity building (or capacity development) that the UNDP uses: *"Capacity development is a process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to 1) perform core functions, solve problems, and define and achieve objectives; and 2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and sustainable manner."*

This definition recognises, to cut it straight to the CSCBP partners, that **capacity building is a process,** not a one-off shot, aimed at increasing the ability of the partners to fulfil their own development objectives. In other words, **the partners are central,** not the capacity builders nor the capacity building methodologies. Equally crucial is that capacity building should aim for sustainable impact.

For a deeper understanding of the purpose of capacity building in a civil society context it is useful to summarise a few things that capacity building should not do:

1. Capacity building **should not create dependency**. And this is not always easy to avoid with a donor tendency towards one way granting.
2. Capacity building **should not weaken the state.** Good governance and democratisation are not strengthened when the government, at all levels, can ignore its responsibility to be responsive to its citizens (downward accountability). Civil society itself, for its healthy development requires a robust framework, provided by the state that guarantees and protects their space.
3. Capacity building **should not be a separate or stand alone activity** but be mainstreamed in the normal organisational activities. It is not only about *how* an organisation works but also about *what* it does.

4. Capacity building **should not only be about financial sustainability.** Social, organisational, managerial and policy sustainability are equally important. Lack of ownership, vision or commitment, constitute an equal risk for organisational sustainability as a cut in direct funding.

Taking these basics into consideration CSCBP management stated in its Quarterly Report January-March 2006: "The PMU prefers to repeat in this report that it abides by the principle that capacity building is a process which requires time and longer term commitment in order to be effective. For these reasons, the Programme prefers a number of extended capacity building approaches for a limited number of CSO over short-term approaches in which very large numbers of CSO are exposed to one-off trainings. A number of PMU principles in capacity building are:

- Working through long-term strategic partnerships based on participation and inclusion;
- The completion of a thorough capacity assessment as the basis of this relationship;
- The use of a range of different delivery methods, tailored to the needs of the local partners as identified by the capacity assessment – but usually including at least elements of training, technical assistance, mentoring, and financial support;
- The use of effective design, monitoring and evaluation cycles and tailored performance indicators;
- The promotion of links, coalitions and networking between key local partners and stakeholders;
- Delivering a sustainable impact for local partners and the communities they serve."

Thus, the programme designed an indirect approach towards capacity building. It offered 'platforms' for civil society´s reflection, planning, coordination and decision making. It did not hold any prescription about the types of capacities to be built and it did not attempt to make an inventory of organisational capacity gaps. It was clear from the outset that such approach would fully depend on the drive of civil society itself to improve its societal impact. The functioning and dedication of the Civil Society Steering Committee was behind a number of ideas in getting the approach on track.

Capacity building was implemented for all of the Programme partners, including grantees, intermediary organisations, ethnic minorities, district networks and their facilitators, CSSC members and PMU staff. The Programme used a mix of capacity building approaches and methodologies, including organisational capacity assessment (OCA), (de-)centralized workshops and training sessions, peer learning, study tours, organizational mentoring and coaching (through intermediary organizations), technical assistance as well as monitoring visits, competitions like best grantee award and grantee forums. The programme also examined the level of sustainability of the capacity building interventions.

Capacity Building as the crux of the Programme was, after grants management, the second largest component in terms of resources and time spent in implementation.

2.3.1. Participatory grant implementation and performance monitoring

The Programme's capacity building strategy was founded on "long term strategic partnerships" through grants. The grants themselves were perceived as a capacity building tool in their own respect, since they exposed grantees to an implementation and reporting regime as well as regular monitoring and ultimately audit and evaluation, to all of which grantees had to learn how to respond properly. These activities in the Programme were perceived as part of the capacity building mix for grantees.

The PMU perceived the monitoring effort as part of the capacity building mix offered to grantees. Monitoring and evaluation of grant implementation in CSCBP was a multi track approach consisting of:

1. **Project launch:** Implementation for each grant was preceded by a project launch in the beneficiary community. During the launch, the grantee was required to explain the project, its budget, allocations and timeline and any other information of interest to the targeted community members, local government, peer organisations and other stakeholders. The purpose of this presentation was to enable the community and other stakeholders to follow up the implementation of the project. This approach contributed towards the required transparency and accountability.

2. **Frequent PMU monitoring visits:** Each grantee was visited by a senior Programme Management Unit staff member at least four times each year. These visits could include a visit to the project implementation sites, local government, etc. The emphasis of the visits was on providing technical assistance as and when required.

3. **Monitoring of project implementation by IOs:** IOs were supposed to frequently (at least quarterly) visit the grantees in their cluster for the purpose of mentoring and coaching, as well as for monitoring the implementation of the projects. They were supposed to keep abreast of views and perceptions of targeted populations and local governments.

4. **Special actions such as the selection of the "Best Grantee":** In preparation of the "best grantee award" all grantees were visited by a team consisting of a PMU manager, CSSC member and the IO and taken through a structured questionnaire that used OCA indicators but measured the organisational learning rather than their actual status. This was followed by an extensive external field assessment for the 17 highest scorers.

5. **Quarterly progress, financial reports, work plans for next quarter:** These reports were presented to the IO, a modality that worked to a degree, endorsed by them and then scrutinised by the PMU. Where clarifications were required the grantee was approached directly by the PMU.

6. **The Programme's M&E framework and workshops on the M&E framework and formulation of indicators:** All grantees, based on the overall Programme's M&E framework were assisted to develop their own framework and realistic indicators in a workshop session. Subsequently they were supposed to report on that in prepared formats.

7. **Poverty resource monitoring and tracking (PRMT):** A selection of 24 grantees was extensively trained on PRMT. The activities employed at community level provided insight in the degree to which the project intervention contributed to communities understanding their position towards rights and entitlements and the consequent actions they undertook.

8. **Grantee and Partner Forums:** Two forums with all grantees and one forum with all major stakeholders were organised, with a view to establishing which were cross cutting issues or constraints, and address them directly or later.

9. **Project closure ceremony:** In principle these were the same participants as for the project launch. The purpose was to reflect on what had been accomplished, how the fund had been used, etc. This also contributed to transparency and accountability.

10. **Grant Closure Report:** Each grantee produced a pre-formatted extensive grant closure report addressing all aspects of the project implementation.

11. **Evaluative consultancies measuring quality and/or effects of interventions: Mid Term Review, comparative analysis of OCA 1 and 2, assessment of capacity building methodologies and inputs, documentation of PRMT.**

A few clarifications on some of the above mentioned points are necessary. Technical assistance (Capacity Building) was cross-cutting and was central to the entire process and was provided at each and every stage through different approaches like site visits, workshops, peer training, study tours, mentoring etc.

2.3.2. Methodology: Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)

At the time the Programme started there was no pre-arranged plan about what capacities would be built for the grantees. That, of course, was a proper approach; the Programme was open to learning about capacity gaps and what grantees wished to be addressed. At the time of site visits to potential grantees, the Programme collected a data set through the structured interview and questionnaire which pointed to some capacity gaps. For a more in-depth capacity assessment, the **Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)** was used to distil capacity needs of the grantees. The process of applying the OCAT is called Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA). There is a rather wide range of tools that can be utilised for capacity assessment.

The two broad categories to be distinguished are **external assessment tools** and **self-assessment tools.** CSCBP required a tool with characteristics of an internal assessment tool. However, the other side of the coin was that many of the CSO that became grantees were relatively young (mostly between 5 to 10 years), relatively inexperienced, not yet very professional, with relatively young staff of modest educational level etc.; all reasons that pointed in the direction of an external assessment being equally useful. The OCAT is a tool that can be applied for both internal and external assessment, or can incorporate in addition to the organisational self assessment scores, those of the external assessors, which made it acceptable and proper for the situation CSCBP was in with its grantees.

As a participatory diagnostic tool, OCAT identifies the **characteristic criteria or indicators of performance** and areas needing change for each of seven components of organizational effectiveness namely:

1. governance,
2. management practices,
3. human resources,
4. financial resources,
5. service delivery,
6. external relations,
7. sustainability.

As it is further explained below, the Programme trained the intermediary organizations in the use of the tool and they conducted OCA with 33 grantees. From the above assessments, the PMU was able to prioritize generic capacity gaps based on the following: frequency of occurrence; critical nature of the capacity gaps in terms of risk of negative fall out in case not addressed; relationship the gaps had with the realization of the objectives of the programme.

The most frequent occurring capacity gaps were in the areas of: governance[1] and leadership; financial management; strategic planning and management; human resource management, participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation; resource mobilization; advocacy and external relations; project and programme sustainability.

1 This was the most frequently cited challenge from the OCA – 82% of grantees had governance challenges and issues to contend with.

2.3.3. The role of the intermediary organisations

There is a definite positive correlation between how much of the CSCBP instruments, like OCA, the Intermediary Office applied to its own organisation and how successful the IO was considered in its role vis a vis with grantees. The IO mentoring role started in earnest while conducting the OCA during which they identified, together with the grantees, strategic capacity gaps that needed attention. In addition IOs gave advice in programming where grantees needed support in decision making. The IO acted as ambassadors between CSCBP and grantees not taking sides and conducted monitoring visits which were also used as mentoring and coaching moments. They marketed the grantees to the public e.g. through reporting on the grantee activities in their own publications. The IO conducted cluster meetings for the grantees to enable them come together under one roof to share experiences on project progress and collaborate. They also facilitated board inductions, strategic planning and advocacy training workshops, M&E and PRMT (Participatory Resource Monitoring Tool) frameworks and assisted in development of manuals such as Human Resources and Financial Management, especially in editing and proofreading.

Although the results of working with IOs are mixed it is a modality that certainly deserves serious contemplation from the capacity building viewpoint. A good IO can make a vast difference in the effectiveness of delivery of a capacity building approach.

2.3.4. Other capacity building activities

The Programme offered to its grantees a rather extensive menu of options for capacity building. It was not made compulsory for grantees to participate in any of these options, however, most of the grantees tried to participate in as many events as possible. The blend of capacity building approaches on the menu included:

1. Training Workshops

Training was offered targeting the needs as identified during the Organizational Capacity Assessment. Training in form of workshops/seminars covered the following topics:

a) Proposal writing.

b) Financial management: To fulfil the accounting and financial reporting guidelines for grantees under EDF rules and regulations. Also a training programme 'Finance for non-financial Managers' aimed at the levels of Executive Directors.

c) Governance and leadership: It is the number one capacity gap according to the Organisational Capacity Assessment. The support material consisted of a 'Leadership Training Manual' for the trainers, a 'Civil Society Leadership Handbook' and a CD containing both these books.

d) Advocacy.

e) Monitoring and Evaluation: A "Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation" was developed and distributed.

f) Application of Participatory Resources Monitoring Tool (PRMT).

g) Strategic Planning and Resource Mobilization: This training, as all other training, was accessible for both grantees and IOs.

Each training was complimented by tools such as formats for proposals, budgets, M&E, reporting, manuals on leadership & governance etc. Workshop sessions included plenary lectures, plenary discussion/interactive ses-

sions in plenary setting and group work. In each training hand outs were provided for participants. A report was made on the proceedings of each training. In summary, the above training / workshops for grantees only, covered around 40 actual training weeks, which is quite massive, also taking into consideration that each training required considerable development and preparation efforts and time. The total number of participants was around 1,000 people, with the note that there were quite a few participants that attended several training programmes.

2. Peer learning and Support

This approach was used for the grantee accountants to help them learn from one another in a learning–by-doing approach in their own organizational environment.

Grantees received feedback on their quarterly financial reports from both the IO finance department, the CSCBP Grants Manager and Finance Department, of which particularly the IO finance feedback contributed to capacity building of the grantee accountants, due to the fact that their contacts often were face to face. However this still did not produce sufficiently high quality finance systems and reports from all grantees. In order to make further strides towards this Peer Learning was introduced. The trainer accountant would go for 3 to 4 days to the organisation of his or her trainee and work together with the colleague through the systems and reports.

An assessment of this approach done in November 2007 indicated that this has been a strong and effective tool in enhancing the capacity of grantee accountants. Additionally it cemented good relationships among grantees. Pre-condition for the modality to work is that the senior managements of the respective organisations are involved, that very clear logistical and facilitating arrangements are provided. CSCBP trained 35 accountants in this peer learning approach.

The model of working through IOs in itself constituted of course another peer learning approach in the programme.

3. Grantee Forums

These were meetings or forums for grantees, IOs and PMU to meet and review, share, discuss the implementation experiences and map a way forward. The Grantee Forums had as main objectives: (1) To offer grantees and IOs an opportunity to share implementation experiences; (2) To discuss and assess different interventions done and planned; (3) To provide a networking opportunity for grantees, IOs and the PMU and (4) To enable the PMU to learn about common implementation issues and to share plans for the future.

4. Study Tours

Study tours to recognised successful projects can be an important boost towards translating good practices to other environments. Additionally it can be very instrumental for networking among participants of the tour. The Programme organised two study tours.

5. Organizational and individual mentoring through intermediary organizations

The PMU originally contracted 8 IOs that were brought on board as facilitators for grantees' growth and development. Initially it was felt that grantees may be more comfortable dealing with IOs than CSCBP. The IO being local based, part of the local CSO networks and with similar interests were seen as the best suited for this intervention.

To enable the IO to perform well, the Programme invested in building their capacity on a number of key skills required in their role as facilitators. These skills included coaching and mentoring, team building, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation skills such as questioning, in addition to skills like the application of the OCAT, PRMT, M&E, etc.

6. Project implementation visits by IO

One of the important roles of the IO was to keep the PMU abreast of the progress, problems, lessons learned in the implementation of grantee projects. For this a frequency of quarterly field visits to each grantee's project implementation sites was considered ideal. Probably that was too ambitious, since no IO accomplished this. A number of IOs never went to project implementation sites (3 out of 7), some went in the full Programme life cycle 1 time (1 of 7) while others (2 of 7) visited two times or more.

7. Cluster meetings

The original idea from the start of the collaboration with IOs was that on a quarterly basis joint meetings with all grantees in the cluster would be organised. This took off very slowly. After the first year only two IOs organised regular meetings. In the second year, after much pressure from the PMU, three more IOs followed suit. Yet these meetings were very important. In first instance it provided an opportunity for grantees to get to know each other in more depth. In several clusters this resulted in forms of collaboration among grantees, or between grantees and their IO, varying from tapping into each others expertise (for a fee), to presenting joint proposals that sometimes were funded (Eastern Uganda). The second objective of the cluster meetings was that they would serve as a preparatory step in a process of policy dialogue with local governments, but it did not really work out. The major reason was that the grantees in a cluster could be working in different technical areas and in different districts.

8. Feedback on periodic narrative and financial reporting

From early days in the Programme onward the PMU attempted to optimise the IO contribution towards achievements in the result areas. One way of doing this was to incorporate the IO in the CSCBP 'chain of command' and assign them the role of endorsing the grantee quarterly narrative and financial reports. A number of IOs resisted this, while others complied. The "no policing" argument was used by a number of IOs.

The model was ultimately accepted by all IOs and proved a very strong tool to improve the quarterly reporting by grantees. Particularly the quality of the financial reporting benefited much from this approach, which turned out in the interest of grantees by allowing for faster reimbursements from the PMU. It must be stated here that with only few exceptions the financial departments of the IO did a very good job on screening of grantee quarterly financial reports, providing feedback and on the job training to grantee accountants.

9. PMU monitoring visits

All disciplines in the PMU had a regular presence in the field from the early Programme implementation stages onward.

10. Best grantee award

This award was pre-announced about 7 months before in order to give grantees an opportunity to prepare themselves well for this competition. The assessment procedure consisted of visits to the grantee office to make an assessment of how much progress had been made with improvements on key OCA areas. There was a built in incentive

for grantees that were pro-active in the process of change and improvement. The best 17 grantees were extensively visited at their project implementation sites. During all these visits detailed feedback about their functioning was provided to grantees.

11. Positive Exposure for grantees

The Best Grantee award, with the accompanying press coverage is one example. Another is the publication of the East Africa Civil Society Handbook 2007, which was, amongst others, enabled by the large participation of CSCBP in the project.

12. Tools for grantees

The Programme developed a Donor Directory for grantees. In addition to their improved skills on proposal writing this contributed to grantees being able to make a better selection of appropriate donors.

13. Development of Internet Portal

An internet portal for civil society in Uganda was set up (www.civilsocietyforum.org) for organisations to post their profile on the portal that offers many options such as the creation of platforms for dialogue for specialised groups of CSO, information about major events can be provided, the policy consequences of major civil society issues can be dealt with in depth. The possibilities are almost without limit. However, the portal can only function as well as its participants make it function. That is the strength as well as the risk for such an enterprise. If there is a strong driving force of participants, which CSCBP tried to create from among its grantees then such a portal can develop into an important gateway for civil society matters and issues in Uganda.

2.4. Collaborations with public and private sector

State regulation

a. Draft NGO Policy and Support to dialogue on NGO legislation

Under the auspices and coordination of the Office of the Prime Minister the development of a regulation framework was undertaken to facilitate the involvement of CSOs in the development process.

This took, as described earlier, the form of developing a draft NGO policy, which, once accepted by Cabinet, will be a definite step forward towards an enabling policy and legal framework for NGOs to operate in. This does not imply that the draft NGO policy is a perfect document fully embraced by all in civil society. It is, however, important that the policy may be in place soon, filling a void, and opening options for contesting the NGO legislation, based on the policy, as well as offering space for amending and improving the policy itself in due course.

The results of the dialogue on the regulations of the NGO legislation are yet to be seen, although it is wise not to be too optimistic about NGO concerns being addressed integrally. The process in itself is however rather unique in Ugandan civil society history. As far as it is known, never before have NGOs worked together on legislation for the sector. In that sense this represents a major and positive precedent. The outcome may still leave a lot to be desired, but there are few countries where civil society, sometimes assisted by other actors, did not have to go through an

extended and painstaking negotiation process with their state representative bodies, to carve out the space required for CSOs to operate with minimal constraints and contribute to the development process.

It is probably justified to conclude that, although the NGO policy is far from ideal, it is acceptable for the time being. The legislation remains potentially restrictive, but the government has not often invoked it.

The cautious conclusion may be that in terms of the above aspects of the civil society operating environment some modest progress has been achieved in the past few years and that the CSCBP interventions and support to ongoing initiatives has been instrumental and to a degree effective.

b. Civil Society-Parliamentary Forum

It is crucial that civil society has access to and can influence the legislative process and can contribute its due share towards overseeing the executive. In practical terms: how can the interface between civil society and Parliament be improved?

In June 2007, The CSCBP organised a 3-day meeting between key actors in Parliament (Chairpersons of Sessional and Standing Committees of Parliament as well as Parliamentary Forums) and key civil society leaders. The theme of the meeting was: "Building Bridges".

The objective of the meeting was to open up channels for more intensive, more frequent and more effective collaboration between civil society and MPs. This was from the perspective of recognising the complementary roles between parliament and civil society in achieving democracy, good governance and development.

In December 2008, a workshop on Strengthening the Institutional Interface between Civil society and Parliament has been held under the auspices of the EC supported Human Rights and Good Governance Programme, as a follow up to the initiatives taken by the CSCBP. It represents an example of complementary programming. We may therefore conclude that this CSCBP intervention has been instrumental and may lead to important outcomes.

c. Advocacy Weeks

The Programme facilitated two Advocacy Weeks, one in Kampala in November 2006 and one in Lira (Northern Uganda) in February 2008. Both weeks were characterised by CSO networking, cooperation and coordination.

Part of what the advocacy weeks were supposed to show to the larger network CSOs was that collaboration and joining resources, while maintaining your own organisational identity and integrity, will enable CSOs to organise and be involved in events that are bigger than individual organisations can afford. Other objectives were the usual ones of engaging key decision makers and providing a platform for (policy) dialogue.

Donor Regulation

European Union: 10th EDF

Representatives from the EC Delegation in Uganda (among which on several occasions were different Heads of Delegation) attended CSSC meetings on a regular basis. In February 2005, the EC Delegation presented a request to the

CSSC to provide civil society contributions to the 10th EDF Uganda Country Strategy Paper (CSP). The CSSC stood up to the task and organised an open workshop to draw civil society views. This resulted in a report that was presented to the EC Delegation and taken by the then Head of Delegation to Brussels to present in the regional discussions preceding the 10th EDF country strategic papers.

At a later stage, both CSSC and PMU were requested to provide their inputs in the technical programming for the 10th EDF, particularly for the civil society component. This was done in a series of meetings with EC Delegation representatives from September to December 2007. A number of lessons learned and recommendations made by CSSC and the CSCBP made it into the 10th EDF social and political accountability approach. Although there is a grants and capacity building component in this 10th EDF governance approach, not all the inputs provided convinced the EC planners to create stronger links with the 9th EDF Programme, creating a distinct risk that the 10th EDF approach at least partly leaves a capacity building approach unfinished, as indicated by the MTR and repeatedly by the PMU and the CSSC, with a risk of social capital disinvestment.

Private sector

Almost anywhere in the world civil society is struggling to define its position towards the private sector, which for reasons of simplicity and clarity will be called: business. Simultaneously, many theorists and civil society practitioners try to find solutions for this supposedly "unfulfilled potential of civil society-business engagement".

As stated before, civil society and private sector relationships have not been the first priority in the CSCBP, partly due to the above well-known realities and the fact that in the Ugandan context this is not different and probably even more distinct. Any real impact on civil society and private sector relations, apart from incidental and isolated examples of forms of collaboration, would require a long term strategic effort with inclusion of the government that goes beyond the resources and timeframe of a programme like CSCBP.

CSCBP undertook a few modest attempts to bridge the wide perceptual, conceptual, attitudinal, professional and value gap between civil society and business.

The first was that the Programme brought together the CEOs of the main media houses in Uganda and key civil society leaders. Within civil society there is the perception that media are particularly interested to present the negative sides of their operations, although these are the exception. Many things that go well and are not reported, but make them go extremely well, or package them in an attractive way and it will be reported was a message from the media. Media need news, or existing facts attractively presented. And to make it attractive is not only the task of the media, but also of civil society. Media claimed to be civil society neutral.

The Programme organised two rounds of their so called Best Practice Award. The competition for this award was accessible for both for profit and not for profit organisations. Part of the objective of this award was to make visible to the 'other' sector that something good is going on in 'our' sector. The first Best Practice Award was won in 2006 by a private sector for profit organisation that had contributed to turning several hundred subsistence farmers into successful commercial farmers. The second award in 2008 had for profit and not for profit as separate categories with a winner each.

Chapter 3:

CSCBP Outcomes / Results / Impacts

3.1. Positive impact

The CSCBP has made a difference in many respects. The next paragraphs will mention a few of the more significant positive differences to which the Programme has contributed.

The first important development was the establishment of a Civil Society Steering Committee (CSSC) in 2001, which was mandated in March 2003 by a large group of civil society representatives to be the standing Steering Committee for the duration of the Programme. The CSSC was important supervising and guiding the Programme. Possibly even more significant, under the umbrella of a common objective it brought together 11 national network organisations. This feature enabled the members to further build their experience in broad-based networking and coordination with other national network organisations.

The Steering Committee has also experienced a few setbacks. Probably the main problem has been the rather unclear role of the Committee in the management structure of the Programme. Initially, the members of the Interim Committee had the idea that the management of the CSCBP would solely be their responsibility, but the realities of EDF programming sank in on the path towards the implementation of the Programme. The importance and potential of the CSSC is recognised by its members. In the closing phase of the Programme, a future role of the committee was being discussed and planned. At the time of writing this paper a serious and advanced discussion is ongoing about the conversion of the Committee into a forum with the working name: Civil Society Alliance. This 'alliance' will have a broader mandate and composition.

The second area where the Programme has made a difference can be seen in the nature and results of its relationship with its **contract partners.** A total of 49 CSOs received a grant to implement proposed projects. It will be shown that CSCBP interventions created positive differences in governance, management, accountability, transparency, service delivery, advocacy, external relations, etc., of its grantees.

Regarding IOs, who were the linking pin between grantees and the PMU, results are mixed. Although all IOs recognise that their liaison with CSCBP has been beneficial for their own organisation, it is also obvious that some IOs benefited more than others, and that some IOs performed their role more consistently, from the PMU perspective, than others.

An important third difference that the CSCBP has made regarding the stage of civil society capacity building actors in Uganda, has been a serious attempt to measure the impact of its interventions. Impact in this regard can be considered as actual changes in organisational behaviour on a number of pre-defined aspects. The strategic and carefully nurtured close relationship with its grantees, secured through grants, enabled the Programme to have effects. This is important from a methodological point of view and as a justification of certain capacity building approaches.

The fourth area in which an impact has been made relates to a number of clusters in which, under the guidance of intermediary organisations, a broadening of the civil society landscape has been accomplished. In some clusters, forms of civil society collaboration evolved that did not exist before the Programme. In one cluster in Eastern Uganda, grantees and their IO created a formal long term collaboration model that will continue after the Programme will end. This is confirmed in a Memorandum of Understanding between approximately 10 CSOs. In another cluster,

grantees and their IO created a separate advocacy platform (KASETAN) for issues in Universal Primary Education (UPE). At a later stage the platform was joined by other organisations in that region.

The fifth positive difference is based on contributions through the Office of the Prime Minister which was responsible for developing a regulation framework for government and civil society interaction. They decided that the best contribution would possibly be the development of an NGO policy, which did not exist in Uganda, although there had been NGO legislation since 1989. The draft NGO Policy was formulated in a participatory process with NGOs, government at different levels, development partners, Members of the Parliament and others. The perceptions on the process and the final product vary, depending on the different vantage points, but have been mainly positive. In other words, the perception that the policy is good exists next to the perception that the policy is not ideal but acceptable.

A sixth positive contribution has been the introduction of a number of interventions and approaches that were relatively new for civil society programming in Uganda and that were part of an indirect approach to more sector oriented capacity enhancement. This refers to offering spaces or platforms to CSOs to establish their own sectoral, structural, networking and coordination capacity requirements, as well as their own solutions. Examples are CSO Leaders' Retreats, Reflection Meetings, dialogues, publications etc. The combination of these initiatives was instrumental in promoting, in addition to other dynamics. Besides, the process of redefining the National NGO Forum mandate and strategy intensified attention for the development of the Quality Assurance Certification Mechanism and the application of a clearer strategy for dealing with NGO legislation and policy issues.

In the previous chapters some of the main activities and interventions of the CSCBP have been described, sometimes critically and always attempting to place them in a larger perspective. It appeared that on the one hand the Programme succeeded in accomplishing results in all of the five areas that the Financing Agreement described, whilst, on the other hand, and not surprisingly, it did not present a magic formula that has fully changed the operating environment and civil society and its organizations in Uganda. However, the CSCBP appears to have made a difference and in order to assess the real value of this difference, this chapter will provide an inventory of outcomes for each of the main interventions in relation to the pre-defined result areas of the Programme.

3.2. Outcomes of grants and grantee capacity building

Outcomes of the grant making and capacity building activities will be summarised in the next subchapters.

3.2.1. Institutional Development

Very few grants were provided to national network or apex organisations. Only two Steering Committee members, no other national networks, received a grant for technical projects, not aimed at improving their role as representative bodies.

However, the Programme extended the remit of this result area including intermediary organisations and grantees, since it is also important for them to be accountable, to network, coordinate and possibly be representative. It has been reported that 60% of the grantees improved on overall organisational/institutional performance. In this, accountability is one aspect next to external relations, which includes networking and coordination. In various reports it has been emphasised that relations and coordination with peer organisations as well as local governments have improved considerably. Around 35% of the grantees remained static.

Grantees networked and coordinated much more than before within their clusters among themselves with other CSOs and with local governments. On a national scale, grantees are networking following three main thematic lines (agro, HIV/AIDS, human rights). Moreover, there has been more collaboration and coordination between accountants as a consequence of the peer training approach.

IOs benefited from their involvement. Some of them applied the OCA on their own organisation and made changes leading to better functioning. IOs were the informal network coordinators for their cluster. All increased their knowledge about CSOs in their cluster and performed a coordinating role that was not done before.

3.2.2. Empowerment

Steering Committee members, grantees, intermediary organisations and district networks report without exception to be empowered by their participation in the Programme. Moreover, through the implementation of the grant projects many targeted populations have been empowered.

The PRMT which was rolled out to 24 grantees, resulted in at least 20 to 30 documented cases of rural communities influencing through actions of their own, policy or local executive decisions. This more than fulfils the requirement of this result area. Regarding the sustainability question it is presently too soon to have a final assessment.

For all grantees, the Programme required that a public project launch and a public project closure would be provided, in which targeted communities, peer organisations, local government representatives, local media and other stakeholders were to attend. This has been executed by 90% of the grantees. It served several purposes, such as accountability towards these stakeholders and public relations for the grantee, but also contributed to empowerment of the targeted populations by providing them with insight into the projects, the objectives, the resources available and their own role.

The empowerment of the grantee organisations themselves has been extensively reported and confirmed in the evaluative consultancies on the capacity building component.

3.2.3. Advocacy

Both external evaluations on capacity building have mentioned advocacy as one of the areas where the main progress has been achieved by grantees.

In one cluster, the IO and its grantees created a separate advocacy platform (KASETAN) that advocates on issues regarding primary education, which was joined by several other organisations in the Teso and Karamoja area.

Empowered populations advocate for their interests to be fulfilled. Therefore as far as rural communities are concerned, the same applies as stated in subchapter 3.2.2.

3.2.4. Service Delivery

Service delivery has improved for many grantees but also decreased a bit in quality for a number compared to the situation at the time of OCA1. The general scores of the comparative analysis of OCA 1 and OCA 2, however, clearly indicate an across the board improvement of service delivery by grantees.

One of the overall conclusions of the grant making in the programme is that grants were instrumental in establishing a longer term strategic relationship with grantees. This constituted the basis for the capacity building approach. Grants in their own respect, and certainly grants provided under EDF rules and regulations, require that grantees fall into the mode of quarterly reporting on progress in project implementation as well as finances. The majority of grantees performed, after some initial hiccups, in exemplary fashion. More than 70% fulfilled the reporting requirements fully and the remaining 30% to a good degree.

The grant projects provided a good point of entry for capacity building on M&E. This stretched from pre-proposal training on logical framework analysis to further training on implementing an M&E framework for a project. There is a justifiable degree of confidence regarding the sustainability of what has been achieved.

3.3. Outcomes of cross sectoral interventions

The approach towards the sector as a whole has achievements in different result areas.

3.3.1. Institutional Development

A concrete outcome of the Programme is the addition of standards for NGO network coordinating bodies (secretariats) in the Quality Assurance (Certification) Mechanism (QuAM).

Reflection meetings, public dialogues and comparable gatherings contributed to a deepening of the analysis (and sometimes strategising) on relevant issues for civil society. This created options for better coordination through networking. Concrete examples are found in NGO collaboration with the media: the discussion about network organisations in a changing environment.

Obviously, NGO leaders' retreats had an important role in coordination through networking. They also had a spin off in accelerating the QuAM roll out. More specific, they have been developing strategies for dealing with NGO legislation and for the structure of the NGO sector in stimulating and promoting a redefinition of the mandate of the National NGO Forum. The Steering Committee has been instrumental from the same perspectives. The CSSC feedback to its constituency set an example for accounting for one's deeds.

Advocacy Weeks did lead to concrete results and demonstrated to CS at large what coordinated approaches can accomplish.

A practical example of an approach through coordinated networking was the support to the feed-in process regarding the PEAP review and the NDP development. Since the NDP process is still ongoing the effects cannot yet be indicated.

3.3.2. Empowerment

In terms of the Financing Agreement this approach did not directly contribute to empowerment of vulnerable communities.

3.3.3. Advocacy

Advocacy training for CSSC members as well as the Advocacy Weeks indicated that well coordinated evidence based advocacy can be effective.

The persistent efforts of the National NGO forum and others towards the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) resulted in the Ministry calling back their proposed regulations to the NGO Act 2006.

The initial Programme support towards increasing the CSSC capacity on trade issues, resulted in a publication, a presentation and an event that fed in the ongoing debate on EPAs. The decision to leave the further advocacy to trade specialists was a wise one. The presentation of a civil society strategy for the 10th EDF fed into the early stages of the process. As a final result, CSSC involvement in advocacy has contributed to securing a civil society component for the 10th EDF. Stronger civil society involvement in the Civil Society Development Partner Group has led to representatives of this group taking clear and strong positions regarding NGO legislation and policy development in governmental forums.

Civil Society has taken a position in the debate on the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) review and NDP development with the preparation of 17 technical position papers that are being awarded serious consideration by the concerned line ministries.

3.3.4. Service delivery

The cross sectoral approach applied by the CSCBP, as interpreted in the Financing Agreement, did not lead to direct improvement of service delivery for national networks, since most of them are not involved in service delivery. Results are inconclusive regarding network functions and their members in terms of providing information, coordination, networking, etc.

Indirectly, the re-invention of the NGO Forum may lead to a better service delivery towards its members, the sector and more indirect stakeholders.

The CSSC members shared, on a continuous basis, information with their members.

The Programme did not consider better representation of members a priority.

3.3.5. Regulatory system

A Draft NGO Policy has been developed under the coordination of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Its presentation to cabinet is pending.

The situation on legislation is unclear. There has been a joint governmental and NGO approach towards reformulating the regulations. The actual result is unclear at present, but there are indications that the government will return to the original restrictive approach.

The Programme initiated meetings with Parliamentarians and civil society leaders. This resulted in a concept paper for a civil society/parliamentary forum with a civil society desk included in parliament which was presented in September of 2007 to the Speaker. The discussion has been continued in a workshop in December of 2008 under the auspices of the EC supported Human Rights and Good Governance Programme. Some agreements (civil society desk in Parliament) in this workshop built further on the CSCBP initiative.

3.3.6. In conclusion

CSCBP addressed all the result areas of the programme, sometimes slightly differently compared to the original design, and in several cases obtained more results than foreseen. Quite a number of outcomes need to be carried further by civil society, donors and government.

It may be stated that the specific purpose of the programme has been achieved except for the private sector component. This is not unexpected. Private sector and civil society collaboration are in its infancy, anywhere in the world. Within the constraints and framework of the CSCBP it was judged more appropriate to first concentrate on donors and government.

3.4. Grant management results

A summary conclusion of the grant management on financial accountability:

- 92% of grantees fully accounted for all their expenditures.
- 99.2% of all grantee funds were properly accounted for.
- 8% of grantees were not able to account for on average 1.5% of their grant amount.
- 10% of the grantees (5 organisations) were not able to account for the accumulated sum of UGX 65 million (Euro 30,000 out of Euro 4 million).
- The value for money reports of the auditor was positive. All grantees, except one could show ample evidence of their project implementation.
- Extensive training on governance, accountability and accounting has very positive results.
- Extensive monitoring of grantees has positive results on financial accountability.
- A relationship built on trust with grantees renders positive results.
- Some IOs contributed well to the grantee monitoring, while others did less.

3.5. OCA 1 and OCA 2: a comparative analysis

Another external evaluation has been the execution of OCA 2 in May of 2008 and a comparative analysis to OCA 1, which was carried out in May and June of 2006.

The period between the two organisational capacity assessments was two years. This is a sufficient long period for an analytical comparison of the organisational effectiveness of a grantee. However, for a sustainable organisational development process this period is still relatively short.

The consultant report states: "*A comparison between OCA 1 and OCA 2 suggests substantial improvements in most of the assessment parameters, especially governance. Of the 26 organisations with both OCA 1 and OCA 2 scores, fifteen CSO recorded a performance improvement of 50% and above, seven CSO remained static, while 4 declined as compared to OCA 1. The decline is not quite significant and was a result of a number of factors most of which were governance.*"

3.5.1. Governance performance

Governance considerably improved in the Programme period. 88% of the grantees made good to very good improvements in the way their organisations are governed. Only 12% made no significant progress on governance. No grantee came out with a governance system being worse than the one at OCA 1. As the consultant states in his report, considering performance indicators, the progress was probably most significant in governance.

3.5.2. Service delivery

For approximately 35% of the grantees the quality of service delivery remained static. A clear improvement in the service delivery quality could be observed with 45% of the grantees. Another 20% of the grantees experienced decreases in the quality of services they provided.

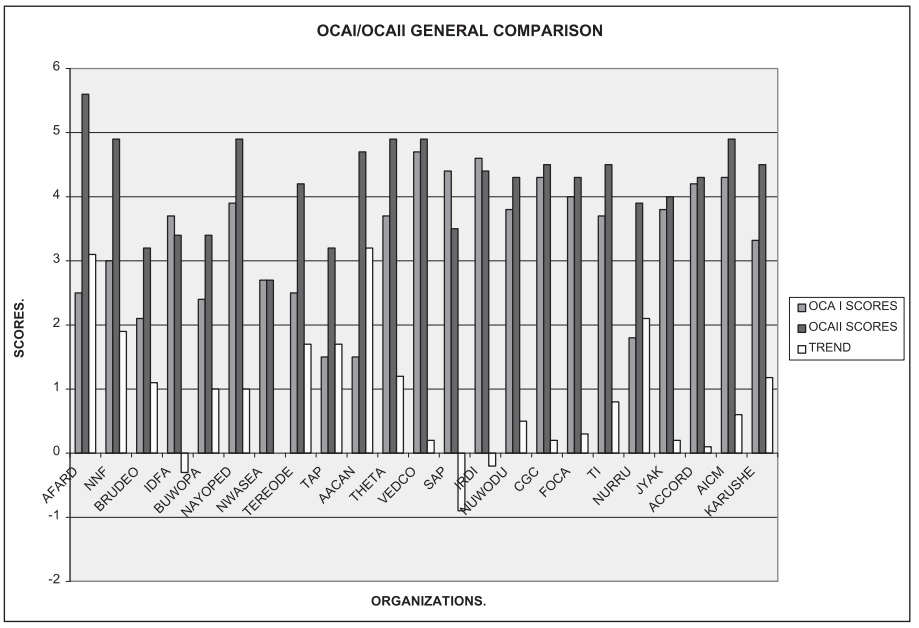
3.5.3. Financial management results

The grantees have, almost without exception, improved their financial management capacity. Around 90% of all grantees had an unqualified external audit report, in other words: no ineligible expenditures. About 10% of the grantees had an audit qualification, but half of them for relatively small amounts between 1,000 and 2,000 Euros. There are a few grantees that have audit qualifications around 10,000 Euros.

3.5.4. Overall performance

In this paper this chapter will be concluded with a graph that shows the overall comparison of OCA 1 and OCA 2. The consultant states: *"It is apparent that from the comparative analysis of the seven thematic areas there has been significant improvement in most organisations. The improvement is attributed to OCA 1 which facilitated the building of systems and procedures for organisational governance and operations."*

Graph 5 *OCA I & OCA II Comparisons for Individual Organizations*



Positive changes were attributed to OCA 1 as it was the first baseline measurement. Also, the strong buy-in that was created for the capacity building approach, created the momentum for grantees dedicatedly working on the improvement of their overall capacity.

For the purpose of this paper the following general figures are of importance. They refer to grantees with an overall performance improvement on all OCA parameters of:

More than 25%	accomplished by	27% of grantees	
			Total 58% improved
From 5 to 25%	accomplished by	31% of grantees	
			Total 35% static
Static (-5 to +5%)	accomplished by	35% of grantees	
			Total 7% decreased
Less than -5%	accomplished by	7% of grantees	

Chapter 4

Reflexions

4.1. What worked and what not

The CSCBP took an institutional mentoring approach using the PMU and IOs. The Programme intervention logic was instrumental and it is envisaged to have created a multiplier effect for and after the Programme. IOs, however, needed to have further built individual capacities within the institutions to act as reference points for greater sustainability.

The direct grant system acted both as an incentive and direct input into the CSO work, with demonstrable effects. Equally important was the top-down support provided by the PMU and IOs. This integrated model provides a useful capacity building model that is in line with Government Policy, especially the National Training Policy and the National Local Government Capacity Building Policy.

The cluster model worked to a degree but was not optimised by most of the IOs. There was a distinct reluctance with a number of IOs to organise regular cluster meetings with all their grantees. However, these meetings have been one of the most powerful instruments to "get the cluster CSOs together", to make them collaborate and strategise jointly.

Another way of grouping CSOs as compared to the geographic clustering in CSCBP are clusters based on thematic focus of organisations. Clusters based on "organisational maturity", or the prevalence of certain capacity gaps, may be more complicated to accomplish and to make functional. However, this approach could risk stigmatising the weaker organisations.

The model of using IOs had mixed results. There are many reasons for this but one of the more crucial ones is that the terms of reference for such IOs need to be more specific than those used by CSCBP. The monitoring of IOs on hardcore outputs needs to be stricter. The time that the IO needs to dedicate to being an IO requires a better calculation, analysis and acceptance. The grantees, or clients, need to be empowered to demand for IO services and will regularly have to report the quality of these services.

Generally the training that CSCBP offered was considered relevant and of good quality. It is very easy to say that training should be more specific on organisation, taking the development stage of an organisation into consideration, etc., but this is not easy to implement on a large scale. One possibility would be to provide capacity building funding to individual CSOs in order for them to choose their own training options and preferences.

Another way is to use an Output Based Approach, in which professional organisations are provided with funds to develop a training package on a module basis and CSOs choose what they think is useful using their capacity building funding accordingly.

4.2. Has civil society as a whole benefited from the Programme?

Probably one of the important characteristics of Ugandan civil society has been its relative isolation. In both the pre- and post-independence history of Uganda it has been exposed to authoritarian governance systems, either colonial,

military or (semi-) civilian. At no time in the last century, until today, are appreciated powers being criticised or challenged. There have been times that any organisation, or individual, who made a critical note in the public (or even private) arena, took very considerable risks, ultimately in some periods, the risk of death.

It is against this background that civil society has developed. Even the mushrooming of CSOs after the NRM took power was still guided by the internalised knowledge that there was no harm in being extremely cautious in what you stated or published. And there have been good reasons for this behaviour. This is, at least a partial explanation for the apparent, as observed by many, meekness of CSOs and their preference for service delivery and development. It is only gradually over the last two decades that CSOs start using the space to critically follow the state and its institutions, but there is a positive development recognisable in this regard.

Presently civil society is engaging the government on the NGO Policy as well as on the NGO legislation. They have participated in the consultations, actively sought the dialogue and contributed in the dialogue. Yet, if the government now falls back on its previous operational mode and decides in isolation, as it did with the NGO Bill, they certainly will be contested more compared to the past.

The CSCBP brought CSO leaders together on a regular basis to either brainstorm and discuss issues (reflection meetings) or to strategise, coordinate, decide on intra-sector relevant matters (the structure of the NGO sector, the re-invention of the NGO forum, the QuAM etc.) in strategic leaders' retreats. Also inter-sector relevant matters were discussed, but it was clear that the intra-sector issues had the upper hand.

First the civil society and NGO household needed apparently to be sorted out. This was new, particularly the scale on which it took place, and the hardcore relevance of what was discussed, while a number of the younger leaders in addition to a sharp analysis introduced a frankness and openness in the discussions that was as refreshing as it was needed.

Possibly due to its proximity to civil society, one of the merits of the Programme may have been that it recognised the signals, and availed the resources to channel the signals into civil society action, at that stage pretty much internal action.

In further chapters on outcomes, lessons learned and conclusions it will be stipulated again, that this programme had its relevance, probably a rather crucial relevance, to enable civil society to undertake what it was able to undertake at the time of the implementation period of the CSCBP.

A few conditions are now in place, to some of which the Programme contributed, for civil society to keep developing. Some of these conditions, such as the gradual turn over in leadership were not directly influenced by the Programme. Others, like extending QuAM to network organisations, CS leaders planning together, NGO Policy, putting relevant issues on the CS agenda, providing resources for NDP inputs etc. and many other things were to a great extent initiated by the Programme.

4.3. Grant management: Partnership or power broking?

In a number of cases, e.g. when certain reporting requirements were not fulfilled, or accountabilities provided were incomplete, monies for the next period were delayed by the PMU, until the grantee had properly addressed these matters. In a limited number of cases the PMU was of the opinion that a grantee needed to address certain governance

issues. When this did not happen, or not to the extent the PMU considered desirable, grant monies were sometimes frozen until the grantee in question had convincingly addressed the matter.

Has this collaboration model been based on a partnership philosophy or was it power broking? Was the grant management process characterised by a relationship based on mutual respect between partners of equal weight and stature?

The special and general grant contract conditions, as well as the EDF regime of Programme Estimates, were crucial aspects that informed the way and provided part of the background against which the grant management was executed in CSCBP.

Management towards the grantees was guided by a partnership approach in combination with an emphasis on substance (institutional development of grantees, empowered communities etc.). However, exactly because of the definition of the relationship between partners of equal weight and stature, the PMU was entitled to make its collaboration principles clear as part of the mutual agreement. All partners were supposed to live up to the conditions as stipulated in the grant contract, as was the PMU. Reporting and accountabilities needed to be timely, transparent and correct. The PMU was supposed to transfer the next tranche of fund as soon as possible after approval of reports. When governance structures stood in the way of transparency and accountability, the grantee was expected to ensure this was changed. There was no compromise on transparency and accountability. These conditions were known to grantees and the PMU acted accordingly. This was not power broking but the execution of a partnership based on agreed principles. Programme management did not consider proper grant management possible without these conditions to be fulfilled.

4.4. Did grantees fulfill their proposed objectives?

Grantee objectives evolved around three main themes: empowerment, advocacy and appropriate service delivery. The grantees have fulfilled their proposed objectives to a larger extent as is confirmed by the consultancy report on the Assessment of the capacity building inputs. The consultancy report compared OCA 1 of 2006 and OCA 2 of 2008 as well as the value for money part of the audit among 49 grantees.

Empowerment

The empowerment processes undertaken have been contextual and specific to the interventions of the various supported grantees. Overall, the empowerment of the wider community in resource planning and monitoring has been slow due to, among others, the unexpanded use of the PRMT. However, there are clear examples of empowerment of specific groups and interests in the fields of agriculture, health, and poverty monitoring. The following is a mere illustration: Formation of savings and credit cooperatives (e.g. VAD, VEDCO, ECCA); Communities influencing PMA/NAADS decisions (e.g. KIIDA, TAP, VEDCO, IDFA); Farmers running their own marketing coalitions (e.g. IDFA, VEDCO, VAD); Communities linking directly to government departments for technical assistance (e.g. KADIFA, IDFA); Local councils taking local government to task to explain budget expenditures to the public (AFARD); Communities engaging local government in dialogue on healthcare (eg. THETA, TERREWODE, KADO, TAP). The challenge lies, however, in using these numerous successful examples as focal points to engage the wider community in the implementation and monitoring of poverty eradication programmes to improve livelihoods, consistent with the original required result on empowerment.

Advocacy

The support to CSOs has contextualized advocacy to the district and sub-county levels to help the target groups to solve local challenges.

Examples include: Research on herbal treatment of animals to engage technical departments (e.g. VAD, VEDCO); Marketing research to provide bargaining options for farmers (VAD, KADO, IDFA, VEDCO); Election of special interest groups to the executive councils at sub county and district levels, specifically to advocate for their needs (e.g. NUWODU-KAWIDA, IDFA).

In fact, in most of the successful examples in advocacy, it is observed that: *"where the issues are identified with the local people, the people take a lead role and issues stand a better chance to be resolved"*. This can contribute to the discussions among donors and agencies supporting the development of civil society in Uganda. It constitutes a departure from the usual practice in advocacy, where NGOs based at the national level do not necessarily derive empirical data from the grassroots, which can lead to misrepresentation.

The areas that need improvement in advocacy are: documentation, information sharing, networking and alliance building and forming linkages with organizations at the national and even international levels for real policy influencing.

Appropriate Service Delivery

There are salient examples of empowered communities demanding changes in PMA/NAADS, health service delivery systems and practices: Districts to provide appropriate training to both government and traditional medical practitioners for better health care (THETA, TERREWODE, KADO, NAYODEP, and TAP) and special interest group representatives (disabled, women) at both sub-county and district levels demanding to know the use of budget provisions to improve their plight (NUWODU-KAWIDA, AFARD).

However, the scope of involvement of the wider community (beyond the target groups of the supported CSO) to demand appropriate services is still limited. Inclusive participation should enhance both the top-down accountability (sub-county, district) and the demand side, from the community. This may require scaling up and extension of the use of PRMT.

The audit report of all grantees supports this by confirming that almost each and every grantee offered value for money in their project implementation.

The community empowerment processes have mainly related to the target groups engaging local government on their specific needs. The involvement of the wider community in resource planning and monitoring, by a few of the supported CSOs, remains a slow process.

In quite a few cases, empowered communities are able to continue projects of grantees such as NUWODU, IRDI and VEDCO. These projects appear to be sustainable.

The aspect of sustainability made the participating community to function with minimal oversight from CSOs. As a consequence of the variety of project interventions many groups can organize their own meetings to discuss their own agendas; the participating farmers arrange their own meetings and negotiations with agricultural input providers, middlemen and local governments, especially at the sub-county level; in the case of special interest groups like

people with disabilities there has been self-realization; moving from self-pity to hard work and earning community respect; many communities keep records of their activities and a good number of communities have made their own contacts with other organizations and agencies for possible collaboration.

4.5. Conditions for efficient and effective grant management

From the CSCBP experience the following conditions and principles could go a long way in ensuring effective grants management:

Accessibility

The fund should be publicized widely, in national and local newspapers and on the internet with links from websites of other organisations involved in civil society development in order to make it accessible to organisations based outside the capital. The funder should provide different sizes of grants to make the fund accessible to organisations of different size, focus and capacity. There should be clarity from the start regarding what will and what will not be funded, and why. Such clarity should be available to all involved in running the fund, and to potential grantees. It includes considering whether the fund will cover material and personnel costs, projects, and the timescale for funding.

Embody humility

Donors are in service to nonprofit organizations and therefore donors and their representatives need to be humbled above all else. One of the easiest ways to sustain humility is to recognize that donors are dependent. Without the creativity, knowledge and programming of CSO, donors would not be able to pursue their missions. Therefore there is need to build mutual trust and respect given that the donor and the grantee are both partners in development.

Engage with empathy

Develop a perspective of standing in the CSO shoes. Empathizing with grantees involves developing a deeper appreciation for their work. This helps create an intimate understanding of the challenges, goals and exhilarations of the people serving our partner organizations.

Ask questions and listen with an open mind

Listening requires both willingness and ability. Encouragement of dialogue shows that donors are actually concerned with and interested in the experience and resources that CSO bring to the table. Dialogue also enables donors to be responsive to current needs and opportunities. Donors must be willing to truly listen and resist tendencies to offer strong advice that stifles communication and erodes mutual respect.

Build goodwill and trust

This cultivates both internal and external relationships because these lead to better grants. Relationships characterized by trust and goodwill create an environment where CSO feel comfortable approaching the donor with problems. Building and maintaining relationships requires an investment over time which starts with donors' openness about grant making practices.

Be accountable

Donors share responsibility for outcomes and effectiveness together with their beneficiaries. Donors who form good relationships with CSOs share a sense of responsibility for accomplishments and failures. Donors should regularly evaluate themselves and strive to maximize their effectiveness. They should also use a variety of strategies to monitor their performance to remain accountable to the CSO they serve. Encourage the accounts of both donors and grantees to be externally audited annually and the reports published. Also ensure that the reporting requirements for both the fund and its beneficiaries are established in advance of any grant making, on the basis of extensive consultation with donors and potential grantees. An annual meeting with all stakeholders should be held for reflection, experience sharing and networking.

Sustain a fundamental commitment to learning

Learn from those doing the work. In addition to active listening, donors should view CSOs with which they interact as teachers, experts and resources. This helps the donor to be exposed to important things happening in the community.

Hold firm on insisting that grantees meet agreed-upon objectives

Donors need to strike a balance between flexibility and accountability. If the grant is going well, an informal and friendly working relationship will develop over time which can easily lead donors to forgive deviations in performance. Grantees will naturally want the ability to change their plans over time, but they also benefit from a sense of external pressure to reach well-defined goals that are not easily modified. It is difficult to find the right point between insisting on progress toward the goals that was mutually agreed to at the outset and adjusting to new circumstances.

Community involvement in monitoring of projects

The participatory resource monitoring tool (PRMT) model created a medium of information exchange between community and the local authorities. Community involvement in project monitoring and evaluation ensures viable operations and maintenance of ownership of assets.

Timely disbursement

There was late disbursement of grant funds in some quarters which caused breaks in implementing activities. This was a result of a combination of several factors ranging from late accountability, poor reporting and incomplete documentation. There is need for timely disbursements for grant management to be successful.

Continuous technical support

Technical support through trainings like strategic planning, proposal development, financial management, resource mobilisation etc. should be continuous to ensure continuous improvement in the implementation of these projects.

4.6. Sustainability of the capacity building interventions

It may be fairly safe to assume that where Programme interventions did lead to structural changes in organisational governance, finance systems, management systems, written policies etc. there is a reasonable chance that these changes are sustainable at the institutional level of the CSOs.

Sustainability -in terms of organisational sustainability- is an issue that would require further capacity building inputs. Even then, due to the fact that all of the grantees are almost 100% depending on external funding, the outcome is hard to predict. A programme, simply stated, is no guarantee to build sustainable organisations. It may contribute a few conditions which have to be further developed by the organisations themselves. A number of grantees do have potential and a good chance to become organisations that will prosper in the coming 10 years or more. Others will not, which is a fairly normal process among relatively young organisations, profit or non profit.

When communities have successfully interfered with something (whether schools, health centres roads, seeds, markets etc.) they will have a tendency to use comparable approaches in the future for other, or the same, areas where they have influenced policies, budgets, teachers, health post construction etc.

There is no guarantee that this follow-up intervention will be successful and that the people involved will be ready to continue collaborating together, lobby and advocate with local authorities, CSOs and others for fulfilling their interests. In other words, sustainability at the community level is a concept that it is rather slippery as well as advisable.

Chapter 5

Lessons Learned and Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

Providing a summary of lessons learned is a rather standard element of ending a programme report. In the case of CSCBP the problem is not scarcity but affluence and thus one of selecting the lessons most relevant for other support programmes to civil society, for civil society itself, for the European Commission, the government and other stakeholders.

One problem in planning within the context of EDF programming is that the planning for the next cycle has to be undertaken before the programmes of the previous cycle have been completed. As a consequence it can be observed that many experiences and lessons from previous cycles do not make it into next cycles, which to a degree explains why development programming in the EDF context is not always optimal.

Another trend that needs to be observed with some caution is the drive towards joint funding modalities. This in the midterm inevitably leads to less variety in what is being funded. Donors nowadays apparently pay as much, or more, attention to the formats and modalities of programme and project assistance and delivery, than to the content. Efficiency is the magic buzz and a key performance standard that aid providers have to fulfil towards their HQs.

It is probably an illusion that (sector) budget support will provide better results for civil society or governance programming. This partly due to the fact that the supply side of governance has a natural inclination to influence the demand side, to neglect demands or to make functional demands impossible by manipulating the fund flows. In other words, the supply side will have an inherent drive to prove that what it supplies is what is required, and more so when the overall governance structure is already characterised by a fairly unilateral approach in policy making as is the case of Uganda.

In order to systemise the approach, in this chapter an attempt will be made to summarise a number of key lessons at different levels of civil society interactions with their target populations, (local and national) government and donors (programmes / projects, funding mechanisms, overall policy making).

Regarding the use of OCAT, it was concluded that there were there were shortfalls in almost all areas of organisational effectiveness. Capacity assessment tools measure only what they have defined as organisational effectiveness, so there is a risk that other deficiencies are hidden behind the categories of the tool. A category of open ended questions is a partial solution for that.

Due to the fact that the PMU coordinated the addressing of the most frequent capacity gaps, the approach developed was generic to a high extent. Additionally, there was a general common factor among most of the grantees, i.e. the capacity gap was large. Few organisations distinguished themselves positively on the OCA measured areas. Programme management was fully aware of the fact they embarked on a generic approach and had its reasons, but still balanced it against a more organisation specific approach. Two options were looked into:

- A real organisation-specific approach with an organisational development approach cut to the exact needs of each specific grantee. The time required and the costs involved were totally prohibitive within the context of CSCBP.

- Another more specific approach could have been to sample grantees into groups with approximately equal levels of incapacity (with an implicit apology for this terminology) in the measured areas of organisational effectiveness. This would have led to so much overlap and duplication in the developed training programmes that it did not justify the at least double costs and time required for both development and delivery.

A way out would have been to develop extensive modular approaches for each of the OCA areas of organisational effectiveness. However, this would have required so much time and technical assistance inputs that it would have crammed the modules in a too short timeframe and have created a real overload of training. Additionally it would have depleted the budgets that would have to be used for delivery.

5.2. Lessons at the CSCBP micro level

For the purpose of this report the CSCBP micro level includes grantee projects and targeted populations, grantees as autonomous CSOs and IOs coordinating the capacity building effort in a cluster.

Lesson 1

There are many more genuine, dedicated, talented, creative and effective CSOs operational at district and lower levels than is known by national civil society actors, development partners and the government of Uganda.

The Best Practice Award (BPA) organised two times by the CSCBP provided a wealth of information about CSOs (and for profit organisations) all over Uganda. The first BPA of 2006 resulted in almost 500 forwarded applications of which roughly 400 were CSOs. In the second BPA around 160 CSO were forwarded for the award.

Based on these and many other observations it may be safe to state that the strength of civil society in Uganda is underestimated, also because the focus of such assessment has almost fully been on Kampala and a very limited number of up-country CSOs.

Many organisations are almost fully neglected by the regular donor community and their opportunities for accessing funding from institutional donors is very limited. Some creative thinking needs to go into what possible ways could be designed to stimulate and support these and comparable CSO.

Lesson 2

A generic capacity building approach based on a thorough needs assessment is sensible in a multi-grantee, multi-partner programme, however space needs to be created for partner specific requirements (through IOs or otherwise). CSCBP has been unable to do this due to time, budgetary and capacity constraints.

The preceding chapters provided sufficient back up for this lesson. Grants, if managed properly, can be an excellent point of entry for capacity building. About 60% of grantees are proven to have benefited much very much from the capacity building approach. They became better organisations in terms of governance, financial systems and accountability, management practices, external relations, advocacy, service delivery, etc.

Lesson 3

Intermediaries (other CSOs, individuals) as key players and (co-)capacity builders is a model that can work, can add value, but it depends very much on the importance and priority that the intermediary gives to this role in their overall activities and budget, and equally whether intermediaries themselves are prepared to learn and be flexible.

This lesson refers to the mixed bag of experiences with IOs in the CSCBP. It is probably time to experiment and assess the contributions in this regard, that could be made through private sector organisations. Making capacity building output- and outcome-based is in its infancy, but does deserve serious consideration and piloting, also with a view to empowering CSO making their own capacity building choices.

5.3. Lessons at the CSCBP meso level

The lessons at this level deal with the management of a civil society capacity building approach, the functioning of national networks or CSOs who are dealing with issues of national significance and civil society coordination.

Lesson 4

Although it has the burden of possibly being perceived as "kicking in an open door" it cannot be sufficiently emphasised that: Proper, timely, transparent and substance communication, at all levels, with all partners and all stakeholders in a civil society support programme is crucial to create and maintain sufficient levels of buy-in at all stages of implementation.

Clear enough.

Lesson 5

The role of recording and documenting for an in a principle software approach such as CSCBP is of crucial importance in order to be able to demonstrate what the effects of certain interventions are. If it is not indicated to partners what requires documentation and in which formats, then it will not be done or on a very limited scale.

This lessons stresses the importance of documented monitoring and evaluations. CSCBP did this fairly well.

Lesson 6

Civil society representative bodies like the CSSC, may not be experienced as representative bodies. The members of such bodies themselves may not necessarily feel they represent anything else but their own organization. It may be worth considering taking the representational aspect away and emphasising a think tank role.

The CSSC did have a crucial role in the Programme, although, as indicated earlier its functioning was not optimal, since it was too much distracted in (petty) programme management issues on which it did not have a real influence anyway. When such a body has a free and primary role as a 'think tank' it may be of more use to the management of a programme. Such a change in focus might be accompanied by a different composition of the committee.

Lesson 7

Very frequent shortcomings of CSO are: imperfect governance structures and financial systems; low level of preparedness or understanding and effort towards the need to be transparent to beneficiary communities, (local) government, member organisations, or the public at large.

Probably this is what many observers expected, however it has been good to see it confirmed in the different OCA. What is also good that it has been demonstrated that these issues can be successfully addressed, even on a rather large scale.

Lesson 8

Communication in and by civil society does not receive the attention it deserves e.g. nationwide exposure of QuAM may have been attempted, but, except for a fairly select group who is aware, there are probably thousands of NGO who are not aware at all that such self regulatory mechanism is in process of being rolled out.

Few CSOs in Uganda, and this applies even to national networks, have a communication strategy, while at the same time many CSOs in Uganda are dissatisfied with the media coverage civil society gets.

NGOs in Uganda score rather high on the public trust index. This, despite the fact that many people have relatively little knowledge about the issues that other CSOs than the NGOs in their neighbourhood, parish or sub-county are involved in. To maintain this position of relative high trust will, however, require dedicated communication efforts.

Lesson 9

District and even national level networks, are often less transparent, accountable and even functional than many autonomous CSOs. Few networks are able to demonstrate what the value added is they offer to their members. Membership is, in addition to being a sensitive issue, also a concept that is being inflated by overstressing numbers.

This touches, amongst others, on the representational capacity of networks, a contentious subject. Under the result area 'institutional development' the CSCBP was supposed to contribute to national networks and apex organisations becoming more representative. Another, not easy to resolve, question is whether a network that unites anti corruption organisations is stronger with its 100 members, than a network dealing with child protection that has only 25 members.

Probably the number of members of any network is of less consequence than the content of its messages.

Whatever the ultimate truth on these issues, if there is such a thing, what networks themselves could definitely improve upon is networking with their members. A good network at least has a continuous 'feel' of issues living among its members.

Lesson 10

The general perception is that the real brain power in civil society and thus the strategic thinking and conceptualizing is limited to relatively few CSO, networks or apex organizations, who are Kampala based. This perception is incorrect.

It is unfortunate, but it has to be stated, this misconception may be supported by some Kampala based CSOs. The CSCBP due to its national coverage, in depth interaction with its grantees, its best practice awards and through several other channels has found that the "up-country' factor in civil society has much to contribute. Even on the

so-called bigger issues. This leads to the challenge how to make those voices heard? The new National NGO Forum strategy appears to provide some openings for this. The CSO leaders' retreats, in which a considerable number of 'up-country' CSO representatives participated, were one of the more effective interventions for coordination and strategising purpose in civil society.

5.4. Conclusions

This paper was an attempt to share some of the richness of the experience in the CSCBP.

A first and important conclusion is that grants can act as a positive vehicle in capacity building of autonomous CSOs. It has to be ensured that the grants management modality is positive, based on partnership and mutual learning, but, with that in place, the longer term relationship cemented by the grants is a good foundation for capacity building interventions. Even the grants themselves, with their opportunities for broad based accountability (public project launch and closure), planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting requirements are an important element in the capacity building mix.

In the second place the Programme has demonstrated that a large scale CSO capacity building approach is possible, can be implemented systematically and in a way that the impacts can be measured. It may be the first time this has been done at this scale in Uganda. It has been demonstrated that at least 60% of the CSOs who were grantees have benefited, sometimes very much, in terms of their organisational development. In other words 30 out of 49 grantees are proven to be better organisations now than they were 3 years ago. Around 15 of the remaining organisations have benefited from the exposure provided by the Programme, and may have improved in one or two areas of organisational effectiveness, without being able to make the claim of overall organisational development. These organisations remained static, according to the Programme's assessment. A minority of around 4 of the grantees did experience some setbacks instead of progress, mostly due to factors not under the control of the CSCBP.

Large scale CSOs capacity building is possible, and can be undertaken efficiently at reasonable overall cost. The grants and capacity building components of the Programme took around 50 % of the overall Programme budget. The present donor interest may appear to concentrate on other matters today, but those seriously interested in developing civil society in Uganda need to be (made) aware that national scale, cost effective development of CSOs in Uganda is within the realm of what is affordable and possible and that the results of such efforts are measurable.

The CSCBP also demonstrated that it is possible to have an impact on the overall status and functioning of civil society in Uganda as perceived by donors, the government and national civil society representatives themselves. It is important to recognise here that classic approaches for building the capacities of civil society actors of national relevance such as apex organisations and national networks, as well as national advocacy organisations have not been employed in the Programme. Reasons were budget limitations, a desire for cost effectiveness, the present status of the concerned individual organisations and their leadership and the fact that no known and tested approaches in the context of other countries have set positive precedents to be followed. For these and other reasons the programme applied an approach, with civil society itself in the driving seat that concentrated more on offering space, platforms and opportunities than on guidance. The conclusion of Programme management is that this approach worked to a reasonable degree.

One of the major problems regarding civil society development is that those involved (e.g. donors) often use standards derived from different environments, which may not be the proper ones to use in the Ugandan context. The old wisdom

that in processes of social development it is not desirable to want to move faster than the ball in order to avoid being off side and thus irrelevant for the game, inspired the Programme's approach that opportunities needed to be created for civil society leadership to make up their mind about issues and to strategise and coordinate together. Out of this approaches like 'reflection meetings' (which will be continued by the NGO Forum) and 'leaders' retreats' were born. Particularly the latter had some direct effect on the 'sector' as a whole. The need for restructuring the (particularly NGO) sector led to the NGO Forum re-inventing itself, adopting a new strategy and approach. These meetings also provided the insight to civil society leaders that 'space' for civil society operations and functionality is not the prime issue in Uganda. There is space in abundance. What matters is how this space is used. These meetings were further instrumental for the acceptance of QuAM as a self regulatory mechanism for NGOs and the need for emphasis on the roll out, for a strategy of engagement as regards the long standing issue of NGO legislation and other issues.

Support to intensify the debate on donor architecture has been instrumental. In addition the Programme commissioned a study on donor harmonisation that will feed into this debate: in the first instance within a civil society that needs to establish its position in order to further strategise its engagement of donors on the issue.

For the first time NGO representatives and representatives of the NGO Board and the MoIA worked together on the formulation of regulations to the NGO law. The results of this unique collaboration are still to be seen, but it may signify a shift in approach of civil society: engagement. On the subject of developing a draft NGO policy NGO also actively engaged. They participated in many meetings and put forward many proposals for amendment of the draft policy. Again the outcome of the process is still pending.

The government is treading in this regard on a risky path. It is caught between consultative approaches and its own considerations on policy and legislation. The absorbing of consultation outcomes is apparently one bridge too far for a government that is still struggling with democratic processes. The risk the government takes is that it may further alienate important parts (e.g. leaders) of its population. To ask people for their opinion and contributions and then to basically communicate that "your views are inconsequential for us", is the government's prerogative, but may carry some costs particularly in the situation that the real governmental considerations are not publicised. Although the CSCBP has made some contributions towards a civil society that operates and coordinates differently, hopefully more effectively, at the national level, some of the changes are also and importantly attributable to intra civil society dynamics, such as a gradual turnover of the civil society leadership to a younger generation.

The Civil Society Steering Committee has been demonstrating the advantages of coordination among national civil society actors for the last 5 years. Its importance in this regard has been recognised and provides a reason why the committee may continue to function, possibly or likely in another composition and of course with a different mandate as the Civil Society Alliance (or under another name).

5.5. A final word

Civil society, to follow on the DENIVA report on the civil society indexing in Uganda, is indeed 'at a crossroads". Its gradually rejuvenating leadership faces a multiparty dispensation in its infancy and a standing government that is getting rather old, slow, and remaining unprepared to give in on their traditional areas of control and regulation.

An environment as sketched in the above paragraph might all too easily lead to a degree of disappointment in civil society circles, since it most likely will frustrate, at least partly, civil society's attempts to create their own space and their own regulation mechanisms. Disappointment and bitterness often feed into more extreme positions and actions.

It is, however, doubtful whether this will be effective in the present operating environment. It may result in a further clamping down on essential freedoms.

The probably more effective approach might be to maximise the utilisation of channels for government and civil society engagement. To create wide civil society alliances for coordination and strategising is considered to be crucial. However, it needs to be made clearer to the public at large, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. development partners), what this engagement and its outcomes entail. Strategies to communicate the policy dialogue processes and the way the voice of the citizens of Uganda is appreciated or neglected will be essential for civil society organisations to make themselves better heard and listened to.

The CSCBP overall conclusion is that civil society in Uganda, in all its aspects, represents a social, economic and political factor of importance, a pool of talent and thousands of activities all over the country that contribute to poverty alleviation and empowerment of local rural and urban populations.

Civil society is there to stay, to grow and to become more effective. The proper mix of its own strong intra-sector dynamics and external support may contribute to a balanced development of Uganda.

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Resumen: En este documento se detalla un programa de la Comisión Europea de fortalecimiento institucional de la sociedad civil en Uganda. Este programa, de tres años de duración, persigue adecuar las políticas del gobierno local y los programas de desarrollo a las demandas de los sectores más vulnerables. El objetivo específico del programa es el fortalecimiento de la sociedad civil para que trabaje junto con el gobierno, el sector privado y los donantes en las políticas y el proceso de desarrollo. Para ello, el programa capacitará a ONG locales en 5 áreas: fortalecimiento institucional interno, empoderamiento, incidencia, prestación de servicios y marco regulatorio nacional.

Palabras clave: sociedad civil, fortalecimiento institucional, desarrollo local, desarrollo de capacidades.

Abstract: This paper presents an European Commission program on capacity building of civil society in Uganda. This three-year program aims to adapt local government development policies to the demands of the most vulnerable sectors. The objective of the program is to strengthen civil society to enable it to work together with government, private sector and donors along the development process. In order to achieve this goal, NGOs will be trained in 5 areas: institutional development, empowerment, advocacy, service delivery and regulatory system.

Keywords: civil society, institutional development, local development, capacity building.

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