



Connections for Development

The Partnerships Programme Arrangements (PPAs):
The Way Ahead

DFID Public Policy Consultation

Diaspora and Stakeholder Perspectives

November 2007

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of CfD members and other stakeholders and do not necessarily represent those of Connections for Development (CfD).

Foreword

Connections for Development (CfD) is a UK, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) led, membership-based organization committed to ensuring that UK BME communities, and the organisations they are involved in here, are supported in the process of shaping and delivering policy and projects that affect their countries of origin or interest – collectively “our world”.

CfD’s objectives include the promotion and development of interest, co-operation and action on International Development (ID) issues, and areas of activity such as poverty reduction and raising the level of awareness about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) amongst BME civil society organisations in the UK, with interests overseas. The Department for International Development (DFID) has funded CfD under a Strategic Grants Agreement with the aim of building a stronger, better-informed and more effective UK BME community to engage in ID, and providing a framework for the open sharing of views and constructive dialogue.

CfD regularly mobilizes BME communities and their organisations to take part in policy consultations with relevant UK Government Departments. This is our way of voicing our members’ opinions or enabling their engagement in the UK domestic and/or international policy debates.

We also offer capacity building events and hold regional conferences to facilitate more participatory engagement with the wider CfD membership. In 2006 we completed a national Mapping Exercise that highlighted the level of involvement of the UK BME voluntary organisations in International Development. The Mapping Exercise Report exposed a number of significant hurdles faced by such organisations in the implementation of development objectives. Copies of this report are available free upon request and our membership is also free. Membership forms are available on request or can be downloaded from our website at www.cfdnetwork.co.uk.

In light of the Partnerships Programme Arrangements (PPAs) CfD invited contributions from the Diaspora and their civil society organisations, scholars, UK public and all interested stakeholders. A focus group was also organised to allow a wider participation in this public policy consultation. It was conducted in a non prescriptive way but contributors were made to understand that this consultation is a result of demands from the Parliament, general public and developing countries about how DFID’s aid to international civil society organisations (ICSOs) is spent. In essence, this process is demanding evidence that aid given to ICSOs is appropriately spent or is making a difference.

Subsequently this collective response includes the views of those who contributed through us.

1. Response prepared by J. J. Otim, London School of Economics

This document produced by CfD is based on collective responses during focus group discussions with scholars, sections of the African diaspora and their civil society organisations, and interested stakeholders in London. Their responses have been incorporated to correspond to the key objectives of the DFID public policy consultation document and questions under three sub-headings shown below.

1.1 Improving performance and management

Sustainability must be an emphatic component of every PPAs initiative, ranging from personnel to ownership. Every project proposed must show and pass sustainability life-span test. Every project must show it can take on a life of its own after the 3-6 year funding phase. Shifting focus away from process to strategic-level objectives, indicators and targets demand that assessments incorporate impact evaluation, beginning with mid-term reviews to identify failings and see if they are re-dressed at the end of project to predict and assess sustainability of the project. Evaluations after the 3-6 year project implementation life must be incorporated into the final assessment.

Monitoring and evaluation should move away from self-assessment and encourage reputable local independent consulting audit firms as a second-layer check on development projects. The best way of assessment of the of the goals of PPAs projects must incorporate appraisals by grassroots end-user beneficiaries. For instance, monitoring of revolving funds among community-based organisations were based on peer-to-peer monitoring. This could be complemented by use of local expertise.

However, true appraisal is often constrained by the imbalance of power relations between the PPA and local expertise. Accountability is often translated into dictatorship and made in the form of instructions modelled on a top-down approach running from DfID through PPAs down to second-tier local NGOs to the community-based organisations at the grassroots. The local community-based organisations are weak and often try to bend to the

demands of the PPAs. This could be addressed by DfID allowing for and ensuring independent assessments of the PPAs by expert audit firms with expert grassroots knowledge to encourage bottom-up and bottom-down accountability.

The MDGs assessments must incorporate consultative workshops, and seminars focussing on local specificities since data is quantified and reflect an aggregate and do not pick out peculiarities and disparities in pockets of situations.

1.2 Resource allocation

Aid has been increasingly seen as a development industry or an NGO economy with the PPA workers seen as best industry workforce sector earners. Besides, the over-reliance on expatriate staffing and catering for their transport using the most luxurious and most expensive means of transport and living expenses, often in the most expensive accommodation available, eats into project funds. Most of the development money is seen as spent on staffing and their needs and beneficiaries do not get the intended benefits which remain with PPAs.

Budget breakdown is not related to the goals of the NGOs, most funds go into administration such as manning country offices, capacity building through expensive workshops, and conferences in five-star hotels, and catering for per diem while actual money allocation for projects takes less than 40-60 percent. PPAs must train and build capacity of local expertise and rely less on expatriate staff who incur huge staffing costs. Rwanda's NGO registration board allows only 2 percent of expatriate employment as part of the project funding.

The choice and constitution of PPAs must be opened up and widened to reflect diversity of the UK and incorporate the larger and well-established diaspora black, minorities and ethnic groups and their international civil society organisations in the UK which have grassroots reach in the developing countries. Discussants felt the current traditional PPAs are limited and most of

the PPAs administration staff exclude ethnic minorities. They recommended that ICSOs such as CfD should be strengthened, upgraded and included among the current PPAs.

The focus group discussants noted that some of the DfID priorities are poorly identified by not working with diaspora CSOs which have huge talent in development issues and presence and knowledge of grassroots needs in the developing countries. Moreover, diaspora CSOs would undercut the huge administrative costs because of their local presence in areas of operation in the developing countries. These issues have been cited in previous presentations to the parliamentary committee for development.

ICOs run by UK diaspora ethnic minorities and working in the developing countries should be strengthened and encouraged to partner with the PPAs since they are built on best practices in the UK and know the cultural settings in the developing countries. Experience with diaspora-coordinated direct-partnership initiatives with empowered grassroots community-based organisations has been very successful. A case of Comic Relief poverty-alleviation model with a women's group in Kitgum town in northern Uganda was cited, which started with 25 members and has expanded to over 400 members. This would call for adopting a North-South partnership model in poverty alleviation and development.

Areas of conflict such as southern Sudan, northern Uganda should be given special dispensation in resource allocation in poverty alleviation to re-dress the adversities of war. Here the PPAs could work in partnership with diaspora ethnic minority CSOs as has been undertaken by the World Bank in some countries. Diasporas have the necessary wealth of functional literacy, appropriate asset-based application of ICTs in rural settings, training, and working with disadvantaged groups such as women and know how best to exploit skills and talents within rural communities and situate development projects and encourage appropriate participation within the peculiar cultural set-ups.

Diaspora ethnic minority CSOs working in the developing countries cited resource allocation towards women empowerment as the most widely profitable undertaking. This leads to self-improvement of women, being directly responsible for increasing opportunities for disadvantaged girls and sending daughters to school, and reducing domestic pressures on men which had often led to family crisis. They recommended PPAs to consider such initiatives for proper resource allocation and outcomes.

1.3 Clarifying expectations about PPAs, enabling dialogue with DfID and ensuring those expectations are met

Multi-layered project conception phase involving grassroots, local research institutes, fieldworkers, and academics in relevant fields of intervention must be encouraged. This is considered relevant to derive local needs-based development project designs instead of relying largely on expatriate skills with little grassroots touch and without involvement of stakeholders. Delivery of aid is considered patronising and experts with PPAs seen as disengaged experts on local situations in developing countries. Funding grassroots small-holder research schemes in institutes, colleges, universities, etc to work with community-based organisations can also guarantee sustainability.

Most strategic objectives of indicators undertaken by the PPAs are externally defined and driven. There is an urgent need to get all key stakeholders to agree on key objectives through a participatory process on locally measurable strategic indicators of outcomes. Some of the project goals should be set within broader interacting cultural and political factors that may influence the processes or goals of the project. So the projects must be malleable to pressing community concerns before achieving end-goals.

Flexibility must be built into all project proposals since some project plans may not be community priorities but may have more pressing priorities within the same project scope. The community needs may require liaison with some other stakeholders.

While PPAs goals have resonances with the local people, the strategies of attaining the goals of the PPAs are not tailored to the specific needs of the

local conditions and the strategies sometimes carry unchallenged Western-viewpoints of what local development demands.

From the above, PPAs should have a broader strategic objectives within which framework local people should be able to fit their priorities through dialogue within national priorities. PPAs project goals must be aligned with national policies on issues such as HIV/AIDS, and encourage coordination and streamlining development projects with existing projects to avoid the problem of duplication of development aid organisations and projects.

PPAs should avoid generalisation in conceptual design of projects and encourage diversity in approach to every project since people's lifestyles and culture are diverse and varied even within a single community.

2. Response prepared by Dr. Eshetu Wondimagegne of the Norfolk African Association (NACA)

The core-working group of NACA and its members has taken sufficient time to read and analyse the document regarding the above subject. We hope you will find some of our comments and questions useful.

In the first instance we agree with you that civil society plays an important role in reducing poverty. Although none of our members knew that PPA was operational for a few years, we support your proposal to make necessary reforms to the scheme in the three identified areas pointed out in your summary. Our comments and questions are based on the four points that are outlined in the introduction part 1.1, that CSO play important role in helping reduce poverty complementary to roles played by governments and the private sector.

We believe if given the timely support it is the local civil society, which is able to conduct community-based projects that can play a major role. Development work in a region of a country will be successful only if based on the needs of the local people and is attempting to solve a problem immediately at hand and then becomes convincing to the people to foresee future requirements (NACA, 2007).

2.1 Comments and questions

1. Is the list of international NGOs who have received funding up to now shown on Table 1 exhaustive?
 - o Could the scheme consider new BME community based development projects at grass roots level by the Diasporas in their country of origin?
2. The scheme was initiated in 2000 and became operational in 2001 with the first ten PPAs being awarded funds? (1.4).
3. To most of our members the **VSO** scheme of assessing the abilities and finding a placement to volunteers makes real sense. **CfD** has dedicated members that are willing to volunteer and work in developing countries including in their country of origin. It would be very timely and useful if CfD member Civil Society Organisations and Community based organisations here in UK are asked to participate in recruiting and making available BME experts for the required regions in order to be part of a team to assess and present **the interim and final report** on DFID supported and INGOs run projects in developing countries.

In another way it will be important if the International NGOs start using from CfD network BME experts on the field in DFID funded programmes.

4. We also suggest that CFD member Civil Society Organisations and organisations that conduct community based development projects here in UK be encouraged to initiate and support actions against hunger and programmes that help reduce poverty in developing countries.

There is one project that is relevant at the moment, which NACA would present for consideration. This is regarding a bacterial wilt disease of bananas that destroy the crop, which is staple food, and of commercial significance to many countries in East Africa, specifically Uganda and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, enset (**the tree against hunger**) is affected by the same pathogen and affects over 30 million people in south, southwest and central part of the country. NACA has a member who has studied the modes of transmission of this disease and who made a start of formulating control measures in 1994.

The individual is willing to volunteer and work to conclude this search of control or protection measure(s) by working in Uganda or Ethiopia. Any development is dependent on healthy and energetic workforce. Therefore, food guarantee in countries of East Africa is crucial. Further information about the banana and enset study and any discussion of interest to take forward the remaining research for the future can be obtained by ringing 01603 625470 on work days.

2.2 Conclusion

NACA members gratefully thank the CfD for bringing this consultation document to their attention. We will be happy to give you the views of our members at any time on relevant subjects in the future. I hope you will find some of our comments and questions interesting.

3. Other general perspectives from some CfD members

The following is a selection of comments received from individual members after we went out to them asking for a response to the PPA consultation:

- I think the questions asked will not resolve the infrastructural issues that make DFID, in my opinion, one of the worst instruments of the British government.
- You have asked how performance management, resources allocation can be improved. These aren't the right questions.
- DFID is flawed all the way to its centre.
- The international perception of DFID is that it is arrogant, complacent and has no understanding of how to alleviate poverty or challenge governments.
- These are not issues that can be sorted out by looking at performance management or resource allocation.
- I attended a meeting in Birmingham a few months ago dealing with the new budget for Pakistan. That lack of youth participation, the buttering up of dictators and the lack of challenge to the tyranny in Pakistan really brought home to me how awfully inept and blinkered DFID is.
- DFID is - and if you challenge DFID, they don't like it.