

Who does what in development cooperation ?

In a famous play by Luigi Pirandello called *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, a number of actors appear on the stage. They're confused and lost, because no script has been prepared for them. The author is nowhere to be seen and has apparently failed to assign them clear roles.

Something similar seems to be happening in development cooperation. Until the late 1980s, things were relatively simple: central governments were the driving force behind development and the main recipients of aid. Other actors generally had very few opportunities to participate in the process. This 'single-actor' approach to partnership also dominated ACP-EC cooperation under the successive Lomé Conventions. The situation changed dramatically in the early 1990s, however, with the advent of democracy and the growing popularity of participatory development approaches. As a result, the development stage is now occupied by a large number of actors: central governments, (elected) local governments, civil society in all its diversity, the private sector, social and economic actors, without forgetting the many donor agencies or NGOs that also want a part. Not surprisingly, there is some confusion among these actors about 'who should play which role' in development. As in Pirandello's play, a clear cast list is not readily available.

Multi-actor partnership

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement recognises the need for taking a multi-actor approach to partnership. For the first time, the signatories have committed themselves to involving non-state actors and local governments in all aspects of ACP-EC cooperation (i.e. policy formulation, implementation and evaluation). The purpose of extending partnership to a wider range of actors is not to undermine central government, but to promote dialogue and collaboration between state and non-state actors in the pursuit of common objectives (such as poverty reduction, economic growth and sustainable development).

In practice, however, the shift towards multi-actor partnership is a challenge for all parties involved. Decades of centralised management cannot be erased with a stroke of a pen. Governments may resist participatory approaches or lack the capacity to engage with other actors. Non-state actors may see the government as 'the enemy' rather than as a partner to work with. There may be fierce competition among local actors for donor funding. Furthermore, there is no shortage of 'territorialism' as all the various actors jockey for position. For instance, what exactly is meant by central governments 'playing an enabling role'? What competences and funding should be devolved to local governments? How can intergovernmental cooperation be encouraged? What is the best way for local governments and civil

society to divide their responsibilities for local development? How should the roles played by donor agencies and European NGOs be adjusted, if they are to promote local ownership and participation?

Guiding principles

In order to ensure that ACP-EC cooperation is effective, it will be vital to properly manage this multi-actor partnership. There is no magic formula for doing this and much is likely to depend on local conditions. Some ACP countries have democratic traditions with accountable governments and a well-organised civil society. In others, it will take time to forge an atmosphere of trust and a culture of collaboration.

Yet there are certain guiding principles that may help progress to be gradually achieved. First, the principle of inclusion of all relevant actors needs to be consistently applied in the day-to-day management of ACP-EC cooperation. Second, it is important, in providing support to civil society, to respect the legitimacy of central and local governments. Third, the principle of comparative advantage (i.e. who is best placed to do what?) could be used to allocate roles. Fourth, institutional innovation will be crucial in establishing new modalities of dialogue and joint management among different actors. Fifth, donors should ensure that funding strategies help to clarify roles and promote collaboration rather than competition between actors.

ACP-EC cooperation in practice

Facts and stories

From now on, this page of the newsletter will be dedicated to hard facts and stories on four aspects of ACP-EC cooperation: money, politics, programmes and the EU.

Where does ACP-EC money go?



Special funds are fashionable these days. The European Commission recently adopted a proposal to allocate EUR 1 billion from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) reserve to improve access to water

and sanitation in ACP countries. The proposal still has to be formally discussed with EU member states and the ACP countries.
http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/120|o|RAPID&lg=EN&display

'Micro-projects' are one of the oldest forms of ACP-EC cooperation and consume some 2% of overall EDF aid. The money is used to finance small-scale infrastructural projects at grass-roots level. The EU's Court of Auditors recently audited the management of micro projects in six ACP countries (i.e. Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and sought to establish whether the projects had been successful in achieving their desired aims.
http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=ECA/04/1|o|RAPID&lg=EN&display

The European Commission has established an early warning system to register companies or individuals who should be barred from receiving EDF funds because of serious professional misconduct, a conflict of interests, etc. The system should be fully operational by May.

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/143|o|RAPID&lg=EN&display

What's new at the EU?

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade (DG Trade) wants to make life easier for exporters from developing countries. It has created a free, on-line helpdesk providing instant information on customs duties, customs documentation, rules of origin and trade statistics. Work is currently underway on broadening the range of information provided through the helpdesk to include product-specific import regulations such as sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

<http://export-help.cec.eu.int>

Where is Europe going?

2004 will be a busy year for Europe. Judge for yourself:

1 May 2004

ten new members join the Union

10 June 2004

elections for the European Parliament

1 November 2004

appointment of a new Commission



What's new in the political arena?

One of the main tasks of the African Union (AU), which was founded in July 2002, is to promote peace and security on the African continent. The ACP-EC Council of Ministers has committed itself to supporting this crucial

political initiative by creating a Peace Facility for Africa worth EUR 250 million (funded from the EDF's long-term development resources).

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/l_345/l_34520031231en01080111.pdf

The Council of the EU has adopted a Common Position on extending the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe until 20 February 2005. The Council believes that the Zimbabwean government continues to violate the basic aspects of partnership, i.e. human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.

Thirty years in active politics

Looking back on a life spent in development cooperation

John Corrie, *Member of the European Parliament, Honorary President of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly*

In 1972, I was a United Kingdom Nuffield Agricultural Scholar visiting Australia, New Zealand and South Africa for six months. My first experience of South Africa was in the Karoo near Bloemfontein, where I stayed with an Afrikaans farming family. What I heard and saw during that visit so shocked me that I was determined to spend part of my life helping those less fortunate than myself, particularly those in developing countries. I was not aware at that time that I would become first a Member of the British Parliament at Westminster and then serve as a nominated member of the European Assembly, before becoming a Member of the European Parliament in 1994.

My work with the European Parliament gave me an opportunity to join the Development Committee, and also to be part of the group of parliamentarians working on relations between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. My first introduction to this came in 1975, when I travelled to Grenada for the Lomé I negotiations.

Huge changes

Huge changes have taken place during this time. Some USD 40 billion has been spent in Africa since 1975, and yet in many respects Africa is worse off now than it was then. Let me be quite blunt: this is mainly due not only to a lack of capacity, but also to corruption within many countries and ideological politics which are the ruination of their economies.

Guiding principles

I have always worked with a few guiding principles. I believe good governance is better than pure democracy. It is not possible to transpose a Westminster-style democracy onto an African country dominated by tribal chiefs and a clan system. Elections are not fought on policies, principles or proposals for the future.

Secondly, I have always believed that project financing is the best way to spend money in Africa, as very few countries have the capacity to cope with budget support. The European Parliament has never given EU Delegation offices in developing countries enough funding or enough staff to properly manage projects. These have always tended to be too short, and would do more good if they were programmed over a number of years with continual funding. With budget support, it is quite impossible to have transparency, as it is easy enough to move figures around to make it look as if the money is being spent correctly.

Ten years ago, one would not have dared to say this, but now reality has crept into the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and people are beginning to realise that these things must be openly discussed, or the problems will never be solved.

Move to Joint Parliamentary Assembly

The move from a Joint Assembly to a Joint Parliamentary Assembly has been a great success. ACP members are now much more involved in the work. I deeply regret that my suggestion to scrap split-house voting was turned down, mainly by the ACP side, as this means that this manoeuvre is constantly used to control voting in the Parliament. I sincerely hope that this will change in the future.

The other new initiative which I introduced was Standing Committees. While these have made a good start, they have a long way to go. All too frequently, they get bogged down in debate on one particular subject. What is required is for a number of issues to be brought forward to these Committees by countries who have a specific remit to discuss them. A report could then go forward to the JPA on what has been discussed without going into resolutions or detail.

Access to finance

The real problem at the heart of Africa's poverty is access to finance. There are millions of entrepreneurs who could produce goods and create employment if they had access to a little funding. The World Bank, the IMF and the European Investment Bank should all be looking at ways of running micro-credit schemes through appropriate banking systems in developing countries.

The great worry now is that donor fatigue is setting in, as taxpayers in Europe see much of the money going to developing countries being wasted. Strict international rules within globalisation and the WTO are going to make it much more difficult for developing countries to pull themselves out of their financial difficulties. Cancun was a disaster, as not enough preparations had been made, and was followed by developing countries coming together with a strength of voice which had not been heard before. It will not be easy to re-convene a WTO meeting without an enormous amount of groundwork.

Afro-realist

I am not an Afro-pessimist; I try to be an Afro-realist. I do believe that the European Commission in Brussels needs profound institutional change. It is being strangled by red tape and bureaucracy, and there are some real fears that budgetisation of the EDF, which I have always supported, could bring more problems than it solves. We must ensure that the EDF financing is 'ring-fenced', so that it does not revert to Member States if it is not spent by the end of the year.

We have a long way to go, but I think that at long last Heads of State and Ministers in developing countries are realising that there have to be major changes or they will be left behind in this globalised world. Regional cooperation and integration is the

only way forward if smaller countries are to gain the strength they need to compete.

As I retire after 30 years in active politics, I look forward to continuing with development work in the hope that some of the lesson learnt in the past 30 years can be put

to advantage, and I can help to relieve some of the debt and poverty.

We have set ourselves millennium goals which I doubt will be reached. Instead of goals, there should be targets to move towards. In many ways, development aid is

a matter of common sense: keep it simple, keep it practical and, above all, try to work with the people themselves.

Articles which carry an author's name do not necessarily reflect the view of the ECDPM.

EVENTS

Six regional workshops

The ACP Secretariat is organising six regional workshops for ACP National and Regional Authorising Officers. The aim of these workshops will be to discuss with EC officials and other actors the Mid-Term Review process (MTR). Five of these workshops will take place during the months of February and March. The meeting for the Southern African region will be held in Botswana from 8 to 11 May.

3-7 May: ACP and ACP-EU Council of Ministers, Gaborone, Botswana.

21-24 June: 4th ACP Heads of Government Summit, Mozambique.

DG Trade EPA newsletter

E-mail requests to: eu-tradenews@cec.eu.int

The International Aid System 2005-2010: Forces For and Against Change, published by ODI

www.odi.org.uk/publications/web_papers/aid_system_rogeronson.pdf

EC action plan on agricultural commodity chains, dependence and poverty and a support strategy for the African cotton sector.

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/199|o|RAPID&lg=EN&display=

ACP-EU Civil Society Information Network newsletter.

This issue deals with the upcoming Mid-Term Reviews of ACP Country Strategy Papers as part of the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

http://acp-eu.euforic.org/civsoc/detail_page.phtml?act_id=4062

Non-state actors in Guinea. Bridges between a national dialogue process and a thematic platform. Gwénéelle Corre. ECDPM *In Brief* No. 3A.

www.ecdpm.org

Non-state actors in Chad. Turning natural partners into effective allies. Charlotte Carlsson. 2003. ECDPM *In Brief* No. 3B.

www.ecdpm.org

Regional approaches to conflict prevention in Africa: European support to African processes. Lindsay Alexander (et al.). 2003.

ECDPM *In Brief* No. 4.

www.ecdpm.org

Improving ACP-EU cooperation: Is 'budgetising' the EDF the answer?

James Mackie (et al.). 2004. ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 51.

www.ecdpm.org

READINGS

The *events page* on the *ACP-EU trade website* has been updated:

www.bellanet.org/calendar/index.cfm?op=ShowCalendar&calendar_id=23

The *final report* on the *ECDPM-ILEAP workshop on strengthening ACP capacities for EPA negotiations* is available from www.ecdpm.org or www.acp-eu-trade.org/cb.html

Lessons from NAFTA for Latin America and the Caribbean Countries: a summary of research findings by the World Bank.

wbln0018.worldbank.org/LAC/LAC.nsf/ECADocbyUnid/32E02C48D1A7695685256CBB0060CA65?Opendocument

DG Trade on-line helpdesk for helping exporters from developing countries do business on the EU market.

<http://export-help.cec.eu.int>

'InfoCotonou' highlights key debates, activities and events related to the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, an agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries on the one hand, and the European Union (EU) on the other. ACP-EC actors are encouraged to share their opinions, reports and other resources on ACP-EC cooperation. The ECDPM is a non-partisan organisation that seeks to facilitate international cooperation between the ACP and the EC. Information may be reproduced as long as the source is quoted.

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European Centre for Development Policy Management
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
NL-6211 HE Maastricht The Netherlands

Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00 Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02
info@ecdpm.org www.ecdpm.org

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