



Expert Seminar “The Future of Civil Society Development Organisations (CSOs)”  
Vienna, November 10-11, 2009

Group work and World cafe  
**Collection of topics and main areas  
for the Managua Conference**  
incl. proposals for speakers



### **Topic: Funding CSOs**

Presentation/Minutes by Filippo Addarii, Euclid Network

Assumption: Civil Society has to be enabled through funding to play its role.

Main topics for the plenary:

- 1) new players in development industry, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and change in funding structures (from aid to trade and loans without strings)
- 2) climate change will impact all funding for development

Main topics for a breakout session:

- 3) Grants vs tenders. Donors moving from grants to tenders. need for CSOs to develop skills for bidding - income generation
- 4) CSOs need to explore and develop alternative and innovative source of income such as social enterprise - develop creativity and innovation in the sector
- 5) project finance vs direct budget support - role of CSOs in influencing budget and monitoring delivery

Contributions from delegates:

- Does it make any sense to talk about funding without funders? the answer is yes because CSOs must set up their own priorities and establish a coalition before sitting down with donors. it's also an opportunity to provide training for whoever is interested
- the discussion requires a multi-stakeholder approach including all donors as public institutions, corporations etc
- Euclid Network is developing a working group on this topic with several partners including BOND (UK)

- plug into Southern networks for knowledge sharing as well (eg India)
- bring in NGOs with expertise in climate change and poverty reduction as Greenpeace and Action Aid
- approach BRICS government perhaps using corporations as heralds
- discussing climate change not just as economic and technological opportunity (green economy) but also for its social implications (Action Aid is specialised - good speaker)
- we need to plug into American networks which have a more business like approach: social enterprise and income generation (Ashoka, Schwab etc)
- final note: we must keep in consideration that a session on the material conditions for civil society to take actively part in society might be a rushed step forward in a conference which still discusses the role of civil society in society

### **Topic: Political role of CSOs**

Presentation by Grzegorz Gruca, PHO; Minutes: TRIALOG

There were some doubts on the relevance and viability of discussing topics like “redefining the political role of CSOs” in a single conference. The idea was raised to invite the EC and other actors to discuss this issue together, but it was felt better to first set up our CSO agenda and then discuss it with other players.

Political role of CSOs:

- contribution of CSOs to various kinds of democracy
- social movements

Need for a new system:

- Economy, democracy, human rights,... take into account limitations/frames
- New tools, measurements, education, communication,...
- UN and its potential

Global CSO community

- to hold governments and “powers” accountable

It is not sure whether civil society will be one player with one voice, but it is worth trying and taking the opportunity.

### **Topic: Partnership**

Presentation by Eva Marn, Humanitas/SLOGA; Minutes: TRIALOG

The first proposal of a topic for the conference was “Identity of CSOs”, then the group jumped into a discussion about legitimacy and political role(s) of CSOs. The identity is really an issue: Who have we become? Where did we lose our political role? We have become the tool of the system with which we do not agree. Do we want back again? We don’t want to be the tool of the system any more, but find other ways. How political do we want to be?

This question is linked to the issue of authentic partnership(s): How do we, all the players, act together globally? Instead of us speaking, we should give the voice to the South. The international system has affected our partnership, we became the system ourselves. How can we discuss this with Southern CSOs?

The group suggests to take (aid) funding mechanisms and see how they affect and define relationships between the different players. We can find out good practices and alternative aid-mechanism models and learn from the input of Southern resource persons and networks. Then we can go back to the principles of partnership and the question what we can propose as Code of Conduct.

Suggestions for speakers:

- Chico Whitaker, Brazil
- Kumi Naidu, South Africa, CIVICUS
- CDRA
- Slum Dwellers International: they stand for cooperation from the bottom. They determine the condition for cooperation with them.

### **Topic: Citizen participation**

Presentation by Ivan Garcia Marengo, Coordinadora Civil/Minutes: TRIALOG

The active role of civil society in decision making processes and whether CSOs worldwide accept this right of citizen participation or not could be a topic to be discussed at the Managua conference and possibly become part of a Code of Conduct.

For example, Nicaragua has experience in participatory budgeting and introduction of legislation. Civil society participation exists in the Council of the president for economic and social issues which gives recommendations to the president. It is also existing at the municipal level – in all municipalities where the mayors are not from the governing party. There is by law a Council of municipal development where one representative of each CSO existing in the municipality is participating and altogether prepare the budget.

Suggestion for speakers:

- Chico Whitaker: Brazil has very interesting experiences in citizen participation.
- CIVICUS
- Try to ensure youth participation
- UN involvement on issues of participation, legislation

Another key question is whether the conference is going to feed “our” (European) policy needs or will the envisaged statement be a joint “declaration”?

### **Methodology/Context of Managua conference**

Presentation by Thomas Vogel, Horizont3000; Minutes: TRIALOG

In the preparation of the Managua conference, it is important to deal with the open questions about the history, the purpose and the expected outcomes of the process towards Managua which started at the Prague conference in 2008. The background and the terms of reference need to be clear - why this conference?

Different methodological levels to discuss the future of development CSOs and CSO participation in development are possible. It was suggested that the focus of a Managua conference should be more pragmatic, not academic. To define the focus of the conference (academic, political,..) will help to define the level of discussion and the speakers.