

# Glocalisation

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## FLIPPING AROUND THE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM

RESEARCH ON THE ROLE OF NEW  
DONORS IN GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

LAPAS  LATVIJAS PLATFORMA  
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### Flipping Around The Development Paradigm

Research On The Role Of New Donors In Global Development

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## Executive Summary

In September 2015 a new global and universal agreement for the eradication of poverty and achievement of sustainable development will be adopted. It aims to be transformative, but will it?

This paper outlines a paradigm for a new global partnership and lays out a case for transformative social change, change that would find a balance between a minimum threshold of fundamental human rights and the outer limits of environmental capacity. A new development agenda will need to tackle a number of difficulties:

- \* the lack of a global “we”, a result of dynamics between groups (states) following national interests,
- \* a powerhouse of interests focused on retaining some form of the status quo,
- \* the vast gap between the language of international agreement and the implementation of these agreements.
- \* the immense variance of interpretation on poverty. Poverty is relative and defined in relation to society, therefore minimum standards in rich countries are far higher than in poor countries. This poses a great challenge to setting standards perceived as fair by all.

The authors see a way forward to end the current development cooperation model, described as exploitative and asymmetric, and losing its legitimacy. Local initiatives striving to bypass the state and contribute to social change through active participation of members of society point the way.

Examples of local level transformative change that can provide lessons for global change are included as case studies.

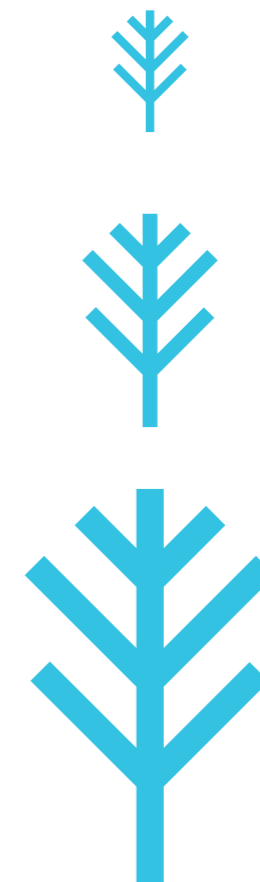
Reconciliation efforts in Croatia illustrate the crucial nature of local level participation and engagement. Latvia offers a glimpse into three development cooperation projects, where private contacts and initiatives have played a crucial role, yet the individuals involved do not consider themselves to be engaged in development cooperation. Development cooperation implies a hierarchy of one side teaching or helping the other, yet these individuals eschew hierarchy and are engaged in mutually beneficial cooperation. Estonia illustrates the potential of crowdsourcing in improving legislation and sparking civic participation. Estonia also highlights the power of business as usual, and the inability to change entrenched political habits such as pork barrel financing in politics. Poland describes a policy shift to energy prosumerism – where consumers of energy become small scale producers. The policy shift was brought about by well-organized NGO activism, working across traditional issue area divides of environment and development to counter the opposition of big business. Slovenian development NGOs made the leap to impacting the global debate, and brought the global post-2015 debate home to local decision-makers and non-development NGOs, proving that ‘glocalisation’ is an apt term for existing NGO initiatives.

The authors propose to create a platform for change at the grass roots level that will unite all actors that are already leading their separate battles for improving life in communities at home and abroad. The case studies presented show that by respecting the underlying principles for global cooperation:

coherent action, effective use of resources, multi-stakeholder cooperation, transparency, accountability, ownership and sustainability, change is possible at the local level. These principles would guide the creation of the platform. Through small steps, the platform would cater to immediate needs that cannot be met by the authorities, while also paving the way for changed patterns of behaviour both by community members and by authorities. An overarching aim of the platform would be reinstating communal trust and a sense of belonging in today’s highly individualised

society. One can think of such platform as a brokerage venue for ideas, funding, promotion, problem solving, consulting and dissemination of know-how and knowledge.

What remains to be seen is whether the Governments of the examined countries will seize the opportunity, offered to them by the changing times, their own national circumstances and the already existing initiatives led by their members of civil society. Will they be bold enough to show that there is not only a single path to development, currently known as the existing development paradigm?



## Towards an Inclusive Global Society

Authors: Ana Kalin, Igor Loncarski

According to the social contract, individuals agree to give up some of their freedoms and transfer them to the state in order to gain protection of their rights. While Hobbes believed that in the absence of the state, there would be anarchy and war, Locke and Rousseau claimed that the aim of the state is to uphold and protect the natural rights of its citizens.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of the reasons behind the creation of the state, its aim is to ensure increased levels of safety and security for its members. This need for a sense of security and safety is an essential part of being human. It "...emerges very early on in the life of the child, and is 'much more important in the human being than the impulses resulting from a feeling of hunger, or thirst.'"<sup>2</sup> In other words, the feeling of security is the basis for a stable, coherent, continuous and meaningful life narrative that enables the individual to enjoy platonic and intimate personal relations, as well as being a loyal and solidary member of the community that contributes to it. We live in an increasingly unstable environment. Global capitalism and globalisation have led to rising inequalities. The gross concentration of wealth is clearly demonstrated by the fact that in 2014, the richest 80 billionaires enjoyed the same wealth as the bottom 50% of the world's population totalling 3.5 billion persons.<sup>3</sup> We are faced with a growing frequency and severity of economic crises that leave many in perpetual uncertainty and economic instability. Adding to this instability is food price volatility severely affecting food security and sovereignty, and energy crisis.

And if that were not enough, we are faced with environmental degradation that only exacerbates already existing poverty, illnesses, famine, competition for resources and so on.

In addition, the balance of power is changing on more than one level. On one hand, the equilibrium in international relations is starting to shift. The primacy of the Global North is increasingly put under question, be it through the rise of emerging economies such as China, or by challenging the untouchable security status of the West. On the other hand, we observe a decrease in state sovereignty and the emergence of non-state actors, fighting for power and influence over global governance. Especially strong among non-state actors is the private sector, which is playing an increasingly influential role in shaping world politics. We are in a sense living in rather schizophrenic times, in which "markets are striving to become global, while the institutions needed to support them remain by and large national."<sup>4</sup> A very relevant question thus needs to be asked: for how long can a system, in which the feelings of un-safety and insecurity are so pronounced, continue to exist?

It would be safe to say that while not everybody is as outspoken about this described reality, almost everyone would agree that existing practices can no longer be sustained. 2015 is the "expiry date" of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Fifteen years after the adoption of the agreement for a global partnership to eradicate poverty and inequalities and to change the lives of people around the world, we now have the opportunity to rethink what went wrong and why, and consider how to tackle the challenges in a better way.

### A New Global Partnership

Before proposing any specific solutions, it would be opportune to explore the nature and scope of a new global partnership that might be able to address the less than optimal reality. There are numerous reasons speaking against the continued pursuit of a partial development model that focuses barely on the Global South. Poverty is not only a problem of the developing world, but of all countries in the world. Poverty is not only a lack of material resources such as money or property. According to Markuš, "poverty is a complex web of disempowering relationships, which don't work. Households trapped in this spider's web suffer from material poverty, vulnerability, powerlessness, physical weakness, isolation and spiritual poverty."<sup>5</sup>

Governments worldwide have not been devoting sufficient attention to both domestic and international poverty, which is only exacerbated in the context of increasing inequalities. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth has not been high on the priority list. The problem is not in the market economy itself, but rather in the arbitrary power of the leading players to make and uphold rules that systematically benefit the rich. While advancing the interests of a privileged few, the limits of sustainable natural resource use have been neglected. The consequences of this neglect have global implications,

as rising global temperatures, biodiversity loss or ozone depletion know no borders.

In the changed global context, the dynamics that used to be attributed to North – South relations can today be related to the interaction between the few (politically and/or military) powerful Western countries and their corporations, and the rest of the world. Development experts have been pointing to the importance of policy coherence for development (PCD). They have been critical of the perception that only development aid and its increases in quantity and quality matter when dealing with poverty eradication. Much more important than aid itself is the lack of coordination and coherence between internal (fiscal, trade, migration, agriculture, etc.) and external policies of developed countries. The incoherencies have drastically reduced the potential impact of aid policies, which can best be described with the expression that developed countries give with one hand and take with the other. In addition, global non-development rules and regimes are often disadvantageous for developing countries, which is certainly the case with trade, financial and tax regimes. Developing countries have thus been increasingly marginalized "in the rapidly globalizing world economy, and much of this debacle can be attributed to economic globalization, to the processes of economic integration of trade, migration, technology, and financial flows around the world, that took place during the second wave of globalization (1945 – 1980)"<sup>6</sup>, leaving the developed countries to harvest the benefits. It is important to understand that whilst developing countries are still

at the bottom of the food chain, the same power disparities hold true for emerging economies and non-privileged developed countries. This can only lead to one conclusion: structural change is needed in order to ensure global development.

Systemic change is required in the social and economic structures at the global levels in order to inspire change at national levels that will stimulate further change at the global level. It goes without saying that any structural change must not infringe upon the carrying capacity of the planet. In bringing about such change, two sets of difficulties can be expected. If structural change is to be beneficial for all, it ought to be based on the assumption of an inclusive global society. Without a “global we”, there can be no broad global and inclusive development, but rather “pockets of growth.”<sup>7</sup> Various discussions taking place at the United Nations (UN), whether on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the post-2015 development agenda or climate change, show the existence of a loose interdependent global community. Nevertheless, this community would best be defined as the interdependence of states as opposed to an inclusive global society.

The second concern relates to institutions that would be necessary for structural change to occur. Institutions are not abstract structures that can be constructed overnight with a magical wand. “They are an outgrowth and expression of human development in the society – of changes in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of people.”<sup>8</sup> These institutions would need to enable us to find a balance between

the need for loyalty towards the state and the desire for sustainable development, which can only be loyal to a “global we.” It is becoming increasingly clear what a complex task the construction of institutions that will guide all the countries with their different norms, beliefs and values will be. The only way to succeed is to look for the root causes of development that are independent from the stage of development of society or its belief system.

If our goal is to have sustainability and inclusive global development, we cannot escape establishing a new mechanism at the global level. Such a mechanism needs to ensure human dignity and equality within environmental limits. This can only be achieved through equitable and sustainable economic growth that exists not as an end in itself but for the purpose of achieving sustainable development. Taking into consideration the above mentioned constraints, the global mechanism cannot be normative and prescriptive, as states themselves need to choose their own path to development based on their own history, culture, needs and other relevant circumstances. The mechanism should rather be about setting the minimum rules that enable all to have equitable sustainable human development. As the mechanism pertains to all persons and all countries, it should be at the core of global and national decision-making, not used optionally in times of economic prosperity (as is most often the case for development cooperation nowadays) or seen as the option of last resort.

The Interconnected Social, Environmental and Economic Spheres

In line with the proposed aims of the global mechanism, it should focus on the three pillars of sustainable development, namely the social, environmental and economic. These three areas, however, cannot be approached as stand-alones, as they all influence one another and the achievement of any one of the three dimensions is dependent on the support of the other two. This interconnectedness is therefore an important element of the proposed global mechanism. In addition to the three thematic areas, principles will be introduced that ought to be followed in order to achieve the proposed aims.

In trying to connect the social and environmental arenas, the ideas of environmental space<sup>9</sup> and Oxfam’s safe and just space for humanity<sup>10</sup> offer a very good foundation. They both try to find a balance between the minimum threshold of fundamental human rights and the outer limit of environmental capacity. The space in between is the safe space in which both the rights of humans and of nature are not violated. The two boundaries are interconnected, as ensuring too many rights can produce pressure on the environmental ceiling, for example through pollution due to excessive comfort and consumption, while policies aimed at environmental protection can push people below the minimum set of human rights. A new dimension will be added in this research to the minimum limit of fundamental human rights, that of structural equality. Human rights law is an important element of the social dimension of sustainable development. The institutionalisation and

internationalisation of human rights was possible because of two world wars and especially because of the atrocities of WWII. Human rights rhetoric first found its place in the UN Charter, which implies that states no longer have the freedom to act or judge of their own will on human rights issues. Even more important is the actual codification of human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its First Optional Protocol and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights form the so-called International Bill of Rights.<sup>11</sup>

There are numerous criticisms of human rights, the biggest one being their Western origin. The concept of rights belonging to the human being indeed stems from the West. In addition, developed countries often use human rights as conditionalities. If that were not enough, they themselves do not fully embody the universal concept of human rights, the rights of migrants being a good example of this selective approach. All of the above only amplify the suspicions of sceptics about the true nature of human rights. Despite these set-backs, and fully acknowledging the importance of respecting and accepting cultural diversity, it is crucial to recognise the existence of minimum standards of rights of every human being that can under no circumstances be violated by anybody.

Human rights are divided into civil and political on one hand, and economic, social and cultural on the other hand. This unfortunate division, a consequence of Cold War politics and diverging perceptions of different political systems, is neither beneficial to the acquisition of minimum standards of rights for all,

nor does it function in reality. If we look at rights struggles in the UK, the fight for political citizenship was taking place in parallel to the struggle for trade union rights and rights to clean water and public health. The fight for rights in developing countries taking place nowadays involves concurrent struggles for political, social, cultural and economic demands.<sup>12</sup> It is thus obvious that civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights must be included in the minimum standards.

In light of globalisation and an increasing number of shared challenges, the need arose to look beyond individual rights, as some problems can only be tackled collectively and in shared responsibility with states.<sup>13</sup> These rights are the most controversial of all, whether they are called collective rights or third generation rights. There is no denying that in order to curb environmental degradation, to stop the rise in global temperatures or to reverse biodiversity loss, joint efforts from various social and political institutions will be needed.

The minimum threshold of fundamental human rights satisfies the minimum standards that provide human beings their dignity.<sup>14</sup> It is an absolute must, but in a world of immense inequalities, it cannot provide a sufficient solution. The proportional distribution of goods and rights is also relevant when discussing the minimum social foundation within sustainable development. "In fact, evidence from across the world, including high-income countries, suggests that poverty levels are drastically reduced after social transfers have been implemented, with the most significant reductions occurring in countries with comprehensive social policies that aim at universal coverage."<sup>15</sup>

The basic idea of social policy is the creation of a state that provides a certain level of protection to its citizens from raw market forces in order to have a more equitable distribution of social outcomes. The concept stems from Western political philosophy and is based on two key assumptions: a legitimated (nation) state and a pervasive (formal) labour market. Without looking further into supportive assumptions, needed to ensure the delivery of socially accepted minimal standards of living, it is clear that the key suppositions are not met in most developing countries. When looking into the African continent, many of the least developed countries have a very large informal sector. Furthermore, the nation-state concept is in many countries challenged by large insecurities due to internal conflicts, famine or disease. In the case of such states, are there appropriate systems in place to deliver social redistribution and what is the influence of interest groups on redistributive systems?<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, the power of interest groups is an increasing problem all over the world, which might be an important reason for the rising inequalities worldwide.

To be able to apply the idea of the welfare regime outside developed countries, Wood proposes the institutional responsibility matrix (IRM), which links the domestic to the global.<sup>17</sup>

Table 1: The institutional responsibility matrix

	Domestic	Supra-national
State	Domestic governance	International organisations, national donors
Market	Domestic markets	Global markets, multinational corporations
Community	Civil society, NGOs	International NGOs
Household	Households	International household strategies (i.e. remittances)

Wood expands the traditional welfare triangle of state-market-family with the community dimension. He also adds the international dimension for all four components. This global component indeed plays an important role in the case of developing countries, and might even lead to the weakening of pressure on domestic structures to improve governance. This means that the domestic dimension needs to remain the focus of attention, where the political commitment needs to be made, "the interaction therefore between social forces within an identifiable political economy with which that population identifies as its site of primary rights and responsibilities."<sup>18</sup>

While Wood's model offers an explanation for developing countries, its functioning can be applied to the entire international community. Perhaps not all of its components are relevant in all countries to the same degree, but they still play a role in power relations. Civil

society plays an important role in today's welfare system, especially in the role of identifying and satisfying the unmet needs of the population, and consequently as a critical player that warns about the state of affairs and attempts to change it. While the influence of international civil society is more present in developing countries, it also plays a watchdog role in developed countries. It is crucial for civil society not to forget its role in society and thus not to accept the ongoing and increasing transfer of responsibilities from the state, related to ensuring welfare.

The influence of global markets and multinational corporations (MNCs) is substantial in all countries. Increasing inequalities all over the world can be attributed to a range of economic policies that have dominated the global arena in the past decades.

Anecdotal evidence speaks of a so-called “decoupling” between the median wage and productivity. Proponents of this phenomenon argue that between 1972 and 2010 US productivity grew by 84%, while the median wage only grew by 21%. Something similar holds for the UK, for example, where real productivity grew by 114% and median real wage by 72%. The numbers imply that this so-called gross decoupling was 63 percentage points in the US and 42 percentage points in the UK. More recently, however, some authors have argued (Pessoa and Van Reenen, 2013<sup>19</sup>; Feldstein, 2008<sup>20</sup>) that the idea of decoupling, at least at the aggregate level, is flawed due to measurement errors. More specifically, one should be looking at the total employee compensation, which has remained stable as a share of national income over time. Secondly, the structure of employee compensation has changed over time and simply looking at the pure wage is not comparable over time. Nevertheless, when looking at the disaggregation of the “decoupling wedge”, Pessoa and Van Reenen, for example, show that while employee benefits account for 16 percentage points of the difference in the UK, wage inequality captures another 16.6 percentage point difference. In other words, while it is true that the “decoupling” can be accounted for by including other employee benefits, wage inequalities have nevertheless increased over time. This can be observed by comparing the mean and the median wage. The mean wage is the average wage in the economy, defined as the sum of all the wages divided by the number of employees. The median wage is the wage received by the median employee, where 50 percent of employees have lower wage than median and 50

percent of employees have a wage higher than the median one. Inequality in wages implies that the mean wage will be higher than the median wage. If the mean wage increases faster than the median wage, the inequalities are increasing over time. Moreover, employee benefits, which some argue help explain the “decoupling” phenomena, are traditionally more heavily received by employees in higher income brackets, thus adding to the increasing wage inequalities.

The “decoupling” phenomena is an important starting point to understand why and how we got to be where we are today in terms of current economic conditions in developed Western countries and the role (importance) of globalization, as well as the financial sector. As the modern market economy is very much driven by and based on consumer demand (private consumption), constant (long term) economic growth can only be achieved through increased demand, either domestic or foreign. Given the “decoupling” phenomena and rising inequalities, the immediate question relating to economic growth is how to make people consume more, if their disposable income is on average not rising fast enough to catch up with productivity growth.

At this point we need to emphasize the implicit assumption that the existing economic and social order crucially depends on sustained economic growth, which we typically measure by looking at the value of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). GDP is a sum of investments, consumption (both private and government), and net exports. GDP will increase if any of the components of GDP increase. One solution is to find new demand

in foreign markets (increase net exports), the other solution, which is not only economically, but also politically appealing (as it makes people happy and content), is to somehow enable people to consume more today at the expense of future disposable income (increase consumption and investments in turn as well). Here enters financialization, enabling people to borrow more heavily today against future income in order to afford higher education, an increasing range of durable goods, and housing. At the same time, developed Western industrial nations began a transition towards a service economy. Most of these services are non-tradable, or put differently, difficult if impossible to be outsourced. One of the important enablers for this transition was the opening up of emerging economies to foreign investments. Most of these countries are very appealing to multinational corporations when it comes to cheap(er) labour and low corporate tax rates. This started the so-called process of “off-shoring”, where mostly dirty and low value added industries (to start with) were moved to low cost locales. This was not only beneficial for MNCs from a cost perspective (lower prices of goods and more local consumption), but it also facilitated access to many new, large and promising consumer markets.

Integration reduces barriers to trade and makes goods and services cheaper for consumers. On the other hand, it propagates spillovers of negative financial and economic shocks to other countries. In addition, it can push smaller local producers and manufacturers (mostly those in developing countries) out of business. They cannot operate as efficiently as large MNCs (mostly located in developed countries) with massive economies of scale and scope.

Financial markets in particular, but also other industries, have become more integrated. More specifically, while insurance and banking industries were the two most segmented industries in the period 1980-1984, they became one of the least segmented industries in the period 2001-2005, mostly due to regulatory changes (Bekaert, Harvey, Lundblad, and Siegel, 2011<sup>21</sup>). Interestingly, Bekaert et al. find evidence that the segmentation in several other industries has increased, predominantly in basic materials, food production, technology hardware and equipment, and pharmaceuticals. Moreover, Bekaert et al. corroborate most of the other research that focused on equity market returns when looking at the levels of integration among different countries, as they show that an openness of equity markets to foreign investors is an important driver of integration. In other words, “Wall Street” philosophy has taken over “Main Street”.

This also holds from the perspective of financial intermediation, as we have experienced a tremendous increase in the levels of financial intermediation and the importance of financial institutions in the recent decades. The main driver in such a setup are short-term earnings and there is little regard for any long-term risks and impacts, as the entire compensation-rewards system is based on short-term incentives. Coupled with the innovation in financial instruments and enforced by behavioral biases of individuals, this has created several bubbles and bursts in financial markets over the past several decades. However, the worst market failure culminated in the most recent global financial crisis in 2008. At the risk of experiencing a repetition of a 1929-style depression,

central banks in the developed western countries stepped in with massive monetary support. This calmed the markets, but economic growth has not returned to the developed countries. Even now, when the US Federal Reserve has changed its policy stance and stopped the Quantitative Easing program (QE), there are very weak signs of economic growth returning to the US. The European Central Bank (ECB) has only recently embarked on a similar mission of QE, driving not only the already low interest rates, but also credit spreads (that are supposed to capture credit or default risk) to all-time lows. The hope of the policy makers is that “cheap money” will spur spending and consumer demand. In the existing market mechanism, a prolonged decrease in demand causes production overcapacity in many industries and a consequent lack of new investments.

The views of economists over the role of the state are split. While some argue that the state should further relinquish its tasks to the private sector and cut state spending, some argue that without massive state spending and investment intervention, we are facing a long path of zero or low growth globally. Moreover, with the withdrawal of the state, some see the increasing threat of the largest MNCs further infringing on ecological and social values. Something has to give. Either the industries restructure and reshuffle, with new, fused, innovative, green and clean industries emerging, driving demand and economic growth without sacrificing human rights and further environmental deterioration, or we face a downward spiral to the very bottom of ecological and social wellbeing. We believe that we are at the make or break point in global growth and development.

Environmental, or safe and just space, implies that the minimum level of human dignity must be achieved without causing irreversible damage to our ecosystem for the sake of today’s and future generations. Very often natural resources and nature are perceived to exist for the purpose of serving and satisfying the needs of human beings, either to ensure their survival or for use as a profit-generating commodity. However, human beings depend on nature for their existence. For the past ten thousand years, we have lived in the Earth’s stable state, known as Holocene. In 2009, the Stockholm Resilience Centre identified a set of nine planetary boundaries that must not be crossed: ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, chemical pollution, climate change, ocean acidification, freshwater consumption, land use change, nitrogen and phosphorous cycles and atmospheric aerosol loading. Overconsuming and thus exceeding nature’s capacity could lead to irreversible environmental changes. Currently, we are breaching three of these boundaries, namely biodiversity loss, climate change and nitrogen and phosphorus cycles.<sup>22</sup>

Planetary boundaries shed light on the global perspective. This might be problematic due to two reasons. First of all, critical local or national thresholds are not known, which presents an impediment in a world that still functions as a system of (nation) states. Even though the global outer limits might not be yet breached, national or regional stress over the use of resources is already present. The second problem is that the global perspective does not reflect the vast inequalities that exist worldwide with regards to where resources are used and by whom.<sup>23</sup>

Various international institutions governing specific boundaries already exist. Some of them are effective, some lack the capacity to ensure implementation and some are in need of global reform. There is no doubt that more coherence is needed in the environmental institutional landscape, which could be achieved either through a reform addressing individual boundaries and their interactions or through a creation of a new overarching institution. It is also important to understand that non-environmental institutional arrangements also affect the outcomes of resource use, such as those related to world trade.<sup>24</sup> Keeping in mind the global implications of natural resource use as well as their global trade element, a global solution needs to be found for shaping their governance.

Figure 2: Empowering relations within the safe and just space

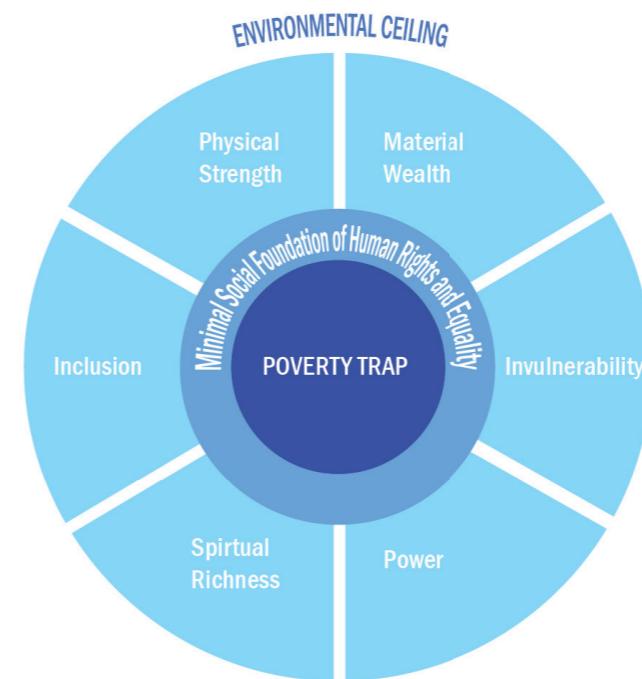


Figure 2 is a combination of the previously mentioned Oxfam’s safe and just space for humanity and Markuš’s poverty trap of disempowering relations. It describes the safe and just space,

which enables humanity to prosper, and is comprised of material wealth (access to material assets, adequate housing, possession of land and livestock), invulnerability (access to reserves, savings and choices, good climate conditions), power (access to political participation, social power, influence, social connections and bargaining tools and no corruption), spiritual richness (trust, hope for a better future, a clear picture of self and personal value, good community relationships, no fear of outside or supernatural powers), inclusion (access to services, information and education, connection and inclusion into society) and physical strength (strength, good health, adequate nutrition, number of dependants in line with opportunities). The safe and just space has its outer limits or an environmental ceiling, which consists of the nine planetary boundaries that must not be crossed, and its inner limits, which represent the minimum standards for a decent life.<sup>25</sup>

### The Underlying Principles

In order to ensure the functioning of the proposed global mechanism, the following principles would need to be respected in its implementation:

- \* Policy coherence for sustainable development: policies must not be competing with one another, but must rather all work together with the aim of ensuring the proposed goals of sustainable development, both at the national and international levels;
- \* Sustainable development effectiveness: development resources need to be used as effectively as possible in order to ensure sustainable results;
- \* Multi-stakeholder cooperation: stakeholders need to cooperate in the dialogue, decision-making and implementation of the global mechanism;



\* Transparency: sustainable development resources are used in an efficient manner and information about their use is disseminated openly;

\* Accountability: all stakeholders must account for their activities, as well as take responsibility for them. Transparency is crucial for disclosure of information and results of activities;

\* National ownership: national authority over development policies and activities, achieved through the creation of national strategies for development.

### The Importance of Acting Locally

The proposed system can work only if countries embrace the concept. Its implementation thus implies acting locally by adhering to the proposed global principles with the aim of bringing about development at home and globally. A crucial element of success is a national strategy for development. It should be crafted by the country itself, based on its national circumstances, namely its stage of development and the developmental needs, while taking into account national history and culture. Attached to the national strategy for development should be action plans and means of implementation. The latter should include an appropriate mix of financial means for the implementation of the strategy: domestic resources, foreign direct investment, loans, remittances and Official Development Assistance (ODA). All countries should prepare national strategies for development, whether they are developed or developing, middle-income or emerging economies. Their finance mix would certainly differ, reflecting their stage of development and local circumstances. These specifics would, among others, be reflected in the country's IRM.

It is important to differentiate between the proposed national strategies and the existing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). The latter exist in developing countries and are prepared by the country and its development partners. The proposed strategies for development, on the other hand, apply to all countries and result from exclusively national efforts. In the case of developing states, they could still use ODA as one of the financial flows to their economy, but it should come in the shape of donor support, their knowledge and assistance in achieving the nationally built development strategy plans, while leaving it to local actors to take the lead. In circumstances where policy coherence for sustainable development would be respected, alongside equitable and inclusive financial and trade regimes, the need for ODA would be drastically reduced. The solution therefore does not lie in development aid perceived as charity, but in creating the structure that actually leads to sustainable and just development for all. As the problems in developing countries will not cease to exist overnight, it is important in the short run to continue with development aid, while applying the proposed principles of the global mechanism. Donors can at best be facilitators that can offer their best practices, while the recipients need to be the ones adapting those best practices to their reality, making it successful.

Following globally agreed rules might be perceived as a renouncement of national interests of states or their right to sovereign decision-making. When considering this dilemma, the reality of international relations needs to be taken into account. In the current balance of power system, most states are already following instructions

that stem from formal or informal international or regional agreements and/or rules. Only a small number of countries is actually in the driving seat and has the luxury to act solely on their own accord. While the proposed model indeed introduces globally binding principles, it also presupposes development based on national needs and circumstances, determined by countries themselves. For the majority of countries this element of sovereignty is not in place today. The model also makes sure that

that stem from formal or informal international or regional agreements and/or rules. Only a small number of countries is actually in the driving seat and has the luxury to act solely on their own accord. While the proposed model indeed introduces globally binding principles, it also presupposes development based on national needs and circumstances, determined by countries themselves. For the majority of countries this element of sovereignty is not in place today. The model also makes sure that our cultures and values are not undermined, while simultaneously respecting global equity. In other words, we are defending what is ours and at the same time leaving others to keep what is dear to them.

It is possible for people, societies, nations and countries to change. They can embrace the proposed concept that will improve the quality of life for the majority of the world's population without doing irreparable damage to the nature that sustains us. But such a change cannot happen overnight, because it demands a change in perception at various levels. The first level is the economy-centric view of the world in which we live. The second level is the "us" and "them" divide that governs our world.

The second perception might be harder to overcome, because it is based on the way people's identity is created, always measuring ourselves against others. But it is not impossible to change and in the following chapters, we present examples of how this change can begin to take place.

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## How the State Decided to Support Energy Prosumerism

### Case study: Poland, Author: Katarzyna Szeniewska

#### Background

National energy policy should lie at the heart of Policy Coherence for Development approach, given its strong links to the level of carbon emissions and thus climate change, one of the five priority areas of PCD listed by the EU,<sup>1</sup> as well as the importance it plays in foreign policy, often impacting strongly security policy.

The Polish energy market still strongly depends on fossil fuels: mainly national sources of coal as well as oil and gas imports. In 2012 energy consumption was based on hard coal (41%), oil (26%), gas (13%), and lignite (11%), while renewables amounted to 11%.<sup>2</sup> But even these numbers have been contested by some of the environmental groups as inflated due to the broad definition of renewable energy in Poland, which for example includes energy produced in co-combustion of coal and biomass.<sup>3</sup> The issue of energy policy and renewable energy sources has been a delicate political debate for years. Polish dependency on coal has led the government to be one of the strongest contesters of emission reduction commitments at the EU level. In 2012 Poland successfully blocked EU consensus on the ambitious emission reduction strategy by 2050.<sup>4</sup> During the negotiations on the EU Climate Package in October 2014 Poland was again a difficult negotiator, insisting on (and partially succeeding in obtaining) significant concessions for the country. Even with the concessions, the EU Climate Package was reported by some in the mainstream media as a failure of Polish diplomacy

and a threat to Poland's economy and energy security, especially given the current political crisis across Poland's eastern border.<sup>5</sup> Some analysts referred to it as economic 'suicide'.<sup>6</sup>

Many analysts consider reaching the new EU target of a 27% share of renewables by 2030 a challenge for the Polish economy. The long-awaited renewable energy bill, which was finally enacted in early 2015 is supposed to offer better support for the transition to these types of energy sources. An important element of the bill, in the opinion of many non-governmental groups, is the so-called 'prosumer amendment', put forward in November 2014 by the Member of Parliament Brambora based on the proposal by the Institute for Renewable Energy (EC BREC IEO), an independent Polish research institute. The amendment creates more favourable conditions for the development of micro and small-scale energy producing installations. The struggle to keep the amendment in the final act is an interesting case of success of environmental groups' advocacy and a missed opportunity for engaging and enhancing collaboration between environmental and development non-governmental groups.

#### Power Plant in your Backyard - Energy Prosumer Movement

'Energy prosumers' means micro- and small-scale energy production, often by individuals and groups, independent from the large energy producing and supplying companies. The groups are often organized around housing communities as well as schools and churches and produce energy for their own needs –

satisfying these needs partially or fully. They might be the sole owners of the installation (e.g. as a cooperative); co-owners together with an investor or it can be an investment of a local authority. Recently there have even been successful crowd-funding campaigns for energy installations. In 2013 in Holland such a campaign collected 1,3 mln EUR in order to build a wind turbine, now co-owned by 1700 individuals<sup>7</sup>.

The term 'prosumer' (as a mix of the words 'consumer' and 'producer') was created in the 1970s and refers to a broader concept of consumers who engage in the production of the products they consume.<sup>8</sup> The term has also been applied to consumers who actively research the market and share the knowledge they have with other consumers<sup>9</sup>. In relation to energy, prosumerism can go even further with individuals and groups selling the surplus energy they produce back to the energy network, thus making the investments made in the installations more economically viable.

Energy production for one's own use can already be relatively easily done in most EU countries. However, to allow the prosumer to sell surplus energy on the market, it requires the state to set up so-called Intelligent Energy Networks (IEN), which ensure an ongoing communication between energy producers and consumers, include smart-metering and allow for a two-way energy flow (meaning that consumers can also be producers). Smart-metering enables the prosumer to communicate energy use directly to the energy provider (rather than depend on periodic meter verification), as well as to check at any given moment the energy use and cost. Such meters and networks are gradually being introduced in European

towns, like Kalundborg in Denmark.<sup>10</sup>

The IEN approach was developed in the early 2000s and its spread has rapidly increased since 2006. According to a report by the Joint Research Centre, by 2012 there were almost 300 IEN projects under development in 30 European countries. The most active in this domain are the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Denmark, the latter leading the pack. In the UK an estimated 500 000 households produce solar power and basic production kits are available in IKEA. In Germany, individual and group prosumers account for almost half of the renewable energy produced in the country.<sup>11</sup>

#### Making it Happen in Poland

Making prosumerism work in Poland requires parallel developments on three fronts: public attitudes and interest, availability of technical solutions and a conducive legal framework. While over 70% of Poles support the development of renewable energy sources,<sup>12</sup> the concept of energy prosumerism is a very new one in Polish culture and has been growing slowly.

The prosumer movement came to Poland in 2013, together with the discussions on the new renewable energy act. The EU had been pressuring the Polish government to pass such an act since 2010. Several organizations such as the Polish Green Network, Zielony Instytut and Greenpeace Poland have been promoting the prosumerism approach among schools and the wider public through a range of projects. There has also been some interest in renewable energy among local authorities, supported by the federation of local governments (Stowarzyszenie Gmin Przyjaznych Energii Odnawialnej).

In 2013 some two hundred thousand micro-installations were in place in Poland. This number was attained due to the decreasing costs of installations as well as some financial support from a public programme of the Fund for Energy Protection. Research conducted in 2013 showed that 45% of the respondents declared interest in investing in a renewable energy installation<sup>13</sup>.

In order to grow, energy prosumerism requires not only access to know-how and technology, but also specific energy market regulations that not only allow for this kind of a solution, but also create conducive environment for its development. Until recently, Polish regulations on renewable energy set the price of energy from renewable sources sold by individuals 20% below the average energy price on the market. To make prosumerism economically viable the Polish government needed to establish fixed and favorable prices for this kind of energy.

The key component of the 'prosumer amendment' in the new renewable energy act is fixed prices for fifteen years at a very favorable rate for the smallest energy producers, guaranteeing economic viability of the installations. According to different estimates, the amendment will help establish between 150 000 and 300 000 small-scale prosumers by 2020.<sup>14</sup> The benefits of prosumerism listed by its supporters are many:<sup>15</sup> job creation, energy independence and security, public health (due to lower pollution), democratic ownership of energy sources and – of course – more renewable energy, which means a reduced dependence on fossil fuels and lower carbon emissions.

But not everyone was in favor of the amendment. In the last discussions on the new bill, Parliament's higher chamber proposed a new amendment practically cancelling the 'prosumer amendment' proposed earlier. After a short but intense lobbying effort and a public campaign by environmental groups, the lower chamber of Parliament rejected the higher chamber's amendments effectively approving the new bill with the 'prosumer amendment'. The vote was a narrow win by the opposition over the central-right party in power.<sup>16</sup>

While overall the new regulation is still far from perfect, according to the environmental groups, the prosumer amendment has been declared a success by the civic and democratic movement.

#### Energy Prosumerism and Development – the Missing Link?

How does this approach relate to global development? First of all, it increases the supply of renewable energy available and thus reduces countries' dependency on fossil fuels – be it national or imported. It is widely accepted as one of the means of increasing the share of renewable energy in the economy and reducing carbon emissions. This in itself is a strong contribution to global development, with broad agreement in the international development community that "climate change is a fundamental threat to development in our lifetime"<sup>17</sup> and "the implications of renewable energy use for environmental sustainability do not need further explanation"<sup>18</sup>. As Naomi Klein puts it, in response to a question about the possible solutions to tackling the climate change crisis, "...[W]e certainly need smart frameworks for thinking and talking about the diverse set of solutions that we know can tackle the crisis

—from invoking the polluter-pays principle to divert fossil fuel profits into the green transition, to building decentralized, community-owned solar and wind systems, to reining in financial speculation—and making sense of the world that they are already helping us build."<sup>19</sup>

Another important aspect is the democratic principle and active citizenship dimension of the energy prosumer movement approach. It teaches us, in line with development education principles, that as individuals we have a role to play in the economy and society at the local and global level. It also weakens the oligopoly of energy companies, which dominate energy production and distribution markets, strengthening democratic control<sup>20</sup>.

Probably the most important aspect is that energy prosumerism fits also in the very center of systemic change (or 'transition') movements, which are increasingly of interest to development and environmental communities around initiatives like degrowth, Great Transition Movement and the Rules.<sup>21</sup> This democratically-owned, locally-managed and environmentally-sustainable solution is just the kind of change many of these groups would like to see in the current socio-economic paradigm and in the face of the multiple crises we are experiencing.<sup>22</sup>

Many researchers and activists exploring this approach, just like Naomi Klein in the earlier quoted interview, say that decentralized sources of renewable energy controlled by citizens and adapting more flexibly and intelligently to changes in energy demand and supply are fundamental for a new economy that would respect planetary boundaries and foster peoples' well-being over the traditional concept of economic growth.<sup>23</sup>

#### Lessons Learnt

There are several lessons to be drawn from this example. For one, a positive policy change, favoring citizens over big business, is possible. With a strong research and campaign base, non-governmental groups were able to put forward and carry through a policy solution they felt was needed. A relatively well organized and united non-governmental climate movement, represented by a strong coalition, has also definitely been an asset in the process. Creative campaigning and advocacy tools, including an extensive and engaging use of social media have also contributed to success. While it might be argued that global development topics are more difficult to campaign for, development groups, absent in the process, can only learn from this experience on how to effectively organize, lobby and reach out to the public.

A missed opportunity throughout the whole process is the creation of a link between energy and development policy as well as bringing in a systemic change dimension. Environmental groups positioned the issue of the 'prosumer amendment' as a fight between citizens and big business<sup>24</sup>. Other language included energy security and sovereignty. The arguments of global commitments, responsibility or even fighting climate change have been largely missing from advocacy and communication materials, not to mention of course possible references to PCD.

Environmental groups, clearly aware of the climate change angle, chose language that possibly seemed the most effective for the campaign. It is unclear whether other sorts of arguments and framing would resonate at all with Polish society.

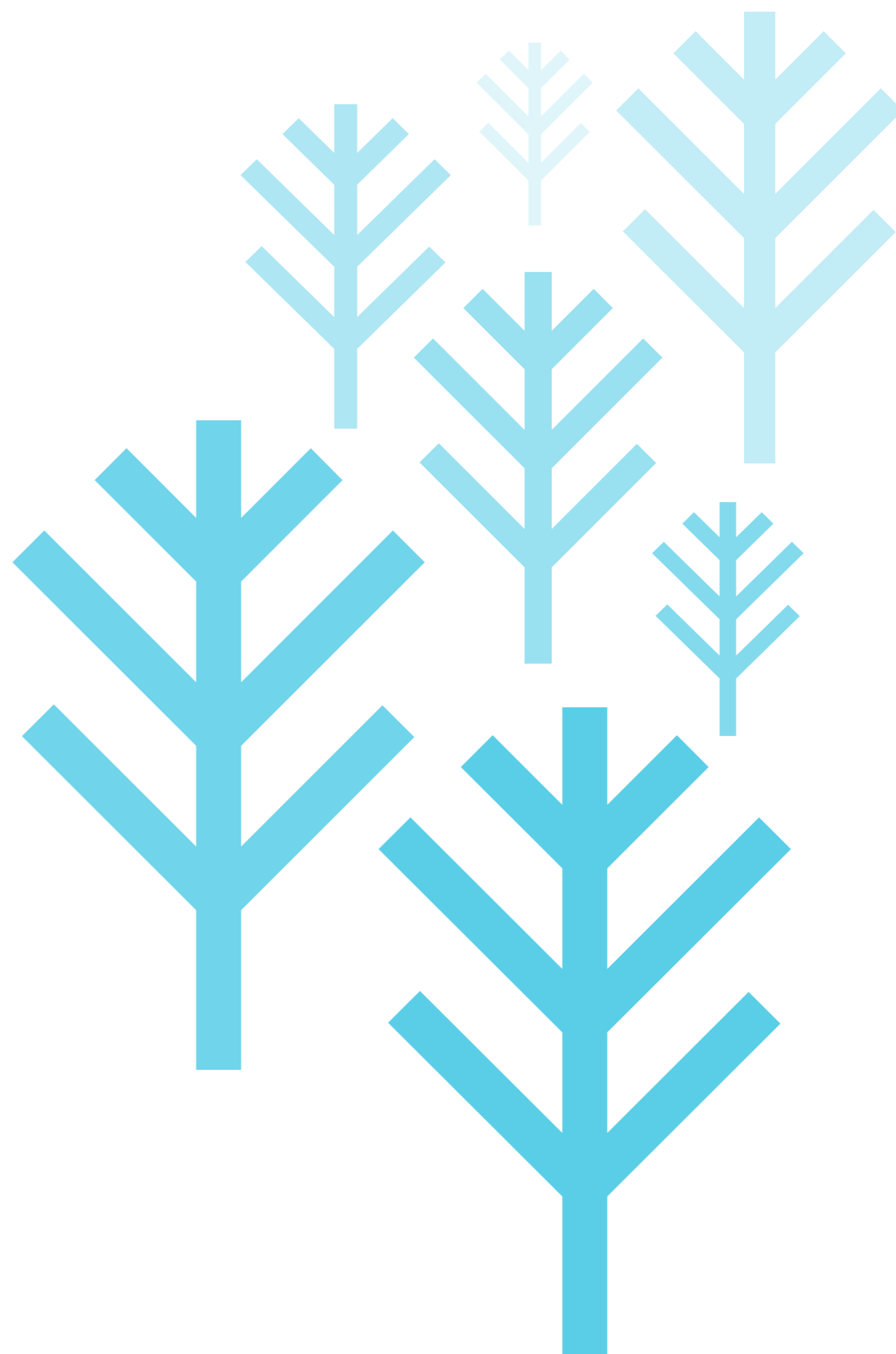
Still, the campaign, which received a reasonable amount of media attention, more than any development topics, might have been a good opportunity to introduce a new or broader framing of the issue. The lack of engagement of development organizations in the struggle and process certainly did not help to expand the framing.

Stronger cooperation between environmental and development organizations is needed if policy coherence and systemic change movements are ever to gain more momentum. For development organizations, the experience and campaign base of environmental organizations would be a welcome asset. For environmental organizations, it might be an opportunity to gain new policy influence tools (PCD) as well as develop a more holistic approach, going towards more sustainable socio-economic change. Both groups would benefit from rethinking and possibly realigning their narratives towards more systemic change-oriented ones.

With the Sustainable Development Goals about to be adopted, cooperation between the two domains is more important and logical than ever. Polish civil society remained quite passive in the consultations and negotiation process. But with the relatively strong position Poland holds in the EU, Polish NGOs' engagement in the monitoring of the country's and the EU's efforts in the implementation of the new framework will be crucial.

While full integration of environmental and development groups' narratives is probably not realistic – and possibly not useful, given that the diversity in approaches and messaging enriches the debate and helps reach various audiences – both movements have a lot to share.

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# The Gap Between the Technical and Practical Aspects of Reconciliation

## Case Study: Croatia,

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### Introduction and Context

Croatia is the only EU member state that has recent experience of a civil war, along with post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. Given that many countries, which are recipients of EU development aid (be it bilateral or multilateral), have often had recent post-conflict experiences, and still suffer the consequences of the aftermath of armed conflict, Croatia's understanding of the complex issues is very important to share and learn from.

All the 'new' EU member states have seen very significant social, economic and political changes in the last twenty five years. These changes were partially influenced by social demands for change coming on the backdrop of the 'fall' of mostly totalitarian regimes, but were also very much driven by the prospect of EU membership. The extent of reforms required to become an EU member state were huge, and a great challenge not only for the policy-makers, but also for the public, which was sometimes found somewhat lost in the reforms that significantly changed the political, social and economic arenas.

In Croatia, reform challenges spanned across economic, political and social aspects, with an added element of post-conflict reconstruction and reintegration. Beginning with the mid 1980s, tensions, which were manifested through the prism of economic difficulties, became more apparent in Yugoslavia.

Economic difficulties were not seen as a joint problem, but rather served to single out some states. Progressive, but rapid rise of nationalist elements soon led to an escalation of conflict.

Although the dynamics of conflict in other parts of Yugoslavia were somewhat different, in Croatia the conflict was essentially along ethnic/national lines between Croats and Serbs. Today, there are less than five percent Serbs in Croatia, compared to twelve percent of the population in 1991. In terms of post-conflict reconstruction and development, the apparent ethnic divisions exuberated, added an important element of reconciliation, which has been addressed to varying degrees by both state institutions and civil society, and with mixed success.

Given that Croatia developed specific post-conflict skills, a positive and a negative example of post-conflict experience will be looked at. These will illustrate not only the processes, but also more importantly the lessons learnt from the multi-layered challenges of post-conflict processes. One example will focus on the practices of engaging civil society organisations from the parts of Croatia that have been more affected by the war. A more 'negative' example stems from the EU accession process, during which efforts were made to ensure reconciliation. However, they put more emphasis on the technical aspects, as opposed to the practical implementation, which did not contribute to effective reintegration of the Serb minority.

### Civil Society in Rural Areas

Many areas that were, to a larger degree, affected by the war in Croatia are predominantly rural areas. These areas are generally less developed, have lower incomes than the national average, significantly higher levels of unemployment, an ageing population, and a lack of opportunities, especially for the youth. A large proportion of them belong to the Areas of Special State Concern (Područja od posebne državne skrbi). These areas, whose status is reviewed annually, usually have a higher proportion of Serb population. In order to stimulate development of those parts, the state offers measures such as tax breaks for employers and individuals. The tax breaks play a role in stimulating entrepreneurship in a region, while also helping civil society organisations retain existing and employ new staff. In practice they have not stopped the outflow of young people.

One important initiative to strengthen CSOs in the more remote parts of Croatia, was setting up regional networks of CSOs that divided Croatia into 5 regions. One of the main goals of these networks (set-up in 2007, and receiving significant funding through the National Foundation for Civil Society Development (Nacionalna zaklada za razvoj civilnoga društva)), is to improve the capacity of NGOs and the flow of information on available funds for NGOs in those regions. This continues to help local CSOs access calls about which they would otherwise not have had information. Two of those regional networks (Step and Šalter) are located in Split (south and south eastern Croatia) and Osijek (eastern Croatia), respectively.

These areas have a higher proportion of local councils under the 'Area of Special Concern' label and cover areas that were strongly affected by the war, while they also cover areas that have higher proportion of Serb minority population.

In 2011, Osijek County had a 26.7% rate of unemployment, while in the counties of Vukovar, Požega and Slavonski Brod, all of which are covered by Šalter, unemployment stood at 29.6%, 24.4%, and 31.8%, respectively. On the other hand, Step, which encompasses Split County, had a rate of unemployment of 21.8%, Šibenik 20.6%, Dubrovnik 14.8%<sup>1</sup>, and Zadar 17.5%. The national unemployment average for 2011 was 17% (Croatian Employment Bureau 2012:1). Although this illustrates the challenges these areas are facing, the unemployment situation in the more rural parts of the county is usually grimmer, making the need for local level initiatives even more important.

In order to assist civil society development in those areas, regional CSO networks work with CSOs and local councils to organise trainings around those regions providing know-how on topics such as financial management of NGOs, fulfilling financial reporting criteria towards state administration, writing project proposals, finding partners for projects, and other specific skills. This not only builds capacity, but it also means that CSOs don't have to spend resources on travel and finding trainings, which can be better utilized elsewhere for project activities. Between 2007 and 2013, Šalter received approximately 490,000.00 EUR for activities and operations, while in the same period Step received some 294,000.00 EUR (Šalter Network).

It is important to mention that activities related to informing, education and advising of CSOs take up on average 80% of those budgets, and that over the years, there has been an increase in the funds available. Today, the Šalter network has 720 member organisations, and in 2013 the network held 22 educational events, while 70 organisations used their advisory services on 506 occasions (interview with Nikoleta Poljak). Step, on the other hand, has nearly 700 organisations on its mailing list (interview with Slobodan Škopljaja), and conducts similar activities to Šalter.

The National Foundation for Civil Society Development, which was set-up in 2003, has also played an important role in supporting individual NGOs at the local level. The aim of the Foundation is to provide technical and financial support to organisations that support the sustainability of the non-for-profit sector, with the ultimate goal of helping develop a vibrant, democratic and inclusive civil society in Croatia. The Foundation publishes an annual tender for operational grants for NGOs, providing varying degrees of funding over 3 years to NGOs working broadly on democratization issues. Through these calls it supports organisations playing an important developmental role in local areas. Each year approx. five organisations receive the operational grant (which can be up to 52,000EUR per year, for up to three years). They tend to be spread out around Croatia to ensure a greater degree of inclusiveness. One grant is usually given to an organisation based in, or around the capital, Zagreb, while the others are given to organisations based and active in other areas of Croatia. The types of NGOs that are supported vary from NGOs dealing with women's rights, to minority issues.

Such an approach provides support to local-level initiatives to address local and regional issues, and helps particularly in building local level capacity over a longer term with a focus on sustainability.

The Foundation, as well as certain other national and international donors put focus on ensuring inclusion of organisations from around the country. Some of the tenders require that organisations from a number of counties are partners in the project, and that project activities take place in a number of locations to ensure a greater degree of inclusion.

Funding from local and regional government plays an important role in social entrepreneurship. A good example is a honey producer close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, some 90km from Split, which is registered as a profit-making NGO. He took part in 'Step's' activities that helped him access local government funding for developing his honey business in a formerly occupied, remote part of Croatia. Having secured stable levels of income, he reinvested his profits into the production of beekeeping equipment that he sold on to other producers, while employing several members of national minorities, and making donations to renovate a local school.

Local level NGOs play an important role in identifying local problems and working on solutions in the contexts they are familiar with. In post-conflict settings this is particularly important because local NGOs can raise awareness and inform local, regional and/or national level authorities of the existence of issues of concern, and of ways to deal with those problems.

In other words, inclusion of local level organisations helps in finding local level solutions to local problems, while at the same time contributing to development and inclusiveness in those areas.

#### Reconciliation Efforts

Due to the specific post-conflict scenario and the EU accession process Croatia has faced, and continues to face challenges in its reconciliation efforts. Although doubts remain about the nature of the conflict – whether it was civil, or inter-state, or whether it moved from one to the other – the country nevertheless faced numerous challenges in the reconstruction, reintegration and reconciliation processes.

Given that the conflict was essentially based on national/ethnic lines, there was a need to develop mechanisms to foster post-conflict inter-ethnic reconciliation processes. As a part of a process to draw a line under the war crimes prosecution processes, the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) recently passed a judgment acquitting both sides of the conflict on charges of genocide. Although such a judgment can help shift the focus away from war crimes prosecutions, it is not clear how it will contribute to returnee reintegration and reconciliation processes.

Of course, reconciliation efforts started long before the judgment. Some Croatian NGOs began work on reconciliation mechanisms even during the war in cooperation with NGOs from Serbia, or on their own within Croatia. However the majority of efforts began as part of the EU pre-accession negotiation process given that there was not much political or wider-public desire to work on reconciliation in the post-conflict period.

One of the key conditions that Croatia needed to meet for EU accession was the reintegration of returnees. As of 31/12/2014 Croatia ensured the return of 133,705 Serbs to the country, which is over 50% of those that had fled the country by 1995 (UNHCR internal documentation). Overall, reports indicate that 370,000 Serbs escaped Croatia during the war and in the aftermath of peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia (Minority Rights Group International). Along with the physical return, measures were designed to ensure legal provisions for their reintegration into the social and political life of Croatia. The initial Association and Stabilisation Agreement with the EU, as well as successive Progress Reports produced by the EC, outlined that returnees and their families faced continued and remaining challenges in attaining their rights, including issues falling under minority rights more broadly (EC 2010, EC 2012). This remained a hot topic throughout the negotiation process, and was the last chapter of the *acquis communautaire* to be concluded, in 2011. Although there were many challenges in the process, pressure created by the conditionality of the EU accession process, as well as activities of UN bodies such as the UNHCR played a crucial role in improving the human rights standards for national minorities, and consequently creating a framework that facilitated, and continues to facilitate voluntary returns and peaceful co-existence. The Housing Care Programme developed by the Croatian Government came into existence in 2003, but it was not until 2006 that minorities could also take advantage of this programme. Since its beginning, the Programme registered 17,500 family applications of former occupancy/tenancy rights holders;

of which 8,930 were approved. Since 1995, Croatia has reconstructed 149,082 family houses, of which some thirty five percent belong to the members of the Serb minority, whereas nearly all occupied houses (19,280) were repossessed by returnees or internally displaced persons (19,271) (UNHCR). Although there is no official data to support, or refute this, some commentators still see a discrepancy between access to rights in practice for the Serbs and Croats, and in particular with respect to the length of time taken to process requests. Clearly, this would make the reconciliation efforts more difficult.

The established legal framework ensured that parts of Croatia with a minority percentage greater than fifteen percent would have a right to a city vice-mayor, vice-county, or local council leader (Constitutional Law). Although this provision is respected,, the practice of employment in state institutions, despite laws providing for proportional employment of national minorities, illustrates that only 2.38% of Serbs are employed in those bodies (Croatian Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of Minorities), while the percentage of Serb minority in the population in 2011 was 4.4% (Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2012:1). Since the early 2000s, when mechanisms to promote the return of Serbs that had fled during the operations to free occupied territories (as well as the peaceful re-integration of Eastern Slavonia) were beginning to take shape, there hasn't been an increase in the proportion of Serbs in Croatia. Rather to the contrary, in 2001 the proportion of the Serb minority stood at 4.5%. This decline is made more significant by the fact that Croatia has a declining population.

Perhaps this is partially down to the fact that some Serbs may not have wished to identify themselves as Serbs in the census, while some have decided that they do not wish to return to Croatia. However that only serves to cast a shadow over the success of reconciliation efforts. A worrying trend for reconciliation is observed by figures from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics and UNHCR Office in Croatia, which indicate that only 15% of a sample of members of the Serb national minority have a monthly income exceeding 4000HRK (530EUR), while the national average is nearly 5500HRK (720EUR) (UNHCR 2, Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2012:1).

Difficulties in ensuring effective reconciliation between Serbs and Croats are further underlined by the evident tensions in the Vukovar region, which has seen the worst of the fighting. Today the Vukovar-Srijem County population has over 15% of Serbs, while the proportion of Serbs in Vukovar itself is around 35%. As a part of the EU accession process, the Serb minority was ensured rights to use their own language, their schools, and of course, proportional representation in the city administration, meaning that they have a guaranteed place for a vice-mayor of Vukovar. Although these mechanisms are of immense importance, they have not been implemented in a manner conducive to reconciliation. As a part of a study that is being compiled for the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, it was found that the rights attained and enshrined in laws, in practice mean that Serb and Croat children, living in a town with a population of 26,000, by and large attend separate elementary and secondary schools, with a separate teaching of history. Consequently, the laws

that are designed to protect cultural heritage and identity, are taken to the extreme, and serve to continue reinforcing divisions. A separate study conducted by the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung showed even more alarming trends.. They illustrated that the youth in 2012 were less tolerant, more nationalistic and more xenophobic than the same age group some 15 years earlier, or only several years after the end of the war (Ilišin V. et. al., 2013). It is therefore unsurprising that autumn 2013 saw violent clashes in Vukovar when local authorities placed bi-lingual signposts on state administration buildings. This move was particularly unwelcome by parts of the war veteran community of the Croatian forces, whose subsequent efforts to redefine what percentage a minority is, failed.

Challenges of reconciliation efforts, and the difference between theory and practice, are clear. Despite laws ensuring provisions for reconciliation, it is clear that to be a success, reconciliation needs to be taken out of legalistic and institutional terms. Many civil society organisations have focused more on ensuring that human rights standards are met, which has largely been a success. However, despite more isolated projects working on reconciliation, there hasn't been much focus on engaging mainstream Serbs and Croats in a constructive dialogue that would foster reconciliation.

### Conclusion

Efforts are being made to ensure a greater degree of local level participation of CSOs. Despite reconciliation efforts, it is clear that this process needs donor understanding of the real

specificities and challenges, as well as a lot of work on sensitizing the public in general and local-level decision makers in particular to the importance reconciliation has for development. Most of the Serb population lives in parts of Croatia that are poorer – further underlining the need for a regional approach to CSO funding in order to assist reconciliation efforts. Of course, reconciliation does not happen overnight, and having strong institutional and legal frameworks puts Croatia in a strong position to continue work on reconciliation efforts. However, more work needs to be done by all donors in engaging CSOs. CSOs possess the 'softer' reconciliation skills to ensure reconciliation doesn't happen on paper only. They understand the real needs on the ground, as well as the complex historical settings. Reconciliation is a process where incentives for cooperation need to be actively created, rather than passively hoping (or not) for it to simply happen.

1. The unemployment rate for Dubrovnik County is somewhat below the national average, largely due to the extended tourism season, and consequently a higher potential for employment in tourism and related sectors..

## What Comes First – the Chicken or the Egg?

Or how a united civil society at the local level can be both the trigger for and the consequence of a global post-2015 development agenda

**Case Study: Slovenia, Author: Ana Kalin**

### Setting the Stage

The year 2012 can be marked as the beginning of the debate on the model of development after the MDGs framework will cease to exist. At that stage, the discussion was to a large degree focusing on processes. At the beginning of 2013, consideration of the post-2015 development agenda started with a content-generating stage. At the global level, parallel dialogues were taking place, one stemming from the Rio+20 sustainable development track, and the other one originating from the post-MDGs process. This division between development experts on one hand, and on the other hand the environmental professionals, who have been in the driver's seat in the sustainable development field, was prominent also within the European Union (EU). Whereas some EU member states had by then proclaimed the need for uniting the two tracks, others were still in favour of retaining two separate, yet coordinated processes.

Slovenia belonged to the group of countries that at the end of 2012 declared support for a united post-2015 framework. Nevertheless, in the spring of 2013 some of the strongest players within the EU continued favouring a two-track approach which preserved a certain level of division between the developmental and environmental perspective in other countries as well. It was not until June 2013, when the General Affairs Council of the European Union adopted the conclusions on the overarching Post 2015 Agenda that the EU formally agreed to tackle the follow-up of the MDGs and Rio+20 in unison.<sup>1</sup>

Slovene NGOs were not too involved in the initial stages of global debates. Environmental NGOs were quite active in the run-up to Rio+20. Development NGOs were at first not involved in the post-MDGs and/or post-2015 debates. However, separate from the global debate on the future of development, a segment of Slovene environmental and development NGOs started a local campaign in 2012 called "Enough".<sup>2</sup> While in the first place focusing on existing consumption patterns, the aim of the campaign was to start a critical discussion on the concept of development and the understanding of the responsibility of every individual for the fate of our societies and the environment. Simultaneously, developmental NGOs started debating the meaning, purpose and role of development cooperation in overcoming inequalities and eradicating poverty. The conditions were thus set for a more systematic approach to tackling global issues at the local level.

### Linking the Global with the Local

In the Slovene non-governmental development cooperation sector, advocacy and policy issues are not at the forefront of activities. This is mainly a consequence of the size of this particular segment of the NGO sector, coupled with its financing possibilities (or lack thereof), which are mainly oriented to short-term visible results. In line with this reality, Slovene NGOs have not been at the forefront of the global civil society movement, but rather got involved in the post-2015 development process only at the beginning of 2013.

In accordance with regular practice, the Platform of Development and Humanitarian NGOs at that point started to coordinate advocacy efforts on this important global policy issue, which at the beginning of 2013 coincided with the arrival of a new advocacy and policy officer, who for the first time since the existence of the Platform had the advantage of working mainly on advocacy matters.

Due to external events in the first half of 2013, namely the launching of the Communication from the European Commission A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future,<sup>3</sup> followed by the process that ended with the adoption of the Council conclusions on the Overarching Post 2015 Agenda in May of the same year, Slovene NGOs needed to direct their efforts at the regional and national levels simultaneously. At the regional level, energies were concentrated on the work within the European Task Force (ETF) of Beyond 2015, a CSO network open to all European organisations, which in May 2013 launched its recommendations on the post-2015 framework entitled "Putting People and the Planet First."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, with the aim of influencing the EU position, advocacy efforts were undertaken at the national level. As already mentioned, Slovenia had at the end of 2012 declared itself in favour of a united post-2015 framework, but due to on-going internal and regional uncertainties, it was of utmost importance to secure continued support for fusing the two tracks. It was at this point that alliances were first built with environmental NGOs, aimed at showing a united front in the non-governmental sector, as well as hoping to create additional pressure on Government.

A joint letter by the developmental and environmental NGO platforms was sent at the beginning of April 2013 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Environment (ME).<sup>5</sup>

This joint approach was not utilised in the creation of the first position of development and humanitarian NGOs with regards to the post-2015 framework, which was directed towards the MFA at the end of April 2013.<sup>6</sup> Immediately before the meeting of EU Development Minister in May 2013, another letter, emphasising the most important messages, was sent to the MFA in order to maintain momentum. After the adoption of the Council Conclusions, the State Secretary at the MFA, acting in the role of Development Minister of Slovenia, addressed the Platform and confirmed the commitment of Slovenia to a universal post-2015 framework with a global partnership at its core.<sup>7</sup> It is often difficult to evaluate the exact impact of advocacy work, as one can never claim with certainty what actions were decisive for bringing a matter to its tipping point. Nevertheless, the end result was close to the position advocated by NGOs, therefore the efforts were not in vain.

The participation of a development NGO representative in the official delegation of the President of Slovenia at the special event on MDGs in September 2013 in New York was not only an excellent opportunity for further advocacy efforts, but also confirmed the recognition by the Government of the role of civil society in shaping the new framework. With the aim of continued awareness raising among Slovene decision-makers, but also among the broader public, a special issue of the quarterly magazine of the Platform (Slogopis) was devoted to the post-2015 development agenda, incorporating the state of affairs and political commitments made at the special event on MDGs.<sup>8</sup>



In 2013, the core of activities of development NGOs were aimed primarily at advocacy efforts in securing a post-2015 framework that would be able to tackle global challenges, eradicate global poverty, inequality and reverse environmental degradation. The focus on ensuring the appropriate contents of the new framework continued at the beginning of 2014 with the creation of a second, more detailed and advanced NGO position regarding the new agenda. In line with broader attempts of ensuring a cross-sectorial, and interconnected framework, the second position was coordinated between development and environmental NGOs.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the policy and advocacy officer of the Platform became a member of the Steering Committee of the ETF on Beyond 2015. This was important from two perspectives. Firstly, through the involvement at the European level, Slovene NGOs were well informed about global and EU developments. And secondly, through the membership in the Steering Committee, a fresh and slightly different perspective from a so-called new Member State was represented in the European CSO position, as well as the point of view of smaller NGOs.

However, a new dimension was added to post-2015 related activities in 2014, that of connecting the global mechanism with activities at the local level. This was a consequence of three realisations: i) the agenda was low on the priority list of Slovene decision-makers and the only way to bring it closer to their hearts was through raised levels of public understanding leading to pressure for change; ii) knowledge about the agenda among non-development actors was practically non-existent, so there was a need to raise their awareness,

especially as the new framework will most likely set the conditions for their future work; iii) the two-way connection between the global and local levels: on one hand, local input is crucial for an agenda that is aspiring to be truly universal, and on the other hand, an excellent and universal agenda means nothing without recognition at the local level, which is crucial for effective implementation.

The 2014 elections to the European Parliament (EP) presented an excellent opportunity for the execution of the second stage of activities. A broad coalition of NGO networks was formed, which included platforms from the areas of development cooperation, environment, education, social inclusion, health and volunteerism, as well as UNICEF. They joined forces for the first time and created a common civil society Manifest for the EP elections. The already mentioned position of development and environmental NGOs on the post-2015 agenda was used as a basis for the creation of an even more inclusive view on the future of Europe. The alliance called for a Europe that would be based on equality, where a healthy environment would be a priority and life would be decent, where the economy would support sustainable development for all, where policies would be coherent and without negative effects on development, and where good governance and accountability would be the order of the day.<sup>10</sup> Under these overarching demands, the platforms included their specific requests in their respective fields of work.

Manifests were then sent to all one hundred and eighteen candidates for the EP elections, together with a pre-drafted pledge to be signed by the candidates.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-nine percent of the candidates committed themselves to the CSO demands. Among them were three Slovene

EP members (out of eight members from Slovenia) and four members of the Slovene parliament. It is important to mention that national elections were held in July 2014, soon after the EP elections. The civil society alliance, formed for the EP elections, again joined forces and addressed all parties running for the national elections with a list of demands. Furthermore, the same coalition, joined by a few additional NGO platforms, proposed a joint activity as part of a broader call for proposals funded by the European Structural Funds and the Government of Slovenia in August 2014.

#### Was the Global Successfully Linked with the Local and Vice Versa?

It is possible to say that there are elements of success, as well as failure in the described activities, which took place over a period of one year and a half. It is not common practice for diverse platforms to cooperate in Slovenia. While they have over the years joined forces in support of an improved NGO status at the national level, they have rarely (if ever) worked together on coordinating substantive issues. The joint Manifest can thus be counted as a two-fold success. On one hand, a coordinated position of a broader section of civil society meant more pressure on decision-makers, especially when compared to past experiences in which politicians received numerous positions from CSOs working in various sectors. On the other hand, the elections to the EP were successfully used as a tool to introduce concepts from an overarching and universal development agenda to non-development CSOs.

In addition, through the described process, Slovene politicians and decision-makers became acquainted with the contents of the global post-2015

agenda. A substantive number of important positions advocated by development and environmental NGOs were incorporated into the official Slovene position on post-2015. Furthermore, some politicians committed themselves to supporting the core and underlying principles that the Slovene CSOs believe to be necessary for both local and global development, environmental sustainability and equality.

As always, there is also a negative side to the story. While commitments were indeed made, when the time came for a first post-election meeting between politicians and CSOs, the level of interest within the alliance decreased significantly. The alliance itself therefore made it easy for decision-makers to go back on their commitments. In order to ensure continued support for CSO demands, a constant dialogue with decision-makers is needed, which unfortunately did not happen in the described case. In order to achieve the desired goals, CSOs need to sustain coalitions, as larger numbers often have more impact. While the alliance worked together on several occasions during a short period of time, over time the momentum was lost.

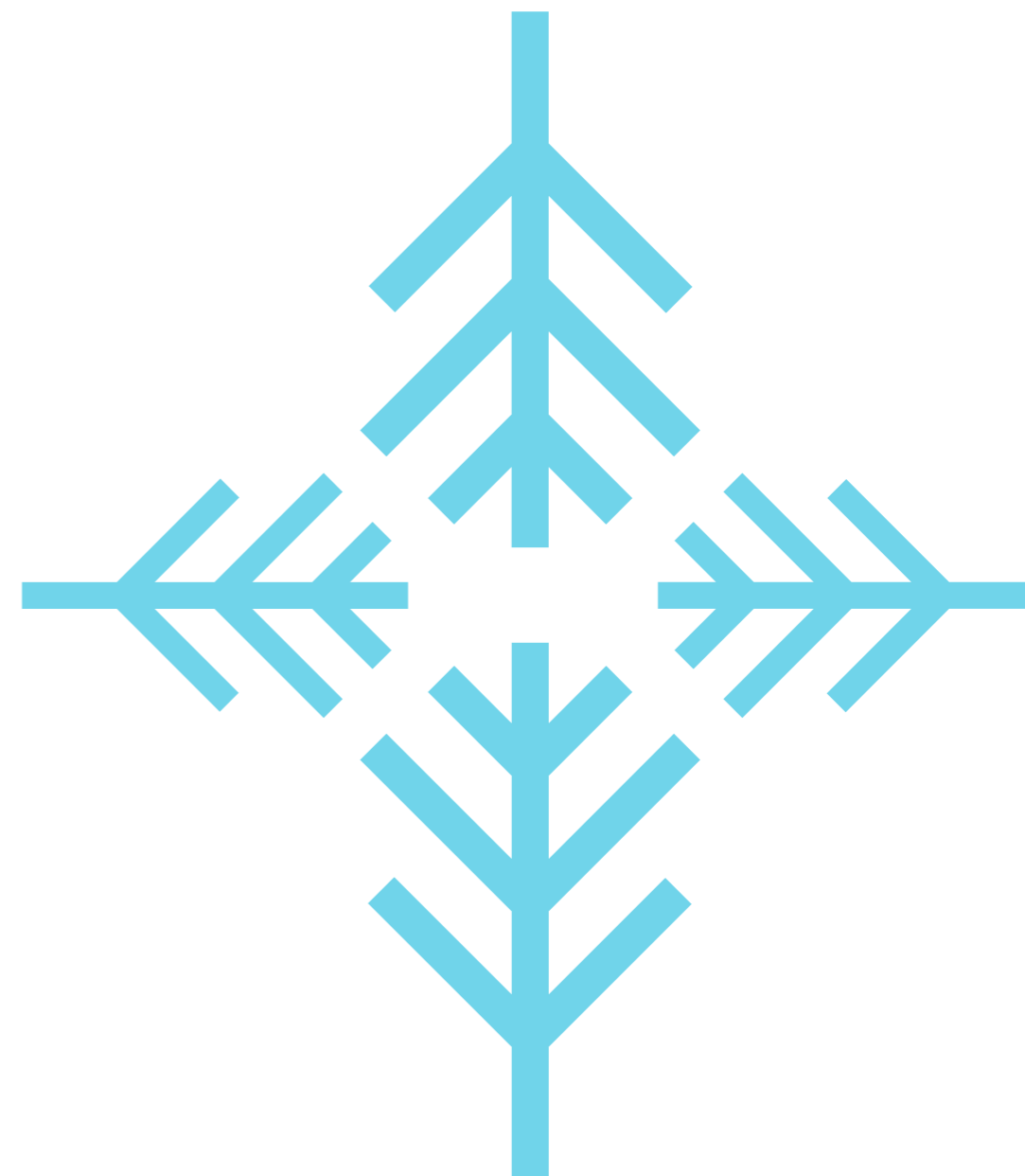
In order to bring about change, constant and long-term efforts are needed on the side of CSOs, especially when discussing something as complex as a future global development agenda, which calls for a changed perception of the world in which we must all assume our share of responsibilities. Unfortunately, in the described case, despite a good and relatively successful beginning, the endeavours ceased too soon to ensure significant change. This was also a consequence of a change in the structure of the Platform for development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

This highlights an often-present problem, namely that instead of creating a system to support change, too often change occurs due to engaged and enthusiastic individuals. This can to a large degree be attributed to financial factors and a very small operating space, as development issues are a rather obscure topic in Slovenia. Notwithstanding the financial situation, the development NGO sector needs to invest more in its professionalization, as well as in pursuing common goals instead of partial and, in the large scheme of things, inconsequential interests. In the long run, the existing setting often does not lead to sustainable and effective results.

While the results of the exercise could have been better, they nevertheless represent a step in the right direction. The example is a confirmation that through joining forces, more can be achieved. And no less important, the case shows how tightly connected the global and local levels are. In order to achieve progress, simultaneous efforts need to be undertaken. In other words, neither the chicken nor the egg came first.



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3. European Commission, A Decent Life for All: Ending poverty and giving the world a sustainable future [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/2013-02-22\\_communication\\_a\\_decent\\_life\\_for\\_all\\_post\\_2015\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/2013-02-22_communication_a_decent_life_for_all_post_2015_en.pdf)
4. Concord – Beyond 2015 European Task Force, Putting People and Planet First <http://www.beyond2015.org/sites/default/files/Putting%20People%20and%20Planet%20First.pdf>
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8. Slogopis No. 12 <http://www.sloga.sloga-platform.org/images/stories/PDF/slogopis%2012.pdf>
9. Sloga and Plan B, Stališče razvojnih, humanitarnih in okoljskih NVO do post-2015 agende [http://www.sloga-platform.org/images/stories/Stalisce\\_NVO\\_post-2015\\_februar\\_2014.pdf](http://www.sloga-platform.org/images/stories/Stalisce_NVO_post-2015_februar_2014.pdf)
10. Sloga, Plan B, MINVOS, prostovoljstvo.org, vkljucen.si, Nacionalna mreža NVO s področja javnega zdravstva, UNICEF, Manifest civilne družbe pred volitvami v Evropski parlament <http://gallery.mailchimp.com/1e69aaf-7c73728dce6744d567/files/fe1f32ee-7d90-4ddb-929c-227fc223c0b9.pdf>
11. [http://www.sloga-platform.org/sloga/images/stories/PDF/maj14/dr.\\_igor\\_%C5%A0oltes\\_zaveza.jpg](http://www.sloga-platform.org/sloga/images/stories/PDF/maj14/dr._igor_%C5%A0oltes_zaveza.jpg)



## A New Approach to Global Development

Case Study: Estonia, Author: Anna Karolin

### Successful case:

#### People's Assembly Rahvakogu

##### Background

In 2012 several political scandals rocked Estonian politics and together with the consequences of the global financial crisis on the Estonian economy, caused widespread disappointment among the Estonian public. For a better understanding of the situation, it is necessary to point out that since 2009, strict budget cuts had been implemented without big public protests and that in 2011 the Estonian prime minister caused public outrage by calling the opponents of the controversial Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) ratification bill conspiracy theorists wearing tin-foil hats and eating strange seeds. The ACTA bill also led to one of the biggest public protests in the history of newly independent Estonia.<sup>1</sup>

Then came the year 2012, when an MP and former Reform Party Member Silver Meikar admitted to funneling roughly 7600 Euros in questionable donations to the ruling Reform Party in 2009 and 2010 (known as the "Silvergate" scandal).<sup>2</sup> This discovery was followed by a series of dubious statements from party members with regards to the sources of their donations. An investigation was setup, but ended without any convictions.<sup>3</sup> This also led to public protests,<sup>4</sup> a public letter and online petition by important public opinion leaders, including politicians, writers and other social activists.<sup>5</sup>

The "Silvergate" scandal thus triggered what was believed to be a "crisis in democracy"<sup>6</sup> and the exposed violations of party regulations created suspicion towards other political parties as well.

In order to break the impasse, in November 2012 the Estonian president Toomas Hendrik Ilves undertook the role of an informal mediator and started a discussion between the activists, politicians and other relevant actors. Thus began the so-called Ice Chamber Process, named after the room in which the first meeting took place. One of the important conclusions of the process was to create an online civic platform,<sup>7</sup> the People's Assembly Rahvakogu,<sup>8</sup> to improve the current mood in politics and use crowd-sourcing as a way to get good ideas.

##### The Role of Rahvakogu/ People's Assembly

The People's Assembly Rahvakogu ([www.rahvakogu.ee](http://www.rahvakogu.ee)) is an online platform for crowd-sourcing ideas and proposals to amend Estonia's electoral laws, political party law, and other issues related to the future of democracy in Estonia. This form of direct democracy was new to Estonia, as was the idea of individuals simply proposing new legislation directly to the parliament, compared to the usual means through various kinds of protests. The concept of doing something constructive and inclusive, rather than protesting or ousting political leaders, was equally unknown. To ensure the best results, the

following operating procedures were agreed: i) gather ideas from society; ii) review them with experts and provide a balanced expert opinion 3) organise an assembly and thus hold a discussion day and 4) suggest the agreed proposals to the Parliament. Organisational powers were given to the Estonian Cooperation Assembly, and a large part was played by (non-political) NGOs, among them the Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organisations (NENO). Volunteers played an enormous role in the functioning of the Assembly.

The Assembly addressed five issues: the electoral system; competition between political parties and their internal democracy; financing of the political parties; strengthening the role of civil society in politics between the elections; and stopping the politicization of public offices. The Assembly combined modern communication tools with traditional face-to-face discussions. During the first stage, which ended in January 2013, proposals and comments were submitted online. In February 2013, analysts grouped the proposals and comments into bundles of different possible scenarios and provided impact analysis. The "deliberation day" (one day or more, as necessary) followed in March selecting the most preferred scenarios during public meetings. These were then presented to the parliament, Riigikogu, by the President of the Republic.

During the online phase, Rahvakogu received almost two thousand proposals over twenty five days.<sup>9</sup> Out of those, the Assembly discussed six suggestions. There were fears that the invited sample of citizens would not attend the deliberation day, but the turnout was relatively good, as three hundred and fourteen out of the five hundred invitees turned up for the discussion and deliberation.

The deliberation day concluded with five topics, divided further into eighteen proposals. Sixteen were accepted and two issues were voted down. The two rejected ideas were: 1) cancelling the requirement for candidates to submit a financial security deposit for standing for election in case a certain number of signatures are collected and; 2) securing permanent state funding to the People's Assembly.

The sixteen accepted proposals included dividing public financial support to parties in a more equal manner; improving regulations and monitoring of political donations; not supporting the politicization of public offices; easing the provisions on creating new political parties; increasing direct democracy and Parliament's interaction with the public.<sup>10</sup> Among the most surprising adopted proposals was the one to reject direct elections for the president. It was common knowledge that the majority of the Estonian public otherwise supported direct presidential elections and this result was thought to demonstrate the moderating effect of Rahvakogu.

After the deliberation day, President Hendrik Ilves submitted the supported proposals to the Parliament. Until today, three have been turned into law - Riigikogu decided to reduce the number of recruited members required for the establishment of a political party (from 1000 to 500), to reduce the candidate's financial deposit to stand for elections by half, it established stricter punishments for accepting prohibited donations, extended the authority of the Political Party Financing Supervision Committee and increased state financing for political parties that failed to achieve the election threshold. Legal amendments that require Parliament to start official procedures based on public petitions were also adopted.<sup>11</sup>

All in all, such legislation significantly simplified and eased the process of creating new political parties and their participation in elections. As Estonia has historically had a fragmented Parliament and thus unstable governments, measures formerly in place made it more difficult for new and small parties to formulate and compete in elections. However, such measures also meant that distrust towards established political parties could not so easily be channeled into creating new parties. As a result of these changes, a new political party—the Estonian Free Party—was created, which also succeeded in entering Parliament in the 2015 parliamentary elections.

#### Evaluation of Approach and its Potential Contribution to Development

During and after its creation *Rahvakogu* received a lot of criticism from several journalists and intellectuals for “suffocating” public protests and disrupting the needed ousting of the political elite. However, *Rahvakogu* can also be considered a success from many aspects. As it was a civil initiative, the discourse of civic activism allows for alternative proposals and mechanisms.

Firstly, it was a good balance between direct democracy and expert opinions. The threat of purely direct democracy is the lack of public discussion and simplistic arguments, especially when civil society is not highly evolved. *Rahvakogu* used public proposals, but moderated and complemented them with impact analysis from experts. The proposals went back to the people, but gave them a chance to discuss the possible impacts with experts. This in turn meant a more balanced and moderated form of direct democracy.

Similar to rules on party regulation, development policies and the cost of development aid often create public controversy and provoke anger in the layman. This is particularly true for countries where issues of development and the legacy of colonialism are less well known—such as the EU 13 (Estonia in particular, as the country with the least public support within the EU for development cooperation<sup>12</sup>). In both cases a public discussion is needed to raise public awareness. *Rahvakogu* and similar forms of democracy can not only be used to create such public discussions, but also take full advantage of their moderating effects as experts help to balance views and tackle ridiculous stereotypes.

Secondly, while the number of laws adopted by Parliament has been considered modest by several opinion leaders, it is the opinion of the author that abundant progress has nonetheless been achieved. The proposals encouraging the creation and sustainability of new political parties were instrumental to the entry of two new parties into Parliament during the most recent parliamentary elections, thus invigorating the political space.<sup>13</sup> While it is true that there has been modest social pressure from society, nonetheless several proposals from *Rahvakogu* have been implemented, demonstrating the value of publicly reviewed and evaluated proposals.

Foreign policy and development aid are highly political issues and are often guided by political, not evidence based decision-making. Thus a process, increasing the value of merit based policies, could also be used for better decision-making on development policy. The author would therefore recommend using people’s assemblies for making decisions on development policy.

Thirdly, the mechanism enables public awareness raising on topics traditionally considered elitist or boring. Even though party regulations are not perceived as a very exciting topic, as a consequence of *Rahvakogu* all the possible options and expert opinions were rigorously discussed in the media. A parallel could be drawn with issues such as aid efficiency, priority recipient countries and other issues of development, which at first glance seem like highly technical and unimportant topics, but in reality have an impact on the quality of life of citizens, just like party regulations do.

Fourthly, highly political issues debated and proposed by politicians often take the form of a zero-sum game among competing actors. The process of activating a people’s assembly can help de-politicise the debate and present the issues at stake from a more neutral perspective. As decisions are made based on discussion by laymen, political forces supporting unpopular policy options are no longer seen as losers. This takes away pressure from parties, that prioritize voters’ views and thus under normal circumstances usually succumb to following a populist view rather than a professional one. Having a neutral ground with experts proposing arguments, making decisions and legitimizing issues provides a way for parties to give up their position without losing face among their voters. Development policies can also include such hot topics and are in need of public, not party agreement.

The method of the People’s Assembly can be used in many contexts, for both local and national issues, while also being suitable in the context of development. However, people’s assemblies should not be organized on topics concerning basic human rights, minority issues etc. The method is only

suitable for discussing specific policy options and on questions that are up for majority vote. Assemblies held on very delicate issues (such as identity, race, punishments etc.) might result in deterring some participants or not have a moderating effect. In the context of development, issues of national reconciliation are most likely to be unsuitable for such a method.

#### Unsuccessful Case: Pork Barrel Financing in Estonia

##### Background

The practice of pork barrel financing seems to stem from the first half of 1990s.<sup>14</sup> According to one of the most experienced Estonian parliamentarians Eiki Nestor, the tradition started for pragmatic reasons. As the government wanted to maintain a balanced budget, members of the parliament were in practice not allowed to add additional expense items to the budget. Consequently, a separate itemized list of expenditures and an agreed sum of money was created for parliamentarians to spend according to their (mostly local) preferences.”<sup>15</sup>

According to the former Prime Minister Andrus Ansip initially the majority of the money went to fixing the roofs of kindergartens and schools (this is why the practice is called as “roof money”, “katuseraha” in Estonian).<sup>16</sup> Despite its non-transparent nature, pork barrelling until this day remains a stable source of NGO financing, notwithstanding the otherwise good reputation of Estonian civil society seen as generally transparent and prosperous among CEE countries.<sup>17</sup>

## Pork Barrelling in Estonia

Pork barrel financing generally means “legislators’ incentives to obtain funds, for example, for bridges and harbours, for the benefit of their home districts.”<sup>18</sup> In Estonia not all allocations go to local projects, but also to various organisations based on political decisions and consensus.

Every year between the 2nd and 3rd reading of the new national budget law, parties allocate funding based on their own preferences, often to NGOs. Each parliamentary party faction is allocated its share of finances in the state budget. In 2014, this amounted to approximately 10 million Euros and in 2015 - approximately 6 million Euros, less than 1% of the overall budget. The political parties then decide how to distribute the resources, and communicate their decision to the financing committee of the Parliament, which without thorough review prepares a final financial proposal.<sup>19</sup> The practice is a de facto custom, with no specific legal provision.

In order to receive financing, an organisation has to sign a contract with the responsible ministry, sometimes it has to submit a project proposal, and in the end report the results. However, there is no public procurement or other competitive procedures and thus the rules of public procurement do not apply. The financing is disbursed for many different purposes. These include local or national infrastructure objects, schools and other municipal or social buildings normally funded by local governments, national and regional NGOs ranging from national advocacy organisations to political or small NGOs with a very specific purpose. Often the funds are directed for the support of national theatres, sports organisations etc., ensuring the existence of primary services for public.

There have been serious reservations regarding the use of this money on ethical grounds or due to conflict of interest. Some financing goes to NGOs where parliament members serve as board members<sup>20</sup> or to their districts. A vast majority of NGOs accept the money, with few exceptions (such as, in 2015, The Estonian Human Rights Centre).

The practice has been condemned by many experts, such as Transparency International Estonia, the Policy Centre Praxis and NENO. According to NENO-<sup>21</sup>not everyone has equal access to financing, the decision-making process is not transparent and it is often based on personal beliefs and biases of party members without public procurement or other competitive award procedures. In addition, it has been claimed by some of the members of parliament and experts from NENO and the Praxis Policy Centre that there should be enough financing guaranteed to the recipients of the pork barrel through other more transparent means.<sup>22, 23</sup> Even when the purpose of the allocation is noble or motivated by public interest, the means of allocation are unethical and do not conform to good management practices.

Despite its unpopularity in the media and among experts, pork barrel financing is supported by the main political parties, both in the coalition and opposition.<sup>24</sup> The Reform Party and Pro Patria and Res Publica Union have pointed out several times that since decisions are made in the public interest, and the practice serves to keep the budget in check, it is justifiable.<sup>25</sup> The former Prime Minister Andrus Ansip has pointed out that the practice is very common among Western liberal democracies and that such direct investments are more effective.<sup>26</sup> Social democrats (a recent coalition party) have said that the parliament needs to make political and autonomous decisions and thus the practice is justifiable.<sup>27</sup>

## Evaluation of Approach and its Potential Contribution to Development

Often, countries who develop at a later stage have a chance to avoid the pitfalls of different political customs. Pork barrel financing in Estonia is an example of a political custom that has evolved over time and is now difficult to ban. Pork barrel financing is a common practice among many developed and also developing nations.<sup>28</sup>

As aforementioned, there are several reasons why this does not represent good management practices. To sum them up, not everyone has equal access to financing, the decision-making process is not transparent and is often based on party members’ personal beliefs and biases without public procurement or other competitive awarding procedures. Also, it has been claimed there should be enough financing guaranteed through other more transparent means. Even when the purpose of the allocation is noble or motivated by public interest, the means of allocation are unethical and cannot be described as good management practice.

As the custom allows for political and not transparent financing, it is even more dangerous in developing countries, where the role of the media as a watchdog is weaker and where political culture is less evolved and clientelist incentives more prominent.

In the context of development, more effort should be devoted to strengthening the role of watchdogs—media, civil society and local protests. Also, considering potential hazards, working on banning or deterring parliament members from such financing practices through conditional aid could also be considered. In countries, where this practice has not yet developed, efforts should be made to advise against it.

However, as these steps will most likely be seen as hypocritical, developed countries themselves should be encouraged to end the custom.

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# Is Cooperation the New Development?

Case Study: Latvia, Author: Kristīne Ļeontjeva

“I don’t think you should interview me, we were cooperating, not helping them.”<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The case study from Latvia aims to examine three practices of cooperation between Latvian entities and their partners in priority countries, as defined by the official Strategy of Latvia for development cooperation, yet not financed from the official development cooperation funding and not labelled as such by project implementers. The case study will discuss how the projects were initiated and implemented, what was their effect on their target groups and what distinguishes them from “official” development cooperation projects, finally using this distinction to illustrate some shortcomings in the development cooperation field and identify opportunities for systemic improvements, which would be more in line with the newer thinking on development cooperation.

The case study analyses available documents on development cooperation in Latvia and provides data from five interviews conducted with people involved in the three practices of cooperation.

## Background

Latvia started planning and implementing development cooperation policy in 2004 when it joined the EU, in line with the first document adopted for this field of work - The Basic Principles for the Development Cooperation Policy of the Republic of Latvia (referred to as Development Cooperation Principles)<sup>2</sup>. In 2008 the World Bank’s International Development Association changed the status of Latvia to a donor country.

The most recent Development Cooperation Policy Strategy for the period of 2011-2015 (from now on Strategy) states that Latvia, within its capacities to engage in development cooperation activities, should focus on the effectiveness of aid, policy coherence and sustainability of results achieved.<sup>3</sup> The document does not however provide any specific proposals or provisions for how effectiveness, coherence and sustainability could best be implemented.

The priority countries within the Strategy are Eastern Partnership countries, countries in Central Asia and countries where Latvian civil experts or military missions are stationed. In terms of thematic priorities, the Strategy invites development agents to focus on any of the priority fields defined by The European Consensus on Development. It also states that Latvia will offer its transition experience to help implement political and economic reforms in regions where this is necessary. Thus development cooperation should be carried out in areas where Latvia as a donor state has comparative advantages and expertise to support development programmes in partner states. The necessity for a needs assessment in receiving countries is either implied or not mentioned, except for Moldova and Georgia for which there have been country strategy papers prepared for 2006-2008.

The budget for development cooperation over the years has fluctuated greatly, especially with regards to country programmable aid - from over 800 000 Euros in 2008 to just over 1000 Euros in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

These resources have been distributed by earmarked funding in accordance with the Development Cooperation Plan that supports the implementation of the Strategy, through calls for grant proposals for which CSOs, businesses, local authorities and state institutions could all apply for, or through a decentralized approach, financing development cooperation projects identified by Latvian embassies in recipient countries. The scope and thematic focus of the projects have been extremely diverse - from building courthouses in Afghanistan to promoting non-formal peer-to-peer learning in Belarus.<sup>5</sup> During the years 2009 - 2011 very few projects were carried out. Among them were a training in Riga for five Georgian officials on migration and citizenship and a study visit in Riga for a representative of Georgian Adult Learning association, carried out in 2009.<sup>6</sup>

Latvia’s development cooperation partner countries that have received the majority of financial support are Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Afghanistan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on their website states that “Latvia understands Georgia’s attempts [at development] and needs”<sup>7</sup> while in the case of Moldova “Latvia is interested in stability and development in the region, as well as understands attempts and needs of Moldova.”<sup>8</sup> The thematic focus of projects, as mentioned before, has been very varied and diverse. Generally most project funds have been allocated for developing soft skills projects and reforms, and not for infrastructure projects, which generally require larger amounts of donor money. The Strategy sees the development cooperation funding as an opportunity to increase the capacity and experience of Latvia’s experts to improve their success in obtaining other funding.

This is the general setting for development cooperation practices in Latvia - unstable funding, wide action areas, narrow geographical focus, earmarked funding allocation, lack of needs assessments, focused on finding a niche and the special development product that only Latvia can offer. This means focusing on the input perspective (what can we offer), not necessarily the output (what are the needs of recipient country), which is stressed already in the Strategy. Against this general background the organizations that are included in this case study have not applied for MFA funding / to MFA calls for proposals, but have turned to other donors for support.

## The Three Practices

This paper presents three different organizations and their cooperation projects in the above mentioned priority countries. The main characteristics of the projects are similar to those projects that receive funding from MFA and thus qualify as development cooperation projects. These main common characteristics are the thematic focus, types of interventions, and the countries of action. However the people implementing the projects looked at in the case study do not consider their projects as development cooperation projects. The reasons for that can be taken as a good starting point for improvements in the development cooperation field and are discussed further in the paper.

## The projects that were chosen for analysis are:

(1) “Non-formal education for all”<sup>9</sup> was a project that was submitted to and financed by the Youth in Action programme through Youth in the World (3.2.) action in 2010.<sup>10</sup> The duration of the project was 12 months, the total grant amounted to over 80 000 Euros. The direct beneficiaries were 32

young people and 44 youth workers and youth leaders from two European countries and two countries in Central Asia. The project included an advance planning visit, a youth exchange, a training course and two job shadowings – one in Europe and one in Central Asia. It was coordinated by an organization that mostly works with youth projects, implementing training courses and youth exchanges.

(2) “Recommendations for policy makers” – this project brought together policy and media experts from EU countries, Russia, and Eastern Partnership countries to draft recommendations for policy makers of all countries involved on improving media literacy, especially in light of the hybrid war taking place in Ukraine. The project also included presentations of recommendations to policy makers and media professionals in all countries involved. It was financed by three different funding sources, none of them being governmental. The project was initiated and coordinated by an NGO that focuses on cooperation projects between Baltic States and Eastern Partnership countries.

(3) “Meeting of local municipalities” – a long-term partnership was established between a small municipality in Latvia and a municipality in Belarus. Over the past three years there have been four study visits organized (two for Belorussian officials, entrepreneurs and representatives of educational sector to Latvia and two for Latvian officials, entrepreneurs and educational professionals to Belarus). Study visits were aimed at exchanging experiences, learning from each other, building future cooperation. All activities were financed jointly by both municipalities. Only representatives of the third case had been at some point in the past receivers of MFA’s

development cooperation funds for projects with local municipalities in partner countries. However in recent years the organization has not applied for such grants anymore, financing its activities from the municipal budget.

When asked for the main reasons for their activities and the circumstances under which they decided to implement the projects, all of the interviewed stated a common sense of need and urgency. The first organization had cooperated for many years with organizations in Russia that introduced them to their partners in Central Asia. Having Russian as their mother tongue created a common interest to explore each other’s realities. At the same time having brought with them a young person with disabilities in one of the projects and realizing the difficulties that she was facing in her daily life, it became apparent that there were great similarities between the situations of people with disabilities in each of the countries, be it the Baltics or Central Asia. Thus they decided to write a project that was then submitted by the Latvian partner to Youth in Action programme. “This followed the idea that we are very similar and that both they and us had to learn about dealing with people with disabilities through non-formal learning. It was about giving ideas for financing activities that people were tired of doing voluntarily.” (from the interview with project coordinator)

In the second case the organization was established just after the bloody events in 2008 in Georgia to support Georgian people in their struggles for keeping their independence and territorial integrity. This was the same year that budget cuts occurred in Latvia, not allowing the organization to receive any funding from the state. As the representative of the organization mentioned in the interview, this prevented the

organization from wider work in Georgia itself, but at the same time taught them to look for and find other funding sources. That was also one of the reasons that was mentioned for not applying for MFA’s funding now when it has been re-established – “We are doing ok just with private funding. We now do what we know we should be doing, not what the Government has put in their plan. We don’t want to do projects just for the sake of doing them and getting funding.” Being a rather small NGO it relies on information and intelligence gathered in partner countries by partners living and working there. Most of the contacts were made long before the organization was established through, for example, volunteering in Georgia, taking up a diplomatic post in Ukraine, working in international missions to Ukraine and Georgia, etc.

The third project was initiated through a meeting that took place several years ago within a framework of a project supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It had become clear for both municipalities (in Latvia and Belarus) that this kind of meetings were useful and beneficial for those involved. “It’s something new, we don’t really know how they live, it’s interesting to see. And for them as well – in a way we’re similar, but at the same time – we are in the EU. Different perspective to learn from. All participants really enjoyed it, and because people liked spending time together and saw some benefits, we continued. It’s like holidays, but with a meaning.”

It is through private contacts that all the above mentioned practices were initiated and enacted. For none of the people involved in the cases this is a full or even part time job (except the third example where the municipality employees are organizing meetings,

but this is also not their main responsibility), all are involved with something else, yet they responded to a need that was discovered in conversations and cooperation with their contact persons in their partner countries. Much of the planning and implementation was thus based on a people-to-people approach and on trusting that local people knew best what their situation and needs were. In none of the cases had the country development strategies been consulted or directly taken into account.

The contacts with partners in partner countries also were the reason why none of the three cases were seen as finished projects – all involved were planning to continue cooperation based on needs. “We can react really quickly. We know how to mobilize people and resources if such a need occurs. We have done it before. In a way this is why we established this organization – to be able to react when the need comes.” All felt they had to cooperate and work together because of common historical memories and perceptions, common contacts stretching way back. None of the cases mentioned common wider goals to be achieved. Representatives of two of the cases also mentioned that this feeling of an on-going cooperation also might be the reason why they had not evaluated the outcomes and impact of their projects. Lack of evaluation and impact assessment of these cases are quite similar to how the MFA’s projects are carried out – they are internally evaluated, but there are no extensive assessments done by MFA to see how the projects contribute to the implementation of the Strategy and whether they contribute to any of the three elements that the Strategy invites to focus on: aid effectiveness, policy coherence and sustainability of results achieved.

The projects funded under the development cooperation by the MFA since 2005 have been similar in form to the projects mentioned here – training courses, seminars, exchange of experience, study visits. Except the very few projects focusing on infrastructure (about eight out of over 132 described in more detail in the yearly reports of the MFA), most of the projects offer to the recipients skills trainings and recommendations for reforms. The difference, however, according to the interviewed was in how these projects are initiated and therefore how involved the recipients are in the implementation phase.

#### Development Cooperation or “just” Cooperation? Evaluation of the Approach and its Potential Contribution to Development

None of the people interviewed were calling these three projects development cooperation projects, they were always considered to be “simply cooperation” projects. When during the interviews the author enquired the reasons for that, representatives of two of the cases said it was because they were not specifically doing something good for the Belorussians/ Georgians/ Ukrainians/ Central Asians. They were cooperating on an equal basis. This implies that development cooperation as a concept holds the hierarchy of someone helping someone else, which a participant of the first case, for example, did not feel comfortable with: “I went there to learn how to work with people with disabilities, but they straight away assumed I should teach them. But what could I teach someone who’s been living with a disability all their life? They took it as the European experience, but I refused to go down that road.”

The MFA’s list of projects implemented under development cooperation reflect this understanding of hierarchical relationships - the overwhelming majority of projects (about 82 of just over 100) deal with one way knowledge sharing and skills training – from Latvia as a donor to recipient countries. The idea of hierarchy is reflected also in the Development Cooperation Strategy, which promotes Latvia’s involvement in those areas where it has the comparative advantage and expertise as a donor country. This risks to not take into account the idea that the best experts on development are those thoroughly familiar with the local situation, not necessarily those that have already carried out reforms - but at a different time, different place and in a different situation.

Another aspect of not calling these development cooperation projects was that the gains were seen to be mutual, so somehow not fitting with the imagined concept of development cooperation of the people interviewed: “they were not the only ones benefitting and we were benefitting from the cooperation not only in terms of economic gains” (interview with representative of the second case).

The cases mentioned in the study had a potential to reach wider audiences – through youth workers/ educators in the first case, policy makers in the second case and municipalities implementing new initiatives and reforms in the third case. Sustainability currently seems to be achieved by planning to continue the cooperation. Actions that are part of wider development strategies and that take advantage of development strategy as a coordination mechanism among many actors, however, could have potentially more sustainable

results, as resources could be pooled together for a more effective response. As there is a lack of evaluation and wider impact assessments carried out for both these and MFA-financed projects, this is only an assumption to be considered.

While an in-depth study of characteristics of development cooperation projects financed by the MFA would be very useful for a complete picture (for example – the scope of needs analysis done for each project, how the project ideas originate and how involved are people of recipient countries in determining the content of the projects, and the short and long-term impact of the projects), this case study raises the question of what does the concept of “development” mean and imply.

This case study shows that there are cases when some projects similar in form and content will not be called development cooperation projects because (1) the funding does not say it should be called that; (2) the recipients are contributing to the content and form of the project, so implementers don’t call it “development” cooperation. If we acknowledge that these cases are in fact development cooperation, it would show the good example of recipient ownership and widen the scope of what could be called development cooperation, stretching the boundaries of the sector and also taking away the monopoly of funders (in this case the MFA) to define development cooperation. There would need to be more actors involved in shaping development cooperation strategy as it, along with the yearly plans of implementation, could be the coordinating mechanism for development cooperation efforts in all sectors, which in the case of a very small country with a small budget for development cooperation would be feasible.

The coordination mechanism should provide a framework based on a wider needs analysis of the partner countries; marked thematic areas; widespread invitation across sectors to plan cooperation activities in line with the Strategy even if with funding from other sources; monitoring, review and impact assessment measures that could inform future strategies and annual planning documents as well as the inclusion of actors across all fields. Thus the mechanism could offer effectiveness, coherence and sustainability.

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9. Names of projects and beneficiaries are changed.
10. Through Youth in Action programme (2007-2013) the European Commission funded projects in the youth field for youth policy development and implementation in the EU Member States. As one of the dimensions of youth policy is youth in the global world, projects aiming at developing EU’s youth through meeting and cooperating with youth from the rest of the world were granted through the Youth in the World action.



## Conclusion - Time and Opportunity for a New Paradigm?

Authors: Ana Kalin, Igor Loncarski

All eyes are turned to New York, where in September of this year states will supposedly adopt a new global and universal agreement for the eradication of poverty and achievement of sustainable development. Due to constant and rising economic, ecological, social and political tensions, there seems to be a sufficient degree of awareness that some sort of change is needed. But the level of transformation in global power relations and standard economic operating procedures that states are willing to embark on remains to be seen.

### Where We Stand Today

The agreement still in the making is addressed as transformative and intended to put an end to business as usual. Its holistic and universal nature is certainly a step in the right direction. However, only the future will show if all countries will truly implement it in its entirety and even more important, how development and environmental experts and ministers will convince their colleagues from other government spheres, such as finance, trade, economy or agriculture, to put people and the planet first.

Experience shows that “most debates about global governance have tended to refer either to the remaking of (Western) authority, sometimes in a more acceptable fashion, or to the issue of policy-making and delivery in an age, where states promise more but seem able to deliver less.....On the one hand, ‘governance’ captures the emergence of new forms of regulation and the technical difficulties of providing order in an increasingly complex and globalized world. But, on

the other, global governance is recognized as a deeply political exercise, in which different actors seek to impose their vision of order and rights and make use of unequal resources to get their way.”<sup>1</sup> Hence, when it comes to the creation of “yet another new global” development agenda, it is possible to envisage several difficulties with ensuring a truly transformative top-down global approach that will eradicate poverty (or at least improve the well-being of the most vulnerable) and bring about environmental sustainability.

The first difficulty is the lack of a global “we”, a result of dynamics between groups (states) followed by national interests. According to social psychologists, when a group is created, it delineates itself from the outgroup. Norms and values determine the individual’s conception of what is appropriate, which to a large extent establishes smooth and predictable social conduct and a cohesive society. With the purpose of simplification and ordering of the complex world and the constant influx of information from the environment, stereotypes are applied to the outgroup, which are used to clearly distinguish between the groups.<sup>2</sup> Parallel to the process of categorisation, the process of social comparison takes place, the purpose of which is to obtain confidence of our beliefs through comparison with the opinions of other group members. The combination of both processes leads to the exaggeration of intragroup similarities and intergroup differences.<sup>3</sup> As a consequence, there is an inherent positive bias towards the ingroup and a tendency to dislike and mistrust the outgroup.

Problems of the outgroup are perceived as limited and not directly related to the ingroup. As such they represent little or no concern for the ingroup. Nevertheless, as already discussed in the first chapter, global changes ranging from environmental (pollution and degradation of the environment) to socioeconomic (rising inequalities) and political (a multipolar and less “predictable” world) have brought the problems of the outgroup closer to the doorstep of the ingroup. While awareness and recognition of relevance and importance of those issues by the ingroup is not necessarily sufficient (as is the belief of the authors), the most recent economic crisis and the advent of speedy and more free (less controllable) informational dissemination through the internet and social media has made people in the ingroup more likely to identify the outgroup problems as potential local threats.

As mentioned in the first chapter, the need for a sense of security and safety is essential for human beings and the group is an important source for obtaining this feeling. With the creation of a truly global, inclusive and participatory agreement, the domain of national politics and national interests would be significantly restricted. Loyalty towards the group would have to be replaced by loyalty towards a global village. However, this global village includes not only our ingroup, but also all outgroups with different norms and values of “dubious” nature, which means that levels of safety and security would be considerably diminished. Due to this dynamic, it is extremely difficult to overcome the divide between groups (states) and create a global “we”.

Secondly, changes in the rules of behaviour are not in the interest of elites, may they be state elites or economically powerful corporations or individuals. Economically and politically powerful countries of the West have had more leverage when important global decisions and agreements have been shaped, which in turn helped them gain more power. Nowadays, the emerging BRICS economies are challenging the status quo and their influence can to some degree be seen in the shaping of the new development agenda. As already mentioned in the first chapter, corporations also have an increasingly important role in today’s decision-making processes. When looking at the distribution of wealth, we observe that 80 of the wealthiest billionaires enjoy the same wealth as 3.5 billion persons on this Earth. Increasing wealth inequalities are not only a phenomenon of developing countries. Saez and Zucman (2014)<sup>1</sup> show that the share of household wealth of the bottom 90 percent of households has decreased in the past 30 or so years from around 35 percent to around 22.8 percent in 2012, while at the same time the share of the top 0.1% of US households has increased from around 10 percent to 22 percent. This implies that there seems to be very little interest per se among the so-called economic elites to make any changes to the way how societies operate today.

Thirdly, even if the new development agenda will in theory provide for everything that it aims to accomplish, there is always a gap in the implementation of international agreements. Additionally, according to Hathaway, in case of rights-based regimes the likelihood for compliance is much lower than with security regimes or regimes of economic governance.

Neumayer introduces the importance of civil society in relation to international agreements: while states do not have a natural tendency to comply with them, the likelihood of them doing so increases with a strong civil society<sup>1</sup>. The lack of accountability mechanisms that would safeguard the effectiveness of the agreed rules only adds to the gap between theory and practice.

Fourthly, Oxfam<sup>6</sup> itself in its proposal on safe and just space for humanity warns that the proposed concepts of social floors and an environmental ceiling are normative boundaries. Fully agreeing that poverty anywhere should be eradicated, poverty is nevertheless relative and defined in relation to society. In rich countries, the minimum standards below which nobody should fall are much higher than in poor countries. It would thus be difficult to come to an overarching conclusion that could be accepted and perceived as fair by everyone. Similarly, it is the perceptions of risk and the wish to remain within the Holocene, as an objective description of the planet's biophysical reality as described by scientists, which will influence where it is opportune to set the boundaries of natural resource use.

It is impossible not to wonder if the new development agenda 1) will be that much different from already existing documents, 2) will be based on a collective "we" or 3) will loyalty remain to national interests, in which case the interests of the strongest will have disproportionate power in its creation. Development cooperation is a model that essentially aims at spreading the lessons learnt and the accompanying results from the developed countries to the developing world. This presupposes that the solutions from the Western countries are (at least at the moment) the best

existing solutions for individuals and societies to lead quality lives. While this paper surpasses the concept of development cooperation and tackles issues of global development, the dynamics between developed and developing or the rich and the poor, are crucial for understanding the underlying forces that guide world developments and events. Taking into consideration the influence of large corporations on the leading economies, with little or no consideration for other stakeholders in the society, and the domination of "Western" political and economic doctrine in most supranational institutions, this combination leaves little space for nationally owned and culturally-specific development. Not only does this development model lead to loss of cultural and linguistic diversity, but it can lead to strong tensions between the development model and societies wanting to preserve their way of life.

#### Flipping the Traditional Top-to-bottom "Father-knows-best" Government Approach

As much as the creation of an inclusive global community based on equality, decent living standards and sustainability for all would be the optimal solution, it is not very likely to happen. What is the possible solution to end the exploitative and asymmetric system that is losing its legitimacy? Due to growing tensions within and between states, rising inequalities, decreases in social services and disempowerment of the average individual, there is an increasing number of initiatives striving to bypass the state and contribute to social change through active participation of members of the society. These initiatives come in various shapes and sizes, but their overall aim is to bring about change.

While there are several definitions of active citizenship, in this paper it will be perceived as people that take the initiative and play an active role in the community with the aim of improving the well-being of the community (at local, national or global levels), while keeping in mind the idea that all persons have rights and responsibilities towards the community. The following are the most commonly known examples of active citizenship:

- Crowdsourcing: obtaining ideas or services, developing original and/or new concepts and products from a large group of people that each contributes their small part in the creation of the overall result. Usually this result is achieved through online communities. There can be numerous forms of crowdsourcing in any field, such as crowdvoting or creative crowdsourcing to receive a creative solution in architecture.

- People's Assemblies, as described in the Estonian case study, are also a form of crowdsourcing. The Rahvakogu is an online platform to obtain suggestions aimed at improving the functioning of the Estonian political system, which of course affects the overall quality of Estonian life.

- Multi-stakeholder cooperation: the concept relates to any kind of cooperation that involves more stakeholders who join forces in order to achieve a mutually beneficial cause.

- Co-working spaces, such as the Centre for Social Innovation,<sup>7</sup> not only provide a shared space for various organisations that previously worked as isolated units, but also create a culture of collaboration and sense of community, joining non-profits, for-profits, entrepreneurs, activists and so forth under one roof in order to expedite idea exchanges and amplify their impact.

- Civil society alliances, as described in the Slovene case study, in which a broad coalition of NGO networks working in various social fields was created. Their purpose can be manifold, but aimed especially at creating a holistic approach to social issues, adding credibility to the cause, and increasing advocacy impact.

- Local partnerships, such as the Downtown Denver Partnership<sup>1</sup> in collaboration with the City and County of Denver, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Downtown Denver Business Improvement District, are working together to design and construct a network of bicycle paths in Downtown Denver and throughout the city. The partnership also raised part of the total resources needed for the bicycle network through crowdfunding.

- A strong civil society: it is a crucial element of a society that truly understands and meets the needs of its members. As illustrated in the Croatian case study, a strong civil society can support local initiatives, address local issues and provide employment possibilities or possibilities to reinvest into the community. It is important to strengthen advocacy capacities of civil society, as there are many good examples of how advocacy efforts improved legislation, one of them described in the Polish case study.

- Global education: the aim of global education is to give young people the tools to participate and shape a better world that will respect diversity, social justice, human rights, equality, justice and a healthy environment. While in some countries global education or some of its elements are part of the official curriculum, in many countries it still depends on the work of

civil society and enlightened teachers that recognize the importance of educating the youth to become creative and curious thinkers that are capable of forming their own opinions.

- Awareness raising: includes a broad range of activities aimed at understanding issues and tackling them or seeing them in a different or new way. There are different channels of communicating with target groups, such as directly addressing them, communicating through journalists or using various forms of social media. There are also different means and purposes for communicating, for example writing petitions, using ambassadors to convey messages, branding on posters or advertisements, doing stunts and so on.

- Professional networks in the humanitarian sector: in order to deliver specific expert solutions and services to victims of natural, technological and human catastrophes, professionals from specific fields have united and used their professional expertise.

- Doctors Without Borders or Emergency Architects are good examples of such networks, focusing on medical assistance and reconstructing architectural, cultural and historic heritage respectively.

- Activism: direct actions to achieve an end, which is usually social, political, economic or environmental in nature.

- There are numerous forms of activism, such as demonstrations, boycotts, lobbying, whistle-blowing etc. Activists can be individuals, varying from political representatives, public officials, journalists, and members of the civil society or famous personalities such as Bono.
- Activists can be individuals or there can also be group activism, for example youth activists who get engaged in order to bring about social change.

- Philanthropists: those that give their time, money and/or reputation in order to help improve the lives of other people. Certainly the most known philanthropists are Bill and Melinda Gates, but there have been lately an increasing number of private foundations reinvesting into society at home and globally. Philanthropists do not have to come in the shape of wealthy businessman; they can also be actors, singers or Mother Teresa.

- Social entrepreneurship: social entrepreneurs look for solutions to societal problems that are not being catered by the Government or the business sector. While they are committed to changing something they believe is not functioning well, they are very much focused on the practical side of implementing their vision with the involvement of society.

- The People's Supermarket<sup>9</sup> is a social enterprise in the middle of London, which offers an alternative food network that not only connects the urban and local farming communities, but aims at satisfying the needs of the local community by providing high quality local food at reasonable prices. One way of achieving attainable prices is through voluntary work in the supermarket, which leads to a 20% discount on all produce.

Active participation for improved well-being usually stems from beliefs about the necessity of change and strong commitment to this change. As such, it is often perceived as charity or volunteer work. Instead of agreeing that solidarity is a necessary precondition for a functioning and healthy society in which the state delivers social justice, we live in times where we accept that the state delivers security (whose and from whom?), while the well-being of society is provided either for free or as a good will of "believers in social justice".

The more traditional funding sources for activities aimed at improving the quality of life come from the government, intergovernmental organisations, the private sector and philanthropists. In addition, organisations engage in fundraising initiatives as means for people to contribute to a worthy cause that addresses a societal concern. Financial support can be short or long term, while often the desire is to keep the support of individuals or organisations for the long run. Crowdfunding is a relatively new and more innovative approach to fundraising tied to the internet and other means of digital communication, which allows individuals and organisations to place their causes or projects up for scrutiny of potential supporters who then decide whether to support them or not. The projects can be related to any field, ranging from art, business or societal well-being. Crowdfunding usually relates to time-bound undertakings.

From the description of the numerous forms in which individuals and organisations can be actively involved in shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future, it can be concluded that there is not much that has not been thought of as yet. And while all those activities contribute their share to a better world, it seems that the challenges keep on accumulating and multiplying. Even if new approaches are developed, they alone will not be able to "save the world".

#### A Proposal for a New Platform

Existing examples of active citizenship have cooperation, coordination, connecting and transforming the community at the core of their mission. However, most eventually end up functioning within their operating borders. This can be a consequence of the innate desire for safety and the known, and of the fight for limited financial resources. But it is probably also a

consequence of the functioning of today's world, which is highly specialised. Not so long ago, scientists were proficient in a large number of related fields, for example physics, chemistry, mathematics and philosophy. Due to increasing amounts of knowledge, facts and data in each of these fields, today's researchers most often focus on a narrow section within one professional area, producing revolutionary solutions for the very specific problems they are addressing. But in most cases, there is little exchange of information and cross-referencing with related and relevant fields of work. In other words, a truly holistic, coordinated and coherent approach is more of an exception rather than general practice in today's highly specialised and competitive world.

It is thus the proposal of this research to create platforms for change at the grass roots level that will unite all actors that are already leading their separate battles for improving life in communities at home and abroad. Such platforms would include non-governmental organisations from a wide range of issue areas, researchers, think tanks, social entrepreneurs, philanthropists, enlightened businesses, journalists, public relation agencies, teachers, professional networks, opinion-makers, whistle-blowers, trade unions, activists and volunteers – a movement of active members of the community for social change.

The five case studies have shown that by respecting the underlying principles stated in the first chapter, namely coherent actions and cooperation, effective use of resources, multi-stakeholder cooperation, transparency, accountability, ownership and sustainability, change is possible at the local level. These principles would guide the functioning of the platform. In order to establish the internal code of conduct of the platform, crowdsourcing mechanisms would be used.

### The aim of the platform would be manifold:

- Implementation of local projects, also in cooperation with local authorities;
- Implementation of international projects in cooperation with international partners, may they be from developed or developing countries;
- Advocacy at the local and national levels, aimed at improving legislation for the benefit of the community;
- Awareness raising and global education activities.

Activities of the platform would consist of ongoing and new projects, connected into a joint mission and narrative. Members of the platform would use traditional funding sources to implement their activities, and crowdfunding would also be applied. Members of the platform coming from the business sector would provide an additional source of financing. Through small steps, the platform would cater to immediate needs that cannot be met by the authorities, while also paving the way for changed patterns of behaviour both by community members and the authorities. An overarching aim of the platform would be reinstating communal trust and a sense of belonging in today's highly individualised society, a trust based not on fear, but rather on common beliefs.

The proposal seems very simplistic and easily achievable, but is in reality rather complex and ambitious. There are important dilemmas that need to be answered for such a proposal to function: 1) why would this platform be any different from previous and already ex-

isting attempts of cooperation; 2) how to ensure sustainability of the platform, why would it continue functioning as an overarching movement after the initial excitement, 3) how to make it a movement FOR and not a movement AGAINST; 4) how to go beyond "like" campaigns onto real change movements; 5) how to avoid taking up the responsibilities of the state and instead focus on being the motivator for change.

Firstly, while the existing platforms of cooperation involve a fairly narrow scope of aims, the suggested platform would not try to invent something new, but rather strive to connect already existing activities and thus achieve several different aims as already stated. It would address several issues at a single, concentrated point, and act as a generator and selector of ideas, funds and people. At the same time the mechanism of the platform would enable cooperation among stakeholders towards promoting and increasing general awareness based on the "glocalization" principle and would operate based on the "think globally, act locally" approach. One can think of the platform as a brokerage venue for ideas, funding, promotion, problem solving, consulting and dissemination of know-how and knowledge, a kind of specialized social network/media.

Of course, one of the key issues is the sustainability of the platform. When we talk about the sustainability, we need to address two issues – financial sustainability and the long-term "survival" of the platform beyond financial needs. Operationally speaking, such a platform can be set up and operated at a relatively modest cost and it does not require significant financial support. The basic functioning principles of the platform would also assure that the "overhead" costs of such a platform would be minimal. The "virtual nature" of the platform is particularly

suitable for attracting younger generations who seem increasingly losing interest in the problems of today's world and are becoming more and more alienated (disconnected) from local political (low election turnouts of younger age groups) and economic processes (increasing uncertainty regarding employment and life paths). And yet we say that the future rests with the young. For young generations (millennials) "virtual" is simply "real", it is where they communicate and interact. In fact, it is where they "live". Such an open and accessible environment would also enable individual ideas, funding and projects "brokered" through the platform to be highly customizable to specific needs.

Although the concept of the platform is based on the "meeting" place, a strong and well-defined governance is nevertheless needed in order to assure a long-term "survival" of the platform and its impact – ideas being transformed into observable and verifiable actions. Despite the fact that the basic operating principle of the platform is based on very open principles and easy access to the platform, the governance mechanism needs to assure that the platform is perceived as a safe, trustworthy and accountable place. Simply put, while the platform would be open and accessible to everyone, a governance mechanism of the platform would nevertheless need to impose certain requirements and verification processes from the perspective of both, process and outcome accountability. As the platform would operate on the principle of crowdsourcing (ideas, selection of ideas, funding, implementation, etc.), it needs to act as a governing body of the "crowd".

Hence, it officially needs a designated operator and oversight architecture. While this might look like a conflicting principle given the basic starting points of the platform, it is necessary in order to assure sustainability. Of course, the governing body would need to be fully transparent and not become an end to itself.

Here, we see two possible approaches. A "standard" approach would be for a single founder to act as a governing body in the initial stage and as the platform develops and extends its scope and reach, the governance would accommodate complexity as needed and decided by the majority of participants. It would, nevertheless, be based on the same principle of a limited number of overseers. The advantage of such an approach lies in the forming of a group of activists within the active community, who are not only highly motivated and engaged, but are crucial for the creation of a sense of community and belonging, without which joint projects can hardly be successful.

An "alternative" approach would be to pitch the platform idea on one of the existing "crowdsourcing/funding" venues and if successful, operate it as a "crowdgoverning" mechanism. In other words, "crowds" or "the people" provide and select ideas, provide the funding and execution, the oversight over the execution and finally the follow up. The benefit of this is "empowerment" of the "crowds" and the feeling of deeper involvement, while the downside harbours potential accountability effects. However, "crowds" who want to participate and join such a platform would already have a selection bias in the sense that their awareness of the global "we" and willingness to do something to contribute to small changes is sufficient. From that

perspective we believe that while certain verification processes should be put in place to prevent abuse (especially from the perspective of funding, use of funds and abuse of the platform's mission and vision), the basic governance would simply rely on the "people" and the concept of human rights. We believe that the only way towards sustainability of the platform is the direct link between the efforts of the stakeholders and the observable and verifiable outcomes/deeds made possible by the platform.

Such empowerment makes people behave more FOR than AGAINST, as they are empowered to propose, actively select, fund, implement and observe changes, albeit even the smallest ones. The idea of the platform is to make people active participants as opposed to simply being "bystanders". With "big" and "intangible" ideas this is less likely to happen, perhaps impossible, while with smaller ideas, based in a local community or requiring relatively modest funding or individual effort (or many individuals), this is more likely to succeed. Initial success that truly empowers people is more likely to end up as not a single but many smaller (albeit local) real movements towards change under one common vision. Individuals could simply choose what role they wish to assume – some are good at pitching and formulating ideas, others can help with funding, yet others are willing to put in some work, etc. Each and every individual could get involved as they can and see fit. This would ensure the mobilization of numerous individuals and would also ensure sustainability of the platform.

Having said that, the solution perhaps lies in a third option, a mixture of both proposals. This combination offers the advantage of having an engaged core, needed to push forward the mission

of the platform, empowered supporters that are willing to not only contribute ideas towards a better, more innovative and ownership-based platform, but are also willing to work for the common purpose of the platform. In addition, such a setup engages a large number of supporters, needed to bring about systemic change.

The final issue on how to avoid taking up the responsibilities of the state and instead focus on being the motivator for change is probably the most challenging one. In practice states are organised in different manners with regards to their role as providers of social services and safety for their inhabitants. With the continued strengthening of neoliberal values, coupled with the economic crisis, the provision of social services and thus a decent living has suffered tremendously. Insecurity is on the rise. So what exactly are the taxes that individuals continue to pay (and numerous corporations continue to evade) being used for?

It seems that we have come to accept poverty as a norm. This is not only due to the fact that over 2.2 billion people live near or in multidimensional poverty<sup>10</sup> or because of rising inequalities, but also because we are constantly searching to buy cheap clothing and cheap food, which comes at the price of human rights violations, because we choose not to participate in shaping our future, because we have let our leaders offer us a future with constant fear of the known and unknown, with little prospects or hope, because food sovereignty is decreasing and because we are allowing the leaders and corporations to destroy our environment.

There seem to be, therefore, only two possibilities. We can build a platform that will take care of

immediate needs, while putting pressure on our leaders to implement the role for which they exist – to protect our rights. Or perhaps globalisation and the battle for profits have caused permanent damage to the existing state-system, which is in a downwards spiral of pessimism and distress. Could people eventually rebel and stop paying taxes to a state that no longer offers adequate dignity and safety for its inhabitants, and instead direct their taxes towards a cause they themselves are orchestrating? Could this form of self-organisation be a beginning of something new, which could replace potential drastic distress that seems to be coming our way?

The answer to this question depends on one's beliefs: neo-liberals could probably see this kind of a structure as running parallel to the state; those that believe in the welfare state system could see the platform as a means of organised pressure to reinstate the functioning of the state; and supporters of local sustenance systems might see the platform as a potential solution to a new world order. Regardless of what group one might belong to, time has come for change: because in order to sell and become rich, you need purchasing power; because the state needs to once again eliminate destructive forces of inequality; or because an end should be put to large social injustices and the destruction of the environment.

Returning to the need for a sense of security and safety of the individual, it can easily be said that today's world in the majority of cases does not provide for a stable, coherent, continuous and meaningful life narrative. And it is for this reason that each one of us needs to take responsibility for his or her actions in order to create a future of hope and possibilities. The five case studies are

excellent examples of how individuals change from bystanders to active players, delivering optimism and a perspective for the future. Building on these ideas and joining forces with new and similar ones can be the beginning of a new development paradigm.

It is no wonder that the concept of globalisation is becoming ever stronger in the so-called New Member States. By receiving development aid and following strictly defined rules of development yesterday, they are today's new donors. Only after having joined the "developed club", however, they realised that both the global balances of power, as well as their own national circumstances are not conducive to the same pattern of development that took place in the so-called Old Member States. Will the New Member States be as responsible as their active citizens and support their bottom-up attempts at creating inclusive and sustainable societies or will they perpetually remain followers?

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3. A. Hogg and D. Abrams, *Social Identifications. A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (Routledge, 1998), p. 19 - 21
4. E. Saez and G. Zucman (2014). *Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data*, NBER Working paper 20625, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w20625>
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## About LAPAS

Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) is a platform joining 30 Latvian NGOs working or planning to advance work in development cooperation or development education fields.

LAPAS serves also as an idea community for those interested in global development issues - how can people across sectors and regions cooperate and work towards a more just and fair world for everyone.

More on who we are and what we do: [www.lapas.lv](http://www.lapas.lv)