

**More political, more flexible,
more crisis-resistant**
Five trends in the work of German
non-governmental organisations

2017



Discussion Paper 2017

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Introduction

The world is in upheaval, and new political environments are creating major challenges for developmental and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In a rapidly changing world, NGOs need more than ever to question their own strategies and adapt to new tasks.

In July 2016, VENRO asked 25 executive directors and programme directors at selected member organisations about current challenges in their programme work. We attempted to gain, as far as possible, a picture that was representative of our member organisations as a whole, by interviewing representatives of large, small and medium-sized organisations in the fields of private and church development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and developmental education, public relations and advocacy.

From the responses, we were able to identify five trends in the work of German NGOs:

- **Shrinking spaces – partners in the South under pressure**
- **Strengthening the political work of NGOs in the South**
- **New tasks and funding models**
- **Cooperation with the private sector**
- **Increasing support for people in crisis areas**

In this discussion paper, VENRO describes these trends and highlights the associated opportunities and possible difficulties for NGOs. In addition, five member organisations provide examples from practice that illustrate their specific experiences, insights and strategies.

As well as the five trends, a number of other challenges are mentioned, such as increasing administrative barriers when applying for funding, and the growing influence of donors on the content of NGO work. Two other themes are touched on briefly: the changes that result from the new Agenda 2030 for NGOs, and the challenges of increasing digitalisation.

This discussion paper is a continuation of VENRO's series of publications on sustainable action strategies for NGOs. With this series, the association aims to stimulate discussion and help ensure that German NGOs – and indirectly their partner organisations as well – are fit for the future.

TREND 1: Shrinking spaces – partners in the South under pressure

Ever more countries in which Northern NGOs support their partner organisations in the struggle for human rights, minorities or environmental protection, are coming to regard this involvement as interference by other countries: they see NGOs as »agents« acting on behalf of foreign governments. Countries such as Russia, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brazil and Israel have introduced new laws and regulations that restrict the freedoms of civil society organisations, and have prosecuted organisations under these laws. In some cases, the Northern partners have been forced to leave the country. »For this reason, we have developed strategies for pulling out of a project region without reversing the progress made, and keeping functioning partners in place,« reports the director of one surveyed NGO. Many respondents made the point that new partnerships and exit strategies are needed because of the restricted freedoms. They also said that donors, too, demand strategies of this kind. But unfortunately donors do not support these strategies by providing the necessary financial resources.

And yet it is not only new laws that are obstructing NGO work. High bureaucratic hurdles can also prevent NGOs in the South from carrying out their actual programme work. For example, they may need new official permits in order to do their work, but the authorities never issue these permits. Similar obstacles include demands for comprehensive reports in the local language, or a requirement to disclose details of funding – along with a rule that says only a limited percentage of funding can be obtained abroad. At the same time, many respondents stated that, in their view, the area of finance and accounting was a weak point in many Southern NGOs. Therefore, they said, many partners are vulnerable to government restrictions.

Actions taken by governments, such as those outlined above, are described by NGOs as »heavy regulation« that goes as far as »domineering« over civil society actors. Local NGOs, according to one respondent, are in some cases expected to stick to pure charity work. As civil society actors, they are not supposed to express opinions on political issues publicly.

One consequence is that Southern NGOs are uncertain to what extent or indeed whether at all they can go about their work without fear of prosecution. In some countries, workers live under threat of personal consequences, such as arbitrary arrests. This uncertainty has led to a form of self-censorship in a number of cases. Faced with possible sanctions, NGOs restrict their advocacy work, i.e. they try less hard to influence political decisions to benefit their target groups.

TREND 1: Bureaucratic hurdles and violence in project work

The German NGO »Brot für die Welt« (Bread for the World) collaborates with partner organisations in many regions of the world. Many of our partners report increasing, systematic repression and restrictions on civil society organisations. Pressure can be exerted by individual politicians, for example, but also by powerful interest groups, or by the media, through unbalanced reporting.

In Latin America, partner organisations that are critical about resource depletion or the (absence of) rule of law have come under massive pressure. In Mexico and countries in Central America, for example, organised crime uses extreme violence to secure whole swathes of land for drug cultivation, smuggling and human trafficking. In many cases, these regions are also particularly resource-rich, making the situation even more complicated. Local politicians and government security forces are often in cahoots with organised crime.

Threats and arbitrary arrests

Representatives of organisations as well as ordinary members of the public who campaign for human rights are arrested arbitrarily, placed under surveillance, threatened, attacked and murdered. Some are systematically smeared by the media, and labelled »foreign agents«, »money launderers«, »terrorists«, »friends of the West«, »traitors«, »enemies of progress«, and so on. This not only destroys the reputation of these organisations, it also means that alternative sources of funding within the country, such as donations, dry up. Supporting donors in many cases are pilloried as well.

In Cambodia, a new controversial law on associations and NGOs (»LANGO«) requires civil society organisations to produce an unreasonable amount of documentation and reports. The law also gives the interior ministry and foreign ministry arbitrary powers to cancel organisations' licences or refuse to issue a license. Partner organisations of Brot für die Welt are among those who have been threatened with sanctions under the law. Since May 2016, NGO workers and citizens who campaign for human rights have been increasingly arrested, imprisoned, threatened and intimidated. A high-profile senior member of staff at a partner organisation of Brot für die Welt had to leave the country in July 2016 because of death threats.



Farmers demonstrating for land rights in Jakarta, Indonesia.

In India, funding of civil society partner organisations by Brot für die Welt is regulated mainly by the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). Indian organisations that are licensed under this act are allowed to receive funding from foreign donors. If an FCRA licence is refused, suspended, or cancelled, no more financial support for projects is permitted. Since FCRA was amended in 2010, around 4,000 NGOs have lost their licences. Those affected are mainly concerned with nuclear power, human rights and environmental protection issues. Partners of Brot für die Welt have also had their licence temporarily revoked. They have now regained their licences, in some cases after lengthy court cases.

Making cases public to protect people

If there are acute threats, Brot für die Welt is on hand to advise and support partner organisations. Advocacy activities are aimed at exerting pressure on governments to take appropriate steps to protect the partner organisations or stop their repression. We are in constant contact with

the German Federal Foreign Office and other political decision-makers in Germany and in the countries concerned. Publicity is often the best protection. Brot für die Welt has an emergency fund, which we can use to pay for legal aid, health care, court costs, visa fees and safety trainings. In exceptional cases, Bread for the World assists the temporary evacuation of persons in danger.

In the long-term perspective, these trends raise some difficult questions. How can we support partners financially in countries where laws and decrees restrict the receipt of foreign funds, or where licences cannot be obtained? What should be done about unreasonable checks and regulations imposed by authorities for individual projects and contracts? How should Brot für die Welt respond if some countries require it to register as a donor from now on? We discuss these and other questions together

with the partner organisations and also, to an extent, with foundations and other concerned organisations as well as in international networks, to find common counter-strategies.

Department for human rights and peace, Bread for the World – Protestant Development Service

2011 study on shrinking space by the ACT Alliance church network, »Shrinking political space of civil society action«: tinyurl.com/shrinking-space-2011

2014 study, »Space for civil society. How to protect and expand an enabling environment«: tinyurl.com/space-act-alliance

TREND 2: Strengthening the political work of NGOs in the South

Most VENRO members collaborate with partner organisations in countries in the South. They campaign together for greater poverty reduction, better medical care, or to provide support of various kinds for individual groups such as women, children and the rural population. NGOs in the North and South note that although the assistance given does benefit the supported groups, and shared knowledge improves the local situation, in many contexts these improvements are subject to limitations. One reason for this is the politically disadvantaged position that the supported target groups are in.

Often, they have no political interest representation – they have no lobby. This means that ethnic minorities, small-scale farmers or street children, for example, cannot tell policy-makers about their precarious situation. It also means that while legal and civil rights may be guaranteed by a constitution, some groups cannot claim those rights. At local level, the lack of political participation results in tangible disadvantages, e.g. when conflicts arise over land. Many NGOs want to change this situation by adding a political element to their project work.

In future, therefore, the aim is increasingly to enable the target groups of project work in countries of the Global South to make their voices heard in the political arena, to protect their civil rights, and to work towards greater participation as interest groups. Larger and smaller NGOs are thus developing concepts to advance this work.

The challenges are manifold. The »shrinking spaces« trend (see trend 1) complicates the approach in some countries. At the same time, in many project contexts there are other priorities: »Unless basic needs are sufficiently satisfied, no meaningful advocacy work can be done,« states one project worker. A number of member organisations, for various reasons, also report that funding is difficult to obtain. Teaching political advocacy skills is a complex task. It is harder to provide donors with evidence of success and positive impacts, than is the case with other measures. It is also more difficult to convince donors of the value of work of this kind, in comparison to building schools, for example. For these reasons, very little in the way of donated funds has been forthcoming to date.

Many Northern NGOs pursue the approach of taking up their partners' concerns and pushing for respective policy change in the North. Small organisations find they are unable to do this because of a lack of funding: »We don't have the resources to make our demands heard. We do too little advocacy work in the North because there is simply no funding for it,« a project worker reports.

TREND 2: Making project work more political

Oxfam sees itself as part of a global movement that seeks to put an end to poverty and extreme inequality. This can only happen if we eliminate the structural injustices that lead to an ever-widening gap between rich and poor. So, for many years, Oxfam has campaigned politically for fairer relationships between North and South, and to uphold human rights.

In our project work, too, we follow a human-rights-based approach – for example by supporting women's organisations that stand up for women's rights in their countries at a practical and political level. But if we honestly ask ourselves what percentage of our project funding actually goes into support of this kind, we find that many projects in fact have a strong emphasis on practical help for disadvantaged communities – from building wells to supplying seeds to promoting savings groups. All of that is well and good, and it's what people want and appreciate, but it only goes a small way towards resolving the structural problems.

Therefore, in its current strategic plan, Oxfam decided to make its project work more political: every project will have elements built in that aim to exert influence for the benefit of impoverished and disadvantaged people. Wherever possible, stronger links should be forged between campaigning activities in the North and project work in the South.

Female farm workers assert their rights

One example of this is our partnership with the Women on Farms Project in South Africa, which for a long time has worked with female farm workers on commercial wine and fruit farms in the Western and Northern Cape. Apart from providing practical support for these women by building vegetable gardens, the current project is primarily concerned with education about labour rights, training female workers as legal advisors for their colleagues, and establishing local labour rights forums to help women collectively assert their rights against the farmers. At the same time, labour law violations are documented and published, and meetings with policy-makers and farmers are organised to demand the enforcement of existing laws.

In parallel, Oxfam in Germany and with its partner in South Africa is conducting research on supply chains and the influence of German supermarkets on pricing and



Farmer Philipina Ndamane on a field in Cape Town, South Africa.

hence on working conditions on farms in South Africa. The goal is to raise public awareness in Germany about these relationships, and put pressure on the supermarkets.

The project has been successful to date, particularly thanks to the commitment shown by many female farm workers, who gained political experience during a strike in 2012, and also because of the extensive expertise and credibility of the partner organisations. It is still unclear, however, whether supply chains can actually be traced back from Germany to particular farms, whether a supermarket campaign in Germany can influence supermarket pricing, and whether any price increases would in fact reach the female farm workers. During project visits, we also saw that some women have now gone back to investing what little free time they have in their vegetable gardens, rather than in further political activities. They are frustrated because although the strike won them higher wages, farmers in return have evicted many families who used to live on the farms, and fired women who were particularly politically active.

Influence behind the scenes

Not everywhere are conditions for project work as favourable as in South Africa. Oxfam's work is partner-centred, and not all partners are interested in exerting political influence – whether because of a lack of expertise in advocacy and campaigning, justified fear of reprisals, or the absence of state structures to which they could address their demands. Some of Oxfam's country offices also need to be careful not to put their licence and hence their entire work at risk. So, in these places, influence can only be exerted behind the scenes.

Moreover, questions concerning the legitimacy and mandate of NGOs are a recurrent theme. Is it up to us to exert political influence in the South? But then again, what opportunities are we missing out on, if we don't? And finally the project funding mentality of governmental donors – with fixed terms and budgets, along with

inflexible requirements for describing goals, sub-targets, indicators etc. – does not necessarily fit with the vagaries of the political process, where flexibility and perseverance are essential. Thus there are many open questions, which Oxfam would be pleased to discuss with other actors in development cooperation.

Nicole Schenda, project leader at Oxfam Deutschland e. V.

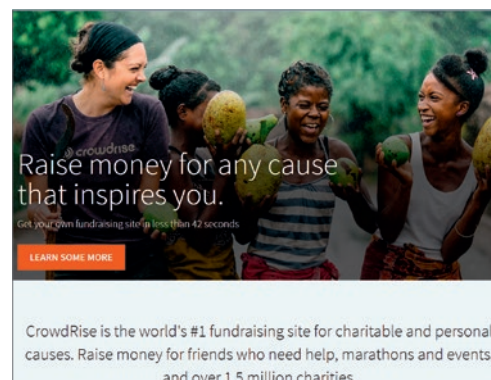
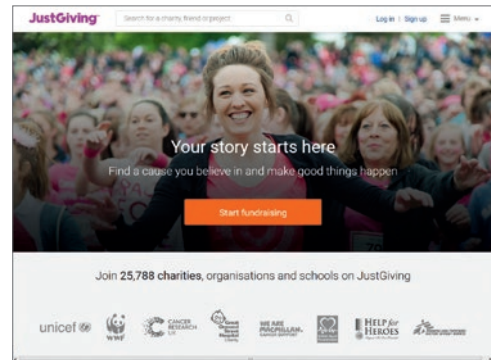
TREND 3: New tasks and funding models

In many countries of the Global South, large and small NGOs have emerged in recent years that independently implement projects and raise their own funding. »Thirty to fifty percent of our partner organisations now do their own online fundraising,« says one NGO representative. For NGOs in Germany, this also raises the question of what their future role will be. And thus the issue of funding arises again, in a new form.

The director of one NGO says: »In the future, we will not implement as many projects ourselves. Instead, we will be in charge of the monitoring.« Increasingly, other German NGOs also see their future role as being in this field: critical evaluation and support for projects, measuring impacts, advising based on acquired expertise, and applying for tenders issued by large actors in the development cooperation field, such as government agencies (GIZ, DFID), international institutions such as the European Union and United Nations, and also large foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

As a result, the relationship between Northern and Southern NGOs is fundamentally changing. NGOs are becoming strategic partners, worldwide. Fundraising, too, often no longer requires partners in the North. As fundraising becomes increasingly digitalised, NGOs can appeal for donations in almost every country in the world, using international platforms like Just Giving. The trend is increasingly visible, particularly in the English-speaking world. But even the language barrier is falling away as translation software improves. Many NGOs are responding by internationalising their decision-making processes and bodies, or by converting former country offices into independent NGOs, with whom they then enter into strategic partnerships.

Some NGOs are even considering operating under a different legal form. NGOs are increasingly making their labour force available as a service, and as a contractor, to international businesses and organisations. As an executive board member of one organisation points out: »It's a gigantic growth market for NGOs.« At the same time, German NGOs, too, want to internationalise their fundraising and find private donors in other countries. »We can still do better in this field,« acknowledges one German NGO representative.



Increasing digitalization of fundraising:
Donations platforms online.

TREND 3: Using expert knowledge to win new clients

The German Leprosy and Tuberculosis Relief Association (DAHW) is one of the oldest German relief organisations. It was founded in 1957 to help people with leprosy in Ethiopia. Thanks to a high level of donor acceptance, DAHW was able to rapidly expand its work into new areas, both geographically and in terms of focus. Today, DAHW operates internationally, providing medical treatment and social support in the field of neglected tropical diseases. Over all the years, DAHW has acquired useful expertise in the partner countries that goes beyond the core focus of DAHW, i.e. the treatment, rehabilitation and social inclusion of people affected by diseases that mainly hit the poor. Our expertise comprises medical knowledge, counselling and advisory skills, organisational development, and policy consultation.

For several decades, the level of donations received by DAHW has been slowly but steadily declining, mainly because of the dwindling interest in leprosy and tuberculosis among younger people and the media in Germany. DAHW could have decided to respond by adjusting its project expenditure accordingly, and successively dismantle its structures in the partner countries. But DAHW recognised that if it did that, knowledge and expertise that had been steadily built up in those countries would disappear. Qualified members of staff would migrate to other fields, or even leave the country, which would be a loss not only to our target group, but also to the respective national health care systems.

Especially in the case of leprosy – one of the neglected tropical diseases – many government health care systems in developing countries no longer have the necessary knowledge. Without supporting expertise, which is made possible largely through donations, it would no longer be possible to provide sufficient treatment for this disease.

Invest, learn and benefit

So at DAHW we decided to preserve the built-up expertise in the partner countries by expanding our business model and offering our expert knowledge as a service. We were encouraged by the fact that DAHW had previously acted as a service provider for international organisations (such as the World Health Organization and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria). Apart from

the organisations mentioned, we are now also a service provider for the private sector (steering and implementing research projects, practical tests), other international organisations, and government bodies in the respective countries.

What we have not had so far are the German implementing organisations and German consulting firms. It seems that because we are an NGO, they don't really consider us to be professional partners – with a few exceptions. We firmly believe, however, that in a number of fields we can help bring about better and more cost-effective results than other contractors.

Our new clients are demanding with regard to reporting, monitoring and product design. We have had to readjust, invest, and learn to put ourselves in the respective client's position. Ultimately all of this has benefited our own projects as well. We will continue to motivate partners to define common goals, and work to exploit cross-sectoral synergies.

Jürgen Ehrmann, head of medical and social projects at DAHW, Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe e.V.

TREND 4: Cooperation with the private sector

To what extent is it useful for NGOs to partner with the private sector? This is a question that member organisations have asked themselves time and again. Many NGOs are open in principle to talks with the private sector, in order to achieve goals. Partnerships can be helpful under certain circumstances to improve people's situations, said some of the NGO representatives who were surveyed. At the same time, NGOs point out that their independence and a critical attitude towards enterprise are still an essential part of their identity. One NGO representative says: »At the implementation level, we have tended to have bad experiences of cooperating with enterprises.« Therefore, each individual case needs to be considered on its merits.

It is possible for NGOs to cooperate with one or more enterprises (increasingly so with a strong economy in Southern countries), as well as in a group with enterprises, other organisations, and civil society representatives. These multi-actor partnerships are encouraged by Agenda 2030, for example.

Another possibility is for projects to be (partially) funded by enterprises, especially when only limited public funding or donations are available for particular tasks. Report and appraisal activities for companies are an area of interest for some NGOs, such as checking on companies' behalf whether corporate standards for the protection of employees or the environment have been met (see trend 3).

At the same time, it remains an important task for NGOs to critically observe enterprises and call upon the international community to do more to promote corporate responsibility. International treaties and national legislation should force enterprises to make value chains fairer, guarantee workers' rights, and protect the environment. »It cannot be right that improvements take place only in certified niches, when the result is that products made there are higher in price and so at a competitive disadvantage compared to products where national or international laws have been broken in the value chain,« says the executive director of one NGO.

Trend 4: Cooperation only with clear standards

Since it was founded 25 years ago, SÜDWIND e. V. – Institut für Ökonomie und Ökumene has been concerned with the behaviour of enterprises. Our goal has always been to achieve changes in value chains. We demand transparency, respect for human rights, and higher environmental standards. We campaign for economic, social and environmental justice, but we also use other approaches to make a lasting improvement in the lives of people who are affected by unjust economic structures.

Specifically, we take part in stakeholder dialogues that have a longer-term perspective (e.g. the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles, and the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa), we get involved in dialogue forums on individual themes (such as the automobile industry), and we hold talks with businesses. On enterprises' behalf, SÜDWIND also conducts analyses of the social and environmental impacts of cultivating or processing particular products, such as hazelnuts and cocoa. Another instrument is our work in advisory bodies, for example with the Rewe Group, and on banks' investment committees.

In deciding whether to enter into a consultation, critical dialogue or other forms of cooperation with enterprises, SÜDWIND has always been guided by whether a potential for change exists in the enterprise, what that potential is, and the extent to which we are able to influence the behaviour of the enterprise. The crucial question for us is whether changes in enterprises' value chains can be achieved through cooperation, and whether this can create a developmental advantage for people affected by poverty or injustice.

No cooperation without an exit scenario

We consider all forms of cooperation with enterprises. The board has developed a set of guidelines to help it decide in each individual case. For example, it assesses the possibilities for influencing the enterprise's work in keeping with SÜDWIND's guiding principles, as well as the risk of being unduly influenced by the enterprise. With each partnership, SÜDWIND defines a goal, and regularly evaluates whether it has been reached. Of course the risk to our reputation and the power relationships are assessed, too. It is always important to us that we are still able to criticise the enterprise, despite the partnership. Not least, before every decision, we develop an exit scenario.

Another criterion for us is the financial feasibility of our involvement. As a charitable organisation that relies on funding and external income, we always have to consider the cost-effectiveness of what we do. We can only enter into partnerships if our involvement is paid for through funding as part of a project, or by providing a paid service.

For example, SÜDWIND has been represented on the Pro Planet advisory board since 2013. The Rewe Group uses the Pro Planet label to identify products where the production process has been modified to lessen the environmental and social impact. To award the label, the independent five-person board has to judge whether significant environmental and social improvements have taken place in the product manufacturing process. The assessment procedure for the label is performed at the Collaborating Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), which was jointly founded by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy. SÜDWIND charges CSCP for its services.

Convinced that we can achieve real changes

The main reason we decided to get involved in this institutionalised critical dialogue was because we firmly believed we could initiate real changes in value chains. Before a product receives the Pro Planet label, it has to successfully pass through a five-stage process. This starts with an analysis to identify environmental and social problems that could occur from the time a product is manufactured until it is used or consumed. Then proposed solutions are articulated, and steps for improvement are implemented. The advisory board awards the label only if evidence of improvements can be shown. Rewe cannot award a Pro Planet label without the advisory board's approval.

We have observed the rise of stakeholder processes and enterprise dialogues in very many fields in recent years. We are able to make good decisions regarding the many requests that we receive to participate in such processes only because our work is based on a strategy and our criteria.

Martina Schaub, director, SÜDWIND e.V. – Institut für Ökonomie und Ökumene



TREND 5: Increasing support of people in crisis areas

In the summer of 2016, the think tank Institute for Economics and Peace published the latest Global Peace Report (visionofhumanity.org). Among its findings are that the world as whole is less peaceful than it was the year before, while for ten years, political instability and terrorism have been causing greater uncertainty. The situation has deteriorated particularly in Africa and the Middle East, the report states.

Some conflicts have been going on for years, but have disappeared from public view. VENRO members are concerned that not enough money is available to address these crises. They say that there is a shortage of donations and public funding, and that in humanitarian aid, funding is often provided only for short periods, whereas longer-term stabilising NGO work is needed.

Alongside violent conflicts, we increasingly see other crisis situations too, such as in the aftermath of natural disasters or the widespread outbreak of a disease like Ebola. Crises today are more complex, because they mostly involve a wide variety of combatants. For developmental NGOs, this trend poses a series of challenges. Working in unsafe and uncertain contexts demands more preparation and safeguards, which can require a considerable amount of time and generate high costs. Not least, NGOs need to prepare their staff for working in conflicts, and invest in the best possible protection for them, as well as training.

In humanitarian aid, localisation is a current goal. In other words, international NGOs should no longer play a front-line role in humanitarian crisis situations. Instead, they should primarily support local civil societies. This brings new challenges, e.g. how to ensure that neutrality is maintained in such contexts. So one member organisation is setting up its own local teams, of which some will develop into independent NGOs. They will be on the ground already in the event of future crises, and can act immediately. These changes are also leading to a new understanding of the role of German NGOs.

TREND 5: Staff need better protection

In recent years, the security situation has deteriorated for staff of the Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) in a number of project countries. One example is Haiti. CBM has stepped up its work in this country since the devastating earthquake of 2010. However, the dangers have increased since then, too. With an unstable political situation, the desperate state of the economy has caused an increase in crime. More natural disasters can be expected, particularly hurricanes and earthquakes.

Furthermore, in countries experiencing ongoing armed conflicts, we have to recognise that the days are long gone when it could safely be assumed that combatants everywhere would treat NGO personnel as neutral or at least not as a direct target. All these dangers raise the question of how to offer colleagues better protection, so that they can continue CBM projects. As part of its duty of care, CBM decided to strengthen its security management system.

Over the past three years, CBM has developed a new security concept, which we have now implemented in all project regions. First we identified the main risks and hence the focus of our security strategy, which we then set about implementing with staff members in the various countries. It was a valuable learning experience! We found that we could not implement all the points at once, so we set priorities and based our security concept on that.

In various CBM offices abroad, we then organised the first training sessions. Using what we learned from these, we went on to develop a four-day training module. This was implemented in all CBM regional offices to establish the security concept locally. We are currently working on the fine tuning. We are looking to see whether our concept is really firmly embedded everywhere, how the situation is developing in particular regions, and whether we need to adapt our strategy.

Not just a cost factor – an opportunity for the organisation

We told our staff that a security management system is not just a cost factor and an additional burden. We always stress that our security concept is an important part of CBM's project work, and that it helps us to win tenders and attract qualified personnel.



Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince after being hit by a hurricane.

Around ten percent of CBM staff have a disability (restricted mobility, hearing or sight impaired). To give them the best possible protection, we conducted evacuation training in Haiti, for example, to prepare for natural disasters. As part of the training, we specified which colleagues without disabilities would help their colleagues with disabilities. For work trips – for all project countries – we have produced the Disability Inclusive Safety & Security and Travel Approach, so that colleagues with disabilities can travel as safely as possible. In these cases, our staff without disabilities have a special responsibility, which we want to make sure they are well prepared for.

A hotline set up for emergencies

We learned a thing or two when we were establishing our safety and security approach. The following pointers give an idea of what needs to be considered. In general terms, it is a matter of openly asking about security risks in one's own organisation, and obtaining information

about risks from all staff levels at an early stage. Staff should be encouraged to act on their own initiative when it comes to security, so that they don't start seeing security as something that gets in the way of their work. Prevention is key. Nevertheless, procedures should be in place for dealing with a crisis. It is important to have clear and simple security standards, in the form of a manual that can be issued to all managerial staff. But standards alone are not enough. They need to be learned and practised in drills.

Someone needs to be permanently available in the head office of the organisation, i.e. there needs to be a crisis hotline. Locally, an experienced colleague should be appointed as the security officer; they should be consistently dedicated to this role and relieved of other

duties if necessary. Incidents and dangerous situations should be reported and published within the organisation (e.g. in a quarterly report), so that everyone can learn from them.

Security costs money, but prevention costs much less than dealing with an emergency situation. So an annual budget should be allocated for security training, etc. It is also important to have a financial reserve for unforeseen expenses. If the underlying concept is good, a lot can be achieved with limited resources.

Tom van Herwijnen, Health, Safety & Security Manager at CBM International

Conclusion

These five trends make it clear that developmental civil society, and particularly the NGOs rooted in it, need to adapt to new tasks in a world in upheaval if they are to continue to play a significant role in the future.

Whether it is the increasing restriction of civil society freedoms, or the growing importance of online fundraising – to continue their work effectively together with partners in the global South, NGOs will have to give serious thought to how they can adapt their structures and instruments to the new circumstances. All of our interviewees agreed that

NGO work has to become more political, more flexible, and more crisis-resistant.

VENRO helps NGOs to develop sustainable action strategies and find the right responses to current challenges. As of 2016, the association is also active in the field of quality and effectiveness of developmental work. We offer training courses, expert discussions and webinars, as well as practical guides and publications for all developmental and humanitarian NGOs based in Germany. For more information, please visit our website www.venro.org/service.

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- Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe (AGEH)
- arche noVa
- Ärzte der Welt
- ASW – Aktionsgemeinschaft Solidarische Welt
- AT-Verband
- AWO International
- Behindert und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (bezev)
- BONO-Direkthilfe
- BORDA
- Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst
- Bund der Deutschen Katholischen Jugend (BDKJ)
- Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe
- CARE Deutschland-Luxemburg
- Caritas International
- Casa Alianza – Kinderhilfe Guatemala
- CHANGE
- ChildFund Deutschland
- Christliche Initiative Romero
- Christoffel-Blindenmission Deutschland
- Dachverband Entwicklungspolitik Baden-Württemberg (DEAB)
- Das Hunger Projekt
- DED-Freundeskreis*
- Deutsch-Syrischer Verein (DSV)
- Deutsche Entwicklungshilfe für soziales Wohnungs- und Siedlungswesen (DESWOS)
- Deutsche Kommission Justitia et Pax
- Deutsche Lepra- und Tuberkulosehilfe (DAHV)
- Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW)
- Deutscher Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband
- Deutsches Komitee Katastrophenvorsorge
- DGB-Bildungswerk BUND – Nord-Süd-Netz
- Difäm – Deutsches Institut für Ärztliche Mission
- Don Bosco Mondo
- DVV International – Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes
- Eine Welt Netz NRW
- Eine Welt Netzwerk Hamburg
- EIRENE – Internationaler Christlicher Friedensdienst
- EMA – Euro-Mediterranean Association for Cooperation and Development
- EPIZ – Entwicklungspolitisches Bildungszentrum Berlin
- Erlassjahr.de – Entwicklung braucht Entschuldung*
- Evangelische Akademien in Deutschland (EAD)
- Fairventures Worldwide
- FIAN Deutschland
- FUTURO SI
- Gemeinschaft Sant'Egidio
- German Doctors
- German Toilet Organization
- Germanwatch
- Habitat for Humanity Deutschland
- Handicap International
- Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe
- HelpAge Deutschland
- Hilfswerk der Deutschen Lions
- Hoffnungszeichen / Sign of Hope
- humedica
- Indienhilfe
- INKOTA-netzwerk
- International Justice Mission (IJM)
- Internationaler Bund (IB)
- Internationaler Hilfsfonds
- Internationaler Ländlicher Entwicklungsdienst (ILD)
- Internationaler Verband Westfälischer Kinderdörfer
- Islamic Relief Deutschland
- JAM Deutschland
- Jambo Bukoba
- Johanniter-Auslandshilfe
- KAIROS Europa
- Karl Kübel Stiftung für Kind und Familie
- KATE – Kontaktstelle für Umwelt und Entwicklung
- Kindernothilfe
- Kinderrechte Afrika
- Lateinamerika-Zentrum
- Lichtbrücke
- Malteser International
- Marie-Schlei-Verein
- matterna – Stiftung Frau und Gesundheit
- medica mondiale
- medico international
- MISEREOR
- Missionsärztliches Institut Würzburg
- NETZ Bangladesch
- Ökumenische Initiative Eine Welt
- OIKOS EINE WELT
- Opportunity International Deutschland
- Ora International Deutschland
- OroVerde – Die Tropenwaldstiftung
- Oxfam Deutschland
- Plan International Deutschland
- Rhein-Donau-Stiftung
- SALEM International
- Samhathi – Hilfe für Indien
- Save the Children Deutschland
- Senegalthilfe-Verein
- Senior Experten Service (SES)
- Society for International Development Chapter Bonn (SID)
- SODI – Solidaritätsdienst International
- Sozial- und Entwicklungshilfe des Kolpingwerkes (SEK)
- Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden (SEF)
- Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken
- SÜDWIND – Institut für Ökonomie und Ökumene
- Susila Dharma – Soziale Dienste
- Terra Tech Förderprojekte
- TERRE DES FEMMES
- terre des hommes Deutschland
- Tierärzte ohne Grenzen
- TransFair
- Verband Entwicklungspolitik Niedersachsen (VEN)
- Verbund Entwicklungspolitischer Nichtregierungsorganisationen Brandenburgs (VENROB)
- W. P. Schmitz-Stiftung
- WEED – Weltwirtschaft, Ökologie & Entwicklung
- Weltfriedensdienst
- Weltgebetstag der Frauen – Deutsches Komitee
- Welthaus Bielefeld
- Welthungerhilfe
- Weltladen-Dachverband
- Weltnotwerk der KAB Deutschlands
- Werkhof Darmstadt
- Werkstatt Ökonomie
- World University Service
- World Vision Deutschland
- Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklung bei der GLS Treuhand

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VENRO's central goal is to construct a just globalisation, with a special emphasis on eradicating global poverty. The organisation is committed to implementing human rights and conserving natural resources.

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- engages in advocacy for the interests of developing countries and poorer segments of society
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