

“The shift from Project to Programme-support – experiences of the partner organisations of Caritas and ADRA in Zimbabwe and Malawi.”

Report on Learning visit to
Malawi and Zimbabwe June 2012

1. Background

Since 2009 Danida has provided support for so called programme agreements or grants which can be given to Danish Civil Society Organisations and their partners that have sufficient experience and capacity.

The programme agreements / grants are given in accordance with the “Strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries” that states:

“The objective of programme agreements is to establish the basis for implementing combined efforts with greater impact, more continuity and better dialogue with partners in developing countries. Support to programme agreements can be awarded to organisations which in their activities have a clear strategic focus (geographical, sectoral or thematic) that makes it relevant to incorporate the organisation’s activities or parts thereof into a comprehensive programme rather than implementing single projects. Programme agreements are based on capacity assessments.” (Chapter 5.2)

12 Danish CSOs have so far achieved programmes – either thematic or country / regional based - financed through Danida.

CISU has since the very beginning followed and promoted this possibility for those of our member organisations that had the experience and capacity. Several of our member organisations have asked for our advice in the preparation phase of the programme application to Danida and we have facilitated a series of seminars for the organisations involved in the implementation of the programmes.

In its development strategy of May 2012 Danida is indicating that it will increasingly use core funding as a modality. This modality may be of interest of some of the present programme organisations. CISU has furthermore been requested by Danida to take over increased funding responsibility – and is therefore in the process of developing a programmatic funding modality. Above highlights the importance for establishing a better insight into the experiences from managing programmes.

It is therefore in our interest through a learning visit also to explore the experiences in the field and seen with the eyes of the local partner organisations so that we also in our future activities at the best possible way can support those of our member organisations that have programme agreements or might decide to embark on the route towards core funding.

2. Objective

The objective of the learning visit is to explore the experiences and challenges related to the shift from project to programme approach seen from the perspective of the partners in the

south – namely the partner organizations of Caritas Denmark and ADRA Denmark in Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Thematic issues for the visit

In relation to the headline above the objective for the trip was approached through:

- Exploring how a programmatic approach has led to changes in focus and content of the programme - especially related to strategies, quality and timeframe which is possible under a programme approach
- Exploring how a programmatic approach has led to changes in the setup and use of Monitoring and Evaluation systems in the programme including reporting formats and dialogue tools used between the partners in the programme
- Exploring which possible effects the shift from a project to a programme approach has had on the partnership between the Danish organizations and the national partners.

The intention of the visit was to engage in a mutual learning process, where both CISU and the visited organizations would benefit afterwards. The consultant will during the visit, where relevant give a presentation of the strategies and approaches of CISU and a presentation of the main priorities of the "Strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries".

3. Observations on thematic issues

MALAWI - key learning points:

The process and elaboration of the programme:

- The programme must be adjusted to the local context – especially when the overall objectives includes several countries. Special attention must be given in the elaboration of indicators that reflects the reality in the specific country. Important to give room for adopting indicators related to partners' perception
- Shift in focus towards a programme produced some sort of concern in the organisation itself and among the target-group / grass root level and partners (just talk / political process). It is important that the preparation phase has time enough to address this concerns and inform / build up capacity internally and externally.
- Shift in orientation required a process of capacity building and training of staff and many consultations with the local level and partners in order to reach a common understanding of the new perspectives. Important that the board / constituency are in line with the new perspective.
- It is important that the programme from the outset has a longer time perspective
- The programme approach involves a constant dialogue between the North partner and South partner – which is positive.
- The MANGO training (Elisabeth – financial officer) has been very important and has led to a training course for the whole staff in July. ADRA Malawi will adopt this approach.
- There has been a close dialogue between Adra DK and Adra Malawi – also based on the experiences from the other countries - Uganda / Rawanda - that for part of the programme –

Explore how a programmatic approach has led to changes in focus and content of the programme:

- first and foremost a better link between activities at local level and the regional / national level. Issues identified at local level are brought to national level via the communication component and the more strategically and active work / efforts in relation to networks, partnerships etc.
- The organisation has gained respect from other actors for this more strategic approach and are now viewed as not just working at the local level but are now a more active partner as a Civil Society Organisation.
- This new orientation has required a process of capacity building and training of staff and many consultations with the local level and partners in order to reach a common understanding of the new perspectives.
- The programme approach can lead to a more differentiated understanding of the concept and content of "advocacy" and how to work with this at local and national level. (dialogue and bridging). A new dimension is the more emphasis at working with evidence based research.
- The shift to programme requires a good understanding between partners. It would be good to have the possibility for staff also to visit Denmark in order to understand danish context.
- Strategic alliances are very important to gain support from partners both at local and national level

Explore how a programmatic approach has led to changes in the setup and use of M and E systems:

- A programme approach requires a more systematic system of M and E tools.
- The systems must be based on a thorough analysis of the needs internally in the organisation and address these needs with the corresponding capacity building.
- This process of capacity building will lead to a better understanding at all levels of the organisation regarding the content of the programme.
- The setup of an appropriate M and E system will lead to a better understanding between the danish and local partnerorganisation.

Important issues and considerations:

- The question of who "owns" the programme
- The room for making the necessary adjustments of the programme – the programme seen as a mutual learning process
- When You change from a project to programme approach this involves further building capacity of staff. This raises the concern how to avoid that staff are "stolen" from other organizations / institution (Michael Usi and the experience from staff in TV program management and setup)

Zimbabwe – key learning points:

The findings from Zimbabwe reinforced in many ways what was found in Malawi. In addition the discussions in Zimbabwe pointed at:

Linking and interface:

- The potential in linking activities at grassroot level with the advocacy at national level
- Linking horizontally and vertically - The potential in linking different organisations within the church – e.g. Caritas and CCJP
- Possible inspiration in the transformation to working in a new context – also regarding church structure

Regional cooperation and attention:

- The importance of the regional meetings – influencing the political process both related to SADEC and internally in Zimbabwe
- The potential in exchange visits between the countries – learning perspective

Preparation and planning:

- A programme gives more room and space for the flexible and strategic approach – a better framework for not just working short term (projects) but also at a long term perspective
- The framework should constantly be monitored and adjusted to the changes and challenges in the overall context. Eg. The mining experience from Mutare which can change the context.
- To be able to monitor and evaluate it is important to develop a appropriate framework – where also the overall approach and all partners are reflected
- Important with a pilot phase – in order to reach a common understanding regarding potential and necessary adjustments in the different organizations
- Caritas DK can use their influence to prepare and facilitate the necessary shift in mindset in the partner org. (Caritas national director)

Flexibility and adjustments:

- A programme gives more room and space for the flexible and strategic approach – a better framework for not just working short term (projects) but also at a long term perspective – more room for the necessary processes as a precondition for obtaining sustainability
- The framework should constantly be monitored and adjusted to the changes and challenges in the overall context.
- Provision has to be met for the roundtable meetings at level for all dioceses – in order to communicate and inspire

Legitimacy and accountability:

- The specific activities at local level (eg. gardens and irrigation) give the possibility to link with the justice and peace training / initiatives – and gives legitimacy downwards and upwards
- Data collecting qualifies the advocacy work at national level
- Concrete actives gives life and substance related to target group and facilitates the possibility for J and P initiatives

4. Outputs and Dissemination

Main observations and recommendations to CISU for internal use in relation to courses, advisory services and Project Fund:

- For the partnerorganisations visited in Malawi and Zimbabwe it was clear that the shift from project approach to programme approach had led to a much more strategic set up that addressed their role as Civil Society organisations in a more clear and focused way. The process behind this shift – dialogue with CBOs, other CSO in the country and the Danish partner - had led to a qualitatively lift in the overall work and identity of the organisations.
So based on these experiences there is a lot to gain in transformation for project- to programme approach if the Danish and local partnerorganisation(s) are ready for this shift.
- The shift from project to programme approach requires time – it does not come overnight. It is therefore important that the first phase of a programme is considered a pilote-phase where capacity is build up and the preconditions are created so that the real potential for a more strategic thinking and advocacy efforts can really unfold in the following phases of the programme.
- The above statement is especially important when a programme relates to different partnerorganisations in a given country and / or consists of different countries (as is the case in both the ADRA and Caritas programme).

The setup of a appriate

Dissemination:

The main findings from the visit has been disseminated to the involved organisations through debriefing meetings after the return.

- CISU has conducted workshops for current programme organisations and has a close contact with these concerning experiences and lessons learnt in the current programmes. The findings of this visit will enter in the discussions with the organizations and will – if relevant - be used as recommendations for the transformation of programs into the setup of framework agreements.

CISU is currently working with the elaboration of guidelines for the future Project Fund. As part of this process CISU is working with the outline of a program facility which will for the first time form part of the possibility under the Project Fund. In this process the experiences and recommendations of this visit will be used as reference and background.

Futhermore the experiences from this visit will be shared:

- Internally in PATC through a presentation to colleagues
- Externally to other members by inclusion of general lessons learned in future courses, counselling and through our website.

Annexes:

- ToR
- People met and itinerary



projektrådgivningen

Project Advice and Training Centre (PATC)
- Danish Platform for popular development co-operation

ToR for learning visit

“The shift from Project to Programme-support – experiences of the partner organisations of Caritas and ADRA in Zimbabwe and Malawi.”

1. Background PATC

Project Advice and Training Centre (PATC) is a Danish umbrella organisation with more than 260 members among Danish civil society organisations. All members work with development through partnership with civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Global South. The focus area of PATC is capacity building of the Danish CSOs through training, advisory services, networking and debates.

Besides, PATC advocates on behalf of the member base regarding the general framework for Danish civil society organisations and attempts to stage relevant debates and discussions among the members and Danish civil society in general.

PATC also administers the Project Fund on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Project Fund is a special funding mechanism for Danish CSOs, which within certain limits can support their projects and partnerships with local CSOs in developing countries.

In order to understand the context that PATC members are working in, PATC attempts to build up context specific knowledge, relating this to an area of interest for members in Denmark, their partners in the Global South and PATC.

To qualify this work PATC consultants conduct several learning visits every year. The visits feed into the ongoing adjustment and development of trainings and counselling services.

The aim of these visits is that the consultants can obtain an impression on site of some of the development interventions the member organisations are implementing together with partners in the South. And as part of this can discuss and consider together with locally employed staff and key persons related to the projects some of the challenges and problems that emerge in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of development interventions.

This will provide a most valuable insight into the experiences learnt by the national CSOs in the project/programme work, and at the return to Denmark it will be used to strengthen the course activities and the individual counselling of the organisations.

The visit will be carried out by Mr. Johannes Nordentoft, CSO consultant of PATC.

2. Thematic background

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Danida is in its draft development strategy of 30 March 2012 indicating that it may increasingly use core funding as a modality. This modality may be of interest of some of the present programme organisations. This highlights the importance for establishing a better insight into the experiences from managing programmes.

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3. Objective

The objective of the learning visit is to **explore the experiences and challenges related to the shift from project to programme approach seen from the perspective of the partners in the south – during this visit: the partner organizations of Caritas Denmark and ADRA Denmark in Zimbabwe and Malawi.**

4. Thematic issues for the visit

In relation to the headline above the objective for the trip will be approached through:

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The intention is to have a mutual learning process, where both PATC and the visited organizations will have benefitted afterwards. The consultant will during the visit, where relevant give a presentation of the strategies and approaches of PATC and a presentation of the main priorities of the "Strategy for Danish support to civil society in developing countries".

5. Project portfolio

The following projects/programs will be visited:

Caritas Denmark and Caritas Zimbabwe / Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Zimbabwe:

Regional Programme: "Voices for Change in Rural Africa" - (2012 - 2014)

ADRA Denmark and ADRA Malawi:

"Action for Social Change" (2011-2013)

6. Plan of work

The visit will be based on the following main activities:

Prior to departure:

- Desk study of available project documentation.
- Interview with Danish partner organisations

In Zimbabwe and Malawi:

- Partner visits with focus on discussing:
 - Strategies for implementing the programme
 - Implications for partnership relations
- Field visit with focus on exploring the specific experiences and challenges working with a programme approach
- Debriefing with the partners on major observations

The above will be further developed based on discussions with Danish partners and in close contact with the local partner organizations.

Upon return:

- Finalisation of report
- Debriefing meetings with Danish partners

7. Preliminary travel schedule (further details will follow)

Date	Organisation
11/6 Monday	Departure Denmark
12/6 Tuesday	12.15 Arrival Lilongwe MW, Kamuzu Intl.- KLM ROYAL DUTCH AIRLI - KL 4175
13/6 Wednesday	Visit to: ADRA Malawi
14/6 Thursday	ADRA Malawi
15/6 Friday	ADRA Malawi
16/6 Saturday	Day off / report writing
17/6 Sunday	13.15 - Departure Lilongwe MW, Kamuzu Intl.- SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS - SA 171 21.20 - arrival in Harare International Airport from Lilongwe, Malawi and check in at The Bronte (reservations to be made on bronte@mweb.co.zw)
18/6 Monday	8.30 – 10.00 meeting with Fr. Chiomba, Secretary General of Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional advocacy trips • Programme Management Committee 10.00 – 11.30 meeting with Mr. Cornelius Hamadziripi, National director Caritas Zimbabwe 11.30 – 12.30 meeting with other Caritas staff (Jameson, Wonder) 12.30 – 14.00 lunch 14.00 – 15.30 meeting with Mr. Alouis Chaumba, National director of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) 15.30 – 16.30 meeting with other CCJPZ staff (Arkmore, Vitalis)
19/6 Tuesday	07.30 - Depart for Mutare (with Jameson from Caritas Zimbabwe, PATC to pay for the cost of transportation as well as per diem and accommodation for Jameson, Caritas Zimbabwe to send a budget for this) 11.00 - Arrival and check in at hotel Mountview or Holiday Inn Mutare) 11.30 - Meet and greet Rt. Rev. Bishop Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear view on Caritas Denmark Africa Programme and PMC 12.00 lunch

	<p>13.00 – 17.00 field trip to Chimanimani with Caritas Mutare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See irrigation projects • Hear about Caritas Mutare’s plans and initial experience with being part of the Caritas Denmark Africa Programme
20/6 Wednesday	<p>8.00 – 10.00 meet CCJPZ Mutare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hear about plans and initial experience with being part of the Caritas Denmark Africa Programme <p>10.30 Return to Harare 14.00 Arrive in Harare</p> <p>14.30 – 16.30 Debriefing session with Fr. Chiromba, Mr. Hamadziripi and Mr. Chaumba</p> <p>16.30 spend night at the Bronte (make sure to make a reservation)</p>
21/6 Thursday	<p>Return to Denmark 13.30 Departure from Harare International Airport for Denmark</p>
22/6	Arrival Denmark

9. Outputs and Dissemination

The output will be:

- Travel report, focusing on overall observations, lessons learned and potential recommendations for practice of PATC and PATC members working in fragile situations.

The findings will be disseminated:

- To the involved organisations through debriefing meetings
- To programme organisations through joint workshops on lessons learned
- Internally in PATC through a presentation to colleagues
- Externally to other members by inclusion of general lessons learned in future courses

10. Contact details