

Evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society

Learning Synthesis IV: Global CSOs and Their Options for Results Reporting



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1 Tracing the national footprint

A growing number of Northern CSOs have become members of global con/federations in the last two decades. The most common rationale for affiliating to a global network or con/federation is to scale up impact – by accessing its expertise, range and global influence – while seeking operational cost-efficiencies.

These ‘global’ CSOs continue to grow in terms of funding, membership and, arguably, influence. They are often seen by donors as offering potentially high impact with low fiduciary risk. Their organisational ‘architecture’ varies considerably and, in most cases, continues to evolve. A number of typologies have been developed to illustrate these organisational architectures – whether in the form of alliances, confederations or federations.¹ The difference between alliance, confederation and federation is principally to do with the degree of authority ceded by the members to the centre, for example, in the form of a Secretariat. One way of expressing this is in terms of a spectrum of ‘tight’ to ‘loose’ forms of collective organisation.

In Denmark, as in other European countries, national members of global CSOs have been among the principal beneficiaries of strategic or framework funding. Nine Danish CSOs currently in receipt of framework agreements are currently members of global con/federations – ADRA, ActionAid, CARE, Caritas, Danish Red Cross, Ibis, Save the Children, DFPA and WWF. DanChurchAid is a member of the global ACT Alliance.

Despite their growing significance, the internal and external impact of this process of ‘globalisation’ of CSOs is comparatively little studied. The Hauser Centre at Harvard University in 2010 produced one of the few analyses of the challenges and trade-offs that have characterised the growth of global CSOs.² One of these trade-offs is the possible loss of culturally specific approaches and values, e.g. the Scandinavian approach to partnership, as part of the globalisation process. Other aspects of the growth of global CSOs seem not to have been researched, including whether they had achieved the anticipated benefits of increased impact and cost-efficiency, and their impact on Southern civil society and partners.

During the evaluation of Danish Support to Civil Society, the issue of how Danish CSOs in receipt of framework agreements can appropriately monitor and report on the Danish contribution to global results had been frequently raised. This was identified as a priority learning issue by Danish CSOs themselves during the evaluation, in a workshop of 19 October 2015. Danida has also expressed interest in how the Danish ‘footprint’ can be traced in the results reporting of Danish members of global CSOs. Most recently, the new draft strategy for Danish Development Cooperation³ comments positively on the opportunity offered to the Danish to influence global results as result of their membership of global alliances, while highlighting the

¹ ‘Governing International Advocacy NGOs’, David L. Brown et al., *World Development*, 40 (6) 2012, for example, suggests five models: unitary organisation, federation, confederation, network and support organisation.

² http://www.ksghauser.harvard.edu/engage/humanitarianorganizations/research/documents/adaptation_change_in_six_globalizing_NGOs.pdf

³ Verden 2030. #voresDKaid Udkast til Danmarks udviklingspolitiske og humanitære strategi p. 10.

need to demonstrate more rigorously the value of the Danish CSOs in contributing to these results.

In response to this interest, the evaluation conducted a short piece of research with four Danish CSOs belonging to a global con/federation – Action Aid Denmark, ADRA, CARE Denmark, and DanChurchAid. The research focused on the challenges and opportunities facing Danish CSOs that form part of global con/federations or alliances in translating global results for Danida. The CSOs were chosen since each con/federation or alliance has a different organisational architecture that illustrates some of the potential implications for how a Danish CSO reports its results.

This short learning synthesis will try to help clarify what factors associated with global CSOs influence the ability of a Danish CSO to track its distinctive contribution to global results and how different options regarding results reporting offer differing levels of contribution.

2 Factors influencing global reporting

2.1 Danida expectations regarding results reporting

Danida guidance on annual results reporting for Danish CSOs in receipt of framework agreements is comparatively flexible. CSOs are asked to report their results against their own immediate objectives and some key indicators which can cover activities that are funded solely or partially by Danida. The results should be described qualitatively and quantitatively where relevant and possible. This allows Danish CSOs considerable flexibility with regard to their annual results reporting.

However, the Danida Resource Allocation Model (RAM) sets out 24 criteria for assessing the performance of framework CSOs on the basis of their annual results reports. Since this influences the reallocation of framework funds to Danish CSOs their reporting formats have evolved to explicitly address RAM criteria such as partnership, innovation, learning and added value. The RAM also allows for reporting on the outputs and outcomes of processes, such as capacity development or empowerment, as well as policy change at meso and macro level. The RAM also includes a criterion on “Global Engagement beyond Denmark” which covers the Danish CSO’s contribution to global agenda-setting and engagement.

2.2 Demonstrating the Danish contribution: five factors to consider

There are five key factors that influence the capacity of a Danish CSO, as a member of a global alliance or confederation, to demonstrate its contribution to global results.

The relationship of the Danish CSO to the country programme

The relationship the Danish CSO has with country programmes and offices is a major factor in enabling it to demonstrate the Danish contribution to results. In some cases, e.g. Oxfam and Save the Children, Northern CSO funding support to the con/federation is allocated to its general funds. If funding is not earmarked for specific programmes it is technically impossible to establish an audit trail linking Danish funding to programme outcomes.

Global Danish CSOs rarely manage country offices and programmes directly now.

DanChurchAid is an exception in managing its own country offices; in some cases this responsibility is shared with other members of the ACT Alliance through a Coordination Committee. More often country programmes are managed by:

- The global CSO itself through a “unitary management system”, e.g. Save the Children, Oxfam;
- By a lead member of the global CSO, e.g. CARE; or
- By the local national affiliate or member of the CSO, e.g. Action Aid, ADRA.

The status of the country can have a bearing on the leverage that the Danish CSO has in terms of monitoring and reporting. The more autonomous the country office, the less motivation there

may be to adapt to the specific requirements of Danida support. All four of the Danish CSOs that participated in the research retain a direct bilateral relationship with specific country programmes. Each CSO has contractual agreements with the country office and/or partners which includes specific outputs such as the format of results reporting. These agreements can be directly with the partner organisation or indirectly via the country office. For example, in the case of CARE Denmark the partnership agreement is made between the CARE International country office and the partners. Save the Children Denmark also supports three-year country programmes in five countries through bilateral agreements. (It also continues supporting individual projects.) Partner countries are selected in line with Danida priorities and in accordance to where Save the Children Denmark has an opportunity to make a distinctive contribution or add value. None of the CSOs reported significant problems with the country offices or partners fulfilling these agreements, which helps to ensure that the reporting requirements of the Danish CSO are met.

In some cases, e.g. CARE Denmark, the Danish CSOs can second staff to the country office to help with monitoring and reporting – usually where the country office has a weakness in this area or a large portfolio. More frequently, Danish CSOs have a ‘long-distance relationship’ in which the main point of contact with the partner is through the monitoring visit of the Danish CSO staff. This monitoring relationship is one of the areas where the Danish CSO can add value to the work of Southern CSOs. CARE Denmark sends out a survey annually to partners directly to inquire about the value addition of CARE (not CARE Denmark) in the partnership. In some cases it may be easier to trace the added value of the Danish CSO at the level of the alliance or confederation when the Danish CSOs has a clearly defined leadership role.

The opportunity to exercise leadership within the alliance/federation

Most global CSOs have a global strategy (ADRA is an exception) which informs the focus and structure of member strategic plans. In some cases, the alliance or con/federation has a system of delegated or lead responsibilities to enable a member to assume a lead responsibility for a specific aspect of the global strategy.⁴ For example, Action Aid Denmark provides leadership and support on taking forward the Action Aid International strategic objective on Democratic Governance. CARE Denmark leads on Climate Change within CARE International and Save the Children Denmark leads the Save the Children International (SCI Global Initiative on Child Rights Governance. Save the Children Denmark also co-leads on number of other SCI global priorities such as partnership and child protection. Within the ACT Alliance, DanChurchAid has the main capacity and is primarily responsible for Humanitarian Mine Action.

These leadership functions within global con/federations can have different levels of ‘formality’: CARE Denmark’s leadership on climate change is explicit, with a high-profile global team; Save the Children Denmark sets objectives for its leadership and influencing work within SCI, and reports on these.

⁴ This arguably more common in the humanitarian strategic partnerships.

When exercising a global leadership function Danish CSOs sometimes second their own staff to the global initiative (e.g. Save the Children Denmark on partnership) and/or fund and manage a leadership post (e.g. CARE Denmark funds the global Climate Change Director).

CARE Denmark: Leading on climate change

CARE Denmark hosts the Poverty Environment and Climate Change Network (PECCN) for CARE International. PECCN “connects, innovates and guides climate change action across CARE International”. PECCN spearheads CARE’s Climate Change Strategy. CARE Denmark funds about 50% of the costs of the PECNN Secretariat and manages the Climate Change Director, based in UK. CARE Denmark manages staff contracts, the budget and is responsible for the governance system of PECCN.

CARE Denmark reported on its work with PECNN in its 2014 Results Report under an outcome indicator referring to decision-makers accessing CARE policy positions and proposals on Climate Change during UNFCCC and COP 20 policy processes.

It is interesting to note that CARE Denmark reports on the results of their leadership function within CARE International under “policy influence at the international level”, which is part of their results framework. Although it also provides capacity development support in climate change to other members, this is only briefly described in the 2014 Results Report. Action Aid Denmark’s role in capacity development in governance is acknowledged in Action Aid International, and its capacity building efforts within and beyond the federation is extensively reported in its 2014 Results Report.

ActionAid Denmark: leading the Democratic Governance international platform

Action Aid International has established ‘International Platforms’ for each of the five Strategic Objectives of its global strategy. Each platform is led by a member country with the authority to decide on the overall direction of the strategic objective. AADK leads Strategic Objective 2: “advance the political influence of people living in poverty to hold governments and corporates accountable”. More than 30 countries are working on the objective, which has a set of global indicators.

ActionAid Denmark has delegated responsibility for supporting:

- Developing and sharing methodologies, research, tools and knowledge
- Developing the capacity of civil society organisations through personnel support (People4Change) and training (Training4Change)
- Local and national governance programme work in AADK partnership countries.

In all cases, the leadership role is more one of thought leadership, strategy development, and advisory support than a mandatory or operational role. ActionAid Denmark, for example, has no direct responsibility for the M&E of governance programmes. Action Aid International reports on governance at programme and country level but not a global level.

The opportunity for informal influence within the alliance/confederation

Danish CSOs also include in their results reports a more informal role in influencing the policies and practices of their global CSO in the absence of a more formalised delegation of responsibilities and, in some cases, without these changes being included in their results framework. ADRA Denmark, for example, includes its influence on ADRA International in the areas of Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) and the adoption of the core Humanitarian Standard in its reporting to Danida. As part of an intent to influence CARE International's approach to partnership, CARE Denmark shared leadership with CARE Norway in developing a framework on "How to Partner with Civil Society" which has become an official CARE International document.

The relevance of global M&E systems to Danish reporting

The facility with which Danish CSOs can report to Danida depends also on the approach to M&E within the alliance or con/federation. Many global CSOs have invested in global M&E systems, some of which are mandatory for its country offices or affiliates. These tend to be the 'tighter' con/federations such as CARE International, ActionAid International and Save the Children International.

Global M&E systems

CARE International, for example, has a global Project and Program Information and Impact Reporting System (PIIRS). Country offices and CARE members are obliged to submit annual reports to CARE International using indicators derived from the PIIRS system. All member-funded projects and programmes must include at least one of these indicators.

ActionAid International, similarly, has a detailed Global Monitoring Framework (GMF) with a system of global indicators. All country programmes must submit annual reports to the Secretariat in line with the GMF.

Neither the ACT Alliance (DanChurchAid) nor ADRA International have a global M&E system; nor do they submit reports to the Secretariat. Both have developed their own reporting templates and receive customised reports from partner countries in line with Danida requirements.

In the case of the three tighter con/federations – CARE, ActionAid and Save the Children – the Danish CSOs require separate reporting from their partner countries. In these cases, country offices produce multiple reports: CARE Denmark, for example, requires bi-annual reports from partner country offices in a format, adjusted from time to time, which is largely designed to meet Danida requirements and reporting on the theory of change of the programmes. ActionAid Denmark partner countries also report to ActionAid Denmark bi-annually in a format

compatible with the GMF but which gathers data specifically for Danida reports (but using mostly the global indicators). Local partners also use the global indicators of the GMF to report to country offices.

This highlights a broader issue. Partner countries of Danish CSOs will probably have to report to more than one donor in different formats, using different intervention logics (logframes, theories of change) and data-gathering tools. This can be a burden on the country office. Danish CSOs such as CARE report that they have tried to encourage donor harmonisation of civil society reporting formats, but with limited success.

Where reports are originated

It is generally easier for a Danish CSO to report to Danida on its achievements within an alliance or confederation if it can exercise some degree of control over how data are gathered at country level. Most Danish CSOs prefer to work through Southern CSO partners but, in the case of global CSOs, the Southern partner can be a country office or a national affiliate to the con/federation if the country office directly implements some programmes. In such cases, e.g. Danish Red Cross, the Danish CSO in effect has only one direct partner in-country. Danish CSOs, therefore, can derive the data upon which to report their global results from a variety of sources:

- Directly from a Southern CSOs partner.
- Indirectly from a Southern CSO partner via the country office e.g. DanChurchAid.
- Directly from a country office who, in some cases, may directly implement the programme e.g. ADRA.

All the CSOs reviewed derived their reports directly from implementing partners – whether a Southern CSO or country office. This enables them to collect data from their partners in line with indicators relevant to their own strategy and in line with their own guidance, e.g. in partnership agreements. In most cases, Danish CSOs report from country offices where staff may or may not be sensitive to the specific reporting requirements of Danida over and above their standard reports to the Secretariat. The three larger CSOs reported that they pro-actively managed their relationships with country offices in order to ensure quality of reporting, e.g. through regular support from the desk staff and monitoring visits. Some also have the capacity of seconding staff to country offices to provide support in monitoring and reporting where this is thought to be advisable.

The key point is that, unless Danida requirements are incorporated into global M&E systems, partner country offices will be required to produce customised reports for Danish CSOs. This requires active oversight by Danish CSOs, involving a ‘cost’ at both ends of the partnership relationship.

2.3 Conclusions

The Danish CSOs reviewed reported that membership of a global alliance or con/federation presented them with no significant limitations with regard to meeting Danida's reporting requirements. This is partly related to their retaining bilateral, contractual relationships with country offices/partners. Each had the flexibility to design their own monitoring frameworks and to request or require country offices to report to those frameworks on the programmes they support.

Both ActionAid Denmark and CARE Denmark commented that it would be an advantage if there was a greater degree of alignment between the global M&E systems and their own reporting requirements to Danida. CARE Denmark, for example, is encouraging CARE International to include partnerships and human rights-based approaches in the PIIRs system and to adopt more of a theory of change/outcome mapping approach.

Those CSOs that do not allocate framework funds to specific programmes, activities or posts face a broader challenge in demonstrating the Danish footprint in the results they report. It becomes more difficult to demonstrate the counterfactual case for national donor funding, i.e. to demonstrate what strategic or framework funding has enabled the global CSO achieve which otherwise it would have been unable to do. Some level of earmarking or 'hypothecation' of strategic funding is necessary to enable the use of these funds to be traced.

The Danish CSOs reviewed cited more advantages than disadvantages arising from membership of a global CSO in terms of results reporting, for example:

- CSOs such as ActionAid and CARE can report on achievements beyond their partner countries through information generated by their global M&E system. This, after all, is a rationale for becoming an affiliate of a global CSO – to contribute to a larger scale global impact. In addition to reporting on programmes in partnership countries, ActionAid Denmark, for example, reports on ActionAid International's global results through tax campaigns in association with its leadership on governance, and can demonstrate links between local, national and international achievements.
- Perhaps the most frequent benefit of this is to contribute to and report on results arising from global advocacy. This can be global advocacy conducted by the CSO itself, e.g. ActionAid International or through alliances, e.g. ACT Alliance
- It may also be possible to access more resources or develop strategic partnerships to improve overall capacity in monitoring, evaluation and learning, for example, by conducting larger studies to improve methodologies.

Leveraging resources for improved MEL

CARE International has evaluated – for example, through impact evaluations and Randomised Control Trials – the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) method that is often used in its country programmes. This has enabled it to scale up the approach on the basis of learning and evidence. CARE has also collaborated with the New Economics Foundation to develop new methodologies to assess ‘value for money’ or social return on investment.

3 Global CSOs: Options for results reporting

3.1 Danish CSOs: Five ways of demonstrating the Danish footprint

Danish framework CSOs face similar challenges in summarising their results and in demonstrating the links in their results chain.⁵ Those affiliated to global alliances face a distinctive challenge in demonstrating the Danish footprint in or distinctive contribution to the results they report. The features of global CSO systems and architecture described above can potentially complicate and extenuate the results chain and make it more difficult to demonstrate that Danish footprint. At its strongest, this would involve providing a plausible counterfactual case, i.e. that these achievements would not have been possible without Danish support. In practice, Danish CSOs do this in a variety of ways, each of which varies in terms of the strength of the evidence base to support the reported contribution. There are five broad options for a Danish CSO, affiliated to a global alliance, to demonstrate how it has contributed to the results it reports. These principally involve earmarking funds for particular country programmes and/or initiatives; and a leadership role in reporting results, and are as follows.

External changes through bilateral programmes

It is significant that all the six Danish CSOs interviewed maintain bilateral agreements with specific countries within their global alliance. DanChurchAid and CARE Denmark, for example, summarise their global results by partner countries in a simple table format. This is the best way to provide a demonstrable ‘audit trail’ of financial and programmatic support to partner countries and the results they report. It gives them the opportunity to demonstrate a strong contribution to change in these countries, i.e. specify what is being supported, how it is being supported and what the expected results are. It should also be borne in mind that summarising results from partner countries should be considered as ‘global reporting’ since they most often run programmes in several countries in different continents.

⁵ See ‘Seeing the Wood for the Trees: Summarising Results’, INTRAC, January 2016 regarding the use of relevant indicators, appropriate data gathering tools, and purposeful narratives.

CARE DK ratings for global portfolio of country programmes

Overall progress in relation to Domain 1 indicators and sustainability criteria

| Domain 1 | Goal fulfilment | Sustainability |
|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Nepal | 3.5 | 3.3 |
| Vietnam | 4 | 3.8 |
| Niger | 3.5 | 3.7 |
| Mozambique | 2.5 | 3 |
| Uganda | 3 | 3.3 |
| Ghana | 3.5 | 3.5 |

Source: CARE Denmark Results Reporting 2014

The normal rules of good M&E standards apply when reporting the Danish CSOs' contribution to results in individual countries with bilateral agreements:

- Assessing or measuring what has changed;
- Assessing the contribution of the Danish CSO to these changes (as opposed to other CSOs in the con/federation) via some form of contribution analysis.

Once the relevant changes have been assessed at country level, results can then be summarised across the different countries.⁶ Depending on the nature of the programme indicators, results could also be aggregated in numeric form or through a ranking and rating system. Danish CSOs may also want to report on the synergies and added-value generated by supporting programmes in several countries – for example, how lessons learned in one country have contributed to better programming in another.

External changes from global leadership

Danish CSOs can also show a strong contribution to global results in areas where they have an explicit lead responsibility or are recognised as the centre of expertise in the global CSO. This is clearly the case, for example, with CARE Denmark's leadership of climate change initiatives and ActionAid Denmark's leadership of governance. This provides the Danish CSO with the opportunity to demonstrate its distinctive contribution to results – for example, beyond partner countries – where this responsibility is formalised, staff and/or teams are funded; discrete activities planned and implemented; and outputs delivered. It can also be argued that the

⁶ See 'Seeing the Wood for the Trees: Summarising Results', INTRAC, January 2016.

programme achievements reported would not have been possible without the Danish leadership support provided.

CARE Denmark leadership of CARE International policy on climate change

CARE Denmark-hosted Poverty, Environment and Climate Change centre of expertise (PECCN) leads the international level CARE policy advocacy on climate change. In 2014, PECCN made good/excellent progress on nearly all of its target outcome indicators (21 out of 24). The work of the network has resulted in positive change across four main outcome areas; influencing policies, institutions and processes; improving programme quality; organisational change; and facilitating resources and partnerships – as well as two internal indicators around integrating gender justice and team management.

PECCN continued to engage in the UNFCCC policy process through advocacy and communications work at UNFCCC sessions in Bonn in March and June. CARE's work was referred to in a COP20 statement by the US lead negotiator on adaptation ... CARE's policy positions were successfully launched and widely disseminated in and around the COP 20 meeting.

PECCN contributed technical inputs, including submissions into the investment framework of the Green Climate Fund, and the UNFCCC on good practice in national adaptation planning. As a result, CARE approaches and tools were promoted in the official UNFCCC synthesis report on methods and tools for adaptation planning.

Source: CARE DK 2014 Results Report

This kind of reporting involves treating the leadership area as a subset of the con/federation's overall impact. Most international CSOs have strategies that cut across geographical boundaries, and it would be reasonable to expect such strategies to come with an associated planning, monitoring and evaluation (PME) system. If this is not the case then the Danish CSO should think about introducing some form of programme management cycle, e.g. developing a sector strategy, objectives, indicators, and reporting schedules. This would provide a clear audit trail on leadership in the area and how it has contributed to the results reported. The contribution of other members of the con/federation to the results should be reported also if appropriate.

Internal changes from global leadership

Danida reporting guidance to framework CSOs allows for results to be reported at an organisational as well as societal or community level. The Civil Society Policy highlights, for example, partnership and capacity development as key 'building blocks' of Danish support to civil society. These key concepts – and other such as added-value – have been incorporated into the RAM and subsequently into Danish CSO reporting.

There are a number of cases of Danish CSOs providing semi-formal or informal 'thought leadership' within CSOs with direct organisational impact on their ways of working and indirectly on their programmes. Frequently these involve the Danish CSO seeking to infuse the global CSO with traditional 'Nordic' approaches to, for example, working with civil society, the

concept of partnership, or the importance of a rights-based approach to lasting change. These concepts feature prominently in Danida's own policies.

Once again, the stronger the audit trail of how the Danish CSO has led such initiatives, the easier it is to demonstrate the Danish footprint – for example, if this influencing work results in specific outputs such as the adoption of new policies by the global CSO. Extending the reach of key commitments in Danida policy documents to global CSOs can legitimately be seen as policy influence. Given the size and range of many global CSOs this is not an insignificant achievement.

Internal leadership can take other forms. A Danish CSO, for example, might fund and/or lead a major initiative, such as a research or M&E study, that enables the global CSO to better understand, monitor and deliver a change process or development intervention. Practitioners do not change their behaviour only or directly as a result in organisational policy changes. Demonstrating and disseminating evidence-based good practice within the global CSO can also demonstrate a contribution to improved understanding of change processes and to lasting changes on peoples' lives.

Shaping Save the Children International's approach to partnership

Save the Children Denmark (SCD) was instrumental in developing the Partnership Principles which constitute the foundation of SCI's approach to partnerships. ... lead the development, systematisation and formal integration of SCIs partnership management approach to partnerships into the global operational system. The most significant achievements ... at global level were:

- Developing and defining the globally applied Partnership Management Category under SCI's Quality Framework in line with the SCI Partnership Principles;
- Facilitating the roll-out of SCI's approach to partnerships in various parts of SCI;
- Institutionalising the partnership manager position into SCI Centre as a core SCI-funded function.

Given SCD's partnership focus and the support provided to this area through the SCI system SCD was considered a go-to organisation in 2014 by SCI and members, and has strongly influenced SCI's thinking and operationalisation of partnerships globally as well as in selected SCD priority countries.

Source: SCD Framework Progress Report 2014 p. 20

It is rarely possible or necessary to 'prove' causality when reporting policy influencing, but it is necessary to provide evidence to demonstrate the contribution of the Danish CSO to the change reported. Successful influencing within a con/federation should arguably be easier than influencing external bodies since it is more within a Danish CSO's sphere of influence and a context of shared values, and there are likely to be fewer extraneous factors that potentially

contributed to the change. Demonstrating the impact of Danish influence should also be easier for the same reasons, which argues for the threshold for evidence being slightly higher.

In some cases it might also be possible to trace forward the impact of these internal changes on wider groups such as service users or partners. This could facilitate some quantitative reporting, e.g. on the impact of improved, replicated village savings and loans schemes on household incomes. Where this cannot be measured it is reasonable to produce illustrations or case studies although these should be acknowledged as 'best case' examples.

External changes through membership of coalitions and alliances

Most global CSOs are actively engaged in advocacy. It is commonly accepted that policy or practice change is more likely to be achieved by working through alliances or coalitions than by working individually. While this may make policy change more likely, it becomes more difficult for an individual CSO to demonstrate its own contribution to the change. In practice, Danish CSOs include their joint advocacy in their results reports. This is most frequently in alliance with other members of the con/federation e.g. advocacy with the EU on migration by European CARE members, or DanChurchAid with ACT Alliance members. It may involve advocacy activities with other global CSOs.

DanChurchAid global advocacy through ACT Alliance

DanChurchAid contributed to a range of global advocacy initiatives on climate change conducted in direct cooperation with DanChurchAid partners and southern ACT members ... Within ACT, DanChurchAid contributed to several online as well as face-to-face capacity building initiatives directly linked to the ACT Alliance climate change advocacy strategy. Some of the activities, including a high level informal dialogue meeting in New York together with the governments of Switzerland and Gambia, contributed successfully to increased dialogue between different UNFCCC parties and to progress in talks related to the priorities of the ACT Alliance. DanChurchAid took a leading role in a coordinated push calling for climate finance in the EU. The ACT Alliance strategy was to push for increased climate financing and higher contributions to the Green Climate Fund. Several EU member states made pledges in line with the call from ACT Alliance, in step with the DanChurchAid strategy.

Source: DanChurchAid International Report 2014 p17

The key to assessing policy influence is first to have robust evidence of change and, second, to develop a plausible argument for your contribution to that change. Specific methods for assessing contribution can be employed – for example, contribution analysis, process tracing, and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) – but often, a clear, rational argument supported by evidence is sufficient (although the argument should be in the public domain and open to challenge, if necessary).

It is possible that another CSO has led on the campaign and on the assessment of change. In these circumstances, the Danish CSO need not produce additional evidence of the change but

should try to provide additional evidence of the Danish contribution to the alliance and its activities.

Global changes through CSO without specific contribution

The main argument used by national CSOs in affiliating with global CSOs is that they can contribute to change on a larger scale. The achievements of global CSOs on an international level can be impressive but it is not always possible to directly trace the specific contribution on an individual member. In these circumstances, to what extent is it plausible for a Danish CSO to report these results?

An easy – but unsatisfactory – way of doing this is to report a percentage of the global CSO results that corresponds to the percentage funding contribution of the national CSO to the confederation or global programme. For example, Save the Children Denmark used to use the relative percentage of their contribution to SCI global budget to calculate the reach of their programmes.⁷ This is a rather arbitrary mechanism by which to measure and report on the strength of contribution to global results. It has a number of disadvantages, the main one being that it establishes no plausible link in the results chain other than the funding relationship shared with other affiliates. This might present a plausible counterfactual case if the level of funding was significant in relation to the total global spend, but this is unlikely in larger con/federations.

The case is perhaps stronger of reporting, for example, a policy change achieved by the global CSO even though the Danish CSO had no traceable involvement, other than indirect funding. This is after all the rationale and a reason for the growth of global CSOs and it would seem to miss the point not to report such global achievements.

Save the Children Denmark “Global Reach”

The contribution of SCD to the total direct reach for children and adults in 2014 was 3.5 million compared with 2.8 million in 2013 and 2.2 million in 2012*.

* SCD calculates its contribution to total reach based on the percentage contribution to the Save the Children Economy (excluding domestic programmes).

Source: Save the Children Denmark Progress Report 2014 p8

From a methodological point of view, this is similar to the case above, although the influence of the Danish CSO on the reported change is likely to be lower. The assessment of change and its contribution to the change is likely to be made by the con/federation. The task for the Danish CSO, therefore, is to report its own contribution to the con/federation. As above, this may be as simple as claiming a proportion of the contribution based on funds provided. However, there are other circumstances in which a Danish CSO might plausibly argue a contribution, for example:

- Providing advice or support to a campaign or advocacy work
- Providing learning or evidence that is used by a campaign or piece of advocacy work

⁷ Save the Children Denmark recognises this approach is limited and is seeking an alternative.

- Conducting research that is used for advocacy
- Taking part in (or facilitating) networks or joint initiatives
- Linking local-level advocacy (e.g. in a country with which a Danish CSO has a bilateral agreement) to international efforts
- Developing tools or approaches used in a campaign
- Providing capacity development to partners involved in advocacy
- Contributing to planning or strategic positioning.

Some of these initiatives may have taken place outside the reporting period. This can be acceptable in some cases as it is generally understood that policy and practice change may take a long time to achieve, and the link between activities and outcomes can be spread across different funding periods. Although it is unlikely that a strong counterfactual case can be developed in such cases, it is still important to provide as much evidence as possible on the Danish CSO contribution. For example, an international campaign might use a piece of research to which a Danish CSO has contributed. The strength of this causal link will be much greater if the Danish CSO can provide evidence of how the research was conducted, used in the campaign and accessed by other agencies.

3.2 Conclusion

The reporting options described above are not mutually exclusive. In most cases Danish CSOs report their results by combining a number of the options above, e.g. working in countries through bilateral arrangements; leading global initiatives; and contributing to global campaigns. The most straightforward approach may be to report each initiative separately and to explain any synergies between the results if there are any. This is unlikely to involve additional data collection, but might involve some creative thinking to draw out different influences. For example, a Danish CSO may have invested in the capacity development of a Southern CSO over a period of years (reported as part of its bilateral programming) that subsequently plays a major role in a global campaign. Identifying these kinds of links can be an important part of monitoring and lesson-learning.

3.3 Danida: Facilitating global reporting

Simplify RAM and reporting requirements

Danida is a signatory to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) which commits donor countries and organisations to co-ordinate their actions through harmonised programmes, and to simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. Many CSOs have embraced the principles of the Paris Declaration which is one of the factors contributing to the growth of global CSOs. Yet individual donors, including Danida, remain eager to demonstrate their distinctive contribution to harmonised programmes.

This has implications for the country offices of global CSOs. All the country offices of the CSOs reviewed provide a set of reports to meet the specific formats in line with Danida requirements requested by their Danish CSO partner. This reporting is, in many cases, additional to the reports they provide the Secretariat or other donors. No global M&E system was capable of

generating customised data for Danish CSO reporting. Demanding reporting requirements involves a transaction cost for both country offices and the Danish CSO. Resources that could be used to deliver results are dedicated to reporting results. These costs need to be recognised.

While Danida's reporting guidance is comparatively simple, the complexity of the RAM with its multiple indicators has been reflected in Danish CSO results reporting and the reporting requirements passed on to country offices. The pending review of the RAM offers an opportunity to simplify the RAM and reduce the number of associated indicators. This is likely to reduce the burden of duplicate reporting. A consultation with Danish CSOs when reviewing in the review of the RAM may help to identify and reduce the unique reporting requirements of Danida funding.

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