

**Report on the  
European Seminar on CSO Development Effectiveness  
Vienna, 10-11 March 2010**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the framework of the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness<sup>1</sup>, regional seminars have been organized since October 2009 with the aim to raise the interest of national CSOs to conduct country consultations on CSO development effectiveness in the first semester of 2010. Previous regional seminars were held in Bangkok (November 2009), Lima (December 2009) and Nairobi (January 2010).

The European seminar on CSO development effectiveness took place on 10 and 11 March in Vienna. It was organized by CONCORD in consultation with the European members of the GFG. It was targeted at CSOs from East and South-East European countries that are not members of the EU. Its objective was to raise their interest to hold country consultations on CSO development effectiveness.

In the run-up to the meeting, CONCORD, in consultation with European GFG members, identified potential participants in each of the 15 eligible countries<sup>2</sup>. Representatives from all but one country (Montenegro) attended the meeting.

Resource people and facilitators included two European GFG members (Jean Reyanert and Daniel Svoboda), Tara Brace-John (One World Action), Jake Bharier (CONCORD), Dr Dragan Golubovic (European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law) and Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD). Government representatives (Johanna Mang from the Austrian Development Agency and Michelle Barrett from USAID) were invited to attend a session on the enabling environment on the first day.

The documentation on the meeting is available online at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/european-seminar-on-cso\\_262.html](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/european-seminar-on-cso_262.html).

## **DAY 1 - 10 MARCH 2010**

## **II. EFFECTIVENESS AND DEVELOPMENT – AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DEBATE**

- **Introduction to the debate<sup>3</sup>**

Tara Brace-John (One World Action) and Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD) presented some of the key concepts used in the debate (i.e. development and effectiveness), recalled the different roles of CSOs in development and explained some of the push and pull factors that led CSOs to start the Open Forum process.

In the ensuing debate, participants stressed that development is related to positive changes and the promotion of freedom, peace, wealth; respect for human rights and the environment; sustainability and inclusion. There are multiple interpretations of the term, and multiple ways of achieving development.

Participants stressed that the roles of CSOs in development change over time depending on the context in which they work. The added value of CSOs lies, among other things, in their expertise, experience in the field, proximity to the people that they serve and represent, their ability to promote values and their capacity to mobilize resources and governments.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cso-effectiveness.org](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org)

<sup>2</sup> Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Albania

<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/01\\_introduction\\_-\\_tara\\_brace\\_john\\_and\\_franz\\_josef\\_berger.ppt](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/01_introduction_-_tara_brace_john_and_franz_josef_berger.ppt)

There was also a debate on the term “effectiveness”. It was pointed out that efficiency, effectiveness and impact refer to different concepts. Efficiency is the ability to accomplish a result with a minimum amount of time, effort and/or other resources (“doing things right”). Effectiveness is the capability to produce an effect (“doing right things”). Impact, in turn, can be defined as the long-term result from an action. Several participants pointed out that the concepts are very similar to each other and are in practice often used interchangeably. They also pointed out that the concepts, coined in an English-speaking environment, are not easily to translate into local languages.

- **Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action**

Jean Reynaert (CONCORD representative in the GFG) explained that the Paris Declaration was developed and signed by donors and governments in 2005 to deal with a number of technical and management issues in bilateral aid delivery. It is formulated from the perspective of donors and governments and responds to challenges to the effectiveness of donors and governments. Donors and governments put pressure on CSOs to adhere to the principles of the Paris Declaration.

At several occasions in the run-up to the High-Level Forum in Accra, CSOs stated that their roles in development are different from those of governments and donors and that the challenges to their effectiveness are also different. Therefore, the Paris Declaration cannot be directly applied to them. CSOs hold that they need to develop their own effectiveness framework through the Open Forum. In the Accra Agenda for Action, government and donors recognize CSOs as development actors in their own right, commit to engage in the Open Forum and also commit to work with CSOs to improve the environments for CSOs.

- **CSO development effectiveness<sup>4</sup>**

Daniel Svoboda (co-chair of the GFG) explained that CSOs in the Open Forum are not only interested in the effectiveness of aid (aid effectiveness), but in development effectiveness: how can positive sustainable change be achieved through the diversity of instruments and actions, including – but not confined to – international aid. This shift of emphasis takes into account that CSOs are not only aid actors, but play a variety of roles in development that may or may not be financed by international aid.

Daniel presented different definitions and explained some of the determinants of CSO development effectiveness. He also pointed out that there are internal and external factors influencing CSO development effectiveness. Internal factors can be controlled by CSOs themselves (internal governance structures, internal systems for learning, evaluation and monitoring, human resource policies etc.), while external factors are controlled by governments and donors (funding, opportunities for political dialogue, promotion of human rights etc.).

### **III. DISCUSSION ON KEY ISSUES IN CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

Participants split into four groups. Applying the World Café Methodology, each group spent 30 minutes on each of the following four topics:

- Role and added value of CSOs in development
- Accountability, partnership and ownership
- Effectiveness and impact
- Enabling environment

The results from the group discussions were presented to plenary during the first session on the second day (see below).

### **IV. PRESENTATION ON THE OPEN FORUM FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

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<sup>4</sup> Available at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/02\\_cso\\_development\\_effectiveness\\_-\\_daniel\\_svoboda.ppt](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/02_cso_development_effectiveness_-_daniel_svoboda.ppt)

Daniel Svoboda presented the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness. His presentation is available online at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/03\\_open\\_forum\\_general\\_presentation\\_-\\_daniel\\_svoboda.ppt#256,1,Slide\\_1](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/03_open_forum_general_presentation_-_daniel_svoboda.ppt#256,1,Slide_1).

## **V. WHAT IS AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOS?**

This was organized as an informal exploratory discussion on the enabling conditions that CSOs need to maximize their effectiveness as development actors. Three keynote interventions were followed by a short plenary discussion.

- **DR DRAGAN GOLUBOVIC: What is an enabling environment for CSO?**

Dr Golubovic from the European Centre for Not-for-Profit-Law explained what an enabling legal environment for CSOs looks like. His presentation is available online at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/04\\_enabling\\_environment\\_-\\_dragan\\_golubovic.ppt](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/04_enabling_environment_-_dragan_golubovic.ppt).

- **JOHANNA MANG: Support to CSOs by the Austrian Development Cooperation**

The Austrian Development Agency works in the region in the water, environment and higher education sectors. Primary partners are local authorities, and sometimes, when it comes to service delivery, also local CSOs. The current CSO strategy was drafted before the Accra High-Level Forum and does therefore not yet take into account the wider reflection on the roles and added value of CSOs.

- **MICHELLE BARRETT: USAID's support to CSOs in the region**

Michelle Barrett presented how USAID has supported CSOs in Eastern Europe and the Balkan countries since the early 1990s. She also explained briefly the NGO Sustainability Index. Her presentation is available online at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/05\\_usaid\\_support\\_-\\_michelle\\_barrett.pdf](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/05_usaid_support_-_michelle_barrett.pdf).

- **Discussion**

The ensuing discussions revolved around questions of financial sustainability, funding from donors and the associated loss of independence and autonomy. There are very few alternatives to government funding (i.e. income-generating activities), and especially political, advocacy and human rights work is difficult to fund. The challenge for CSOs is to defend the autonomy and independence in light of their dependence on donor funding.

## **DAY 2 - 11 MARCH 2010**

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM DAY 1 TO PIN DOWN AND ENRICH PRINCIPLES OF CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

Each facilitator presented the main conclusions from the four issue groups from the first day and the feedback was put to discussion in plenary.

- **Role and added value of CSOs in development**

Participants identified a number of different roles: holding governments to account for lack of transparency and participation and conflict of interest; filling gaps in service delivery, representation and advocacy and providing sustainable solutions; delivering basic services; being watchdog for government policies; advocating for good governance and policy changes; and mobilizing volunteers and the public.

Participants stated that CSOs have an added value that is based on their specific expertise and role in development. CSOs bring to the development process visions, perspectives and ideas different from other

development actors. They have also different ways of working (stronger focus on participation and communities) and different priorities.

- **Accountability, partnership and ownership**

Participants stated that accountability can be achieved through self-regulation and quality standards. For donors, accountability runs to citizens in their countries, while for CSOs it runs to donors and to the citizens that they serve. Transparency is a pre-condition for achieving accountability. Accountability standards for CSOs should be established by CSOs themselves and not by governments.

To realize ownership, coordination and collaboration among donors and CSOs must take into account the local context and culture. Full ownership requires participation and community engagement throughout the development process. Participants stressed the need to base funding relationships on trust.

- **Effectiveness and impact**

Participants identified a number of elements that improve or corroborate the ability of CSOs to achieve impact. The findings are summarized in a presentation by Daniel Svoboda which is available at [http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/06\\_summary\\_of\\_discussion\\_on\\_effectiveness\\_and\\_impact\\_-\\_daniel\\_svoboda.ppt](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/ppt/06_summary_of_discussion_on_effectiveness_and_impact_-_daniel_svoboda.ppt).

- **Enabling environment**

Participants identified the following crucial elements for an enabling environment:

- Legal framework
- Political environment: respect for human rights including freedom of assembly, access to information
- Institutional framework: partnership and dialogue between governments and CSOs; institutional arrangements of governments for CSOs (agencies, committees)
- Enhancement of CSO capacities: training, exchange of domestic and regional expertise etc.
- Financial mechanisms for CSO activity: VAT exemption, taxes etc.
- Cultural and ethnic context
- Public trust in CSOs

## **VI. OPEN FORUM CONSULTATIONS IN EUROPE**

The Open Forum's objective is to propose a global framework for CSO development effectiveness, including principles, guidelines, mechanisms and minimum standards for enabling conditions. To this end, a global bottom-up process of country and thematic/sectoral consultation will be organized.

Franz Josef Berger (CONCORD Secretariat) explained how European CSOs can participate in the Open Forum consultations: CSOs from EU countries can participate – through their national platforms which are members of CONCORD – in the CONCORD working group on CSO development effectiveness. This working group is in theory also open to CSOs from non-EU countries, but there is no funding to support their travel costs (meetings take normally place in Brussels). The CONCORD working group plans to provide a regional input for the first Open Forum Global Assembly in August 2010.

In addition to this, a number of CSO platforms in Europe are planning to hold national consultation that are self-financed (Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, Finland). The Czech platform has already held their consultation in 2009.

To enable consultations in South and South-East Europe, the Open Forum provides financial support to CSOs organizing these consultations in the region. Therefore, CONCORD and the present representatives from the Open Forum invited participants in the seminar to organize, together with their peers, national consultation on CSO development effectiveness in their countries.

The toolkit of the Open Forum serves must be taken as a framework that provides guidelines for how to organize a consultation. However, the guidelines in the toolkit are only suggestions that can be adapted to national contexts and realities. Franz stressed that what ultimately counts for the Open Forum is to have an inclusive and transparent consultation process that produces a representative input for the Open Forum. It was recognized that political realities as well as time and funding constraints put limits to the inclusiveness of the process.

Consultations should take place by the end of June at the latest, so that their results can feed into the Global Assembly of the Open Forum which will take place from 24 to 26 August 2010.

## **VII. SPOTLIGHTS ON SELECTIVE WORK TO-DATE IN EUROPE ON CSO DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS**

This session was used to inform participants about ongoing work on CSO development effectiveness in Europe.

- **CONCORD working group on CSO development effectiveness**

This group is open to non-CONCORD members (also from non-EU countries). However, there is no funding to facilitate participation of non-CONCORD members. Currently, the group is working on two papers (on “impact” and “enabling environment”). In June, the group plans to meet in Spain to take stock of current European work on CSO development effectiveness, with a view to producing an input for the Open Forum Global Assembly (24-26 August 2010).

- **Quadrilogue**

Jean Reynaert explains the Quadrilogue (also known as Structured Dialogue). The Quadrilogue is a dialogue on future cooperation between CSOs and local authorities on the one hand and the EU on the other, involving four parties: CSOs, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Member States. In the next couple of months, a number of consultation meetings will be held in Brussels, as well as in Africa, Latin America and Asia. CONCORD is one of the nine European platforms involved in the Quadrilogue. The Quadrilogue touches upon many issues relevant to the discussion on enabling environment that is being held in the Open Forum.

CONCORD will follow-up with the European Commission on how CSOs from East and South-East Europe will be involved in the Quadrilogue.

## **ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVE OF</b>
ABDULOV Nail	National Assembly of Youth Organizations in Azerbaijan
AKHALKATSI Ani	Open Society Georgia
ARANCLI Suade	Civil Society Development Center (Turkey)
AVAGYAN Anna	Counterpart Armenia
BAJIC Sevko	Civil Society Promotion Center
BEDOYA Christine	TRIALOG
BERGER Franz Josef	CONCORD
BHARIER Jake	CONCORD
BIRDEN-CORBACIOGLU Emine Rana	KADER- Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates (Turkey)
BOSANAC Gordan	Centre for Peace Studies (Croatia)
BOUT-GUSAIM Irina	Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions
BRACE-JOHN Tara	One World Action
CEKU Hajrulla	Foreign Policy Club (Kosovo)
ECHIM Tatiana	Demos (Moldova)
GOLUBOVIC Dragan	European Center for Not-for-Profit Law

GONZALEZ Julieta	CONCORD
HIRT Chuck	Central and Eastern European Citizens Network
JOSIC Jelena	Coalition for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (Croatia)
KOCAQI Monika	Refleksione (Albania)
KOKONA Darina	Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development (Albania)
MKHROYAN Anahit	Caritas Armenia
OSSBERGER Melanie	Globale Verantwortung (Austria)
OSTAF Serghei	Resource Center for Human Rights (Moldova)
PONIZOVA Olga	Eco-Accord (Russia)
RATTENBURY Ben	Euclid Network
REYNAERT Jean	CONCORD
SAFARLI Ilyas	Uluchay (Azerbaijan)
SALAMADZE Vaja	Civil Society Institute (Georgia)
SIKOSEK Majda	Felicitas (Serbia)
STEEL Rebecca	TRIALOG
SVOBODA Daniel	GFG co-chair, Czech National Platform
TRAJCHESKA Gordana	National Council of Women (Macedonia)
TYMCHUK Taras	GURT Resource Centre (Ukraine)
VASHKEVICH Darya	Assembly of Pro-Democratic Organisations Belarus

## ANNEX 2: LIST OF PRESENTATIONS

- Tara Brace-John & Franz Josef Berger: [Introduction to the debate](#)
- Daniel Svoboda: [What is development effectiveness?](#)
- Daniel Svoboda: [General presentation on the Open Forum](#)
- Dr Dragan Golubovic: [What is an enabling legal environment for CSOs?](#)
- Michelle Barrett: [USAID's support to CSOs in East and South-East Europe](#)
- Daniel Svoboda: [Summary of group discussion on impact and effectiveness](#)
- Daniel Svoboda: [Presentation on the Prague Proclamation on CSO development effectiveness](#)

All presentations are available at <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-blog,008-.html?lang=en>.