



KATHOLIEKE
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Evaluation of Oxfam Novib's Capacity Building Programme for Diaspora Organisations

Final version

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Study commissioned by Oxfam Novib

2 October 2008



Hoger instituut
voor de arbeid

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFFORD	African Foundation for Development
Arc Mundi	Awareness Rising for Change - Multicultural Networks and Development Initiatives
BASUG	Bangladesh Support Group
BWPD	Burundian Women for Peace and Development
CBP	Capacity Building Programme
CFA	Co-Financing Agency
COS	Centra voor Internationale Samenwerking (Centres for International Cooperation)
DFD	Diaspora Forum for Development
DFID	Department for International Development
DGIS	Directoraat-Generaal voor Internationale Samenwerking (Directorate-General for International Cooperation)
ENNOS	Ethiopisch/Nederlands Netwerk voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Ethiopian/Dutch Network for Development Cooperation)
ERCMOVE	Economic Resource Center for Migrants and Overseas Employees
FAVON	Federatie van Afghaanse Vluchtelingen Organizaties Nederland (Federation of Afghan Refugee Organisations Netherlands)
FSAN	Federation of Somalian Associations Netherlands
HIRDA	Himilo Relief and Development Association
HTA	Home Town Association
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
INAFI	International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ITA	internal trajectory assistance
KAST	Kongolese en Angolese Stichting Talentueux (Congolese and Angolese Foundation Talented)

KPA	Kleinschalige Plaatselijke Activiteiten (Small-scale Local Activities)
Linkis	Laagdrempelige Initiatieven en Kenniscentrum voor Internationale Samenwerking (Low-Threshold Initiatives and knowledge Centre for International Cooperation)
M&D	Migration and Development
MDF	Management for Development Foundation
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MIND	Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development
MWPN	Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network-Netherlands
NCDO	Nationale Commissie voor Internationale Samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling (National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development)
NEAG	Nederlands Expertisecentrum Alternatieven voor Geweld (Dutch Centre of Expertise Alternatives for Violence)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NNF	Novib Nederland Fonds (Novib Netherlands Fund)
Novib	Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (Dutch Organisation for International Assistance)
NSON	New Sudan Organisations Network
ON	Oxfam Novib
ROPABU	Réseau des organisations paysannes au Burundi
SCSF	Sudan Civil Society Forum
SEDPI	Social Enterprise Development Partnerships
SMO	Samenwerking Maatschappelijke Organizaties (Cooperation Civil Society Organisations)
SMS	Stichting Mondiale Samenleving (Global Society Foundation)
SOMVAO	Somalische Vereniging Amsterdam en Omgeving (Somalian Association Amsterdam and Surroundings)
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities
VOND	Stichting Vrouwen Organisatie Nederland Darfur (Foundation Women Organisation Netherlands Darfur)
VvVM	Vrouwen voor Vrede op de Molukken (Women for Peace on the Molucs)
WSF	Warner Strategy & Fundraising
ZMV	zwarte, migranten, en vluchtelingenorganisaties (black, migrant and refugee organisations)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since a few years, the links between migration and development are receiving a considerable amount of attention from policy makers, civil society organisations and academics. One of the main issues in the debate refers to the role of migrant organisations in development cooperation. A quick review of the available literature on the topic, shows that there seems to be an increasing number of migrant organisations that are carrying out community development or other activities in the country of origin. Slowly, international and national (non-)governmental organisations are recognising the potential of these organisations in development. However, besides a lack of recognition, migrant organisations are confronted with a number of other obstacles that might limit the effectiveness of their efforts. Lack of appropriate organisational and technical skills and capacities are often mentioned as main issues in this regard.

The first Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Brussels in July of this year, referred to this in its recommendations for the theme Partnerships with diasporas to enhance the development impact of their activities (Task Force for the preparation of the GFMD, 2007, p. 11):

Identify partners within the diaspora (numbers, location, skills, etc.) and support diaspora organisations' organisational and representation capacities.

The recommendations of the Civil Society were even more explicit (King Baudouin Foundation, 2007, p. 24):

Options for diaspora capacity building include developing diaspora-specific training programmes and curricula, or providing subsidies to migrant leaders to participate in existing capacity building programmes.

Although still rather modest, in a few countries NGOs and other development actors are starting to set up capacity building programs for migrant organisations. One of the pioneers in this context is the Dutch development NGO Oxfam Novib (ON). Since 2002, the NGO has organised and funded courses on topics such as

Project Cycle Management and Planning; Proposal development; Fundraising; Financial Literacy; Peace building. In addition, Oxfam Novib has also organised meetings and conferences to enable migrant organisations to learn from each others' experiences.

However, very few of these efforts have already been evaluated in terms of effect on the beneficiaries. This weakness has also been identified by the participants on the Civil Society day of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Therefore, the recommendations of the report state (ibidem):

Capacity building initiatives to date should be systematically evaluated to inform continuing and future efforts.

Six years after the first attempts to provide capacity building services to migrant organisations, Oxfam Novib wishes to evaluate its program.

After a brief methodological note, we will describe the context in which the Oxfam Novib's capacity building programme (CBP) has been developed, followed by the history and content the CBP. The evaluation of the programme is the subject of the next chapter, and we conclude with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

1. Objectives

This evaluation focuses on what the programme officer of the Bureau Linkis/Popular Campaigning of Oxfam Novib identified as the core activities of the organisation's capacity building programme for diaspora organisations (see appendix 1 for a detailed overview):

- training courses;
- national expert meetings;
- international conferences (i.e. linking and learning meetings).

However, Oxfam Novib also carries out three other activities aimed at building capacities among diaspora organisations:

- feedback sessions with the staff of ON;
- internal trajectory assistance;
- supporting alliance building.

In first instance the evaluation will concentrate on the first three activities of the CBP, organised between July 2002 and February 2008, but we will also touch upon the other initiatives when relevant.

According to the programme officer of Linkis Oxfam Novib (see further for more info about this department), the CBP's three main objectives include:

1. developing capacities and skills to improve project development and enabling diaspora organisations to scale up their projects and organisational capacities;
2. alliance building;
3. empowering migrants to speak for themselves.

The evaluation aims to:

- assess whether the CBP has achieved its objectives by looking at the output, outcome, and, where possible, impacts;
- identify suggestions of the participants for amelioration of the CBP.

Important to note is that the evaluation does not assess the global Linkis/Oxfam Novib programme. Also a financial cost/benefit analysis of the CBP is beyond the scope of this study.

2. Method

The evaluation is based on the following information:

- evaluations by the participants of the training activities. The evaluations which were carried out after each activity;
- face-to-face or telephone interviews with (see list in appendix 2).
 - staff of ON (3);
 - trainers (3);
 - other organisation offering capacity building services to diaspora organisations (1);
 - participants of the CBP (21).

The last figure deserves some more attention. According to the available invitation and attendance lists of ON, the 17 CB activities received about 120 to 130 members of diaspora¹ organisations, based in the Netherlands, representing about 60 organisations. However, about two thirds of the participants attended only one training course and/or one expert meeting. For our interviews we have selected those participants who have participated in more than one activity. Table 2.1 gives an overview of the number of participants and their attendance rate.² In total we contacted 27 participants, of whom we were able to interview 21. Due to overlapping agendas, and 1 non-response, we were not able to interview the other six. The twenty people we interviewed, represented 20 different organisations.

¹ We use Van Hear et al.'s (2004, p. 3) definition of Diaspora: 'Diaspora are defined as populations of migrant origin who are scattered among two or more destinations, between which there develop multifarious links involving flows and exchanges of people and resources: between the homeland and destination countries, and among destination countries.' However, in this report - unless otherwise stated - we refer to 'diaspora organisations involved in development cooperation' as simply 'diaspora organisations'.

² The table only refers to training courses. However the majority of those who have participated in at least one training courses have also participated in one of the expert meetings.

Table 2.1 No. of courses (interviewed) participants attended

Number of courses	Participants	Interviewed participants	Contacted but not interviewed participants
1	69	2	0
2	18	4	1
3	8	3	2
4	7	5	2
5	7	6	1
6	2	2	0

Where appropriate, we have anonymised the quotes of the interviewed. We refer to these interviews with numbers. Important to note is that these numbers do NOT correspond with the order of interviewees listed in appendix 2.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT: THE LINKIS NETWORK AND OXFAM NOVIB'S ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

1. Support of small-scale development initiatives: the creation of Linkis

1.1 Oxfam Novib: a brief introduction

The roots of the Dutch development NGO Oxfam Novib go back to 1956, with the creation of the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Internationale Bijstand (Dutch Organisation for International Assistance or Novib). In 1994 Novib joined Oxfam International, the worldwide known network of independent development and poverty alleviation organisations, and changed its name into Oxfam Novib (ON) in 2006. According to ON, the decision illustrates the importance ON attaches to international collaboration to combat poverty and social exclusion.³

ON adopted a rights-based approach to combat poverty. This approach starts from the premise that a lack of basic rights inhibits poor people to have access to decision making power, material and financial resources and basic services. This results in hunger, social exclusion, exploitation, inequality and lack of opportunities to ameliorate living conditions.

ON has a staff of about 350 persons, works together with 850 organisations (which amount to 3,000 in about 100 countries, if all the local partners of Oxfam International are taken into account), and had a budget of 170 million euro in 2006. About three quarters come from government subsidies, while the remaining quarter is collected by own fundraising (De Haas, 2006 and website Oxfam Novib⁴).

Since more than twenty years, ON attaches significant importance in its policy and financial resources to mainly (but not only) small-scale development initiatives of Dutch individuals or organisations. This is not unique for ON, but a typi-

³ www.oxfamnovib.nl.

⁴ www.oxfamnovib.nl.

cal feature of the Dutch development cooperation. To explain this, we need to describe the government's approach to development cooperation of NGOs, i.e. the co-financing programme, and the development of supporting programs for non-traditional development actors.

1.2 The co-financing programme of the Dutch government

In 1965 the then Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs decided to dedicate annually a proportion of the budget of development cooperation⁵ to a number of Dutch development NGOs with which they could co-finance development projects in the South. However, each project had to be screened and approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This policy became known as the co-financing programme, and similarly the NGOs as co-financing agencies (CFAs).

In the end, this method proved to entail too much workload for the Ministry. Therefore, it decided to outsource the evaluation of projects up to 25,000 Dutch guilders (about 11,000 euro) to the CFAs in 1972. Eight years later the Ministry partially stepped down from the project support model. It still provided regular project support to a variety of organisations, but opted to channel structural funds to the CFAs as well. Although the operations of CFAs have to adhere to the broad development strategy of the Dutch governmental development cooperation, CFAs have considerable agency to develop their own programmes. Every four years the co-financing agreement would be evaluated. Together the CFAs cover the different confessional and non-confessional political groups in the Netherlands: ON (non-denominational), Cordaid (Catholic), ICCO (Protestant), Hivos (Humanist). Each organisation has its own thematic and geographical focus (Van Oudheusden, 2007).

This implied a significant concentration of the government's development cooperation budget (11 to 14%) in a relatively small group of development organisations. In the last decade, the government has opened up the exclusive focus on these four NGOs to other organisations. In 2002 Plan Nederland and Terre des Hommes joined the CFAs and recently also other organisations became eligible for funding from the co-financing programme, if they adhere to a number of conditions. Another new feature in the government's policy is that the CFAs do not automatically receive a fixed proportion of the budget for co-financing anymore.⁶

⁵ In 1965 this amounted to 5 million fl. (about 2.26 million euro), in 1970 29 million fl. (about 13.2 million euro), in 1990 331 million fl. (150.2 million euro).

⁶ Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:
www.minbuza.nl/nl/ontwikkelingssamenwerking/veelgestelde vragen/jargon_verklaard
[accessed 30 April 2008].

1.3 The birth of Linkis

At the end of the 1980s, it became clear that there was a growing number of small-scale development projects initiated by individuals or small civil society organisations, which in addition, had difficulty to access financial and other support. The Nationale Commissie voor Internationale Samenwerking en Duurzame Ontwikkeling (National Commission for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development or NCDO), an almost entirely government-funded but independent foundation that focuses on public awareness raising about and support for development cooperation in the Netherlands, introduced the Kleinschalige Plaatselijke Activiteiten (Small-scale Local Activities or KPA)-programme. This programme awards grants up to 100,000 euro as matching funds to Dutch based organisations or individuals who implement development projects in the South.

Other organisations, and more specifically the CFAs, followed suit and developed their own focus and methods of supporting small-scale development activities of Dutch based organisations. ON's initiatives included the creation of the Novib Nederland Fonds (Novib Netherlands Fund or NNF) and of an office for Samenwerking Maatschappelijke Organizaties (Cooperation Civil Society Organisations, or SMO). The SMO office focused on facilitating cooperation between ON, Dutch civil society development organisations and their or ON's partners in the South. The NNF allowed organisations to apply for funds to finance awareness raising activities (e.g. workshops, conferences) about development cooperation. Within this latter fund, considerable attention was given to so-called *zwarte, migranten, en vluchtelingenorganisaties* (black, migrant and refugee organisations, or ZMV organisations).⁷ In its last year of existence, in 2003, 78 organisations, including 22 ZMV organisations, received funding via the NNF.

Because each CFA had its own focus and methodology and the CFAs were working independently from each other, organisations who wanted to apply for funding had to spend considerable time to find out the most appropriate CFA for them. To solve this problem, the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), i.e. the administration of the Ministry, instigated the CFAs and the NCDO to streamline their activities. The coordinator of Linkis Oxfam Novib explains this process:

“an advisory group looked at the different options available. One of the main questions was whether to centralise everything into one window, or to erect one window in each of the participating organisations. Since each organisation had its own domain of expertise and specific focus, the latter option was chosen, and Linkis was born”.

⁷ In recent years however, ON (and other organisations) have replaced the term ZMV-organisations by either 'diaspora organisations' or the *pars pro toto* 'migrant organisations'. These last two terms we also use in this paper.

The Linkis (Laagdrempelige Initiatieven en Kenniscentrum voor Internationale Samenwerking or Low-Threshold Initiatives and knowledge Centre for International Cooperation) is a network of CFAs and advising and training organisations. Each CFA has its own Front Office at which Netherlands based organisations and individuals can apply for funding (up to 100,000 euro) for small-scale development activities. Each Front Office has its own specific thematic policy and geographical focus. A bit confusing is that each participating CFA has given a different name to its Front Office. At this moment Linkis encompasses ON, Cordaid, HIVOS, Impulsis⁸ and NCDO, and a network of fourteen regional COS (Centra voor Internationale Samenwerking or Centres for International Cooperation). The latter provide advice on the feasibility of the projects, information of funding possibilities and/or training. The central communication tool is the network's website: www.linkis.nl.

1.4 Linkis Oxfam Novib

ON's Front Office was dubbed Linkis Oxfam Novib. It is a merger of the SMO and the NNF and was brought under the Popular Campaigning bureau. The objectives of Linkis Oxfam Novib include: (1) 'enhancing public support for development cooperation in the Netherlands', and (2) 'contributing to poverty alleviation in the developing world' (Oxfam Novib 2007, p. 3).

Projects are eligible for funding if they are located in one of the countries in which ON is active, and if they are related to one of the five prioritised themes of ON (see further). Important in this context is that Linkis Oxfam Novib only finances project and activities, and thus not operating costs of organisations themselves (although 10% of the subsidy can be used for overhead costs). The Linkis coordinator of ON explains:

"we don't finance the operating costs of organisations, because this is only effective if this support can continue for a couple of years. However, if we would do this with our limited budget, we would only be able to sustain a small number of organisations. We opted to support small-scale activities for one year (up to 50,000 euro) and some large-scale activities for three years. This approach allows a bigger flow of organisations."

The annual budget for approved projects is 8 million euro, which is about double of the budget in the first year of Linkis. By the end of 2007 the total number of approved projects by ON amounted to 700. Together they received about 25 million euro, of which 9 million euro went to 35 large-scale projects (i.e. 5% of the total number of approved projects) and 16 million euro to the remaining 665 small-scale projects.

⁸ Impulsis is a joint venture of ICCO, Kerk in Actie and Edukans.

Typical of ON's front office is its interest in diaspora organisations. Of the total budget of 8 million euro, 2 million euro was granted to diaspora organisations. Until recently (see further), 30% of all approved projects by ON had to come from diaspora organisations. Between 2004 and 2006, about 48% of all approved projects came from diaspora organisations (i.e. 278 out of 569), while for all CFAs together this figure amounted to 23% (or 588 out of 2523) (Linkis.nl, 2007).⁹

1.5 The target group: development initiatives of non-traditional development actors in the Netherlands

The Linkis programme is targeting 'private initiatives' (in Dutch 'particuliere initiatieven'). This is a group initiatives that is very difficult to define.¹⁰ Bouzaabaa & Brok (2005) describe this as small-scale organisations (in terms of revenue and number of participating members) who mainly consist of volunteers. The researchers have identified some 6,400 initiatives like these in the Netherlands, although estimates run up to 10,000 (Kinsbergen, 2007).

One group of organisations belonging to the non-traditional development actors, are migrant or diaspora organisations engaged in development cooperation. The exact number of this kind of organisations is not known. Emcemo (2004) refers to maybe up to 800 organisations for the biggest migrant communities in the Netherlands (e.g. Moroccan and Surinam community). Van Heelsum (2004) identified about 4,000 migrant organisations, representing 16 ethnic communities, ranging from 1 to almost 10 organisations for each 10,000 members of the community. However, only a small proportion of these focuses on development cooperation. To our knowledge the most in-depth review of migrant organisation involved in development cooperation provide Kusters et al. (2006). Unfortunately this study focused only on Sub-Saharan African migrant, organisations. They have identified 67 organisations, of which Somalian (14) Sudanese (9), Ghanaian (7), Ethiopian (6), Burundian (5), Congolese (DRC) (5) organisations are best represented.

These organisations are very diverse in scope, number of members, organisational capacities and experience. However, on subsequent meeting and conferences on migration and development in the Netherlands, diaspora organisations¹¹ have urged the need to be acknowledged as actor in development, and to have access to funding, capacity building and other resources.

⁹ See also Sikkema et al. (2006) who have evaluated the front offices, and Van der Meer (2006) who has made a specific evaluation of Linkis' outreach to diaspora organisations.

¹⁰ Also in other countries these kind of initiatives exist. However, there is not yet a widely accepted and used term to denote them. In the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, for instance, academics and policy makers use the term 'fourth pillar' initiatives (see Develtere & De Bruyn, 2008; Develtere, 2005). In this paper we refer to them with the very generic 'non-traditional development actors'.

¹¹ Here we return our meaning 'diaspora organisation involved in development cooperation'.

2. Oxfam Novib's focus on diaspora organisations

2.1 The first steps

The attention for diaspora organisations by ON began in the 1990s. It became not only apparent in the NNF, but also in the other projects of ON, most notably in the Arc Mundi project. Arc Mundi (Awareness Rising for Change – Multicultural Networks and Development Initiatives) was set up in 1998 by ON and three other organisations.¹² Through information evenings, debates and other activities, Arc Mundi attempted to stimulate the cooperation and dialogue between development organisations and diaspora organisations which are involved in development cooperation.

Following the discussions within the Arc Mundi debates and the needs expressed by diaspora organisation, ON decided to develop a migrant and development policy in 2002. This decision was also facilitated by the growing worldwide recognition by international institutions (e.g. the World Bank, IOM), development agencies (e.g. DfID in the UK) and academicians (e.g. Manuel Orozco) of the potential contribution of migrants to the development of their country of origin. ON participated actively in these international discussions. ON's policy focused on strengthening the involvement of diaspora organisations in development. Central in this policy was the financing of development projects of diaspora organisations, building capacities of these organisations, and supporting alliance building with other diaspora organisations and development organisations (De Haas, 2006).

As the staff of ON point out, this focus on diaspora organisations within ON was not evident at first. Gradually a social base had to be developed within the organisation. Not only was there discussion about the role of migrants in development of their country of origin, but also about the question whether ON should channel part of its resources to (diaspora) organisations in the Netherlands, since ON as a development agency is supposed to finance organisations and projects in developing countries (De Haas, 2006). Besides the aforementioned increasing global awareness on migration and development, the Arc Mundi debates, and the – although initially not very strong – pressure of diaspora organisations themselves, some people within ON have been instrumental in developing the internal support for the topic. One of them was the programme officer responsible for the ZMV budget within the NNF. She lobbied successfully for more support for migrant organisations and for more attention for migration and development issues, including remittances.

¹² Forum, Stoa and VON. In 2002, COS Nederland replaced STOA in this collaboration.

2.2 From a specific diaspora policy to mainstreaming a diaspora focus within ON

Initially, ON had set aside a specific budget for diaspora organisations within the NNF. This policy was continued within the Linkis Oxfam Novib front office. 30% of all approved projects had to be directed towards diaspora organisations. Contact person for all diaspora organisations at time was the aforementioned programme officer. In 2006, ON reorganised its operations. Instead of directing all applications of diaspora organisations to the aforementioned programme officer, applications are now distributed according to regional focus¹³ for projects up to 50,000 euro for one year, and according to thematic focus¹⁴ for larger projects (at least three years running time and a subsidy of more than 50,000 euro).

For instance, the focal point for a Somali diaspora organisation that applies for funding will be the unit responsible for the Horn of Africa, while a Bangladeshi diaspora organisation will be assisted by the South Asia unit.

The Linkis coordinator of ON explains the reasons behind this shift:

"In the beginning we adopted a specific approach to diaspora organisations, because we had the idea that they were lagging behind in terms of access to resources and organisational and other capacities. This was partly due to a lack of recognition of their role as development actors. Now we think that there are not so many differences anymore between diaspora organisations and other Dutch based organisations. This became also apparent in the increase of approved projects of diaspora organisations."

Although there is no specific budget for diaspora organisations available anymore, the coordinator asserts, the objective is still that minimum 30% of all approved projects come from diaspora organisations and the Linkis bureau has see to it that the target is met.

¹³ The different regions are Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; Middle East and Maghreb; Horn of Africa and West Africa; East and Central Africa; Southern Africa; South Asia; Southeast Asia; Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹⁴ The themes are: right to a sustainable livelihood (food security and trade and labour); right to basic social services (health and education); right to life and security (emergency aid and conflict prevention); right to be heard (social and political participation); and the right to an identity (gender and diversity). Together these themes encompass the issues of the Millennium Development Goals.

CHAPTER 4

OXFAM NOVIB'S CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

Most of the development agencies involved in Linkis, provide training or other capacity building activities to initiators of the development projects. Often the activities are only accessible to partners of the organisations, i.e. organisations whose project has been approved and subsidised by the CFA who offers the course. Oxfam Novib is one of the only organisations that has developed a specific capacity building programme for diaspora organisations. In the strategic plan 2007-2010, Oxfam Novib explains the motivations behind this focus (Oxfam Novib, 2007, p. 10):

"Increasingly, project applications by diaspora organisations are approved and funded, but the more difficult objective of enabling those organisations to influence development policies remains on our agenda. As a sector, diaspora organisations are still weak and vulnerable, most of them are volunteer organisations, they are fragmented and their programmes are often not sustainable without external support. As a result, their voices are barely heard in the policy-making processes, yet they are the most talked about in the corridors of the policy-making discourses."

In this section we describe how this capacity building programme came about. Further on we also touch upon capacity building initiatives of other organisations. In the next chapter we move from description to analysis and evaluation of the CBP.

According to the Linkis programme officer, ON's capacity building programme comprises three different kinds of activities: training courses, expert meetings, and international linking and learning days. For a list of these activities, see appendix 1. However, during our interviews we noticed that capacity building efforts of ON also entail internal trajectory assistance, regular feedback sessions with the staff of ON, and supporting alliance building by acting as a facilitator and providing funds.

1.1 Objectives

As mentioned in the chapter on methodology, the overall objectives of the capacity building programme include:

- developing capacities and skills to improve project development and enabling diaspora organisations to scale up their projects and organisational capacities;
- alliance building;
- empowering migrants to speak for themselves.

Furthermore the programme has specific attention for remittances, i.e. informing migrants on how to leverage their remittances for development and creating an enabling environment (e.g. lower transfer costs, access to bank accounts) that maximised the development potential of migrants' remittances (see Oxfam Novib, 2007).

Each of the activities had operational objectives, which we will describe further on.

1.2 Budget

ON has a separate budget for capacity building activities. This amounts to 300,000 euro per year. About two third goes to training courses, ITA, alliance building, and one third to international exchanges, such as the conferences.

2. A history of the capacity building activities

2.1 The beginning: Multicultural training Women's Peace Work¹⁵

The first training activity of the CBP found place in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. The Linkis programme officer explains:

“after what happened at 9.11 in New York, we witnessed increasing negative feelings between or towards certain cultures and groups, and especially against muslims. We decided at Oxfam Novib to do something about peace building and women. We looked for like-minded and interested people and brought them together”.

Besides the Nederlands Expertisecentrum Alternatieven voor Geweld (Dutch Centre of Expertise Alternatives for Violence or NEAG), a Dutch network of organisations and individuals interested in conflict management, the diaspora organisation Vrouwen voor Vrede op de Molukken (Women for Peace on the Molucs or VvVM) was approached to jointly organise a training and meeting session. VvVM was founded in 2000 by a group of Moluccan Christian and Muslim

¹⁵ The original title in Dutch was: Multiculturele Kadertraining VrouwenVredeswerk.

women to work around peace building between the different religions in the Indonesian archipelago of the Molucs. The head of VvVM describes the first contact they had with ON to organise the training session:

"We met [the programme officer] for the first time when she was responsible for the ZMV-fund of Novib, to talk about our project. At a certain moment during the meeting she asked us whether we were interested in doing something about peace building education. That was exactly something what we wanted to do, since our organisation works on these issues with different religions."

They decided that the project had to raise awareness about the role women of different cultural and religious backgrounds can play in peace building, conflict and violence resolution in the Netherlands as well as in the countries of origin.

The three organisations formed a project group and invited some twenty women from different origins, residing in the Netherlands, to a preparatory meeting in July 2002. During the meeting the specific objectives and the content for a training weekend in October of the same year were discussed. 22 women, including the organisers attended the two-day training session in October.

Output of this project included not only a proceedings report (see Novib, 2003a), but also a follow-up peace conference, funded by ON, in June of 2003. The conference hosted more than 100 participants, including guests from Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Somalia. In its turn this conference resulted in the creation of the Multicultural Women Peacemakers-Netherlands (MWPN).

2.2 Take off: the *Project Cycle Management* training course

Although the peace building training is considered to be part of the capacity building efforts of ON, it might be more appropriate to mark the start of the CPB with the creation of the Linkis Oxfam Novib front office. On the basis of the feedback from partner diaspora organisations, the priorities of ON and international developments on migration and development (and esp. remittances, see further), the Linkis team decided to provide capacity building services on project development, and leveraging remittances for development. The first training course ON offered to its partner organisations was on Project Cycle Management in 2004. The Linkis programme officer clarifies the motivation behind this course:

"When we started with Linkis, we noticed that the quality of the proposals was not very good; several organisations did not possess enough experience in setting up projects. We decided to assist the diaspora organisations by offering them a course on PCM".

ON contacted the training and consultancy agency Management for Development Foundation (MDF), because, as the programme officer asserts, *"this organisation was very experienced in giving training courses on these kind of issues (...) We asked them to adapt the program to migrant organisations"*. The trainer of MDF continues: *"in collaboration with ON we set the objectives of the course and proposed a training programme of four days, including*

a weekend. ON had set this amount of days as a maximum". At the end of the course participants were considered to be able to understand the basic principles of PCM and the different demands ON makes during the different phases of the project cycle; to understand Objective Oriented Project Planning Method; to develop a logical framework, including the formulation of indicators; to have practiced the evaluation project proposals; to be acquainted with using the LogFrame for monitoring purposes as well as be aware of the information needed to monitor the projects; and to know how to formulate a Terms of Reference for a (final) evaluation. Before the course, participants were asked to bring case studies of their projects with them, which were dealt with during the actual course, and to keep a logbook during the course.

Of all the courses offered by ON, this is the only one that was repeated in the following years. The MDF-trainer: *"although the content of the course has changed slightly over the years, the objectives remain the same"*. Each course took place in Ede, where MDF's training facilities are located. In 2007, the course was split up in two parts at the request of the participants: 2 days on planning, and 3 days on monitoring and evaluation (given in 2008).

The participants receive a file with documentation. Although the course is given in Dutch, these files are also available in English, French and Spanish. The MDF-trainer: *"The participants wanted this, because it allows them to pass on this information to their partner organisations in the countries of origin"*.

2.3 Focus on remittances: expert meeting: bridging the gap

At the end of the 1990s, intergovernmental agencies started to (re)discover the importance of remittances to developing countries and to study the links between migration and development. The World Bank, IOM, the IADB, the European Commission and others published reports on these issues, organised conferences and set up task force or think tanks to discuss what measures should or could be taken to leverage the development potential of remittances and other contributions of migrants. Nearly from the start, ON actively participated in these discussions, which allowed the organisation to build an extended network of international experts and practitioners. For instance, in 2003 ON joined the newly erected Task Force on Remittances that had emerged from a major remittance conference in London in the same year. Also in the Netherlands, development and other actors hold debates on the role of migrants in development.

In March 2003, ON organised a first two-day expert meeting for about 30 academics, development NGOs and agencies and migrant organisations on the link between migration, globalisation and development in Noordwijk aan de Zee (see Novib, 2003b). The discussions of this meeting were fruitful and ON decided the following year to build further on this experience by organizing its first international expert meeting on the issue: *"Bridging the Gap. International Migration and the Role of Migrants and their Remittances in Development"* (see Novib, 2004). More

than 50 people were invited from all over the world, including the most renowned academic experts on the subject, and successful diaspora organisations (for instance representatives of Mexican Home Town Associations or HTAs). Importantly, some ten Netherlands-based diaspora organisations, mostly partners of ON, attended the meeting. The two expert meetings provided the framework of ON's activities in the field of migration and development and remittances.

2.4 Going international: linking and learning conferences on remittances

For the international activities on remittances, ON decided to collaborate with the International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions (INAFI), a network of more than 100 NGOs and MFIs and three different continents. INAFI has been a partner of ON since 1995. Some of INAFI's members have development remittance services and operational models to leverage remittances for community development purposes. To make optimal use of this know-how for the Dutch based diaspora organisations, ON and INAFI organised in 2005 a first conference in Zacatecas, Mexico. The region and city of Zacatecas is characterised by large emigration to the USA, where emigrants have created Home Town associations. These HTAs collect funds with which they finance community development projects in their regions of origin. Over the years, the Mexican local, regional and national governments have tried to support these initiatives by contributing for 3 or 4 US\$ for each dollar sent by HTAs (the so-called *tres por uno* programme). About five Dutch-based diaspora organisations were invited to this conference. Their travel costs were covered by ON. Objective of the conference was not only to present best practices and visit some projects of HTAs, but also to discuss possible avenues for the future, and connecting Dutch diaspora organisations with similar organisations in other countries.

The collaboration was so successful that in 2006, a follow up conference was organised in the Philippines and in 2007 in Benin. The same and other diaspora organisations were invited to these conferences. Conference background material and proceedings were provided to all participants.¹⁶

2.5 Facilitating alliance building: workshop 'Migrant Women's Financial Coping Mechanisms' and strategic planning training

In the meantime, ON continued organizing activities on financial issues in the Netherlands. The UN International Year of Microcredit in 2005, prompted ON to co-organise a workshop on *'Migrant Women's Financial Coping Mechanisms in Times of Needs'*. For this workshop, ON collaborated with Dutch based organisations Mama Cash, a Dutch based women's fund, that supports women's projects all

¹⁶ See www.inafiasia.net/inafiphil/philippine_chapter.htm and www.inafiinternational.org/-cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40&Itemid=53.

over the world, and the Economic Resource Center for Migrants and Overseas Employees (ERCMOVE). Objective of the workshop was to increase awareness on the importance of managing personal finance; stimulate formation of microsaving groups in the Netherlands; explore possibilities for diaspora organisations' involvement in microfinance; and identify possible activities to economically empower (migrant) women groups. 31 participants (mostly women) attended the workshop, representing 17 migrant organisations, originating from 13 countries, and two Dutch development agencies. Besides a workshop report (see Novib, 2005), tangible outcomes included the establishment of the Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development (MIND). MIND is a network of mainly women migrant (organisations), that aims to economically empower women migrants in the Netherlands and in their countries of origin.

In October of the same year, MIND - with financial support of ON - organised a three day training course on strategic Planning in Soesterberg. Facilitated by Warner Strategy & Fundraising (WSF), a Dutch training and consultancy agency, the participants learned how to set up a strategic plan for their own organisations and for MIND. The co-director of WSF, had also been actively involved in developing the Linkis programme of ON, as interim director at the start of the programme.

2.6 Continued attention for project development: trainings on *proposal development and fundraising*

WSF was also approached by Oxfam Novib to give two courses on proposal development and fundraising to some twenty (potential) applicants for financial support through the Linkis Oxfam Novib front office. The first two-day training course focused on project cycle management, i.e. formulation of objectives, strategic activities and budgets, as well as important issues to take into account during the implementation phase. The content was based on the logframe methodology. The trainers used case studies to illustrate the theory. On the basis, of these case studies, participants had to put the theory into practice.

A month later, participants were informed about the potential donors and methods to approach these. The fundraising course also dealt with issues such as communication, marketing, and mobilisation of supporters.

As with the other courses, also here participants received documentation and background material (see WSF, 2006a and b).

2.7 Relationships with southern partners: *managing international partnerships*

One of the major potential problems for diaspora organisations (but also for other organisations of course) is the cooperation with partner organisations in the South. This can be explained by the geographical distance and possible differences in ideas and approaches, between the organisations. Also ON had witnessed this

problem in its Linkis programme. For this reason ON organised in collaboration with MDF a four day training course on *'Managing International Partnerships'*. Objectives of the course included raising awareness on how the working methodology can influence or cause problems in the field; giving information on how to solve these problems; how to build knowledge exchange relationships with the partners; and how to communicate tricky and complicated issues without causing frustration. Specific attention was given to coping with cultural differences and negotiation and influencing strategies. 18 members of different diaspora organisations attended the training course.

2.8 The microfinance hype: methodologies and principles of microfinance and financial literacy

The international conferences and the aforementioned workshop on coping mechanisms for women were not the only microfinance activities for diaspora organisations ON organised. At the end of 2006 ON asked Social Enterprise Development Partnerships (SEDPI), a Filipino organisation specialised in giving training courses and advice on microfinance issues, to give a training course on *'Methodologies and Principles of Microfinance'*. SEDPI was a partner organisation of a Dutch based Filipino diaspora organisation, that got funding via the Linkis Oxfam Novib front office. The Linkis programme officer explains the reason for giving this course:

"During and after the International Year of Microcredit in 2005, we received many applications of diaspora organisations for microfinance projects, and many others were interested in doing something on microfinance. However, microfinance is very complex and difficult and I had the impression that a lot of organisations were not aware of the potential risks and problems in setting up a microfinance initiative. (...) the objective of the course was to raise awareness among the participants that it was difficult to set up a microfinance institution, especially in another country."

The microfinance course explained the basics of microfinance and gave specific attention to remittance services. The trainer of SEDPI:

"Migrants were fed up with sending their money to their country of origin and seeing that it hardly had any durable financial effect on the recipients or their communities. (...) We proposed several microfinance models, including one in which it was possible to save money in an MFI in the country of origin."

In the international literature, partnerships between MFIs and diaspora organisations is regarded as one important strategy to leverage the potential of remittances for development. During the course, the trainer of SEDPI asserts:

“we found out that many participant did not know how to manage their own finances. Linkis programme officer and the participants asked us whether we could also give a course on financial literacy to tackle this problem.”

Consequently, in June 2007 SEDPI gave a three day course on financial literacy. Both courses were attended by about 20 participants and were given in English.

2.9 Platform development: expert meeting: building strategic partnerships

In terms of activities, 2006 had been very intense year for ON and its partners. ON had organised or funded 5 training courses, and one international conference. The second Linkis programme officer asserts:

“in 2007 we preferred to subsidise the organisations in order that they could organise certain training courses themselves. (..) We also wanted to evaluate the capacity building programme, before deciding to organise new activities”.

Notwithstanding this ‘rest period’, ON still offered a PCM and co-organised the third international conference on remittances. Furthermore, ON this staged a second expert meeting. This time, the aim was to bring together all diaspora organisations who were partners of ON, in order to discuss how to build strategic partnerships. 23 leaders of 21 diaspora organisations attended. At the end of the meeting, the participants agreed to set up the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD). The platform intends to enable diaspora organisations to share experiences, and to develop joint strategies to lobby and advocate at international and national development institutions. An extra stimulus was given by the first Global Forum on Migration and Development, which was held in July 2007, a few months after the meeting. Indeed, the platform was present at the Civil Society Day, which preceded this conference.

2.10 Other capacity building initiatives of Oxfam Novib

The aforementioned activities are not the only capacity building initiatives for diaspora organisations ON offered. Firstly, the staff of Linkis Oxfam Novib have regular meetings with applicants and funded organisations to discuss the planning and implementation of their projects.

Secondly, ON offers the more established and experienced organisations, who are implementing large-scale projects, internal trajectory assistance (ITA).¹⁷ ITA consists of intensive assistance of an external consultant (i.e. WSF) to improve the organisational and planning skills of the organisation, including the development of a strategic plan. The co-director and trainer of WSF adds: *“Oxfam Novib informs*

¹⁷ Notably Stichting Dir, HIRDA and Doses of Hope.

diaspora organisations of the possibility to follow an internal trajectory, but the threshold is rather high for most organisations. Moreover, it is rather expensive”.

Thirdly, ON facilitates the creation of region or issue based, alliances, networks and platforms by providing financial assistance. We have already mentioned MWPN, MIND and DFD. Other examples include the Sudanese platform Sudanese Civil Society Forum (SCSF), Congonetwerk, and the platform Somalian NGOs for development (SOMNGO).

3. Capacity building programmes for diaspora organisations of other organisations

Oxfam Novib is not the only organisation offering capacity building activities to it diaspora organisations. We list here a few other examples.¹⁸

Besides advice, some of the regional COS offer annually training courses on project development. Participants are asked to give a small financial contribution to attend the course.¹⁹ According to the Linkis coordinator, the COS have a different but complimentary approach to ON: *“their courses are more generic and provide general information, and are geared towards starting organisations, while our activities have a link with what Oxfam Novib is doing and target organisations who already have some experience in implementing projects.”* In contrast to the ON's CBP, the courses of the COS are accessible to all diaspora organisations.

Stichting Mondiale Samenleving (Global Society Foundation or SMS) offers a range of training courses: from project development over didactics to web-design. Also their courses are open to all diaspora organisations.²⁰

Seva Network Foundation, a migrant organisation, offers a wide range of different training courses and other capacity building activities, often tackling topics similar to those of ON. As with the aforementioned organisations, the activities are open to all diaspora organisations.²¹

¹⁸ See also De Haas (2006) for a review of all development and other organisations that target diaspora organisations.

¹⁹ www.cosnederland.nl for more information.

²⁰ www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl for more information.

²¹ www.sevanetwork.net for more information.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

In this chapter we will assess whether ON's CBP achieved its three main objectives, i.e.

- developing capacities and skills to improve project development and enabling diaspora organisations to scale up their projects and organisational capacities;
- alliance building;
- empowering migrants to speak for themselves.

First, we will look at the implicit or explicit operational objectives of the different activities and assess whether there was a clear contributing link to the overall objectives. Secondly, we assess the outreach, and thirdly the achievement of the overall objectives of the CBP, and identify the reasons for success or failure (i.e. the explanatory factors). After some additional general remarks, we conclude the evaluation with a summarizing SWOT-analysis.

2. Congruency of activities with overall objectives

In the previous chapter, we described how the CBP for diaspora organisations took off in 2004 with the start of the Linkis Oxfam Novib programme. The Linkis team developed a capacity building strategy which included the organisation of training courses, meetings and conferences; providing financial support to diaspora organisation to set up own activities; and process-assistance related initiatives, such as ITA and feedback sessions. Importantly, the approach of Linkis left room for supporting or organizing activities which addressed a particular issues that sprung up during the years. For instance, when the need for financial literacy was addressed at the microfinance training course, ON organised a course on financial literacy.

Table 5.1 shows that the intended contributions of the activities indeed matched with the overall objectives.

Table 5.1 Intended contribution of capacity building activities to achieve the overall objectives of the CBP

Overall objectives	Activities	Intended contribution of activity to achieving objectives
1. Skill development and project improvement	PCM, Project development, fundraising, strategic planning, ITA	Teaching of how to manage, monitor and evaluate projects
	Expert meetings and international conferences	Providing theoretical background and information about similar initiatives
	MIP	Teaching how to collaborate with southern partners
	Financial literacy and microfinance	Teaching financial skills
2. Alliance building	Multicultural training peace work	Bringing women together to discuss and look for synergies
	EM Building Strategic Partnerships	Creating enabling environment for diaspora organisation to build strategic alliances
	International conferences	Facilitating organisations to meet with international diaspora organisations and other actors
	Other courses	Providing opportunities for exchange
3. Empowerment	International conferences	Facilitating organisations to present initiatives at international level; giving information of similar initiatives in other countries which can be used in lobby
	Creation of platforms	Stimulating/facilitating diaspora organisations to speak with 'one' voice
	Skill development activities	Providing skills (jargon, instruments) to level playing field with other development actors

3. Outreach

The target group of the ON's CBP consists of diaspora organisations who have successfully applied for funding via the Linkis Oxfam Novib. This is especially the case for the courses related to project development and the expert meetings. Thematic activities are geared towards diaspora organisations who are working

around these themes. Examples include, the multicultural training on peace building, the workshop about migrant's women's financial coping mechanisms and strategic planning course, the microfinance and financial literacy courses and the international conferences on remittances.

3.1 Selection of participants

Organisations are only eligible for participation if (1) they adhere to the following criteria: the organisation has to be a partner of the ON Linkis; (2) they have already implemented at least one project (especially for the courses related to PCM). The Linkis coordinator adds:

"the smallest application was for 150 euro. The courses are clearly not meant for these kinds of organisations. We are targeting organisations who can still grow and upscale significantly. (..) The organisations should also focus on the countries in which [Oxfam Novib] is active. For instance our programme countries do not include Turkey or the Netherlands Antilles, although these are countries with strong diaspora organisations in the Netherlands."

"There is a rather big demand of the organisations to participate in the training courses", as the second Linkis programme officer asserts, *"but unfortunately there is only a limited number of places available for each course, so we have to make a selection."* The number of invited organisations is set by the training institution in collaboration with ON. Potential participants for the meetings are selected by the programme officer of the Linkis Oxfam Novib office. For certain courses, such as PCM, or expert meetings all organisations are invited, and are selected on a first come first served base. For activities on specific issues, the Linkis team of ON only invites the organisations that are working on that particular topic. For activities organised by diaspora organisations, but funded by ON, the diaspora organisation is responsible for the selection and invitation.

There is however a perception among a minority of the interviewed organisations that the selection method lacks transparency. One of the interviewees argued (interview 1):

"often we do not know why we are not selected and as a result we do not know how we can adapt or improve ourselves or our organisation in order to achieve the selection criteria."

Moreover, for the theme based activities, certain organisations feel excluded, as the interviewee continues (interview 1):

"We were never invited to one of the international conferences, although we are also interested in remittances. Always the same organisations are invited to these events and this causes some frustration among the other organisations."

Notwithstanding this criticism, most participants we interviewed, were confident about the selection procedure at ON, as interview 13 illustrates:

“[The programme officer] knows the organisations very well. She knows what we are doing and what our priorities are.”

Table 5.2 gives an overview of the number of participating diaspora organisations and individuals to the 12 training courses and two expert meetings ON organised in the past 6 years. On average each training course was attended by 20 participants, representing about 15 different organisations.

The total outreach of the training courses amounts to 111 members of diaspora organisations (since one person may have attended different activities), and 52 different organisations.

Table 5.2 Number of participants from diaspora organisations to the training courses and expert meetings

Title	Date	No. of participants from diaspora org.	No. of diaspora organisations represented
<i>Training courses</i>			
Vredeseducatie. Multiculturele kadertraining. Vrouwen-vredeswerk	06.07. and 05-06.10.2002	17	10
Migrant women’s financial coping mechanisms in time of needs (workshop)	28.05.2005	29	16
Strategic planning	28-30.10.2005	20	10
Proposal development/projectontwikkeling	13-14.05.2006	23	19
Fundraising/fondsenwerving en mobiliseren achterban	23-24.06.2006	22	22
Managing international partnership	26-29.10.2006	18	17
Methodologies and principles of microfinance	24-26.11.2006	19	16
Financial literacy	14-17.06.2006	22	21
Project cycle management	14-17.10.2004	15	9
Project cycle management	08-11.09.2005	17	13
Project cycle management	28.09-01.10.2006	16	16
Project cycle management	16-18.11.2007 and 09-10.02.2008	14	13
<i>Expert meetings</i>			
Bridging the gap	19-20.10.2004	9	9
Building strategic partnerships	31.03-1.04. 2007	23	21

Most of the participants attended only one training course, while 18 attended 2 courses and 16 to 4 or more (see table 5.3).

Tabel 5.3 No. of courses participants attended

Number of courses	Participants
1	69
2	18
3	8
4	7
5	7
6	2

ON, or in some instance the trainers, send the invitations to the selected organisations, who subsequently choose themselves the member of the organisation who will participate. In theory, only one person per organisation is allowed to participate, but in practice (as table 5.2 shows) this rule is very lenient. In the first years of the CBP, mostly heads of the organisation participated, but in later years (and especially for the PCM trainings), we see an increase of other staff members. Some organisations follow an explicit policy in stimulating their members to follow the courses. Not surprisingly, these are mainly the biggest and more established organisations. Examples are Hirda and Stichting DIR, of which up to five staff members have been participating in different courses. The director of Stichting DIR explains: *“I have participated in almost all courses, and it is now important for other people of DIR to follow the trainings”*.

Thus, taking into account that of the overwhelming majority of organisations, only one member (in most instance the director or head) has participated in the activities, there is room for stimulating other members to attend the meetings. Another option is to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants are passed on to the other members of the organisation. Some of the organisations do this by reporting the activities. For instance, the director of HIRDA asks every participating member to write up a small account of the activity, which they publish in their newsletter, and the director of BASUG publishes his experiences in the organisation’s newsletter. Moreover, some organisations provide training courses on the same issue afterwards (see further).

3.2 Accessibility

Most of the organisations who are invited to a training course, attend it. ON tries to ensure their participation by planning the activities partly in the weekends, in a central location in the Netherlands, which is easy accessible to the participants,²² and by covering the costs of the organisation of the activity. In addition, ON or the trainers send the invitations one or two months before the activity takes place. For

²² Wim Stoffers of ON clarifies: *‘very few participants come from remote regions in the Netherlands, because most are based urban areas.’*

international conferences a longer period is foreseen. All interviewees found this a good period. In general, the objectives of the activities were clear for the invitees.

The interviewed organisations did not feel pressured by ON in attending the courses, and participated out of interest in the topic, or/and the courses provide opportunities to network. Two organisations mentioned however an additional motivation, as interview 2 points out:

"we come to the course to learn from it, but to be honest, it's also a bit the story of the stick and carrot. To increase our chances to receive funding, we follow the courses to please Oxfam Novib."

The cited reasons for not attending a meeting include time constraints, language problems or topics that do not seem interesting or relevant for the organisation. We will return to the language and time constraints further in the evaluation.

3.3 Selection of activities

The staff of ON identifies the topics of the training courses on the basis of (1) in-house knowledge, which is deemed by many to be adequate (interview 11):

"I think that [the programme officer of Linkis Oxfam Novib] know the domain adequately in order to identify the most pertinent issues and problems."

(2) ON's own needs and priorities; and (3) the feedback of their partner organisations, during individual feedback meetings with the staff of ON, during the activities and on the basis of the evaluation forms that participants are asked to fill in after an activity. For instance, the course on financial literacy and splitting up of PCM in two separate courses was a result of this feedback. The trainer of MDF:

"we split up the PCM in a 3-day course on planning and a 2-day course on monitoring and evaluation on the basis of the evaluations we received and in consultation with ON. (..) At first I was not in favour of this, but afterwards I had to change my opinion, because it allowed us to receive and provide feedback to the participants during this second session."

However, also here, some organisations perceive that there is limited consultation among diaspora organisation about the content of the CBP. For instance, interview 15:

"Now Oxfam Novib just announces the courses, without us having a say in the matter. Only during the evaluation at the end of a training we can say something."

Interview 2 adds:

"The programme is supply driven, instead of demand-driven. (..) it's very top-down. There is no real needs assessment among the organisations."

Although, interview 6 asserted:

“I would not know how you can practically organise [more consultation], so it’s better to leave it like it is.”

Still, according to us, there are enough opportunities for diaspora organisations as well as to ON available for consultation. Most diaspora organisations see someone of ON at regular times (for instance during the feedback sessions, the courses, the meetings) or can contact them via mail or phone. In addition, the activities matched with the overall objectives of the CBP, and the objectives of the CBP address indeed a need among diaspora organisations. In the future the newly established platform DFD could act as an instrument to organise consultation. For this report we have asked the participants during the interviews which courses, activities or changes they would liked to be offered by ON. We list these in the recommendations.

4. Achievement objective 1: skills development

4.1 Assessment

A first indication whether participating organisations have acquired more skills, allowing them to improve their projects is given by the approval rate of the projects, diaspora organisations submitted, and by the assessment of ON staff. We reiterate the words of the coordinator of Linkis Oxfam Novib:

“In the beginning we adopted a specific approach to diaspora organisations, because we had the idea that they were lagging behind in terms of access to resources and organisational and other capacities. (...) Now we think that there are not so many differences anymore between diaspora organisations and other Dutch based organisations. This became also apparent in the increase of approved projects of diaspora organisations. In the last three years the approved projects of diaspora organisations increased from 140 to 230.”

Although project proposals have ameliorated, the other staff members of ON we interviewed, argued that a small proportion of organisations still submit qualitatively weak proposals. On the other hand some organisations, such as Stichting DIR, Doses of Hope and HIRDA are now implementing large-scale projects (more than 50,000 euro), which indicates that some organisations were able to upscale their operations.

The evaluations at the end of the training courses provide a second indication. All courses have received very positive evaluations, in terms of for instance clarity of the courses, meeting expectations and usefulness of the training courses.

For a third indication we have to assess whether the training courses do not only benefit the participants, but also the other members of the organisations. In other words, is the information passed on? In the evaluation of the outreach we already touched upon this issue, and we will elaborate this further when assessing the third objective. For now, it suffice to say that some and mainly the bigger organisations do this, but that there is no guarantee that this happens.

Lastly, during the interviews we asked the participants to assess the courses. In general, the participants confirmed the above made conclusions. We list a couple of the positive remarks about the PCM, project development courses and the microfinance and financial literacy courses.

PCM and proposal development

Interview 8: "I had doubts about the first PCM, because I was not sure whether the course would be very useful for me (...). However, the course allowed you to participate with your own project. I thought I knew everything about project development, but the course has shown me the importance of taking the bigger context in which your project takes place, into account. It also taught me how to identify objectives and how the objectives of your project could contribute to larger objectives such as poverty reduction."

Interview 9: "If I would not have followed the PCM course, I would not have known how our partner in [country X] could monitor the project implementation, and what kind of information I need from them to monitor their work."

Interview 10: "For some of the trainings I did not see initially the added value. For example what is the difference between PCM and project proposal development? But when I went it was fascinating and interesting – I could even use it in my personal life."

Interview 11: "I have given PCM courses myself in [my country of origin] but the PCM course of Oxfam Novib was very useful, because it had its own specific approach. The emphasis ON puts on the importance of PCM is correct."

Interview 3: I don't have a background in development cooperation and we had some problems in developing a project proposal. The training on proposal development allowed me to understand all the details of proposal development and as a result we could improve our proposals."

Microfinance and financial literacy courses

Interview 8: "the course on microfinance has changed my opinion and ideas about microfinance. Initially we wanted to create our own MFI, but after the course we concluded that this was too difficult and complex."

Interview 2: *"it was a very good course. I liked the presentation of BRAC a lot. (..) I think the aim was to give us an insight in MF, what is the ABC of MF. It enabled us to have a different approach for our project in [country Y]."*

Interview 13: *"I also work for another development NGO and we get a lot of applications from organisations to do something on microfinance. The course was a real eye-opener and it allowed me to screen these applications."*

Interview 5: *"The course on microfinance was very interesting. Especially the contribution of BRAC was very useful. They were there to speak with us and to teach us a bit of their methodology. (..) Our organisation has some microcredit projects and the course helped us to get some in-depth knowledge about it. At the end I would say that the course was for 80% a success for me, not 100% because the course was too basic."*

Also the ITA received a very positive appraisal, as the director of Stichting DIR explains:

"at a certain moment, Novib told us that we could receive assistance from an external consultant, paid by Novib, to develop a strategic plan. In the beginning I thought, 'there they are again with a new idea', but afterwards it was very useful. I thought that our organisation was already working very strategically, but from the discussion with the consultant we learned that this was not the case. (..) now we have a strategic plan, and indeed our organisation is more effective."

In conclusion, the participants were convinced that the courses have helped them in ameliorating their project proposals and other aspects of project management, and suggested that ON would continue offering the PCM, and even repeat trainings on the other issues which were dealt with during one-off courses. Besides the very good quality of the training institutions we identified five factors that were instrumental in the success of the programme or that explain why some participants might not benefit fully of the trainings.

4.2 Strengths and weaknesses

Costs

All costs of the capacity building activities are covered by ON, including the meals, the accommodation and – in the case of international conferences – the travel costs and required documents. If this would not be the case, many organisations said they would not (be able) to attend the activities. Still, because most participants are volunteers in their organisation, a small minority of interviewees asked whether they could receive a financial compensation for the time they attend the activities, especially those during working days.

Language

Except the courses on microfinance and financial literacy (in English), all courses are given in Dutch. For some courses (e.g. PCM) the course material is also available in French, English and Spanish. The international conferences are in English, French and Spanish, but simultaneous translation is available (though not to Dutch).

Opinions about the use of language diverge. Especially the French speaking participants have problems in following the courses and ask that more attention would be given to their language needs. One of the participants proposed to include a Dutch or English to French translator, who can even be found among the participants themselves.

Some English participants also do not master Dutch adequately to follow the courses. Interview 2:

"Some of the trainings are given in Dutch. This is very frustrating because not everyone speaks the language. It's better to give it in English, also because most of the organisations are doing international projects. We want to give the material to our partners who don't speak Dutch."

However, exclusive trainings in English would also cause problems for other organisations. Besides some of the French speaking participants, there are organisations whose members are not proficient in English, *"and the specific jargon used in development does not facilitate things"*, according to interview 3.

Duration of the course

Also the duration of the courses is a topic of discussion. Especially those participants who have a full-time job besides their volunteer work for their organisation, have difficulties of freeing up four days for training purposes or attending conferences. However, interviewed participants agreed that the courses indeed need three or four days, because of the complexity of the issues.

The option of spreading the courses over different evenings was rejected. Instead it would be better to concentrate the training in the weekends, including Fridays. To facilitate the planning of their agenda, one participant proposed to give a list of offered courses at the beginning of the year. In addition, 2006 was regarded as a year in which too many courses and activities took place.

Adaptation to diaspora organisations

A key issue for the usefulness of the training courses for participants' work, is the level to which the activities take into account the specific situation of diaspora organisations. The trainer of MDF listed some of the specific characteristics of diaspora organisations:

“Most of the organisations have relationships with partners in the South, consist of volunteers, lack professional development expertise and are very motivated.”

Trainers indeed adapt their course material in order to make it more relevant for the target group. The trainer of SEDPI:

“Normally we give the microfinance course to practitioners, but in general migrant associations do not possess this level of financial literacy. Because our courses are very generic, we did not have to adapt the core material. However, we adapted the examples we changes. In addition, we did not tackle financial or operational issues in-depth. Instead we replace this material with information on how to invest or save remittances.”

Trainer of MDF:

“We give PCM to a lot of different target groups, and we always ask the participants to bring some examples or to document their experience. Next we illustrate PCM with real-life examples. In this way, we adapt our teaching methods to the target group.”

Also WSF works according to a similar method.

Most participants appreciated these adaptations and found the courses therefore very useful for their work. However, one organisation argued (interview 4):

“Sometimes the content is only applicable to the big organisations and not organisations that are implementing very small projects.”

Differences in level between participants

The effectiveness of the activities is sometimes impeded by the differences between the participants in background, know-how and expertise. Almost all interviewed participants mentioned this issue as a problem. When we look at the background of participants these differences become apparent. Some of the participants are working for a development agency in the Netherlands, or have attended already courses at other institutions (such as Seva network Foundation, COS or SMS), whilst others have no background in the traditional development cooperation.

An often heard proposition was to offer beginner's and an advance courses, especially in PCM. The trainer of MDF gives his opinion about this idea:

“an advanced PCM course might be a good idea at first sight. Still, it is very difficult to select the appropriate participants. Some participants tend to overestimate their know-how and other underestimate it. It is almost impossible to compose a homogenous group of participants. (..) a possible solution might be a pre-selection by ON, but I think that not everyone will appreciate if they are put in the course for beginners.”

Also the participants acknowledge the selection problem. Most organisations argued that this is a responsibility of the diaspora organisation itself. Interview 5 proposed that ON could set some criteria, like qualifications or attended courses, for people who want to attend a course, *“especially because at the end, the organisations have to select themselves who they will send to the course.”*

5. Achievement objective 2: alliance building

5.1 Assessment

The second objective entails the creation of enabling environment to build alliances, create platforms or networks as well as intensified exchange of ideas and experiences and collaboration between the diaspora organisations.

Most interviewees argued that the activities of ON had facilitated and stimulated them to exchanges ideas and collaborate. We list three illustrations:

The director of Stichting DIR: *“For certain projects we have collaborated with organisations that we got to know on the meetings of Oxfam Novib. For instance we organised something about the Dutch elections with Hirida, Samvao, Sankofa and Nedsom. We also give advice to other forums (such as Ethiopian, Somali, Rwandan). (...) We also organised a meeting with other African organisations, that we met via the training courses.”*

Interview 15: *“thanks to Oxfam Novib, we have developed a very broad network of organisations in other countries and other diaspora organisations.”*

Interview 12: *“according to me, the trainings have two added values: network creation and information provision. We used to be an organisation that did not share know-how, but thanks to the trainings we are now sharing experiences. The encounters are therefore very useful.”*

Tangible indications that the ON’s approach resulted in building alliances between diaspora organisations include the creation of platforms and umbrella organisations. During the six years of the CBP, at least 2 theme based organisations have been founded (MWPN and MIND), 4 regional based platforms (SCSF, SOMNGO, Congonetwerk and ENNOS) and one umbrella organisation for all diaspora organisations (DFD). Importantly, ON’s intention was not to create new organisations as such, but to prove an enabling environment in which synergies could take place. The decision to develop a new organisation or platform should come (and indeed came) from the diaspora organisations themselves.

Multicultural Women Peacemakers Network Netherlands (MWPD)

MWPD is an offshoot of the Multicultural Training Women's Peace Work of 2002. Interview 16 describes the first meeting during the training course:

"This was a completely new experience for us, a real revelation. Often you're just focused on your own organisation and the cultural group to which you belong. For the first time we came into contact with other diaspora organisations and migrant women. (...) in addition, to the training [on peace work], mostly leaders of organisations participated which enabled us to have more in-depth discussions and to establish MWPN."

17 organisations, active in 11 different countries, are member of this network. Its activities include the publication of a training syllabus; peace building trips to Burundi, the Philippines and the Molucs; and organisation of information exchange days.²³

Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development (MIND)

MIND resulted from the Workshop on Women's financial coping mechanisms and the course on strategic planning, and brings people together around gender issues. ON funded thereafter the organisation for 1 year, and now MIND organises training courses and exchanges experiences among its members.

Sudanese Civil Society Forum

A member of SCFS explains the formation of the forum and ON's involvement in it:

"In 2003 there were about 53 Sudanese organisations in the Netherlands. Many applied for funding at Novib. To decrease this complexity and to have one single point of contact for the Sudanese community, the Sudanese community decided to organise itself in one platform. Novib supported this idea and funded the initiative and provided logistic support. Ultimately, there were too many differences in opinion between the organisations and Novib did not prolong its financial support, but continued to give us moral support. In the end, 42 organisations continued their efforts, and in 2005 they erected SCSF. Initially we did not ask Novib for funding, because we first wanted to develop our vision, and concentrate on communication and lobby. In 2006 we received a grant from Novib to strengthen our institutional capacities, including training to the member organisations. We are now one of the most effective diaspora platforms in the Netherlands. We also participate in the Sudan Platform, a consultative body of the government and co-financing agencies."

²³ For more information see their website: www.mwpd.nl.

Somalian NGOs for Development (SOMNGO)

The director of HIRDA: *“Spurred on by Novib, we developed a network of Somalian NGOs, including Iskaashi, Doses of Hope, Sugaal.”* At the moment, 10 Somalian diaspora organisations are member of the platform. SOMNGO’s objectives include stimulation of cooperation between Somalian diaspora organisations in the Netherlands and abroad, lobby and advice.

Congonetwerk

At the request of Congolese diaspora organisations, ON provided financial support to organise three workshops with MDF as training institution, to develop the platform Congonetwerk. In February 2008, the platform was created. 15 organisations are members.

Ethiopisch/Nederlands Netwerk voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (ENNOS)

A couple of years ago, Oxfam Novib started to bring together member of the Ethiopian diaspora to discuss issues related to development cooperation. In 2006 this gave rise to ENNOS. ON funded the creation of the network, and the development of a website. In due time ENNOS will act as a spokes organisation of the Ethiopian diaspora in the Netherlands.

Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD)

The creation of the DFD was decided upon by the participants during the Expert Meeting Building Strategic Partnerships in 2007. DFD should provide Dutch-based diaspora organisations with an instrument to lobby and advocate collectively at national and international institutions and to allow them to develop joint strategies.

5.2 Strengths and weaknesses

The for objective 1 identified factors are also valid for objective 2. In addition we identified two other items.

Creating a good atmosphere

First, ON has provided organisations with opportunities to meet and to exchange ideas. An important feature of these meetings consisted of the attention given to creating a good and pleasant atmosphere among the participants. For instance, at the end of the activities, trainers, ON and the participants organise recreational activities such as a fashion show, dancing and singing. The participants, ON staff and trainers also remain together for the duration of the training course, expert

meeting or conference. As one interview stated: *“the atmosphere during the trainings is always very relaxed; we’re one big family”*.

At whose request?

Oxfam Novib has played in the above mentioned examples a pivotal role in its development providing financial support and creating an enabling environment. Participants valued the effort of Oxfam Novib in stimulating organisations in joining forces, and stressed that the decision to erect a platform or organisation always comes from the participants themselves. However, some interviewees challenged this view point and felt that ON encourages diaspora organisations sometimes too much in creating a network. The step towards platform creation is sometimes too quick. In addition, they questioned the need for creating a platform, from the members’ point of view, and argued that it is mainly beneficial for ON to have one spokes’ organisation instead of many different ones. Although the latter may represent better the reality.

Interview 14:

“Some of the platforms were created mainly at the request of [Oxfam Novib]. We had not enough time to learn to know the people, which rendered the cooperation between the different members of some platforms difficult afterwards. On the other hand I understand Oxfam Novib’s wish to create platforms.”

In essence, however, ON stresses that it is not their intention at all to push organisations in creating new platforms, but to address the needs of the participants themselves. Via its activities ON attempts to create an enabling environment in which alliances building can take place, but will not take steps to form a new forum, platform or other organisation. Only when there is demand of the diaspora organisations themselves to form formalised synergies, ON might decide to provide funding to facilitate these organisations to meet and to develop strategic plans, means of communication, etc. As for many diaspora organisations, the platforms also have limited financial means which might become problematic for the continuation of certain efforts.

Interview 13 illustrates this view point:

“Sometimes, platforms are created too quickly. Oxfam Novib facilitates the creation of platforms, but the initiative always come from the participants. (..) Thanks to Oxfam Novib we can meet and look for synergies. In other words, Oxfam Novib creates the context for us to collaborate. (..) On the other hand it might shortcut the process, because migrant organisations don’t have the resources to meet again.”

6. Achievement objective 3: empowerment

6.1 Assessment

The last objective might be the most difficult to assess. We could argue that (partial) achievement of objectives one and two would lead automatically to empowerment of the participating diaspora organisations. If diaspora organisations acquire more skills and capacities to develop and implement projects, and exchange ideas and opinions and develop joint strategies and platforms to lobby and advocate their causes, it would imply that they are more empowered to speak for themselves. Tangible proof of this is however not straightforward.

As a first indication, we should look at the presence of the participating diaspora organisations in the policy making debates. Some of the bigger platforms are indeed participating in consultative bodies (e.g. SCSF), do collaborate with other international development agencies (e.g. BASUG on violence against women,²⁴ and are asked by the media to give their opinion of certain issues related to their country of origin.²⁵ However, in many instances, Oxfam Novib or another CFA participate in these activities. In addition, the main international meetings to which diaspora organisations are invited, are the INAFI-ON organised conferences on remittances. In other words, in many cases (but certainly not in all!) it remains questionable whether diaspora organisations would be involved or invited, if Oxfam Novib or another CFA would not participate or bring them along. We argue therefore that the ON partner diaspora organisations in the Netherlands do not yet have reached a position in the policy making debate as for instance the HTAs and the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD).²⁶

Empowerment is of course a very slow process, and diaspora organisations do not act in a vacuum. Until about ten years ago, international and national development actors did not acknowledge the potential contribution of diasporas in development, and consequently, did not provide opportunities to enter the policy discussions. Very recently, a new and arguably major step towards this recognition has been taken with the Civil Society day of the Global Forum for Migration and Development. First organised in 2007 in Brussels, the next meeting will take place at the end of 2008 in the Philippines. Several Dutch-based diaspora organisations, incl. participants of the CBP, attended this meeting, and will probably attend it in 2008 if they are accredited.

²⁴ See website of BASUG for more info: www.basug.nl.

²⁵ An internet search for the interviewed participants and their organisations (see appendix) will show this.

²⁶ AFFORD is a UK-based African diaspora organisation that (among other) has consulted by DFID, and is often invited at international conferences to give a view point of the African diaspora. The programme officer of LInkis Oxfam Novib for instance regards this as one of the best examples of an empowered diaspora organisation.

Similarly as for the other objectives, we use the words of the participants themselves as another indication of the success or failure of achieving the objective. In this case the quotes refer to the international conferences on remittances.

Interview 14: *“the international conferences have improved my confidence. I learned that also in other countries, organisations are working on the same issues as us, so we are not alone and what we are doing is recognised as useful. (..) the conferences allowed us to get some exposure, what is very important for organisations such as ours. (..) they also gave us helpful information which will enable us to strengthen our position in debates with other non-diaspora organisations.”*

Interview 11: *“in Mexico it was fascinating to see what could be done with remittances. I mean, the Home Town Associations in Zacatecas showed us how remittances can fund other things than merely consumption. Nevertheless, I had some criticism about the operation of the Home Town Associations, but we could voice this at the meeting. [The head of one of the HTAs] told us at other meetings that he learned something new, every time he saw us. It’s nice to have such a constructive discussion environment. (..) We also asked [the same person] what the organisation did on gender issues, but the first time he only referred in this regard to beauty contests. However, now there are more women in the management of the organisation. This might not have happened, if he had never met us at the conferences.”*

Third, we analyse whether participants of the CBP have taken initiatives to organise CBP activities for their members, with or without funding of ON. When we described the different platforms earlier we already touched upon the fact that some of them offer training courses. Sometimes, diaspora organisations ask the trainers of WSF, MDF or SEDPI to give courses to their members. The trainer of SEDPI illustrates this:

“We proposed several microfinance models, including one in which it was possible to save money in an MFI in the country of origin. In our courses we proposed different models on how to save money. [The Filipino diaspora organisation] Stichting Habagat liked the idea and asked us to give an extra course to explain this model in detail and to give advice on saving possibilities in the Philippines. (..) The extra training was 20 euro a person, and they paid it themselves.”

In addition, SEDPI also gave a course on financial literacy for members of MIND. MIND has offered several other activities and training sessions to its members, e.g. PCM for which they also got funding from ON.

A member of MWPN and the director of HIRDA provide other examples:

“MWPN organises activities that enhance the capacities of our members. For instance, we offered them a course on organisational management. Sometimes we give these courses ourselves, and sometimes we hire consultants, for which we get funding from Oxfam Novib.”

"In 2002 we started sending people to Somalia to train the members of our partner organisations. Sometimes we give the content of the training courses we followed at Novib."

6.2 Strengths and weaknesses

Besides the factors described for the previous objectives we list two additional ones.

Lack of own financial resources

One of the main bottlenecks for diaspora organisations is the lack of financial means. The second programme officer of Linkis states: *"migrants encounter more problems to raise funds among the general public and the own constituency is often poorer."*

Interview 19 confirm this statement:

"Each year we organise cultural activities, events and other things to collect money. Unfortunately, the contributions are very small. You need to have good contacts and the ability to promote your organisation and to involve Dutch people in your organisation".

The training course on fundraising has not provided adequate possibilities for fundraising among the general public that diaspora organisations can put into practice, according to the participants. Interview 10:

"The training on fundraising helped but it was theoretical and very difficult to apply in reality. It would have been more useful to have a practical course – even with a case study."

Participants, but also trainers, regard attention for innovative and practical fundraising methods for diaspora organisations is an issue to be dealt with during the CBP. According to us, diaspora organisations run the risk to become too dependent on funding mechanisms of CFA's.

Training for trainers

The training courses were not intended to turn the participants into trainers themselves, although there seems to exist a lot of confusion about this among the participants. Interview 17:

"There is a difference between education and training for the development of skills. Only financial literacy was focused on trainer for trainers, but it wasn't sufficient to give training. Therefore it is important to develop a pool of trainers because "not everyone can be a trainer".

Nevertheless, there is a clear demand among interviewed participants to focus on this issue in the future. Although trainers assert that this requires another approach. The trainer of SEDPI:

“For the financial literacy course, it was intended to teach participants how they could train other people in these issues themselves. However, at the end of the course, I am not sure whether we succeeded in doing this. Especially for participants without any background, it was already complex to master the principles of financial literacy and this takes time. (...) [training participants into trainers for other economic or financial issues] would however require much more time, and I don’t know whether this would be possible anyway for all participants, since most participants do not have an economic background.”

The trainer of MDF confirms:

“Our courses were not intended to train participants into trainers. This demands another approach and you need some expertise to be able to take up this role.”

Important in this discussion is not only the feasibility but also the necessity of offering training to become trainers’ courses. In our opinion, ON offers sufficient other possibilities (by providing financial assistance) to diaspora organisations to pass on knowledge to the other members of diaspora organisation who have not attended courses. Furthermore, as mentioned by the trainers, these kind of courses would require a considerable investment in time and funds, which would probably limit the possibility to offer the other capacity building services.

7. General remarks

In this last part of the evaluation, we elaborate three additional issues, which sprung up during the interviews.

7.1 Opening up courses to non-diaspora organisations

ON has decided to open up some of the capacity building activities (such as PCM) to non-diaspora organisations. A majority of the interviewees supported this idea, as long as the majority of the participants come from diaspora organisations; the focus on the specific situation of diaspora organisations will not be lost; and the different levels of know-how and professionalism, between the different participants will be carefully monitored.

Including other organisations in the courses would provide an opportunity for diaspora organisations to network, to learn from each other, to exchange experiences and information and to look for synergies. Interview 6:

“It would allow us to increase our action radius and to show them with what kind of specific problems and obstacles we are being confronted.”

In addition, interview 7 continues,

“[the non-diaspora organisations] would see our good work, which would help us to be acknowledged as relevant actors in development”.

However, interview 8 feared that opening up activities would “*endanger the construction of a strong diaspora movement, which could influence Dutch policy making*”. For this reason, participants asked to continue providing some activities which are only accessible to diaspora organisations.

7.2 Synergies with other capacity building initiatives

In the previous chapter we describe very briefly capacity building initiatives of some other organisations (i.e. SMS, Seva Network Foundation and COS). These are accessible to all diaspora organisations, but ask a financial contribution of the participants. Other CFA’s, also offer training courses for their partner organisations. Although the Linkis network has ameliorated the clarity of the available funding and assistance programs for potential applicants, and rendered collaboration between advising and funding agencies less complex, there might be room for more synergies between the capacity building initiatives. Several organisations offer PCM training courses, and there is a possibility that organisations tend to shop between them. Some of the participants to ON’s CBP have followed several PCM courses for instance.

An analysis of all capacity building initiatives in the Netherlands, is beyond the scope of this study, thus we conclude here that there is a need to look deeper into this issue.

7.3 Continuity of the CBP

Almost all interviewees (participants, ON staff and trainers) stressed the central role the current Linkis Oxfam Novib programme officer has played in the development of the CBP programme and the focus on diaspora organisations within Linkis Oxfam Novib. The Linkis coordinator of ON argues:

“One of the most important reasons for offering capacity building activities to migrant organisations is because [the programme officer of Linkis Oxfam Novib] emphasised the importance of migration and development and migrant organisations. A lot of what is accomplished thus far can be attributed to her”.

And we add an exemplary quote of a participant (Interview 17):

“she is very good in the technical aspect of organizing activities, and in getting funding for activities and putting migration and development on the agenda of Novib. (..) Sometimes she puts a bit of pressure in order that things get done, but this is actually good, because in this way people get stimulated and things happen. She (..) stimulates us to work together. (..) She is an excellent information and liaison person for what happens at the international level.”

Participants questioned whether the engagement of ON regarding diaspora organisations would still continue in the case the programme officer would leave

Oxfam Novib. According to the Linkis coordinator of ON, migration and development is now mainstreamed within Novib, and Linkis Oxfam Novib will try to ensure that 30% of all approved projects come from diaspora organisations. In addition, in the Linkis Oxfam Novib strategy plan for 2007-2010 (see Oxfam Novib, 2007), diaspora organisations are identified as one of the target groups.

8. Conclusion

To wrap up the evaluation, we summarise the main conclusions of this chapter and show this schematically in a SWOT²⁷ analysis table.

8.1 Outreach and achievement of objectives

In this chapter we have assessed whether the objectives of the CBP have been achieved. This is not a straightforward exercise since the objectives were not translated in easily measurable goals. This can be explained by the process-oriented nature of the objectives (development of skills and organisational capacities and enabling the scaling up of projects; facilitation of alliance building; empowerment of migrants). Still, in our evaluation we were able to identify a number of clear indications that lead us to conclude that between the start of the CBP and the 2007, the activities of the CBP have contributed to attaining the objectives.

First, via the training courses, ITA and meetings, the participants have acquired skills regarding project cycle management, microfinance, remittances and proposal development which allowed them to ameliorate the quality and effectiveness of their work, i.e. development of proposals, project management and monitoring, and to acquire the useful knowledge which allowed them to position themselves better within the field of (professional) development actors. In the last three years, some organisations have been able to upscale their projects (to more than 50,000 euro), and have strengthened their organisational capacities. However, the results are not entirely positive: the project proposals of some organisations still lack the quality required for funding and organisations have difficulties to access other financial channels than those provided by Linkis Oxfam Novib. In addition, only a small proportion of the participants have clear strategy to pass on the information acquired in the CBP to other members of their organisation.

Second, during the running time of the CBP, participants (sometimes together with non-participants) of organisations that focus on similar regions or issues, the have created and developed networks, platforms and new organisations. Oxfam Novib has been instrumental in this by providing financial and logistics support, as well as contributing to the creation of an enabling environment in which an exchange of ideas could take place.

²⁷ Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities.

Third, the facilitation of alliance building, the training courses, the ITA, and the organisation of international conferences on remittances to which diaspora organisations were invited, has strengthened the position of diaspora organisations in the debate on development cooperation. Visibility of diaspora organisations in the media and national policy making has increased in the Netherlands. However, the national and international attention for diaspora organisations as actors in development is still limited. We argue that – despite the increased attention – without the backing of more established organisations such as Oxfam Novib, it is still very difficult for diaspora organisations to have a strong voice in the (policy making) debates on development cooperation.

8.2 Contextual factors

Arguably, a capacity building programme would not have been possible (or at least would have been much more difficult to develop and implement) without a favourable institutional environment. As we explained in the previous chapters, the number of Dutch development NGOs and the government (via financial means) have shown a specific interest in supporting non-traditional development actors (i.e. *particuliere initiatieven*) for some decades. This culminated in the erection of the Linkis network, which provided a clear institutional structure, including funding mechanisms for non-traditional development actors. This makes the Dutch context very unique, because similar structures hardly exist elsewhere. By its very nature, the Linkis network proves the recognition by the established development NGOs and the government, of the potential contribution of non-traditional development actors in development cooperation.

Since non-traditional development actors partner up with specific CFAs (which are active in the same regions in the South or in similar issues as the former) for funding, CFA can direct capacity building activities to well-defined and identified target groups (i.e. the partners).

Furthermore, the international attention for migration and development and remittances, which started at the end of the 1990s, begin of 2000, has provided not only an incentive but also extra support for organisations who wanted to engage with diaspora organisations. The Dutch government, and some CFAs (such as Oxfam Novib) has attempted to fuel or facilitate the discussion on this issue and has actively attempted to allow diaspora organisations to be involved in these debates. Even if these attempts may be deemed insufficient according to some, the Netherlands was one of the pioneer western countries in this context (see De Haas 2006 for examples elsewhere).

In this regard, we should not minimise the contribution of diaspora organisations in the Netherlands in putting these issues on the agenda. Although, most diaspora organisations do not possess the financial and institutional capacities and means as the established development actors (or even Dutch non-traditional

development actors), they have actively voiced their needs and advocated for recognition.

Specifically within Oxfam Novib social support for active engagement with diaspora organisations started to develop in the 1990s. Support within the organisation was an important facilitating condition for the development of the CBP. This brings us to the last contextual factor, namely the existence of a motivated programme officer who was instrumental in putting this engagement into practice and in advocating the role migrants can play in development. This also points at a potential risk for the continuation of the CBP and ON's focus on diaspora organisations. If the programme officers would leave, this focus might disappear or weaken.

8.3 The development of the programme

From the start, the CBP included activities whose intended results matched with the overall objectives. The CBP encompasses a broad range of activities which allowed specific capacity building efforts for organisations working on different issues and of differential scope. For instance, PCM training courses and feedback sessions are geared towards all organisations, while ITA assists organisations which are able to scale up their activities.

Oxfam Novib's CBP however, does not tune often into the capacity building efforts of other organisations (such as COS, Seva Network, SMS) that offer similar training courses. ON has chosen to offer its own training activities to its partner organisations, in order to assure optimal quality and complimentary with ON's activities.

Importantly, in the development of a strategy and activities to achieve the objectives, the Oxfam Novib Linkis team allowed room to insert or support other activities to address pertinent issues that sprung up during the running time of the programme. For instance, when participants identified a need to know more about financial literacy during the microfinance course, ON organised a course on the issue.

The good knowledge of the Linkis programme officer about the needs of diaspora organisations and their position in the development field, as well as the close interaction of Oxfam Novib (and especially the programme officer) with the partner organisations, made it possible to organise or finance activities and events which addressed clear needs of the organisations and participants. However, among a proportion of the participants there exists a perception that selection of participants and activities is done without adequate consultation. Still, the evaluation brings out that the CBP addressed the most pertinent capacity needs of the participants. Some organisations might also have expectations from the capacity building programme which are beyond the scope of Oxfam Novib's focus.

An opportunity to address the perception problem regarding consultation as well as the potential risk of a weakened emphasis on migration and development when the programme officer would leave, consists of the creation of the DFD by diaspora organisations. This organisation provides an opportunity to act as spokesperson and representing body for diaspora organisations in the discussions with ON.

8.4 Quality of the CBP

One of the major success factors of the CPB has been the quality of the training courses. The trainers adapted their material to the realities of the diaspora organisations and got very good appraisals from the participants. The mix of capacity building activities (feedback, trainings, ITA) renders it possible to use different teaching and information exchange methods. Furthermore, the possibility for diaspora organisations to get funding for own training activities or meetings allows the former to organise capacity building activities (incl. alliance building) which are tailored to their specific needs.

In addition, participation in the activities is facilitated because Oxfam Novib bears most of the financial costs of the activities, and organises them (together with the trainers) in easily accessible locations and during weekends. However, certain (especially French speaking) participants do have language problems in following the courses, which decreases the effectiveness of the courses for them. Some participants also identified the differences in level between the participants as a factor to be dealt with.

Bar one, training courses are clearly not aimed at teaching participants how to become trainers themselves. This requires another teaching approach and specific skills of the participants. However, Oxfam Novib provides funds and enables diaspora organisations to organise their own training courses.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Outreach</i>			
Partner diaspora organisations of ON participated in activities	Passing on information to members of the participants' organisations		Increased differences in level of know-how and experience between organisations and participants and formation of a group of elite group of diaspora organisations
Linkis/ON programme officer possesses good know-how of diaspora organisations activities	Selection of participants not always clear to partner diaspora organisations		
Accessibility of activities in terms of costs, clarity of activities, communication	Limited accessibility for some organisations in terms of language and time constraints		
<i>Achievement of Objectives</i>			
Participants have acquired skills on project development and implementation, microfinance,	Did other members of participants' organisations acquire skills?		
	Some organisations still have problems with project development and proposals		
Some organisations have scaled up their projects			Effectiveness of these networks and platforms?
Creation of networks and platforms			
Increased networking and exchange of ideas between diaspora organisations and other (inter)national development actors			
More visibility of diaspora organisations in media, and national policy making	Visibility is still limited	Increasing (inter)national recognition of diaspora's potential contribution to development	Dependency on ON for this visibility
Some organisations and platforms provide capacity building initiatives to other members or member organisations			

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<i>Development of CBP</i>			
Departing from process-oriented objectives and leaving room to address pertinent needs of diaspora organisations (based on feedback sessions and evaluations) and on international evolutions (e.g. remittances)			
Broad range of activities (training courses, expert meeting, international conferences, ITA, feedback sessions, network creation)	Little tuning in to capacity building initiatives of other organisations	Availability of CBPs of other organisations (e.g. COS, Seva Network, SMS, other CFA's)?	
Strong engagement of ON and especially Linkis/Oxfam Novib programme officer towards diaspora organisations and migration & development (M&D)		Mainstreaming M&D in entire Linkis/Oxfam Novib programme	Creating expectations to diaspora organisations, which cannot be met Continuity of engagement in developing and maintaining engagement if programme officer leaves
Intended contribution of activities match with overall objectives			
Specific budget for CBP	Perception of limited consultation	DFD as consultative body	
<i>Quality of the CBP</i>			
Positive appraisals of training institutions	Limited use of training qualities of diaspora organisations themselves		
Provided activities are considered to be relevant	Other activities (esp. training courses) requested	Funding diaspora org. to take up courses of other org. or organise these themselves	
ITA			
Costs are covered by ON	Language difficulties for esp. the French-speaking participants		

Strenghts	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Duration of the course deemed good	Difficulties for some participants to free themselves during the week		
Adaptation of courses to the realities of diaspora organisations	Sometimes courses only applicable for larger organisations	Availability of CBPs of other organisations (e.g. COS, Seva Network, SMS, other CFA's)	
	Differences in level between participants		
Atmosphere is very good during activities	Diaspora organisations still very dependent on funding mechanisms of CFA's		
	Participants not trained into trainers	Pool of trainers	
	Limited follow up of activities	Opening up courses to non-diaspora org.	No specific activities for diaspora org.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this chapter are based on the conclusions of the evaluation on the one hand, and on suggestions of the interviewed participants and trainers. The table summarises the recommendations.

1. Development of the CBP

First, to ensure that the CBP continues to address the needs of the partner organisations of ON, and is firmly embedded within the strategic objectives of ON, involvement of diaspora organisations in the consultative and decision making process should be ensured. At the moment close interaction between the programme officer of Linkis Oxfam Novib and the partner organisations ensures this, but there is risk that this informal consultative process will diminish in importance if the programme officer would leave ON. DFD provides an excellent opportunity to take upon the role of representative body of diaspora organisations in the discussions with ON about migration and development and capacity building issues.

Second, although the Linkis Oxfam Novib team already provides information on the scope of ON's work and its strategic objectives, it would be advisable for ON to emphasise the aim of the CBP, what kind of support ON can give to diaspora organisations, and what is beyond the scope of ON. This is to prevent diaspora organisations from having expectations of ON and its CBP which cannot be met.

Third, to allow potential participants to attend activities, the content of the CBP should be communicated regularly. For instance a list of activities of the coming year can be announced, as well as other capacity building possibilities available for diaspora organisations (such as ITA, applying for funds to organise training courses). At the moment, the announcement of activities is deemed very adequate by the participants, but to allow them to better plan their agenda as well as to inform them of ON's efforts, some participants would value an annual announcement list.

Fourth, to prevent duplication of efforts and allow similar capacity building initiatives of other organisations to benefit from each other, potential synergies with other organisations can be studied, and implemented if deemed useful.

Fifth, we recommend that ON continues to develop and offer a range of capacity building initiatives, which take into account the experience level of the diaspora organisations. PCM and feedback sessions are very important for organisations with small-scale projects, while ITA and other process-oriented assistance is instrumental in allowing more experience organisations to scale up their activities. This might also address the (perceived or real) differences in level between participants. Introduction of advanced and beginners' PCM courses for instance might be not feasible (in terms of selection and costs).

Sixth, until now, the CPB is specifically focussing on diaspora organisations. In the future certain activities will be opened up to non-traditional Dutch development actors. This will allow diaspora organisations to exchange ideas and experiences with the latter, and might contribute to increased recognition by Dutch development actors. However, we argue that a specific focus on diaspora organisations in the (part of the) CBP remains important. Diaspora organisations are still confronted with a range of obstacles and realities which are not shared by Dutch organisations. For instance, access to financial means and fundraising among the Dutch public remains a bottleneck.

Seventh, to enable the sharing of the experience gathered during the CBP, and also in the light of the increased attention for capacity building by international institutions (for instance during the GFMD, see introduction), Oxfam Novib could organise an international meeting (i.e. conference, workshop) on capacity building initiatives geared to diaspora organisations and/or non-traditional development actors.

2. Activities of CBP

Since the activities of the CBP were all regarded as very useful and of high quality, and they obviously contributed to achieving the objectives, we recommend that these will be offered in the future. More specifically:

- an annual PCM course preferably split in two parts (one on management and one on monitoring and evaluation);
- there was interest among the interviewees who did not participate in certain courses to re-organise these: microfinance, financial literacy, managing international partnerships, fundraising. Instead of re-organisations of these courses, ON could also opt to provide funds and information in order that diaspora organisations organise these themselves;

- individual feedback sessions with the programme officers of ON are considered to be a very good instrument to allow (potential) partners of Oxfam Novib Linkis ameliorate their project proposals. We recommend therefore that - if possible - time should be made available to continue these;
- process assistance such as ITA, has helped organisations in scaling up their activities and should therefore continue. Other possible training approach could be taken into consideration, e.g. shadowing, internships, on-the-job training;
- continue the field visits of diaspora organisations to specific countries (of origin);
- continued institutional support for platform and network strengthening;
- continued organisation and funding of international conferences and meetings on remittances and migration and development to which diaspora organisations are invited. Without the backing of ON it is still very difficult for diaspora organisations to enter discussions on the international level.

Next, a number of new issues and topics have been proposed by the interviewees, ranging from computer programmes, humanitarian, Islamic microfinance to gender courses). Taking into account the focus of ON, we recommend that Oxfam Novib considers the organisation of activities or informing participants where they could find capacity building initiatives on the following topics (which were also suggested by the participants):

- financial analysis of projects and their own organisations;
- fundraising: diaspora organisations are very dependent on subsidies, and find very few opportunities to raise funds elsewhere;
- media training and communication;
- lobby and advocacy, including national and international level;
- conflict management, intercultural dialogue and peace building;
- organisation of regional and theme based activities, bringing together Dutch and diaspora development organisations;
- follow up events or activities of past activities.

To ensure the effectiveness of the training courses, as well as the participation of invitees, the following issues should be taken into account:

- concentration of courses in the weekends;
- financing the training courses;
- providing translation for French (or Spanish)-speaking participants.

It is the responsibility of participants or pass on the information to other members of their organisation. An often repeated request of participants during the interviews to facilitate this knowledge sharing, was to develop training to become trainers' courses. This requires however, a very specific training approach, and requires specific skills from the participants. We recommend therefore that for

each specific training course, Oxfam Novib discusses with the training institutions whether this is feasible.

In addition, Oxfam Novib could look into the possibility and feasibility of inviting southern partners of diaspora organisations to attend capacity building activities.

Development of CBP

- 1 Ensure consultation and participation of diaspora organisations in the development of CBP (suggestion: via DFD)
- 2 Emphasising scope and objectives of CBP to diaspora organisations
- 3 Communicating the list of capacity building initiatives organised by ON at the beginning of the year, but at the same time leaving room for new initiatives to be implemented if needed.
- 4 Studying possible synergies with capacity building initiatives of organisations.
- 5 Continued provision of range of different capacity building activities, which take into account the difference in level of experience and know-how of diaspora organisations
- 6 Opening up of certain capacity building activities to Dutch non-traditional development actors, whilst at the same time continuing to offer certain activities to diaspora organisations.
- 7 Organizing international meeting (i.e. conference, workshop) on capacity building initiatives geared to diaspora organisations and/or non-traditional development actors

Activities of CBP

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|
| 8 | Continuation of | PCM courses (in two parts) |
| 9 | existing activities | Re-organisation or outsourcing of courses on microfinance, financial literacy, MIP, fundraising. |
| 10 | | Individual feedback sessions |
| 11 | | Continued and stronger emphasis on process assistance (such as ITA) for diaspora organisations |
| 12 | | Field visits |
| 13 | | Institutional support for alliance building, platform and network strengthening |
| 14 | | Funding and organisation of international conferences to which diaspora organisations are invited |
| 15 | Suggested topics for | Financial analysis |
| 16 | new activities | Fundraising |
| 17 | | Media training, incl. communication skills |
| 18 | | Lobby and advocacy, incl. at the national and international level |
| 19 | | Conflict management, intercultural dialogue and peace building |
| 20 | | Organisation of regional and theme-based activities |
| 21 | | Follow up events or activities of passed events |
| 22 | Organisational issues | Concentrating activities in weekends |
| 23 | | Providing translation for French or Spanish-speaking organisations during the activities |
| 24 | | Financing training courses |
| 25 | Passing on | Discussing with trainers of course the feasibility of training the participants to give the course themselves |
| 26 | information | Considering inviting southern partners of diaspora organisations to attend certain activities |
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APPENDIX 1

ACTIVITIES

Table A1.1 Trainings

Titel/title	Tijdstip/date	Plaats/location
Vredeseducatie. Multiculturele kadertraining. Vrouwenvredeswerk	06.07 en 05-06.10.2002	Doorn
Migrant women's financial coping mechanisms in time of needs (workshop)	28.05.2005	Noordwijk a/d Zee
Strategic planning	28-30.10.2005	Soesterberg
Proposal development/projectontwikkeling	13-14.05.2006	Leusden
Fundraising/fondsenwerving en mobiliseren achterban	23-24.06.2006	Leusden
Managing international partnership	26-29.10.2006	Ede
Methodologies and principles of microfinance	24-26.11.2006	Noordwijk a/d Zee
Financial literacy	14-17.06.2007	Amersfoort
Project cycle management	14-17.10.2004	Ede
Project cycle management	08-11.09.2005	Ede
Project cycle management	28.09-01.10.2006	Ede
Project cycle management	16-18.11.2007	Ede
	9-10.02.2008	

Table A1.2 Expert Meetings

Titel/title	Tijdstip/date	Plaats/location
Bridging the gap	19-20.10.2004	Noordwijk-aan-Zee
Building strategic partnerships	31.03-01.04.2007	Amersfoort

Table A1.3 Linking and learning conferences on remittances (in collaboration with INAFI)

Titel/title	Tijdstip/date	Plaats/location
'The Impact of migrant remittances in Latin America: microfinance'	22-24.09.2005	Zacatecas, Mexico
'Converging initiatives and best practices in harnessing migrants philanthropy, Investments and remittances for local economic development'	24-26.05.2006	Tagaytay City, Philippines
'Microfinance, remittances and development'	07-09.11.2007	Cotonou, Benin

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEWEES

Table A2.1

Name	Organisation
Ms. Leila RISPENS-NOEL	Oxfam Novib (programme officer Bureau Linkis)
Mr. Wim STOFFERS	Oxfam Novib (Coordinator Linkis)
Ms. Christel DE VRIES	Oxfam Novib (programme officer Bureau Linkis)
Mr. Vincent RAPISURA	Social Enterprise Development Partnerships (SEDPI)
Mr. Dick VAN BLITTERSWIJK	Management for Development Foundation (MDF) Training & Consultancy
Mr. Theo VAN KOOLWIJK	WARNER Strategy & Fundraising (WSF)
Mr. Radj BHONDOE	Seva Network Foundation
Mr. Lema LANDU	Kongolese en Angolese Stichting Talentueux (KAST)
Mr. Liberat NSAVYIMANA	Réseau des organisations paysannes au Burundi (ROPABU)
Ms. Stéphanie MBANZENDORE	Burundian Women for Peace and Development (BWPD)
Ms. Sylvia VAN DEN BERG	Stichting Ayni Bolvia-Nederland
Mr. Doris ALFAFARA	Stichting Habagat
Mr. Khamis S. MWINYIMBEGU	African Humanitarian
Mr. Santo L. DENG	Sudan Civil Society Forum (SCSF)
Mr. Rateb FAQUIRI	Federatie van Afghaanse Vluchtelingen Organisaties Nederland (FAVON)
Mr. Nasir ADAM	Stichting Iskaashi
Ms Deniz GÖKÇE	Economic Resource Center for Migrants and Overseas Employees (ERCMOVE) (ex-member)
Ms. Farida PATTISAHUSIWA	Vrouwen voor Vrede op de Molukken (VvVM)
Ms. Véronique WALU	Redeem Foundation
Mr. Mulugeta ASMELLASH	Stichting Dir
Ms. Özden YALIM	Migrant Women Initiatives in the Netherlands for Development (MIND)
Ms. Fatumo FARAH	Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA)
Ms Mekka ABDELGABAR	Stichting Vrouwen Organizatie Nederland Darfur (VOND)
Mr. Mohammed GAMELELDIN	New Sudan Organisations Network (NSON)
Ms. Alem DESTA	Stichting Friends for Ethiopian Youth Development Fund
Mr. Bikash CHOWDHURY BARUA	Bangladesh Support Group (BASUG)
Ms. Corazon DEE	ERCMOVE
Ms. Tuky SANTILLAN	MIND, Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD)

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