



Organisational Performance Review of the Norwegian People's Aid

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO
Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway
Phone: +47 23 98 00 00
Fax: +47 23 98 00 99

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Organisational Performance Review of the Norwegian People's Aid

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*Elling N. Tjønneland
Gisle Hagen*

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Executive Summary

In 2007 an organisational performance review concluded that the NPA was a flexible, dynamic and effective organisation sustained by two core values; international solidarity with marginalised groups and the necessity for political change. The review also found that the NPA had a good partnership policy and had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the review also called for improvement in the NPA's results management, monitoring and evaluation, and in the systems and procedures for organisational development.

Background

The NPA is among the biggest Norwegian NGOs providing development aid. Its 2010 budget was about NOK 380 million of which the grant allocation from Norad amounted to about 35%. Norad is considering entering into a new co-operation agreement with NPA when the current 2008-2011 agreement expires. The purpose of this review is to provide an input into Norad's decision on future support to the NPA.

The review has two purposes: to analyse and assess how the international strategy is operationalised in a country context with a particular focus on one country – Rwanda. In addition the review shall analyse the NPA's achievements in addressing the two main challenges posed by the 2007 review.

Strategy and partnerships

The NPA has developed an international strategy and policy documents which succeeds in providing the organisation with a clear focus and mandate. The NPA is also in the process of successfully completing the shift from the previous approach of focusing on implementing operational activities to an emphasis on working with partners in civil society. The policy guidelines emphasise the partnership dimension and the need to work with change agents in programme countries.

These policies seem firmly anchored in the organisation and internalised by the NPA staff. However, there are variations in how this is operationalised and implemented in programme countries. Some emphasises the need to support the agenda of the partner and places much effort on the dialogue and process, while others would tend to see partners as implementing agents of NPA policies. The NPA also faces dilemmas in selecting partners with different priorities. The team also observed differences in managing the relation between a civil society/actor perspective and thematic perspectives. It is also noted that that the programme approach – where different civil society partners are working towards common goals – is insufficiently developed in many country programmes. In many instances an NPA country

programme appears to be the sum of individual partner activities and projects.

The Rwanda country programme is in many respects an atypical NPA programme. The programme, especially the major DFID/Sida-funded PPIMA project, has a much stronger programme focus, a large number of “implementing partners” and heavy donor-emphasis on “results”. PPIMA is widely considered by stakeholders in Rwanda as a highly relevant and strategic intervention with the potential to make a big difference in strengthening civil society organisation and their capacities to engage in public policy dialogue.

The team also concludes that PPIMA is a good operationalisation of NPA’s international strategy in a Rwandan context. It has succeeded in developing a major and coherent programme focusing on strengthening civil society and opening democratic space. On some dimensions there are deviations from the NPA strategy. PPIMA has tended to reinforce the impression of the NPA as a donor with its civil society partners simply being implementing agents of an NPA programme. The dialogue with partners in Rwanda is weak and is too dominated by concerns with meeting contractual obligations.

The design and early implementation of the NPA’s country programme are major achievements. Results can also be seen at different levels: in achievements through the community score card process; in establishment of linkages between different civil society actors; and in establishing a dialogue between civil society and authorities. It is not possible at this early stage to conclude about societal impacts.

There are many similar examples, particular from local areas, where NPA-partners have succeeded in contributing to

changes in public policy benefitting target communities. A challenge has often been to scale up activities and provide mutually reinforcing linkages between national and local interventions. In many, perhaps most cases, the NPA are primarily active through projects and at the local level. In this respect the Rwanda programme stands out with its programme approach and major efforts to link local and national projects.

What are the main results of the NPA’s support to capacity building and organisational development? A main focus has been on strengthening technical skills in financial management and reporting. This appears to have led to a general improvement of individuals in partner secretariats and of individual organisations. In some countries there are reports suggesting that the NPA support for improving internal governance and strategic development has been successful for select partners. In Rwanda some innovative attempts have been made through a programme approach coupled with targeted support to strategic partners for development of long term strategies and work plans. This may potentially have a strong impact on the capacity of civil society organisations to engage with authorities and mobilise for political change. Success will also depend on the NPA’s capacity to follow-up and engage with their partners on these issues – in the challenging start-up phase in Rwanda most of the NPA’s resources have been dedicated to administrative and management issues.

A weakness in the NPA’s support for organisational development is the reluctance to harmonise and work with other donors and foreign NGOs. Contracts with partners have also typically been of a one-year duration. This has weakened the NPA’s support in this area. The Rwanda programme is a major exception to this.

Organisation and Management

The NPA's has a decentralised model with much power delegated to country offices in developing programmes and partnerships. Policy documents and guidelines have been developed to facilitate common objectives, priorities and coherence. The programme department at the head office has been strengthened and procedures and mechanisms have been put in place to help country offices and staff in their tasks, and to facilitate monitoring, evaluation and learning. Several steps have been made to further improve organisation and management. Most importantly: the NPA recently established two new positions at the head office. One was the responsibility for improving the NPA's monitoring and evaluation, and in particular to help develop a better focus on results based planning and reporting. The other was a new position to help develop and strengthen the NPA's partnership policy.

The team finds that the efforts to improve results based planning, monitoring and reporting have led to a marked improvement. It has enabled increased awareness and knowledge of how results are documented in civil society work for participation and accountability. This is also indicated in the periodic results reports to Norad which has improved significantly in the period.

On the other hand: the team also observed that the quality of reporting from partners to the NPA and from the NPA to donors is uneven. In the case of Rwanda – with very demanding management and monitoring prescriptions in the major Sida/DFID-

funded PPIMA programme – the team notes that there is limited back up and assistance from head office to the country office. Nor have we seen calls for substantial technical support from the NPA Oslo in relation to i.e. practical working arrangements in results based reporting and connected issues towards Sida and DFID or in relation to the partners.

Recommendations

The report summarises its main findings and recommendations in 12 main points structured around three headlines: strategies and policies; implementation and partnership; and organisation and management. It is noted that the NPA is putting in place appropriate policies and management structures which demonstrate notable capabilities in their efforts to serve development goals.

The main recommendations call for stronger emphasis on development of country strategies which could also help improve a programme approach to the NPA's work. There is also a need to scale down some of NPA's ambitions and ensure better coherence between goals and available resources. The report also recommends that the NPA's head office ensures that it has the capacity to provide more technical back-up and support to complex country programmes, and expects that country offices requests more assistance from the head office when they are involved in managing demanding interventions.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADENYA	The Association for the Development of Nyabimata
ADI TERIMBERE	Association pour le Développement Intégré
ADTS	The Association for Development and Social Transformation
AJIC	Anti-Corruption, Justice and Information Centre
AJPRODHO	Youth Association for Human Rights Promotion and Development
ALAC	Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCOAIB	Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development
CD	Country Director
CESTRAR	The Trade Union Centre of Workers of Rwanda
CLADHO	Federation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights in Rwanda
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute
COPORWA	The Community of Potters of Rwanda
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EDPRS	Rwanda Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EDV	Ending Violence Against Women
FENAPH	The National Federation of Persons with Disabilities
HQ	Headquarter
IMBARAGA	Rwanda Farmers Association
LO	Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NINGO	Network of International NGOS in Rwanda
NOK	Norwegian kroner
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NUDOR	The National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda
OD	Organisational Development
PM	Programme Manager
PPIMA	Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RNGF	Rwanda NGO Forum on Aids and Health Promotion
RWF	Rwandan Franc
RWN	Rwanda Women's Network
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
TA	Tubibe Amahoro
TR	Transparency Rwanda
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

Preface

This report provides an independent organisational performance review of the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). It assesses how the NPA operationalises its strategy in the country context. It also assesses the NPA's systems and procedures for results management, monitoring and evaluation as well as the NPA's approach to systematic learning and its ability to respond to changing conditions. The Terms of Reference is available in Annex 1.

The Review was commissioned by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). It was carried out by the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway. The review was led by senior researcher Elling N. Tjønneland (CMI). Senior advisor Gisle Hagen, in Norad's Rights and Social Equity Team, Department for Global Health, Education and Research was also a member of the team in his professional capacity.

The team began its work in May 2011. A first meeting with Norad's Civil Society Department took place on 2 May and an inception report was submitted on 16 May. Over a period of 8 weeks the team collected data and material from the NPA and interviewed NPA staff in Oslo and NPA staff and partners in Rwanda. A list of people interviewed is provided in Annex 2.

The report is organised around 4 main chapters with the bulk of the analysis and assessments being provided in chapters 2 and 3. The Rwanda case is more fully described and analysed in annex 3.

The team has benefited from the support and assistance of a number of people. Staff at the NPA head office in Oslo and at the NPA country office in Rwanda has provided much assistance to the team during the review.

Above all, the team would like to take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge and thank the NPA and its partners and the numerous individuals interviewed. They gave graciously of their valuable time to provide information, analysis, interpretations and explanations. The views of all of these stakeholders were crucial in helping the team to formulate its assessments and recommendations.

The draft report was submitted to the Norad and the NPA on 1 July 2011. Written comments were received from both in August.

The team has attempted to address the issues raised in the Terms of Reference and in the response to the draft report. Needless to say, the shortcomings and omissions are entirely ours. The team is also responsible for the views and recommendations expressed in the report.

Bergen and Oslo

6 September 2011

1: Introduction

This organisational performance review was commissioned by the Civil Society Department in Norad. The review is intended as an input to Norad's decision on future support to the NPA.

Background and Purpose

The NPA's budget for international development, including humanitarian assistance, was about NOK 376 million in 2010. Of this funding from Norad amounted to about 130 million or 35%. The NPA is among the four Norwegian NGOs receiving the highest level of support from Norad.

A comprehensive organisational performance review of NPA was carried out in 2007, prior to NPA's current agreement with Norad (2008-2011).¹ The review found that NPA's main strengths lie in its partnership approach and its ability to work effectively with partners on relevant activities. The review identified two main areas of improvement for the organisation:

- results management, monitoring and evaluation; and
- organisational development (systems and procedures; knowledge management and organisational learning).

NPA's main strategy for its international work is – based on careful analysis of the context – to support selected change agents in their efforts to influence the government towards fulfillment of democratic rights and a fair distribution of power and resources in society. The

¹ See Stein-Erik Kruse & Kim Forss (2007), *Organisational Performance Review of Norwegian People's Aid, Synthesis Report*, Oslo: Norad (Norad Report 4/2007), and Kim Forss et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Ecuador, Andean Program and Latin America*, and Stein-Erik Kruse et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Mozambique* (downloadable from www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109623).

purpose of the review is twofold. Firstly, and most important, the review shall analyse and assess how this strategy is operationalised in the country context. It shall also consider what results this has produced for the target group (NPA's partner organisations): it shall identify, analyse and assess the outcome of NPA's support to partners, as well as the relevance and sustainability of the results, in one selected country case study – Rwanda.

This includes assessing the following issues:

- NPA's analysis of the context and considerations in the choice of partners; NPA's approach in pluralistic societies and economically, socially and/or ethnically divided contexts;
- Partners' popular basis, grass-root links and legitimacy with the general public; partners' relations to government structures and other civil society actors; partners' strategies and working methods to promote and defend peoples' democratic rights and to promote equitable distribution of resources;
- NPA's contribution to partners' capacity to reach their own goals and to pursue their own agenda; NPA's added value to the partnership, according to partners; communication between NPA and partners on potential risks;
- NPA's understanding of its own role and responsibilities as an external actor in partnerships and projects/activities intended to influence public policy in programme countries; NPA HQ's instructions to country offices regarding NPA's role; NPA's role as seen by partners, peers, government and others;
- To what extent development changes accord with planned results of NPA's programmes; what development changes can be attributed to NPA's efforts; have the programmes had any unintended consequences; and
- NPA contribution to strengthening civil society as such through its support to partners in a given country.

Secondly, the review shall assess NPA's achievements in addressing the two main challenges posed by the 2007 performance review. This includes:

- Results management, monitoring and evaluation: quality, applicability and use of systems and procedures for planning for and reporting on results (incl. preparation and use of baseline information; use of indicators; and means of verifying success); and
- Organisational development: NPA's approach to systematic learning; ability to respond to changing conditions.

Organisation and Methodology

The review is based on desk studies of documents on the NPA's international strategy and its implementation; interviews with NPA officials and other stakeholders in Norway; and case study material based on field visit to Rwanda. The review also drew upon the findings from

the review of NPA's work in Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia commissioned by the NPA in 2010 and published by CMI in 2011.²

The review does not provide a full account of the Rwanda programme and their outcomes and impacts. The main purpose was to use examples and lessons from Rwanda to inform the analysis of NPA's operationalisation of its international strategy, including results management and the NPA's approach to systematic learning and ability to respond to changing conditions. The main purpose of the country visits was therefore on interviews with staff at the NPA country offices and staff at the head offices of partner organisations.

There are several methodological limitations and constraints affecting a review like this. The team only visited Rwanda. Although data were also accessed from other countries, findings from one country cannot be generalised and made valid for the implementation experiences in other countries.

There is also a limit to how many questions can be adequately answered in a short period of time. The team was faced with a comprehensive ToR which included a broad range of complex questions. Total time and available resources were insufficient for addressing all questions in the same depth. During interviews and visits to partners the team had to prioritise and select certain issues to be pursued more systematically.

The review relied to a large extent on interview data with key informants. It may be questioned how truthful partners are when asked about their relationship with the NPA. There is no doubt a perception of a donor-recipient relationship, and most of the visited organisations have relied on the NPA for some 25–50% of their total revenue, if not more. Partners are likely to have been rather cautious about voicing criticism. On the other hand, the team was pleased with the openness and frankness of feedback – to a large extent explained by the confidence partners have in the NPA. The NPA should also be commended for its frankness. The level of soul-searching and self-criticism on the part of the NPA was often more evident than among its partners.

Another limitation relates to language. English is for many a third language in Rwanda and some are only able to communicate in Kinyarwanda. That constraint made interaction slower and more formal, and some of the qualities of direct communication were lost.

The team met in early May 2011 for initial planning and preparations, including a meeting with the Norad civil society department. A first round of interviews with NPA staff in Oslo took place in the first half of May and an inception report was submitted to Norad in mid-May. The team visited Rwanda for a period of nearly two weeks in the first half of June.

A second round of interviews with NPA staff in Oslo took place in the second half of June 2011.

The draft report was submitted on 1 July 2011. Written comments from Norad and the NPA were received in August. The final report was submitted in September.

² See Elling N. Tjønneland & Arne Tostensen, *Making Partnership Work. Vision and Implementation of a Development Programme*, Bergen: CMI 2011 (*CMI Report R2011: 2*) (available from www.cmi.no/publications/publication/?4031=making-partnership-work)

2: NPA – from 2007 to 2011: an Overview

The NPA's development programme has a current (2010) budget of nearly NOK 380 million, a staff of 17 at the programme department at head office and 20 liaison, country and regional offices covering over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

The NPA's development work is one of several programme areas. The NPA was established in 1939 as the Norwegian trade union movement's voluntary health and solidarity organisation. The NPA is formally an association with collective membership through trade unions and individual membership. The members take part in 136 local NPA branches. Currently, it has more than 10,000 members.

The NPA has a broad range of activities in Norway, encompassing (i) help and rescue work; (ii) reception centres for asylum seekers; and (iii) advocacy and campaigning. Its international work is divided between the Mine Action Department and the Development Programme Department, both reporting directly to the Secretary-General. There are also a Communication Department, a Human Resources & Administration Department, and a Finance and Accounting Department serving the whole organisation. The department heads together with the Secretary-General constitute the management team. There is also a Board of Directors, where both trade unions and individual members through the local NPA branches are represented. The Board of Directors is elected by the General Assembly which meets every fourth year.

Until 2008, the Mine Action Department and the Development Programme Department formed the International Department of the NPA under the joint leadership of an International Director. In 2008, these two sections were reorganised as departments, both reporting directly to the Secretary-General.

The 2007 Performance Review

In 2006, Norad commissioned a major review of the NPA's development work. It focused on the organisational performance and capacity of the NPA to provide effective aid.³ The Performance Review found that the NPA was a flexible, dynamic and effective organisation sustained by two core values; international solidarity with marginalised groups and the necessity for political change. The Review also found that the strategic shift to working with partners with a focus on rights-based advocacy introduced in the 2003–2007 strategy was still in transition. The strategic mission and the objectives may have been clear, but the NPA, according to the Review, still had some way to go in implementation. The focus should be sharpened and further strategic decisions be made.

The Review noted that long-term funding from Norad made up a smaller share of funding compared to earlier periods. Shorter contracts for emergency and operational activities were expanding. Monitoring and evaluation were also found to be weak with inadequate attention to the reporting of results and achievements.

The Norad Review also found that the NPA had a good partnership policy and – compared to many other NGOs – had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the Review also noted that the NPA may have too many partners, and does not distinguish sufficiently between different types of partner (strategic and project partners). It was also found that the substantive dialogue between the NPA and many of the partners was weak – to some extent avoiding difficult and sensitive issues. In many countries there is very limited reflection on the mutuality of partnership relations. The Review also found that the approach to organisational development of partners could be systematised better and strengthened. What the NPA presents as capacity strengthening was only scratching the surface of organisational change. The Review found that NPA staff at the field offices spend little time with each partner – sufficient for supervision, administrative monitoring and consultation – but not for facilitating and supporting processes of organisational development. Nor was it clear whether partnerships are ends in themselves or seen as means to other ends.

The 2007 Review recommended that the NPA revise its global policy and strategy document as a policy document (differentiate between policy and strategy) in order to focus on rights-based approaches to development, partnerships, a political solidarity perspective, and a maximum of three thematic areas. It was also considered important that the NPA maintain its flexible and responsive support and ability to adapt goals and means to specific contexts. Finally, the NPA needed to explain and clarify its multiple objectives and different approaches and working methods. Furthermore, the Review recommended that the NPA prepare brief operational strategies at global and regional levels with a view to providing a holistic overview of all activities within a geographical area irrespective of funding source; explaining and justifying the selection of countries, thematic priorities and partners; justifying the allocation of resources between countries, partners and programmes; and describing the organisational set-up and support from the NPA. In addition, the NPA needed to strengthen its

³ See Stein-Erik Kruse & Kim Forss (2007), *Organisational Performance Review of Norwegian People's Aid, Synthesis Report*, Oslo: Norad (Norad Report 4/2007), and Kim Forss et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Ecuador, Andean Program and Latin America*, and Stein-Erik Kruse et al., *Organisational Review of Norwegian People's Aid. Case Study from Mozambique*, (downloadable from www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=109623).

organisational capacity, including a clearer focus on the organisational development of partners and on monitoring and evaluation.

These issues were also highlighted in the dialogue between the NPA and Norad prior to the current 2008-2012 framework agreement with Norad. The main focus was on making the international strategy more focused and on improving results management, monitoring and evaluation.

Responding

The NPA responded to these recommendations and the challenges identified in the performance review. In 2007 the NPA developed a new strategy for its international work for the 2008–2011 period.⁴ The new Strategy did not break with its 2003–2007 predecessor: it rather developed and sharpened its focus. The focus on supporting rights-based interventions in selected thematic areas was replaced by a more explicit focus on supporting civil society organisations able to serve as agents of change in the struggle for democracy and a fair distribution of resources. These overall goals would then guide the selection of countries where the NPA would work, although more tactical considerations – such as the priorities of the donor community and the Norwegian government and the private sector, risk considerations and the potential added value of NPA interventions – would also be taken into account. Once a country had been selected the democratic deficits would be identified and the potential players and change agents identified. The strategic areas of democratisation and natural resources would be the focus of support to partner organisations. Several specific interventions and objectives were listed to achieve this.

In addition, the new strategy also more clearly identified the NPA's own political strategies and objectives. It would seek to mobilise and influence national governments and international policy towards supporting democracy and the equitable distribution of resources, and to improve the economic conditions of countries in the South. Members, Norwegian opinion and the international community would be mobilised in support of these goals.

The next level in the hierarchy of governing documents for the development work is three policy documents: on partnership (2009), on land and natural resources (2011), and on participation and organisation (2011). These documents seek to provide guidelines in the operationalisation of the international strategy. The partnership policy was first formalised in the 1990s. It was shaped and finally approved in 1998. A first major revision took place in 2004. A further revision, but with no major changes, was finalised in 2009.⁵

In addition to these documents the NPA has begun to develop a series of country position papers which guides the NPA's development programme in the countries where it works and set out the NPA's views on key challenges and issues related to developments in the countries

⁴ See NPA, *Norwegian People's Aid – International Strategy 2008-2011*, Oslo: December 2007 (available from <http://www.npaid.org/filestore/NPAInternationalstrategy2008-20112.pdf>). The strategy is available in an official Norwegian version and unofficial translations into English and Spanish. The Strategy also covers the work of the NPA's Mine Action programme, but with the split in 2008 of the international department into two separate departments – development and mine action – the strategy has *de facto* only guided the work of the development programme.

⁵ The previous document, *Partnership Cooperation in Civil Society* was approved by the NPA Board in 2004 while the current document *Norwegian Peoples Aid Partnership Policy* was validated in February 2009 (available from <http://www.npaid.org/filestore/PartnershipPolicyNPAfinal30.01.092.pdf>).

concerned. Seven position papers have been prepared so far. Furthermore, all programme countries are now expected to develop country strategies outlining the purpose and objectives of the country programme as well as a presentation of the country programme.

In addition to these developments with regard to governing documents a series of changes in the management and administration of the development programme have been introduced. Most significant was the establishment of two new positions in the department: one addressing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and the other partnership and organisational development.

Achievements and Challenges

The NPA has developed into a professional development aid organisation. 10 years ago the organisation was highly fragmented with decentralised country offices largely developing and managing programmes on their own. It was often seen as lacking a clear strategic focus and purpose. In the next chapter the team presents some of its observations and findings specifically related to strategic focus and the application of the partnership policy, and on NPA's systems and structures for organisation and management, especially related to monitoring and evaluation. In this section we provide some overall reflections and views on the NPA.

The NPA's development programme is large and has remained fairly constant in the 2008-2010 period. Table 2.1 provides a geographical breakdown of the disbursements of the NPA's development funds.

Table 2.1
Geographical allocation of the NPA's development funds 2008–2010
(NOK million)*

Country/region	2008	2009	2010	Total
Russia	2.6	0.9	0.8	4.3
Balkan	13.4	10.6	11.3	35.3
<i>Europe</i>	16.0	11.5	12.1	39.6
Mozambique	4.7	3.8	3.6	12.1
South Africa	3.3	5.1	5.1	13.5
Zimbabwe	11.7	23.3	14.2	49.2
Southern Africa regional	2.2	3.3	3.0	8.5
Angola	29.8	23.0	22.5	104.3
Ethiopia	6.3	6.5	6.5	19.3
Rwanda	7.7	8.4	24.5	40.6
Tanzania	27.3	15.6	10.1	53.0
Somalia	4.8	5.9	8.0	18.7
Sudan	112.6	147.1	137.7	397.4
<i>Africa</i>	210.4	242.0	235.2	687.6
Burma	8.7	12.6	16.7	38.0
Cambodia	5.8	6.0	6.1	17.9
Sri Lanka	31.3	4.5	0.9	36.7
<i>Asia</i>	45.8	23.1	23.7	92.6
Iraq	8.1	7.2	9.0	24.3
Lebanon	13.7	15.7	16.0	45.4

Palestine	28.9	34,4	28.4	91.7
<i>Middle East</i>	50.7	57.3	53.4	161.4
Bolivia	4.3	5.3	5.7	15.3
Chile	0.8	0.8	1.0	2.6
Colombia	0.9	1,1	1.3	3.3
Cuba	4.0	3.7	3.6	11.3
Ecuador	11.8	9.7	8.4	29.9
El Salvador	3.2	3.2	3.2	9.6
Guatemala	4.5	4.0	3,4	11.9
Honduras	2.4	2.4	2.4	7.2
Nicaragua	4.5	4.0	3.5	12.0
LA regional	0.7	0.8	1.1	2.6
<i>Latin America</i>	37.1	35.0	33.6	105.7
Total	360.0	371.2	358.0	1 091.0

Source: Figures provided by the NPA

* Figures have been rounded off to the nearest 100,000.

Table 2.2 shows the source of these funds. It is noteworthy that the contribution from Norad through the framework agreement only accounts for about one third of the funding. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the other dominant source of funds (mainly for humanitarian purposes and through strategic partnership agreements with embassies in select countries). There is also substantial funding from other sources, but that is in 2010 and 2011 mainly linked to a few countries, especially Sudan (USAID, multi-donor trust funds and others) and Rwanda (Sida and DFID).

Table 2.2
Total income by source of funding (2008–2010)
(NOK million)*

Donors	2008	2009	2010
Norad**	117	124	128
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs***	154	133	110
USAID****	61	65	50
Government of South Sudan*****	6	33	33
Sida*****	--	3	15
EU	8	6	6
UNHCR	11	3	--
UNOCHA	--	2	--
World Bank Sudan	--	--	4
African Medical and Research Foundation	--	1	--
International Media Support	--	-	3
NPA's own contribution	23	23	22
Total*****	382	400	376

Source: Figures provided by NPA

* Figures are rounded off to the nearest million and only grants above 1 million are included.

** The Norad contribution includes a small allocation through the "oil for development" programme.

*** The MFA figures also include contributions from Norwegian embassies.

**** The figure includes NOK 12 million in 2010 and a small contribution in 2008 from the US Department of State.

***** Funding classified in NPA accounts as allocations from the Government of South Sudan is mainly coming from the Multi-donor Trust Fund.

***** This is allocation to the Rwanda programme and includes funding from DFID channeled through Sida as the lead donor.

***** The discrepancy between total figures in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 is largely explained by the allocation to the NPA head office/development programme department and global programmes which are not included in Table 2.1.

The tables indicate that there are no real reductions or scaling down of the programme. Some country programmes have closed in the period or are in the process of being phased out (Sri Lanka, the Balkans, Russia, Tanzania), but others are under consideration or in preparation (Vietnam, Eastern Congo). The NPA is also considering new programmes in North Africa/Middle East to support the democratisation processes there.

The NPA has also successfully closed and moved out of its operational activities and is now much more firmly behind an approach of working with civil society partners. A main significant exception to this is Sudan where this process has turned out to be perhaps more difficult and slower than originally envisaged. The NPA has made a strategic turn in its Sudan programme in line with the international strategy and seeks to work more with civil society partners. However, it has also and based on an assessment of the Sudan context remained with operational activities and government partners.

The NPA emphasises the importance of decentralisation with devolution of decision-making authority to country and regional offices. Adaptation of the strategy and policy guidelines to local contexts is considered crucial for successful implementation of a strategy which focuses on support to advocacy and political change. However, this approach also makes the NPA vulnerable. Translation of strategies and guidelines to local contexts requires skills beyond management of traditional aid projects. It requires skills in political analysis and ability to understand political dynamics in the countries concerned. And at the same time it requires that the NPA has sufficient capacity and procedures in place to provide the necessary quality assurance and professional support to the external offices and country programmes. We will return to some of these issues in the next chapter.

The team notes from this and other studies that the NPA staff both at the head and country offices is of the opinion that the existing strategy and policy guidelines provide sufficient guidance and clarity. These policy documents can be further improved – a new strategy is also at the drafting stage but it not expected to deviate from the key principles contained in the current strategy document – but the main challenge lies in the operationalisation and translation into often widely different country contexts. We note that there are often major differences in how these strategies are turned into country strategies. This is very evident in the country case examined by this review team – Rwanda. The programme here differs markedly from other country programmes. It is a much more coherent programme than many others; it involves a range of organisations each performing distinct tasks both at the national and local levels; it places dialogue between civil society organisations and the authorities at the centre of the programme; and it introduces new projects (micro credits) at the same as they are phased out in other country programmes. This may well be justified based on the context, but it raises critical questions about the head office' capacity to provide advice and support, as well as the vertical communication and learning between country programmes.

For the NPA the next and most important step in the further development of policy documents will be to ensure that each programme country has a country strategy in place. This country strategy should outline the purpose and objectives of NPA's work in the country, present the programme, partners and activities and serve as policy guide and as a communication tool. So far very few countries (only 3 at the beginning of the year) have prepared such strategies. The team recommends that these country strategies also become an important tool in the dialogue and communication between the head office and country offices. And above all: it may help in developing a stronger programme approach to the NPA's activities. In many instances the NPA's country programmes appear as the sum of individual projects and partner activities. The Rwanda case is an example of how a stronger programme approach perhaps can yield more results.

The team observed that NPA policy documents and reports have placed much emphasis on the distinction between development work/service delivery, on the one hand, and advocacy and rights-based work, on the other. This may have been necessary as part of the shift in the focus of the development programme, but the team will emphasise that such a clear-cut separation of development work from political mobilisation and efforts to support political change is unwarranted. This applies especially among the poor and marginalised in rural areas where development work which can bring about improvements and tangible benefits are crucial for the credibility and legitimacy of the work of the NPA and its partners, and hence their ability to mobilise politically or in terms of rights.

The team noted a rather inconsistent approach to "regional programmes". Such programmes are nominally in place in Latin America, Southern Africa and – until recently – in Southeast Asia.⁶ There are smaller regional projects in place, but the main role of these programmes seems to be administrative – they reduce costs and create flexibility in allocating funds to countries in the region. Regional programmes also help to facilitate sharing of experiences between NPA staff in different countries in the region, and also – potentially – between NPA partners in the regions concerned. These are all valid arguments for a regional programme. However, the team would suggest that the NPA also explores the possibilities of developing stronger regional programmes. This may take the form of support to cooperation between partner organisations in two or more countries or for the activities of a regional partner organisation. Better linkages between country and regional projects may also help to reduce management costs.

The current international strategy is guiding both the Mine Action Programme and the Development Programme which jointly used to constitute the NPA's international department. This department was split in 2008 into two separate departments working relatively independently of each others. The explanations are several: a different mode of operation (centralised vs. decentralised); a different culture (military vs. development aid); and different partners (government institutions vs. civil society). In several countries there are both a mine action and a development programme. They relate to each other administratively (there is one office, one country director, etc), but operate as two different programmes. These divisions are unfortunate. A recent Norad-commissioned review of the Mine Action Programme concluded that the NPA is not only one of the leading worldwide organisations in mine action, but also one of very few organisations engaged in operational mine clearance programmes, the development of new methodologies as well as in advocacy. These are areas that are mutually reinforcing. However, the review also identified a particular concern: socio-

⁶ The Balkan programme is also a regional programme, but that comes to an end in 2011. The Balkan programme has not been examined by the team.

economic aspects and skills could be better integrated into the programme, and the review points at the challenge of ensuring better coherence between the NPA's mine action programme and the development programme.⁷ The team hopes that better cooperation and interaction can be established on the ground, perhaps especially in countries where the development programme is supporting major land projects and also struggles with its relations with authorities. The question of land use after mine clearance immediately presents itself. The Rwanda programme also illustrates this. The NPA's mine action programme successfully cleared the last remaining landmines in the country in 2008, but the team learned that the land cleared (520 000 m² near Kigali) is still idle and not in use.

In 2010, the NPA commissioned a review of its gender policy and the organisation of gender equality work at the head office. It strongly recommended that women's empowerment and gender equality be a central concern in the international strategy for the next 2012–2015 period. However, it did not call for new policy papers and guidelines. Instead it suggested that the policy papers on organisational development, democracy and participation and on access to land and resources place women and youth squarely at the centre of attention.⁸ The present team concurs with these views.

Finally, the team notes that the current strategy documents also seek to reinforce NPA's political legacy as the solidarity wing of the Norwegian labour movement. In programme countries it seeks to work through and with partners, but within Norway and at the global level it outlines fairly ambitious objectives. The NPA's development programme has only had limited success in running with these objectives (in contrast to the Mine Action Programme which has been successful in its advocacy work in relation to land mines and cluster ammunitions). Its activities has mainly been confined to Norway and linked to NPA's geographic expertise (such as Sudan and Palestine). It has had limited visibility in relation to thematic issues in Norwegian foreign and development policies. The team recommends that the NPA seeks to sharpen its focus and scale down its ambitions. It may also consider its role in development aid coordination in programme countries. The NPA has tended to stay out of such arrangements, but the case of Rwanda may indicate that the NPA potentially can play a role and make a difference also in such aid fora.

⁷ See Cowi A/S, *Evaluation of the Humanitarian Mine Action Activities of Norwegian People's Aid*, Oslo, Norad Evaluation Department, November 2009 (*Evaluation Report 6/2009*) (<http://www.norad.no/en/Tools+and+publications/Publications/Publication+Page?key=150570>)

⁸ See Berit Aasen, *Review of the organisation of the Gender Equality (GE) work in the International Programme Department, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research, May 2010.

3: Assessment of Special Questions

This chapter will present the team's assessment of the special issues highlighted in ToR, especially related to the implementation of the partnership strategy and management of results.

NPA's Partnership Policy

The 2007 Norad Performance Review found that the NPA had a sound partnership policy and – compared to many other NGOs – had come a long way in its thinking on what partnership entails. However, the 2007 Review also noted that the NPA may have too many partners, and does not distinguish sufficiently between different types of partner (strategic and project partners). It was also found that the substantive dialogue between the NPA and many of the partners was weak. In many countries there was limited reflection on the mutuality of partnership. The Norad Review also found that the approach to organisational development of partners ought to be systematised and strengthened. What the NPA presents as capacity strengthening was only scratching the surface of organisational change according to the 2007 review team. The reviewers found that NPA staff at the country offices spend little time with each partners – sufficient for supervision, administrative monitoring and consultation but not for facilitating and supporting processes of organisational development. Nor was it clear whether partnerships are ends in themselves or means to other ends.

At the policy level there have been no significant changes in the NPA's approach to partnerships. The 2008–2011 strategy reaffirmed the previous emphasis on supporting civil society organisations, but amplified the message and further elaborated the presentation of the role of civil society. The 2009 policy guidelines on partnership did not really contain anything new; it was basically an edited reprint of the guidelines from the previous phase. A policy paper on *Participation and Organisation* was published in 2011.⁹ It overlaps with the partnership guidelines but further emphasises the importance of focusing on actors and change agents, and the need for supporting organisational development. This document does not contain specific references to the distinction between strategic and project partners which was so strongly underscored in the policy document on partnership.

⁹ The document is available from www.npaid.org/filestore/NFH_POLICYOrg_and_particip.pdf

The NPA carried out a major partnership survey in May 2009.¹⁰ Together with the 2010 CMI study of partnerships in Cambodia, Ecuador and Ethiopia and the Rwanda case study some conclusions can be drawn from the NPA's implementation of its policies. Most important is the finding that the NPA now in most cases successfully have managed a shift from operational activities to an approach emphasising partnership and implementation through civil society organisations.

The assessment is categorised under different headings – partner profile and achievements; capacity development; and dialogue and value added.

Partner Profile and Achievements

Most partners are relatively new. In the Rwanda case 10 of the 14 partners became partners in the current period. Procedures and mechanisms are in place to assess potential partners and help guide the selection. In the case of Rwanda fairly elaborate criteria were developed to select partners in the inception phase of the major PPIMA project. In the development of PPIMA a first selection took place with identification of potential partners. This list was based on impressions and general knowledge with the NPA office of the context and political dynamics in Rwanda. From this list a more systematic assessment of potential partners was made based on defined criteria. This led to the final selection of partners. In the case of PPIMA the selection in most cases appears well founded and justified. In the case of the Norad-funded “ending violence against women” programme we note that no women's organisations were selected. This is somewhat surprising and may have contributed to a weakening of the sustainability of the programme.

The Rwanda case also illustrates a more important potential tension in the NPA's approach to partnership. In Rwanda the NPA has developed a major and coherent programme and then subsequently started a process of identifying and selecting partners that could implement the various components. In the Rwandan case the team feels that this approach has helped generate a big programme with the potential to generate much better results both in terms of opening democratic space and strengthening civil society organisations. This contrast with the NPA approaches pursued in related authoritarian countries such as Ethiopia or Cambodia where results may be less and the NPA may suffer from a weak programme, but supports a number of good individual projects. However, the Rwanda approach may have reinforced the NPA's image as a donor and weakened the dialogue with partners (see more on this below).

Most partners to the NPA are non-governmental organisations, some of which are community-based. Very few partners are social movements and membership-based organisations representing the interests of the members and mobilising for their demands – people's organisation as defined by the NPA (the exception is Latin America where there are many such partners, especially linked to the indigenous movement). This is probably mainly a reflection of the conditions in the countries where NPA are active. In most of these countries the relevant civil society actors are dominated by NGOs and with very weak popular organisations. However, it is noted that the NPA has made strong efforts to partner with local NGO with close ties to the grassroots (community-based organisations). working with such organisations – and with social movements – are often very demanding, e.g., in relation to reporting and management.

¹⁰ See NPA's *Report: NPA Partnership and Organisational Development Survey* (unpublished report, 38 pages, 2010).

The NPA has its roots as a political solidarity movement emerging out of the Norwegian labour and trade union movement. This notwithstanding, trade unions are – with very few exceptions – not listed as NPA partners abroad. Nor do we find much analysis of the role of trade unions in country programmes and documents. The reason for this state of affairs is the role of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) which has insisted on a division of labour, where the LO focuses on trade unions and workers and the NPA on other issues. The team has noted this explanation but still feels that more could be done to build bridges to trade unions in the field. In the case of Rwanda no special efforts were made to assess the potential role of the trade unions in the planned PPIMA programme or to involve them in the programme (but they are involved indirectly through membership of umbrella bodies in the PPIMA programme).

The team has noted that there are variations in how country programmes are operationalising the partnership policy. Some emphasises the need to support the agenda of the partner and places much effort on the dialogue and process, while others would tend to see partners as implementing agents of NPA policies. The NPA also faces dilemmas in selecting partners and we observed different responses. Should the NPA go for the most important change agents, those with the greatest potential to make a difference – which often are those that “everybody” else is also supporting - or should they select smaller and often weaker organisations, typically working in marginal, rural areas? The team also observe different emphasis in relation to choice between a civil society/actor perspective and thematic perspectives. In some countries there is a strong emphasis on identifying “themes” and “target groups” (such as women, youth, democratisation, indigenous peoples or land) while others emphasise the need to understand political dynamics and select partners based on such analyses. These differences may reflect different country contexts and the NPA’s history in a particular country, but also different approaches and priorities by the NPA country offices (see more on this below).

What do we know about the results of the activities of the NPA-supported partners? Are NPA-partners making a contribution in promotion of democracy and redistribution of resources? The Rwanda case does not at this stage allow for any assessment of societal impacts. The PPIMA programme has just started. What we do know is that PPIMA is highly relevant, it has successfully exploited a niche to establish a platform bringing most of the key civil society actors together in a dialogue with the authorities both a national and local levels. It has also successfully established linkages between civil society interventions at national and local levels. This is in itself a significant achievement. There are also examples of how this has had impact at local level where the community scorecard process had led to dialogue with local authorities and subsequent efforts to provide additional government support to affected marginalised communities.

There are many similar examples, particular from local areas, where NPA-partners have succeeded in contributing to changes in public policy benefitting target communities. A challenge has often been to scale up activities and provide mutually reinforcing linkages between national and local interventions. In many, perhaps most cases, the NPA are primarily active at the project and local level. In this respect the Rwanda programme stands out with its programme approach and major efforts to link local and national projects.

Capacity Building

Support to capacity building or organisational development (OD) is an important dimension of the NPA's partnership policy. The NPA's partnership survey indicated that this is a strong component in most partnerships. In most countries OD is included in more than half of all partnerships. The survey also showed that OD support in general has a broad scope.

In the case of Rwanda there has been an emphasis on strengthening the *technical capacities* of the partners. The Norad-funded partners received support to strengthen their capacities in financial management and reporting. This is expected to increase with the Sida/DFID-funded PPIMA programme. The NPA office is in process of hiring an additional accountant which is expected to dedicate much of his/her time to help partners with financial management and reporting. PPIMA is also hiring district field coordinators which *inter alia* will assist the 8 partners working on the ground with management and reporting.

There has also been some, but far less, emphasis on *internal governance* issues in the support to partners in Rwanda. The emerging exception is on gender issues which are identified as one of the key priorities in the PPIMA programme. The NPA has recently completed a major gender audit of all their partners and this is expected to lead to new initiatives.

The Rwanda case has also seen some important efforts to strengthen partners and their ability to *mobilise and to do advocacy*. A chief initiative in 2009 and 2010 was Norad-funding to enable select (strategic/long-term) partners to develop five-year strategic plans and two-year operational plans. This was facilitated by external consultants and culminated in most cases with partners inviting donor agencies to a presentation and marketing event. It also paved the way for a shift to multi-year contracts with partners who had successfully completed the process of drawing up strategic and operational plans.

What are the main results of the NPA's support to capacity building and organisational development? A main focus has been on strengthening technical skills in financial management and reporting. This appears to have led to a general improvement of individuals in partner secretariats and of individual organisations. In some countries there are reports suggesting that the NPA support for improving internal governance and strategic development has been successful for select partners. In Rwanda some innovative attempts have been made through a programme approach coupled with targeted support to strategic partners for development of long term strategies and work plans. This may potentially have a strong impact on the capacity of civil society organisations to engage with authorities and mobilise for political change. Success will also depend on the NPA's capacity to follow-up and engage with their partners on these issues – in the challenging start-up phase in Rwanda most of the NPA's resources have been dedicated to administrative and management issues.

A weakness in the NPA's partnership policy and support for organisational development is the reluctance to harmonise and work with other donors and foreign NGOs. Contracts with partners have also typically been of a one-year duration. This has weakened the NPA's support in this area. The Rwanda programme is a major exception to this.

Dialogue and Value Added

The general impression from recent studies and reviews is that the NPA is highly regarded as a donor partner. There appear in most cases to be good and frank discussions where the NPA both listens, provides advice and takes action on issues agreed upon. It appears that administrative and financial matters predominate in the dialogue in many of the programme countries (with some exceptions, perhaps most evident in some of the Latin American countries). The focus on reporting – both on results and on financial management – is a strong and dominant element in many partner relations. The one complaint – and from all regions – is that the NPA seems to be stuck in the practice of only providing one-year contracts. They have also been reluctant to engage in basket funding with other donors, or to provide core funding to strategic partners.

The focus on reporting appears particularly strong in the Rwanda programme. This applies especially to the major PPIMA programme. This has perhaps reinforced the impression of the NPA as donor agency working with implementing partners. There are also many complaints from several partners that the NPA has too much focus on reporting. On the other hand: Rwanda is among the few programme countries where the NPA has made efforts to provide multi-year contracts to its strategic partners. They are also working closely with a few other international NGOs (Care and Save the Children).

Complaints of the NPA's overemphasis on reporting also come from other countries. The recent mid-term review of the Southern Africa programme also notes that several of the social movement partners mention that the focus on results and reporting may have weakened the partnership.¹¹

The team is of the impression, however, that the dialogue between the NPA and its partners to a large extent remains a one-way traffic. There appears to be limited discussion related to the strategic and administrative challenges facing the NPA, or how experiences from the work in the country could be used in the NPA's political work in Norway and internationally. There are several indications which point to that shortcoming. One is the lack of procedures for consultations with partners about the development of the NPA strategy in the countries concerned. Feedback from partners to the NPA seems primarily to take place through indirect channels: the NPA may learn from "one-way" discussions with partners – achievements and failures of the partner also feeds into the NPA's internal planning. Furthermore, NPA staff gets inputs from informal discussions with individuals and resource persons in the country.

The team also noted that not all partners were familiar with NPA strategies – neither internationally nor in the country. Nor were they always familiar with the NPA's other activities in the country. It indicates that although the NPA may be viewed as a good partner it remains primarily a donor for many partners.

The NPA seeks to develop a strong identity as a political solidarity organisation. It does not see itself primarily as an aid donor, but as a partner with other organisations in the struggle for democratisation and justice. The impressions from several studies give a strong message of an organisation committed to supporting and strengthening partners. The NPA's strong added value here is primarily its role as donor partner and its flexible and non-prescriptive way of working with its partners. The team is, however, also left with the impression that the NPA

¹¹ See Alvin R Anthony, *External Mid Term Evaluation, Southern Africa Regional Programme*, April 2011 (unpublished report commissioned by the NPA).

can do more to help develop alliances between itself and its partners, and to move beyond donor-recipient relations. In a true partnership, partners may to a greater extent help also be in a position to develop the NPA's own national, regional and global strategies.

A 2009 review of the Norwegian Embassy-funded strategic partnership programme between the NPA and Angolan NGOs also shed lights on those challenges – and on what the NPA's added values may be.¹² The review gives high praise to the NPA's ability to provide financial and technical support to partners, but finds limited added value from the NPA partnership beyond funding. The NPA gets a much lower score on its ability to engage with partners on substantive thematic issues and in providing programme advice. The added value from the non-financial contribution from the NPA was found to be limited. The experience from the Angolan programme cannot be generalised, but it does identify what is most likely a weak and challenging dimension in the implementation of the NPA's partnership model.

The 2010 review of the NPA's major programme in Iraqi Kurdistan has a more positive appraisal of the added value of NPA's contribution.¹³ Here the NPA is active on a broad front, of which partnership and support to civil society is but one component (through a community building programme). Support to civil society is praised for its achievements in strengthening local civil society organisations. The added value is identified as the ability to respond quickly, the priority focus on democratisation and human rights, and the NPA's flexible and non-prescriptive mode of operation. The NPA has played a strong role in mentoring and coaching development of civil society organisations according to the review.

In the Rwanda programme – and in the PPIMA initiative in particular – the main dialogue has focused on reporting and management, but through this innovative programme the NPA has made an important contribution in facilitating space for public policy dialogue and in building civil society capacity for advocacy and dialogue with authorities. This is the main added value of the NPA's Rwanda programme.

Organisation and Management

10 years ago the NPA was a highly decentralised and fragmented organisation where the head office played a limited role in providing overall direction and guidance. Since then the NPA has recorded major achievements in becoming a professionally managed provider of development assistance. The decentralised model has been retained, but policy documents and guidelines have been developed to facilitate common objectives, priorities and coherence. The programme department at the head office has been strengthened and procedures and mechanisms have been put in place to help country offices and staff in their tasks, and to facilitate monitoring, evaluation and learning.

In the current programme period several steps have been made to further improve organisation and management. Most important – and as a response to the 2007 performance review – the NPA established two new positions at the head office. One was the responsibility for improving NPA's monitoring and evaluation, and in particular to help develop a better

¹² See Manolo Sánchez et al., *Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Partnership for Civil Society in Angola. Final Report*, Oslo: Scanteam, December 2009 (unpublished).

¹³ See Nordic Consulting Group, *Review of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) in Iraq. Final Report 20.04.2010*, unpublished (commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad).

focus on results based planning, monitoring and reporting. The other was a new position to help develop and strengthen the NPA's partnership policy.

Reporting and Results

The new M&E advisor began a process of simplifying reporting of results. This involved a series of workshop and training courses for NPA staff and partners in the majority of programme countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia as well as the Balkans. It culminated with the publication of a handbook or manual on *Observing Change – results based planning, monitoring and reporting* in late 2010. Several workshops have since been held for staff and partners in programme countries (for some countries more than once).

The manual *Observing Change* was intended to be less technical and more practical than most tools emerging in this growing market. It was designed so that it could be adapted to various settings and be used by practitioners without extensive training. The NPA emphasizes descriptions using ordinary language as an alternative to development jargon and exaggerated use of quantifiable methods. The NPA works with partners in civil society doing advocacy and empowerment in order to achieve political change at society level (impact). According to *Observing Change*, impact is a result of several outcomes and complex processes often at a national level. However, results - at outcome level - need to be monitored and documented by the NPA and partners so that changes can be documented later also at impact level. Impact (defined as change in the society) is complicated to measure, and is at this point in time not the main focal area for reporting of results. However, for some countries the 2008-2010 result reports also reflect efforts to analyse impact.

The NPA has also revitalized its reporting routines from country offices to head offices. In early 2010 new guidelines for quarterly reporting to Oslo was issued. The NPA has had a reporting system that was primarily geared towards serving the various donors and their need for information. It was felt that the NPA and the heads of department had a need of a more systematic overview highlighting the challenges and progress in the different programme countries. Quality reporting was judged to be an important part of the NPA monitoring approach. Relevant quarterly reports were intended to tie together the organisational information flow, and make sharing of information possible.

The team finds that these efforts to improve monitoring have enabled increased awareness and knowledge of how results are documented in civil society work for participation and accountability. This is also indicated in the periodic results reports to Norad which has improved significantly in the period.

On the other hand: the team also observed that the quality of reporting from partners to the NPA and from the NPA to donors is uneven. In the case of Rwanda – with very demanding management and monitoring prescriptions in the major Sida/DFID-funded PPIMA programme – we note that there is very limited back up and assistance from head office to the country office. Nor have we seen calls for substantial technical support from the NPA Oslo in relation to, i.e., practical working arrangements in results based reporting and connected issues towards Sida and DFID or in relation to the partners.

Managing a Partnership Policy

The person appointed to be responsible for partnership and organisational development was also allocated other responsibilities related to political work and advocacy and is now head of the development policy unit. Less time was therefore dedicated to partnership issues.

A main initiative was the 2009 partnership survey. This was the first major effort to systematise knowledge and experiences in the NPA's partnership policies.

Partnership has also been a dominant theme in the first programme manager seminar in Oslo in 2009 and in the joint country director/programme manager seminar in Oslo in April 2011. These events were also important mechanisms for vertical sharing of information within the NPA.

The NPA has good policies and guidelines for partnership. However, the team has noted that there are variations in how this is operationalised and implemented in programme countries – differences which go beyond differences in country contexts. The NPA has begun a process of learning and assessment of its experiences in building partnerships. This should continue. The team will also encourage the NPA to study the experiences from the evolving Rwanda programme. This country programme – with its strong programme approach, large numbers of “implementing partners” and heavy donor-emphasis on “results” – may be atypical compared to many other NPA-programmes, but the country itself is not. The challenges facing the NPA in an authoritarian country like Rwanda with its limited space for civil society action are likely to be replicated in many old and new NPA programme countries.

Relations between the Head Office and Country Offices

The NPA office in Oslo is perceived to be accessible, available and supportive. The international development department currently has a programme staff of 17 (down from 19 in 2010). They are mostly geographical advisors – each being responsible for 2-3 programme countries – but there are also a few thematic advisors in a part or fulltime position (e. g., the M&E advisor). Most are senior advisors with a long track record with the NPA.

There are regular and frequent formal and informal communication between the head office and the country office (mainly with the country director and to a lesser extent with the programme manager, but there are variations between programme countries). The geographical advisor typically also visits the country once or twice a year. There is also a formal quarterly report from each programme country to Oslo.

A formal arena for meetings between the head office and the country offices is the annual meeting in Oslo with all country directors (including also the country directors from the “mine action” countries). A more important forum for the development programme was the introduction in 2009 of the programme managers meeting which in 2011 was merged with the meeting of country directors. Beyond this there are more irregular meetings at the regional level. The country directors and programme managers from programme countries met with Oslo (in Africa) in 2010, and the programme managers in Southern Africa/Latin America meet regularly under the auspices of the regional Southern Africa/Latin America programmes.

However, despite growing professionalization and strong attention to head office – country office relations the team also noted its limitations. In the case of Rwanda the team found that the international strategy has been largely neutral when it comes to defining the Rwanda programme, neither pushing nor preventing it. The relation between the NPA Oslo and the NPA country offices is not control oriented and formal, but rather subject to personal skills, interests and individual working methods both in Oslo and abroad. This may have its advantages, but in the case of Rwanda both the PPIMA and the Norad-funded programmes may have benefitted from back up and assistance from Oslo. Inputs from Oslo are equally important from a quality assurance perspective.

The 2011 change of senior personnel – country director and programme manager – at the Rwanda country office may also illustrate this. The previous leadership of the office was very proactive and gave the NPA a strong voice in the development of PPIMA and in relation to the donor community and key stakeholders. This may have been justified, perhaps even a necessity, in the situation at the time. The new country director emphasises more strongly other dimensions and the need for a more genuine partnership with the NPA having a less visible role inside Rwanda. These shifts and adaption to changing political dynamics require both skills and careful balancing.

The team will expect that Oslo – through especially the M&E advisor, but also those responsible for partnerships – become more directly involved in providing back up and support to country offices in project/programme approach analysis as well as results reporting at country level. The tools available through the M&E advisor and others should be available and expected to be requested when the NPA country offices assumes a lead role in complex interventions such as PPIMA in Rwanda.

4: Conclusion and Recommendations

The NPA is a professionally managed organisation with a solid track record in supporting civil society partners in developing organisations. It has addressed weaknesses and recommendations for changes made in the 2007 performance review and have sought to develop appropriate policies and management structures. The NPA demonstrates notable capabilities in their efforts to serve development goals. The NPA is in 2011 in much better position to address shortcomings and weaknesses and to build on strengths compared to the situation in 2007. However, the NPA still faces a number of challenges and needs to further improve both on implementation and management.

The team has structured its main findings and recommendations under three headings.

Strategies and Policies

1: Policy documents can be improved, but the team do not see a need for major changes in the current global strategy document and policy guidelines. Some editing and improvements, including efforts to make them shorter and more readable, are necessary but further revisions on substance will not necessarily yield much additional value. The challenge for the NPA lies in implementing strategies and policies in programme countries.

2: The contextualisation and operationalisation of the NPA's strategies and policies should primarily take place at the country and regional level. The NPA therefore needs to develop strategy documents for each of its programme countries. These documents – developed by the country offices in conjunction with the head office – should serve both as governing instruments for country operations and as communication tools with partners and stakeholders. The country strategy document should provide an overview of what the NPA does in the country concerned, what it seeks to achieve as well highlight linkages with the NPA's work in Norway and globally. Such documents will also be an important instrument in the relations and communications between the head and country offices. They are also crucial in helping the NPA to develop more coherent and integrated programmes. Many of the country programmes appear to be the sum of individual activities.

3: The team has noted the dissolution of the International Department and the organisation of the NPA's Mine Action Programme and the Development Programme into two new and separate Departments. The team would strongly encourage greater interaction, perhaps initially piloted in selected countries. There may be mutual benefits to be reaped from such interaction, e.g. related to land issues, but also with regard to the NPA's engagement with national authorities.

4: The team feels that the identity and purpose of the NPA's development programme could be further developed and strengthened with a focus on trade unions in programme countries. Regular information sharing with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions as well as trade union federations is important. The possibility of the NPA facilitating support to trade unions in selected programme countries should be explored.

5: The team also recommends that the NPA revisits and clarifies its approach to regional programmes. Should it be limited to being an administrative arrangement, a vehicle for information sharing between NPA offices, or focused on certain projects where regional approaches may add value to country programmes? Furthermore, regional thinking may help in guiding the selection, focus and concentration of country programmes.

Implementation and Partnership

6: The decentralised organisation and implementation of the development programme remain a major strength of the NPA's development work. Contextualisation and operationalisation of NPA strategies and policies take place through country and regional offices. However, the team has noted that there are wide variations between the NPA's country programmes. These variations can only partly be explained by different contexts. They are also explained by historical NPA legacies in the specific country and – most probably - by NPA staff having different approaches and priorities. This reinforces the need for stronger focus on proper country strategies and a stronger programme approach (cf. recommendation 2 above), but also for improved management support and quality control (see below).

7: The NPA has good policies and guidelines for partnership. Working with partners in civil society also seems accepted as a goal in all country programmes and is internalised by the NPA staff. However, there are variations in how this is operationalised and implemented in programme countries. The NPA has begun a process of learning and assessment of its experiences in building partnerships. This should continue. The team will also strongly encourage the NPA to study the experiences from the evolving Rwanda programme. This country programme – with its strong programme approach, large numbers of “implementing partners” and heavy donor-emphasis on “results” – may be atypical for the NPA, but the country itself is not. The challenges facing the NPA in an authoritarian country like Rwanda with its limited space for civil society action are likely to be replicated in many old and new NPA programme countries.

8: The team will recommend that the NPA revisits its old distinction between strategic/long-term and project/short-term partners. This distinction does not seem to have been given much attention in many programme countries. It may however, help the NPA in establishing more long-term partnerships. The goal should also be that such partners should be provided with multi-year contracts. This would also help the NPA to concentrate on fewer partners; it is

simply not possible to establish genuine partnerships with a large number of partners in each programme country.

9: The NPA has not really succeeded in reducing the number of programme countries or the number of partners. While some programme countries have been or are being phased out, others are established because of funding opportunities and encouragement from donors (such as the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The number of programme countries is now on the high side considering the level of support and quality control that the NPA in Oslo is able to provide. In many programme countries the NPA staff does not have sufficient capacity to work with partners beyond management and reporting. The NPA needs to strike a better balance and ensure that it has the capacity to do what it wants to do.

10: The current international strategy has a strong emphasis on the NPA's political role. The NPA also has major ambitions to influence Norwegian foreign and development policies as well as to contribute to international debates. The capacity to run with these ambitions has been far too limited. It is recommended that the NPA scales down its ambitions and concentrate on issues where it has the potential to make a difference. This has so far mainly been in relation to Norwegian policies, especially linked to areas where the NPA can draw upon country experiences.

Organisation and Management

11: The development agencies continue to request documentation of results. For civil society working with participation and empowerment and in view of the methodological difficulties in assessing results in this sphere, this has ramifications for donor relations and internal organisation of the NPA. The investment done by NPA in practical tools is a well conceived response to this pressure, and could encompass performance based budgeting and disbursements. This may contribute to a results oriented approach in a more generic sense, not only an administrative add-on. To progress further in this field the policy thinking in NPA could be more corporate, and less ideological. A programme approach – such as the case of Rwanda – may also clarify some of the results civil society as change agents achieve at impact level.

12: The NPA head office should be prepared to offer more tailor-made technical support and advice to NPA country offices involved in complex interventions such as the one in Rwanda. The role of the M&E advisor and partnership advisors are crucial to achieve this.

Annexes

1: Terms of Reference

1 Background

A comprehensive organisational performance review of NPA was carried out in 2007, prior to NPA's current agreement with Norad (2008-2011).

The review found that NPA's main strengths lie in its partnership approach and its ability to work effectively with partners on relevant activities. The review identified two main areas of improvement for the organisation:

- results management, monitoring and evaluation; and
- organisational development (systems and procedures; knowledge management and organisational learning).

NPA has addressed the weaknesses. A new strategy 2008-2011 was formulated taking the findings into account; a monitoring and evaluation senior advisor was recruited; and a new results management tool has been developed, to name a few measures taken.

The framework conditions of NPA's work, globally, as well as in the Norwegian context, have changed somewhat since 2007. Main priorities of Norwegian development policy are altered. Reference is made to 'Report no. 13 to the Storting (2008-2009) Climate, Conflict and Capital', with the parliamentary committee's 'Innst. S. nr. 269 (2008-2009)' and the annual budget propositions (St.prp nr. 1). Reference is further made to Norad's 'Principles for support to civil society (Oslo, May 2009).

The organisation

The NPA was established in 1939 as the trade unions' voluntary health and solidarity organisation. NPA's international work includes long-term development efforts and humanitarian work, including a substantial portfolio on land mine clearance. The Norad-agreement covers the long-term development work.

Thematic areas vary through different country contexts, though revolving around three main areas: democracy and just redistribution of power and resources; access to and control over natural resources, incl. land; and women's rights and gender equality.

The current cooperation agreement with Norad covers 19 countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. NPA also has regional programmes in Southern Africa and Latin America.

The NPA's international budget for 2009 was close to 600 million NOK. Of that, the budget for long-term development programmes amounted to about 45 percent, or 258 million NOK. Grants from Norad in 2009 amounted to about half of this, 133¹⁴ million NOK. This makes NPA one of the four organisations receiving the highest level of support from Norad.

NPA is currently preparing a revised international strategy, taking effect from 2012-2015.

¹⁴ Annual support from Norad under the cooperation agreement 2008-2011 has been 109 million NOK. In addition, NPA was granted 2 million NOK under the Oil for Development grant scheme managed by Norad, and 22 million NOK under the Strategic Partnerships with Norwegian Embassies in Tanzania and Angola (managed by Norad as of 2009) in 2009.

2 Purpose of the review

Norad is considering entering into a new cooperation agreement with NPA as of 2012. This review is to provide input to Norad's decision on future support to NPA.

NPA's main strategy for its international work is – based on careful analysis of the context – to support selected change agents in their efforts to influence the government towards fulfilment of democratic rights and a fair distribution of power and resources in society. The purpose of the review is twofold. Firstly, and most important, the review shall analyse and assess how this strategy is operationalised in the country context. It shall also consider what results this has produced for the target group (NPA's partner organisations): it shall identify, analyse and assess the outcome of NPA's support to partners, as well as the relevance and sustainability of the results, in one selected country case study – Rwanda. The team may, where possible, comment on likely impact.

Secondly, the review shall assess NPA's achievements in addressing the two main challenges posed by the 2007-review, as cited above (under 1. Background).

3 Scope

The review shall analyse, assess, conclude and make recommendations regarding NPA's approach and achievements, including the following issues:

3.1 Support to change agents in practice and results thereof

- NPA's analysis of the context and considerations in the choice of partners; NPA's approach in pluralistic societies and economically, socially and/or ethnically divided contexts;
- Partners' popular basis, grass-root links and legitimacy with the general public; partners' relations to government structures and other civil society actors; partners' strategies and working methods to promote and defend peoples' democratic rights and to promote equitable distribution of resources;
- NPA's contribution to partners' capacity to reach their own goals and to pursue their own agenda; NPA's added value to the partnership, according to partners; communication between NPA and partners on potential risks;
- NPA's understanding of its own role and responsibilities as an external actor in partnerships and projects/activities intended to influence public policy in programme countries; NPA HQ's instructions to country offices regarding NPA's role; NPA's role as seen by partners, peers, government and others;
- To what extent development changes accord with planned results of NPA's programmes; what development changes can be attributed to NPA's efforts; have the programmes had any unintended consequences;
- NPA contribution to strengthening civil society as such through its support to partners in a given country;
- Other aspects that may further the purpose of the review.

3.2 NPA's responses to challenges posed in the 2007-review

- Results management, monitoring and evaluation: quality, applicability and use of systems and procedures for planning for and reporting on results (incl. preparation and use of baseline information; use of indicators; and means of verifying success);
- Organisational development: NPA's approach to systematic learning; ability to respond to changing condition

4 Implementation

The following methods and sources of information will be used in the review:

Document studies with particular emphasis on

- NPA's International strategy 2008-2011; (and 2004-2007 for reference); NPA's Partnership Policy; other relevant policy documents, handbooks, website

- NPA's plans and reports submitted to Norad during the agreement period 2008-2011; (as well as plans and reports submitted to Norad 2004-2007 for reference)
- Cooperation agreement NPA-Norad 2008-2011; (and 2004-2007 for reference)
- Organisational performance review of Norwegian Peoples Aid: Synthesis report (Norad Report 04/2007 Review) Norad, June 2007
- 'Report no. 13 to the Storting (2008-2009) Climate, Conflict and Captial', with the parliamentary committee's 'Innst. S. nr. 269 (2008-2009)'
- Annual St.prp nr. 1
- Norad's 'Principles for support to civil society (Oslo, May 2009).
- Review of Norwegian Peoples' Aid's International Work in the 2008-2011 Strategy Period (NPA review 2011, forthcoming); other relevant NPA reviews, in particular 'Review of the NPA Rwanda programme and assessment of prospects of NPA activities in Rwanda (NPA June 2007)'.

Interviews with NPA management and staff at head office and in country; and with MfA (incl, if possible, Norwegian Embassy in Kampala) and Norad management/staff.

Country visit to Rwanda, including interviews with NPA and (selected) partners; peers (other NGOs/organisations working on similar topics/with a similar methodology; relevant government representatives; independent observers (e.g. academics; journalists). The country visit will be concluded by a meeting with NPA and partners to discuss preliminary findings.

Review team

The review shall be carried out by an external consultant together with a senior adviser from Norad. The external consultant shall be team leader and responsible for the report. The Norad-adviser will be part of the team in his/her professional capacity, not as a representative of Norad. The Norad-adviser will contribute according to his/her areas of expertise in all phases of the review, including sections of the report. The team leader is responsible for employing the total competence of the team in the best possible manner.

For the field work, the team may be supplemented by a local consultant (to be contracted by the team leader).

The team leader should be a consultant with experience in leading evaluations in the field of development cooperation and in carrying out organisational reviews, and should have specific competence on results assessments. The consultant should also preferably have good knowledge on civil society as an arena and actor in socioeconomic development and democratisation, particularly on social and political movements; capacity building as a method for strengthening partner organisations. The team should preferably have good knowledge of Rwanda, and preferably be fluent in French.

The Norad-advisor will be selected after contracting of the team leader in order to supplement the team with necessary knowledge and experience.

Time schedule

The review is to be undertaken in May/June 2011. The exact timetable will be decided according to the schedule of the team members and the NPA country offices. The review is estimated at five working weeks.

5 Reporting

Norad will meet the team before start-up of the review to clarify any questions regarding the terms of reference.

After completion of document studies and interviews in Norway, the team will submit an inception report outlining design, method, and main questions for the review and some preliminary findings, along with a plan and focal points for the field visit.

A draft report shall be submitted to Norad and to NPA 14 days after completion of the country visit. Norad and NPA shall be given 14 days to comment, after which the final report shall be submitted within 14 days.

The report shall be written in English and not exceed 20 pages, including an executive summary of max 3 pages. Recommendations shall be clearly stated. Submission of the report shall be in electronic Word format.

The report shall be presented by the team to Norad and NPA.

2: List of Persons Met

Norway

Rannveig Lade	Country Advisor, Rwanda, NPA
Steinar Sundvoll	Former Country Director, NPA Rwanda (2008-2011)
Beate Thoresen	Development Policy Advisor, NPA
Eva Haaland	Regional Advisor, Southern African, NPA
Sveinung Torgersen	Acting Head, International Development Department, NPA
Kjersti Berre	Advisor, M&E, NPA
Terje Vigtel	Director, Civil Society Department, Norad
Erling Eggen	Senior Advisor, Section for Civil Society Strengthening, Civil Society Department, Norad
Lillian Prestegård	Adviser, Section for Development Initiatives, Civil Society Department, Norad

Rwanda

Felipe Atkins	Country Director, NPA Rwanda
Patrick Osodo	Programme Manager, NPA Rwanda
Anita Namara	Programme Coordinator (PPIMA), NPA Rwanda
Alphonse Kabasha	Accountant, NPA Rwanda
Kathleen Valentini	Intern, NPA Rwanda
Dinah Musindarwezo	Programme Coordinator/Gender Equality Specialist, NPA Rwanda
Jean Claude Rugera	Programme Officer (PPIMA), NPA Rwanda
Richard Bombona	Head of Mission, Embassy of Sweden
Marie Jusnes	First Secretary, Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden
Claudine Nyinawagaga	National Programme Officer, Democratic Governance, Embassy of Sweden
Elizabeth Carriere	Resident Representative, DFID Rwanda-Burundi
Doreen NN	Programme Officer, DFID Rwanda-Burundi
Navaraja Gyawali	Country Director, Care International in Rwanda
Appollinaire Mupiganyi	Executive Secretary, Transparency Rwanda
Albert Rwego	Program Manager, Transparency Rwanda
Alessandro Bozzini	Technical Advisor, Transparency Rwanda
Innocent Cyiza	Journalist, Transparency Rwanda
Colette Ndabarushimang	Regional Coordinator, ALAC, Transparency Rwanda

Dominique Ruhumuliza	Director, Administration and Finance, COPORWA
Jean Damascéne Nkundumukiza	Executive Secretary, ADTS
John Mudakikwa	Executive Secretary, AJPRODHO Gahini Sector, Kayonza District, Eastern Province: AJPRODHO staff, executive secretary (Gahini), governance advisor (Kayonza) and members of Village Savings and Loan clusters Gitoki Sector, Gatsibo District, Eastern Province, AJPRODHO staff, members Ppima target groups
Thaddée Karekezi	Executive Secretary, Rwanda Civil Society Platform
Emmanuel Safari Alexis Floris Nukurunziza	Executive Secretary, CLADHO Policy and Advocacy Officer, Budget Information Program, CLADHO
Emmanuel Kamonyo Sibomana Guido Ngamije Kirabo	Policy Advocacy Coordinator, CLADHO Chairperson, CLADHO
Gabriel Nkulyimana	Coordinator, ADENYA
Musime Juvenal Innocent Uwitonze	President, IMBARAGA PPIMA Field Officer, IMBARAGA
Pierre Celestine Kabano	Executive Secretary, Tubibe Amahoro Field visit to Ngororero District and Ngororero Sector, Western Province (VSLA and PPMIA sites), meetings with District Mayor, Head of Joint Action Development Forum and District and Sector officials, PPIMA coordinator, field officer and animators, and with VSLA clusters
Bavukiyiki Mathieu	Coordinator, ADI Terimbere Visit to ADI office, Kabaya Sector, Ngororero District, Western Province, meetings with ADI staff, accompanied by Head of Joint Action Development Forum and other District and Sector officials and by Tubibe Amahoro
Emma Marie Bugingo	National Executive Secretary, Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe
Mary Balikungeri Peter Turyahikayo	Founder & Director, Rwanda Women's Network Program Manager, Community Development, Rwanda Women's Network
Annete NN Andrew NN	Program Officer, Rwanda Women's Network PPIMA District Field Officer, Gatsibo, Eastern Province, Rwanda Women's Network
Geoffrey Kirenga	Acting Director & Child Protection Programme Manager, Save the Children
Douglas Kirke-Smith	Head of Finance and Programme Support, Save the Children
Apollinaire Mushinzimana	Coordinator, National Decentralisation Implementation Secretariat
Diogene Nsengumuremyi	Executive Secretary, National Union of Disability

Bernard Bagneneza	Organisations of Rwanda (NUDOR) Shia Country Coordinator, advisor NUDOR
Jennifer Orgle	Civil Society Technical Advisor, Strengthening Civic Participation Project, USAID
Jean Claude Ngendandumwe	Executive Secretary, Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development (CCOAIB)
Nadine Umotoni Gatsinzi	Acting Director General in charge of Research, Rwanda Governance Advisory Council

3: Rwanda Country Case Report

Introduction

Rwanda is a small, landlocked country with a very high population density. The population is about 10 million in a country of just over 26 000 sq km. At the same time Rwanda is one of the least urbanized countries in Africa. The capital Kigali is growing at a fast rate but 80-90 per cent of the population still lives in rural areas with the majority depending upon subsistence agriculture.

Rwanda has seen high economic growth rates in recent years – the average growth rate in 2006-2010 is estimated at 7.3 percent annually - but the structure of the economy has remained largely unchanged for decades. Agriculture, the main employer, contributes about 40% of GDP. Tea and coffee, the main cash crops, contribute less than 2% of GDP, but usually generate over 80% of export earnings. Rwanda has joined the East African Community and the government is pushing ahead with market-oriented reforms as they try to position the country as a regional trading and services hub.

The Government of Rwanda's long-term development goals are embedded in its *Vision 2020* which seeks to transform Rwanda from a low-income agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based, service-oriented economy by 2020. It envisages real growth of eight percent annually, to be achieved through: (i) deepening reforms, including in the business environment; (ii) investing in major infrastructure (power, transport, and ICT); (iii) increasing agricultural productivity; and (iv) investing in skills development needed for economic modernisation.

Within this long term vision, the government's *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (EDPRS) assigns the highest priority to accelerating growth to create employment and generate exports. The strategy is framed around three strategic flagship programmes:

- Flagship one (Growth) targets economy-wide improvements in productivity. Its goal is to transform Rwanda's economy from subsistence agriculture towards increased commercial agriculture, as well as manufacturing and services.
- Flagship two (Vision 2020 Umurenge) focuses on ensuring that growth is shared by creating economic opportunities for the poorest Rwandans. It has three components: (i) public works; (ii) credit packages; and (iii) direct supports.
- Flagship three (Governance) seeks to strengthen political and economic governance, and build institutions and capacity of the state.

Central to Rwanda's goal of ensuring inclusive development is the implementation of its 2006 *Fiscal and Financial Decentralization Policy*, which aims to provide equitable, efficient and effective pro-poor service

delivery, while promoting local development in an environment of good governance. It seeks to foster citizens' participation and empowerment as well as transparency and accountability.

Poverty is widespread with an estimated 57% of the population living below the poverty line in 2006 and with more than a third of the population living in extreme poverty. No data are available to show to what extent and how high economic growth and poverty reduction efforts have translated into reduction in poverty.

The present government came to power in 1994 when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) overthrew the previous government and ended the genocide of Tutsis and moderate Hutus that had been unleashed. Between 800 000 and 1 million had been killed over a period of 100 days. The 2003 presidential and legislative elections officially marked the conclusion of nine-year transition to normal, open party political activity. It produced a resounding victory for the governing RPF and President Paul Kagame. RPF retained its position as the dominant party in the 2008 elections and Kagame was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2010 for a second term as president until 2017.

There are several other parties in the parliament but most are in alliance with the RPF and have no distinctive identities. There are no domestically based opposition parties that can claim significant ideological distance between themselves and the RPF. There are still armed groups in opposition based in the DRC but they do not at present represent any significant threat.

The RPF government – despite its commitment to political pluralism – has proved unprepared to loosen its grip on power and allow space for genuine opposition. The government is led by predominantly English-speaking Tutsis former exiles in Uganda with a technocratic approach and eager to establish a strong developmental state. The strength of the contemporary Rwandan state is perhaps best explained by Rwanda's history of a strong, centralized state, and partly by the security imperatives following the genocide. At the same time we may witness a growing divide between the post-war urban and Kigali-based political elite – reinforced by the return of Tutsi returnees – and the rural society largely populated by Hutus. Some prominent members of the ruling elite have also defected and left the country, including the former Chief of Staff in the Defence Force.

The meanings of Hutu and Tutsi are contested. People who consider themselves to be Hutus are thought to outnumber Tutsis by at least 4:1. The current post-genocide constitution forbids discussion of ethnicity as “divisive” and ethnic monitoring is illegal. This also applies to the historically marginalised batwa community now estimated to number around 30 000.

*Civil Society*¹⁵

Before the 1994 genocide Rwanda had a relatively dense network of diverse associations labeled civil society. This included cooperatives; peasant associations; informal associations; foreign and local NGOs; and churches. However these civil society components did little to promote or to reflect tolerance and pluralism in Rwanda. During the colonial period, the Christian churches propagated ethnic stereotypes, which pitted one group against the other. During the post-colonial period, a state based on ethnic exclusion closely controlled the development of associational life and stifled the emergence of a democratic culture. In this context, civil society reflected the country's political and ethnic divisions. Thus, NGOs, cooperatives, peasant associations, and church groups in Rwanda were often run by extremists.

Most Rwandan development NGOs were created after 1985. The sharp increase in development assistance during that time fuelled their expansion and set their agenda. The government used development NGOs to service the needs of smaller peasant associations engaged in a wide range of economic activities encouraged by the state, international NGOs, and donors. The disruption caused by the 1990-1994 war and genocide led to a sharp decline in the activities of these development NGOs. Massacres and flight also decimated the ranks of the cadres managing the development NGOs.

¹⁵ The discussion of civil society is based on data from several written sources: ARD, Inc., *Civil Society in Rwanda: Assessment and Options*, Report submitted to USAID/Rwanda 2001 (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACM181.pdf); T. Taksdal Skjeseth, *Donors, Civil Society and Democratization in Rwanda, A Critical Analysis*, Oslo 2011 (unpublished MA dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo); CCOAIB, *The State of Civil Society in Rwanda in National Development*, Kigali, March 2011 (*CIVICUS Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Rwanda*) (<http://civicus.org/downloads/CSI/Rwanda.pdf>); and Roddom Consult, *Rwanda Civil Society Mapping*, Kigali: Draft Study Report submitted to UNDP Rwanda, April 2011.

The destruction of the economy and basic social infrastructure, the horrors of genocide, and the need to resettle three million people led to a massive influx of foreign aid in the post-genocide era. Donors relied heavily upon international non-governmental organisations and northern NGOs to execute emergency relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement programmes. They, in turn, relied heavily upon Rwandan cadres and development NGOs to execute their programmes on the ground.

National development NGOs expanded rapidly and increased the number of its personnel as a result of this. With the return to normality from the late 1990s donors reduced the amount of aid to Rwanda for rehabilitation and resettlement projects, and northern NGOs cut back on subcontracting national NGOs to execute their programs. Most Rwandan development NGOs was forced to reduce their personnel and cut back on activities as a result of this.

Rwanda has a range of sector umbrella organisations for civil society organisations and one national umbrella, the *Rwanda Civil Society Platform (CSP)*. CSP is the national representative structure for some 16 national level civil society umbrella institutions bringing together close to 150 centrally or district registered civil society organisations. It was formally constituted in July 2004 and became operational in 2006. Sectoral umbrella organisations include

- *Federation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights in Rwanda (CLADHO)*;
- *Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development (CCOAIB)* is a national umbrella association of development NGOs working mainly in agriculture and rural development;
- *Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development (CCOAIB)* is national Network of 160 NGOs fighting HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and non communicable diseases;
- *Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe* is the largest national umbrella organisation for women's promotion and development;
- *The National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR)* is the national umbrella for organisations of persons with disability;
- *Rwanda Farmers Association (IMBARAGA)* was established in 1992 and brings together some 26 000 members in 26 districts in the country; and
- *The Trade Union Centre of Workers of Rwanda (CESTRAR)* is the main trade union body in Rwanda with 17 affiliated unions. It was established in 1985.

At the other end of the spectrum of civil society organizations are grassroots associations organised at the village level. These associations are generally small, locally based, and formed by neighbours and kin who know each other. They include rotating credit and micro-credit associations, youth and women's groups, cooperatives, and local religious groups. Thousands of grassroots associations exist at the local level, which account for the high density of associational life in Rwanda. Their relationships with national and regional-level civil society associations differ considerably. The faith-based institutions are the main nationally based organizations to reach down to their constituents at the village and grassroots level.

Development Aid

Rwanda's government has set itself ambitious targets of reducing dependence on aid by expanding the domestic revenue base. Currently (2010) official development assistance amounts to 12% of GDP and 50% of government revenue. The main donors are the multilaterals (World Bank, EU and the African Development Bank) with the main bilateral donors being USAID and DFID and a number of smaller donors (Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland and others).

More than a 120 international and northern NGOs have projects and programmes in Rwanda. Most of the more important of these have established a joint platform and dialog forum, the Network of International NGOs (NINGO), but it has not developed into a coordinating body. Nearly 50 international NGOs are full members of NINGO.

The NPA in Rwanda

The NPA became active in Rwanda in aftermath of the 1994 genocide with a programme focusing on humanitarian assistance, particularly emphasising health and supporting livelihoods of widows and orphans. The

NPA directly implemented programmes and the beneficiaries had no role in project design or implementation. By 2003 the NPA Rwanda had a staff of 73 and one central office and five sub-offices. Most staff were directly involved in service provision and beneficiary support.¹⁶

By the end of 2003, when the NPA's new policy and strategy document defining the direction for the next four years (2004-2007) was issued, the NPA still maintained an operational programme focused on service delivery, but the orientation had begun to change towards rights issues. The programme covered health, vocational training, support to justice institutions and refugee assistance as well as activities related to the 2003 elections.

The NPA head office defined Rwanda as one of the countries where a strategic change of direction was required. The new resident representative recruited in 2004 was instructed to lead the transition towards a rights-based approach and partnership co-operation in line with the new international strategy. An NPA-commissioned review concluded in 2007 that it appeared that no further training and support was provided from the NPA head office.

In 2004 the NPA held a range of workshops to outline the transition towards a rights-based approach translated to a Rwandan context. A consultant was also commissioned to write a document – *How to apply NPA's global strategic concept in current Rwanda* – which became the guiding document for the NPA Rwanda in the change process. There was also a need to acquaint staff with a rights-based approach and how to work with partners. All staff were taken through a 4-week training conducted by a local NGO (ADTS) focusing on training for transformation aiming to change attitudes and behaviour, develop ability and competence to conduct and facilitate training, and to learn techniques to base development and frank discussion. Several staff members were also selected to embark on further specialised short-term training courses.

By 2005 the health and refugee programmes had been fully phased out and in the 2006 the direct support to justice institutions was also phased out. Three main areas for interventions were selected: reduction of violence against women (VAW) with a focus on domestic violence; youth participation; and access to land and natural resources for historically marginalised groups.

In 2006 the NPA Rwanda had 28 partners. They had 12 partners and 7 projects in the VAW programme; 10 partners and 8 projects in the youth programme; 3 partners and 3 projects in land and natural resources; as well as 2 partners and 1 project in the out-going justice programme. There was also one partner and one project under the "Women Can Do It" initiative. By 2007 this had been reduced to 21 partners. Funding was limited and typically amounted to less than NOK 200 000 per partner per year. Criteria for selecting partners were identified. Contact with local communities and ability to influence were apparently the most important. The 2007 internal review concluded *inter alia* that:

In general, it is observed that the focus of the NPA Rwanda has been more towards good project development than systematic organisational strengthening of the partners. Most of the intensive accompaniment of partners is done during elaboration of project proposals to get quality proposals which may ignore the need to systematically and progressively develop strong capacity in partner organisations to conceive and design good projects. NPA Rwanda seems to have been looking for organisations which have potential to serve as change agents in the Rwandan context, but the main focus seems not to have been to strengthen the organisations as such, rather to support their work and co-operate with them in advocacy and lobbying.¹⁷

In 2006 the NPA had a staff of 22 in the Kigali office and all sub-offices had been closed. The Kigali office still had large stores and warehouses overloaded with equipment used during the previous years of operation. In 2008 the equipment was sold or given away and the NPA moved into new office premises in 2009.

The 2007 Rwanda review recommended that

NPA should continue and if possible scale up its portfolio, but must be mindful of the challenges involved. The focus should be on greater and more targeted support to the partners' organisation development, building stronger partnerships, and support partners to strengthen and have lasting links

¹⁶ See also the report from the 2007 NPA-commissioned review of the Rwanda programme: Liv Bremer, Charles Bakwatsa and Trude Falch, *Review of the NPA Rwanda Programme and Assessment of Prospects of NPA Activities in Rwanda*, Final Report June 2007 (unpublished).

¹⁷ The quote is from p. 50 in the 2007 review.

*with grassroots – building constituencies and internal democratisation of partner organisations. The present intervention areas are still relevant from the national and international perspective. But there is more to be done, in terms of policy analysis and programming, to translate international NPA strategy into Rwandan context. This is important to enable partners to influence the national policy framework, for example, bringing more information about grass root women and youth's situation and interests into the decision making levels and actively advocate for the desired change.*¹⁸

The 2007 application to Norad for the 2008-2011 period and the 2008 report to Norad outlined a further consolidation of the Rwanda programme with a focus on ending domestic and gender-based violence, strengthening of civil society organisations, and democratic governance. Four partners were retained (*AJPRODHO, Tubibe Amahoro, ADTS* and *COPORWA*) while one new partner was brought in (*Transparency*). One additional partner (*Rwanda Cinema Centre*) was intended to be retained but was dropped in 2008. In 2009 Rwanda introduced a new activity on financial services for poor households through the establishment of Village Savings and Loans Associations. No new partners were added and most were active in all programme areas. Four of the five partners were also provided with financial and technical assistance to develop a five-year strategic plan and a two year operational plan. In 2010, support for development of strategic and operational plans was also provided to another organisation: the *Rwanda Civil Society Platform* (it became a partner through the Sida-DFID funded PPIMA-programme – see below.) Such support was intended to pave the way for long-term partnerships and multi-year contracts.

“Women Can Do It” had no activities in Rwanda after 2008.

In 2008, the NPA Rwanda also partnered with the Sudan Mine Action Program and the Rwanda National Demining Office of Rwanda's Ministry of Defence, on a project to clear the last remaining landmines in Rwanda. The project was completed in December 2008, freeing up some 520,000 m² of strategic land near the City of Kigali.

A new Country Director took up office in 2008. He had a long history of engagement and deep knowledge of Rwanda. He was also appointed a Honorary Consul General of Norway which facilitated additional links to the diplomatic and donor community and to the Rwandan authorities. The NPA Rwanda decided that they either had to scale down their operation, or expand with additional funding from other donors. They decided to design and develop a major new program on civil society strengthening and participation. This led to the launch of a major 3-year *Civil Society Capacity Building and Engagement in Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy* (PPIMA) programme in mid-2009.

The PPIMA project is a civil society support project aimed at promoting an active interest among Rwandan civil society organisations and citizens in public policy affairs and helping them to self-organize and acquire the skills they need to engage effectively in national and local level processes of policy formulation, implementation and management. This will be achieved through a number of activities aimed at increasing their access to information on public policies and policy processes, building their capacities for policy analysis and advocacy, and engaging them in specific policy and governance improving actions at both national and local levels. The project secured funding of about SEK 63 million from Sida and DFID with a small supplementary funding from Care International in Rwanda.

14 civil society partners were selected to take part in the implementation of the programme. This included NPA's five others partners. Some old partners were also brought back in, but most were new. NPA cooperates with Care International and the Save the Children UK in the management of the programme. Both delegate staff to the NPA's technical assistance unit for PPIMA. (This arrangement was also linked to DFID's support to the programme.)

The NPA Rwanda currently has 5 programme staff, 1 accountant, 1 intern, and 3 persons in the administration, in addition to the country director. At the time of the visit, the NPA Rwanda office was in the process of hiring 2 additional accountants and 2 district field coordinators in the PPIMA technical assistance unit. In addition two district field coordinators are provided by Care (in the process of being recruited) and Save the Children (in place). Care and Save the Children delegate one staff each on a part time basis to participate in the Technical Assistance Unit.

¹⁸ From p. 80 in the 2007 review.

Partners and Programmes

NPA currently has 13 partners in its Rwanda programme with one more to be added in 2011. Below we have provided a brief summary presentation of each, including information of budgeted 2011 support from NPA, as well as information of what NPA is supporting. The figures for budgeted support are provided in Rwanda Franc (RWF). The current exchange rate is 0.94.

PPIMA

The PPIMA project is a civil society support project aimed at promoting an active interest among Rwandan civil society organizations and citizens in public policy affairs. It seeks to helping them to self-organize and acquire the skills they need to engage effectively in national and local level processes of policy formulation and implementation to ensure that policies work to deliver improved services, especially for poor Rwandans. Several interrelated activities are identified with the aim of increasing civil society access to information on public policies and policy processes, building their capacity for policy analysis and advocacy, and supporting their engagement in specific policy and governance improving activities.

8 partners are working in four of the country's 30 districts (one in each province). Two organisations will work in each district (but in different clusters). Each organisation will train and support 48 locally recruited community animators that will mobilise and train communities in using community score cards as a basis for engaging with local authorities and service providers. Each district will also be provided with an anti-corruption, justice and information centre (AJIC).

5 partners will work at the national level. This includes support to the 8 partners working in the 4 districts as well as advocacy and monitoring of government policies.

Rwanda Civil Society Platform (CSP) is the national NGO coalition which brings together 15 civil society organisations, mainly NGO sector umbrella bodies but also the trade union federation, the farmers association and various faith based organisations. It was established in 2004 and became operational in 2006. Its task within this programme is to be responsible for national policy dialogues, including the launch of an interactive website as a space for dialogue and dissemination of key information on public policies. They are also expected to coordinate the PPIMA's steering committee.

It became an NPA partner through PPIMA. The NPA has supported a review and revision of the Platform's five year (2008-2012) strategic and operational plan, recruitments and funding of a Policy and Advocacy Coordinator and an Information and Outreach Coordinator and the establishment of related programme units, as well as related overhead costs, including parts of the salaries for the Executive Director and the Accountant. The 2011 budgeted support is about RWF 87 million.

Transparency Rwanda (TR) was registered in 2000 and became a chapter of Transparency International in 2008. Within PPIMA it is largely responsible for activities to combat corruption. This includes the publication of a bribery index, the running of national Kigali-based Advocacy and Legal Advice Centre (ALAC) and support to the district-based anti-corruption, justice and information centres (AJICs).

TR became an NPA partner 2008. NPA provided support for its work, including the publication of a magazine and the development of a five-year strategic plan. Following the launch of PPIMA all funding from NPA is provided through PPIMA. This includes strengthening of TR's secretariat through recruitment and partial support to a number of key TR positions; continued support to publish the quarterly *Transparent Magazine*; and continued support to ALAC and office running costs.

Budgeted support for 2011 is around RWF 209 million.

Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development (CCOAIB) was established in 1987 as is a national umbrella association for a range of development NGOs. Currently it has 38 members. It became an NPA partner through PPIMA.

Within PPIMA its main responsibilities are within public dissemination and research-related activities (including surveys). The 2011 budgeted grant is about RWF 90 million.

Federation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights in Rwanda (CLADHO) is as an umbrella body for human rights organisations. It currently has five member organisations. Its original focus was on civil and political rights but its main focus today is on social and economic rights. In recent years it has been involved in economic literacy work convening a number of training workshops on budget literacy and mobilising civil society around budget monitoring work. It is also a partner of the International Budget Partnership.

Within PPIMA it will be responsible for several activities around economic literacy and budget monitoring, and surveys and research assessing and monitoring government's pro-poor spending. CLADHO is also expected to play a leading role in the establishment of civil society policy monitoring groups.

CLADHO is a new NPA partner. The 2011 budgeted grant is about RWF 179 million.

Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe is the largest umbrella organisation for women's organisations in Rwanda. It was established in 1992 and currently has some 55 member organisations. It presents itself as a platform and a consultation structure for their associations and members. Pro-Femmes has a countrywide structure with one national and four provincial level coordination offices and a focal point in each of Rwanda's 30 districts.

Within PPIMA it will be lead agency in advocating gender issues, including budget monitoring. This includes training of member organisations and PPIMA partners in budget monitoring as well as special responsibility for the gender monitoring of four line ministries (education, health, infrastructure and agriculture).

Pro-Femmes was a previous partner under the "Women Can Do It" project but was phased out in 2007 (NPA instead wanted to partner with one of their members working more directly on the ground). It returned as a partner through PPIMA. The 2011 budgeted grant is RWF 71 million.

The Community of Potters in Rwanda (COPORWA) is an NGO whose mission is to strengthen the capacity of Rwanda's historically marginalized Batwa community to actively participate in the country's social, economic and political life and to promote and protect their rights. Within PPIMA, it will be responsible for information work directed to the Batwa communities, monitor budgets and expenditures, and implement lobby and advocacy activities, aiming at improvement of local level accountability and service delivery in the Southern province.

COPORWA (then CAURWA) became an NPA partner in 2006 and was selected as a long-term partner in 2007 under the current agreement with Norad. Recently it has received support from NPA to develop a 5-year strategic plan and support for fundraising. With PPIMA the budgeted grant in 2011 is RWF 66 million. Its main responsibility is implementation in the Nyaruguru district in the Southern province. With ADENYA it is also responsible for the AJIC centre in that district.

The Association for the Development of Nyabimata (ADENYA) is a rural development NGO working in the Nyaruguru and Nshili districts in the Southern province. Within PPIMA it will be responsible for implementation in Nyaruguru and – together with COPORWA – the AJIC Centre.

ADENYA is a new NPA partner. The budgeted grant in 2011 is about RWF 89 million.

Tubibe Amahoro (TA) is an NGO established in the aftermath of the genocide with the mission to contribute towards the social education of local communities, respecting the values of peace, solidarity, freedom, equity and human dignity. It is a community based organisation based in the Western province, with project activities concentrated mostly in Karongi and Ngororero districts. The main areas of TA work have been resolution of resource-related conflicts especially those linked to land; unity and reconciliation among residents and returnee populations over land; training of local population and authorities in human rights and gender issues emphasising the rights of women and youth.

Within PPIMA it will be responsible for the implementation in Ngororero district in the Western province. This also includes the establishment of an AJIC Centre.

TA has been a partner with NPA since 2001 and has been involved in a range of NPA-funded projects over the years. It is a recipient of organisational development support. This includes support to develop a 5-year strategic and operational plan which specifically identifies a human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming as strategies to be applied during the next five years. The 2011 budgeted PPIMA grant is RWF 94 million.

Association pour le Développement Intégré (ADI TERIMBERE) is a rural development NGO mainly focusing on agriculture. It was established in 2003. It focuses on support to farmers, by assisting them to acquire fertilizers, get market for their products and in assisting them in developing skills. Within PPIMA it will be responsible for implementation in the Ngororero district in the Western province.

It is new partner for NPA. The budgeted 2011 grant is about RWF 68 million.

The Association for Development and Social Transformation (ADTS) is an NGO established in 1998. It has 32 member organisations drawn from different regions in the country. The principle target groups comprise local NGOs, CBOs, and local church communities. Its mission to promoting positive transformations of human society through adult training, with a focus on empowerment of organised local communities. ADTS's main areas of work include transfer of facilitation and communication skills; training of trainers and facilitators; good governance; training in rights-based approaches; conflict resolution and; ending domestic and gender-based violence.

Within PPIMA its main responsibility is implementation in the Gakenke district in the Northern province, including the establishment of an AJIC Centre.

It has a long history of engagement with NPA. It was *inter alia* commissioned to provide training of NPA staff in 2004. It is one of NPA's long term partners. It has also received various organisational development support from NPA in the current programme period. The budgeted PPIMA grant in 2011 is RWF 141.

The Rwanda Farmers Federation (IMBARAGA) is a membership organisation with 26 000 members in 27 districts. It was established in 1992 and has a head office in Kigali and 8 regional offices. It is dedicated to the defence and promotion of farmers' interests. IMBARAGA initially focused on advocacy and lobbying on behalf of smallholder farmers, but over the years it has also developed service provision activities for its members.

IMBARAGA will be responsible for PPIMA implementation in the Gakenke district in the Northern province.

IMBARAGA is a new NPA partner. The 2011 budgeted grant is RWF 73 million.

Youth Association for Human Right Promotion and Development (AJPRODHO) is an NGO with the mission to empower youth to promote, defend and respect human rights and to advocate for socio-economic betterment in the society. AJPRODHO was founded in 1997 as a students' human rights organization and has since grown to become a reputed and well established national youth-led human rights organisation with development activities in different parts of the country, concentrated mainly in the eastern, southern and western provinces.

Within PPIMA AJPRODHO will be responsible for the implementation in the Gatsibo district in the Eastern province, including the establishment of an AJIC centre.

AJPRODO has been an NPA partner since 2006. It has received support for the development of a five-year strategic plan. The 2011 budgeted PPIMA grant is about RWF 130 million.

The Rwanda Women's Network (RWN) is a registered national humanitarian NGO dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of the socio-economic welfare of women. Its main target groups to date have been women survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. Others include children, especially child-headed households and people living with HIV/AIDS. RWN recognizes the importance of empowering women and their families to meet their own needs. It was established 1997, taking over from its parent organisation, the US-based Church World Service which had initiated a two year assistance program in Rwanda following the genocide in 1994.

RWN will be responsible for implementation of PPIMA in the Gatsibo district in the Eastern province.

RWN is a new PPIMA partner. The 2011 budgeted grant is about RWF 79 million.

The National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR) is a national umbrella organisation of persons living with disabilities in Rwanda. It brings together 8 organisations and was established in September 2010. This followed the dissolution of its predecessor -*The National Federation of Persons with Disabilities* (FENAPH) - by government decree (FENAPH has since been transformed into a public National Council of Persons with Disabilities). NUDOR is expected to become a partner with NPA through PPIMA in the course of 2011.

Norad-funded programmes

There have been some changes in the Norad-funded programmes in the 2008-2010 period. One programme area is the “strengthening of civil society organisations” where Norad funds have been used to support six old and new partners in developing five-year strategic plans and two-year operational plans as well as to improve financial management. This paved the way for multi-year contracts with the partners.

Two of these partners (Transparency and Rwanda Civil Society Platform) are now funded solely through PPIMA) while the other four – AJPRODHO, ADTS, Tubibe Amahoro and COPORWA – also are partners in the Norad-funded programme on *ending domestic violence* (EDV). The program began in 2005 with 12 partners but this has been reduced to the current four with activities in 9 districts in three provinces. The programme seeks to address violence at the household level by working with couples and in building community capacities to self-mobilize and act collectively against this vice within the society. Limited funds were made available in 2010 and 2011. A major evaluation was carried out to help provide future direction for the programme.¹⁹

Most Norad funds in 2010 and 2011 was allocated to a new component on violence against women – a project to mobilise savings and provide access to financial services for poor households through the establishment of *Village Savings and Loans Associations* (VSLA). Experiences from implementing the EDV projects had prompted the introduction of this component in 2009. This was an effort to establish a link between women’s human and their social and economic rights. The vision of the VSLA is to empower women by giving them opportunity to generate resources and improve their social and economic status. It is assumed – based also on studies from other countries – that economic empowerment of women reduces their vulnerability to domestic violence.

The VSLA is implemented by AJPRODHO, ADTS and Tubibe Amahoro with an annual budget in 2010 of more than NOK 2 million. The initiative is on track to reach the project target of establishing 1650 associations with more than 40 000 members.

Assessments and Issues Arising

Three years ago the NPA’s Rwanda programme was faced with the difficult choice of either scaling down and close, or to seek additional funding and expand. It successfully opted for the latter and developed a major programme (PPIMA) to strengthen civil society and secured significant from non-Norwegian sources (Sida and DFID). The NPA Rwanda has also successfully completed its move out of operational activities and now works with local partners in all areas. The team makes several observations of the Rwanda programme.

1: Strategic focus and partnership

PPIMA is widely considered by stakeholders in Rwanda as a highly relevant and strategic intervention with the potential to make a big difference in strengthening civil society organisation and their capacities to engage in public policy dialogue. This is even more significant considering the nature of regime in Rwanda and the limited and constrained space available for public policy dialogue.

The team also concludes that the PPIMA is a good operationalisation of NPA’s international strategy in a Rwandan context. It has succeeded in developing a major and coherent programme focusing on strengthening civil society and opening democratic space; there is a strong focus on achieving results; and in a short period of time PPIMA has established itself as the “dominant show in town” – it is a major and dominant programme in this area and any new donor-initiative is forced to relate to PPIMA. On some dimensions there are deviations from the strategy. PPIMA has tended to reinforce the impression of NPA as a donor with its civil society partners simply being implementing agents of an NPA programme. More emphasis should be put on reducing this image and move towards a better partnership.

The smaller Norad-funded activities have struggled to develop into an equally coherent programme. The dominant activity has been the development – since 2009 – of a financial service model targeting poor households in selected rural villages. Savings and microcredit arrangements through the establishment of Village

¹⁹ See D. Omollo-Odhiambo and T. Odhiambo, *Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ending Domestic Violence Project in Rwanda*, unpublished report, May 2011 (commissioned by the NPA Rwanda).

Savings and Loans Associations are considered to be useful mechanisms for economic development and empowerment of women. This may be justified and aligned with the NPA's strategy, but this presupposes that the VSLA is seen as an instrument to achieve something else (such as participation and empowerment) and that there is a focus on this in the project. There seems – based on the reports – to be little focus on this. It could have been facilitated with a better linkage to the PPIMA programme, but the direct linkages appear to be limited (VSLA and PPIMA are in most cases implemented not only in different villages, but also in different clusters). The NPA Rwanda will soon also be faced with other challenges – VSLA is about to reach a stage where proper micro-credit institutions may have to be established.

The other current (2009 and 2010) Norad component in the Rwanda programme is the support to strengthening of civil society organisations with a focus on NPA Rwanda's strategic/long-term partners. This is well aligned with the international strategy. The NPA has also succeeded in shifting from one-year to multi-year contracts for several of its partners.

Within PPIMA formal and informal procedures were in place to facilitate the selection of partners. This included assessment of potential partners based on several criteria. The final selection of partners also appears to be based on a strong analysis, but we do note that nearly all partners are NGOs and none – with the exception of IMBARAGA – are membership-based or popular organisations. Apparently there have been no efforts to involve the trade unions (CESTRAR) in the programme (but they are involved indirectly through membership in umbrella bodies). Several of the PPIMA partners have however, links to the grassroots and solid track records in working on the ground.

The selection of partners in the ending violence against women and the VSLA also followed procedures with a series of criteria as a basis for assessments. However, the recent evaluation of the ending violence against women programme found that none of the NPA's partners in this programme were women's organisations. Nor were these issues central to any of the selected partners. This, according to the evaluation, weakened the sustainability of the programme. More worrying, according to the evaluation, is that it potentially may have crowded out core activities of the partner.²⁰

The NPA Rwanda has made various efforts to provide organisational development support to its partners. This has been in relation to developing strategic and operational plans, and efforts to improve financial management and reporting, for its main partners. Within the big PPIMA programme the main focus – and probably the most important “value added” of the NPA – has been in helping partners to develop capacities to engage in public policy dialogue at the national as well as the district and cluster levels. There has also been some, but modest attempts to strengthen internal dimensions and management of the partners. This is most manifest in the case of gender where NPA has made a gender audit of all partners and have plans in place to help partners' mainstream gender in their work.

NPA-partner relations in Rwanda have however, over the past year been almost completely overshadowed by the reporting demands emanating from the new PPIMA programme. This has led to much frustrations and complaints on both – or all – sides.

2: Organisation and Management

The NPA office in Rwanda has significantly reduced its staff in the current period, but it is now expanding following the launch of the PPIMA programme. PPIMA is a big programme with a demanding and complex management structure. There are 13 (soon 14) implementing partners, an ambitious programme document with a very detailed log frame, and with donors (DFID and Sida) keeping a very close and demanding eye on the programme. This has already led to delays in the start-up and implementation of the programme; in establishing a functional management structure within NPA through a technical assistance unit (which also involves two other international NGOs); in reporting; and in disbursement of funds.

Reports from partners are done monthly for financial expenditures, and quarterly for narrative reports. The reporting routine in PPIMA appears to be somewhat out of line in view of the managerial capacities of many of the PPIMA partners. Nor does frequent, detailed reporting necessarily lead to better results management. Nor does it necessarily lead to capacity building of weaker partners. There is a real risk that the reporting burden may be de-motivating and time-consuming for both NPA staff and the partners. From a more ideological viewpoint, a

²⁰ See p. 40-41 in D. Omollo-Odhiambo and T. Odhiambo, *Mid-Term Evaluation of the Ending Domestic Violence Project in Rwanda*, unpublished report, May 2011 (commissioned by the NPA Rwanda).

tight reporting and control regime may be counterproductive in view of the NPA vision of equality and partnerships, and instead strengthen the donor-recipient dimension.

The team also noted that contracts and reports are all in English. This language is for many the third language and not all partners are able to express themselves properly in that language. In the case of one PPIMA partner the team observed that the district coordinator submitted the reports in English (as required), but that no members of the leadership – responsible for the report – were able to read or communicate in English.

Simplifying reporting is one challenge. Another is the quality of reporting, especially related to results. The mid-term evaluation of the ending violence against women noted a variety of gaps and shortcomings in the monitoring and evaluation processes. The PPIMA programme has a more developed log frame, but we expect that there is a need for substantial training and refresher training to ensure that NPA staff – especially the new district field coordinators – has the required skills to assist partners with monitoring and reporting, and also that the NPA in Kigali has the skills and capacity to generate reports based on reports from districts and partners.

The team found consistency between the project document with results log frame and the reporting templates to be used by the partners according to the contract. The team further found adequate coherence between the reporting template from the partners, and the NPA reporting to SIDA as lead donor. There is also consistency between the reporting templates in both directions, showing a coherent line of reporting from activities in the field to the reporting on a more aggregate level to the contributing donors. Generally, the reporting from partners is done in detail, sometimes referring to everyday obstacles for non-performance, such as sick children, rain, lack of transport etc. This is the reality for the people concerned, and is relevant information (although not taken appropriately into the PPIMA log frame matrix as a risk.)

The processing of reports from partners to an aggregate result oriented reporting to SIDA as lead donor to the PPIMA project is challenging and the team has only a limited comprehension of how the analysis is actually done at the NPA office in Rwanda. The recent manual made by NPA in Oslo does not appear to be used as a reference.

The PPIMA management undertaken by NPA Rwanda is governed by the PPIMA project document, which includes a log frame with a results framework, in the team's view adapted from linear programme monitoring. Such a framework is hardly suitable in the PPIMA sphere of civil society advocacy, empowerment and accountability.

The team would advise looking into other options for reporting and recording of results. One approach might be to have more emphasis on events, milestones and arenas within the program itself, and less emphasis on calendar driven narrative reporting solely for the donors' purpose, which in any case is less reliable due to poor proficiency in the reporting language. The log frame is abundant with references to these events, and it could be developed further in identifying key milestones.

Another possibility is the NPA staff recording minutes from the meetings of the development forums with district authorities or aide memoires from field visits. We were informed that staff roughly dedicates 4 days a month pr partner, which seems extensive. Since this is already done by NPA staff we believe it is rational that these effort be converted into formal reports to the donors, thereby taking some of the burden of the partnerships. The appointment of NPA district field coordinators is a further opportunity to reduce the burden of reporting.

If desirable, NPA might also suggest incentives for the partners. Once an identified, agreed milestone is attained and adequately reported, the disbursement is done, thereby defusing the awkward situation with delays of disbursements connected to unclear reporting (this is known as result based financing, often used in bilateral aid).

The upcoming mid-term review of PPIMA will hopefully be able to recommend a more simplified management and reporting structure.

The Norad projects are managed without similar reporting procedures, although partners are the same as in the PPIMA project. The partners implementing Norad-supported projects are also involved in PPIMA project, which entails that 4 partners have two lines of reporting to NPA, one for PPIMA and one for Norad, the latter being less detailed and less frequent. Somewhat surprisingly for the team, this two track approach was not mentioned as a source of confusion for the partners.

We also note that the periodic results report 2008-2010 from the NPA to Norad does not distinguish between PPIMA-funded activities and activities funded by Norad.

Norad

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

Postal address:

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO

Office address:

Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway

Tel: +47 23 98 00 00

Fax: +47 23 98 00 99

postmottak@norad.no

www.norad.no