

Review of Bistandsnemda's (Norwegian Missions in Development) Work with Indigenous Peoples

Axel Borchgrevink
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R 2007: 15

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Executive Summary

As part of Norway's efforts to strengthen its cooperation with indigenous peoples a set of Guidelines were published by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2004. The Guidelines emphasise a rights-based approach and the requirement that there be 'a clear connection between normative work on indigenous issues and practical cooperation with and on behalf of indigenous peoples'. Norwegian NGOs are the most important channel for Norwegian support for indigenous peoples. Among the Norwegian NGOs, Bistandsnemnda – The Norwegian Missions in Development, hereafter referred to as BN – receives the largest amount of funds for indigenous peoples projects. This is an umbrella organization, consisting of 18 mission organizations. Norad decided to conduct a review of BN's work with indigenous peoples in order to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the principles of the Guidelines. Four member organizations (The Norwegian Mission Alliance, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, the Norwegian Pentecostal Mission and Normisjon) and their work in three countries (Bolivia, Paraguay, Bangladesh) were selected for the review. In addition, the review has revised project documents of all BN projects for indigenous peoples, and met with the organizations in Norway. Time limitations for the review mean that some conclusions must remain tentative.

The consultants gained a more positive and nuanced view of the development work of mission organizations through the fieldwork. Widespread perceptions of these organizations only being interested in religious conversion were found to be false. In all cases we found a genuine concern for promoting development and the social and economic well-being of the target groups. In no cases was there any tendency to prioritise those who belonged to specific faiths or denominations. Project activities showed positive outcomes in the form of more secure livelihoods, the provision of basic services, strengthening of local organizations, and even efforts at advocacy and legal empowerment.

There was considerable variation among projects and organizations as to the degree to which they were based on significant self-determination, ownership and participation. Among the organizations visited, the programs that impressed in this respect belonged to those who did not limit partnership to their local counterpart church, but had established cooperation with a broader range of social actors.

In most cases, program design and project staff showed great respect for indigenous traditions and culture.

In the majority of cases, the BN organizations showed limited awareness and knowledge of rights-based approaches. This goes for project documents as well as for missionaries, partner organizations and project staff. In the best programs, the logic of interventions did correspond to a rights-based approach. Still, these positive programs lacked the coherence and linkage towards the international Human Rights regime and the specific indigenous rights instruments that could have strengthened them even further. In many other cases, references or linkages to rights were absent, or were superficial and unconvincing.

Some of the programs were based on a thorough understanding of the specific situation and urgent concerns of the indigenous peoples in question. Others lacked an appreciation of the particular factors that need to be taken into account when working with indigenous peoples, and the opportunities and constraints offered by the national and local political situation. Here it is important to point to the very different contexts in which programs were implemented, which may offer an explanation for some of this variation.

BN as an umbrella was found to offer a number of advantages, both in terms of coordinating and facilitating relationships with Norad, and in terms of enhancing project quality and promoting professional improvements amongst its member organizations. BN has lifted awareness and knowledge of specific themes – such as sustainability, partnership, and organizational development – and has the potential to do the same with respect to rights-based approaches and indigenous rights.

The review concludes with the following recommendations:

- BN needs to strengthen knowledge and training on indigenous rights
- Members need to better ensure that this awareness and training is utilised at all levels by project partners and field staff
- BN and Members need to reflect upon the implications of our finding that increased separation/secularization improves project work
- BN and Members need to develop better diagnostic tools for analysis of the cultural politics of the contexts where they are working
- Norad should clarify the Guidelines and the reporting routines for working with indigenous peoples

1. Introduction

As part of Norway's efforts to strengthen its cooperation with indigenous peoples and to develop a coherent approach in this field, a new set of guidelines – *Norway's Efforts to Strengthen Support for Indigenous Peoples in Development Cooperation: A human rights-based approach* (hereafter called the Guidelines) – were published by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2004. As the title indicates, they emphasise the requirement that there be 'a clear connection between normative work on indigenous issues and practical cooperation with and on behalf of indigenous peoples'. Norwegian NGOs are the most important channel for Norwegian support for indigenous peoples.¹ Among the Norwegian NGOs, Bistandsnemnda – The Norwegian Missions in Development, hereafter referred to as BN, receives the largest amount of funds for indigenous peoples projects. This is an umbrella organization, currently consisting of 18 mission organizations that have a common framework agreement with Norad. Nine of the member organizations have a total of 35 projects involving indigenous peoples, in 15 different countries (see Appendix 2). Given this background of extensive cooperation with indigenous peoples, Norad decided to conduct a review of BN's work with indigenous peoples in order to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the principles of the Guidelines. The fact that BN is the largest recipient of funds for indigenous peoples made it natural to start with this organization when undertaking a first review of how the Guidelines are followed up in practice. Whilst not officially voiced, continuing widespread perceptions of mission organizations as primarily being interested in religious conversion, and the consequent questioning of whether these organizations are able to implement their development activities with sufficient respect for the culture and spiritual beliefs of indigenous peoples are also likely to have contributed to this decision.

The Terms of Reference for the review (see Appendix 1) pose two basic questions. The Team is asked a) to assess the relevance and approach of the BN member organizations and their projects in relation to the Guidelines and the ILO Convention 169, and b) to assess how the BN Secretariat coordinates and ensures the quality of the member organizations' work in the field. Fieldwork should be conducted in three countries – Bolivia, Paraguay and Bangladesh – where four of BN's member organizations have projects: The Norwegian Mission Alliance, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, the Norwegian Pentecostal Mission and Normisjon. The report from the review should include recommendations for BN and its member organizations future work with indigenous peoples. The review team has consisted of Axel Borchgrevink (team leader) of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and John McNeish of the Christian Michelsen Institute. Both are anthropologists with long experience with issues of indigenous peoples, development and aid.

Fieldwork in Bolivia and Paraguay was carried out during two weeks in June, while one week was spent in Bangladesh in August. The review team has applied a series of recognised social science methodologies to gather information on the operation of BN and its member organisations. Group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews and a review of documents have been carried out in the main offices of BN and the mission organisations both here in Norway and during visits to the differing field locations in Bolivia, Paraguay and Bangladesh. A seminar has been held to collectively inform and further discuss field data with BN and its member organisations. In Bolivia and Bangladesh informal interviews were carried out with Embassy and diplomatic representatives. In all the countries visited, further interviews were also carried out with a number of civil society organizations working with indigenous issues and related affairs. Drafts of the four case studies have been circulated to the organizations in question, and in some cases subsequent discussions have led to the weeding out of mistakes in the original. See Appendix 3 for a complete list of all interviews made. In line with the TOR both review and account have been made of a series of key documents including BN's and member organizations' strategies and project descriptions, ILO Convention 169, the Norwegian guidelines for support to indigenous peoples in development cooperation, local reports and

¹ Norwegian NGOs account for around 40% of the total according to the report *Norges bistand til urfolk* (NUPI-paper 708, 2006) by Haslie and Øverland, who also point out the many uncertainties and inaccuracies related to these statistics.

reviews, previous evaluations of the programs and relevant documents on the indigenous peoples situation and the national indigenous policies.

Whilst complying with the stated methodology of the TOR, the review team recognizes that certain limitations have had an undeniable impact on the quality of its findings. The time frame for fieldwork has been very small, taking into account the extensiveness and geographical spread of the projects we have visited. We also recognize that the unfortunate impact of limitations to time have been particularly important in the case of one mission, i.e. the NLM, with which we were only able to spend one day. For this organization, our conclusions must therefore remain more tentative than in the other cases. With the other organizations, long hours in cars together with project staff did allow a considerable amount of time to probe and discuss approaches and methods, and we were able to visit larger samples of projects and beneficiary communities. On the other hand, we were dependent on the mission or its partner organization for setting up all the meetings during field visits. Even though we were free to suggest contacts this reliance did limit the possibility of gaining independent and unbiased views. To some extent, this weakness was mitigated by the interviews we arranged on our own with other civil society actors and resource persons. These were focused efforts to gain independent views on the situation, and where possible, on the specific work of the organizations in question. Furthermore, given the fact that the focus of this review is on the working methodology of the organizations, rather than on the actual results of the programs, these limitations are perhaps excusable. However, these limitations do mean that we were unable to investigate sufficiently the links between project activities and the position of the cooperating churches.

It is also worth pointing out that there is great variation between the BN member organizations, and between the countries in which they work with indigenous peoples. More time and the opportunity to expand the review to other missions and projects cases would undoubtedly have improved the objective validity of the details and conclusions written below.

2. Development cooperation with indigenous people

2.1 Norway's Efforts to Strengthen Support for Indigenous Peoples

In 2004 the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched a new set of guidelines aimed at directing the work of Norway in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples. The guidelines "Norway's Efforts to Strengthen Support for Indigenous Peoples in Development Cooperation" build on the basis of earlier action plans and parliamentary propositions and expand on these by drawing on international indigenous rights conventions and agreements. In doing so the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have formed a set of "rights based" guidelines that better explain and clearly connect normative support for indigenous issues with practical cooperation with and on behalf of indigenous peoples. Clear signals are also given of the wish to promote the integration of indigenous issues into other areas of Norway's development cooperation.

Whilst reference is made to a number of other earlier agreements and recent events such as the establishment of the Permanent UN Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2001, the new guidelines establish their legal basis through clear reference and adoption of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 169. A 1989 revision of earlier Convention 107/69, the Conventions attempts to legally specify the identity and international recognised rights of indigenous peoples. Article 1 of ILO 169 defines indigenous peoples as:

- a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws and regulations
- b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of the conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.
- c) Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply.

According to ILO 169 indigenous peoples have the rights to maintain and develop their own culture and language. The Convention contains provisions concerning the right to natural resources, traditional lands and territories etc. The Convention also states that indigenous people have the right to "prior consultation" i.e. to be consulted and to take part in decision-making processes relating to issue that concern them. It furthermore states that government authorities ratifying the convention have an obligation to support this work.

Developed from a basis in ILO 169, the Norwegian human-rights based guidelines for support of indigenous peoples aim to highlight that development and human rights are inextricably linked. The guidelines state that they aim to break the circle connecting poverty and an absence of choice and opportunity by ensuring that the rights of individuals or groups living in marginalisation, and specifically indigenous peoples who are often the poorest of the poor, are fulfilled. Simply put human rights norms provide the basis for development and contain the norms to which committed States must conform and the rights that individuals can demand. The guidelines state that key concepts of its human-rights based approach are the responsibility of the State, the empowerment and participation of individuals/groups, no-discrimination of individuals and focus on vulnerable groups.

As a means to distinguish the extent to which a specific project supported by the Norwegian government are primarily human-rights based or motivated by other consideration the guidelines

distinguish between two specific categories: *specific support for indigenous peoples* and *integrated support for indigenous peoples*.

According to the guidelines a project classified as *specific support for indigenous peoples* must:

- a) have clear, identifiable targets relating to the improvement of the target group's situation in defined areas of the project design, and
- b) involve the indigenous group(s) in the formulation of the goals of and methods used in the project or programme.

Other projects where indigenous peoples are the main, or subsidiary target group, but the project is not explicitly based on ILO 169 and the traditional culture and way of life of indigenous peoples in terms of project design and implementation, are described as *integrated support for indigenous peoples*. For both categories the Norwegian governmental assistance for development projects where indigenous peoples were the main target group in 2003 amounted to cNOK250 million.

Norway's specific assistance for indigenous peoples is channelled, directly and indirectly, through the actors and channels that appear the most appropriate and effective in each context. This includes assistance channelled through Norwegian NGOs, Norwegian indigenous organisations, Norwegian embassies, UN agencies and multilateral organisations. A proportion of assistance to promote the rights of indigenous peoples is also channelled directly to indigenous organisations in Latin America. In 2003 more than half of all Norwegian assistance for indigenous peoples in development cooperation was channelled through Norwegian NGOs. For the years 2004 and 2005, BN was the largest recipient of funds for indigenous projects among the Norwegian NGOs.

2.2 Four key dimensions for evaluating development cooperation with indigenous peoples

The Terms of Reference for this review state that the work of the BN and its member organizations should be assessed in relation to the Guidelines. In order to do so, there is a need to make the Guidelines operational in a way that allows the concrete approaches of the BN organizations to be assessed according to the fundamental principles expressed by the Guidelines. We have done this by delineating four key dimensions that we believe sum up the most important principles of the Guidelines. These are a) Self-determination, ownership and participation; b) Respect for culture; c) Rights-based approach; and d) Strategic thinking and relevance. While these dimensions are clearly interlinked and partially overlapping, we believe they form a useful framework for organizing the empirical analysis of the findings of this review. In the following we describe what we see as the central elements of each of these dimensions.

Self-determination, ownership and participation

These are goals and principles that are generally accepted within mainstream development cooperation, and thus not limited to cooperation with indigenous peoples. Even if not always easy to achieve in practice, they are relatively uncontroversial in theory. For indigenous peoples, these principles have particular relevance as the Guidelines, ILO169 and the Declaration of Indigenous Rights all emphasize the rights of indigenous peoples to decide over their own development and their right to be consulted on all interventions that affect them. At the same time, we know that in practice, the marginalized situation of indigenous peoples very often means that these rights are not realized. Thus, for this review, participation in decision-making and ownership of development interventions form a key dimension along which to assess the work of the BN organizations.

Respect for culture

Cultural difference is by definition a characteristic of indigenous peoples, and the Guidelines and international Human Rights understandings stress the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and

develop their culture and traditions. As their way of living diverges from that of mainstream society, particular challenges are posed to development interventions. These need to be designed in ways appropriate to the cultural context. This is an issue which may be complicated in itself, and even more so given that surrounding society often have derogatory attitudes towards indigenous culture. Cultural difference is also symbolically important, and pride in ones own culture may be linked to strengthened indigenous self-esteem and organization. Language differences imply particular challenges, which may be highly relevant for the many educational programs supported by the BN organizations (the right to culturally appropriate education).

Religion is an area of particular relevance for this review. The BN organizations are all mission organizations, faith-based and established to spread the word of God as they see it. This underlying orientation may in itself be perceived to be in conflict with the ILO 169, which states that ‘The social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognized and protected’. In the review we have paid special attention to the issue of whether the BN organizations have sought to promote specific faiths or denominations in their development work.

Rights-based approach

The Guidelines are very clear in their emphasis on the importance of a rights-based approach when working with indigenous peoples. This has several implications.

Activities should be based on the international principles of Human Rights, as well as the more specifically indigenous and collective rights as codified in the ILO 169 and the recently adopted Declaration of Indigenous Rights. Activities must be in accordance with these principles, and it is furthermore expected that the organizations are aware of the international Human Rights regime and refer to this where relevant – such as when doing advocacy work towards states that are signatories to the conventions. In addition to the fundamental rights of self-determination and of respect for culture (which were discussed above), it is worth pointing out the centrality of the right to land and traditional territories for indigenous peoples.

A rights-based approach implies recognition not only of the rights that indigenous peoples have, but also of the fact that there are duty-bearers with primary responsibility for upholding these rights. Foremost in this respect is the state, which has positive obligations (to protect, promote and provide) as well as negative obligations (to abstain from violations). From this follows that a rights-based approach entails working to ensure that states actually fulfill these obligations, through monitoring and advocacy. A rights-based approach may imply both strengthening the capacity of the indigenous peoples to make claims on the state, as well as direct lobbying by the BN organization and its partner.

In situations where the state does not provide the services indigenous peoples have a right to, and BN member organizations assume the duty of providing this service, then it is important that this service be delivered in a rights-based manner. Most importantly, it should be accessible to all, irrespective of religion, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics, and it should be delivered in ways that respect the rights of the user.

Strategic thinking and relevance.

In order to work with indigenous peoples in an effective manner, projects and programs must be conceived and planned on the basis of a thorough understanding of the local/national context, and of the specific concerns and priorities of the indigenous peoples in question. Thus, the BN organizations should address the most urgent needs of the peoples they work with, and do so in ways that are based on an in-depth understanding of the political context and the opportunities and constraints it offers. Similarly, projects that do not target indigenous peoples directly or explicitly, but that nevertheless affect them, must be analyzed with specific focus on the impacts they have for indigenous peoples.

3. Case studies

3.1 Bolivia:

3.1.1 Context

Over the last five years dramatic political events have reshaped the possibilities for the majority indigenous population in Bolivia (63% National Census, INE 2006:157). As has been widely reported in the international media and recent research, localised protests focused on issues of access, ownership and sale of natural resources in the country, water and gas principle amongst them, sparked a series of mass militant demonstrations that resulted in a political and economic crisis in which public buildings were burnt, demonstrators and police were killed and two national presidents and their governments were pushed out of power. Although tensions in the country remain high, this cycle of demonstrations came to an end with the democratic election of an Aymara indigenous/peasant union leader, Evo Morales Ayma, to the Presidency at the end of 2005.

On taking power, Morales and the Movement for Socialism founded a government explicitly aimed at ending the 500 years of exclusion and oppression of indigenous language and culture. Although many of the government's actions have been considered controversial by the international community (including the decriminalisation of coca production, the nationalisation of the oil and gas industry and the redistribution of land), initiatives aimed at re-establishing national and local sovereignty over the country's natural resources form part of this process. Further emphasis of the government's politics of indigenous inclusion has been made in the launch of a process of constitutional assembly. Whilst not entirely new in the country's history, the constitutional assembly is designed to reconsider the legal foundation and political structure of the nation-state, and more importantly to grant the country's indigenous population, as part of more general civil society in the country, the possibility to take part in a process of rethinking the economic and political basis of government in Bolivia.

The deadline for the submission of the assembly's conclusions has now been delayed (originally 6 August 2008) as a result of counter-protests by opposition groups in the lowlands of the country. Representing the elite business interests of the economically wealthy departments of Santa Cruz, Tarija and Beni (known together as the *media luna*) PODEMOS disputes the strong indications given by the assembly of a government-backed move towards a "pluri-national state" and away from their demands for increased regional autonomy. Despite anticipated delays and localised protests, the process of current government and the constitutional assembly nonetheless mark an historic watershed in the country's politics, ensuring the enduring presence of indigenous peoples in key political decision-making structures of the state. Indeed, they promise the possibility of a redefinition of the form of earlier political and legal openings that have structured and continue to structure the majority indigenous population's relationships with the Bolivian state.

Bolivia's history of political reform, stretching from the introduction of agrarian reform and peasant unions following the 52 Nationalist Revolution to the strengthening of democratic municipal government and local planning with the introduction of Popular Participation and Decentralisation in the mid-1990s, have created a bewildering and often overlapping complex of imported local government structures and hollow promises of increased local control over development. These processes have defined the similarly overlapping, and sometimes confused, relationships that exist between peasant, indigenous and mestizo identities in the country. Although expectations about their positive impact on the generally low standard of living in the country may be too high², the plans and

² Between 1999 and 2002 poverty rose in Bolivia from 62% to 65%, and in some rural areas in the Highlands of the country is estimated to be as high as 82% (Landa 2002; Hernani 2002). There is furthermore a large gap in the distribution of wealth

ideas currently under discussion in the 21 commissions of the constitutional assembly may, if allowed to reach their fruition by opposition elements, have a democratic outcome that will help to rationalise and translate the idea of legitimate government to a more indigenously grounded idiom and practice.

3.1.2 Misjonsalliansen (Misión Alianza de Noruega): MAN-B

The Norwegian Mission Alliance has been established in Bolivia for 27 years. It is without doubt the largest Norwegian backed mission and civil society actor in Bolivia. In 2006 the Norwegian Mission Alliance received 11 million for 7 projects, out of the 23 million directed to projects in Bolivia by Norad. During its history the work of the mission in Bolivia has undergone considerable change, most importantly passing through a process of nationalisation. Although a number of Norwegians remain by local invite on the mission board, its national leadership has now been entirely replaced by locals. Further changes have also taken place in the mission's means and method of practice. Although still based on the goals of evangelical Christian mission, movement has been made in its development work away from previous externally guided practices to a basis of work where local participation is held central.

Projects Visited:

- Plan de Desarrollo Integral de Valles Interandinos (PDIVI)
The project is located in the Inter-Andean Valleys of the Department of La Paz and is focused on the integrated development of 4 cantons in the municipalities of Combaya and Sorata. The project aims to establish the sustainable development of the local communities and to improve the general conditions of life of the population, through integration with and acceptance by the short and long-term development plans (Plan Operativa Annual, POA, Plan de Desarrollo Municipal, PDM) of the local municipal government. The project contains four areas of work i.e. training of human resources (technical capacity, planning and leadership), strengthening of local organisations (parent and teacher associations), the improvement of local services and infrastructure (education, health, drinking water and basic sanitation) and economic development (irrigation, animal breeding, small-scale industry, sustainable resource management). A diaconal component aimed at the integration of local churches, students and families in this work is also included. The review team were able to visit and meet with project workers, beneficiaries, local government and representatives of the population of Combaya.
- Plan de Desarrollo Local Alto Norte (PAN)
Since 1993 the Norwegian Alliance Mission in Bolivia (MAN-B) has developed and carried out an integrated development plan for three districts of the City of El Alto, Bolivia. PAN comprises 3 main programs focusing on *community development, education, evangelical and diaconal work* respectively. These programmes are furthermore implemented in conjunction with the establishment of a micro-credit organisation (Fundación Diaconía FRIF), a sports outreach programme (Cruza Fronteras) and a health promotion programme aimed at the prevention of HIV and Tuberculosis. Whilst visiting the PAN project in El Alto the review team visited and met with staff, parents and the local government representatives of the Strongest/Carlos Montenegro basic and secondary school in District 6, and the staff and beneficiaries *Manzanera* project, a voluntary female basic health care project now established in many neighbourhoods of the migrant city.
- Plan Diaconal de Desarrollo Regional II (PDDR II)
In 2004 the Norwegian Alliance Mission in Bolivia (MAN-B) started the second phased of a integrated development project in the cantons of Calma, San Pablo, San Lorenzo, Santa Fe, 2 de Agosto and Santo Domingo in the Municipality of Caranavi, Department of South Yungas. These communities, or colonies, are relatively recent settlements of people (indigenous, peasant and others) from the Highlands and elsewhere in the country who have moved into the "cloud forest" environment in search of more productive land. The project aims to improve the conditions of economic production of local families and ensure better connection to local services through the

(the richest 20% controls half of the total wealth) (World Bank 2008). Of the 63% Indigenous population, 1/3 live below the poverty line.

participation of local organisation in processes of local management and diaconia. While visiting Caranavi the review team were able to meet and discuss the project with representatives of the mission, beneficiaries and local governments of the communities of Santa Fe, the longest established local colony where the mission has assisted with local agricultural production and women's animal breeding association, and San Lorenzo, where the mission has recently established support to a local organic coffee growers association.

Self-determination, ownership and participation.

Although establishing their own local development association, Man-B have taken care to design a system of development planning and practice that ensures local participation and ownership. Furthermore this is a system that acknowledges the central role of the municipal government in anchoring the projects in the long term planning of the community. Recognition is made by the mission of a gradual move away from earlier externally led practices in the course of the 1980s and 1990s to a new policy emphasising local participation. To some extent this shift mirrors and responds to the requirements of changing political structures in the country, principle amongst the local participatory development planning of the Popular Participation and Administrative Decentralisation laws introduced in the mid-1990s. However, it is also evident from our discussions with the leadership and employees in Bolivia that the mission is in general prepared to reflect and learn. It has also demonstrated genuine intent to gradually improve the practice and outcomes of its development work. This is evident in the increasing emphasis given by the mission to the involvement and empowerment of women in their projects. Part of this process has also been to draw up plans where over time the mission withdraws from a local context and beneficiaries in the local communities directly take over ownership of the projects. In their thinking about this process there has furthermore been recognition of a need to move away from paternalistic processes of "following" to a gradually more distant process of requested "companionship". In discussion with mission and project staff the review team were repeatedly told of the willingness of the mission to work with anyone, regardless of their background or religious persuasion. This seemed to be backed up by the mission's employment policy where a large number of field staff distanced themselves from any membership in a protestant evangelical church. Moreover, although the mission is necessarily involved in diaconal work (not funded by Norad) aimed at the involvement of local churches in its development projects, it is clear from involvement in local projects where the majority interviewed belonged to the Catholic church that participation is not only extended to members of the evangelical church. Indeed, in the course of visiting a number of the mission's project, the review team, discovered that most of the participants and beneficiaries of the mission's development work did not belong, nor felt particularly spiritually challenged by, the evangelical church.

Respect for culture

The mission demonstrates a clear respect for local culture and explicitly expresses the desire to assist local people in a process of cultural empowerment and revalorisation. Diaconal work aimed at changing the local relationship of the church to social and development was being carried out in each of the locations visited by the review team. This work did not, however, represent evangelism in the traditional sense. Indeed, it was repeatedly stated by the mission's fieldworkers that for them the significance of the diaconal work was not to change local culture, but rather to re-emphasise the importance of existing Andean cultural categories³ and humanistic values of respect and responsibility. In each of the projects efforts were further made to establish contact and direct involvement of both local government officials and traditional ancestral/peasant union leaders in the running of the local development association they established. In doing so respect was also given to the dual role of these leaders in the organisation of local community work and traditional ritual life. Most of the project workers were also able to speak Quechua or Aymara, the indigenous languages in the project locations. The only clear point of difference with local culture was the mission's policy on the consumption on alcohol. Mission workers were obliged to be abstinent and a policy of zero tolerance

³ ama sua", "ama lulla" y "ama quella" (don't steal, don't be idle, don't lie)

was adopted with regards to the work time of beneficiaries in the projects. This said a resigned acceptance was made of the use of alcohol in local festival life, and acknowledgement also made of its important role in local ritual and beliefs.

Rights-based approach

Whilst respectful of local culture and conscious of the important role they play in supporting cultural empowerment in their project locations, MAN-B does not operate out of a clearly defined rights-based approach. None of the documentation of the mission in Bolivia, projects or comment made by mission staff indicates that the mission makes any official recognition of key human rights or indigenous rights conventions. Although explicitly aware of the indigenous origins and culture of the people in their projects, questions of ethnic identity and rights do not play a part in their aims of integrated development. From the review team's discussion with mission staff, it would appear that part of the explanation for this lack of focus has to do with the specific character of their project locations. Whilst many of the people they work with in El Alto come from Aymara and Quechua indigenous populations⁴, in the course of their process of migration to the city many of their beneficiaries had chosen to adopt urban identities that are viewed more positively in national society⁵. This process of change and sometimes duality (where different identities co-exist) complicated their description of the ethnicity of the locations where they work. This was, however, not the case in Combaya, where the identity and culture of the community is predominantly and unquestionably Aymara. Nor was it the case in Caranavi where the local population are colonists originally from other areas of the country, the majority of Highland Aymara background.

Whereas the mission was somewhat unclear in its references to indigenous rights, the rights of women and children are better expressed in their documentation and practice. Indeed, this is an emphasis for which the mission has gained considerable recognition for in its work in El Alto. In an interview with the well-renowned Alteño feminist development organisation, Centro de Mujeres Gregoria Apaza, the review team were told of the local community's admiration for the work of the mission with women and children⁶.

Strategic thinking

Man-B have demonstrated themselves to be both reflexive and well-structured in the design and implementation of their integrated development projects. The mission is a learning organisation where emphasis is first and foremost made on the improvement of the development outcomes and local ownership of projects. As such, it will not pose too much difficulty for the mission to integrate an explicit right-based approach focused on indigenous peoples into its development practice. In taking its responsibilities seriously, the implementation of projects depends on local invitation, participation and the sharing of project costs. Projects come about as a series of defined participatory steps in which

1. applications sent by local communities are evaluated according to pre-defined criteria by the mission
2. diagnostic studies are made by the mission of local needs and the suitability of projects.
3. local development associations are founded in conjunction with the local municipal governments
4. The community pays a percentage of the total cost of the project
5. accounts, results and plans are submitted annually to the local municipal annual development plan (POA)
6. in phasing out mission support local ownership and titles are secured and a process of distant companionship started to ensure long-term sustainability.

⁴ According to the 2001 census, 74% of those older than 15 in El Alto identify as Aymara, 6% as Quechua and 19% as belonging to no indigenous group.

⁵ i.e. *mestizo* (mixed race) or *chola* (urban peasant, often market trader). These identities are attainable through a shift of dress code, employment and cultural practice.

⁶ The only question asked by Gregoria Apaza about the work of the mission related concerns about the sale and marketing of craft products. They were keen to find out if the mission would be willing to cooperate on the sale of locally produced items through Gregoria Apaza's shop in the South of La Paz.

Norsk Luthersk Misjonsamband (NLM)

The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) have been established in Bolivia since 1978. In 2006-2007 the mission had 12 Norwegian missionaries working in the country based primarily in the cities of Cochabamba and Sucre. The mission works in direct partnership with the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church of Bolivia (Iglesia Cristiana Evangélica Luterana, ICEL). The church became independent from the mission in 1997. In addition to the projects for indigenous projects supported by Norad, NLM and ICEL run a theological school and evangelical radio station in Sucre and a Norwegian School aimed at the children of their own mission staff.

Projects Visited:

- *School Project, Jesus Maestro*

This school project was started in 2000 as a joint project initiative between NLM and ICEL. According to NLM the initiative for the school project came directly from ICEL. The location for the school in the municipality of Tiquipaya (c37,000 inhabitants), a satellite neighbourhood on the edge of the Valley city of Cochabamba, was chosen because of the apparent poverty of the area and because of the low quality of school infrastructure previously available there. NLM and ICEL proposed to the local and national government to rebuild one of the existing schools and to develop a new school offering “quality at a low price”⁷. A gradual building process was started, the name of the previous school replaced. In 2006 the school had 761 students spread between primary and secondary levels of education. In 2007 the first class of secondary pupils completed their secondary education. The Bolivian Ministry of Education contributes to the school through the payment of the teachers’ wages and some teaching materials. Although recognised as part of the national school system, Jesus Maestro stands apart from other schools in the area because of its comparatively highly developed infrastructure, maintenance of a private administration, and provision of a special department aimed at the education of children with different mental and physical disabilities. ICEL who manage and administer the school, have an agreement with the Bolivian authorities to administer the school until the end of 2010. According to agreements with BN and Norad the school should be run by national resources after this date. The assessment team were able to visit the school and to speak with members of the mission, the school/project director, the local government, the national school board, teachers and parent association.

- *Tinguipaya: Comprehensive Community-based Development Project (Prodecit)*

The project, started in 1989 and ended in 2006, aimed to improve the living standards of the village communities in the Municipality of Tinguipaya, in the Province of Tomas Frias, Department of Potosí. The Municipality is divided into 7 small communities, or *ayllus*, Collana, Urinsaya, Collana Inari, Sullk’aynari, Mañu, Ckanasa og Ckaña (19.979 inhabitants according to the 2001 census). The project initially set out to improve the basis for agricultural production, sheep breeding, craft production and basic sanitation and drinking water in these communities. In addition to raising incomes and delivering some improvements to these productive activities and services, the project also constructed a series of health posts and craft centres/shops (also used as guest accommodation) in a number of the key villages of the ayllus. Each of these elements of the project have been accepted by the local government and integrated into municipal development plans. Assistance in the form of staff for the health posts, was also been granted by the national government. Because of restraints on time the assessment team were unable to visit the project locations and its beneficiaries. NLM made it possible for us to meet and discuss the results of the project with beneficiaries from two representatives of the beneficiary communities and with the local mayor of Tinguipaya. Unfortunately, because of these beneficiaries desire to capture more funding the commentary on the projects extracted from our conversations were clearly more directly influenced by subjective interests than that found elsewhere in the course of the assessment.

⁷ Parents pay 20Bs per child per semester.

Self-determination, ownership and participation.

Although it is clear that NLM have made clear efforts to integrate their projects with the needs, interests and requirements of local communities, the initial invitation and reasoning behind the choice of locations are less clear. In both of the projects considered by the assessment team, the decision over priorities and location appeared from available documentation and interviews to have been generated by ICEL, in cooperation with NLM in the case of the school project, rather than out of local communities' self generated initiative and interests. Certainly ICEL are NLM's only direct local partner organisation in the school project. In the school project, little concern seems to have been given to the question of the destabilising effect that such a well-funded school would have on the local social relationships of a poor community where public educational services are otherwise poorly developed. BN have subsequently informed us that NLM's initial application for support to the school project was rejected on this basis, but that sufficient improvement in the anchorage of the project in the local community allowed them to subsequently grant support to the project.

In the implementation of projects, NLM and ICEL demonstrated a formalised concern with local ownership and participation, ensuring that local people sustain the management and development of their projects themselves and that local government recognise and integrate their projects in their own plans. At the school, a parents association was established to ensure local participation in and agreement with planned development. This parent's association has had a real impact on the school's long term planning, determining the construction of a special section for children with disabilities and some innovation in teaching practice. The school was also open to families of different religious background, catholic or protestant. In the case of Tinguipaya a local development association was established to ensure local participation and management of the community development project. Moreover, everyone the assessment team spoke to amongst the staff and beneficiaries of these projects stated their whole-hearted support for their establishment and outcomes. Although certain elements in the history of the school and development project may suggest some intervention and over-steering, the team were unable to corroborate any of this in sufficient detail during the time spent in Cochabamba.

Respect for culture

The school project in Cochabamba and the community development project in Tinguipaya both make references to their respect for local culture. In the case of Tinguipaya this is emphasised in that one of the main goals of the project is to recover cultural knowledge and practice through the encouragement of craft traditions. This said, elements in both projects suggest that the mission was concerned with the introduction of its own faith and understanding of a moral culture. Provision for local ownership and participation were, as mentioned above, introduced in both locations. However, it was indicated in the interviews made with the mission worker and beneficiaries that whilst no direct offensive was being made on local culture, the mission was first and foremost determined to establish an understanding and clear local profile for its own christian values and ideals. This was particularly evident in the school project, where a Christian education in which the school pastor has overall responsibility for the discipline of the students took precedence over respect for local culture. This positioning was also underlined by the school director and teaching staff's reluctance to use textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education, and fears about the culturally sensitive content of the coming Education reform. It is also of note, that when pushed by the assessment team to discuss cultural sensitivity, the mission representative and school director/ICEL representative attempted to discredit the idea that indigenous culture had any real importance to local people. This was especially stressed in relation to the school project, where the local community were generally first-generation rural migrants. They also made it clear that the moral basis and desired continuance of traditional indigenous culture was highly questionable, being as it were according to them responsible for acts of drunkenness and violence in both locations. It must be highlighted, however, that in subsequent mail and conversation with NLM our communicated claims of a lack of respect for local culture have been both protested and explained as the result of misunderstanding.

Rights-based approach.

Whilst employing a language of respect for local indigenous culture, NLM shows no sign of an explicit rights based approach in its mission work focused on indigenous peoples. During our visit and discussions with representatives of the school and development project in Cochabamba, no indication was given of their use or knowledge of the overall meaning and content of international conventions as a basis for their implementation and existence. Inclusion of the “right of prior consultation” was clearly not a part of current or past mission practice in implementing projects. Indeed, whilst keen to stress the importance of the Tinguipayan project for the recovery of culture, the mission was at the same time sceptical to the value and veracity of referring to either of the two communities as indigenous. This is despite the fact the local mayor of Tinguipaya reportedly won his position through election as an independent candidate representing the *Ayllus Originarios* (Original Communities) of Northern Potosí. This is an independent political movement closely allied with *CONAMAQ* (The National Council of Ayllus and Markas), a national political movement active and particularly influential in rural areas in re-establishing the saliency of indigenous community and leadership structures in national politics. It is possible, however, that ICEL and NLM have simply been unaware of, or simply confused by the changing expressions of cultural identity in the country.

Strategic thinking

The school project and the community development project demonstrate ICEL/NLM as able and structured planners capable of designing and carrying-out projects of significance to the local communities where they work. Provisions have been made by ICEL and NLM to integrate local society in the implementation and management of projects, as well as to gradually take over their ownership. In both locations work has been conducted with the official acceptance and partnership of local and national government. However, whilst strategic thinking is evidenced, ICEL’s internal process of development planning appears to so far be closed to certain common improvements in participatory practice. Although now an independent and national church, the mission’s closest partner remains ICEL and not the local community, or community organisations and government. Questions must be raised about the diagnostic processes and implementation used in these two projects, as well as the signs of paternalism that persist in their management.

3.2 Paraguay:

3.2.1 Context

Indigenous peoples in Paraguay have experienced great changes in their living conditions over the last fifty to sixty years. The forests that used to cover most of the eastern part of the country have to a great extent been cut down and replaced by large-scale mechanized agriculture. The traditional life of the Guaraní and other indigenous peoples in Paraguay – as hunters and gatherers in the forest – is no longer an option, and they now live in relatively small settlements on the margins of Paraguayan society, living off small-scale agriculture, the renting out of some of their land, and work for surrounding farms. Indigenous peoples today only account for about 2% of the national population.

In spite of a relatively advanced legislation with respect to indigenous rights, and the signing of the ILO 169, the state has done little to enforce or support these rights. On the positive side, Paraguay is special in that Guaraní is an official language alongside Spanish and is understood by most of the non-Indian population. Furthermore, even if their current territories are way too small to uphold a traditional way of life, most of the Guaraní settlements do have titles to their land. It should be pointed out, though, that in many cases these lands have been secured not through the intervention of the state, but because supporting organizations, corporations and individuals (including PYM) have purchased the land and donated it to the communities. The norm is supposed to be at least 20 ha per family, but in practice many areas are much smaller than this. The Guaraní settlements often contain the only forested areas left, and appear as islands surrounded by a sea of soya cultivation. These islands are moreover exposed to pressure in different forms. The renting out of land and the cutting down of

forests for short-term gains are transforming the settlements. Moreover, Guaraní land rights are challenged by corruption and claims to titles to the land by non-Indians.

At the time of the team's visit, several groups of indigenous peoples were camped in parks and on sidewalks in Asunción in order to press for the resolution of their land cases. Several hundred Aché – including children – had spent more than two months living in shelters made from plastic to have their land rights recognized. Indigenous organization in Paraguay is relatively weak, but several local/regional organizations do exist, and two organizations are appearing at national level. There are also NGOs supporting indigenous rights. Among other things, they have been successful in two cases presented to the Inter-American Human Rights Court, where two different Indian groups have been granted the right to have their traditional territories returned. In the settlements where PYM works, there are Indigenous Pentecostal Churches established through previous evangelizing work of the Mission. These are minority churches, while the majority in these settlements appears to follow forms of traditional ritual and spiritual practices.

3.2.2 Norwegian Pentecostal Mission (PYM)

PYM started working in Paraguay in the 1950s. The approach has changed over the years, and a process of 'nationalization' has taken place. Thus, an indigenous church has been established, project responsibilities have been handled over to this and other cooperating partners, and the Norwegian Pentecostal Mission as a legally registered entity in Paraguay has been closed down. Whether this is due to intended policies or to external pressures (legal obligation of non-indigenous churches to withdraw from indigenous territories; Norad pressure for nationalization of the projects; reduced recruitment of missionaries from Norway; lack of sufficient Norwegians in Paraguay to fill the positions legally required for registration), the net effect is that today's way of working differs substantially from those of the past. Still, the Norwegian role in the practical implementation of the projects – particularly the school project – remains strong. PYM works with three groups of Guaraní, the Ava Guaraní, the Mbya Guaraní and the Aché.

- *Integrated school and organizational development project.* This program comprises support for the construction of six primary and one secondary school in different Guaraní communities. Schools are built by the project and handed over to the communities, who will have the responsibility for maintenance, while teacher salaries are covered by the state. The organizational development project is a seminar series on economic and business management and organizational theory, given to 200 selected persons from the Guaraní communities, with the aim of giving them tools to better handle their relations with the surrounding society. The project also includes grants for a number of selected persons to take higher education.
- *Textbook project.* This project aims to support the conservation of traditional Guaraní culture and thereby promote increased self-esteem and pride in own culture and traditions. This is done through the collection of stories from older Indians, which are compiled in a number of textbooks, in the original languages. Accompanying this is also a linguistic component, resulting in the development of dictionaries of the three languages, carried out by the Linguistic Institute of the Evangelical University in Asunción. The finished books are distributed to the schools, to be used to make education more culturally appropriate.

Self-determination, ownership and participation.

Both projects are wanted and requested by the peoples. The Ava Guaraní appear to hold education to be important, and there are examples of communities supporting a teacher where the state is not paying his salary. Judging from the reports, there has also been considerable interest in the management/administration courses. Thus the school and organizational development project responds to the wishes of the Guaraní. The identification of schools to be built and who shall receive grants is made by the Indigenous Pentecostal Church, while schools become the property of the communities when they are finished. Grants were given both to members and non-members of the Church and our

limited data do not give any indication that members were prioritized. There was little participation in the execution of the projects: the construction was wholly in the hands of contractors hired by the Norwegian missionaries with no local contribution, and the missionaries also followed up the grant recipients. This strong role of the Norwegians does give the project a certain ‘assistentialist’ orientation. This way of working is in part due to the limited organizational and management capacity of the indigenous communities – a problem PYM’s organizational development project component seeks to address. The fact that the schools generally appeared well maintained by their communities indicates local ownership after completion. (State responsibility is limited to teacher salaries, some material, and pedagogic follow-up, while maintenance of schools is the responsibility of the communities.)

The textbook project also responds to requests from the communities. Elders provide the contents, and decide what stories they want to tell. People from the communities record the stories, while transcription, linguistic elaboration, light editing of narratives, and layout is under the responsibility of the Institute of Linguistics at the Evangelical University. One of the missionaries has been highly involved in coordinating the activities. While books are distributed to schools upon completion, final ownership of the products (books, tapes, ‘copyright’) remains somewhat unclear.

Respect for culture.

In general, the PYM missionaries – in particular the coordinator of the textbook project – showed respect towards and great interest in Guaraní culture. The textbook project aims at the preservation and revalorization of language, history and traditions of the peoples. There are no attempts at weeding out contents that may clash with Church teachings. The projects support Indian students taking Paraguayan teacher education, in order to replace non-indigenous teachers and thereby ensure more appropriate teaching in the schools. Furthermore, the schools are supplied with the textbooks, which contain material in own language and on own history and culture. However, the textbooks are not developed as pedagogical material, and there is no attempt at giving the teachers specialized training for the particular challenges of working in an indigenous school, or for developing a differentiated curriculum. This considerably limits the potential of the activities to contribute towards strengthening traditional culture.

Project activities are not linked to evangelizing work. Still, the key role of the Church as project partner and responsible for selecting beneficiaries, and the basing of the textbook project at the Evangelical University, mean that the projects have a clear religious and denominational foundation.

Rights-based approach.

The projects have an explicit focus on indigenous peoples, and aim at resolving some of the problems arising directly from their situation as indigenous. Furthermore, the school project aims at providing educational services the indigenous peoples have a right to, in a way that does not discriminate according to religion. The organizational component is designed to enhance the capacity of the Ava Guaraní for economic and organizational management. Over the years, PYM has also addressed other rights issues; most importantly, land rights through the purchase of territories and registration of the land as belonging to the indigenous community. PYM has also played a role in requesting the state to fulfil its obligations in terms of paying teacher salaries. This, however, is as far as PYM’s rights engagement goes.

PYM’s way of working in Paraguay means that the individual missionary has a great influence over the way that the project is implemented in practice. There is considerable variation among the missionaries in attitudes towards and knowledge of rights-based approaches. The PYM missionaries we encountered in Paraguay showed no knowledge of or interest in this. There was no awareness of international instruments such as the ILO 169. The representatives expressed a general reluctance to get involved in ‘politics’ or to work to influence the state to follow up its obligations. There was little belief in the usefulness of working towards the state, mainly justified by reference to widespread

corruption. Given the project focus, a natural area of engagement could for instance have been to request teacher positions to be opened at the schools built by PYM. Similarly, in connection with the textbook project, one might have taken an initiative for cooperating with the Ministry of Education in order to use the books as the basis for developing differentiated educational materials and maybe even specialized curricula for the indigenous groups involved. Such simple efforts appear not to have been contemplated; much less any engagement in more controversial issues, for instance connected to state responsibility for ensuring land rights. However, in interviews in Norway, including with a missionary who had recently returned from Paraguay, more positive attitudes towards rights-based approaches were expressed. Moreover, PYM's history of having worked to secure many of the territories the Guaraní now hold, and of having lobbied the state to assume its responsibilities with respect to education, were pointed out.

The PYM representatives interviewed in Paraguay showed no interest in or willingness to promote or support the organizational capacity of the Guaraní themselves to work for securing their rights. In general this appeared to be seen as an unrealistic strategy, and certainly outside the scope of PYM's activities. To some extent, this is contradicted by the organizational development program, which does have such objectives. However, the missionaries we met in Paraguay had little knowledge of this program (the person responsible had just returned to Norway). Thus, it would be wrong to say that there is no support to strengthening indigenous organization, but it is certainly not an objective that is given a main emphasis, or that is shared throughout the work and organization of PYM. The missionaries also had little knowledge of the organizational work that is going on among Guaraní communities, and were not familiar with the emerging national level organizations. And while they knew personally some of the Aché demonstrating in Asunción for months under difficult circumstances in order to obtain secure titles to their land, it was not seen as PYM's role to support this struggle in any way. In sum, an explicit rights perspective is relatively absent in the theory and practice of PYM.

Strategic thinking.

The rationale for the textbook project is to contribute to the building of indigenous self-esteem – highly important in the long term given the discrimination the indigenous population is exposed to and the lack of value ascribed to their traditions within the majority society. The school project aims at providing education to the indigenous peoples in order for them to be able to manage and control their relations with the outside world, likewise an important concern. Thus the projects focus on fundamental concerns of the indigenous peoples. Still, however, it could be argued that an even more urgent issue is to secure the land rights and give the Guaraní ways to manage their areas that allow the continuing existence of these communities.⁸ Given the strong pressure the settlements are exposed to, they might not be around to benefit from the long-term results of the projects unless this fundamental issue is resolved. The lack of attention to wider rights issues and to the development of indigenous organizational capacity to claim their rights is therefore problematic. Similarly, the lack of contact and coordination with other organizations working with these groups is regrettable. (SAI, with Norad support through the Rainforest Foundation Norway, is for instance supporting a program of distance training of teachers who are employed but lack formal qualifications, as well as other interventions with Ava Guaraní. However, it should also be pointed out that the responsibility to coordinate works both ways, and that in interviews, SAI expressed less interest in this than did the PYM representatives.)

Furthermore, also at the project level, there is limited attention to integrated efforts to ensure a more sustained impact. The projects, which both have educational components, are not integrated, and also seen individually, the projects could have been strengthened through a more coherent approach to education. To some extent the projects seem to have been run in parallel by different missionaries, with little attempt to coordinate. The two PYM representatives we met were for instance not able to

⁸ In this respect, PYM points out that the projects have been developed on the basis of the wishes and needs identified and expressed by the Indians themselves.

inform us about the organizational development component, which had been implemented by a third missionary who had left for Norway shortly before our arrival. An integrated approach to educational development would have attempted to address all existing limitations – differentiated curricula; appropriate textbooks and other materials; special teacher training focusing on the particular challenges of bilingual and multicultural education with groups suffering from marginalization and discrimination; ensuring that the state assumes the responsibility for providing sufficient teacher positions – and not simply building schools, giving a number of teacher the standard training, and providing a set of books. Furthermore, the textbook project seems to lack a perspective on how the books are to be used. As many as 26 have been produced for the Ava Guaraní alone, but they remain largely unedited collections of narratives, without any attempt at making them into proper didactic material, developing books for different levels, producing teacher guides, or giving teachers systematic training in how the material can be used in classes.

3.3 Bangladesh

3.3.1 Context

Bangladesh has an estimated indigenous population of 2.5 to 3 million, or around 2% of the total population. They belong to 45 different peoples. The Constitution does not recognize the existence of different peoples within the country, and there is a general reluctance on the part of the state to acknowledge minority ethnic groups as anything but ‘backward segments of the population’. At best, ‘tribal peoples’ is the term used, which does not denote the link to territory implied in the terms ‘indigenous’ or its local counterpart ‘adivasi’. A strong political focus on the unity of the Bangladesh nations has impeded the recognition of diversity and cultural rights. Bangladesh has not signed the ILO 169, but it has signed the earlier ILO Convention 107. However, it is not being implemented. An exception to this general picture, and hopefully an indication of an emerging change, is the fact that the Bangladesh PRSP speaks specifically of adivasi peoples and their concerns. The Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum was established in 2000, and is active in working for the recognition of indigenous rights.

A main distinction can be drawn between the indigenous peoples living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and those in the plains area, largely living in the northern part of the country. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, an indigenous armed struggle lasted for close to 25 years, and ended in 1996 with a Peace Accord with the government. The Peace Accord recognizes the region as ‘tribally inhabited’, the traditional authority structures of the peoples, and opens up for a certain amount of political autonomy. While the practical implementation of these principles is limited, this is still a very long way off from the situation of indigenous peoples in the Plain areas. These live in scattered villages, interspersed among the majority population, and they are still far from mounting an organized struggle for political rights. The Santals are the largest group, and are estimated to have a population of 200-250,000. While dispossession of land is a problem for all indigenous peoples of Bangladesh, the process has gone much further in the Plains, where the landlessness rate among the indigenous groups is claimed to be 95%. (A study of sample Santal villages in the area where the Normisjon projects are implemented showed 97% of households to be landless).

The vast majority of the indigenous population live from agricultural day labor, well below the poverty line. The process of land dispossession has been ongoing for a long period of time, and continues today, through various quasi-legal and illegal practices, often including intimidation and outright violence. Indigenous peoples face discrimination and exclusionary practices in many forms, and the legal system is of very limited help in these cases. Even the laws themselves promote the process, as for instance the act introduced after partition of Pakistan and India that allowed the confiscation of land owned by Hindus (adivasi traditional religion is in many cases referred to as Hindu), which was retained with only slight modifications after Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan. Educational levels are extremely low – project documents speak of a literacy rate among the Santals of only 14.3% for men and 7.4% for women. The lack of instruction in their own

language, and the discrimination Santal children meet when they enter schools dominated by the Bengali-speaking majority population, are important reasons for this.

Christians make up only 0.4% of the population. Reportedly, indigenous peoples make up the majority of this 0.4%. This may reflect the focus that Christian missionary work has had towards indigenous peoples, but also, we have been informed, the fact that becoming Christian has offered a certain amount of security for an extremely marginalized group. Even if it is not necessarily easy to be a Christian in Muslim Bangladesh, for the vulnerable indigenous people there is still a minimum of protection offered by joining a Christian church.

3.3.2 Normisjon

Normisjon, formerly known as Santalmisjonen, has a long history of working with the Santals. One product of the work of the Norwegian missionaries is the Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (BNELC). In 1986 the BNELC started the BNELC-DF (Development Foundation) as the entity to carry out development work. In 2001, the DF was closed down, due to internal conflicts. It was restarted again in 2003, with active help from Normisjon. In order to avoid a repetition of the earlier problems, a clearer separation was made between the Church and the DF – which now has on its board both a Muslim and a Hindu, in addition to members from other Christian denominations and from BNELC. (In Bangladesh, the legal situation has all along required a clear separation between NGO development work and any evangelizing activity.) Normisjon retains an office in Dhaka (under the ‘old’ name of Santal Mission Norwegian Board), with a Norwegian missionary as Deputy Director. Currently, however, The SNMB has minimal involvement with the work of the DF, and apart from the special history, the relationship between Normisjon and DF resembles that of any other secular international donor NGO and its local counterpart organization. The DF also works with other donors (since it was restarted in 2003, only with the Lutheran World Federation). The following projects are covered by this review:

- Santal Development Project (SDP)

This is a three year pilot project, which started in 2005 and focuses specifically on the Santals. It has two main components; alternative livelihoods promotion and land retention and development. The first consists of vocational training in different professions – tailoring, mechanics, welding, carpentry, embroidery, electrical, barber – and credit for successful trainees to start up their own enterprises. Over the three years, the project aims to train 156 young Santals, and give them help and credit to facilitate starting up in their new professions. The second component is called ‘land retention’, and combines a number of activities: building of community organizations to address land and other legal issues; training in land documentation and laws; legal advice and assistance for court cases involving land and other issues; credit for recovering mortgaged properties; general awareness-raising on legal rights.

- Education program

The objective of the program is to strengthen education among the rural Santal. There are two main components: Children’s Preparatory Schools and Boarding Schools. DF runs 32 CPSs in different villages. They follow the normal curriculum, and are open to all children in the vicinity, Santals as well as Bengali-speaking kids. What is different from the public schools, however, is that they employ Santals as teachers, thereby ensuring that Santal children gets instruction also in Santali, and not only in Bengali. The CPSs provide classes up to grade three, thereby facilitating the entry of Santal children into the school system. DF also has two boarding schools, where children from remote villages can stay during the week.

- Health program

DF also runs two health clinics, offering general services to the population of the area. These clinics are open to everyone (as they should be) and there is no particular focus on specific indigenous-related issues. Thus, even though this is categorized as an indigenous peoples project in the overall BN portfolio, we see the project as falling outside the scope of this review.

Self-determination, ownership, participation

In the Santal Development Project, a number of different approaches have been used to ensure ownership and participation. The project was based on a fairly thorough study, that mapped needs and concerns among the population of a number of Santal villages, and which came up with recommendations for future project interventions that reflected the stated priorities of the people consulted. Furthermore, a core activity of the land retention program has been the strengthening of community organization, and it is through these structures that program activities in the legal field – which cases to take up – are prioritized and decided. The fact that these organizations to some extent build on traditional village authority structures would seem to strengthen ownership. It is also the overarching body of these organizational structures – the Legal Assistance Cell – which selects the beneficiaries for the vocational training program. The education program is not built on such a high degree of participation. Government curriculum and regulations, the existing physical infrastructure (established through the earlier work of the missionaries), and limited funds for anything but the basic running costs, mean that the scope for making decisions and taking ownership is fairly limited. It seems clear, however, that the program responds to felt needs among the Santal population – something that is for instance evidenced by the fact that in some of the CPSs, teachers are paid by parents to also give classes beyond grade three. The health program likewise does not have much emphasis on participation, but undoubtedly also responds to very real needs.

Respect for culture

In general, the DF appeared to be respectful of local culture and traditions. In a few instances, project interventions built specifically on Santali culture, such as the use of Santali language in the CPS (Santal children were not only given additional instructions in Santali, but they were also taught to read and write in their mother tongue – alongside learning to do so in Bengali) and the use of traditional authority structures as the basis for building new and higher-level organizations. In connection with the celebrations of the International Indigenous Peoples Day and the day commemorating the Santal Uprising, DF has organized performances of traditional dance, shown also for the non-indigenous population in the city of Dinajpur, thus promoting knowledge of and respect for Santal culture. In the health program, on the other hand, we saw few indications that DF was attempting to link up with traditional medical knowledge, practices or practitioners. In terms of religion, the programs now operate independently of the church. While the conflicts that paralyzed the organization in 2001 were linked to attempts by certain segments to make the DF prioritize congregations and members of the BNELC, such practices are no longer on the agenda. DF appears to work equally with members of all religious affiliation, without discrimination, and without seeking to promote any particular religion. As well as DF's own stated priorities it is also important to acknowledge that due to the strict regulations and controls against development NGOs working to promote religious conversion it would have been impossible for the DF to work in any other way.

Rights-based approach

The Santal Development Project is the most explicitly indigenous-rights-based program of the four cases visited for this review. It focuses directly on the Santals, identifies core concerns they have as being directly linked to their indigenous status, and seeks to facilitate the legal means they need in order to secure their rights. In addition, the DF is also an active member of the *Coordination of NGOs for Adivasis* (CNA), a network for coordinating advocacy efforts for indigenous issues among NGOs of the region. Through arrangements marking the International Indigenous Peoples Day and lobbying efforts towards government and state institutions, the CNA works for public recognition of the existence of Bangladeshi indigenous peoples and their rights. Thus, the DF follows an explicitly rights-based approach, focusing on empowering the local communities to secure their own rights, as well as on the state's obligation to protect them. Furthermore, there is an explicit recognition of the particular nature of indigenous rights, not simply of rights in general. Neither in its written material nor in its advocacy work does the DF refer explicitly to international instruments for indigenous rights. This may be tactically sensible in the Bangladeshi context. The health and education projects are open

to all, and rights-based in this sense. As previously mentioned, the health project does not have any specific indigenous-rights dimension.

Strategic thinking

Before the SDP was developed, the SMNB commissioned a pre-study. This covered six sample Santal villages, with the aim of analyzing the difficulties faced by the Santals and making recommendations for possible projects. The Terms of Reference for this study explicitly points to areas such the violation of human rights, land issues, discrimination, social and economic degradation, language rights and cultural survival. The study comes up with an interesting – and long – list of recommendations for possible interventions. While the SDP itself has not been able to cover all these aspects, it very clearly builds on and corresponds to the key recommendations of the pre-study report. Thus, the program has been developed through a process where the specific concerns of the indigenous people have been analyzed and interventions have been designed in order to overcome the key concerns of poverty, land dispossession and lack of access to and protection by the legal system. In this way, the SDP can be taken as a model for how a program can be developed in order to address the key and strategic concerns of an indigenous people. On the other hand, questions could be raised about the strategic impact of the vocational training component. While undoubtedly having a great impact for the individuals trained, it is possible to question the impact at community level, as the direct beneficiaries necessarily are relatively few, and as a number of the men trained appear to leave for Dhaka to practice their new skills.

3.4 Bistandsnemda (BN)

Norsk Misjons Bistandsnemnd (BN) is the largest recipient of Norwegian public funds for development projects for indigenous peoples. In the period 2003-2005 the annual figure given to the work of BN by Norad was c 140 million NOK per year, of which 39 million were for indigenous peoples. As an umbrella organisation BN works to assist its total of eighteen member mission organisation with coordination and contact with Norad, and as a professional resource centre aimed at the training, advocacy and exchange of information between the network. As a mission based organisation, BN operates out of a basis in Christian values expressed as being built on Biblical teaching. These stated values are that:

- Humans are made in the image of God and therefore have inherent value and undeniable rights
- Humans have responsibility to take care and administer God's creation for the best of present and future generations.
- Human value is founded in God's love such as was expressed in the words and practice of Jesus in his meeting with the weakest.

The portfolio of 150 projects, of which c40 new are applied for each year, include a wide range of development related themes and issues. Apart from integrated and specific support for indigenous peoples, BN lists projects aimed at: school and education, women and work, agriculture, water management, health work, HIV aids, economic development, anti-corruption and rights.

Self-determination, ownership, participation

In addition to strategy documents, BN have also demonstrated their use of clear criteria aimed at securing and forming a sustainable basis for the local ownership of projects. Assurance of the criteria has been built into the series of clearly defined steps including external consultancy that BN have set for its member organisations application process. BN is convincing in its insistence on long term and mutual responsibility in the planning, implementation and identity of the projects it supports. Mention is further made of the importance of tying, where possible, this work to both local and national governmental development plans.

Respect for culture

BN has clearly stated in both conversation and its strategy documents that its official position is that all humans are of equal value and that despite their differences all people must be met with similar tolerance and respect. They further acknowledge that indigenous peoples have a particular need for empowerment and cultural respect. Culture is then clearly recognised as an issue of importance in development work. Here, critical questions can only be raised of their intention in stating in their strategy document for 2007-2011 that indigenous peoples need to be made aware of their own meaning and social position. It is unclear who they mean to be responsible for definitions of meaning and social position. In the criteria set for project applications BN specifically mention the need for member organisations to make a clear division between evangelical and development work in line with the requirements for development assistance, as specified in Stortingsmelding 35.

Rights-based approach

BN states that in strengthening weak and oppressed groups, that are often vulnerable for cynical misuses of power, it makes a contribution to empowerment and the development of freedom as a right. BN has further stated that women and indigenous peoples are particularly important social groups in this regard. In this way BN makes clear that rights are a particularly important element in its work and strategy. However, with this said it has been clear from both our conversations with representatives of BN and a review of its project documents that at present this commitment to rights is shallow in current evaluations and project practice. This is particularly the case with regards to indigenous rights. Of the project descriptions made available to us by BN the majority (with the exception of those pertaining to Madagascar, Nepal and most of the documents referring to China) mention indigenous peoples or specific marginalised ethnic groups (See Annex 1). However, whereas ethnic groups are mentioned in the majority of country analyses, they are given little priority as an issue for further study or as a key concern for planned assistance. Indeed, in only the projects descriptions for Peru (BN, NLM), Burma (Salvation Army), China (Areopagos), Kenya (Wycliffe) and Pakistan is there any mention of the explicit importance of rights work and only in the case of Peru is ILO 169 mentioned as a specific reference point. In the case of Kenya (PYM) and Pakistan (Wycliffe) clear reference is also made of the need for a change in local “cultural attitudes” to gender. While cultural difference is clearly considered important in the majority of cases, there also appears to be general agreement between BN and member organisations of the overwhelming need to emphasise- as NMA put it in their development goals for Ecuador- that “God’s love and justice are equal for everyone”.

Strategic thinking

Whilst it can be said that BN current approach to rights, and particular indigenous rights, is weak, recognition must be made of the clear efforts made by the organisation to reflect and update on policy and the basis of development practice. The organisation is constantly sending out updated information to its members on development policy discussions and requirements. It also run a series of workshops and published a series of handbooks dealing with different themes related to rights issues e.g. on empowerment, gender rights etc. In conversations with the review team recognition has also been made of the need to further these efforts at strategy and relevance through inclusion of indigenous rights as a specific focus, with special requirements for mission organisations.

4. Analysis and Conclusions

4.1 BN member organizations and indigenous peoples

Despite some persisting reservations about the strategic value of assisting the development of indigenous peoples through the work of mission, in the course of review a far more nuanced and positive impression of BN and its member organisations work with these populations has been gained. Through visiting mission projects and talking with their beneficiaries it is recognised, contrary to many popular media impressions, that simple generalisations about the threatening character of missions to local cultures or reduction to “Rice Christianity”⁹ are inaccurate. In our – admittedly too brief – field visits, we saw no indications of development activities being directly used by the missions or their partner organizations for proselytising purposes. Indeed, it appears from the rough survey of raised hands during the local review of projects that very few of the people benefiting from these projects had any interest in converting from their already established and contrasting religious beliefs. This was also an issue that both mission staff and local people commented and mused over during our stay. In all of the projects visited there was a genuine concern with development and the improvement of the local population’s social and economic conditions. Work was clearly being done that was of immediate advantage to the sustainability of local rights and culture. Amongst the elements that were found to be particularly positive for indigenous populations were specific efforts to directly assist the practical security of local livelihoods, the empowerment and local political recognition of local organisations structures and efforts of advocacy and legal empowerment.

It is important to nuance our findings and draw attention to where mission work for indigenous peoples is of particular advantage. However, in a review of this kind it would be incorrect for us to ignore or fail to detail educated indications of problems that weaken the positive impact of and justification for this work. Of particular note is the continuing lack of clarity of rights as a genuine basis for theory and practice in these projects. All of the missions claimed to have based their development assistance to indigenous peoples on a clear “rights-basis”. However, despite these claims our review of project documents (see above) revealed that whilst many mentioned indigenous peoples or specific marginalised ethnic groups very few mention specifically the importance of rights work, or referred directly to international conventions or the Norwegian guidelines. The poor knowledge and application of a rights-based approach to development work amongst indigenous peoples was also evident in the mission field. During our visits to projects and conversations with mission staff and beneficiaries it was clear that references to rights were more rhetorical than any basis for praxis. Few had had any detailed knowledge of rights guidelines and conventions, and even fewer how these rights could be converted into a practical tool-box of ideas and mechanisms for development and advocacy work amongst and with indigenous peoples. Indeed, the review team gained the general impression from mission workers that the Norwegian guidelines for strengthening support for indigenous peoples was a distant and abstract document with little practical use in these projects. However, it should be emphasized that more important than being able to refer to the relevant international conventions is whether the actual development programs are implemented in accordance with a rights-based approach. The best programs we visited were rights-based in this practical sense. Still, however, it is our conviction that this aspect could have been further reinforced had the organizations to a greater extent made use of and reflected over the concepts and conventions of human and indigenous rights.

As well as commonalities between the mission projects, it must also be noted that there are serious differences in the meaning, practice and quality of the development assistance for indigenous peoples the missions are currently involved in. In all mission projects assessed there was a genuinely expressed concern with the advantages that development assistance could produce for local communities.

⁹ Where poor indigenous people as forced to convert in order to secure their survival, or strategically embrace Christianity to obtain material benefits.

However, it must be stressed that there are also significant differences in the missions' abilities and willingness to reflect and update their understandings of development. This affected the degree to which these organisations were involved in the positive outcomes mentioned above. The review surprisingly observed that one of the most significant differences bringing about this contrast between mission organisations is the separation, indeed "secularisation", in some cases of their development work.

In contrast to NLM and PYM where the local evangelical church remains the sole local partner, a separation of church work from development work appears to have given the Norwegian Mission Alliance in Bolivia (MAN-B) and BNELC Development Foundation (DF) greater structural freedom to develop a more inclusive and professionalized approach to project implementation. Whereas the Norwegian Mission Alliance still work with the different churches present in project area, parallel to their development work, it was also evident from our conversations and visits that it was not religious morality, but rather more general humanistic values that were being encouraged. In achieving this separation the MAN-B and DF appear to have been able to better embed the long term benefits of their projects through strategic and ecumenical alliances with secular civil society organisations and local government. Whilst all of the mission organisations claim to respect local culture, it also appears that the process of secularisation has assisted these particular organisations to be more tolerant of local cultural practice and equally important, initiative for self-development. In short, the separation of religious work from secular development work appears to have assisted a process of reflection and learning that has created positive advantages for the indigenous peoples where these missions are working. It is furthermore of particular importance to highlight the way in which this process of secularisation relates to the issue of participation in these projects. MAN-B and DF have, in contrast to NLM and PYM, moved away from project models based on an alliance with a singular local church. As a result of moving towards a more open process of community based decision-making and participation, and away from more managed forms of participation, MAN-B and DF have better won the trust of local community organisations and government. This is important to highlight because the broader base of support for these projects is likely to have a positive effect on the long-term sustainability of their projects.

Of course in recognising these differences between missions we should also acknowledge the highly contrasting political and social contexts in which each of the missions are working. The requirements of development assistance to indigenous populations whose are a clear minority (Paraguay, Bangladesh) and whose survival are directly threatened differ greatly from the requirements of development assistance to indigenous populations that are a majority, or hold political power (Bolivia). The contrasting politicisation of indigenous and other expressions of cultural, social and economic rights such as gender, generational and religious rights also play a role in explaining the differing expressions of assistance in different national contexts. As such, these contextual factors clearly have a role in limiting some of the possibilities for both NGOs and mission organisations to assist threatened populations. However, such contextual factors must not be considered to be only problematic. They can also be seen as the crucial catalyst of specific guidelines which in certain cases have generated important advantages and bureaucratic advances for indigenous peoples and missionary assistance. Specifically, the introduction of participatory requirements of governmental structures in Bolivia, and of the secular requirements for civil society organisations in Bangladesh should be recognised as contextual factors explaining the process of separation and secularisation mentioned immediately above. As is demonstrated above, these contextual factors are also not entirely determinate of project design and focus. Because of their own processes of decision and reflection, missions working in the same country end up with commonalities and divergences in the manner in which they operate, form local partnerships and establish local participation.

Variations in national and local contexts are important not only in the way they constrain and enable project activities and methodologies, but also because they imply very different levels of vulnerability between indigenous peoples. Bolivia, with its indigenous majority, current high levels of acceptance of indigenous rights, and – at least in the highlands – 500 years of experience with and syncretism of Christian and local ancestral/animistic beliefs, offers a very different situation from indigenous

peoples newly emerged from the forest in the Amazon. Unlike Highland Bolivia where indigenous people now have political power and where there are well-established indigenous organisations, these vulnerable groups lack the means for upholding their traditional livelihood and culture, and struggle to make sense of the bewildering surrounding society. Such differences in vulnerability have implications for the precautions that are necessary to take when seeking to work with and support the different groups. In the latter case, initially very high levels of dependence must be expected towards organizations offering support. Seen from the outside, it would appear to be most in line with the Guidelines to avoid using an organization fundamentally oriented towards spreading its own religion as the channel for support to such groups.

4.2 Bistandsnemnda (BN)

BN plays an important and well-defined role as interlocutor, coordinator and resource centre for its member organisations. As such, it further plays a vital role as an efficient “one stop” contact point for Norad with BN’s eighteen member organisations. All member organisations we have spoken to agree on this point. Its strategy and operating criteria also help to control and update the quality of the projects included in its portfolio. BN does, however, have further distance to travel with regards to strengthening its “rights basis”, and particularly its commitment to indigenous rights. This is evidenced from the poor presence of rights language in its strategy, operating criteria and project portfolio. Moreover, BN staff and leadership freely admit that further work needs to be done to develop their understanding of indigenous rights, and form a clear foundation for this kind of rights work in the portfolio of projects it helps to coordinate.

4.3 NORAD

The Norwegian guidelines established in 2004 are an important advance in developing a solid, coherent and normatively founded approach for Norway’s development cooperation with indigenous peoples. The principles they express – in this report presented as four key dimensions – are central to the demands presented by indigenous peoples, and they reflect the emerging international agreement on the rights of indigenous peoples, as expressed for instance by the recently approved UN Declaration. Yet there remain issues in the Guidelines that create confusion and ought to be clarified. Most importantly, this relates to the distinction between *specific* and *integrated* support for indigenous peoples. While the distinction is not always easy to draw in practice, we recognize the need for such categories, and see no obvious way of making the defining criteria less ambiguous. What urgently needs to be clarified, however, is what status the Guidelines should have for the *integrated* support to indigenous peoples. The Guidelines state that

‘*Specific* support for indigenous peoples is the primary focus for this document. [...] The Norwegian Guidelines are [...] primarily based on *specific* cooperation with indigenous peoples, even if the recommendations are also linked to other efforts that are relevant in an indigenous context.’ (p 12, emphasis added)

As *integrated* support is defined as projects not explicitly based on ILO 169 and the traditional culture and way of life of the indigenous people, one might draw the conclusion that the Guidelines make no specific requirements on these projects. However, we understand that this was not the original intention, nor the interpretation of the Guidelines currently held by Norad and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Stating that such projects should not respect indigenous peoples rights to self-determination and culture would of course also be contrary to ILO 169, which Norway seeks to follow. Some further specific requirements must therefore also be made on the *integrated* projects. However, logically, these cannot be the same as for the *specific* projects, or they would all be *specific* projects. Thus, there is a need to clarify the minimum requirements for *integrated* projects.¹⁰

¹⁰ Similarly, it would be natural for the Guidelines to include measures to be taken by projects that are not with or for indigenous peoples, but that somehow affect them. Dam projects that lead to displacement of indigenous peoples is an example.

This is also linked to the classification of projects as indigenous peoples projects. This is done through the organizations' completion of the reporting formats codes for target groups, where indigenous peoples are one option. As the report *Norges bistand til urfolk* (op.cit.) showed, this is an area surrounded with considerable confusion among all types of development actors. It seems probable that the intention of the reporting system is that also *integrated* support is to be reported, but this is unclear. Even if BN is currently taking more care with this task, there will still be projects that are incorrectly classified. If for the organizations the effect of specifying a project as an indigenous peoples project is that it is liable to be exposed to critical review, this may be a disincentive for reporting indigenous peoples as a target group. A clarification from Norad on the purpose and basis of this reporting – and consequently what projects should be included – would be helpful.

5. Recommendations

BN: strengthen knowledge and training on indigenous rights

BN should seek to address the general weakness in terms of knowledge of rights-based approaches among its members, with a specific focus on indigenous rights. BN has previously shown its ability to promote professionalization and improvement in the development activities of its member organizations in areas such as project sustainability, organizational development, partnership, and gender, and similar methodologies should be used for the area of indigenous rights. BN should draw on best practices and successful experiences among own members as sources of learning and inspiration, but should probably also make use of outside competence on indigenous rights. Interchange with other actors working with aid and indigenous peoples, for instance through the Forum for Development Cooperation with Indigenous Peoples and its annual conference in Tromsø, is recommended.

BN members: ensure that this awareness and training is utilised at all levels by project partners and field staff

As BN is an umbrella organization, with the member organizations being responsible for partner contact and programme implementation in the field, it is these who must take responsibility for ensuring that knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes related to indigenous rights are shared at all levels. Given the often long and many-levelled aid chain from head office in Norway to individual project staff members working directly with target groups, this is a considerable task that requires dedicated efforts from the BN member organizations working with indigenous peoples.

BN and Members: reflect upon the implications of our finding that increased separation/secularization improves project work

If it is accepted that de-linking of development work from partner churches improves outcomes of indigenous peoples projects through enhanced ownership, participation and sustainability, this has important implications for BN and its members. While our sample is too small to definitively prove this relationship, we believe there are strong logical and theoretical reasons for doing so. BN and its members should reflect upon how this finding may be used to strengthen its work with indigenous peoples.

BN and Members: develop better diagnostic tools for and analysis of the cultural politics of the contexts where they are working

Despite BN and its members claims of concerns with indigenous peoples their project documents demonstrate little consideration of the particular challenges and needs of these, or other ethnic minorities. More care needs to be taken in their analysis of identity and cultural politics in the countries where they are working, and better tools developed to study and identify a suitable and context specific rights based approach to assist these populations.

Norad: Clarify its guidelines and reporting routines for working with indigenous peoples

As indicated above, Norad should clarify the minimum requirements for integrated support to indigenous peoples, as well as clearer instructions for what kinds of projects that should be tagged as having indigenous peoples as main target group.

Annex 1: Terms of reference

NORAD REVIEW Norwegian Missions in Development Programme affecting Indigenous Peoples

Background:

The Norwegian Missions in Development (BN) is an umbrella organization for 18 member organizations with approximately 150 development projects in almost 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin-America. About 35 of the projects, approximately one fifth of the portfolio, have indigenous peoples as a major target group. As this represents a substantial part of Norwegian bilateral co-operation with indigenous peoples, it was decided that Norad needed more information as to how the ILO 169 Convention and the Norwegian guidelines for support to indigenous peoples were adhered to in this portfolio.

Several of the projects were initiated before the Norwegian guidelines were approved, and the question is to what degree the focus of the running programmers have included a rights based approach. Further it is of importance to look into processes of indigenous peoples empowerment and participation in the projects and gender as a crosscutting issue.

BN and its member organizations are being reviewed, and each organization is invited to participate with one representative each during the projects visit. BN is a dialogue partner in the planning process, and will have facilitating role for the implementation of the review.

The member organisations and the BN Secretariat and relevant departments in Norad form an advisory group to be heard during and after the implementation of the review. The senior adviser on indigenous peoples issues is a reference person for the review.

Purpose and scope of work:

- To assess the relevance of the Norwegian Missions in Development (BN) projects in reference to the Norwegian guidelines for indigenous peoples and the ILO Convention 169.
- To assess the relevance, the approach and efficiency of the working methodology of the support to indigenous peoples by the organizations supported by BN
- Assess how the BN projects relate to indigenous peoples situation at local and national level Assess how indigenous peoples rights are addressed in the projects and how the projects support indigenous peoples empowerment and self determination
- Assess indigenous peoples participation in the planning, management and control of the projects.
- Assess how BN Secretariat coordinates and ensures the quality of member organizations' work in the field.

Implementation of the Review:

The team should read through the 35 projects in the BN portfolio that list indigenous people as a main target group.

The team travels to two countries in Latin America (Bolivia and Paraguay) and one country in Asia (Bangladesh).

The Norwegian organizations that have partners that will be visited in Latin America are:

**The Norwegian Pentecostal Mission (PYM),
The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) and**

The Norwegian Mission Alliance (MNA).

In Bangladesh the team will visit projects of Normisjon's partner organisations.

In Oslo: Meetings with BN Secretariat and the above mentioned member organizations.

In the countries visited meetings with and interviews with representatives of the member organizations, the project partners, indigenous peoples' representatives, as well as representatives from governmental authorities on local and national levels and other relevant actors, such as other international organizations supporting indigenous peoples.

Using efficient methodologies such as:

- Group interviews
- Individual unstructured interviews
- Review of documents

Relevant documents review:

- BN's and member organizations' strategies/ reports/project papers/reviews/ evaluations.
- ILO 169 Convention
- Norwegian guidelines for support to indigenous peoples in development cooperation
- Local reports and reviews
- Relevant national document on the indigenous peoples situation and the national indigenous policies

The Review Team:

Team leader: Mr. Axel Borchgrevink

Team advisor: Mr. John Andrew McNeish

Technical/Logistical support to the team:

1 representative from the member organizations, local or/and Norwegian (participating when the organizations projects are visited)

Timetable: Primo June to 30 September 2007

Logistics and document review:

Agenda and coordination of activities:

Field Evaluation to be conducted by the review team including a wrap up meeting within each country with the Embassy and local partner.

Schedule for the external consultants:

Preparations and study of documents: 1 week

I Fieldwork in Bolivia and Paraguay: 12 days in June

The team starts in Bolivia for work with NLM and NMA and goes to Paraguay for work with PYM.

II Fieldwork Bangladesh: 1 week in August with Normisjon.

Writing of report: 2 weeks

Total: 6 weeks per person

Reporting:

- The report shall provide suggestions regarding the future approach at organizational level and elaborate recommendations for BNs future strategic approach to and work with indigenous peoples in general. The report shall contain an executive summary with the above mentioned recommendations for BN. The report should be written in English and consist of maximum 30 pages, with a summary. A draft report should be circulated to the involved parties within three weeks after the finalized country visits.
- Deadline for final report: September 30, 2007.
- Norad has commissioned the review and is the owner of the report which should be made available on the Norad web side with other evaluations and reviews. If particular sensitive information is included, part of the report may be excluded from public display.

The team should be available for follow up seminars to increase learning from the review to all BN partners and Norad involved with Indigenous Peoples Work. Separate booking for this will be made upon request.

The services of the consultants and the expenses involved will be charged to the frame agreements with NUPI (Borchgrevink) and CMI (McNeish). Please see budget enclosed. Remuneration shall follow the regulations of the said frame agreements.

Oslo, 24.04. 2007

Annex 2: BN indigenous peoples projects

Land	Organisasjon navn	Prosjektnavn	Lokal Partner	Budsjett
Kenya	Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband	Pokot Development Progr. (PDP - PIP)	Evangel.Lutheran Church/Pokot District	1 599 506
Madagaskar	Det Norske Misjonsselskap	Integrated Village Dev. Program Bara	Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (FLM)	1 025 089
Madagaskar	Det Norske Misjonsselskap	Integrated development Ambovombe	Fiangonana Loterana Malagasy (FLM) Eglise Luthérie	514 403
Aserbajdsjan	Normisjon	Agricultural Development in Sheki Area	Norwegian Humanitarian Enterprise, Aserbajdsjan	484 000
Bangladesh	Normisjon	Santal Development Project	BNELC DF - Development Foundation	446 005
Bangladesh	Normisjon	Education Programme - BNELC-DF	BNELC Development Foundation (DF)	782 889
Bangladesh	Normisjon	Health Programme - BNELC-DF	BNELC Development Foundation (DF)	653 330
Burma	Norsk Misjon i Øst	Grassroots Human Rights Education Program in Burma	Human Rights Education Institute of burma (HREIB)	1 264 437
India	Normisjon	Assam Victims' Dev. Support	Lutheran World Service, India	1 260 261
India	Normisjon	Mohulpahari Christian Hospital	Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	583 844
India	Normisjon	Rural Development, NELC	The Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church	405 478
Indonesia	Wycliffe	Kirikiri Edopi Healthcare Program	Kartidaya	214 361
Kina	Areopagos	T'Café/Gallery - Nordica	Chuang Ku, Yunnan Art Institue, Three self	357 700
Kina	Den norske Misjonsallianse	Longchuan Development Project	Longchuan County Government	723 235
Kina	Den Norske Tibetmisjon	Integrated Development Project, Yushu prefecture	Norserve and Plateau Perspective	1 500 000
Kina	Den Norske Tibetmisjon	Development Project in Tibet	The Working Commision, QNP	1 415 834
Kina	Det Norske Misjonsselskap	Rural Dev. Project (RDP) in Jianghua Yao County	Amity Foundation in China	849 159
Kina	Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband	Yuan Yang Environmental Dev. Program - YYEDP	The Womens Federation	523 600
Kina	Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband	ZhaoTong Community Dev. Program	ZhaoYang Poverty Alleviating Office (PAO)	582 250
Nepal	Normisjon	Community Health in Okhaldhunga	United Mission to Nepal	722 552
Pakistan	Wycliffe	Parkari Community Dev. Program	Parkari Community Dev. Program	1 896 253
Pakistan	Wycliffe	Kachhi Community Development Project	Kachhi Community Dev. Program	575 559
Bolivia	De Norske Pinsemenigheters Ytremisjon	Capacity-building of MSLB/FES schools in Bolivia	MSLB/FES Nordic Mission in Bol/Foundation for Educ	1 423 000
Bolivia	Den norske Misjonsallianse	Communication for development	Universidad San Francisco Xavier	1 487 648
Bolivia	Den norske Misjonsallianse	Institute for development	Mision Alianza de Noruega en Bolivia	757 701
Bolivia	Den norske Misjonsallianse	Soccer Crosses Frontiers - sports hall	El Alto Commune, neighbour committees and Mision A	1 487 442
Bolivia	Den norske Misjonsallianse	Integrated Dev., Interandean Valleys	Misión Alianza de Noruega en Bolivia	3 788 616
Bolivia	Den norske Misjonsallianse	El Alto Norte	Mision Alianza de Noruega en Bolivia	5 391 666
Bolivia	Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband	School Project, Cochabamba	ICEL, Bolivia	1 439 299
Ecuador	Normisjon	Health Project MANO AMIGA	Stiftelsen MANO AMIGA	84 600
Ecuador	Normisjon	Primary school for aboriginal Indian	Stiftelsen "Mushuk Kawsay"	928 279
Guatemala	De Norske Pinsemenigheters Ytremisjon	School- and Agricultural Program	Asamblea de Dios	1 392 000

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Paraguay	De Norske Pinsemenigheters Ytremisjon	Integrated School & org. dev. project	Iglesia Filadelfia Indigenista and MOE	908 000
Paraguay	De Norske Pinsemenigheters Ytremisjon	Textbooks for Mbya Guarani og Ache	IDELGUAP/FALEVI	738 000
Peru	Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband	Project for education and dev.	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana, Peru	1 059 793

Annex 3: People and institutions consulted

Date	Institution	Person
11.06.07	NIBR	Einar Braathen Heidi Lundeberg
11.06.07	Norad	Marit Lillejordet Karlsen Turid Arnegaard
12.06.07	NMA	Jørgen Haug
Bolivia		
15.06.07	MAN-B	Tito Montero Alejandro Lafuente Senior staff
15.06.07	Colegio The Strongest/Carlos Montenegro, El Alto Norte	Teachers Parents' association
15.06.07	Manzaneras, El Alto	Large group of female voluntary health workers
16.06.07	Combaya	Traditional authorities Representatives of peasant union at different levels Women's organization
16.06.07	Combaya Project Office	Project staff
17.06.07	Caranavi MAN-B office	Regional director
17.06.07	Santa Fé, Caranavi	Representatives of different community organizations and sectors
17.06.07	San Lorenzo, Caranavi	Leaders and members of coffee growers cooperative
18.06.07	MAN-B	Senior staff
19.06.07	NLM (Cochabamba)	Emilio González
19.06.07	Unidad Educativa Evangélica Jesus Maestro (school project)	Mayor and municipality representative
19.06.07	Unidad Educativa Evangélica Jesus Maestro (school project)	Ministry of Ed., District director Carlos Rivas
19.06.07	Unidad Educativa Evangélica Jesus Maestro (school project)	Parents Association
19.06.07	Unidad Educativa Evangélica Jesus Maestro (school project)	Project director Mario Delgado
19.06.07	Beneficiaries of handicraft project, Tinguipaya	Delia Cruz Prima Morales
19.06.07	Representatives of municipality of Tinguipaya	Mayor Antonio Ríos Advisor Adolfo Gutierrez
20.06.07	Centro de Mujeres Gregoria Apaza	Ana Maria Kudelka Juan Carlos Ríos
20.06.07	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Hege Fisknes Finn Arne Moskvil
20.06.07	CSUTCB	Lucia Poma Marisol Céspedes

Paraguay		
21.06.07	PCI	Carlos Giesbrecht Mirta Pereira
22.06.07	Instituto de Lingüística Guaraní de Paraguay	Large group of staff involved in textbook project
23.06.07	Primary and secondary school, Fortuna	Ramón Gómez and Ignacio Jiménez, project committee Richard Sales and Miguel Toro, teachers
23.06.07	Parents Association, Fortuna	Vice-president Gavina Vera
23.06.07	Nueva Esperanza primary school	Martin Sales Vera, teacher Sales Vera, project committee member
23.06.07	Aguae primary school	Lucretio Soza Venegas, teacher
24.06.07	Paso Cadena, primary and secondary school	Teachers Scholarship beneficiaries
24.06.07	Paso Cadena	Community leaders
24.06.07	Aché community	Missionary and community members
25.06.07	SAI	Emilio Caballero Graciela Ocáriz
Norway		
24.08.07	NMA	Jørgen Haug Tone Lindheim
Bangladesh		
26.08.07	SMNB	Steve Suiting
26.08.07	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Kristian Jervell
26.08.07	Danida	Kirti Nishan Chakma
27.08.07	Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples Forum	Sanjeeb Drong Sontosh Bikash Tripura
27.08.07	Peace and Conflict Studies, Dhaka University	Prof. Dalem Ch. Barman
28.08.07	BNELC-DF	Director Victor Lakra and key staff members
28.08.07	Rariganj Garopara primary school	Teachers and students
28.08.07	Tailoring workshop	Vocational training graduate
28.08.07	Rameswarpur Jot (community organization)	Leadership and members
28.08.07	Bhaiopara Jot	Leadership and members
29.08.07	Local government	District social welfare officer
29.08.07	Adompur Health Clinic	Staff
29.08.07	Legal Assistance Cell Committee, Osmanpur	Members Osmanpur social welfare officer
29.08.07	Various workshops	Graduates of vocational training
29.08.07	Coordination Network for Adivasi	Bhupesh Roy, GBK SI Safiq, Sustain Shakar, RDRS Sontosh Soren, Caritas

30.08.07	Auliapur boarding school	Teachers
30.08.07	Women's group	Members
30.08.07	Bagduri Primary School	Teachers and students
30.08.07	Chandipur Jot	Leadership and members
30.08.07	DF Executive Committee	EC Chairman and members
01.09.07	SMNB	Steve Suiting
01.09.07	??	Faustina Pereira
Norway		
04.09.07	Normisjon	Oddvar Holmedal
19.09.07	PYM	Svein Jacobsen Gaute Hetland Rudolf Larsen
24.09.07	BN secretariat	Oddvar Espegren Kristian Larsen Arne Kjell Raustøl Jan Eivind Viumdal
24.09.07	NLM	Marianne Skaiaa Torfinn Bø
25.09.07	BN and members with indigenous peoples projects	BN Areopagos PYM Norwegian Sami Mission Areopagos NLM Normisjon Wycliffe Norwegian Himal-Asian Mission

SUMMARY

As part of Norway's efforts to strengthen its cooperation with indigenous peoples a set of Guidelines were published by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2004. The Guidelines emphasise a rights-based approach and the requirement that there be 'a clear connection between normative work on indigenous issues and practical cooperation with and on behalf of indigenous peoples'. Norwegian NGOs are the most important channel for Norwegian support for indigenous peoples. Among the Norwegian NGOs, Bistandsnemnda – The Norwegian Missions in Development, hereafter referred to as BN – receives the largest amount of funds for indigenous peoples projects. This is an umbrella organization, consisting of 18 mission organizations. Norad decided to conduct a review of BN's work with indigenous peoples in order to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the principles of the Guidelines. Four member organizations (The Norwegian Mission Alliance, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, the Norwegian Pentecostal Mission and Normisjon) and their work in three countries (Bolivia, Paraguay, Bangladesh) were selected for the review. In addition, the review has revised project documents of all BN projects for indigenous peoples, and met with the organizations in Norway. Time limitations for the review mean that some conclusions must remain tentative.

The review concludes with the following recommendations:

- BN needs to strengthen knowledge and training on indigenous rights
- Members need to better ensure that this awareness and training is utilised at all levels – by project partners and field staff
- BN and Members need to reflect upon the implications of our finding that increased separation/ secularization improves project work
- BN and Members need to develop better diagnostic tools for analysis of the cultural politics of the contexts where they are working
- Norad should clarify the Guidelines and the reporting routines for working with indigenous peoples

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