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Civil Society Participation in PRS and Cotonou Agreement Processes

The Role of Donors in Senegal and Rwanda

Work In Progress

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INTRODUCTION

Based on the idea that it might be possible to elicit greater commitment to equitable and efficient development policies by obliging governments to debate their policies openly with other actors in their countries, various donors prioritise active involvement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of international agreements. With the initiation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)¹ in 1999, the World Bank and the IMF clearly embraced this new trend towards participatory development. Likewise, in the 9th EDF Partnership Agreement between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries², signed in 2000, the contracting parties committed themselves to a stronger focus on political dialogue and, hence, more involvement of Non State Actors in the 9th EDF negotiations. Participation of CSOs was formally inscribed as a prerequisite for the approval of public policies designed as part of this agreement.

In the PRS and Cotonou Agreement frameworks the capacity of CSOs to participate in public policy negotiations in a significant way is, however, hardly questioned. CSOs are expected to have already enough capacities to contribute to public policy processes when they start participating in the PRSP process. If this is not the case, CSOs are supposed to obtain these capacities through the participation process. There is a sequencing problem in this logic. The same PRS and Cotonou

¹ Followed from the discussions in the mid-nineties on debt relief for poor countries and criticism on the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e. IMF and World Bank) and their Structural Adjustment Programmes, the initiation of the PRSP marked a new era in which Least Developed Countries received full responsibility for developing their own national strategy papers, together with local civil society, papers in which poverty reduction would be at the centre. (for a general introduction: Booth, 2001; Eurodad, 2001; and World Bank, The Poverty Reduction Strategy Source Book: www.worldbank.org)

² New in the 'Cotonou Agreement' is that apart from the trade pillar and the financial pillar, which were already at the centre of previous ACP-EU Partnership Agreements, the political pillar also gets a more important place. Especially concerning good governance, non-state actors are expected to offer valuable support. (for a general introduction: ACP Secretariat and ECDPM, 2004)

Agreement processes to which CSOs have to contribute are used for strengthening CSOs that lack the capacity to contribute to these processes. The sequencing problem may be partly solved by donors offering assistance for CSOs complementary to the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes.

This paper verifies the accuracy of the two above-mentioned observations based on data collected in Senegal and Rwanda. On the one hand, a mapping exercise on CSOs' contributions and problems with regard to the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes for both countries will illustrate that CSOs need additional support if they want to participate in a meaningful way (section 2.1). On the other hand, a mapping exercise on existing donor support for CSO participation in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes shows that donor assistance to CSOs remains poor in adequacy (i.e. almost exclusively indirect through government) and number (i.e. almost no direct support) (section 2.2). Hence, it seems that solving the problems of CSO capacity through donor support is problematic.

In search of reasons for the poor donor support in CSOs' public policy activities, section 3 analyses the presence and absence of donor support for three levels of CSO capacity (i.e. institutional, organisational, and development capacity) and links it to different donor rationalities (i.e. process-oriented vs. results-oriented rationalities). Combined with more or less openness of the government for CSO participation and more or less dependence on government for CSO identification, which influence the choice for direct or indirect support, these preferences result in support activities on the macro, sectorial/thematic, or micro level. The results illustrate the reasons why donors are willing or reluctant to support CSO activities on public policy matters. In section 1 I will, first, clarify the concepts used for this data analysis as well as the methodology used for data collection.

1. METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Two observations are central to this paper: first, the limits in capacity CSOs are confronted with when participating in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement frameworks; secondly the feasibility of solving this problem through donors offering assistance to strengthen CSO capacities on this matter. In order to verify these observations a mapping exercise was done of the demand by CSOs for capacity development and the offer by donors of support to CSOs in their participation in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes.

Discussing the demand and supply side of capacity and capacity building or development implies an understanding of these concepts. Although a lot has been written on capacity development, the literature has not reached an agreement on formulating a clear definition on the concepts.

UNDP (2006) defines capacity as *“the ability of individuals, organisations, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve goals.”* Also, Morgan (1998) states that *“indicators of capacity usually focus on performance of some sort of organisational function or activity.”* According to the same author, capacity development refers to *“the approaches, strategies and methodologies which are used by national participants and/or outside interveners to help organisations and/or systems to improve their performance.”*

In their paper Macadam, Drinan, Inall, and McKenzie (2004) carried out a review of concepts and terminology in recent usage of capacity building, which makes them conclude the following: *“Capacity building is construed as externally or internally initiated processes designed to help individuals and groups [...] to appreciate and manage their changing circumstances, with the objective of improving the stock of human, social, financial, physical and natural capital in an ethically defensible way.”*

The definition of Macadam et al. gives the most comprehensible formulation of the objective of capacity building, i.e. an improvement in the stock of capital. Still, this definition is problematic in the sense that it reflects merely one strategy³ to improve CSO performances. Moreover, an improvement of the stock of capital does not necessarily result in a positive development impact, since capitals can be used in a benign or malign way. Nevertheless, with the mapping exercise I do not have the intension to examine impacts, but rather to present possible contributions to CSO capacities or improvements of performances⁴. Despite its limitations, categorising capacity into three groups of capitals facilitates the presentation of the results of the mapping exercise, and, hence, will be used below.

Also capital is a concept that needs some clarification. Whereas in the above definition five forms of capital are mentioned, in this paper three forms of capital are used to examine the capacity of civil society organisations: physical (which in my definition includes financial and natural capital), human, and social capital. Coleman (1988) phrases the differences among these capitals:

“Just as physical capital is created by changes in materials to form tools that facilitate production, human capital is created by changes in persons⁵ that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways. Social capital, however, comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action. If physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form, and human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual, social capital is less tangible yet, for it exists in the relations among persons. Just as physical and human capital facilitate productive activity, social capital does as well, [...] making possible the achievements of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible.” (Coleman, 1988, p. 98-101)

In more pragmatic papers definitions on forms of capital like the ones stated above are often found too abstract to work with. Concrete examples to illustrate the forms of capital are used in these

³ Morgan (1998) sets out a spectrum of some capacity development strategies with their advantages and limitations, e.g. *“Supplying additional financial and physical resources; Helping to improve the organisational and technical capabilities of the organisation; Helping to settle on a clear strategic direction; Protecting innovation and providing opportunities for experimentation and learning; Helping to strengthen the bigger organisational system; Helping to shape an enabling environment; Creating more performance incentives and pressures.”*

⁴ Morgan (1998) points out that improvement of performance and impact under the form of developmental benefits and results are two distinct matters. Impacts come about directly, or at least, in part from improvement of performance.

⁵ Although these capitals are often associated with persons, Coleman also uses the word ‘actor’, as he points out that organisations can be actors with capitals just as persons can.

cases to make the understanding of the concepts easier. Examples of physical capital frequently used are money and infrastructure. For human capital researchers tend to refer to knowledge/information, skills, and experience. Social capital is often identified with networks. Although these examples give an idea of what these forms of capital could stand for, it is important to keep in mind that concept and examples are not alike.

The above explained concepts were used as categorising tools in mapping demand and supply of capacity and capacity development with regard to CSO participation in the PRS and the Cotonou Agreement processes in Rwanda and Senegal. For data collection an extensive literature study was carried out combined with a field trip to Rwanda in December 2005 and several field trips to Senegal between October 2003 and April 2006. During my stay in Rwanda and Senegal⁶ I interviewed a wide range of stakeholders coming from civil society (i.e. organised non state actors (private sector included) active on the national level), the government and the donor community (i.e. bilateral donors, multilateral donors, international NGOs). In order to identify the donors that were assisting CSOs in their participation in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes various entry points were used, i.e. interviews with country experts, and the Ministries of Economics and Finance; lists of participants in meetings on both agreements; phone calls with donors on these lists with the question if they supported any CSOs on this matter or if they knew other donors who did; and interviews with CSOs that participated in the PRS or Cotonou Agreement processes with the question if they worked together or were supported by donors on the subject. Based on this information, 16 donors (6 bilateral donors, 4 multilateral donors, and 6 international NGOs) were interviewed in Rwanda and 20 donors (6 bilateral donors, 9 multilateral donors, and 5 international NGOs) in Senegal. Interviews with country experts, government, and the lists of participants in the meetings of the two agreements were also used to select the most important CSOs in terms of most actively involved in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes on the national level. For Rwanda, 12 CSOs were interviewed. For Senegal, interviews with the 7 actively involved CSOs were used

⁶ The PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement processes in Senegal and Rwanda have a comparable time frame, which make them interesting for comparison. In 2002, the first PRSP was approved in both countries. Currently, the two countries each prepare a second PRSP, which makes it a perfect timing for evaluating the first one. For the Cotonou Agreement, both countries developed their strategies for the period of 2002-2007. The different settings aid to the analysis. Whereas Senegal is known for its long history of policy dialogue and CSO involvement (Fall et al., 2006), Rwanda's civil society is young, inexperienced, and operates in a much less open environment, where the burden of the genocide is still causing suspicion (Renard and Molenaers, 2003; Uvin, 1998).

to update the data on CSOs collected for previous research on CSO participation in the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement between 2003 and 2005.⁷

Mapping demand and supply of capacity and capacity development will give an idea on the number and adequacy of donor initiatives taken to support CSOs in their participation in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes. It is, however, equally important to understand why donors are willing or reluctant to support CSO activities on public policy matters, and to explain why initiatives are inadequate or not. In section 3 these questions will be asked, analysing the results from the mapping exercise for three levels of CSO capacity. Develtere (2005) distinguishes three levels on which capacity building can take place. First, as shown in the table below, *institutional capacity* refers to the competence of an organisation to play its role in society (relative to other actors). This implies that the organisation is capable of defining its role; that it succeeds in developing positive interaction patterns with other actors; that it knows how to mobilise resources (money, competent personnel, relations) that allow the organisation to fulfil its role. Secondly and strongly related to the first level, an organisation requires *organisational capacity*. An organisation should be constructed in such an organisational way that it is able to attain its goals in an effective and efficient manner. For this to happen, the right internal structures and working methods should be in place. Finally, only if both institutional and organisational capacities are present, an organisation can have *development capacity*, i.e. the competences needed to perform the organisation's core activities in accordance with its overall development goals and book results on it⁸.

The three levels on which capacity building can take place will be linked to different donor rationalities, i.e. process-oriented vs. results-oriented rationalities. Combined with more or less openness of the government for CSO participation and more or less dependence on government for CSO identification, which influence the choice for direct or indirect support, these preferences result in support activities on the macro, sectorial/thematic, or micro level. In section 3 this combination of concepts will be further explained.

⁷ A detailed list of the respondents is available on request.

⁸ As stated before by Morgan (footnote 4) improvement of performance and impact under the form of developmental benefits and results are two distinct matters. In this paper no impact will be measured.

2. MAPPING DEMAND AND SUPPLY OF CAPACITY AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The definition of capacity building, i.e. an *improvement in the stock of capital*, with physical, human, and social capital as different dimensions of capacity, offers an interesting framework for a mapping exercise on the *need for and presence of CSO capacity and donor support programmes*. The results presented below are based on data collected in Senegal and Rwanda. Using the methodology described in the previous section, I identified 7 donors in Rwanda and 15 donors in Senegal who were supporting CSOs in their participation in the PRS (1 bilateral donor and 5 international NGOs in Rwanda, and 3 bilateral donors, 6 multilateral donors, and 1 international NGO in Senegal) and Cotonou Agreement (2 international NGOs in Rwanda, and 1 bilateral donor, 2 multilateral donors, and 3 international NGOs in Senegal) processes. Combined with data from the interviews with CSOs I made the following observations.

2.1 Demand of Civil Society for Capacity Building Support

Presence of CSO Capacity for Participation in Public Policies

Many CSOs in Senegal and Rwanda understand the importance of being involved in public policies beyond their own sector or domain of activity and are trying to become actively involved in processes of PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement. Whether or not civil society organisations can truly contribute to the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these agreements is often questioned. Results from the case studies, however, prove that CSOs have capacities that allow them to add valuable inputs to processes of public policy making.

Although CSOs cannot give much input to public policy issues with regard to *physical capital* (see below), the *presence of human capital* in civil society organisations has potential for making valuable contributions. Donors and government officials in Rwanda and Senegal said that CSOs have a different way of working and analysing things compared to government, which adds variety to discussions on public policy. More specifically, they appreciate inputs from CSOs that are close to the population, and hence, know what the local population needs. Although the representativeness of some CSOs is debatable (Martens, 2004), a lot of CSOs work with the population on a daily basis. The comparative advantage that CSOs have in local knowledge on themes that are close to the population is valuable for policies that are meant to favour the poor. It is, therefore, not surprising that exactly on this issue Rwandan and Senegalese CSOs have contributed in the analytical and diagnostic phase of the PRSP. In Rwanda, for instance, the CSOs pointed out that the definition of poverty, used in the first draft of the PRSP was too scientific and not adapted to Rwandan reality. Hence, CSOs formulated a more accurate definition of poverty based on different categories, which was taken into account by the government, in order to make more targeted actions possible. (Renard et al., 2003)

CSOs are typically organised around certain sensitivities, such as agriculture, micro-credit, health, gender, labour standards, human rights, or education. This specific focus in activities gives them access to information that could be interesting for public actors. Whereas in Rwanda not much attention was given to this CSOs asset, especially not with regard to the Cotonou Agreement, in Senegal it was used in both agreements. CSOs got the opportunity to participate in thematic groups in the Cotonou Agreement negotiations (Ba, 2003), and to organise themselves along thematic or sectorial lines (e.g. creating a CSO unit for women organisations or for trade unions) in the PRSP process. CSO contributions in the Senegalese PRSP process show that focusing on a well-defined issue in the discussions on public policy adds to the quality and profoundness of CSO inputs, since it is more in line with their comparative advantages (Commission des OSC, 2005; Sous Commission Genre, 2004).

The way in which CSOs obtain the above explained human capital is closely linked to the *social capital* they possess, for instance in the form of networks. The case study results show that it is important to work with CSOs on both national and local level and to link their specificities. Whereas their colleagues on the local level have easier access to information on the population's needs, national CSOs are, at least physically, closer to government, and hence, have easier access to information on government activities and opportunities to influence power relations. According to some donors the latter is important, since mere service delivery is not going to change things

strategically. In Senegal national CSOs have done efforts to bring the PRSP to the decentralised level. The four CSO units have organised vulgarisation activities in each of the 11 regions of Senegal with the purpose of getting local input, but also in order to gain credibility in representativeness and, hence, negotiation strength on the national level. Moreover, the implementation of the PRSP will be carried out on the local level, so that national CSOs better make sure the bounds with their satellites are strong enough to keep on influencing the process. In Rwanda the link between national and local CSOs remains weak. (Martens, 2004) This link is also not encouraged, since in the Ubudehe project, the local variant of the PRSP, the Rwandan government gets around the organised civil society on the local level by working directly with the population. Participation in the Cotonou Agreement process is confined to actors on the national level in both countries.

CSO Capacity for Participation in Public Policies: Problems Encountered

Although the section above shows that CSOs have capacities that allow them to make valuable contributions to public policy making, problems still have the upper hand. The majority of Rwandan and Senegalese CSOs have difficulties mobilising funds to cover the costs (transport, availability of personnel, time, etc.) to participate in the PRS or the 9th EDF negotiations. This *lack of physical capital* is present on all levels of civil society. Just like individual CSOs and umbrella organisations are confronted with this deficiency, also the newly created platforms, units, and other CSO bodies for PRS and Cotonou Agreement participation have difficulties and are most of the time even hardly operational, according to some, due to a lack of finance and a permanent office. Insufficient finance paralyzes CSOs in their activities. It directly affects their human and social capital in a negative way. The fact that the majority of CSO staff works on a voluntary basis and per diems are an important means to get paid makes that often the same strong leaders are present at all meetings and not many young people get the chance to participate and get access to information. CSOs' poor financial means also undermines the use of social capital, such as information distribution within the organisations and between them, since there is no money for meetings.

The lack of finance can only partly explain the difficulties for CSOs to be active on the national scene. Most CSOs indicate that finance alone is not going to solve the problem. Especially in Rwanda, where civil society is still very young, CSOs ask for more guidance on *human capital*. Making contributions on a strategic level remains too difficult. Many CSOs use a needs-based approach in their operations, providing services for beneficiaries, so that bringing knowledge on

individual activities to a higher level of public policy, especially on abstract macro issues, is often difficult. Many do not know how to influence government. Some CSO personnel is hardly capable of reading and understanding strategic documents, like the PRSP, let alone making well-considered propositions on a national macro policy level. Further, a lot of CSOs are poorly organised and need assistance in terms of internal organisation. They need training on very concrete issues of organisational functioning, such as budget management and how to develop project proposals. On the local level the problem of organisational functioning is still worse. Very often, however, donor support is limited to financial assistance. Finally, context-related issues undermine opportunities for the creation and use of human capital of CSOs. In Rwanda, for instance, CSOs are limited in their actions due to the climate of suspicion that is still present years after the genocide. CSOs complain that they are constrained by the juridical framework they have to operate in. Further, the capacity to make a neutral policy analysis is often lacking. Rwanda's tragic history has affected the whole population in a negative way with a great loss of human capital in terms of intelligent and motivated people that have died or fled the country.

CSOs need additional *social capital support* if they really want to play a more crucial role in the PRS and 9th EDF negotiations. As the case study results show, the main problems on social capital for CSO participation in public policies in Senegal and Rwanda could be narrowed down to two main issues: relations that are hampered by competition and suspicion, and a lack of communication between the various actors involved.

Concerning the first issue, relations between CSOs are not without tensions. Although the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement allow civil society to participate, CSOs are asked to participate through one common organisational body, like a platform. Since CSOs are not a homogeneous group of actors and have different specificities and interests to defend, participating in one body is rather restrictive and competitive. As a result, a lot of CSOs feel not well represented. (Sonko, 2004)

Most CSOs agree on the fact that good representation is important, since they cannot or do not want to do it all by themselves. Only, the way in which CSOs would like to see themselves represented creates controversy. In Rwanda, for instance, the national public policy scene is dominated by a few umbrella civil society organisations that have a weak link with the grassroots. (Renard et al., 2003) The major criticism from member organisations is that some of these umbrella CSOs do not know the role a collective has to play. According to these member CSOs a collective should fulfil a bridging role between state and civil society organisations, defend members' interests and integrity, create opportunities for accessing resources, and give information from

which the members would otherwise be deprived. In reality, some members rather feel threatened by their collective, blaming the latter for claiming the resources for their own use, engaging in activities that are supposed to be carried out by the members, and not reporting back to their base in a transparent, frequent, and consequent way. In the PRS context, the platform is facing the same sort of criticisms. A system of working with informal networks of CSOs on thematic issues is an alternative option for CSO participation in public policies. A few CSOs have organised themselves in this way with regard to the 9th EDF negotiations, although it is still too early to draw conclusions from it.

In Rwanda, tensions of competition are aggravated by suspicion in a political environment that is still recovering from the atrocities of the genocide in 1994. Certain individuals that are representing civil society at the public level are accused by other CSOs of being co-opted by the government or being too pro-government to defend CSOs' interests. These individuals defend themselves by stating that you can either choose to work with government officials, trying to change something for the better, or condemn 'the' government all together and achieve nothing at all.

The national-local divide adds an extra dimension to the problem of competition, suspicion, and representativeness, but rather relates to the second issue: a lack of communication between the various actors involved and access to information. In the 9th EDF process in both Senegal and Rwanda as well as in the Rwandan PRSP the decentralisation component is practically absent. Participating in the Senegalese PRSP, however, has made more CSOs on the national level conscious of the importance of consulting satellites on the local level. Still, a gap remains between both levels. Information between local and national level does not flow (Ndiaye, 2006). The fact that the CSO unit approach on the national level is not followed on the local level, and that the locally elected satellites of these units are not the ones that participate in the local meetings further illustrate this deficiency.

With the initiation of participation in the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement negotiations, CSOs get an interesting opportunity to weigh on public policy making, since also bilateral and multilateral donors are involved to accompany government in facilitating reunions and dialogue. Although for both agreements communication and access to information are problematic, the case study results show that there is a clear difference in communication and knowledge that exists for the PRSP and for the Cotonou Agreement. Since the PRSP is at the heart of Rwandan and Senegalese policy making, affecting the entire development cooperation in the countries, CSOs on the national level have at least heard about it, and are conscious of civil society's role to contribute to this process of public policy making. The ACP-EU Partnership Agreements, on the other hand, have a history of

being one of the many bilateral and multilateral agreements in the countries, and dealing exclusively with trade and financial issues in EC-government negotiations that are not open for CSOs. Some CSOs only know the EC from other direct budget lines that are specifically targeting CSOs for finance of little projects in the field. The case study results show that, in order to involve CSOs in the ACP-EU Partnership negotiations, extra efforts are needed to communicate on the changes that have been made with the initiation of the Cotonou Agreement, i.e. more focus on the political dimension by involving Non State Actors. In Senegal, for instance, the EC Delegation arranged meetings with CSOs and government, first separately, then together, in order to prepare the actors for the new role CSOs could play in contributing to public policy making. In Rwanda, however, CSOs that participated in the Cotonou process complained that not many targeted activities for CSOs were organised on the issue. The majority of CSOs in Rwanda has not yet understood the role CSOs have to play in the policy dialogue component of the Cotonou Agreement, and continues to see the agreement as an opportunity for accessing finance, rather than to play on the public policy scene. The dubious message that is spread in regional and international meetings on the guideline of (up to) 15% of the EDF being spent on CSO support activities (Dellicour, 2005), is not adding to a clear comprehension.

In sum, the data show that CSOs are interesting actors to work with in terms of their closer contacts with the population, and, hence, understanding of local needs, or because of their specific knowledge on themes in which they specialise. Yet, for meaningful contributions in participation mechanisms CSOs still need capacity assistance, not only in terms of physical capital in order to pay staff, attract more young people, and organise meetings to consult their base, but also in terms of human capital (assistance on project formulation, budget management, how to influence government, how to translate basic needs to a higher policy level). With regard to social capital CSOs need more space to organise themselves in line with their specificities and not as one artificial body that feeds competition and suspicion. Further, more investment is needed in communication mechanisms and incentives within the organisation, among national CSOs and their local satellites, and between member organisations and their representative bodies on a higher level. Finally, a clear role definition of each of these organisations is needed, as well as clarity on which role CSOs are expected to play in the PRS and Cotonou Agreement processes.

2.2 Supply of Capacity Building Programmes by Donors

Presence of Capacity Building Programmes

The above findings show that donor support is needed if CSOs want to contribute to public policies in a more significant way. Since the majority of the donors that were interviewed agreed on the fact that CSO participation in public policy negotiations is very important, it is not surprising that some donors have taken up the challenge to offer support to CSOs.

Offering support through finance remains the most popular form of assistance. In the countries of study this *assistance to physical capital* is for the largest amount indirect, i.e. passing through government. Since one of the main arguments of bilateral and multilateral donors for not supporting CSOs is the fact that they have a mandate to work with government and not with civil society, it is not surprising that some of them have opted for the golden mean. In Senegal GTZ and UNDP have played a major role in facilitating CSO participation in the PRSP process. The two actors have assisted the Ministry of Economy and Finance in financing and optimising the mechanisms created for CSO participation on the national level. Although the assistance did not always have straightforward results, especially in the beginning when the CSO Collective for the PRSP collapsed, the support allowed CSOs to organise themselves and eventually get structured along four units, i.e. a unit for NGOs, a unit for CBOs, a women organisations' unit, and a trade unions' unit. CSOs were also supported in the vulgarisation activities, carried out in the eleven regions of Senegal. It allowed national CSOs to strengthen ties with their local satellites. The example indicates that through indirect support through government donors can still make a difference when it comes to CSO participation in public policies.

Whereas donors that support CSOs indirectly (through government) mainly focus on facilitating CSO contributions to a macro policy level, donors that support CSOs directly, prefer to do so for well-defined sectors. In Senegal, ILO set the priority of including social protection in the PRSP. ILO worked together with trade unions, government, and employers' organisations, first, on developing a national strategy on social protection, and, consequently, on including this strategy in the second PRSP. In this way ILO wanted to prevent social inclusion from being reduced to just a few lines in the PRSP. Also, UNIFEM wanted to influence the second PRSP by making it more gender-sensitive. Since cooperating with local women organisations would add both expertise and legitimacy to UNIFEM's work, the donor supported women organisations on many fronts in the process. It is not surprising that specifically on these two issues of social protection and gender CSOs have managed to contribute the most to the second PRSP (CSPLP, 2005). It shows that

donor support and pressure is very important (or maybe even necessary) if CSOs want to influence the national public policy level. Other examples of donors who supported initiatives on specific issues in public policy in Senegal are Oxfam GB (on EPAs in the Cotonou Agreement), Safe the Children (on children's rights in the PRSP), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (on EPAs and trade unions in the Cotonou Agreement), and the Canadian Cooperation (on studies of participation of the GIP (Groupe d'Initiative pour la Participation aux politiques publiques) in public policy in four well-defined areas).

In Rwanda, the notion of good governance gets an extra dimension. In a political climate that is dominated by distrust it is not very obvious to work with CSOs in an indirect manner. Most donors that have so far supported CSOs on public policy issues do so in a direct way. The Belgian Cooperation has launched an initiative to support CCOAIB, which coordinates the CSO platform for the PRSP, in facilitating its role in the PRSP process. Also, TROCAIRE, an Irish NGO, has already been very active in the PRSP and is considering supporting CSOs on this issue. 11.11.11, a Belgian NGO, has assisted CSOs in getting access to information on the Cotonou Agreement. Overall, supporting CSOs on public policy issues in Rwanda remains controversial (Renard et al., 2003). Giving incentives for the creation of a more critical civil society to act as a countervailing power towards government, remains very difficult.

A lot of the support to physical capital, presented above, can be transformed in support to human or social capital, if additional assistance is given on how the money is spent. With regard to *human capital support*, CSOs have been supported in various ways. Some of the initiatives taken in order to strengthen CSO capacity to participate in the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement negotiations are the following: information sharing through information meetings (e.g. 11.11.11 on the Cotonou Agreement in Rwanda); organising exposure trips to other countries (e.g. Trocaire on the PRSP in Rwanda); organising workshops to reflect on ideas/knowledge on specific issues (e.g. ILO on PRSP in Senegal); training on budget monitoring (e.g. UNIFEM on PRSP and gender budget in Senegal); assisting CSOs in identifying problems (e.g. GTZ on PRSP in Senegal); assisting CSOs in formulating project proposals (e.g. GRET and EC Management Unit on the Cotonou Agreement in Senegal).

Concerning *social capital support* donors have invested in assisting CSOs to organise themselves. In Senegal, especially GTZ and UNDP have played a major role in the creation of a CSO structure for participating in the PRSP process. Whereas for the first PRSP support was given for the creation of the collective, that eventually disintegrated in four CSO units, for the second generation PRSP a CSO Commission was formed, in which the four units synthesised their activities (Sonko,

2004). Also, support for vulgarisation activities towards CSO satellites in the regions was provided. In Rwanda, support was given for the creation of a platform for CSO participation in the PRSP. As for the Cotonou Agreement the Delegation of the European Commission in Senegal organised separate meetings with CSOs, in order to inform them and to assist them in organising themselves. CSOs managed to set up a platform for participation in the Cotonou Agreement, although until now it has not been operational due to a lack of finance. In Rwanda, no such efforts have been made and most CSOs continue to view the Cotonou Agreement as a source of finance, rather than as an opportunity for public policy influencing. Nevertheless, under the impulse of CECI, a Canadian not-for-profit corporation, some local CSOs have started to get organised around the Cotonou Agreement and the role CSOs could play in it. In addition to the general networks set up within the PRSP and 9th EDF framework, donors have supported the creation of networks on more specific issues. In Senegal, ILO has supported the creation of the unit of trade unions (intersyndicale) and UNIFEM has done so for the unit of women organisations in the PRS CSO participation process. In addition, UNIFEM has facilitated the creation of a working group on gender issues that goes beyond CSOs and brings together various stakeholders on gender issues. CRDI, in cooperation with the Canadian Cooperation, has assisted the initiative of eight Senegalese CSOs to organise themselves in the Groupe d'Initiative pour la Participation aux politiques publiques (GIP), a group that wants to go beyond the PRS and 9th EDF framework and create a structure for CSO public policy participation in various frameworks.

Capacity Building Programmes: Problems encountered

Although the above mentioned donor initiatives sound very promising, most of them have been modest in terms of donors' financial input and guidance (time and personnel), especially when it comes to direct support from donors to CSOs. CSOs complain about the lack of support they get in the PRS and 9th EDF negotiations. The biggest investments were made by donors that supported CSOs in an indirect manner, i.e. through government (e.g. GTZ and UNDP in Senegal) or by donors that supported their traditional CSO partners in a specific sector (e.g. ILO and UNIFEM in Senegal). Most other initiatives were only experimental or limited in time and scope. Moreover, the adequacy of the indirect support to CSOs has to be questioned, since CSOs seem to have difficulties with representing themselves through one body (non-operational PRS platform in Rwanda; dissolved PRS collective in Senegal). In an attempt to explain these problems, section 3 will elaborate further on reasons for the poor number of donor initiatives and preference for indirect but rather inadequate donor support.

3. DONOR RATIONALITIES AND CSO CAPACITY ON DIFFERENT LEVELS

The mapping exercise on demand and supply of capacity and capacity development has identified the problems of donor support initiatives for CSO participation in the PRS and 9th EDF processes in terms of low number and not always adequate. In an attempt to explain these deficiencies, it is important to understand the rationalities by which donors are driven in their choice to support CSOs in public policy making, as well as the capacity levels for which CSOs prefer to receive assistance. The table below outlines the framework of analysis. It shows the levels of CSO capacity, which correspond to donor preferences for a more process-oriented or results-oriented approach in their support activities.

Table 3: Framework of analysis

Levels of CSO capacity	Donor Rationalities
Institutional capacity (Role execution: identification, positive interaction patterns, mobilisation of resources)	Process-oriented approach (indirect, direct; macro, sectorial, micro)
Organisational capacity (Internal structure; Working methods)	
Development capacity (Perform core activities in accordance with overall development goals + results)	Results-oriented approach (indirect, direct; macro, sectorial, micro)

Combined with more or less openness of the government for CSO participation and more or less dependence on government for CSO identification, which influence the choice for direct or indirect support, these preferences result in support activities on the macro, sectorial/thematic, or micro level.

Based on the analytical framework, which will be further explained below, I argue that so far the PRS and the Cotonou Agreement processes have been driven by a rationality that supports a process-oriented approach with a focus on the macro level. CSOs have been mainly supported indirectly, through government, in their institutional capacity. Most donors and CSOs, however, use a different rationality in their operations, which is more focused on obtaining concrete results on the micro level. A lot of CSOs prefer to receive more assistance in strengthening their organisational and development capacity. The absence of a link between process and results-oriented approaches in the PRS and the Cotonou Agreement processes so far, especially with regard to the CSO participation process, can explain the limited number of direct donor support initiatives in this domain. Donors that do give direct support to CSOs in the process-oriented approach of CSO participation in the PRS and the Cotonou Agreement prefer to do so on more concrete terms, i.e. on the sectorial/thematic level. Also CSOs feel more at ease contributing on the sectorial/thematic level, since it corresponds to their specificities, often organised along sectorial/thematic lines. For each of the levels of capacity these arguments are now clarified, using data from the Senegalese and the Rwandan case.

First, *institutional capacity* was defined as the competences an organisation needs in order to play its role in society (vis-à-vis other actors). With regard to the PRS and Cotonou Agreement negotiations the new role CSOs have to play first implies that CSOs are capable of *defining this role*. As shown in the previous section donors helped CSOs in identifying their role in the process of public policy making, for instance by organising separate CSO information sessions on the content of both agreements and by offering workshops on the role that CSOs could play. Only for the Cotonou Agreement in Rwanda there is a misunderstanding of the role CSOs have to play. A lack of communication has made that Rwandan CSOs continue to see the 9th EDF negotiations as an opportunity to access funds for implementing their development goals, rather than to weigh on the process of public policy.

Whether or not CSOs succeed in *developing positive interaction patterns* with other actors, is another aspect that indicates the presence of adequate *institutional capacity* and support. It is strongly related with a final feature of institutional capacity, i.e. that a CSO knows *how to mobilise resources (funds, competent personnel, and relations) that allow the organisation to fulfil its role*.

The mapping exercise showed that within the framework of PRSP or the Cotonou Agreement in Rwanda and Senegal, most support of donors was meant to facilitate CSOs' role to participate in the process of public policy negotiations, and hence, CSOs' interaction with the government and each other. Direct and indirect types of donor support were identified for participation on the macro level or for involvement along sectorial and thematic lines.

As for the donor assistance that was offered *indirectly*, i.e. through government, especially CSO activities on the *macro level* were supported, in correspondence with rationalities on which the PRSP and Cotonou Agreement are based, and, hence, in accordance with governments' preoccupations. In Senegal, for instance, the Ministry of Economics and Finance considers the PRSP as a holistic macro framework and CSO participation is also expected to be organised along these lines. CSOs were asked to organise themselves on a macro level through the creation of one representative body of civil society. CSOs were also supposed to comment on every aspect of the PRSP and synthesise their comments in a more generalised macro document. If this approach based on rationalities of a PRSP macro-level policy framework is compatible with the rationalities by which CSOs are driven is questionable. The fact that the first Collective that was formed dissolved quickly, and the second attempt of letting CSOs work together in a CSO Commission was in reality a weak cooperation between four strong CSO thematic units, shows that expecting CSOs to participate with one voice is not in accordance with CSO rationalities. CSOs are a diverse group of actors organised along various themes and sectors. Also, in the PRSP process in Rwanda this demand for CSO participation in one platform with one voice is causing tensions and made the platform non-operational.

Donors that did not offer support through government, but that assisted CSOs *directly*, had more space for respecting these CSO rationalities in accordance with their own ones, and assisted CSOs in working on specific themes or sectors. In the PRSP process in Senegal, donor support along *sectorial and thematic* lines has allowed CSOs to get structured in a more workable way, and offer inputs to the PRSP negotiations more in-depth and less general. Four CSO units (unit of women organisations, unit of trade unions, unit of NGOs, and unit of CBOs) were formed. In the second PRSP gender and social protection have become the themes to which CSOs have managed to contribute the most. That these two are the themes, in which the two 'thematic' CSO units (unit of women organisations and unit of trade unions) have a comparative advantage, is not a coincidence.

Although it has proved more adequate than indirect support, direct support to CSOs in process-oriented initiatives on the thematic or sectorial level remained limited in number and scope. Bilateral and multilateral donors state that they have a mandate to work primarily with government

rather than with civil society. They are used to work with the government on well-negotiated priority domains, themes or sectors. CSO participation in the PRSP process has been mainly executed on the macro level, which makes it too vague and theoretical, and less interesting for donors to invest in it conform their priorities. Governmental donors that did engage in support initiatives on the macro process-oriented level often did so on government's demand, and, hence, indirectly in accordance with their mandate. International NGOs were not involved on the macro process-oriented level, since they prefer to work on well-defined themes and tend to work mostly on non-governmental issues and at grassroots level.

However, in the domain of good governance CSOs become interesting for donors. Apart from the motivation that it is their mandate to support government policies, and, hence, engage in indirect support for CSOs on the macro process-oriented level, donors can also engage in it because they want to contribute to good governance. The reason why donors choose for indirect support, like in Senegal, despite its inadequacy, is that they need government for identification of CSOs. Donors that have a history of working in a specific sector with natural CSO allies, like UNIFEM and ILO, do not have this identification problem, and, hence, can give direct support with a more concrete thematic focus. However, donors can only use government for identification of CSOs if the government is open for CSO participation. In a country like Rwanda, the political climate of suspicion makes it easier for donors to still try to support CSOs directly, rather than through national policies, although not all of them find it easy to identify which CSOs to support.

Whether offered directly or indirectly, so far most donor support has been concentrated on strengthening institutional capacity of CSOs, so that CSOs could fulfil their role in the process of PRSP and Cotonou Agreement negotiations. Nevertheless, it can be questioned if this process-oriented role is the role CSOs really want to play. The overall criticism of CSOs that have participated in the negotiations on PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement is that so far too little attention has been given to support follow up activities for ideas and policies created in the various meetings, workshops and information sessions. Although CSOs have welcomed the process-oriented support, they wonder what they have gained from it from a results-oriented perspective, which is more in accordance with CSO rationalities. In the end, CSOs are held accountable by their beneficiaries and members. The latter are getting impatient on what the investments of their leaders in public policy processes have truly changed for them. The pressure of being accountable to their base is augmenting for many CSOs. Information and workshops are interesting, if afterwards support is given for carrying out these new ideas. A lot of CSOs lack *development capacity*, i.e. *the competences needed to perform the organisation's core activities in accordance with its overall*

development goals and book results on it. After four years of PRSP and 9th EDF negotiations many CSOs feel that it is time for a more results-, rather than a process-oriented focus. Linking policy and action remains essential.

Also for donors it seems to be less obvious to support CSOs in process-focused activities. Overall, the number and scope of support initiatives, directly or indirectly, remains limited. Like CSOs, also donors have constituencies to whom they are accountable. Tax payers for bilateral and multilateral CSOs or members of international NGOs want to know if the money they offered is well spent. Hence, for the small budgets that donors have at their disposal to work with CSOs, donors prefer to engage in results-oriented initiatives where results are easier to obtain and more visible, rather than process-oriented ones, like support for CSOs in public policy participation. The latter ask for a lot more investment in time and CSO coaching and do not easily offer clear results. This could, together with the 'mandate argument', explain the rather low number of support initiatives in CSO participation to the public policy process. In addition, according to some donors, multilateral donors are better placed to contribute to process-oriented CSO activities. Multilateral donors have more room for manoeuvre, since the link with their constituents is not as direct. Many bilateral CSOs in Senegal curiously await the results of the capacity building the EC is offering within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, in order to see if there are opportunities for bilateral donors as well to engage in similar CSO support activities. According to some donors, linking more sectorial or thematic work with the macro level remains vital, since the decision on how much money will be spent on these issues is first negotiated in the national budget.

Finally, support to institutional and development capacity is only fruitful if also *organisational capacity* of a CSO is strengthened. An organisation needs to be constructed in such an organisational way that it is able to attain its goals in an effective and efficient manner. For this to happen, adequate *internal structures* need to be in place. Here, problems of hierarchy, lack of young people, underpaid staff, and poor information distribution remain problematic. As stated in the previous section, a lack of physical, human, and social capital restrain CSOs from being operational in an effective and efficient manner. Also, with regard to working methods, the organisational capacity of CSOs is often poor. As the Rwandan case shows, many CSOs need a combination of finance with guidance on elementary competences, like budget management. Providing extra donor personnel to assist CSOs in executing their role in public policy making could be another option, as the GTZ initiative for the PRSP or the creation of a support unit for the Cotonou Agreement in Senegal show.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analysed the capacity of CSOs to participate in the public policy processes of the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement, based on extensive literature study and field trips to Senegal and Rwanda. In the frameworks of the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement the capacity of CSOs to contribute to public policy negotiations is hardly questioned. There is a sequencing problem in the logic of overcoming the lack of CSO capacities. The same public policy processes to which CSOs have to contribute, i.e. the process of PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement, are used for strengthening CSOs that have not enough capacities to contribute to these processes. The paper has done a mapping exercise on CSO capacities to contribute in public policies, and has verified the feasibility of solving the sequencing problem through the supply of complementary donor capacity building programmes for CSO participation in public policies.

The results of the mapping exercise on the presence and absence of CSO capacity along different dimensions of capacity (physical, human, and social capital) show that CSOs have potential for adding interesting contributions to processes of public policy making. It is therefore important that they are supported in this new role. In Rwanda and Senegal some CSOs have managed to give valuable inputs in the processes of the PRSP or the Cotonou Agreement, due to their specific strengths with regard to human capital (e.g. expertise on local population's needs or on specific themes) and social capital (e.g. closeness to the population). The majority of CSOs, however, remain deprived of adequate capacity to participate, especially with regard to physical capital, which also affects their human and social capital in a negative way. Donor assistance to CSOs remains poor in adequacy (i.e. almost exclusively indirect through government) and number (i.e. almost no direct support). Hence, it seems that solving the problems of CSO capacity through donor support is problematic.

In search of reasons for the poor donor support in CSOs' public policy activities, section 3 analysed the presence and absence of donor support for three levels of CSO capacity (i.e. institutional, organisational, and development capacity) and linked it to different donor rationalities (i.e. process-oriented vs. results-oriented rationalities). Combined with more or less openness of the government for CSO participation and more or less dependence on government for CSO identification, which influence the choice for direct or indirect support, these preferences result in support activities on the macro, sectorial/thematic, or micro level.

The analysis showed that so far the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement processes have been driven by a rationality that supports a process-oriented approach with a focus on the macro level. Most donors and CSOs, however, use a different rationality in their operations, which is more focused on obtaining concrete results on the micro level, mainly to facilitate matters of accountability. The absence of a link between process and results-oriented approaches in the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement processes so far, especially with regard to the CSO participation process, can explain the limited donor support in this domain. Donors that do support CSOs in the process-oriented approach of CSO participation in the PRSP and the Cotonou Agreement, because of their preoccupations with good governance, or because of their mandate to assist government, prefer to do so on more concrete terms, i.e. on the sectorial/thematic level. Also CSOs feel more at ease contributing on the sectorial/thematic level, since it corresponds to their specificities. It has yet to be seen if, with the PRSPs moving into a second generation and the Cotonou Agreement in its implementation phase, these public policy frameworks will offer more opportunities for donors and CSOs to be engaged in activities that are more closely linked to their traditional fields of action, comparative advantages, and rationalities.

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