

CAPE Project

Southern Voices for Change in the International Aid Architecture

We are seeing increasing rates of change in the international aid system, a loose aggregation of 90+ official agencies, but expect even more. Change stems, among other factors, from: (1) concerted action among donors and recipients, as committed at Monterrey, in the PRSP framework and in the Rome harmonisation agenda; (2) disjointed experimentation, such as the expansion of global funds, of the US Millennium Challenge Corporation and of the share of grants in IDA; and (3) competitive pressures linked to new funding pools and different donor objectives.

The voices of aid recipients in general, and Southern CSOs in particular, in shaping such trends are muted, if heard at all. The main international discussion fora are heavily biased towards donor views (the DAC and EU), Northern shareholder representation (the IFIs), and a predominantly governmental perspective (the above plus the UN). Policy-relevant information, even within donor countries, is often poorly analysed and communicated.

An ODI-facilitated debate engaging Southern CSO actors on the desirable future structure, instruments and major processes of international aid, well fits the 2005 international agenda window, in which the UK will have a high profile as G8 and EU chair and sponsor of the Africa Commission.

There will be three integral parts of the project, described in greater detail below. Please note that the parts are not necessarily sequential, although some activities will need to be carried out before others.

Part I: Identifying Southern views and perspectives on the international aid architecture and bringing them together to enable the exchange of ideas and proposals

Stage 1 Issues reviews for each of the regions involved in the project (Africa, Asia, and Latin America)

Four Southern-based independent researchers or practitioners (two from Africa, one from Asia, and one from Latin America) will collate published/known views of Southern CSOs, especially think tanks and research centres, on aid architecture and contrast them with Northern perspectives, reflected in recent ODI research as well as other documents produced by Northern CSOs. Topics to be covered, subject to these partners' views, include the pros and cons of greater donor alignment as seen by recipients; the impact of rising "governmentalisation" of aid through budget support; new approaches to conditionality; grants versus loans; and developing country representation in major national and international aid allocation decisions.

Stage 2 'Review' process and jointly published scoping paper

To facilitate further dialogue on aid architecture issues among Southern CSOs/researchers/scholars/experts, the four issues reviews generated in Stage 1 will

be circulated among invited outside readers for their comments and suggestions. An important aspect of this exercise will be to ensure that the reviews are as complete and thorough as possible, and to identify and address any obvious gaps.

A scoping paper will then be written on the basis of the four issues reviews produced in Stage 1 and the feedback received from the reviewers. The scoping paper itself will then be presented to all four authors of the issues reviews as well as to all the reviewers for a final round of comments to ensure that its contents adequately reflect the work and views of all the participants involved in the process.

The scoping paper will help frame subsequent debate by suggesting major open questions in aid architecture and identifying their implications at the country level.

Part 1 of the project will also involve identifying key regional CSO partners for further involvement in the project, especially in terms of helping carry out Parts 2 and 3. We expect to travel to one or two of the regions to engage with Southern organisations/researchers/experts working on aid architecture issues face to face, discuss the aims and different activities of the project, and encourage the involvement of Southern CSOs in those activities, especially in terms of the Forum for the Future of Aid (Part II below).

Part II: Launching a virtual Forum for the Future of Aid (FFA)

Website

A supporting website with searchable archives will be created, and will include, among other things, the Literature Reviews that have been commissioned for the project, as well as the reflections and feedback from our commentators and the Scoping Paper itself. Other information to be added might include information on the organisations collaborating with ODI on this project, and any relevant material/research/publications they would like to post.

Interactive Forum for the Future of Aid (FFA)

The website will also host the FFA, an interactive discussion network with expert research, briefing and consulting support that will facilitate the exchange of ideas among Southern CSOs engaged in thinking about aid architecture issues. In this, Southern CSOs are first canvassed for interest in specific policy topics, which are then examined with their help, plus voluntary inputs from other experts, and summaries are relayed to the wider network.

The Forum will be ‘active’ and maintained by ODI on a daily basis at three different points:

- A two-week period to stimulate discussion once the literature reviews and comments and feedback have been posted (see Part I)
- A one-week period once the scoping paper has been published (see Part I)
- A two-week period after the workshop has taken place in London (see Part III), both to discuss the Synthesis Report and to carry out an evaluation of the project

At other times the Forum may not be maintained on a daily basis, but useful information will continue to be posted, even if the discussion is not mediated.

Incentives to encourage Southern CSO engagement with the website and in particular the FFA

ODI will work towards generating and maintaining Southern CSO interest in the Southern Voices website and the FFA by promoting a series of activities:

- Encourage Southern CSOs to further their engagement with aid architecture issues by hosting and organising their own events/meetings/workshops on the future of aid and using the website to share their ideas and outcomes from such events. The Southern Voices project will fund selective ODI staff inputs to such seminars, and make a modest contribution to in-region travel by other CSO participants as appropriate/possible
- Invite Southern CSOs to write small opinion pieces on some of the issues being discussed in the FFA, published on the FFA site and disseminated to Northern media.
- Provide small funds/seed money for Southern CSOs who submit proposals, refereed by ODI, to carry out creative projects related to international aid architecture

Part III: Workshop at ODI, Synthesis Report, and other publications

ODI will organise and host a three-day workshop in London on 14-16 November with all of the Southern CSO representatives that have collaborated with us in putting together the Scoping Paper, either as authors of Literature Reviews or as commentators/reviewers, as well as a select group of donors, government representatives, and Northern NGO representatives. Some of the Southern participants will be asked if they would like to stay along to take part in the workshop John Young is organising as part of the 'Big Think' for the CSPP on 17-18 November.

The workshop will be based on the open questions set out in the joint Scoping Paper.

ODI will then synthesise the proceedings of the workshop in a ***Future of Aid Synthesis Report***, published jointly with the Southern CSOs that attended the workshop and participated in the discussion.

ODI will also produce in its own name ***3-4 topic-specific aid architecture briefings***, accessible to a wider public.

ODI will also produce 2-3 ***opinion pieces***, co-authored with local partners, and based on the earlier documents (Synthesis Report and briefing papers) already generated by this project.

All these materials will be posted on the project's website and will serve to 'active' the last round of the FFA (see Part II above), which, as explained above, will also

include an evaluation of the workshop and briefing process thus far, in terms of lessons learned and value added to Southern CSOs.

ODI publications related to the project are “The International Aid System, 2005-2010: Forces for and against Change”, ODI WP 235, 2004, and companion Opinion pieces (#15, Apr 2004, and forthcoming), as well as seminar presentations for both the International Architecture (Feb-Mar 2004) and UN reform (May 2004) series.

Project leaders within CAPE include Andrew Rogerson (a.rogerson@odi.org.uk) and Alina Rocha Menocal (a.rochamenocal@odi.org.uk). Please feel free to contact them if you have any questions or would like to get involved!