

Strengthening CIDA Partnerships with Canadian Civil Society Organizations CCIC/CIDA Consultations, April 17 – 18, 2002

A CCIC Background Paper

1. Affirming Roles for Civil Society Organizations in Canada's Aid Program¹

The September 2001 public hearings on CIDA's draft *Strengthening Aid Effectiveness (SAE)* paper were the most important public discussions of Canadian policies for international cooperation since the government's foreign policy review in 1995. The Minister for International Cooperation and senior CIDA officials heard views on new strategies for strengthening aid effectiveness from a wide range of organizations, who drew from many years of deep involvement in international cooperation.

In the consultation process, CCIC and its members endorsed the basic principles guiding the *SAE* – local ownership, partnership, increased focus on poverty through the social development priorities and pro-active policy engagement – but often questioned the application and implications of these principles. (See CCIC's analysis of the *SAE* on the Development Policy Page of our web site – www.ccic.ca.)

During the September hearings, CCIC members repeatedly raised a perceived failure of the *SAE* to address complex tensions between CIDA's desire for more focused priorities in government-to-government cooperation and an approach to aid that sustains a creative and purposeful inclusion of civil society. A narrowing of geographic and sectoral scope, along with renewed priority to a seemingly exclusive focus on government, may marginalize the roles for civil society in development. In the words of one Canadian NGO presenter at the time, "the result could be a net loss to Canada's development efforts – the loss of Canadian engagement through citizen-to-citizen development, the loss of Canadian financial and volunteer contributions, the loss of creativity and energy that organizations and institutions bring to international development and ultimately a loss of development impacts and results."

While we trust that the Minister and the President of CIDA took good account of these messages, we have waited more than 6 months in vain for a formal response to the issues and concerns raised at the public hearings. Many of CCIC's members are coming to the 2002 CCIC/CIDA Consultations with grave concerns, reinforced during these past six months by informal messages from various parts of the Agency, that CIDA no longer values nor places priority on renewing and expanding Canadian civil society contributions in Canada's aid programmes.

The truth is that Canada civil society makes major contributions to new directions in international cooperation. In the 2002 CCIC/CIDA Consultation, we wish to review approaches and tools for CIDA / civil society collaboration that strengthen innovation and the effectiveness of Canadian civil society organizations as they respond to new trends and directions in international cooperation. But in order to move forward our shared commitment to ending poverty we need a productive dialogue for the future. We trust that Minister Whelan and senior CIDA officials will address member concerns by responding to the messages heard during the *SAE* hearings and by setting out CIDA's comprehensive strategic framework for the roles of Canadian and Southern civil society in all aspects of Canada's official aid program.

This Background Paper briefly characterizes the circumstances for Canadian civil society actors in the new development context, reviews some aspects of innovation now underway within the CCIC membership, and sets out some concerns and issues about how and whether current forms of civil society collaboration with CIDA can support these new directions.

2. Civil Society Organizations and the Global Context for Poverty Eradication

Since the 1960s, CIDA has had a long-standing commitment, unique among official donors, to collaborate with civil society in its development programs and policies in Canada and overseas. Civil society interveners during the September hearings were therefore deeply concerned by the *SAE*'s narrow conception of civil society's role in development cooperation. At best, civil society was seen as a convenient mechanism for service delivery or as a means for assuring participation of local populations in donor or government-initiated development strategies. By contrast, in recent years, many Canadian civil society organizations (CSOs) have been seeking ways to emphasize in long-standing relationships with Southern counterparts an engagement that consolidates more diverse and shared roles based on a common pursuit of rights and global justice.

CCIC and its members place poverty eradication as the sole goal of Canada's aid programs. As the work of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen demonstrates, people-centred development for poverty eradication is ultimately about recognizing the rights of the vulnerable, and transforming the power relations and cultural and social interests that sustain inequality. Support for poverty reduction requires interventions that address not only capacities to improve livelihoods, but also unequal power, capacity and access to resources for those whose rights are denied.² While playing diverse roles, with sometimes unpredictable and mixed results, civil society organizations that work with representative constituencies among the poor are nevertheless at the forefront of change within developing countries.

Organizing as part of civil society, the poor and marginalized in developing countries interact with local and international NGOs, international donors, local and national governments, and informal enterprises in the private sector, collectively seeking economic and social space for expanding their options for sustainable livelihoods. Political rights and capacities are equally important as civil society organizations are increasingly called upon by their members to participate in local and national governance to influence development priorities and heighten accountability, recognizing the rights of people living in poverty.

Changing roles for civil society organizations (CSOs) are taking place within a global context of dramatically increasing inequality and pervasive poverty. CSOs face widespread reduced state capacities for education and health facilities among the poorest countries. This erosion of social support and infrastructure is in part the result of failed policies of structural adjustment imposed by creditors and international financial institutions, as well as complex civil conflicts, failed states, and corrupt political elites. Those most affected are those most vulnerable – growing numbers of poor and marginalized people. Many in civil society are challenging their political leaders, in the South and in the North, as they perceive northern dominated global institutions, such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF, to be acting in concert with bilateral donors to consolidate a system of highly unequal relations within and between countries.

The belligerent role of the United States, and Canada's seeming acquiescence, in the preparations for the recent UN Financing for Development Conference, the unilateral approach of the US to global issues, and its refusal to countenance any proposals for reform of unequal power relations in the WTO and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), has set the stage for increased North/South polarization. "One-size-fits-all" economic prescriptions continue to deepen poverty throughout the South.

As evidence in the September *SAE* hearings, many Canadian CSOs consider public engagement a vital component of Canadian development programming. Engagement is seen as integral to increasing public awareness of and action on global disparities, broadening our understanding of rights and responsibilities to

encompass global citizenship, and concern about development and fairness in the world. Ethical values shared widely in the Canadian population are a foundation for global citizenship that can be built upon. But years of cuts and neglect, compounded by changes in the political context for Canada's role and influence in the world, have weakened NGO capacities and strategies for pro-actively engaging Canadians in support of a more ethical foreign policy.

The Reality of Aid 2002, a report from more than 35 NGO coalitions from around the world, documents the increasingly complex web of conditions attached to diminishing aid resources that belie donor rhetoric of respecting developing country "ownership".³ So profound are the perceived contradictions that some Southern NGOs reject a role for aid that goes beyond the simple humanitarian response to acute need. But most still acknowledge the importance of particular aid initiatives (affecting social indicators for example) and stress the potential of a reformed and augmented aid regime within a reformed and fairly-constituted international economic order. CSOs have been leading the campaign for development alternatives that address structural, socio-economic, gender, ecological and financial barriers to overcoming global poverty. In doing so, they are supported by thousands of citizens' organizations in national and international forums seeking accountable energetic leadership for democratic alternatives.

Many northern CSOs involved in international cooperation are rethinking and reworking their policies and programs to enable more equitable partner relationships outside of traditional conditionality-recipient frameworks. The challenges we face are complex. Latin American authors in *Reality of Aid 2002* document the impact on their work of changing criteria and external conditions in their relationships with Northern private aid organizations (a summary can be found in Appendix One).⁴ Southern counterparts are calling upon Canadian civil society organizations for more specialized resources and asking them to play new roles based on more equitable and shared interaction in the South. They see the need for new skills for learning, transferring knowledge and for more complex forms of intervention with a wide range of development actors in Canada and in the South.

CCIC members have also promoted change in their relationships with CIDA; and, as we highlight below, are pursuing innovation and change in response to changing global and civil society dynamics. We also argue that these changes can best be promoted through partnership approaches that have worked well for CIDA and Canadian civil society – responsiveness, flexibility, promotion of CIDA's overall goals, and receptivity to opportunities for innovation – all of which have created optimal space for the best of Canadian NGO contributions to Canadian aid efforts in the past.

3. Promoting Innovation in Canadian Civil Society North/South Relations

Canadian civil society organizations are involved in the full continuum of development practice, moving from direct engagement with partners and other development actors overseas to policy intervention and public engagement in Canada and internationally. This continuum is rooted at one end in long-term associations with civil society counterparts overseas, and at the other end with the promotion of global citizenship in Canada. As noted above, many Canadian CSOs are evolving new relationships and tools for collaboration in support of southern-directed community interventions to reduce poverty.⁵ (See the summary of roles assumed by civil society in developing countries in Appendix Two.) Donors, whether they are government agencies or northern CSOs, are often constrained by external and sometimes-conflicting pressures for accountability, and by institutional rigidities and cultures, which make change difficult to manage. Nevertheless innovation and change is taking root, shaped by the particular missions of our organizations, and driven by a common commitment to poverty eradication.

Canadian CSOs and their counterparts are seeking new approaches and means to collaborate in capacity development, to exchange knowledge and skills and to find ways to scale up innovation. These innovations are also challenging Canadian CSOs at the other end of the continuum to integrate and extend innovative forms of public engagement in Canada and to improve policy interventions with government officials and multilateral institutions. CSOs, North and South, are increasingly called upon to influence the macro policy environment for poverty eradication.

How have Canadian CSOs responded to the challenges?

1) Canadian CSOs are risk-takers and incubators for new forms of partnerships, new approaches, and new areas of work through which to make progress on poverty eradication. Over the past 30 years, they pioneered participatory methodologies long before official donors understood their importance; they recognized the centrality of empowerment for people living in poverty long before it appeared in the rhetoric of the World Bank and other official donors; they developed experience in micro-credit, capacity building, peacebuilding, conflict resolution and responses to complex humanitarian emergencies throughout the 1980s and 1990s, long before these became specialized departments of official donors.

Today CCIC members are

- exploring new approaches to rights-based programming that put at the centre the long term goal of ending global poverty. CCIC members are implementing programs, for example, to end child trafficking in Asia and other regions, to protect the rights of war-affected children, to provide access to education and health as a basic civil and human right, to support the capacity of women's organizations to change the legal framework affecting women, and extend food-based interventions within a broader framework of a right to food. They have been collaborating to understand and promote labour rights within program strategies to end poverty.
- empowering the poor and vulnerable within communities to not only improve their day-to-day livelihoods, but also over time to gain experience and confidence to be effective agents for change influencing newly decentralized local and regional government structures in many developing countries. A Canadian organization working with a counterpart in Mali, for example, has been able to draw lessons from six years of experience in community empowerment, particularly for women and the poor within these communities, with local decision-makers and to work with counterparts to apply these lessons to other settings.
- piloting dynamic inter-active approaches to engage Canadians on global issues that address weaknesses in earlier development education models. These approaches include, among others,
 - a focus on "global citizenship" as an organizing paradigm for exploring north/south interconnections;
 - direct overseas exposure of Canadians in *both* community-based projects and policy change initiatives arising from these projects;
 - deliberative dialogue approaches to global issues that involve a diverse range of public participants in uncovering shared values through a structured discussion of issues;
 - exploring the use of new technologies to facilitate collaborative learning, solidarity networks and increased participation in both cultural exchange and policy dialogue; and
 - forming new private/civil society/government partnerships to involve youth and youth groups in volunteer placement programs.

- expanding work in complex humanitarian emergencies. Canadian CSOs implement more than half of all CIDA resources devoted to humanitarian emergencies for Sub-Saharan Africa. As well, several of the largest agencies have raised considerable independent resources through public appeals to augment Canadian government contributions significantly. Canadian CSOs are collaborating with international institutions, governments, and private agencies to better understand not only the challenges of working in dangerous conflict zones, but also how to orient this work to build a base post-conflict reconstruction and integration of affected populations. In the Congo and Great Lakes region, for example, the knowledge and proposals of several Canadian NGOs for peace and reconstruction are a source of both information and analysis, not only for their Canadian constituencies, but also for senior Canadian and other northern government officials responsible for shaping government responses to these conflicts.

2) Canadian CSOs are exploring new organizational forms of partnership and engagement with counterparts across the globe on common interests in programs for poverty eradication and social and economic justice.

- In recent years a number of Canadian NGOs have become integrated within wider families of NGO partners (e.g. OXFAM, CARE, Save the Children, World Vision), particularly in the North, but also in some cases including Southern counterparts on an equal basis. These partnerships strengthen the programmatic impact and policy influence of the Canadian partner, but like CIDA, the latter must work through appropriate roles with network partners who often command much greater financial and human resources, without losing ground with their Canadian constituencies.
- Some CCIC members are working with their Boards and volunteers to manage an institutional evolution from a centrally-driven donor organization to an international partnership of autonomous NGOs, held together by a common mission, rather than financial co-dependency. Others are playing strategic roles within European-based secular and church-based coalitions where they are able to extend their influence based on the quality of Canadian relationships with Southern counterparts and their skills in managing North/South relationships.
- Some CCIC members have long-standing relationships in particular regions and communities where they have begun to extend programming to facilitate conflict resolution and convene dialogue among contending protagonists – workers, estate owners, community organizations and local NGOs. Others are requested by partners to be an intermediary with International Financial Institutions for project funding to scale up programs and diversify risk with local governments.

3) Many CCIC members place increased priority on expanding their roles in information-sharing, structured learning, and building policy and research capacities, as these capacities and resources become vital to emerging new roles in relations with Southern counterparts.

- Canadian CSOs within international partnerships are taking up a shared research and policy agenda with advantages of both economies of scale for solid research and impact on the policy agendas of the global institutions and G8 governments. Some have effectively linked their policy initiatives to public engagement through their Canadian constituencies and volunteer base to increase participation in campaigns to change policy (with recent example being the Jubilee debt campaign or the campaign on essential medicines). Others have established solid policy-based relationships with counterparts overseas (such as trade unions) that include shared policy agendas but also direct systematic interaction between Canadians and Southern activists.

- Some members are developing niche roles for information processing and sharing with specialized Canadian audiences and electronic networks based on thematic interest and/or solidarity action. Others are undertaking learning workshops and other forms of deliberation with partners to process lessons, and to publish these and other forward-looking southern analysis of strategies for development alternatives. Canadian and other CSOs have unique access to information on country situations beyond national capitals and in regions where the poor reside that is usually unavailable to official donor agencies.
- Many Canadian CSOs have expressed interest and priority for learning, knowledge processing and policy engagement. At the same time, Canadian CSOs face organizational barriers and limits to their capacities to expand these activity areas. Each agency works with its Board to balance and shape its programming priorities and the human resources needed to support these programs. Weaknesses in policy capacity in individual agencies have often been compensated with the synergies achieved through active participation in shared initiatives and policy working groups around various themes. Over the next two years, CCIC expects further collaboration with members to strengthen the sector's capacity with models of shared policy work (that also include CIDA). A key challenge is the difficult translation of concrete field experience into policy lessons that can influence policy dialogues at all levels and support proposals for change coming from CSOs that represent constituencies of people living in poverty.

4. Issues for CIDA/CSO Relations

CIDA relationships and programs with CSOs, including regular dialogues and mutual work on policy and practice, have evolved over these past 30 years in response to shared development challenges and innovative opportunities from Canadian voluntary organizations. But to what degree are current CIDA/CSO modalities facilitating the full spectrum of civil society development activity implied by new trends and directions in international cooperation? This is a central question for the 2002 CCIC/CIDA Consultation. Several long-standing issues will be crucial to this discussion.

Various members have proposed new ways to improve CIDA's approaches and mechanisms for strengthening CSO contributions to development cooperation. While not definitive, they are offered below to stimulate further discussion. Many others should emerge in the course of the Consultation. Issues and proposals relate to,

1. Responsive funding mechanisms in Canadian Partnership Branch;
2. Contracting procedures for Bilateral Branches;
3. Systematic opportunities for learning and policy dialogue with CIDA; and
4. A comprehensive operational framework for engaging Canadians as global citizens.

1. The preservation of flexibility, with transparent criteria for making choices, and fair access to these programming resources from Canadian Partnership Branch (CPB). CCIC members strongly endorse CPB's responsive mechanisms and the principles that have characterized their operation – mutual respect and CSO autonomy in determining programs, cost-sharing, expansion of multi-year program funding arrangements, and open dialogue with CIDA on issues affecting the mechanisms. Responsiveness to CSOs is perhaps one of the most important contributions of CIDA to international cooperation during the past three decades. Members testify to the central importance of the mechanism for providing the space for piloting new areas of work and innovation that were later scaled-up, while assuring predictable long-term resources for sustained partner relationships. Given the lack of significant alternative Canadian sources of private finance (public foundations for example) for international cooperation, unlike the US or the UK, the role of public funding (like CPB responsive funding) for innovative north/south initiatives is key.

Canadian CSOs are therefore concerned that 1) new directions for CIDA may undermine the principles of the responsive mechanism; 2) current interpretations of results based management (RBM) are submerging strategic goals for many CSOs in a maze of artificial and reductionist identification of “results”; and 3) CIDA resources devoted to these mechanisms have been frozen and may decline (see the table in Appendix Three).

CCIC members are proposing that

- CIDA re-affirm the centrality of the responsive mechanism for supporting the role of civil society organizations as an essential part of CIDA’s strategic goal of poverty reduction;
- New aid resources over the next five years be added systematically to current budgets for Voluntary Sector Programs in CPB. This would permit financial flexibility to increase support for Canadian civil society initiatives (for both program and project funded organizations) and to rationalize current allocations to program funded organizations;
- CPB work with CCIC and other representative stakeholders to reform the process and the micro-management requirements in current program funding agreements that centres CIDA support on overarching strategic goals and related results for periods up to five years.
- CPB recognize the strategic importance of involving Canadians in international cooperation and the special requirements for cooperant sending organizations in ways that permit better integration of Canadian cooperants in sustainable programs with southern counterparts, with greater flexibility for specialized short-term programs, inclusion of youth, and southern-based cooperants.
- The President of CIDA work with CCIC and other relevant stakeholders to resolve significant auditing conflicts with Treasury Board. Its auditors are implementing guidelines that are seemingly inconsistent with existing CIDA Contribution Agreements and with the Government’s own development principles as expressed through CIDA policy statements.
- CPB simplify its project requirements for project funding mechanisms and recognize the need for sustained multiyear involvement with southern counterparts to achieve measurable results beyond simple outputs.

2. Making contracting arrangements for projects funded through CIDA bilateral branches consistent with locally-directed development processes. Since “country-focus programs” were initiated in the mid-1980s, Canadian civil society organizations have taken advantage of bilateral project resources to increase the impact of initiatives arising from long-term partnerships with southern counterparts. Because they take advantage of pre-existing partnerships in the South and programs often developed over several years with CPB program resources, the responsive sole-sourcing mechanisms for Bilateral Branches are most consistent with both the origins of the projects being proposed and with the capacities of the CSO. But opportunities for many CSOs (particularly medium size organizations) to take responsive proposals to CIDA have diminished as bilateral programs turned to the open bidding system and responded to new programming directions that emphasize government-to-government mechanisms, like Sector Wide Approaches.

CSOs are concerned that current rules affecting the process and terms of contracting mechanisms place little or no value on increasing local participation and management. They are highly inflexible, risk-adverse programming tools that diminish innovation and capacities to respond to changing circumstances in the field. As well, they require the investment of significant up-front financial resources (from scarce

programming budgets) in order to develop bids and proposals that are far from certain to succeed, thus excluding many CSOs with skills, experience and new approaches.

Aid contracting has tended to transform complex development processes that require long-term commitment and local knowledge into "biddable products". Accountability is almost entirely back to CIDA and for short term "results", rather than to locally-directed development process by developing country partners.

CCIC members have proposed that

- CIDA consider changes to contracting arrangements to better take into account of the importance of long-term collaboration, local knowledge, participation and decision-making, including structuring new forms of accountability more sensitive to primary programming relationships in the South.
- CIDA adopt operational principles to guide its interventions that are consistent with local ownership and leadership of development initiatives, accountability to local stakeholders, and the need for long-term collaboration to achieve results (see an example of draft principles in Appendix Four).

3. Provide more systematic opportunities for sharing results, learning and policy dialogue between CSOs and CIDA. Several members have noted that increased attention to policy dialogue has led to engagement on policy issues with other Ministers and Departments – Finance, Agriculture and Food, Department of Foreign Affairs – as well as with Parliamentarians, often with CIDA present, but seldom with CIDA initiating opportunities. CCIC welcomed the *SAE*'s emphasis on improved policy coherence and a more pro-active policy engagement on the part of CIDA in government policy-making. We have pointed out that CIDA's development experience highlights the tensions between foreign policy determined by a focus on short-term Canadian economic and political interests, and CIDA's mandate, which arises from the long-term needs of developing countries, and challenges unequal global economic and political structures. In our response to the *SAE* we suggested that CIDA has an interest in strengthening the policy roles of Canadian CSOs and encouraging dialogue with Southern counterparts as it seeks to counterbalance more narrowly conceived national interests in Canadian foreign policy promoted by other Ministries.

The *SAE*'s recognition that CIDA should be knowledge-driven corresponds with the above-mentioned interest among many CCIC members to work more systematically with program partners for knowledge and skill enhancement as a key development resource. While Canadian CSOs need to improve their own capacities for capturing knowledge in their program and policy work and sharing lessons, exchanging relevant knowledge and making strategic contributions to strengthening Southern counterparts, they are equally concerned that there are few opportunities to work with CIDA on these issues. Systematic dialogue with CIDA as a large corporate institution is inherently difficult, as indeed such dialogue is demonstrably difficult even within CIDA. CIDA has not devoted resources to structured dialogue with those outside the Agency; and there is reluctance on the part of some in CIDA to open existing knowledge networks or consultations on policy or operational issues until they are fully formed within the Agency.

CCIC members have proposed that

- An enhanced CIDA policy role in Canadian foreign policy formation be strengthened through more systematic CIDA policy dialogue with Canadian and Southern civil society organizations.
- CIDA draw upon a wide range of development knowledge beyond the Agency that is relevant to its concerns.

- CIDA knowledge networks be inclusive of development actors outside of CIDA and take into account knowledge rooted in concrete experience of those living in poverty.
- CIDA work with Canadian CSOs and their overseas counterparts to strengthen capacities for learning and engagement with southern experience in development knowledge, including more structured (internet-based) modalities for sharing evolving policy discussions, and systematic opportunities for drawing lessons from Canadian CSO work.

4. CIDA must give high priority to a comprehensive operational framework for engaging Canadians as global citizens in international cooperation. The public hearings on the *SAE* in September 2001 were almost unanimous in their concern for a seeming lack of substantive attention by CIDA to public engagement of Canadians. Strategies for effectively tackling global poverty require, as one presenter in Saskatchewan noted, changing ourselves as well as the lives of people living in poverty.

In December CCIC wrote to CIDA President Len Good and commended new public engagement initiatives, but expressed concern that CIDA's public engagement strategy has not been implemented fully and coherently. We suggested that public engagement is a relatively new framework for all of us, its methods and intent are not as well understood as we would like, both among NGOs and inside CIDA. CCIC is seeking the President's commitment to accelerate a comprehensive operational framework, augmenting both human and financial resources, for effective implementation of CIDA's public engagement strategy. The work of public engagement should not be isolated within a single branch of the Agency, but infused across a broad range of development programming. Despite programs in several branches, accountability to the strategy is unfortunately equally fragmented.

At the end of February, CCIC and its members held a workshop with CIDA officials to review our experience with methods that effectively engage different sectors of the Canadian public and the impact that CIDA's public engagement strategy is having on our work. At our 2002 Consultation we will continue to explore with CIDA how the public engagement framework has changed our approaches and how existing funding and administrative arrangements support this work.

CCIC and its members have proposed that

- CIDA set out a comprehensive operational framework that includes public engagement as an important and coherent component of the Agency's development policies, including a commitment to significantly increase financial and human resources for these purposes.
- CIDA invest management responsibility for its overarching strategy for public engagement in a clear "chain of command", housed in such a way as to reflect its significance and to create a senior-level "champion" within the Agency for public engagement.
- CIDA work with CCIC and other stakeholders to develop and implement monitoring techniques applicable to public engagement.
- All funding mechanisms for public engagement recognize the need for multi-year planning and implementation of public engagement projects and programs to assure impact.

Endnotes:

¹ This background paper takes as given a definition of civil society from CIVICUS: "Civil society is a representation of collective citizen action, whether to advance mutual interests, solve common problems, or

promote shared aspirations. Civil society and its organizations provide an alternative means for citizens to participate in designing and creating a healthy public life in their own image”. Civil society includes diverse and often contending organizations of citizens, inter-acting based on their perception of the common good, excluding those whose actions threaten the basic rights of others (e.g. promoting exclusion based on race, religion, ethnicity or gender). While distinct from the state and private sector actors, civil society initiatives often include forms of collaboration with these actors. CCIC members include a diverse selection of Canadian civil society organizations involved in international cooperation – faith, NGOs, trade unions, environment and women’s organizations.

² An elaboration of these views can be found in CCIC’s “Commentary on CIDA’s Draft Long-Term Strategy”, January 2001 and “CIDA Strengthening Aid Effectiveness: New Approaches to Canada’s International Assistance – Issues for Consultation”, July 2001, available on the Development Policy page of CCIC’s web site, www.ccic.ca.

³ Judith Randel, Tony German, Deborah Ewing (2002), *The Reality of Aid 2002, An Independent Review of Poverty Reduction and International Development Assistance, Focus on Conditionality and Ownership*, Manila: IBON Foundation

⁴ See for example Mariano Valderrama, “Out of the Tower of Babel” and ALOP, “Partnership questioned: NGOs and external conditionality” in Randel, German & Ewing (2002). A CIDA study coordinated by John Saxby in Canadian Partnership Branch on complex issues affecting North/South partnerships addressed similar issues in Charles Abugre, “Partners, Collaborators or Patron-Clients: Defining Relationships in the Aid Industry, A Survey of the Issues, August 1999 (available on CCIC’s web site, www.ccic.ca).

⁵ The examples and analysis of issues in the next two sections are based in part on a series of short interviews with selected CCIC members who were asked to identify innovation in their current programming, implications for their agency, and the degree to which CIDA has facilitated or hindered these new directions. The author expresses his thanks to those who responded to this call for examples and the identification of issues in the CIDA/CSO relationship, but takes full responsibility for the ways in which they are expressed in the text that follows.

Appendix One

ALOP, “Partnership questioned: NGOs and external conditionality”, excerpted from *Reality of Aid 2002*

[This analysis is based on a three country study [Guatemala, Brazil and Peru] undertaken by the ALOP network of NGOs in Latin America in 2001. A summary of the country studies is available in Spanish in ALOP, *Mito y Realidad de la Ayuda Externa, America Latina al 2002*, Lima, November 2001.]

“[Latin American NGOs face] a funding system based on short-term and highly ‘volatile’ resources. Funds come from a diversity of sources, address a variety of issues and come with diverse conditionality. This has led to dispersion, which has produced a loss of focus in the work of the institutions and created uncertainty, making any attempt at medium term institutional planning difficult, and forcing institutions to exhaust themselves in sustained efforts to continuously seek new funding sources.

“The new criteria and requirements are: emphasis on quantifiable results rather than objectives, greater control on resources, the tendency to fund specific projects, and the disappearance of the concept of *programmes* and the return of that of *contracts* in carrying out projects. It has turned northern NGOs into something similar to ‘bank tellers’...Northern NGO employees now concentrate more on administrative tasks and have less and less time for dialogue and monitoring activities in the field....

“Notions such as ‘solidarity’ and ‘partnership’ have been diluted....

“[In the face of neo-liberal thinking and questions about the efficiency of international cooperation to eradicate poverty, northern NGOs have been weak] in defending their own conception within the perspective of development...As a result, they took on projects of a more social assistance nature, or spearheaded massive humanitarian aid programs in situations of social emergency, in order to obtain funding. In that sense, an instrumental rationale has been consolidating itself in the North regarding the fight against poverty, in contrast with the structural view that NGOs in Latin America had been proposing....

“[Northern NGOs and agencies impose conditionality on southern NGOs] in three areas:

- i) agenda and priority issues;
- ii) location focus;
- iii) programming, monitoring and evaluation and accountability systems....

“In some cases...[northern] NGOs see themselves forced to accept activities according to themes and with criteria imposed from outside [in the North]...

“The logframe does not adequately contemplate what the project means to the community...[T]he planning system offers little flexibility in adapting it to specific contexts, which often change.

“Among the issues for which obtaining funding from the North is most difficult, there was consensus...[on] the limited disposition to contribute to strengthening institutionally Latin American NGOs through equipment and wages...[Northern NGOs] resisted allocating resources that would guarantee the hiring of highly qualified professionals....

“Although innovative projects are promoted in the North, there is little disposition to fund the initial expenditures required to establish them....

“In various countries...there has been a reduction in the area of training popular organizations and supporting unions and social movements...

“Dialogue forums and opportunities are slanted according to the moment and, in general, depend on northern NGO initiatives. NGOs show significant weakness in their difficulty to collectively address this challenge, which has generally ended up being resolved bilaterally: each southern NGO with its northern counterpart. NGO networks have promoted consultation and coordination on specific issues, instead of a national agenda. This has coincided with the depoliticizing process of NGOs....

“[I]f the dialogue between North and South is to be fruitful, it cannot be confined to technical and operational aspects, it requires giving back consideration to concepts such as ‘trust’ and ‘solidarity’, and generating new views on development and international cooperation.”

Appendix Two

Within developing countries civil society organizations are a crucial means to

- i) provide an organized voice for the expression of interests of citizens, including poor and powerless people, in community development and policy-making processes;
- ii) incorporate and extend democratic forms of national and local governance through innovative mechanisms for participation and the mediation and aggregation of interests within and between communities;
- iii) promote human rights and protect the interests of those who are affected unfairly and/or excluded from decision-making in relation to individual cases, national policies and reform programs;
- iv) act as bridge-builders between people with differing interests, between those engaged with the different social sectors and in innovative collaborations between the private, government and civic sectors.
- v) act as political intermediary between citizens and the state, and between donors and other civil society organizations;
- vi) support capacity-building of grassroots popular organizations, and sometimes local government and national ministries, providing opportunities for learning and training in social change and development;
- vii) respond to emergencies with detailed knowledge of local communities, and mediate social conflict in community-level processes;
- viii) mobilize local resources and expand local philanthropy;
- ix) mobilize voluntarism in society in self-help groups, in support of grass-root development, and the promotion of civic values;
- x) implement participatory, often innovative, programs in communities, particularly in the social sectors and income generation (production and savings and credit schemes);
- xi) facilitate networking and sharing of experiences across regions in the countries and in the South.

From: CCIC, “Commentary on CIDA’s Draft Long-Term Strategy” (January 2001)

Appendix Three Overview of Financial Trends for Canadian NGOs/NGIs

Table 1: A History of CIDA's Total Disbursements through Canadian NGOs/NGIs
(Exclusive of universities, colleges, research and other institutions, international NGOs)

Year	(1) Bilateral Through NGOs/NGIs	(2) %age of Total Bilateral	(3) CPB Responsive to NGOs/NGIs	(4) Other Channels to NGOs/NGIs	(5) Total CIDA Support to NGOs/NGIs	(6) %age of Total CIDA Program	(7) %age of Total ODA (cash basis)
1984/85	24.8	2.8%	121.0	27.2	173.0	10.7%	8.2%
1991/92	91.3	8.2%	200.4	26.4	318.1	14.6%	11.4%
1994/95	104.7	14.1%	204.3	23.1	332.1	16.9%	11.7%
1995/96	96.1	13.4%	157.6	22.1	275.8	17.3%	12.3%
1996/97	82.3	11.4%	164.5	22.2	269.0	16.7%	12.0%
1998/99	111	17.0%	131.0	82.4	324.4	19.4%	14.3%
1999/00	119.1	18.0%	140.2	53.4	212.7	18.4%	12.7%

Sources: CIDA Annual Statistical Reports on ODA, various years
CCIC Calculations from CIDA Corporate Memory Data since 1994/95 for
NGO/NGI allocated through the bilateral window.

Notes on the Table:

- (1) Allocated to NGOs/NGIs through the bilateral window as Country-Focus sole sourced contracts (prior to 1997/98). These figures exclude universities, colleges, research centres and international NGOs not based in Canada.
- (2) Bilateral as a percentage of total bilateral allocations for Asia, Africa/Middle East and the Americas
- (3) Allocations through Canadian Partnership Branch. These figures exclude universities, colleges, research centres and other international NGOs not based in Canada.
- (4) Other Channels for allocations to NGO/NGIs include food aid and international humanitarian assistance. Best guess estimates are made for IHA for some years.
- (5) Total support from CIDA for NGO/NGIs is the sum of columns (1), (2) and (3).
- (6) Percentage of total CIDA programming ODA, exclusive of administration expenditures.
- (7) Percentage of total Official Development Assistance for that year (including all forms of development assistance from other federal departments, and imputed development assistance for refugees and students in Canada, as allowed by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD).

Table 2: History of CIDA Disbursements to NGOs/NGIs through Canadian Partnership Branch

(Exclusive of universities, colleges, research and other institutions, international NGOs)

	(1) CPB Responsive to NGO/NGIs	(2) %age of Total CPB for Vol Sector	(3) %age of Total CIDA Program
Year			
1984/85	121.0	64.7%	7.5%
1991/92	200.4	76.3%	9.2%
1994/95	204.3	74.4%	11.7%
1995/96	157.6	76.9%	10.6%
1996/97	164.5	76.5%	9.9%
1998/99	131.0	61.3%	7.8%
1999/00	140.2	60.6%	8.2%

Sources: CIDA Annual Statistical Reports on ODA, various years

Financial Support from Canadians for International Cooperation

Financial support for Canadian NGO efforts has remained steady during the 1990s, which has also been a period of high taxation for Canadians along with sharp reductions in the government's aid efforts. Canadian international NGOs raise from Canadians each year approximately 3 times (\$450 million) the annual disbursement of Partnership Branch to these same organization. In a CCIC study of a sample of 64 members, revenue from individuals (excluding gifts-in-kind) grew by 25% between 1993 and 1998.

While there is a great deal of room for improvement in some of the images and rationales promoted by Canadian NGOs in their fundraising appeals, it is also clear that those appeals based on humanitarian solidarity and a fundamental need to share in an unfair world strongly engage Canadians. Support by CIDA for a sustained and sophisticated public education program would assist in the building of a moral and political base of sustainable support for international development assistance among Canadians.

Appendix Four

Guiding principles for RBM and Accountability in Capacity Development and SWAps

These principles are the conclusion to a draft CIDA discussion paper, “Results-Based Management (RBM) and Accountability for Enhanced Aid Effectiveness: A Statement of Principles for CIDA Staff” (February 2002). They do not form a CIDA policy statement but rather arise out of recent discussion within CIDA’s SWAp Knowledge Network. They are reproduced here because they acknowledge and propose alternatives for inherent tensions between development principles (that are central to SAWps and capacity development initiatives undertaken by CIDA) and current emphases in RBM and accountability as practiced by CIDA. These concerns are widely shared by CSOs.

Principle 1

Local ownership and leadership are cornerstones of CIDA’s work in Capacity Development and SWAps. CIDA’s approach to RBM, while recognizing that RBM must inevitably serve CIDA’s own management and accountability needs, must be implemented in a way that acknowledges the paramount importance of country ownership and leadership.

Principle 2

The quality of the governance and accountability environment in the host country is critical to the success of CIDA’s efforts to support Capacity Development and SWAps.

Principle 3

Capacity Development and SWAps are by their nature iterative, learning activities. RBM should be applied to them in ways that promote learning, adjustment and continuous improvement.

Principle 4

We need to recognize that capacity development is often a valuable outcome in its own right.

Principle 5

We must adapt RBM and the use of Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) to the complexities and uncertainties characteristic of Capacity Development and SWAps interventions.

Principle 6

We must acknowledge, in our use of RBM and our management of accountability, that many of the results targeted by SWAps and Capacity Development activities cannot readily be quantified.

Principle 7

CIDA must be accountable for ensuring not only that its own information needs are met, but also that RBM is used by the Agency as a capacity building tool.

Principle 8

In its work on SWAps and Capacity Development, CIDA’s main preoccupation is that *results be achieved*, rather than attributing particular outcomes to particular CIDA-supported interventions.

Principle 9

While being vigilant in managing for results, we must also recognize that achievement of meaningful Capacity Development and SWAp results can be a slow process.

Principle 10

The processes and reporting requirements linked to RBM should not impose unreasonable burdens on our development partners.

Appendix Five

Building on Strength – Collaborating in Public Engagement Workshop Outcomes (February 25, 2002)

In November 1999, CIDA launched its Public Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy and action plan established a new framework for CIDA-supported public engagement activities and provided the context for the launch of new public engagement funding mechanisms.

The CCIC workshop “Building on Strength” was an opportunity for members to share over two years of experience working with the Public Engagement Strategy, exploring how it has changed their work, and how related funding and criteria support their own goals for public engagement (PE). It also provided space for members to share their understandings of public engagement, to identify examples of best practice, and articulate challenges to achieving measurable impacts.

The two main workshop objectives were to:

- identify key areas of challenge and opportunity in our work with public engagement; and
- strengthen and clarify our relationships with CIDA in the area of public engagement.

The day included both panel presentations and opportunities for group and plenary discussion. The final session of the day was devoted to a member-based discussion of “next steps”, intended to identify areas requiring ongoing work, and to provide input on issues to be brought forward in CCIC-CIDA consultations planned for mid-April, 2002.

A total of 48 participants took part in the workshop, including representatives from over 30 CCIC member organizations, the Canadian Teachers Federation, and CIDA’s Partnership and Communication Branches.

This brief provides a summary of the main outcomes of the day. A full report will be available on the Voluntary Sector section of CCIC’s Web site (www.ccic.ca) in April.

SUMMARY FINDINGS:

Understandings of public engagement

- Discussion reflected differences in understandings of PE: For some, it relates to fundraising and/ or promotion of aid to developing countries; for others, it is about promoting fundamental social change. Some see engagement as shaping public attitudes; others see it as involving the public (on their own terms) in reflection and action on international cooperation issues.
- There was discussion about how to share and extend understandings of public engagement and the continuum between awareness and action, both among NGOs and CIDA program/ project officers.
- There was general agreement that PE has to be seen as an integral part of the development equation, bringing north-south issues to the attention of northern publics. The importance of reflecting southern concerns and grounding PE in promoting north-south social justice was underlined.
- Within CIDA, there is an apparent need for an internal inventory of branches and divisions directly or indirectly supporting PE, and some way to ensure a common understanding and approach to PE among program and project officers.
- Public engagement practitioners need to understand and utilize the power of new technologies such as the Internet within their work, both to reach new publics, and to facilitate participation and feedback.

Evaluation and impact assessment

- Evaluation of PE needs to be related to long term impacts, but the goals of attitudinal and behavioural changes are among the hardest to measure. There is a sense of needing some baselines against which to benchmark.
- Effective evaluation requires adequate planning, capacity and resources. It is difficult to undertake within short time frames, and on limited project funding.
- There is a tendency to get stuck at simplistic numeric level of evaluation; more challenging but meaningful to capture qualitative indicators.
- Evaluation ideally should provide some value to projects/ programs and contribute to organizational learning rather than serve just external reporting function.
- There was agreement that the available resources for evaluation of PE are deficient. There is a desire for shared learning on evaluation and sharing of tools and experience.
- Discussion of the challenge of achieving some measurable impact in a given area of focus raised the need for increased regional/ national collaboration.

CIDA Strategy, funding and framework

- Very different level of familiarity with PE strategy between program and project funded NGOs. Former don't directly encounter it and are not subject to the same explicit criteria.
- Ongoing member concerns about the "fragility" of funding for public engagement, even if the reality is that funding is being re-established. Concern in particular that project based funding doesn't allow for full planning-execution-evaluation-learning cycle. This related to a conviction that PE needs to be seen as an integral part of development programming—not a series of one-off add-ons.
- No clear picture of overall funding support for PE within CIDA, particularly with regard to percentage of program funds devoted to PE. CIDA representatives gave dollar totals for some initiatives and the director of the NGO Project Facility estimated the overall level is at or close to the level of funding before the cuts in the mid-1990s.

Next steps

The following arose as needs and suggestions expressed in the final session of the day, which focused on identifying priorities for member work on public engagement, and issues to be raised in consultation with CIDA:

- Increased collaboration on assessment and PE work as a whole. Need opportunities and support for coalition work.
- Need evaluation tools and skills development, along with greater clarity from CIDA about what it wants from evaluations.
- Stable long-term funding an ongoing concern. Need to look both to and beyond CIDA.
- Continue to stress PE as priority to CIDA, emphasize that it is an integral part of the development equation, and that integration of southern-voiced concerns and perspectives is key.
- Need for improved baseline data on attitudes and public opinion; need better understanding of different target groups and how to reach them.
- Want increased accountability within CIDA management structure for PE; clarification of how and to whom the PE Strategy applies; but not blind consistency between program and project funding: As one participant said, "Be careful what we wish for."