

**Capacity Building of Disabled People's Organisations in the
South.
The Scandinavian Model.¹**

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Background to the project.

Scandinavian countries were among the first to engage positively with the idea of disability as a human rights issue and to see its inclusion within development cooperation as crucial. Both these positions owe much to effective lobbying by organisations controlled by disabled people (DPOs). In all four countries DPOs have also taken a leading role in the practical work of development cooperation around disability, specifically working closely with sister DPOs in the South. It is for this reason that this report was commissioned, as it is part of a DFID-funded project to consider the most effective means of supporting capacity building among Southern DPOs.

The main aim of the report is to see what lessons, if any, can be learned about the best way of assisting Southern DPOs by examining the relationships between the national development agencies in Scandinavia and their own DPOs and between those DPOs and their counterparts in the South.

After a brief consideration of the methods employed in this study and then a general overview of the disability and development policy context in the Nordic countries, the relationships outlined above will be examined for each of the four countries.

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It must be stressed that this is a very brief overview, mainly looking at the Northern end of the equation, not an in-depth analysis. The latter would require a great deal more time, resources and a researcher with the necessary language skills.

Methods

The report is based on a series of structured telephone interviews (see Appendix 1) with representatives from national aid agencies and the umbrella DPOs concerned with development cooperation. This has been supplemented by desk-based research. It was hoped that Southern DPOs could have also be included, in order to assess the practical results of this type of partnership working. However, for various reasons – time, resources - this proved impossible. Because of this, except in the case of Sweden and Norway, where there have been recent analyses of North-South DPO partnership working, it has not been possible to make a substantive assessment of the relative merits of this form of engagement as compared, for example, to that of the work with Southern DPOs by international disability charities.

Disability and Development: The Scandinavian Track Record.

As indicated above, the Scandinavian DPOs and their countries have played a leading role in putting human rights at the heart of disability and development. In 1991 the Nordic DPOs met in Hanaholmen, Finland and agreed to lobby their governments for increased action on disability and development. In 1996 the Finnish government made a formal Decision-in-Principle to include "...the status of disabled people as a concern in the context of poverty reduction and human rights."² Four years later in Copenhagen, all the Nordic ministers for development cooperation declared in concert to, among other things:

“Recognise and promote the UN Standard Rules as guidelines for all bilateral and multilateral development work and to assure that special measures are taken to create

² STAKES National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health, *Label us able: A proactive evaluation of Finnish development co-operation from the disability perspective*, 2003, p.28.

accessibility and participation in development society for persons with disabilities in order to strengthen their possibilities to exercise their human rights.”³

While this commitment continues to be reflected in the Scandinavian countries' disability policies and there have been new declarations made before and since the signing of the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in all the countries, interviewees report that there has been an overall failure to implement effectively national strategies for inclusion of the disability dimension in development cooperation. In other words, while various types of disability projects are supported and national DPOs are funded to work with sister organizations in the South, the effective inclusion of disability in the mainstream of development cooperation practice has not yet happened.

For example, Finland's disability and development policies have in general been advanced compared to those elsewhere in the world. Nonetheless, a recent evaluation report found that:

*Most of the assistance via NGOs has been effective and has made an impact on the planned target groups, for example, training of the deaf and blind in specialised institutions has received a lot of funding. However, the impact on some individuals has been limited and it has had less influence on communities and countries. This is because most of the assistance has been disability-specific (targeted at the people with disabilities) and has been based on the dominant social welfare approach.*⁴

There were also criticisms that disability had not been mainstreamed into development, that there had not been enough attention paid to adjusting policy in line with the shift from a social welfare to a human rights approach and that the overall policy had to be overhauled to take into account the new international aid instruments for the poorest countries.

³ [Final Report from Copenhagen Conference 2000](#), *Inclusion of the disability dimension in Nordic development cooperation*

⁴ STAKES op.cit., 2003, p.80

In Norway a somewhat similar situation exists. Between 1999 and 2002 there were a number of important developments so that by the latter year all the basics seemed to be in place for bringing disability fully into development cooperation. There was a policy mandated by the parliament, a written commitment drawn up by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and detailed guidelines developed together with the Norwegian disability movement.⁵ Nonetheless, a report carried out in 2003/04 concluded that "...the guidelines were not known among the target group; not by the Norwegian Embassies nor by Norwegian NGOs or international NGOs that receive most support from NORAD / MFA."⁶ .

At the centre too either there is only a vague awareness of the guidelines and policy and/ or very little is being done to make sure they are applied.⁷ Although of all development agencies NORAD has one of the most impressive policies on paper, on the whole that is where they have remained.

The failure to adhere to policies is not limited to that on disability. Because of this the Norwegian Minister of International Development Cooperation is currently (January 2008) reviewing the more than 30 policy documents that are supposed to guide the countries development work. The future of disability policy is, therefore, rather uncertain.⁸

It has not been possible to assess the situation in Denmark or Sweden, as research similar to that used above is not readily available. However, representatives from DPOs in the two countries confirmed in interviews that although attempts were ongoing to mainstream disability, this remained essentially a work in progress. The current modalities of international aid were sited as a major

⁵ A.K. Dube, Trine Cecilie Riis-Hansen, Bill Albert, [Has disability been mainstreamed into the development co-operation?](#)2005, Disability KaR Programme, pp.26-31.

http://www.disabilitykar.net/research/thematic_main.html

⁶ Hertzberg, Anne and Ingstad, Benedicte (2004) *Included In Development?* Report from a follow up study December 2003 – January 2004 of the Norwegian action plan for inclusion of people with disabilities in development cooperation, mss. Oslo.

⁷ A.K. Dube, Trine Cecilie Riis-Hansen, Bill Albert, op.cit., pp.29-31

⁸ Information supplied (8/1/07) in message from Trine Cecilie Riis-Hansen

barrier, not only for disability, but also for gender and other cross-cutting issues such as the environment or ethnic minorities.

Despite the problems outlined above, it seems that national DPOs have been effective, if not for getting what they want in terms of mainstream development cooperation, at least in having created forums that give them access to government and through these they have shifted official policies so that they now at least now embrace inclusion of disability as a basic human rights issue.

Interviewees were asked if they thought contracting out so much of the disability-related work to DPOs had undermined efforts to get disability mainstreamed. Most said that on the contrary, if the DPOs had not lobbied so strongly and taken on the task of working with Southern partners, much less would have been achieved.

Country reports

The country sections which follow have been structured roughly around the interviews which provide the backbone of this report. As will be seen, because the information available varied it proved impossible to provide the same level of coverage for each country.

Little attempt has been made at in-depth analysis of the situation in countries surveyed. This is because the object of this report is limited to extracting some general lessons from the Scandinavian model of supporting DPOs. This, as well as a discussion as to what extent such a model can be said to exist, will be considered in the concluding section.

Sweden

SIDA ([Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#))

Although SIDA carries out bi-lateral work on disability, for example in Vietnam and Afghanistan, and also supports a number of international disability initiatives, such as the IDA ([International Disability Alliance](#)) and [Mental Disability Rights International](#), virtually all of their support for Southern DPOs is done through SHIA.

Swedish DPOs⁹

There is a very strong and deep-rooted disability movement in Sweden, which is part of a broader tradition of popular movements in the country. Although internationally they are extremely progressive across a wide range of issues from human rights to independent living, Swedish DPOs are not oppositional politically, but very much an established part of the social and political structure. The vast majority of these organisations are controlled by disabled people, with funding for many coming from central and local government. Because of this and a comprehensive welfare system, large charitable organisations run by non-disabled people, such as those which have developed in the UK or USA, have played little part in Swedish disability scene. A similar, albeit not exactly the same, situation is found in the other Nordic countries.

SHIA

The Swedish Organisations of Disabled Persons International Aid Association, was set up in 1981. Its aim is to support member organisations' work in developing countries through advice, administrative support and training. There are 27 member DPOs in SHIA. According to a recent evaluation report (see below), only half of these are active at all, most have only limited involvement and three groups account for about two-thirds of the SHIA project portfolio.

SHIA puts together a strategic bid for funding to SIDA, which is judged on how it fits into the latter's priorities. SHIA is then funded by SIDA. Member organizations bid for project funding from SHIA to work with their sister organizations in the South. In this respect, SHIA has a role as a broker between SIDA and the Swedish DPOs. It also monitors and evaluates projects and advises SIDA on disability issues.

The work of SHIA's member groups is essentially around capacity building and civil society development. It is not concerned with such

⁹ Swedish Institute, [Disability Policies in Sweden](#), (2000)

things rehabilitation or service delivery. They hold that when disabled people are united in a common effort they are stronger, can demand their human rights, and thereby be seen as equal members of society. For a full exposition of SHIA's policy, see Appendix 2.

At this time SHIA does not work directly in the South, but only through its members. They currently support about 60 projects in 20 countries.

How do they work with Southern partners?

They have tried to promote Southern ownership and all the documentation has questions to monitor this. They admit it has been difficult to monitor whether demand is really coming from the South. It is perceived that whatever they do to try to ensure that programmes are what is wanted in the South, Northern priorities continue to dominate, perhaps because Southern DPOs are trying to attract financial support by proposing projects to Northern partners that they think will be successful. While their ideal is of equal partnership, as a recent evaluation has shown (see below), the reality is quite different.

They have no field staff in the South. Work is done by Southern organisations. In this way their working methods are distinct from many INGOs that have local offices, staff and more hands-on project control.

Although SHIA believe that leaving real power in the hands of local groups is the only way they can become truly independent and self-sustaining, they are considering appointing an in-country coordinator to support capacity building work in a purely technical capacity.

How does the money flow between North and South?

Each project has a payment plan and money is paid annually, semi-annually or quarterly directly to the Southern organisations. This makes central reporting easier. They are currently considering changing the system to pay the Northern partners. All budgets are totally transparent, so everyone can see what sums are involved.

Evaluation of SHIA's work

Of the four Scandinavian DPOs reviewed, only SHIA has been evaluated on the issue of specific concern for this report¹⁰, that is how partnership functions and how this the work serves to build the capacity of the Southern partners.

The aim of the evaluation, contracted by SIDA, was to “To assess the relevance in SHIA's programmes for development cooperation”. This was further defined in relation to the objectives of SIDA's policy for supporting NGOs more generally. The key issue here is that the work must “... promote the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society that strengthens the opportunities for poor people to improve their living conditions.”

The report is well-constructed, exacting and extremely critical across a wide range of issues. It offers a painful but necessary object lesson on how the best intentions in development can be easily frustrated unless each part of the process is thought through and closely monitored. Of course, we have seen but one side of this question, as we have not had access to SHIA's response to the report.

It is impossible here to capture the richness and detail of the evaluation. It definitely repays close study by anyone with a serious interest in the practice of North-South partnership relations in development cooperation generally and with disability in particular. The executive summary is given in Appendix 3, but the following quote provides a good flavour of the findings:¹¹

There is a discrepancy between what SHIA says, in different documents, is to be done and what is actually done. SHIA's

¹⁰ Cecilia Karlstedt, Håkan Jarskog, Anders Ingelstam, Lennart Peck, [Swedish Organisations' of Disabled Persons International Aid Association \(SHIA\) Activities and Cooperation Relationship](http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=26716&language=en_US), Sida Evaluation 06/58, December 2006, http://www.sida.se/sida/jsp/sida.jsp?d=118&a=26716&language=en_US

¹¹ Ibid., p.35.

rhetoric in reports, handbooks and policy papers is modern, well formulated and easy to be impressed by. The actual development cooperation that takes place does not match the philosophy and shows a large number of deficiencies.... Nearly all the deficiencies we have seen are caused by deviations from SHIA's own documented focus and its own policy.

We feel that this is because SHIA (i.e. its board and staff) has not been given an all-embracing and development-oriented mandate from its member associations. Instead, SHIA has only been given an administrative mandate – to administer and channel funding.

Finland

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Department of Development Cooperation

Finland does not have a separate agency for development cooperation. All such work is undertaken through a department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has no direct implementation role, but contracts experts who work out of the country's embassies.

A considerable proportion of the aid budget (7%) is devoted to disability issues, although it is not clear precisely how such issues are defined. 70% of this channelled through NGOs. This works out as one per cent of all Finnish development aid going to disability-specific projects through NGOs. Of this 50% goes via DPOs and the remainder through religious and secular organisations.

Finland has a strong formal commitment to mainstreaming disability, although as suggested above, this is yet to be realised in practice. Nonetheless, FIDIDA engages in regular policy dialogue with the Ministry in order to progress the mainstream disability agenda.

Finnish DPOs

There are about 70 disability organisations in Finland, most of which are controlled by disabled people. A number of these, primarily the three large impairment-specific organisations - people who are blind, deaf or have a mobility impairment - are major service providers for municipalities. The result, as is the case in other Nordic countries, is that many of the Finnish DPOs are strong and well integrated into the social and political fabric from the local to the national level. Also, as outlined below, their service-provision role feeds through to their international work.

FIDIDA (Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association) <http://www.fidida.fi/english/>

FIDIDA was set up in 1989 by seven Finnish DPOs. "The main goal of FIDIDA is to promote human rights and to improve the living conditions of disabled people in society. Equal rights and participation of disabled people is the starting point of all activities of FIDIDA."¹²

FIDIDA is a relatively small organisation, with a director and three project workers. It helps coordinate the work of its members, provides information and training, lobbies of international disability issues and also implements a few development projects of its own. However, the vast majority of work in the South is carried out by member groups with their sister DPOs.

FIDIDA's most important role (since 2004) is to evaluate proposals made to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for disability work in the South. Among the criteria used is an insistence on a rights-based approach. The final decision whether or not to support a project rests with the Ministry. They do this work not only for DPOs (their own members), but also for church-based or secular groups such as Save the Children. It is claimed that they are considered by all parties involved as being independent and transparent in their decision making.

From 2004, FIDIDA has co-operated with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in so called Quality Services Project.

¹² <http://www.fidida.fi/english/>

Quality Services Project of FIDIDA

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has outsourced the administration of disability specific NGO-projects to FIDIDA. The main aim of the project is to raise the quality of these projects. The work includes assessment of disability project applications, project monitoring and training. This is a pilot project, in which FIDIDA has the role of an expert organisation on disability and development issues. The MFA, however, has the responsibility on decision making on funding and all other mayor issues.

<http://www.fidida.fi/english/infinland/>

Having this official remit from the Ministry and a clear mandate from their members puts FIDIDA in a far better position than SHIA, whose effectiveness, as the SIDA evaluation has shown, has been seriously compromised because of a lack of such robust arrangements.

Another difference with the work SHIA does is that FIDIDA and its member organisations not only do capacity building (about 50% of their projects), but also engage in supporting service provision. This is in line with what they do in Finland. It also comes from the idea that, as an interviewee said, “We feel that you can’t eat rights and a more holistic support needs to be provided. It’s no good giving a person a wheelchair without the support structures which go with it.”

How do they work with Southern partners?

In theory demand for specific projects is supposed to come from Southern partners. However, because funding criteria and the overall goals for development cooperation (as established by the Ministry) are set in the North, it is these which tend to dictate to a substantial degree what gets supported. This in turn influences what the Southern DPOs ask for. In this respect what happens in Finland is similar to what happens in the other three countries.

Implementation of projects is left mainly to Southern DPOs themselves. While FIDIDA or its member organisations may send

down technical experts to assist or evaluate, there are no offices or permanent staff in the South.

How does the money flow between North and South?

Except for its own projects, FIDIDA does not hold project funds. These are applied for from the Ministry and managed by its member groups. How they in turn handle finances with the Southern partners varies. For example, the ABILIS Foundation, a member of FIDIDA, offers small grants (500 and 10,000 euros) to projects started by disabled people. Once the project has been agreed money is paid in instalments directly to the Southern organisation.¹³

Normally the Southern partners are included in the planning process and so have all the application documents, including the budget. The latter may include 10% of administrative costs in Finland, as well as travel/monitoring costs for people travelling to the South. Sometimes these costs cause friction as they can seem high when compared with local prices and Southern partners may feel the budget is theirs. However, funding can only be accessed through a Finnish partner, so these kinds of problems would seem to be unavoidable.

Evaluation of FIDIDA's work

As indicated above, only SHIA has had a recent evaluation of the effectiveness of DPO-to-DPO working. Some general points were raised about FIDIDA's work in the 2003 Report, **Label Us Able**¹⁴, which considered how disability was faring within the country's development cooperation work more generally. They commented:

Disability-specific development co-operation has been concentrated on a handful of NGOs, mainly NGOs of people with disabilities. This has two implications: 1) the Finnish

¹³ For full details of ABILIS application criteria and financial arrangements see, <http://www.abilis.fi/index.php?lang=1&main=3&level=1>

¹⁴ STAKES, **Label Us Able. A pro-active evaluation of Finnish development co-operation from the disability perspective**, Helsinki, 2003, p.45.

support has been targeted at certain groups of people with disabilities, rather than on disability issues in NGOs mainly relies on the capacity of the Finnish NGOs of people with disabilities. Development co-operation also requires other capacities, such as administrative development and international co-operation, and success in development co-operation requires a complicated mix of these (and some other) capacities. It is unclear whether the Finnish NGOs of people with disabilities have this mix, although many of them have learned a great deal during the past ten years. The results of this evaluation, and some others, show that the experience is very variable.

The only other indication of the impact of FIDIDA's work with respect to Southern DPOs is found in a recent study which reviewed their work with FAMOD (Forum for Mozambican Association of Disabled People) in Mozambique.¹⁵ The author concluded that, "There are feelings among Southern DPOs that they are treated as clients or objects of capacity building rather than equal partners." But "...that a shared understanding of the philosophy of the disability movement between Southern DPOs and Northern partners helps to level the playing field between partners while minimising top-down approaches to relationship building." This is an important observation about one of the key advantages of DPO-to-DPO working. It is echoed in the otherwise critical SHIA evaluation, the latter which found that;¹⁶

In those cases where there is a lack of solidarity, this is mostly due to the local cooperating organisation being a state or similar organisation, rather than one supported and controlled by its members, or because there is no cooperating organisation, or that some other party than the association is the active Swedish party. Consequently, the problem is mainly related to the choice of cooperating organisation. In those cases where the local cooperating organisation is by and for

¹⁵ Jubalani Ncube, **Capacity building of disabled people's organisations in Mozambique**, Disability KaR, London, 2005, http://www.disabilitykar.net/research/small_moz.html

¹⁶ Cecilia Karlstedt, Håkan Jarskog, et al, *op.cit.*, p.31.

people with disabilities, there is usually a strong sense of solidarity.

Norway

Norad

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, which had essentially the same remit as DFID, was established in 1968. In 2004 much of its responsibility for international aid, particularly bilateral development cooperation, was assumed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Norad became much smaller and one of its eleven departments principal function is to administer aid through Norwegian NGOs. Besides working with the Atlas Alliance, they also support a limited number of faith-based groups to work on disability-related issues and with Southern DPOs.

Norwegian DPOs.

The Norwegian Federation of Organisations of Disabled People, (FFO) is an umbrella body for 55 disabled people's organisations in Norway. It represent about 90% of the organised disabled people in the country. Their main aim is to serve as the unified voice for disabled people and promote human rights and social equality. The other umbrella organisation is SAFO (Norwegian Association of Disabled - the Norwegian Union of the Blind, the Norwegian Union of Deaf-Blind and Norwegian Association of Persons with Developmental Disabilities).

As is the case in other Scandinavian countries, organisations controlled by disabled people are the dominant players in Norway. Charities for disabled people are not as prominent as in the UK, and religious groups are essentially marginal when it comes to disability issues.

Atlas Alliance

Atlas Alliance is made up of 14 of organisation of disabled people and organisations of parents of disabled children. While SAFO is not a member, all its member organisations are. Atlas was established to

work on international disability issues because the government wanted to deal with a single organisation that could mediate demands. Originally Atlas was service provision oriented, but over time changed its main focus to capacity building national DPOs to work with southern partners. At the moment it also works with one faith-based group.

All work in the South is carried out by member organisations. They submit proposals to Atlas where they are assessed by the secretariat and then passed on to the Board for approval. The funding is then requested from Norad, which has an agreed overall funding limit. It is only recently that Atlas has been able to approve projects without referring them to Norad. Although Atlas decides its own agenda and programmes, they are within the parameters of a 3-year strategic plan agreed with the government that indicates which countries they will work with, expected results, etc.

In a recent evaluation of the Atlas Alliance,¹⁷ it was pointed out that:

Projects are normally planned, implemented and monitored independently by each Atlas member, without involvement of the Atlas Alliance Secretariat. The Atlas Alliance secretariat seldom participates in field visits and is normally not visible to the collaborating organisations in the South. In fact, when answering the questionnaires distributed in connection with this evaluation many of them did not understand the term "Atlas-partner" (meaning the Norwegian DPO with whom they were collaborating). Quite a number of local DPOs are not familiar with Atlas Alliance and its role.

It can be concluded that the role and mandate of Atlas Alliance and its secretariat need more clarification. Some member organisations see it as an "administrative obstacle" and some see it as a "facilitator and service provider". Norad on the other hand sees it as a "coordinating and monitoring body".

¹⁷ Annika Nilsson, Atlas Alliance: Processes and relationships in Organisational Development Projects. Supplementary analysis, Mss. 5/10/2007.

About 60% of projects are for capacity building with DPOs in the South. Other areas of work carried out by member organisations include CBR, TB control, eye-health projects and inclusive education. Involvement in health interventions is significantly more pronounced by Norwegian DPOs than elsewhere in Scandinavia.

Atlas receives most of its funding by being chosen as the 'good cause' for the national fund raising day. This first happened in 1981 and then again in 1991 and 2002. In 2002 they raised the equivalent of about £15m. Norad contributes 9 krona for each krona Atlas spends on projects. The project funds are separate from the Secretariat budget which comes directly from Norad. Besides funding Atlas's seven-person Secretariat, Norad also contributes 8% of the project money to meet follow-up costs on the various projects.

How do they work with Southern partners?

They work in the South both with DPOs and governments so that disability gets built into the planning process and DPOs become recognised as the legitimate voice of disabled people. Their stated policy is not work with governments without the local DPOs, although as indicated below, this policy has not always been adhered to.

It is claimed both by AA and Norad that main agenda is determined by Southern partners. However, as found elsewhere, it would seem that the demands from the South are strongly shaped by the funding priorities of AA's three-year strategic plan with Norad. This raises serious doubts as to the ability of any Southern partner to make a fully autonomous choice. The different perceptions between the partners is set out clearly in the evaluation mentioned above and can be found in Appendix 3.

Nonetheless, Norad was clear that they wanted AA to work to the ideal of the international disability movement's slogan 'Nothing about us without us'. Further, there was a preference from both organisations that the actual work in the South was carried out by the local organisations. AA indicated that one of their main difficulties was in trying to decide who to work with among the many competing DPOs.

AA does not have offices in the South and if someone goes from Norway they work within the local organisation.

How does the money flows between North and South?

Money is transferred from AA to their member organisations and then directly to Southern partner if they have the proper financial infrastructure and reporting procedures. Budgets are transparent as partners know exactly how much money is involved for the project and how much stays with AA. If a group do not have a track record administrative support may be put in for a preliminary period until things are established. Occasionally partners complain that Northern advisors are too costly and reduce the money available for their project. This issue, mentioned above, has also been brought up in informal conversations with leaders of Southern DPOs.

Evaluation of Atlas Alliance's work

Atlas commissioned an evaluation of its work, the second stage of which was published in 2007. It was found that although work between Norwegian and Southern DPOs was achieving generally positive results in, many difficult problems remained. For example,¹⁸

Ideally the local DPOs should be the vision holders and plan makers while donors should be invited to support various parts of these plans. Instead it is often the donor funding provided for various projects that is steering the direction and structure of the organisation¹⁹. Sometimes separate (and overlapping) departments are even set up to manage each donor project. The project funding, where local DPOs must relate to several independent projects, each with its own goals – projects that are neither linked together nor represent different components of a holistic/comprehensive organisational plan – adds to the feeling of powerlessness and dependency of the local DPO, especially if there are only one or two donors that are very specific in their agenda.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.13.

¹⁹ Evaluations of DICAG 2006 and NUDIPU 2004

Nonetheless, it appeared that most Southern DPOs enjoyed good relations with their counterparts in Norway, especially in comparison to their relationships with other donors. This was particularly true because of "...the shared vision of equal rights and full participation of disabled people, the money, the increasing influence and local ownership in projects, the open dialogue."

Lack of clarity about what constitutes capacity building and the different understandings of the Nordic and Southern DPOs was identified as a significant problem. This echoes what was found in the SHIA report and is an issue which need to be resolved before the entire project of supporting Southern DPOs can be taken forward.

The evaluation, which raises a great many interesting issues, especially about the nature of and lack of success with capacity building, concludes that:

... relationship between Norwegian and local DPOs in the South have developed for the better and that the relationships are highly appreciated. However, they are still focussed a lot around funding and around the "Norwegian project". Most of them can be characterised as "organisational support projects" rather than "partnerships" according to the INTRAC criteria.

Furthermore, it is argued that;

..., despite many years of support from Norway the capacity of most local DPOs to be "a strong driving force to reach national development goals" is still limited. In a few cases the collaboration has even weakened the organisation by increasing dependence and initiating projects that cannot be sustained locally.

Denmark

Danida

The Danish International Development Agency (Danida) is part of the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Support for disability projects is done through grant aid from embassies and the funding of both Danish NGOs and DPOs to work with primarily DPOs in the South.²⁰ It seems that most, although not all, capacity building projects are done through DSI.

Danish DPOs

DPOs in Denmark seem particularly well integrated at all levels of government from national to local level. The national umbrella body, the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) was established in 1934 and now has 32 national member organisations. It represents more than 320,000 disabled people and has branches in 97 of the 98 municipalities. They are financed from the national lottery, subscriptions, collections and other sources.

“Whenever the government - national, regional and local - consults with disabled people or wants disabled people to be represented, DSI is the organisation consulted or asked to designate representatives. This is the situation in respect to almost all the Danish ministries.”²¹

DSI – development work

Of the four countries under review, only in Denmark does the national disability organisation directly manage the international assistance programme. All the funds for this come directly Denida and since 2007 their annual grant is stipulated in the national budget. They use this money to support their 32 national member organisations to work with their sister organisations in the South, mainly on small scale projects. The aim is to encourage Danish DPOs to get involved in development work in the South, while also helping Southern DPOs.

²⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Inclusion of Disability Aspects in Danish Development Co-operation](http://www.danidadevforum.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/C91644CF-A5F2-441F-96FB-2C1637149494/0/DisabilityAspects.pdf), 2004. Status since the Nordic Ministers' meeting in Copenhagen, 2004, pp.15-16.
<http://www.danidadevforum.um.dk/NR/rdonlyres/C91644CF-A5F2-441F-96FB-2C1637149494/0/DisabilityAspects.pdf>.

²¹ http://www.handicap.dk/english/about_dsi

On the back of these mini projects sometimes more ambitious projects are developed for which larger grants can be applied for by Southern partners from Denida, either through DSI (which works mainly with umbrella organisations in the South such as NUDIPU or SAFOD), or through Danish DPOs with links to Southern DPO.

They have been involved in this area of work since the 1990s. Denida has done reviews and evaluations of what is needed with respect to outcomes and there is a framework within which DSI sets its programme priorities. These have mainly been around civil society development, capacity building, advocacy, policy development and human rights issues. All of this is underpinned by have an ongoing dialogue with Denida, as well as an annual review meeting.

DSI is also engaged with Danish development NGOs. One reason is because most of its members do not have experience in the field. At the same time such joint working is mutually beneficial because for their part NGOs "...have very limited knowledge about the disability movement and very little practical experience when it comes to disability." For a more detailed account this and other aspects of DSI's work see Appendices 5 and 6.

How do they work with Southern partners?

DSI member organisations discuss possibilities with Southern partners and then the former groups approach DSI for financial support. Although programmes are evaluated both internally and externally and changes made if necessary, in the end it is the Southern DPOs who carry out the projects. Occasionally a worker is seconded to a project, but only in an advisory capacity. DSI itself works only with similar umbrella groups in the South and then primarily on capacity building and civil society projects.

How does the money flow between the North and the South?

Money flows directly to the Southern DPOs. It is a transparent process. Frequency of monitoring depends on how the DPO has/is performing.

Evaluation of DSI's work

There are no evaluations such as those available for the other three countries. DSI's work is cited positively in two recent reports, one on NUPIDU in Uganda²² and another on the African Decade²³, which also mentions the positive contribution of Sida. However, the relationship between these two organisations and the Southern DPOs is not the primary focus of these reports and no comparative information is offered which would make it possible to see whether or not DSI has experienced problems similar those of their Nordic colleagues.

Summary and Conclusions

Is there a Scandinavian model for capacity building of DPOs in the South? Strictly, it might be said that there are a number of different models, as the precise modalities both for supporting national DPOs and for how those organisations operate with their Southern counterparts differ in each country reviewed. However, making such fine distinctions, at least with respect to the object of this particular exercise, would be pointlessly academic. Looking at the situation from the UK, or indeed anywhere else in the world, there is such a model and it is distinctive.

The Scandinavian model is broadly quite straightforward, government agencies fund umbrella DPOs to work with their member organisations in the North for them to work in turn with their counterparts in the South. This work is carried out within strategic parameters negotiated by the two Northern parties. The emphasis is on capacity building and promoting inclusion in civil society, although other objectives such as service provision and health interventions (especially in the case of Norway) are sometimes supported. Most of the work is done by disabled people in the South, there are few, if any, Northern-run offices here and projects as well as budgets are

²² A.K. Dube, *National Union of Disabled People of Uganda, Draft Report Mid-Term Review Of The Nudipu/ Dsi District Based Disability Organisations Phase Iii, October – December 2006*, February 2007, mss.

²³ Anne Thelse Olsen and Bo Synnerholm, *Mid-Term Review of The African Disability Decade Programme*, 15 December 2006, mss.

agreed with and funds controlled by Southern partners. At least this is all the theory.

As the evaluations of SHIA and the Atlas Alliance suggest, the path to achieving the desired outcomes, at least in Sweden and Norway, has been strewn with substantial obstacles – organisational, structural and practical – and the results have accordingly not been very satisfactory for Southern DPOs. The value of both reports is that they provide trenchant insights by being honest about the practical difficulties experienced and suggesting a substantive and detailed programme of reforms. It is important to emphasise that there is no suggestion in the reports that the model itself should be abandoned, but only that attention needs to be given to improve its implementation and realise its vision and objectives.

We do not know to what extent the shortcomings identified in the case of SHIA or Atlas are replicated elsewhere. Even if they were not, as suggested below, a great many common problems in the Scandinavian North-South relationship did emerge.

Position of Southern DPOs.

Partnership?

Although in all the countries the need for equal partnership between the North and South is stressed, as is the primacy of the Southern partners' ability to decide on what projects they want, it seems fairly clear that the latter is seriously circumscribed by the fact that the overarching strategic decisions have already been made in the North. This in turn stretches the concepts of equality and Southern determination to breaking point.

This conclusion corresponds to research done by INTRAC on North-South partnerships²⁴ in which it was found that "The role of the Northern NGO as donor is a major obstacle to achieving equality. The

²⁴ Vicky Mancuso Brehm, [Autonomy or Dependence? North-South NGO Partnerships](http://www.intrac.org/resources_database.php), INTRAC Briefing Paper No. 6, July 2004. http://www.intrac.org/resources_database.php

imbalance in the relationship created by the Northern NGO's control over resources skews the power balance. And further that "... whilst in theory accountability to local constituencies is important, in practice the funding processes hijack the accountability mechanisms and re-orient them towards Northern donors. Northern NGOs assume a control function, whilst Southern NGOs risk becoming donor-driven and distanced from their grass-roots constituencies."

It is possible that the Northern-determined priorities may coincide with the needs of Southern partners, but anyone who has played the universal game of applying for project funding knows how it really works. You shape the project to what is on offer. In this respect while there are undoubtedly good, working North-South partnerships, it would be disingenuous to see them as equal relationships. They are more honestly seen as unequal and even neo-colonial. The key advantage of having this kind of relationship mediated by disabled people is that the sense of shared experience and solidarity, a positive feature highlighted in the SHIA and Atlas evaluations, as well as the knowledge about building a disabled peoples organisation, makes it more likely that the outcomes will be positive and sustained.

However, even here serious shortcomings have been identified. For example, the SHIA evaluation found that:²⁵

Because we see a link between good cooperation relationships and well-implemented projects, the projects could be better implemented if more effort was put into developing the cooperation relationships through planned relationship-building activities. So far, SHIA has not engaged in any tangible work to form relationships. It has more or less been taken for granted that, as long as the parties share the disability, there is a strong cooperation relationship. But working in a partnership is demanding, and a good cooperation relationship is not automatically created just because there is a joint project. There is a lot of scope for relationship-building activities, and SHIA should take responsibility for these.

These conclusions seem fairly bleak, but it must be noted that more

²⁵ Cecilia Karlstedt, Håkan Jarskog, et al, *op.cit.*, p.33.

research needs to be done on the Southern end of the relationship to develop a clear picture of the complex dynamics of partnership working.

Project Funding and Capacity Building – are they mutually exclusive?

The lack of core funding is a common problem identified by almost all the interviewees. It is also a constant theme raised in conversations over the last few years with leaders of Southern DPOs. Money is available to support short-term training or workshop projects, with more or less the same participants often being recycled again and again. But, virtually nothing is on offer to make it possible for the Southern DPOs to implement what has been learned or sustain their organisations. Sometimes it almost seems that Northern donors, whether DPOs or INGOs, are competing for Southern partners to legitimise their own existence, with the needs of the latter being in reality only a secondary consideration.

The foregoing comments may seem overly cynical, but there are sufficiently strong indications from the two evaluations and elsewhere to suggest they capture an important failing in the way aid is being delivered. More research is called for to determine whether the way DPO to DPO partnership working is being structured and funded is effective in achieving its stated outcome of strengthening and sustaining civil society players so they can act to improve the lives of their members, or whether the way the process has developed results in a repetitive waltz in which the same partners whirl around the dance floor and end up more or less where they started.

What lessons can be learned from the Scandinavian model?

With respect first to the Northern end of the model, the central role of national DPOs has been empowering for disabled people and their organisations and given the agencies and ministries access to a unique source of first-hand expertise and legitimacy which they could not have found elsewhere. The close links with the DPOs is also responsible for the leading position the Nordic countries have achieved in policy around disability and development cooperation.

Whether this aspect of the Scandinavian model, that is the core funding of national DPOs to champion disability issues and work with sister organisations in the South, could be easily transferred to the UK, or indeed anywhere else in the world, is doubtful. Because of the very particular cultural traditions relating to welfare and social cohesion as well as their political and socio-economic systems, genuine self-representative organisations such as DPOs have thrived in all the Nordic countries. The same cannot be said for such organisations in the UK, where powerful charities controlled by non-disabled people have been dominant, where international work on disability is mainly in the hands of charities such as Leonard Cheshire International and other smaller non-specialist charities and where national and local DPOs live a hand-to-mouth existence reliant on increasingly scarce and always capricious project funding or, in some cases, service contracts. Interestingly, this means DPOs in the UK face a somewhat similar disempowering funding environment as their colleagues in the South.

With respect to the lessons that can be learned from the DPO to DPO relationship, because hard information is lacking, it is somewhat more difficult to make a fully informed judgement. Anecdotally there is a great deal of evidence that given the choice Southern DPOs prefer working with their Northern counterparts, mainly because of a sense of solidarity arising out of shared values and understanding.²⁶ However, the reports on SHIA and Atlas suggest that, notwithstanding these positive factors, the DPO to DPO relationship has experienced and created many of the same problems that any Northern organisation, whether DPO or INGO, has had working in the South.

This impression was reinforced by participants at a recent workshop in Dhaka on capacity building of southern disabled person's organisations.²⁷ Many of the same complaints levelled at INGO's were made about the actions of some Nordic DPOs. It was felt, for example, that when impairment specific DPOs worked with their

²⁶ This opinion is gleaned from many years of discussing this very issue with leaders of Southern DPOs.

²⁷ Final report, workshop on capacity building of southern disabled person's organisations, Brac Inn Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh 3rd-5th May 2007, mss.

sister organisations it tended to foment divisions among DPOs generally. Another instance was offered of a Nordic DPO who finding it difficult to work with an established organisation, developed their own local partner, the latter which subsequently collapsed. Short term funding, the dominance of Northern priorities and a lack of understanding of local conditions were all mentioned as significant shortcomings. The lesson drawn from the discussion was that the "... potential for greater solidarity does not necessarily mean any greater levels of patience, tolerance and understanding."

A similar workshop held in South Africa²⁸ reached similarly harsh conclusions. It was reported that although engagement was positive with many Nordic DPOs, genuine partnership and collaboration was lacking and there was little mutual understanding. Furthermore, it was claimed that INGOs are often more knowledgeable about Southern DPOs than their Northern comrades.

The aforementioned observations are worrying, for although they are not part of a structured survey or report, they do ring the same alarm bells as do the SHIA and Atlas evaluations. Given the diversity of experience it would be wrong to claim every project or every link between the Nordic DPOs and Southern DPOs conforms to this pattern. Nonetheless, the evidence is sufficiently compelling to indicate to the Nordic organisations that they need to undertake a thorough review and revamping of how they operate in the South.

The main conclusion that emerges from this brief report is that while positive changes have occurred, the methods used up to now by Nordic DPOs and others to build the capacity of Southern DPOs have not worked. The continued imposition of a Northern agenda disguised under the creaking illusion of 'partnership', short-term project funding, differing ideas of what constitutes capacity building and an insufficient understanding of how cultural and social differences between disabled people in the North and South can so easily trump solidarity have all contributed to this failure.

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SAFOD, Capacity Building of Southern Disabled People's Organisation, Cape Town, 4th June – 5 June 2007, mss.

There are no easy or quick fixes, but the critical, detailed analyses set out in the SHIA and Atlas reports can, at the very least, help to begin to chart a new way forward. A central element of any fresh approach must be to put disabled people and their organisations in genuine leading position and to recognise the reality of what are, when all the rhetoric is stripped away, essentially neo-colonial power relationships that block progress and perpetuate dependence.

Appendix 1

Questions asked of DPOs and government agencies

Questions for agencies

- How does your agency support your own DPOs in carrying out international development work?
- How is the agenda and programme of work decided?
- What proportion of your work with disabled people and their organisations in the South is carried out by your own DPOs?
- Do you monitor/evaluate the work carried out by the DPOs?

Questions for DPOs

- How are you supported to carry out international development work?
- How is the agenda and programme of work decided as between yourselves and the government?
- How is the agenda and programme of work decided as between yourselves and Southern DPOs?
- How does the money flow between the North and the South?
- Do you monitor/evaluate the work carried out?

Interviews ranged over other issues, but were more or less framed around these basic questions.

We were able to speak to seven of the eight possible interviewees. The only one not contacted was Denida.

Appendix 2

SHIA • Policy

Adopted by the SHIA Annual General Meeting on 26th April 2006

For a fair world

SHIA's vision is that of a society in which everyone's equal dignity and rights are respected. Realisation of that vision stands or falls by the right and possibility of assuming control of one's own life. Through international development co-operation in partnership with organisations of women, men, girls and boys with disabilities, SHIA seeks to further the cause of full participation, equality and respect for human rights.

SHIA knows that people with disabilities gain strength by joining forces. Together we can present our demands for rights as human beings, and in this way make ourselves seen as human beings. Organisations of persons with disabilities have a crucial role to play in achieving the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of international development co-operation.

SHIA's activity is based on persons' own experiences of living with a disability, and on their ability to plead their cause through their representative organisations. This is vital to our credibility.

Partnership between organisations of persons with disabilities in the South/East and in Sweden is a prerequisite of the feasibility and long term sustainability of development co-operation. True partnership rests on mutual respect, with the partners contributing commitment, competence and resources according to their several capacities.

Many persons with disabilities are among the poorest in their communities and are subjected daily to violations of human rights. With this in mind, SHIA has identified four areas of fundamental importance for the achievement of a fair world:

- **Combating poverty**

Poverty is not an irrevocable fate. Poverty is politics, and something can be done about it. Poverty does not just mean lack of money, food or a roof over one's head, it is in equal measure a lack of power, opportunities and security.

Accordingly, work to combat poverty is not only concerned with development and the improvement of material living conditions but to no less an extent with giving persons with disabilities power over their lives and full participation in their communities.

- **Human rights**

Human rights apply to everyone and presuppose democratic development. By viewing the situation of persons with disabilities as a human rights issue, SHIA challenges social systems founded on charity, inadequate legislation and discrimination. Promotion of universal equality of dignity and rights – based on the UN human rights conventions – is fundamental to SHIA's endeavour.

- **Democracy**

Democracy is not a terminal state but a process dependent on a living dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives. That dialogue depends on a strong and active civil society.

Full participation is a prerequisite of democratic development. In a society characterised by excessive differences in people's living conditions, democracy is a factual impossibility, because large groups of citizens are excluded from taking part in the democratic process. SHIA therefore aims to achieve full participation in development co-operation.

- **Equality between women and men**

Gender equality means girls, boys, women and men having the same rights, obligations and opportunities in all walks of life.

Women and girls with disabilities in developing countries encounter triple discrimination, on grounds of their economic status, their gender and their disability. Through this discrimination they are excluded and marginalised in the development of society. SHIA must counteract

this by integrating the gender equality perspective within all its activities.

This policy indicates the general thrust of SHIA's activities throughout the foreseeable future. The policy is a document which member federations, partner organisations and the SHIA Secretariat must be able to use. It needs to be discussed at regular intervals and also to be revised in response to changes in the world at large and in our terms and prospects of good development co-operation.

<http://www.shia.se/files/SHIA%20Policy%202006%20English.pdf>.

Appendix 3

Executive Summary of SIDA evaluation of SHIA.

Cecilia Karlstedt, Håkan Jarskog, Anders Ingelstam, Lennart Peck, [Swedish Organisations' of Disabled Persons International Aid Association \(SHIA\) Activities and Cooperation Relationship](#), Sida Evaluation 06/58, December 2006,

1.3 The Swedish Associations' Roles and their Contributions to Activities

The main reason for the Swedish member associations to participate in cooperation projects is to plan activities together with their local cooperating organisations in order to share expertise, methods and experiences about how to form, run and develop a disability organisation and its activities. Our view is that the majority of the associations do not do this in a structured way.

In our opinion, many associations have not thought sufficiently about their contribution in the cooperation and how to go about it. However, a small number of associations have worked very actively with this question, so the associations vary a great deal.

1.4 Cooperation Relationships between Swedish Associations and Local Cooperating Organisations

Our assessment is that the relationships are weak in more than half of the 15 cooperation projects studied, which we consider unsatisfactory. Naturally it is difficult to identify the underlying cause of the weak cooperation relationships, but we an explanation may be found in a fundamental attitude in the Swedish associations. The cooperation with the local cooperating organisation is based on the project, not the relationship. This is particularly evident when an association is looking for a party to implement "its" project. In these cases, there is a total lack of understanding about the concept of partnership. Even if SHIA emphasises the importance of the relationship, or the partnership, we do not see much tangible work

aimed at strengthening the relationships.

In those cases where we have assessed the relationship as strong, we have seen the opposite. There has been a deep personal relationship between individuals in both the organisations. There was a very good awareness of who the relationship was being maintained with, and that the relationship was more important than the individual project. An interesting detail is that the strong relationships tend to be where the real responsibility lies at local level in the Swedish association.

1.5 Summary of Conclusions

1.6 Relevance and implementation

SHIA's target group is people with disabilities that organise themselves to improve their ability to demand their rights. This target group and focus is completely in line with the objectives of the NGO appropriation. Consequently, SHIA's objective, what it wants to achieve, is very relevant for funding from the NGO appropriation.

In line with SHIA's objectives, the associations usually choose to cooperate with organisations of people with disabilities. Approximately two-thirds of the local cooperating organisations in our selection are very relevant organisations of this particular type. But sometimes something goes a bit wrong already at the stage of choosing a local cooperating organisation. Schools, hospitals, expert organisations or projects without a local partner are not what SHIA says it wishes to cooperate with, nor do the parties fulfill the requirements for being relevant local cooperating organisations. Nevertheless, they have been chosen as cooperating organisations in approximately a third of the cooperation projects.

In our opinion, not all of SHIA's members accept that the main reason for this is that SHIA's operational objective is to enable people with disabilities to form and develop their own organisations.

SHIA's next step towards attaining its objective is to design specific contributions, projects. When we assessed the relevance of the projects in relation to SEKA/NGO's objectives and strategies, we felt

approximately half of the projects were very relevant. Many of the less relevant projects involved the less relevant cooperating organisations as described above, whose support also proved to be less relevant. However, the projects involving some relevant organisations were also assessed as less relevant.

It is also important to note that if we instead had based the assessment on SHIA's own objectives, restricting the criteria to the objective of strengthening organisations, the results would have been even more negative. A number of projects that did not primarily focus on strengthening organisations would then have been assessed as less relevant.

The final step on SHIA's route to attaining its objectives that we evaluated was how well the projects have been implemented. Our assessment was that only a quarter of the projects we selected had been well implemented. Even if we excluded the non-relevant organisations, where the implementation also often proved to be weak, over a quarter of the selected projects in the category still were weak. These were the projects run in collaboration with relevant local cooperating organisations, but which had been implemented less successfully or poorly.

Consequently we see a falling scale from relevant objectives to a selection of some less relevant local cooperating organisations. The next step is an even greater number of less relevant projects and finally a large proportion of poorly implemented projects.

This shows that there is a great need for improvement. The objective is correct, but there are deficiencies in the implementation.

SHIA's mandate

There is a discrepancy between what SHIA states in different documents it will do, and what is done in practice. Nearly all the deficiencies we have seen depend on deviations from SHIA's own documented focus and its own policy.

We feel that this is because SHIA (i.e. its board and staff) has not been given an all-embracing and development-oriented mandate

from its member associations. Instead, SHIA has only been given an administrative mandate – to administer and channel funding.

Because the associations have not given SHIA the necessary mandate, the office management has chosen to try to make gradual changes. This sometimes leads to conflicts with the associations.

However, the associations have not been specifically asked if they are prepared to give SHIA the mandate the operation requires if it is to reach its own objectives and meet Sida's requirements.

Why is the situation like this? SHIA is a democratic organisation that is owned by its members. If the associations wish to engage in development cooperation with public funds, it is the members' responsibility to give SHIA the mandate required. One explanation is the associations' weak ownership of SHIA. Often, the associations do not see that they own SHIA. Instead they regard SHIA as a Sida organisation and feel that Sida has given SHIA a task to perform in relation to the associations.

Another reason for the associations' weak ownership is that development cooperation is a peripheral and challenged activity in many associations.

Appendix 4

Assessment of the relationships between Norwegian DPOs and local DPOs²⁹

Using the INTRAC definition of partnership the relationships studied in this evaluation mainly falls in the category “organisational support”. None of the relationships could be called partnerships (except for maybe AICB in India). Some of the relationships are more close to “program support” as the capacity building part is a means rather than an objective in itself. This is why the word “relationship” has been used in this report rather than “partnership”. It should be noted that each type of relationship has its own benefits and can be appropriate depending on the situation. It should also be noted that the local DPOs appreciate the Norwegian support and feel that Norwegian organisations are among the most open and flexible, compared to other donors.

When comparing some key features of a full partnership³⁰ with the present relationships between Norwegian and local DPOs, the following seem to be the case:

1. Both parties share a feeling of kinship, solidarity and affinity.	This is true in most relationships evaluated. The feeling is strongest between organisations of the Blind and Deaf. It is stronger when the relationship involves meeting each other as disabled people – not only programme officer to program officer. Federations seem to have more difficulties to share such a feeling.
2. Both parties know and work from a common value base	This is true in most relationships evaluated. Both parties base their work on a strong belief in the rights of disabled people to dignity, equality and full participation. However, there are sometimes differences in values concerning gender equity and democracy.
3. Both parties have a long term intention in the relationship (beyond money).	This is not the case presently. The relationship is mainly linked to the funding. A majority of local DPOs are unsure of the future but hopes that the funding relationship will go on for “as long as it is needed”, while Norwegian DPOs look at a period of 5-7 years, also thinking mainly of funding.

²⁹ Annika Nilsson, Atlas Alliance: Processes and relationships in Organisational Development Projects. Supplementary analysis, Mss. 5/10/2007.

³⁰ Based on the INTRAC definition above and further developed by Swedish DPOs in the partnership evaluation carried out in SHIA, 2006.

<p>4. Both parties have a good knowledge and understanding of each others' organisations and contexts.</p>	<p>There are great variations. In many cases both parties have rather limited information about the political, structural, cultural and civil society realities in each others' countries. Especially the local DPOs in the South have limited knowledge of Norway. Some of the Norwegian DPOs seem to overestimate their knowledge (according to local DPOs). Staff turn over in Norway also leads to loss of competencies in some organisations. There are no general capacity building requirements for staff and board members of the DPOs, neither in Norway nor in the South.</p>
<p>5. The work is carried out in close and continuous dialogue.</p>	<p>According to the Norwegian organisations dialogue is frequent. According to some local DPOs there are delays in feed back and responses from Norway. They claim that the dialogue is mainly taking place during the visits 1-2 times per year.</p>
<p>6. The partners work together to achieve agreed results and assume a joint responsibility for achieving the results.</p>	<p>The Norwegian DPOs provide funding and usually leave the full responsibility for the results to the local DPO. When Norwegian DPOs work with local authorities (e.g. education, health social welfare) they do not always partner with the local DPO. Sometimes there are separate agreements between authorities and Norwegian DPOs, which are not involving the local DPOs. Local DPOs call for more collaboration in terms of advocacy, exchange and networking.</p>
<p>7. The relationship is transparent and trustful (from both parties).</p>	<p>Most local DPOs claim that they feel trusted and feel that they can have an open dialogue with the Norwegian organisation. However, in reality the fear of losing financial support often prevents full openness by the local DPO. The Norwegian DPOs are not always transparent (for example discussing the costs of their visits and asking if the money could be used better) and they do not always trust the local DPO. Some Norwegian DPOs seem to be more controlling than others.</p>
<p>8. There is a diversity and wide scope in the relationship. It does not only concern few persons and/or a few issues.</p>	<p>The relationship involves very few individuals in Norway and quite a small group in the local DPO. Sometimes the collaboration can be described more as a personal friendship between individuals. However, the relationship mostly has a wide scope including support to administration, training, governance, advocacy and networking activities.</p>
<p>9. Exchange of experience is part of all stages and areas of the collaboration, which is characterized by openness and a</p>	<p>This is an area that has been improving a lot during the past few years. This evaluation is a sign of such willingness. Some Norwegian DPOs seem to be more flexible and open to dialogue than others. The present systems for applications and reporting to Norad to some extent prevent the flexibility and risk taking that is needed. Some Norwegian DPOs have not yet realised that the Norwegian disability movement can also learn from and be</p>

willingness to listen and change.	inspired by the local DPOs.
10. Clear division of responsibilities of parties.	This is mostly clear to both parties, as it is stated in the contracts/agreements. However, some local DPOs are not sure of this despite contracts/agreements. The role of the Atlas Alliance is not generally known and understood.
11. The local partner has a clear ownership of and influence on its core activities (vision, mission and key strategies).	There have been great improvements in this area. However, as most local DPOs do not yet have a diverse funding base they are still highly dependent. The donors' agenda will put restrictions and conditions to the independence and local ownership.

It can be concluded that the relationship between Norwegian and local DPOs in the South have developed for the better and that the relationships are highly appreciated. However, they are still focussed a lot around funding and around the "Norwegian project". Most of them can be characterised as "organisational support projects" rather than "partnerships" according to the INTRAC criteria.

Appendix 5

The role of Danish DPOs in development cooperation.

Disability related activities were first carried out by Danish DPOs in the late eighties and caught momentum after the Hanaholm seminar in 1991. A development advisor to DSI was financed by Danida from the early 90s to 1999 when DSI took over the full financing of the position. This initiative led to the first framework agreement in 1994 of DKK 5.4 mill. in which DSI member organisations could carry out initiatives of up to DKK 400,000 for a maximum of four years. Today the mini-programme is in its third phase and has an allocation of DKK 39 mill. Initiatives usually come from the DPOs and Danida use the publication 'The Way Forward for Disability Support through Danish NGOs' from June 2000 as a guideline in assessing the proposals.

Activities in the mini-programme cover a wide spectrum of activities in ten focus countries. An increasing number of DPOs carry out larger activities outside the mini-programme. The Danish Association for the Disabled have just had a third phase of DKK 19.720.485 approved for a Human Rights project in Nicaragua. Muskelsvindfonden (a DPO for persons with neuromuscular diseases) has supported the capacity building of a similar organisation in South Africa since 1997. In 2002 a second phase for DKK 6 million were approved by Danida.

Danish DPOs have received Danida support for activities in Central and Eastern Europe. In Kosovo a Danish DPO established an orphanage for children with disabilities and supported the organisational development of an umbrella organisation for DPOs, which advocated for adjustments to the national laws. All activities has been phased out after the recipient countries have become part of the EU.

The Danish DPOs are regarded as very successful in terms of results and efficiency in the Ministry. If anyone, the Danish DPOs have operationalised the principles in Danida's Civil Society Strategy in their support for organisational development of local DPOs and umbrella organisations in developing countries. They are also seen

as valuable partners for technical input, when designing various interventions. The Ministry generally welcomes initiatives to address disability issues in developing countries. The DSI mini-programme has grown considerably with every phase and embassies have supported many activities. However, it seems that, except for the education sector, there is a tendency for the Ministry and the embassies to altogether leave both the initiative and the guiding strategy for the interventions to the DPOs.

From Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Inclusion of Disability Aspects in Danish Development Co-operation, 2004. Status since the Nordic Ministers' meeting in Copenhagen](#), 2004, pp.15-16.

Appendix 6

The Involvement of The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People (DSI) in Development Cooperation.

(International Conference: „Development needs Participation – Nothing about us without us. People with Disability as Partners in Development Cooperation“, 14th November 2003 in Berlin)

Karen Reiff

The Danish Council of Organisations
of Disabled People

Introduction

The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People (DSI) is an umbrella organization for the Danish disability movement since 1934. The organization comprises 31 single disability organisations. Totally the organisations have around 350.000 members. All major disability organizations in Denmark are members of DSI.

Since the beginning of the 1990's a new actor has emerged within Denmark's bilateral development cooperation with the increasing involvement of Danish disability organisations. The inspiration for this came primarily from the other Nordic countries and also from an increased focus on equal rights for people with disability recognising their strengths and the need for inclusion within the wider society.

DSI has been the driving force in this process with support from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Uptil now 15 out of DSI's 31 member organisations have been involved in providing financial and technical support for persons with disability in developing countries, amounting to a total of 3 - 4 million Euro annually over the last 5 years.

DSI's involvement with disabled peoples organisations in the South For most Danish disability organisations, development work is not considered a core activity however, today DSI is represented in 10 countries. Since 2001 DSI has developed 10 country strategies, which outlines what kind of activities the Danish disability organisations can become involved in. The 10 countries are Uganda, Ghana,

Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malawi, Nicaragua, Nepal, India, Vietnam and the Phillipines.

In particularly Uganda, Nepal and Ghana the Danish disability organisations have established a substantial number of projects with significant variations in size, national coverage, disability groups and development objective, however they all operate under the overall strategy for DSI's involvement in development cooperation.

The overall strategy is:

To obtain DSI's overall strategy the main activities lay on capacity partner building in the form of organisational development, lobby and development of advocacy skills of disability organisations in the South and mobilization of disabled people.

The main pattern is that Danish disability organisations co-operate with their sister organisations in the South. In Uganda e.g. DSI provides support to its sister structure, The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), which is the national disability umbrella organisation or the Danish Epilepsy Association co-operates with its sister organisation in Uganda. The Danish Association of Physically Disabled supports its sister organisation in Ghana etc.

Opportunities:

- Disability organisations have their own knowledge about relevant disability issues, which people with no personal disability experience may not easily be aware of.
- A solidarity and mutual understanding among people with disability, particularly when they have the same type of disability.
- Disability organisations can draw on the experience of their own development such as an evolution towards a more rights-based approach, development of disability policies, networking, lobbying etc.

Challenges:

- Development is not a core activity among the Danish disability organisations and most of them have limited experience from actual work in low-income countries.
- Particularly it can be difficult to work with small and often weak partner organizations in a different cultural context without extensive experience and skills in the field of development cooperation.

DSI's involvement in Danida's Development Policy

Although disability organisations are relatively new players within the field of Danish development cooperation it is evident that there is a good potential for further development in this area. The potentials lie not only in relation to the specific work of the disability organisations, but extend to broader areas of development assistance where the disability aspect can become more visible.

For instance in Denmark's Development Policy from 2000 it is mentioned that people with disability should be involved in development cooperation. DSI has used this opportunity to enhance the efforts for inclusion of people with disability into sector programmes and Danida country strategies. Sector programmes like education, health and recently water and sanitation programmes have been addressed by disabled people's organisations in Denmark. The disability aspect can also become more visible e.g. in humanitarian assistance in post-conflict areas such as Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. In Kosovo DSI did provide support to the major disability organisation, Handikos during the societal transition. In addition DSI did lobby to ensure that Danida funded reconstruction projects such as schools and clinics were made accessible for children and people with disability in Kosovo.

Furthermore DSI did use the transition phase in Kosovo to develop a Comprehensive Disability Policy Framework for Kosovo framed over the UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. It was done in co-operation with Handikos, the major disability organisation and representatives from the different UNMIK departments. The funds for the development of the Comprehensive Disability Policy Framework came from Danida. DSI did also support the disability movement in South Africa during the transition in the

1990's. The disability movement in South Africa did also use the societal transition to develop a White Paper on disability also framed over the UN Standard Rules.

Opportunities:

- Inclusion of people with disabilities into donor country strategies
- Inclusion of people with disabilities into sector programmes such as education, health, water and sanitation, etc.
- Inclusion of people with disabilities with Good Governance programmes, human rights and democracy programmes, gender and HIV/AIDS programmes
- Inclusion of people with disabilities into Humanitarian Assistance
- To use the societal transition phase to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities into sector and (reconstruction) programmes following the UN Standard Rules

Challenges:

- To ensure a continuous dialogue between the disability organisations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ensure initiatives are followed up.
- Disability organisations should be persistent in their approach with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Recognise and promote the UN Standard Rules as guidelines for bilateral- and multilateral development assistance as well as humanitarian assistance and NGO development
- assistance.
- The constant change of staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Lack of knowledge and practical experience about disability.

DSI's involvement with other Danish development NGO's

As mentioned previously for most disability organisations, development work is not considered a core activity. Therefore the Danish disability organisations try to co-operate with Danish development NGOs whenever possible. Danish development NGOs often has extensive experience of development cooperation. They have often build up a good understanding of the situation in the countries and many have in-country offices, but they have very limited knowledge about the disability movement and very little practical experience when it comes to disability.

Recently DSI has been breaking new ground in co-operation with Danish development organisations e.g. by participating in a Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme Consortium. The Poverty Eradication Programme is linking civil society alliances in five focus countries with in a consortium of 13 Danish organisations. The Programme focuses entirely on advocacy and capacity building so that poor women and men and civil society organisations are strengthened in their active influence on official and alternative initiatives for poverty eradication.

It is a major and significant step towards making disabled people visible in development co- operation together with Danish development NGOs. For the first time a common project proposal has been submitted to Danida from the Danish development NGOs and the three Danish disability organizations.

In addition DSI has established a country office in Ghana together with a Danish development NGO, which has now taken disability on board. This is important, because DSI expects it will lead to a higher degree of integration of disability into the general programme of this particular organisation. Danida's Develop Policy encourages this kind of co-operation.

Opportunities:

- Clear potential for disability organizations and development NGOs to complement the work of each other and develop synergy in a number of areas.
- New models for incorporating equal opportunities for persons with disability in mainstream programmes
- Disability NGOs make their specialist knowledge available, while development NGOs give local insight and professional input on development work.
- Effective inclusion of people with disability will give added value to any programme in terms of poverty and gender focus.

Challenges:

- To convince the development NGOs about the comparative advantages by working together with a disability organisation together with a disability organisation.

- The development NGO does not have any or only very limited knowledge about disability in development.