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Trade unions' views on working with donor governments in the development sector

A review of 18 donor governments' support mechanisms

ITUC CSI IGB

Development
Cooperation
Network

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Preface

This report discusses the current dynamics of trade union (TU) support mechanisms, based on a comparative study encompassing 25 TUs in 18 countries[1]. In view of the debate on the effectiveness of international development, and of CSOs' voice within that debate, there is a need to gain greater understanding of how donors support different groups of CSOs, and of the way in which this affects their activities on the ground. Over the past few years, several development agencies, and the OECD-DAC have conducted studies on donor support mechanisms for CSOs, although they have focused primarily on NGOs as the main recipients of Official Development Assistance (ODA) support for civil society. Other CSOs, such as women's organisations, religious organisations, cooperatives, social movements, and trade unions, have received less attention in these studies. This report was requested by the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN), in order to map out and review the international landscape for trade union donor support mechanisms in the development cooperation field.

The report concludes that donors have acknowledged the diversity of civil society organisations in theory, but have failed to do so in their support mechanisms. A one-size-fits-all approach is often adopted for all CSOs. In general, donor control over TUs has increased, leaving less room for them to be flexible and to work on development issues in accordance with their views and requirements. In some countries, TUs have seen a shift from framework agreements or programme support towards tendering procedures or project support (e.g. the FNV in the Netherlands, the TUC in the UK, or the ICTU in Ireland). Moreover, the PCM approach has become stricter, and more top-down and prescriptive (e.g. the Solidarity Centre in the US, ISCOS in Italy, LO-TCO in Sweden, ELA in Spain, and LO in Norway). The changes have been less marked in other countries. For the ACV and the ABVV in Belgium, SASK in Finland, Solidar in Switzerland, Iscod in Spain, or the DGB and FES in Germany, the framework agreement system has remained stable. For other organisations, such as the LO/FTF Council in Denmark, the LO in Norway or the CFDT in France, there has been a transition from a project-based to a programme-based approach where funding terms are concerned.

This report identifies the need for donors to move towards actor-based support mechanisms, and to make use of the differences between TUs and CSOs in a complementary way. Moreover, donors should take TUs' particularities into account, by providing long-term and flexible support, for instance, and by allowing them to operate elsewhere than in the least developed countries (LDCs), in order to combat increasing inequalities in middle-income countries, where 75% of the world's poor live, and by recognising the difficulty of measuring the impact of TU development activities. The implications for TUs are that they could be more proactive in emphasising their specific features, could increase their efforts to create common learning frameworks, and could actively work towards an alternative discourse on the dominant donor-oriented aid effectiveness paradigm.

1 We will henceforth use the term "TUs" to refer to genuine TUs, Trade Union Support Organisations, or TUSSOs (such as the Solidarity Centre), and in one case even to a political foundation working on trade union solidarity, all of which were interviewed in the course of our research.

List of acronyms

AAA Accra Agenda for Action

ABVV-FGTB Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond-Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique (B) (General Federation of Belgian Labour)

ACLVB-CGSLB Algemene Centrale der Liberale Vakbonden - Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique (B) (General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions of Belgium)

ACV- CSC Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond-Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens (B) (Confederation of Christian Trade Unions)

AFD Agence Française de Développement (F) (French Development Agency)

CFDT Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (F) (French Democratic Confederation of Labour)

CLA Collective Labour Agreement

CNV Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond (NL) (National Federation of Christian Trade Unions)

CSO Civil Society Organisation

DAC (OECD) Development Assistance Committee OECD

DANIDA Danish International Development Agency (DK)

DFID Department for International Development (UK)

DGD Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (B)

EC European Commission

EU European Union

FNV Dutch Trade Union Federation (NL)

GUF Global Union Federation

HIVA Hoger Instituut voor de Arbeid (B) (Research Institute for Work and Society)

HLF High Level Forum

ISCOS Instituto Sindacale per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo (I) (Trade Unions Institute for Development Cooperation)

ITUC International Trade Union Confederation

LO Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (N) (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)

LO/FTF Council Landsorganisationen i Danmark/Fallesraadet for Danske Tjenestemands-og Funktionaerorganisationer (DK) (Danish Federation of Trade Unions/Danish Confederation of Salaried Employees and Civil Servants) Council

LO-TCO Landsorganisationen Tjänstemännens centralorganisation (Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Cooperation) (SE)

M&E Monitoring and Evaluation

NED National Endowment for Democracy (US)

NGO Non-governmental Organisation

NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (N)
NSA	Non-State Actor
NPM	New Public Management
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PD	Paris Declaration
RBM	Results-Based Management
SASK	Suomen ammattilittojen solidaarisuuskeskus ry (FIN) Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency (SE)
TU	Trade Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress (UK)
TUDCN	Trade Union Development Cooperation Network
TUSSO	Trade Union Solidarity Support Organisation
USAID	United States Aid Agency (US)

Foreword

International solidarity has been the trade union movement's core principle and mission throughout its history, and remains so now, more than ever.

Workers support the organisation and struggles of their colleagues in other countries in various ways and through various systems of solidarity funding.

As development actors in their own right, trade unions in Southern countries, like their partners in the North, play an important and often crucial role in economic, social, and political development. Many of the struggles for independency and de-colonisation were led by trade unions; and trade unions were at the forefront of fighting dictatorships in many parts of the world. More recently, the Arab Spring once again demonstrated trade unions' commitment to democracy and to better livelihoods for people.

In many donor countries, trade unions have been recognised as development actors, and funding has been made available to support the efforts made by trade unions and their partners to promote a more sustainable, participative, and fair development path. Building effective domestic institutions and mechanisms for inclusive development based on the democratic ownership of policies remains a crucial challenge for the trade union movement.

As part of an effort to support a more coordinated approach to traditional bilateral cooperation, the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) has drawn up the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles and Guidelines[2], and is promoting its Trade Union Development Effectiveness Tool (TUDEP)[3], in order to improve dialogue and shared ownership within trade union development cooperation partnerships.

This report examines the various ways in which trade unions have been working with donor country development agencies, and provides a snapshot of trade union experiences over the past few years. However, due to the pressure of the financial downturn, the situation is evolving rapidly in many countries.

The report draws a number of evidence-based conclusions, which point out the eclectic nature of policies in donor countries, despite the efforts that have been and are being made to come to a better and common understanding of approaches, practices, mechanisms, and tools for increased development effectiveness.

In addition to the surveys commissioned by donors themselves, including the OECD-DAC peer reviews and the How Donors Work with CSOs[4] study (2011), this review focuses on trade unions as specific and unique actors in the development field.

2 Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles and Guidelines, TUDCN, ITUC, 2011
3 Trade Union Development Effectiveness Tool (TUDEP), TUDCN, ITUC, http://www.ituc-csi.org/tu-development-effectiveness-profile.html?lang=en
4 How DAC members work with civil society organisations: An overview 2011, OECD-DAC, 2011, http://www.oecd.org/dac/howdacmember-sworkwithcivilsocietyorganisationsanoverview2011.htm

The report also questions the 'one-size-fits-all' approach, and market-inspired but inappropriate forms of contracting practices, which, in many ways exclude social movements from the NGO-dominated development business, and therefore from support opportunities and sustainability in their development efforts. Its conclusions recommend a dialogue based approach instead of anonymous, short-term and market-driven procedures for involving social movements in development programmes.

As already mentioned, this study is a snapshot; and its conclusions are therefore not carved in stone. They are primarily an invitation to further reflection and dialogue and to learn from one another's practices, which allows donors, governments, multilateral institutions, and trade union partners in the field to share the lessons learned, and to improve the support for trade union efforts to contribute to the inclusive and sustainable development path that we are all advocating.

Jan Dereymaeker

Coordinator of the Trade Union Development Cooperation Network

Introduction

Together with the increased presence of CSOs in the development effectiveness debate, as described in the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and at the Fourth High Level Forum (4HLF) in Busan (2011), trade unions (TUs) are increasingly making their voices heard. This report addresses the issue of bilateral donor-trade union support mechanisms, and, to a lesser extent, the support mechanisms provided by the EU and its effect on TUs' development cooperation efforts.

An initial review of the published research reveals that a large amount of development-oriented research on civil society actually focuses on the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in development (Tomlinson, 2006). This is also the case where the study of support mechanisms is concerned. As a follow-up to the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), and to the Open Forum process on CSOs and development effectiveness (2009-2011), and in preparation of the 4HLF in Busan in the autumn of 2011, several studies have been conducted, which focus on the relationship between donors and CSOs in terms of the development effectiveness debate (BetterAid, 2011; NORAD, 2008; Hedman & McDonnell, 2011; Fich, 2011; Giffen & Judge, 2010; and Pratt, 2009). However, the focus of these studies has been, either explicitly or implicitly, on NGOs, and has somewhat neglected other important members of civil society, such as women's organisations, cooperatives, religious organisations, and trade unions. This report is a first step in filling this gap, as it examines the support mechanisms created by Western donors for TUs involved in development work.

This research has been commissioned by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)'s Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN), with a view to examining good and bad donor practices for TU support. The research builds on an earlier quantitative survey conducted by the TUDCN (2010) among 14 trade unions in 10 countries. The survey was complemented by in-depth interviews, and by a review of the relevant documentation[5]. HIVA, the Research Institute for Work and Society, was asked to conduct the study.

The aims of the study were:

- to map out current donor policies and practices where TU support mechanisms are concerned;
- to identify the specific characteristics of TUs as development actors, and their implications for donor support mechanisms;
- to place the study's findings in the context of the existing research;
- to identify good and bad practices by comparing support frameworks in 18 countries.

The methodology used to achieve this aim initially involved semi-structured telephone interviews

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5 28 interviews were conducted in 18 countries for the purpose of this research.

with representatives of 25 trade unions and labour NGOs in 18 countries, and then screening key policy documents from donors as well as the TUs themselves, together with other relevant publications[6]. The following reports were reviewed in order to capture the dynamics of CSO support mechanisms.

Table 1. 1   Reports on CSO support mechanisms

Authors	Year	Donors reviewed	Methodology	Commissioned by
Hedman & McDonnell	2011	24 (all DAC members)	Screening of DAC peer reviews. 2 web surveys (DAC Donors + 7 NGO umbrella organisations)	OECD-DAC
Giffen & Judge	2010	14 donors (11 bilateral and 3 multilateral)	Review of policy documents, and interviews	DFID
Pratt	2009	4 donors (in Denmark, UK, the Netherlands and Sweden)	Review of CSO policies	INTRAC
Scanteam	2008	Nordic+ donors (CSO support programmes in six developing countries)	Review of policy documents and publications, and interviews with Nordic+ representatives and various CSOs	Nordic+ donors (Canada, Finland, Ireland, Sweden, the UK, and Norway)
Tembo et al.	2007	DFID (25 civil society programmes)	Review of the documents for the 25 programmes, and interviews with country and programme offices	DFID

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6 We will henceforth use the term "TUs" to refer to genuine TUs, Trade Union Support Organisations, or TUSSOs (such as the Solidarity Centre), and in one case even to a political foundation working on trade union solidarity, which were interviewed in the course of our research.

COM (European Commission)	2002	EC (Cooperation between EC and NSAs from 1991 to 2001)	Examination of the financial support for NSAs through various EC budget lines	EC
European Court of Auditors	2009	EC (benchmarking based on the Netherlands and Sweden)	Review of policy documents, interviews, assignments, and benchmarking	EC

The first section of the report highlights the political relevance of the study, and is followed by a review of publications on CSOs and development effectiveness, and of the role of TUs within this process. Next, we present the findings from the primary data, and examine the current support mechanisms used by donors, the level of back-donor compliance required from the TUs, the impact of PCM obligations, and the comparative advantage of TUs over other CSOs. The last section of the report identifies good and bad donor practices, based on which some policy recommendations will be drawn up for back-donors, as well as for TUs.

1. Why examining TU support mechanisms is important

This section briefly discusses the study's key issue, and its political relevance. In the autumn of 2010, the TUDCN network conducted a web survey, in order to increase its understanding of the different support mechanisms used by back-donors for TUs. The survey revealed that there were significant differences between the financial support procedures, and the translation of those procedures into practice. As these differences have significant consequences for the way TUs organise their development work, the TUDCN asked HIVA to deepen and extend the initial research.

Since the AAA (2008), CSOs have been recognised as actors in the development field in their own right. Furthermore, CSOs have come together via the BetterAid Platform, and have established their own principles on development effectiveness, in order to complement the Paris Declaration, which has been criticized for predominantly focusing on donor-government relationships (Tomlinson, 2006: 1; BetterAid, 2011). Multiple studies have been conducted in order to understand current donor-CSO relationships. In general, however, the studies are biased towards major CSO donor-funding recipients and national and international development NGOs, and are donor-driven (Scanteam, 2008; Hedman & McDonnell; Giffen & Judge, 2010; Pratt, 2009). There is also a tendency to describe CSOs as one homogenous group, which may, on the one hand, contribute towards a harmonized approach, but restricts CSOs from taking progressive and innovative approaches on the other (Gallin, 2000; COM, 2002). This was also one of the European Commission's Structured Dialogue's main findings and recommendations, which highlighted the need for an 'appropriate mix of aid modalities () to best respond to the

widest possible range of actors'[7]. Although donors want to support 'a more diverse and vibrant civil society', in reality this desire often does not coincide with actual donor commitments in terms of harmonisation and alignment. This often leads to increased support for well-established international NGOs (Scanteam, 2008: 1). Investigating donors' support for a non-traditional civil society, from a CSO's point of view, as discussed by Tembo et al. (2007), is therefore timely and essential if we want to obtain a comprehensive understanding of good donor principles with regard to CSOs.

This report will focus on TUs as important, but somehow less visible members of the development community. The importance of TUs as development actors lies in their ability to reach out to large segments of society through their membership-based democratic partners in developing countries. TUs play an important role as members of the tri-partite dialogue[8], which enables them to influence legislation and to put pressure on private and public sector actors to respect labour rights, and human rights in general. In addition, their membership of international organisations, like the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) or the International Labour Organisation (ILO) gives them an advantage, in terms of being able to rely not only on a well-established global network, but also on an established legal framework that is part of the UN system.

In addition, given the increased focus on the role of the private sector in development, an argument can be made for simultaneously strengthening TUs in developing countries, in order to enable them to play their complementary role. Finally, the TUs strong emphasis on distributive issues enables them to play a significant complementary role in Middle Income Countries (MICs).

The logical consequence is that TUs are asserting themselves in the development effectiveness debate, as illustrated, for example, by the creation of the TUDCN in 2008, and by the publication of the Trade Union Principles and Guidelines on Development Effectiveness in 2011. The TUDCN has contributed to monitoring the implementation of the Paris Declaration, by developing indicators on democratic ownership (OECD-DAC, 2011). The ITUC also took part in the aforementioned Open Forum process (Open Forum; Dereymaeker, 2007). This report argues that it is important to examine TU-donor relationships, since TUs are a distinct group within CSOs, with particular characteristics and needs. As this study will also illustrate, some of the TUs' specific strengths cannot be fully utilised when support mechanisms treat civil society as a homogenous entity (Thomas, 1999).

However, it is important to recognise that TUs are not new actors in the development field. Since their foundation, their core interest has always been to enhance the overall wellbeing of their constituencies, and they have supported the strengthening of political, social and industrial democracy where civil rights are protected and poverty is eliminated (Gallin, 2000).

7 In 2010, the European Commission (EC) began a dialogue process with a broad group of CSOs, in response to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda and to the AAA. This process is henceforth referred to as the Structured Dialogue (EC Technical Assistance Team, 2011).
8 Tri-partite dialogue refers to the dialogue between governments, TUs and employers. Tripartism can take many forms; however, the key factor according to Michel Hansenne, Director General of the International Labour Office (ILO), is 'the commitment to preserve the independency of the social partners and the recognition by each one of the role which the others must be allowed to play' (ILO: 27.09.1995).

In conclusion, as 4HLF in Busan comes to a close, we are on the brink of pivotal changes within the aid architecture . Trade Unions have 'a major role to play in sustainable, inclusive development and participatory democracy'; therefore, gaining insight into the way in which their efforts can be improved and how donors can help in this regard is essential (Thomas, 1999).

2. The current dynamics of CSOs' involvement in international cooperation

This section reviews the published research on CSO support mechanisms, and places the debate within a broader dynamic, as part of the architecture of international aid. Our review discusses the increased involvement of CSOs in the aid-development effectiveness debate. As will be explained, there are strong arguments in favour of opting for a comprehensive or holistic interpretation of development effectiveness when considering the role that CSOs play in development. Such an approach allows for TUs to make full use of their distinctive qualities as development actors. After clarifying this point, our review focuses on how donors cooperate with CSOs, and on what this implies for their activities. This mapping exercise will serve as a benchmark, against which specific TU support mechanisms will be assessed.

2.1 A holistic interpretation of development effectiveness

During the last decade, the international development scene has been preoccupied with questions regarding the effectiveness or non-effectiveness of aid. Many studies have been published, with a view to understanding and explaining why aid flows have often had such disappointing results. In 2005, the donor community proved its commitment to this issue via the Paris Declaration (2005), which aimed at increasing aid effectiveness by adopting donor strategies based on harmonisation, alignment, country ownership, RBM and mutual accountability. Although the Paris Declaration has been put forward as a document that is applicable to all development actors, CSOs have questioned the document's universality, and have also contested the fact that they were not involved in its drafting (Tomlinson, 2006: 1). In line with the shift in donor policies towards increased government involvement in developing countries, the Paris Declaration is predominantly a document about donor-government relationships (Tomlinson, 2006: 1; Agg, 2006).

CSOs, however, lobbied for a voice in the aid-effectiveness debate in the run-up to the 3HLF in Accra. The AAA (2008) ended up recognising CSOs as development actors in their own right, and not merely as contractors of donor priorities, in line with the recommendations made by the advisory group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (Report on Roundtable 6, 2008; Lavergne, 2008). The need to create an enabling environment for civil society in developing and developed countries was also emphasised. CSOs raised the discussion to a higher level, by adopting a more comprehensive definition of aid effectiveness, which resulted in the term development effectiveness encompassing more than donor-government relationships, and by stressing the

importance of policies and practices (e.g. trade, investment, and agricultural policies, etc.) outside the aid relationship (Report on Roundtable 6, 2008). In parallel to the discussions during the HLFs, CSOs established the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness. The Open Forum is a global process that encompasses hundreds of CSOs from around the world, and resulted in the adoption of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness in 2010. These principles build on the Paris Declaration from a civil society perspective, but also add additional issues, such as promoting gender equality and respect for human rights and social justice. Finally, in preparation for Busan, the civil society community pinpointed four key issues through the Better Aid Platform, which initiated the shift from aid to development effectiveness (2011: 1). The issues in question are:

- fully assessing and exploring the Paris and Accra commitments;
- boosting development effectiveness through practices based on human rights standards, gender equality, and on the Decent Work Agenda;
- supporting CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, and committing to an enabling environment for their work in all countries;
- promoting an equitable and fair development cooperation architecture.

The core message from CSOs is ensuring that the commitments are respected, and that their perception of effectiveness is incorporated into the discussions.

There are several reasons why it is important to incorporate CSOs in the debate on development effectiveness. First, they contribute a significant amount of funding to development cooperation. Worthington and Pippa (2010: 29) point out that the aid flow from Private Development Assistance (PDA) is significant, especially when taking into account that only 37% of ODA actually goes to country programmes, while PDA generally contributes to domestic development programmes and to community-level needs in a more direct manner (Worthington and Pippa, 2010: 30). Second, CSOs have distinct characteristics, which, it has been argued, lead to a comparative advantage, e.g. their proximity to beneficiaries and their ability to reach the poor (Riddell et al., 1997, 2008). Third, CSOs play certain effective roles as promoters of citizen participation and democracy. Finally, they are important actors in raising awareness about global injustice in Northern countries (Tomlinson, 2006: 2).

In order to improve the current complex development architecture, it is vital that all the relevant partners are respected, and engage in the process of finding solutions to the ineffectiveness of development.

2.2 Working with or through CSO: an insight into the donor-CSO relationship

Over the past four years, donor agencies have shown an increased interest in understanding their relationship with CSOs, which has led to several reviews of the issue. As indicated, DFID, NORAD,

OECD-DAC, the European Commission, and others have all commissioned research on the way in which their organisations cooperate with CSOs, and more specifically on the use of various support mechanisms and their impact (Giffen & Judge, 2010; Hedman & McDonnell, 2011; Tembo et al., 2007; Scanteam, 2008; COM, 2002). In this sub-section, we will provide a brief overview of the main findings of these reviews[9]. Before focusing on CSO support mechanisms, we will address the changes in the donor-CSOs relationship and its implications.

2.2.1 General trends in donor-CSO relations

Throughout the international development arena, CSOs are increasingly involved in a structural dialogue with donors. In some cases this process has been institutionalised, as by the EU, while in others, it has been on an ad hoc basis (Structured Dialogue, 2011: Hedman & McDonnell, 2011)[10]. The financial flows to and through CSOs have also risen gradually over the last few decades (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011). More recently, there has been a contrary trend in some countries, such as the UK, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Spain, where the financial downturn and a more critical attitude towards CSOs have resulted in budget cuts.

We will address the following issues relating to the enhanced recognition of CSOs: the selectivity of donors towards CSOs, direct versus indirect support, the choice of intermediaries, and lastly, the independency of CSOs.

2.2.1.1 Donor selectivity towards CSOs

Historically, donors have preferred to support domestic or international development NGOs rather than other CSOs, such as TUs, smaller or Southern NGOs, or advocacy groups[11]. There are multiple reasons for this preference. First, donors have preferred to support domestic NGOs because of their ties with civil society or with political groups in the donor country. Second, for a range of practical reasons (language, culture, and proximity) domestic NGOs have had a structural advantage in their home countries. Third, international and national NGOs have undergone a specialization process over time where project management is concerned, and have therefore often acquired better management capacities, which were assumed to lead to higher efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, increasing accountability requirements could also be met more easily through these well-established organisations. Accordingly, at the

9 CSOs also raise significant amounts of funds independently. Worthington and Pippa (2010) assert that the non-profit sector in 14 countries amounted to a total of USD 49 billion in 2008 (Hedman & McDonnell, 2001: 11). However, this report will focus on the funding of CSOs, and more specifically of TUs, by back-donors.

10 Although the institutionalisation of dialogue mechanisms with CSOs has been an important principle set out by the European Commission (2002), the European Court of Auditors (2009) finds that involvement is often more ad hoc. As a response, the EC started the aforementioned process of Structured Dialogue with a broad group of CSOs, in order to rethink CSO involvement, improve its effectiveness, and adapt EC procedures on development cooperation.

11 This report makes a distinction between domestic NGOs, which are NGOs based in developed and/or donor countries; international NGOs, which have an international membership that is represented in decision-making; and local NGOs, which are NGOs based in developing countries. In reality, these NGOs may overlap: international NGOs are often, but not necessarily based in developed and/or donor countries. Likewise, domestic NGOs may apply mechanisms that involve them in the decision-making process of their partners in developing countries. Furthermore, although the term NGO could be understood as encompassing everything that is "non-governmental"; we understand it from a practical perspective as development NGO. Although TUs have development activities, they do not belong to this group.

European level, the European Court of Auditors (2009) found a significant difference between the involvement of European CSOs, such as Concord, and that of Southern CSOs. A fourth reason is the emphasis placed by most donors on CSOs' service-delivery role (Scanteam, 2008: Hedman & McDonnell, 2011; Giffen & Judge, 2010). Hedman and McDonnell (2011) mention that five times more funds are channelled through domestic NGOs, based in DAC member countries, than to international and local NGOs[12].This historical trend of funding domestic NGOs is getting less pronounced in some countries, as described by Giffen and Judge (2010: 8), who argue that donors are gaining more interest in funding Southern NGOs directly. However, up to now, funding patterns are still pre-dominantly in favour of domestic NGOs (Giffen & Judge, 2010; Hedman & McDonnell, 2011).

2.2.1.2 Direct versus indirect support

The discussion also touches on the issue of direct versus indirect support. Direct support means that "the donor transfers funds directly to the implementing CSO in the South" (Scanteam, 2008: 20). Indirect support, on the other hand, implies that "an intermediary agent manages the funds and CSO relations based on a formal agreement" (Scanteam, 2008: 21). These intermediary agents can be umbrella CSOs, private firms, or local government institutions, etc.

According to the Scanteam (2008) study, there is a trend towards the use of intermediaries. This trend is somehow in contradiction to the evidence provided by Giffen and Judge (2010: 5-6), which confirms a shift towards more direct support of Southern CSOs. At present, donors are pushing for more direct support, as it is claimed that such support decreases transaction costs and simplifies accountability. There are both benefits and risks linked to indirect support. The main benefits of working through intermediaries, according to the Scanteam report (2008), are that this method increases the outreach capacity of support mechanisms and decreases transaction costs, which are henceforth borne by the intermediary actors rather than by the donors. It also makes it easier to harmonise and align support, which in turn makes results-based management a less cumbersome endeavour (Scanteam, 2008).

2.2.1.3 Intermediary structures

One problematic aspect, according to Giffen and Judge (2010: 18), is the choice of intermediary. The main decision factor should be the legitimacy of the intermediary actor within local civil society. Although many donors want to strengthen local CSOs, in order not to work exclusively through domestic or international NGOs, support is seldom given directly to local CSOs. Four intermediary channels are mentioned by Giffen and Judge (2010), including through an embassy or country office, through partner country governments, through national NGOs in DAC countries, or through national NGOs on the ground (Giffen & Judge, 2010: 19). However, Giffen and Judge (2010) do not mention one of the most important intermediary channels for TUs, namely the ITUC and the GUF and their regional structures, as well as multilateral organisations such as the ILO

12 In the OECD-DAC database, international and local NGOs (in developing countries) are placed in one category. A separate category for local NGOs will be created as a result of this report (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 19).

or the UNDP. The Scanteam report (2008) also chides donors for neglecting the importance of selecting intermediaries that have legitimacy within the broader civil society in recipient countries. At present, the majority of intermediaries are international NGOs or national NGOs, which is not always beneficial to the development of civil society in developing countries (Scanteam, 2008). On the other hand, working directly through local CSOs is not always the preferred option, because direct support from foreign governments can undermine the legitimacy of political CSOs or CSOs which work in other sensitive areas. According to Hedman and McDonnell (2011), 20 out of 24 DAC members actually provide direct support to local CSOs. However, the amount of support provided is unknown.

2.2.1.4 Increased recognition versus decreased independency

The increased recognition of CSOs and the translation of that recognition into higher levels of government funding have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, an increased financial input enhances CSOs' capacity to deliver basic services, and helps strengthen civil society in developing countries. On the other, it also leads to increased dependency on governmental donors, and to larger incentives to adjust to donor priorities as a result. This adjustment sometimes occurs at the cost of the CSOs' own flexibility and autonomy (Scanteam, 2008). This potential loss of autonomy may also affect the role of CSOs as watchdogs, and as actors that enforce donors' accountability (OECD-DAC, 2011).

In addition, there seems to be an inconsistency between donors' rhetoric and the development on the ground. Donors support the strengthening of a 'vibrant and diverse civil society'; however, there is a growing tendency to use CSOs as their programme contractors out of effectiveness and efficiency concerns. In general, CSOs are too often viewed as service providers, and not as advocates for change (Scanteam, 2008; Edwards & Hulme, 1996). In Hedman and McDonnell's (2011) study of OECD-DAC members and of support for CSOs, this government perspective was indirectly confirmed by the fact that DAC members mention the following features as CSOs' most important features: their proximity to beneficiaries, their ability to provide humanitarian assistance quickly, and their capacity to provide support in vulnerable countries and difficult situations (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 17). The features mentioned primarily refer to CSOs in their role of service providers. Therefore, although CSOs continue to be recognised as important actors in development, donors have increasingly incorporated them into their development agenda, with a growing risk of instrumentalisation.

It seems that the attitude towards CSOs within the donor community has changed, and that funding schemes have gradually been made available to other types of CSOs. However, in practice, many back-donors approach the funding of CSOs rather instrumentally. As long as CSOs fit into their development agenda and can meet their accountability needs, they are supported. In reality, this often implies that service-oriented NGOs are favoured (Pratt, 2009).

2.2.2 Focus on CSOs' support mechanisms

2.2.2.1 Which procedures are used by donors?

a)   A shift towards programme support?

There is a trend towards more programme support[13] instead of project support in donors' rhetoric. However, when we take the actual numbers into account, it is clear that most funds are earmarked for specific projects[14] (Giffen & Judge, 2010; Scanteam, 2008; Hedman & McDonnell, 2011). The term programme support can also be misleading, as most CSOs still have to specify the projects that they will implement within the programme, which implies de facto support for projects. In Hedman and McDonnell's study (2011: 22), it is argued that the choice of support mechanism should be based on the donor's specific development aims. This is a donor-centred point of view, and risks neglecting the specific needs, purposes, and perspectives of CSOs. However, as shown in the Scanteam report (2008), support mechanisms continue to be mainly donor-driven, with little consideration for the nature of the CSOs that they are designed for. For example, from CSOs' point of view, programme support can be especially helpful for advocacy CSOs, as they have an even greater need for flexibility in a fast-changing policy environment. These organisations tend to receive less programme or core funding than large service-delivery NGOs for instance, which often have a higher management capacity and a smaller need for flexible support mechanisms (Scanteam, 2008; Hedman & McDonnell, 2011; Giffen & Judge, 2010).

b)   Framework and/or partnership agreements

Donors, like the UK, Belgium, and Denmark, are increasingly using framework agreements. However, these agreements are only accessible to CSOs with a certain absorption capacity, which are once again large development or service-oriented NGOs (Scanteam, 2008; Giffen & Judge, 2010). Some TUs also have framework agreements, as will be discussed later. The benefit of these agreements is the level of predictability and stability that they create. In some cases, they create more freedom, as in the case of Denmark. In others, the eligibility requirements are so strict that, in practice, CSOs cannot operate according to their own priorities, as is the case in Australia (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011).

c)   Tender process

A parallel trend is the increased use of tenders as an instrument for disbursing funds to CSOs. In 2010, 20 out of 24 DAC members stated that they had used this type of funding mechanism (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 23). Moreover, the European Commission is heavily dependent on tendering processes for channelling funds to CSOs (European Court of Auditors, 2009). This is

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13 Project support is funding earmarked for specific projects or activities. Programme support is funding for a programme), which usually has a longer term perspective and provides more flexibility as it is based on outcomes and not activities. Core support is one step further in the CSO autonomy ladder, as the CSOs in question can use the funding as they see fit. The reports do not always make clear distinctions in their definitions. For instance, Scanteam (2008) confuses programme and core support, although they are different funding procedures.
14 Scanteam (2008: 24) has stated that two-thirds of all the funding identified in their study was project funding. Hedman and Mcdonnell (2011: 20) mention that project and/or earmarked funding increased between 2001 and 2009 while core funding has remained at a relatively stable level since 2001.

another illustration of how the New Public Management (NPM) agenda is gradually permeating into the development field. The competition that has been introduced is assumed to ensure better value for money for the donor, and to lead to more innovation (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 23). There are, however, many disadvantages for CSOs where this type of funding mechanism is concerned, as it reduces CSOs' autonomy and flexibility, and cooperation between them (Koch, 2009 and European Commission, 2010 in Hedman). Many CSOs are critical of this type of funding mechanism, as it undermines any form of ownership, especially at the local level. Indications that it has a detrimental effect on TUs will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

d)   Self-funding

A final relevant issue in this context are the support mechanism conditions for self-funding by CSOs. Whilst there are good arguments for encouraging co-funding, as it can increase ownership and make CSOs less dependent on donor funds (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 30), it is important to take the different contexts in which CSOs work into account. On that basis, the amount of co-funding should vary; in reality, however, it is often linked to the degree to which the donor subscribes to the development agenda (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 26).

2.2.2.2 What conditions are linked to support mechanisms?

Generally speaking, donors have increased their control over CSOs. Their enhanced responsibilities have been accompanied by an increase in PCM requirements, based on the NPM paradigm (Clayton et al., 2000). For instance, an external audit in the Netherlands concluded that the new co-financing system has raised administrative pressure to an unnecessary high level (Zijlstra, 2011: 12). Likewise, in the case of the European Commission's Development Cooperation, procedures are viewed as cumbersome. However, the Commission, working together with Concord, has launched initiatives to simplify these procedures, forms, and documents (European Court of Auditors, 2009).

This trend has been influenced by more instrumental views of CSOs, which arose in the context of the Paris Declaration. Pratt (2009: 1) argues that donors have adopted a narrow interpretation of effectiveness and that results-driven frameworks have not been adjusted for the diversity that exists within the civil society community. Unfortunately, the studies included in the published research limit themselves to the analysis of PCM requirements, and hardly mention other conditions of a geographical or thematic nature.

a)   PCM requirements

Hedman and McDonnell (2011: 32) have discussed donors' M&E requirements. In this report, M&E requirements are understood as the conditions set by the donor for the monitoring and evaluation of programmes, and for reporting on them.

CSOs generally perceive the reporting requirements to be complicated. Four-fifths of DAC

members require CSOs to report according to a pre-determined format, which becomes problematic when CSOs have several sources of funding that each have their own format. It would make things much easier if donors would accept each other's reporting formats, something that is rather exceptional at present (Hedman and McDonnell, 2011: 32).

According to the OECD-DAC report (2011), M&E requirements are overwhelmingly introduced in a top-down manner by donors. Nonetheless, studies have pointed out that the involvement of implementing agents may substantially increase their use and ownership. (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 33-34).

Other donor priorities that relate to a results-based management agenda are the strong drive for upward accountability to the donors' government constituency and the extensive focus on development effectiveness[15]. Donors tend to prefer results that can be translated into quantitative indicators, and can be aggregated across programmes and countries. Many CSOs argue against the feasibility of this process, and do not adhere to this linear perception of social development, arguing that it has negative implications (Zijlstra, 2011: 14). Natsios (2010: 1) has described this phenomenon as follows:

> *'The counter-bureaucracy ignores a central principle of development theory—that those development programmes that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programmes that are most transformational are the least measurable'.*

Giffen and Judge (2010) also address the issue of monitoring impact, and the difficulties that this creates in the civil society sector. The Netherlands, Ireland, and the UK are mentioned as the donors who impose the most stringent requirements on CSOs in terms of impact measurement. The process is increasingly expected to be based on quasi-experimental research structures, including control groups, and before-and-after measurements, which are often combined with logical frameworks. This trend appears to be driven by a value-for-money approach, where accountability for tax payers' money is key. The Scandinavian countries, especially, Norway, have adopted a more "Southward" accountability, which is 'more focused on development outcomes at the country level in the South', and as such reduces the need for detailed planning of measurable activities (Giffen & Judge, 2010: 13). Pratt (2009: 1) emphasises that these obligations sometimes undermine CSOs' diversity and autonomy. Unfortunately, according to Hedman and McDonnell (2011), just over half of DAC members engage in M&E-based funding capacity development projects (Hedman & McDonnell, 2011: 3435).

Scanteam (2008) adopts an interesting approach to this discussion, by questioning whether

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15 According to an OECD background report (2001: 6) results-based management can be defined as a broad management strategy aimed at achieving significant changes in the way government agencies operate, where improving performance (achieving better results) is the central focus. Results-based measurement is derived from this strategy; it is defined as the generation or supply of performance information, and is focused on the technical aspects of clarifying goals, developing indicators, and of collecting and analysing results data (OECD, 2001: 6).

donors also take downward accountability into account in their managing-for-results approach. In fact, Scanteam has questioned whether 'CSOs are allowed to stay accountable to their own constituencies and retain their legitimacy and integrity as representatives of civil society' (Scanteam, 2008: 37).

To conclude, studies show that there is a divergence between a positive trend in terms of the recognition of CSOs as important actors, and a negative trend in terms of the increased top-down control imposed on them. Although this control is based on increased concerns regarding development effectiveness, the support mechanisms and related requirements are based on donor-driven definitions of the term (Pratt, 2009). Donors lack understanding of how CSOs operate, of the diversity of the sector, and of the implications of their frameworks for the programmes that CSOs would like to implement. Some countries, such as Denmark, have tried to involve CSOs in drawing up their CSO policies. However, some of the studies question whether the Paris Declaration principles' emphasis on harmonisation has actually undermined these efforts (Pratt, 2009).

3. The dynamics of donor support mechanisms for trade unions involved in development cooperation: what does the data tell us?

This section discusses the findings of our research on TU support mechanisms. As indicated above, it is based on primary research data generated by a series of interviews, a web survey, and by an extensive review of documents and studies. This process has enabled us to analyse the support mechanisms for 25 TUs in 18 Northern countries, namely, the United States, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Japan, Australia, Germany and Ireland.

3.1 Mapping donor support mechanisms for TUs involved in development cooperation

The section begins by examining the sources of funding, and continues with a discussion of the various funding modalities used by back-donors. The issue of direct back-donor support for local TUs will be examined, as will the way in which Northern TUs support their local partners.

3.1.1 Sources of funding

3.1.1.1 Dependency on government funding

Northern governments are the largest funders of TU development work (see table 1.2). The majority of TUs interviewed stated that the largest portion of their budget is financed by their respective governments. Among the 18 TUs included this study, 10 were dependent on their

national government for two-thirds or more of their total budget. For many TUs, the percentage of government funding amounts to around 80, 90 or even 100%. This is the case in the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Norway, Luxembourg, Ireland, Portugal, Germany, and Spain. These figures have remained relatively constant between 2008 and 2011 (fluctuating between 56% and 59%).

One group of organisations has a more diversified economic portfolio. The group includes organisations like Solidar in Switzerland, which rely on their national government for around one third of their funding. Likewise, ISCOS in Italy, JTUC-Rengo in Japan, and APHEDA in Australia have portfolios that are less dependent on government aid, which accounts for between 17% and 58% of their funding, depending on the year (2008-2011).

There is an additional group of TUs that are 100% self-financed. The CFDT in France did not receive any government funding between 2009 and 2011, due to a transitional period during which it re-launched its cooperation policy. This enabled the CFDT to safeguard its autonomy during this period. Likewise, the Swiss SGB differentiates between activities that are more or less political. The former are wholly self-financed through the Solifonds organisation. Other organisations, like ELA in Spain, have shifted towards a 100% self-funding model as a result of PCM requirements and conditions.

In some countries, funds are disbursed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (e.g. in Finland and Denmark), through the Ministry of Development Cooperation (e.g. in the Netherlands) or through the respective technical development agencies (e.g. the DFID in the UK, SIDA in Sweden and NORAD in Norway). In France, responsibility for development cooperation shifted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) two years ago. Trade unions were "forgotten" in this shift, and were not recognised as development actors and therefore eligible for co-funding during a two-year period, although the issue has now been resolved. The situation is different in the United States (US), as the main TU actor, Solidarity Centre, enjoys multiple sources of funding, the main ones being USAID, NED, and the State Department, which all apply their own funding terms and related requirements.

Table 3.2 Number of trade unions benefiting from a certain percentage of government funding (<33%; between 33% and 66%; >66%) for their total development cooperation budget during the period between 2008 and 2011
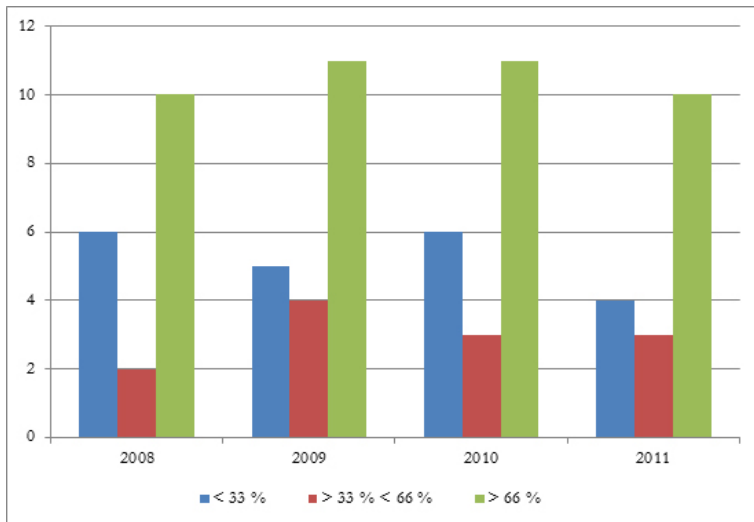
Unavoidably, dependency on governmental funding has implications for TUs. It is especially sensitive because of the political nature of much TU development work. Interviewees provided examples of how their work is sometimes exposed to the political preferences of the ruling party or coalition, or to ad hoc policy making. The influence of social-democratic or neo-liberal governments on TU development work is not as straightforward as one would expect. In the case of Australia, the arrival of a Labour government did result in a significant increase in the development budget for trade unions (from 12% to 43%). In the case of the TUC in the UK, the opposite has occurred. The shift from a Labour government towards a Conservative-led coalition resulted in a significant downturn in funding. However, the trend has not been as straightforward in other countries. In the Netherlands, cutbacks to TU support were more severe under a Left-Wing government. Funding is heavily dependent on the priorities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Development Cooperation, and on the specific political context in which decisions are made. Respondents did state that this vulnerability may apply to all CSOs, as cutbacks in government funding are unpredictable for the entire sector (e.g. Ireland).

The dependency of TUs on government funding is ambiguous. In some countries, such as Belgium, the development work of TUs is embedded in consolidated TU structures, where a certain percentage of membership fees are also reserved for development cooperation. This is also the case in Spain, where 0.7% of the membership fee goes directly towards the development programme. The concept is also being trialled in Luxembourg. On the other hand, TUs may be

more vulnerable, as they find it hard to raise money for their development activities among the general public. This finding has been confirmed by opinion polls on public support for TUs as development actors in Belgium and the Netherlands (Pollet, 2010, 2012). In comparison, NGOs tend to have access to additional sources of funding (such as campaigning), although their dependency on government funding has also increased over the past few decades. The difference with NGOs has been material in the case of Australia, where NGOs have gained more access to external funding (mainly by means of public campaigns). Some respondents viewed this trend as increasing competition for the financial aid provided by the general public.

Box 1 illustrates this high dependency on government funding, and points to the need for a diversification of funding sources. The US case, however, shows that the diversification of funding sources demands a significant time investment, which is pushing the Solidarity Center towards becoming more of a grant-issuing organisation, rather than dedicating its time to its core technical assistance activities.

Framework agreements do not solve the dependency problem, but appear to provide more predictability for TUs. Belgium serves as an example in this regard. In specific countries, framework agreements have provided a more long-term perspective, and have reduced the influence of day-to-day politics (see Box 4). This has created a more stable environment for cooperation, and for the predictability of support mechanisms. A third way, suggested by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the UK is to increase the ability of Southern TUs to apply for funding themselves, so that they are no longer solely dependent on funds raised in the North.

Box 1 The Trades Unions Congress (TUC)'s dependency on government funding in the UK

In the past, the TUC's main source of external funding for its development work came from the DFID. However, the current agreement expired in March 2011, and a new application was rejected by the DFID. The funding guidelines have changed considerably under the new UK Government. Between 2009 and 2011, the TUC received funding through programme support; in addition, it could also apply for support through other funding channels. Under the new Government, the TUC can only apply for funding through one channel, and for project rather than programme funding. As a result, the TUC will not be able to count on any external funding for the coming year, and will be left solely dependent on its members' contributions. This means that the TUC is now looking into alternative sources of funding, such as the EU, but primarily into domestic sources such as Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund. The TUC has had to learn the hard way that strong dependency on government funding can be highly detrimental, if there is no long-term outlook for the funding relationship.

3.1.1.2 Voluntary or compulsory self-funding

Governments demand a certain percentage of self-funding, which ranges between 10 and 25%, for the development programmes for which TUs apply for government funding. In some countries, this self-funding can take the form of the salaries paid to their own staff, and of administration costs, etc. ISCOS in Italy, Solifonds in Switzerland, and APHEDA in Australia are exceptions, as their level of self-funding is higher. It is difficult to get accurate figures, as these depend on the specific financing configuration for each organisation, i.e. whether membership fees are collected directly from members or indirectly through member TUs, for example. This self-funding may be voluntary, as in cases where TUs make the choice to decrease their dependency on government funding, for instance, or compulsory.

In Norway, the percentage of self-funding required for a project or programme depends on the degree to which it complies with the government development agenda. A programme can be 100% supported by the back-donor if it is fully in line with their priorities. If not, a self-funded contribution of 10% is required. Likewise, the Luxembourg government demands a self-funded contribution of 15 to 20% when a project is aimed at one of the target countries identified. If not, the self-funded component is increased to 25%.

3.1.1.3 **EU budget grants: a cumbersome process**

A third source of funding that was mentioned by some respondents was the EU. Although the International Trades Union Confederation (ITUC) has obtained EU funding for its international development network, this funding channel is hard to access for individual TUs. The EU does recognise TUs as development actors; in practice, however, obtaining support through its budget grants is perceived as very cumbersome[16]. This was also one of the findings in the European Court of Auditors' report (2009) on the EC's management of CSOs' involvement in EC development cooperation. The administrative requirements were found to be so demanding that several TUs, such as FNV Mondiaal, decided that the time investment was too significant when compared to the uncertainty of actually receiving the funding. TUs also have to compete in the same funding pool as all the other CSOs, and in most cases the contest is won by those NGOs that are better resourced and have more capacity to invest in the application process. The competition is too fierce, especially for local TUs. In addition, the budget grants tend to undermine the bottom-up planning approach used by TUs, because of the call-for-proposals process, which confines applications to a certain area, leaving little room for initiatives from local TUs.

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16 ISCOS in Italy or the LO-FTF Council in Denmark have been exceptions because they were able to receive funds through EU budget grants.

3.1.2 Funding modalities

3.1.2.1 A shift towards programme support

Some donors appear to be shifting towards programme support. There are, however, significant variations in TUs' flexibility where managing these programmes is concerned. In the Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, Finland and Norway, programme support offers the most freedom to TUs. They can switch between projects, and shift their attention from one country to another, if necessary, as long as the changes fall within the parameters of the overall programme implementation that was agreed upon with the Government. In Germany, programme support is also perceived as relatively flexible in terms of setting priorities. In Belgium, such support is perceived to be less flexible, because the programme projects must be specified in so much detail that flexibility gets lost along the way. For example, TUs must state which activities will be performed in each semester of each year in advance, while much of TUs' development work involves exploring opportunities that emerge, and are often unforeseen.

Many trade unions, however, find themselves in a project dynamic where they have to submit an application for funding every year, and where financing may change from year to year. This is the case for several TUs, including in those in Ireland, Luxembourg, Australia, the Netherlands and the UK.

Box 2 LO Norway's programme support

LO, the Norwegian TU, receives programme funding for a period of four years, for a total of 10 different programmes, which are then divided into several projects. The support mechanism is perceived to be more flexible, as LO is no longer required to renegotiate the programmes every year. It only has to write short programme reports at the end of each year, specifying possible changes. In reality, NORAD no longer interferes in specific projects implemented by LO. LO is free to switch between the projects that it wants to support, or the countries in which it wants to operate. Nevertheless, these changes need to comply with the programme framework and must be shared with NORAD. The only drawback is that it is difficult to develop new thematic lines outside the programmes that have been agreed within the four-year programme cycles.

3.1.2.2 Flexibility

Flexibility is important for all CSOs but is even more essential in the case of TUs, as the field in which they operate is constantly influenced by external factors. For example, TUs have to be able to respond to immediate crises, if labour rights are being breached, or if restrictive labour laws or policies are introduced. The political character of their work is not as straightforward as that of many traditional service-delivery NGO projects. In addition, TUs also have their regular tasks

and daily routines to attend to, alongside the specific development activities that they support. The interviewees therefore argued that TUs need to have access to relatively flexible support mechanisms. Such access may be complemented by additional funding lines that can act as a buffer. For example, LO Norway has increased its ability to react to emerging crisis situations by creating a solidarity fund financed through membership fees, which is independent from government requirements and funding. Likewise, the Swiss SGB has a fund (Solifonds) that is dedicated to more political activities and is 100% self-funded.

3.1.2.3 Long-term outlook

Being able to adopt a long-term outlook is another vital factor for TU development work, and support mechanisms must take this into account. TUs focus on bringing about long-term and structural social change, while engaging strongly with their local partners. The underlying processes are complex, and require significant time to develop and evolve in the right direction. Strategic planning and predictability are required in order for the partnership to bear fruit. The shift towards programme support is a step in the right direction; however, the implicit project emphasis undermines TUs' ability to work on a long-term basis. The programme support that the LO/FTF Council receives from the DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) may be viewed as a good practice in this regard, as it has successfully negotiated a development outline and corresponding development plans up to 2015, and can extend that deadline to 2020.

Another way to ensure a long-term perspective is to influence the government development agenda through various civil society involvement mechanisms. This is a way to ensure continuity, and to avoid ad hoc shifts in a government's development policies, and consequently in those TU programmes that are dependent on government funding.

3.1.2.4 Core funding

None of the TUs receive pure core funding[17]. Most respondents believed that it was unlikely that the back-donor would provide core funding for their activities. Some saw the advantages of stricter support mechanisms, because they can act as an incentive for both Northern and Southern TUs to become more focused, to think strategically, and to monitor the progress of their work on a more regular basis In summary, most TUs that receive programme support are happy with the mechanism as such, but would like to be able to implement long-term programmes, with more internal flexibility and a larger amount of financial support[18]. In fact, adding these features to the programme support process would mean moving to funding schemes that have some ingredients of core funding.

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17 The Solidarity Center does receive a grant sum from the NED (National Endowment for Democracy), but it nonetheless has to provide an overview of the projects that is going to implement.

18 One Belgian respondent was in favour of receiving core support, especially because the DGD uses it for its bilateral programmes. TUs are also responsible development actors, and they should be given the opportunity to prove this to the back-donor and to their constituency.

3.1.2.5 The negative impact of tendering processes

In parallel with the shift towards programme support, there are other countries that are moving in the opposite direction, such as the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, and the US.

In Italy, TUs and CSOs usually receive project funding through a call-for-proposals scheme. The Government issues a call every year, and CSOs (including TUs) can apply for funding based on their own project proposals. In practice, TUs end up writing project proposals based on the Government's wish-list, and on thematic areas, in order to stand a chance of receiving funding (see Box 6). The State Department in the US uses a similar approach; however, as there are multiple funding sources in the US, TUs can be selective when it comes to choosing the requests that correspond to their development strategy.

In the UK, the situation is even worse, as the Government has adopted full-blown tender processes for the disbursement of funds to CSOs. DFID disburses funds to CSOs through a call-for-proposal procedure. This means that TUs have to compete with all CSOs to access funds. They are at a permanent disadvantage in this competition, since they are not as well equipped as many service- delivery or development NGOs, when it comes to complying with the DFID's strict administrative requirements. The main reason for this disadvantage is the fact that TUs have limited staff resources working on development cooperation. This leaves fewer resources available for fund-raising activities, bidding, and administration, in comparison with large development NGOs. In the case of Luxembourg, limited administrative capacity has resulted in difficulties when it came to gathering the requested 15% self-funded contribution. In Scandinavian countries, TUs have been receiving ODA (Overseas Development Aid) for over 20 years, so they are more accustomed to these upward accountability requirements. Nevertheless, TUs have historically been more concerned with downward accountability, which partly explains their administrative shortcomings in terms of upward accountability. In the past, TUs in the UK were able to access funds through multiple funding schemes, now there is only one funding channel that they can apply for in competition with all other CSOs. This development has had a dramatic effect on the amount of funding received by TUs in the UK (see Box 1).

Furthermore, in the Netherlands, the Government introduced a tender process for the disbursement of funding as from 2012. However, it is different to the UK process; there is a "targeted" bidding system in the Netherlands, which is intended solely for TUs (and not for other CSOs). This has resulted in a competition between two unions (the FNV and the CNV) for an earmarked budget, as described in Box 3.

The tender processes adopted in the UK and the Netherlands, and project funding in Italy are described by the respondents as bad donor practices, as they work against the potential added-value of TU development activities. The tenders or the criteria for project selection that are usually issued tend to be focused on service-delivery projects, with a short-term perspective, and inhibit TUs from working within their area of expertise, promoting the Decent Work Agenda,

> **Box 3 Introduction of a tender process in the Netherlands**
>
> FNV Mondiaal receives funding through a four-year programme support scheme. However, as of 2012, the two main TUs in The Netherlands, FNV Mondiaal and CNV, had to compete against each other in a tender process. While at the time of writing it was not yet clear if both organisations finally managed to secure funding, the tender process is a detrimental development, as it undermines the TUs' autonomy, local ownership, and predictability in terms of funding and cooperation between the two TUs, and within international trade union development cooperation frameworks. Treating TUs, and any CSOs for that matter, as tendering organisations decreases the diversity and flexibility of development activities and overlooks the fact that CSOs are development actors in their own right, as specified by the AAA.

protecting labour rights, and from supporting TUs in creating tripartite structures in developing countries, etc. They also undermine long-term strategic planning, multilateral coordination, and the creation of a genuine partnership with local TUs. In addition, this type of support prevents TUs from working on a thematic basis across countries. Framework agreements that respect TUs' specific characteristics as development actors, on the other hand, can be seen as good practices.

3.1.2.6 The benefits of framework agreements

In some countries, such as Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, TUs have partnership or framework agreements with the government[19]. These agreements can be specifically designed for TUs, as in Belgium and the Netherlands, or more generally for all major CSOs, as in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. The TUs that fall under a general CSO framework argue that working under one framework increases the chance of cooperation between different actors, if the TUs are part of the negotiations when the framework is designed, while enough emphasis can be placed on the framework to make it compatible with their development approach. The advantage of framework or partnership agreements is that they create stability in the relationship between the donor and the TUs. Within the framework, clear goals and responsibilities are outlined, which are binding on all parties, and based on mutually agreed guidelines. The agreements seldom entail detailed support mechanism procedures, but they do make it more difficult for the donor to impose ad hoc regulations or changes to the nature of the funding unilaterally. The German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung is a good example: it is recognised as a political foundation (with a strong social-democratic background, resulting in a significant emphasis on trade union work) through a legal framework that ensures stable funding over the years.

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19 An important nuance is the timeframe of the framework agreement. For instance in Sweden, the agreement needs to be renegotiated together with the financial agreement, leading to more uncertainty in funding.

Most of the TUs that we interviewed mentioned the lack of knowledge about TU structures and development activities within government development departments. Including the TUs' particular viewpoint on development issues within the framework could increase the general understanding of what they actually do and the value that they add, compared with other CSO efforts.

However, this argument also holds true in the other direction. Many trade unions have only recently become active in the development cooperation field, which means that they lack the experience and professional scale to have access to framework agreement negotiations. In the case of France, for instance, organisations need to have a minimum budget of EUR 1.5 million to be able to apply for framework agreements. Size is also an issue in the case of Australia.

Box 4 The TU framework agreement in Belgium

In Belgium the three major TUs (the ACV-CSC, the ABVV-FGTB and the ACLVB-CGSLB) negotiated and signed an agreement with the Government in 2007, which provides for a five-year framework for TU development work. Under this agreement, each partner's goals and responsibilities are clearly stated, as is the total amount of funding that the TUs can expect, and the way in which it will be divided among them. This framework can be used as a reference point during negotiations with the Government and is not subject to political volatility due its long timeframe. The Government is prevented from making unilateral decisions and has to discuss policy changes with the three TUs.

Italy is currently engaged in a process of creating a civil society framework for government funding, based on good practices in other countries. If this so-called "institutional table" succeeds, it would significantly improve the predictability of TU support, which is currently heavily influenced by the volatile political landscape in Italy.

3.1.3 Decentralisation of support towards local TUs

In line with international trends towards decentralised cooperation, embassies from donor countries have been given more autonomy to support local CSOs. In general, the respondents stated that this has not yet systematically been the case for TU development activities, or has only been the case for limited budgets. One of the organisations that we interviewed described a limited "public relations budget" for the embassies. However, there are signs that this practice is in the pipeline at ministerial headquarters in some countries, while it is already the trend in the US. USAID channels a large part of its budget directly to organisations in the South, based on the argument that it enhances cost-effectiveness and sustainability (e.g. through the organisations executing the project management themselves). The UK, Ireland, and Germany also provide direct support to Southern CSOs. However, almost all TUs are opposed to this trend.

First, the political nature of TU activities makes direct back-donor support problematic. If a local TU is known to be supported directly by a Northern back-donor, its autonomy and legitimacy could be severely undermined. In Zimbabwe, for example, this has led to the oppression of some TUs, as they were perceived as Western puppets by the ruling party. Direct support for TUs could also be used as a political tool by the back-donor, in order to pursue their foreign policy, while overlooking the priorities of local TUs. Conversely, sensitive funding to TUs could be cut, out of concern for the business interests of companies from the donor country.

In addition, many respondents mentioned the lack of TU know-how at embassy and government level. One respondent stated that only TUs can support other TUs, as their way of operating is so specific. TUs are also part of a larger international structure, and if all back-donors support TUs directly through their embassies, it will become increasingly difficult to create an international TU strategy.
A final concern is the fact that local TUs will have to adhere to all the donor requirements that are currently met by Northern countries' intermediaries. This could ultimately result in local TUs being driven by subsidy logic. They could end up becoming efficient recipients of aid, but stop focusing on their actual priority, namely, defending the rights of their members.

3.1.4 How do TUs support their partners?

Results on the issue of direct support versus support through intermediary mechanisms are ambiguous. In some countries, governments do not define the criteria for working with intermediary structures. This has been the case in Australia, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany and Luxembourg. However, the research noted that for some countries, there seems to be a shift from funding TUs in the South through international or regional TU structures, towards the renationalisation of TU support. This means an increased focus on direct funding from the Northern national TU to the Southern TU. This is remarkable because there seems to be international recognition that Northern TUs could be more effective if they pooled their support for the organisations that they support in the South. In addition, some labour rights issues are better dealt with at a regional or international level. The shift towards direct, bilateral funding seems to be driven by three factors[20].

The first driver relates to questions around the value-added of intermediary organisations. Some Northern TUs believe that working with intermediaries, like GUFs, results in additional transaction costs, while working directly increases the negotiation room with local partners and, to a certain extent, control over those partners. The second driver results from the accountability agenda of the back-donors, who increasingly want to be able to see measurable results, which are found to be easier to demonstrate in one-to-one partnerships. Third, back-donor policies may force TUs to work directly with partners in developing countries, because a thematic approach across countries is not accepted. This is another illustration of the fact that back-donors tend to enforce practices in line with their own accountability concerns instead of taking into account what is actually the most beneficial way of operating.

20 Sweden is an exception, as the country still mainly supports international intermediaries such as the GUFs and the ITUC, despite criticism from SIDA regarding the amount of money going to Geneva and Brussels.

However, many respondents argued that, in the context of the global labour market, an approach that is coordinated at a regional or international level is more advisable. The LO/FTF Council, in Denmark, is an alternative example of how decisions regarding direct or indirect support can be made (see Box 5).

Box 5 The LO/FTF Council's contextual analysis approach

The LO/FTF Council, a TU in Denmark, bases its decisions on whether to work directly or through intermediaries on a contextual analysis of every country. This contextual analysis aims to map the relevant (local, regional and international) TU organisations on the ground, and to assess the most appropriate partner for the specific project in mind. By adopting this approach the Council does not blindly adhere to donor wishes, or to transaction cost concerns. In contrast, the LO/FTF Council tries to take into account the best way of operating on the ground, in order to achieve the desired results.

3.2 Compliance with governments' development agendas

This section addresses the level of back-donor influence on the thematic and geographic orientation of TU projects and programmes. To what extent are TUs currently thematically and geographically restricted and what does this imply for the effectiveness of their development work?

3.2.1 Compliance with governments' development agendas

In most countries, there is an implicit incentive to comply with the government development agenda, as it increases the funding possibilities for TUs. TUs are not always obliged to follow the agenda or thematic priorities exactly, but often end up aligning themselves with them in order to increase their chances of funding[21]. Such behaviour tends to be the case in countries with programme support mechanisms, such as Norway, Denmark and Belgium. The Spanish ELA calls this phenomenon a reformulation of their own priorities in a language that is more acceptable for governments (e.g. trade union support is formulated as 'democratisation' or training for trade union leaders as 'professional training'). Likewise, in the case of Australia, trade union support or political work are not part of the government development agenda; therefore alternative ways are sought to support trade unions in the South, such as working on sexual harassment on the shop floor, or on the organisation of cooperatives, etc.

Although there are no real thematic limitations in most countries, some TUs do find that they are implicitly pushed towards incorporating many additional cross-sector themes, such as gender equality, environmental issues, HIV/AIDS and other topics in all their programmes, although the opportunities to do so may differ greatly from project to project. Some TUs think that governments

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21 This does not mean that development actors follow the government agenda blindly or uncritically. There is still a margin for dialogue and criticism.

should not expect all CSOs to commit to all these issues, but suggest an actor-based approach, acknowledging that certain CSOs are better, for example, at integrating environmental issues, while others are better at supporting gender equality (see Box 7).

In countries where tender processes or project funding has been introduced (the UK, the Netherlands, and the US), or where funding is dependent on EU calls for proposals, as in the case of ISCOS, in Italy, the requirement to comply with the government (or EU) development agenda is more explicit because the procedures include many specifications and conditions regarding what can and cannot be funded. In some cases, the tender and project support processes have forced TUs into a narrow service-delivery role that conflicts, to some extent, with the genuine nature of TU development work, which is concerned with much broader political and social issues (see Box 6).

Box 6 Project support in Italy

The project funding mechanism in Italy has forced ISCOS into a service-delivery role. The Government has a conservative idea of development work, and mainly supports projects in the health and education field. ISCOS is required to draw up its project proposals in line with these priorities, in order to have any chance of receiving funding. ISCOS, like other TUs, has nonetheless managed to work around this limitation by describing their projects as vocational training activities, for example, although they are actually capacity development initiatives. Although effective, these TU survival strategies are not sustainable, and inhibit strategic planning.

Other TUs view complying with these back-donor conditions as less problematic, since they argue that these issues are important enough to be taken into account by every development actor. The Decent Work Agenda that has been developed and promoted by the ILO, and that is now generally accepted and promoted by the TU movement, has provided TUs with a sound framework in which to position additional government development priorities. From this perspective, the Decent Work Agenda enables TUs to adhere to government priorities without losing their own insight into these issues. Accordingly, in the case of Luxembourg, working on the issue of social dialogue in the South falls under the development agenda. In Germany, meanwhile, trade union work is recognised as essential to the democratisation process. This is also the case for the NED in the US, a foundation funded by the US Congress that supports democratization processes in the South, and recognizes the role of TUs therein.

A further step is the full recognition of non-governmental actors as complementary to the government's approach. This has been the case in Switzerland, where development organisations have perceived that their Ministry is very open to giving direction to self- development programmes, without them having to comply with the government development agenda.

In cases where TUs have been involved in drawing up the development agenda, complying with the government agenda becomes less problematic. This has been the case in the Scandinavian countries or in France, where trade unions have been consulted regarding the drafting of the framework document on development cooperation (Coopération au développement: une vision française - 2011). Moreover, in the case of Luxembourg, trade unions, the private sector and the NGO sector participated alongside the ministries involved in Lux-Development, the Luxembourg agency for development cooperation. Likewise, the Australian government consulted a broad range of civil society organisations when reviewing its development policy. Meanwhile, the 'Consejo de Cooperación' is the official participatory mechanism for channelling the opinions of Spanish civil society on its governmental development policy. Trade unions are not in the NGO group, but participate as separate category.

Consultation often takes place on more general terms, i.e. on long-term priorities rather than on more specific issues like implementation, reporting, or funding mechanisms.

3.2.2 Alternatives to the current practice

In response to most back-donors' one-size-fits-all approach to CSOs, TUs would like to see a transition towards an actor-based approach to development cooperation. This implies recognising the particularities and added-value of different CSOs, and adapting support mechanisms in accordance with this diversity. An actor-based approach entails more than separate TU funding channels, as in Belgium and the Netherlands. The donor's requirements and expectations should be adapted to the differences and specific features that exist within the large group of CSOs (TUDCN, 2011).

TUs are relatively new actors in the development debate, compared with the more established NGOs. As a consequence, they are confronted with funding procedures that are primarily oriented towards the needs of specialised development NGOs. However, there is increasing recognition of the particular role that trade unions play in development. Trade unions have something to offer that often cannot be provided by NGOs. Whereas in some countries trade unions are recognised as essential actors in democratisation processes, in others it is precisely this more political nature that hampers their access to funding. Trade unions can rely on stable world-wide networks, which involve not only partners in the South, but also global and regional federations. Furthermore, the existence of an organisation like the International Labour Organisation, which is part of the United Nations and has a body of legal instruments at its disposal, is perceived as added-value that is contributed by the labour movement to international development cooperation. In addition, the expertise of trade unions regarding important development issues, such as social protection, informal employment, international trade integration, and governance, etc. should be recognised.

In some countries, like Switzerland or Portugal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not the sole Ministry that has a budget for development cooperation; other ministries, such as the Ministries of the Economy or Labour also have budgets, and sometimes provide specific funding that

can be used for development-related activities. Where these more specific budget grants are concerned, trade unions may have an advantage compared with other NGOs. Furthermore, for the Ministry of Labour, complying with the government agenda is less of an issue. The importance of social dialogue, tripartism, or decent work is not questioned.

Finland can be seen as a good example where recognising the diversity of civil society is

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Box 7 Diversity of CSOs in Finland

In Finland, the diversity of civil society is recognised and applauded by the Government, and SASK is encouraged to be complementary to other CSOs in terms of their area of expertise. The Government does not encourage all CSOs to be active in the same fields and countries, but seeks to increase the impact of its development work by using diversity within civil society in an effective way. SASK's expertise is respected, as TU development activities are almost entirely conducted through the organisation. In addition the donor has accepted its four main goals: organisational development, collective bargaining, ILO core labour standards and TUs as actors in civil society. These particularities are acknowledged by the Government and by other CSOs, which enables the forming of alliances based on mutually recognised complementarity. SASK has become a pioneer in forging effective alliances with other CSOs, based on a shared agenda, while representing different constituencies and using their specific area of expertise.

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concerned (see Box 7).

3.2.3 Geographical limitations

Geographical conditions tend to pose even more problems for TUs than thematic ones[22]. There is a general trend towards limiting the number of countries in which CSOs that are funded by a specific donor are allowed to operate. These countries include many LDCs (Least Developed Countries) or fragile states, since the focus of many governments is on poverty reduction. In Denmark, there is a GNP ceiling, with which CSOs must comply (see Box 8). The emphasis on working in LDCs has implications for TU development activities. Generally, TU development projects require a certain level of economic momentum in order to have a positive impact, as they are based on redistribution mechanisms. One respondent used the following metaphor: "In order to divide a cake, one must have a cake, and in LDCs and fragile states, the cake simply is not there". In line with recent concerns that 72% of the world's poor live in middle-income

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22 Sweden and Germany are striking exceptions, where TUs do not face geographical restrictions.

countries (MICs), it makes even less sense to restrict TUs to working in LDCs (Sumner, 2010). A framework agreement that entails a negotiated list of countries where TUs can operate could provide a solution for this problem. It would restrict the government from making unilateral decisions on this issue, and gives the TUs an opportunity to prove the importance of not only focusing on LDCs or fragile states. TUs should be perceived as complementary to the NGOs that focus on service delivery in the poorest countries.

3.3 Assessing PCM requirements

3.3.1 The hegemony of logical frameworks

In all countries, except for the Netherlands and Australia in the recent past, and for some experimentation in Belgium, TUs use logical frameworks as a project-cycle management (PCM) tool. FNV Mondiaal uses outcome mapping as a PCM tool. Belgium is experimenting with outcome mapping, while in Australia, TUs are relatively free to develop their own PCM tools. For instance, Australia's APHEDA enters into mutual agreements rather than donor-recipient agreements. The logical framework as such has been accepted by TUs, not with much enthusiasm, but rather as an instrument that can facilitate planning. Some TUs, like the LO/FTF Council in Denmark, genuinely think that it is good tool, which offers sufficient flexibility. Others, such as the ACLVB-CGSLB in Belgium, are getting used to working with it, and are trying to make it work in their partners' context.

On the other hand, some TUs have criticised the blueprint approach that back-donors use where PCM requirements are concerned. The fact that most back-donors do not have any understanding of TU development work has implications for the PCM obligations that they impose. The long-term outlook and complex nature of TU development activities is insufficiently recognised by the majority of donors. In the case of the German FES for instance, indicators have to be designed over a period of three years. As TUs work in fast-changing social and political environments,

such a static model has its limits when reflecting the reality of a project. Likewise, Germany applies an obligatory bidding procedure for external contracting. In some cases, this creates additional administrative work without clear added-value. An overstated orientation towards results and impact assessment in a narrow technical sense might not be adequate for political activities and institutional partnerships.

In most countries, back-donors are unable to establish clear criteria regarding PCM requirements. In some cases, TUs would prefer to have clear and transparent criteria that provide more certainty on donor standards. Enjoying a misleading level of freedom, which is ultimately restricted by numerous amendments made by the donor, is counter-productive (see Box 9). In those cases where donors are more open to a diversity of PCM approaches, such flexibility is welcomed, as it gives TUs the autonomy to develop their own methods. A case in point is the Australian example, where the Government does not apply a fixed format, but accepts a PCM approach that

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Box 9 Unclear donor PCM requirements in Sweden

SIDA has required TUs to draw up a results matrix since 2009, but has failed to clearly state what kind of results matrix it specifically expects. When the TUs hand in their results matrix, based on their understanding of what it should entail, they may end up receiving it back because it is said not to meet SIDA's standards. Therefore, clarifying the standards of the results matrix ex-ante would avoid organisations doing the same work twice.

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is mutually agreed between trade unions and their partners in developing countries.

The study concludes that, overall, reporting obligations have gradually been relaxed in Scandinavian countries. Instead of having to write detailed project reports every year for all their projects, TUs have to write small programme reports, focusing on the changes that have occurred. This has been made possible by the implementation of stricter application formats, where TUs have to specify their aims in detail, and how they will achieve them. Most TUs prefer to write one substantive programme proposal that focuses on results, because it subsequently gives them more freedom to achieve these results, as back-donors do not follow up administratively on every single activity that they engage in. Compared with their Scandinavian partners, who are adopting a more results-based approach, Belgian back-donors still work with activity-oriented support mechanisms, despite theoretically claiming the opposite.

FNV Mondiaal in the Netherlands is currently experimenting with outcome mapping as a PCM tool, as it feels that it is better equipped to capture social change processes. In the field of TU development work, activity A does not necessarily lead to activity B, while logical frameworks implicitly build on this assumption. For instance, it is difficult to track the impact of creating of a social dialogue structure on the financial situation and the broader livelihoods of its workers in a country. This is

due to the existence of multiple external factors that affect the social dialogue dynamic, together with a range of factors influencing the livelihoods of workers. It seems as though some TUs are

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Box 10 Open dialogue on PCM in Switzerland

"The challenge for us and our government is how to translate the developments of a cooperation programme into visible results for the public." The Swiss Solidar organisation has entered into a dialogue with the Swiss Government, in order to share experience and instruments for measuring the impact of complex societal processes. It is not a kind of competition between approaches, nor is there any pressure or demands from the Government. Development organisations can use their own reporting formats. However, this engagement in open dialogue is the result of both civil society organisations and governments being confronted by the challenge of demonstrating results from complex processes like political work, campaigning, or trade union development.

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not aware of alternative PCM approaches, and have left the logical framework unquestioned, possibly for compliance purposes.

3.3.2 The quest for results

The most problematic issue in the field of PCM is the over-emphasis on, and the implementation of certain aspects of the results based-management agenda. The fact that measuring the impact of TU development activities is not straightforward lies at the heart of this problem. As indicated above, the issues of attribution and contribution pose methodological and ethical difficulties, while TU activities are affected by many external factors, which can make showing the genuine impact of an activity problematic. In most countries, back-donors tend to prefer quantitative results indicators, which are even more difficult to design if they have to capture the genuine impact of a project (see Box 10). In addition, donors increasingly desire short-term results indicators for accountability reasons, which runs counter to the long-term outlook of most TU initiatives.

In addition, trade unions often work on complex societal phenomena such as democratisation, the strengthening of civil society, or political projects that are often difficult to express in terms of quantitative indicators. Some TUs try to illustrate the impact of complex societal problems by not only including qualitative indicators, but also by providing detailed narratives of how their programmes are impacting on the lives of workers.

Some TUs, however, stressed the fact that this phenomenon is not limited to the field of TU development work, but that all CSOs have to deal with these obligations. Human rights advocacy groups might even find living up to the donor's expectations more difficult than TUs.

3.3.2.1 The implications of these requirements for local TUs and TU activities on the ground

The RBM requirements are even more burdensome for local TUs, as they often lack the capacity to comply with these increasingly stringent obligations. In extreme cases, local TUs increasingly have to dedicate more time to trying to fulfil the administrative wishes of back-donors, thereby diverting their attention from the correct implementation of their projects. To support their partners, Northern TUs are forced to invest more attention in building M&E capacity than in core TU activities.

However, the study notes that there are several initiatives within the TU movement aimed at dealing with the increasing demands to demonstrate results at an international level, in order to avoid putting the full burden solely on their partners in the field. For example, TUs are trying to create generic TU impact indicators that can be used by their partners. One good practice from Denmark is the creation of a joint civil society working group that is trying to tackle the issue of how to report on the effects of the Danish Civil Society Strategy. At the international level, the TUDCN (ITUC) is also launching a process focusing on this area, with the aim of arriving at specific, appropriate, and contextualised measurements of outcomes and impact.

3.3.2.2 The need for mutual learning structures

The research has pointed out that, while project management poses challenges to most TUs, some Northern and Southern TUs are more comfortable with PCM and RBM obligations than others. TUs that have experience of these issues do not take enough initiative in sharing best practices. Although examples of this kind of peer-to-peer cooperation effort have brought about positive results, TUs do not currently make enough use of them. Many TUs also emphasised

the importance of working together with NGOs on these issues, as they are generally more experienced with such RBM requirements. Generally speaking, TUs have acknowledged the need to become more specialized development actors, and an important phase in this transition is increased cooperation between various CSOs. In Switzerland, this concept of peer-to-peer cooperation is taking shape through the promotion of networking and working through consortia. Another interesting experience is that of Luxembourg, where the development NGO platform

screens the projects that are presented to the Government for funding. When a project meets government standards, it receives a certificate of compliance. In other words, this is an internal peer review system, which appears to be a good way of exchanging professional skills among the development actors involved.

Conclusions

Generally speaking, back-donors have become more open towards TUs as development actors. The extent to which this sentiment has been translated into practice varies, as back-donors are not homogenous entities, and different practices and relationships towards TUs might exist in parallel even within the same agency.

Development ministries are increasingly open to the recognition of TUs as development actors. In some cases, however, like in the UK, this is still a controversial issue. In others, in contrast, the donor agency has acted as a buffer between the stricter requirements of a ministry and the TUs, as in the case of the SIDA.

There is also a dichotomy between the increased recognition of TUs as development actors, exemplified by the fact that they are now part of ministry consultation processes, and the increasingly strict controls imposed on them. The consequences of the political nature of TU development work and its implications for support mechanisms should not be underestimated. However, as discussed in the second section, the streamlined, one-size-fits-all nature of the funding procedures is a general trend where support mechanisms for CSOs are concerned. The specific features of TU development work are therefore not sufficiently recognised. Ultimately, the relationship remains that of a donor and a recipient, with the former often having the final word in decision-making. This unilateralism is accepted by some TUs, but frustrates many others. TUs have mentioned the fact that the priorities of the governing party affect the nature of their funding. For instance, in Denmark in 2003, the LO/FTF Council lost all of its funding, and had to renegotiate its status, in order to finally receive programme support in 2008. The Conservative-led government coalition in the UK has developed funding regulations which are less appropriate for TUs than those of the previous Labour Government. In Sweden, the impact of changes in government has been mitigated by the fact that the staff and policies at the SIDA have remained the same, which has resulted in a certain degree of consistency in TU policies. In some cases, like in Norway, the effect is limited to a decrease in political leverage. In other countries, like in the Netherlands, the effect has been felt both at the financial and political level.

The conclusions of our study are that a more institutionalised, long-term TU strategy is to be preferred. A framework agreement, which is one description, addresses many of problems that are currently identified among the negative donor practices towards TUs.

In the first place, it creates a stable environment for cooperation, based on mutually agreed responsibilities and obligations. In addition, it enhances the predictability of the funding amount,

period, and criteria. TUs can also use the framework agreement as leverage in negotiations with the donor, as it serves as a platform for different opinions on development. If a donor wants to impose changes that run counter prior agreements, CSOs and/or TUs can refer to the strategy as a legitimate argument against top-down decision-making. Generally speaking, the most important advantage of a framework agreement is that it restricts governments' ability to make unilateral decisions. We should, however, be aware, that vague agreements still leave room for donors to impose top-down decisions, as argued by Pratt (2009); therefore clear and well-defined responsibilities need to be enunciated.

Depending on the specific country context, a CSO strategy or a specific TU strategy may be more suitable. In Denmark, TUs are recognised as development actors in their own right within the civil society community. In this case, establishing a joint agreement is advisable, as it increases cooperation and leverage.

The process entry point for creating such a framework should be an actor-based approach to development (TUDCN, 2011). Although TUs have been recognised as development actors in all the countries where we interviewed respondents, this theoretical recognition has not been implemented in the support mechanisms used by donors. TUs fall within the broad category of CSOs, and are subject to the same requirements as other CSOs. However, TUs are specific development actors, and have mentioned the following particularities and comparative advantages:

- TUs are membership-based organisations with a democratic structure. This implies that they have built in bottom-up accountability mechanisms, which are less structurally present among traditional NGOs;

- they have country-wide representation and can implement projects on a nationwide scale. Most NGOs find it hard to achieve such a broad geographical scope;

- they also play an important role in society, via their participation in the social dialogue, both with government and with the private sector. This involves an important awareness-raising role, both in the North and South;

- they are key participants in the functioning of the labour market and of the economy, which are major development drivers;

- the workplace is a key development factor, but it is also a place where many abuses occur, and TUs are well suited to tackle these issues;

- in line with the increased involvement of the private sector in development, TUs must also play an important role in ensuring corporate social 'accountability', which protects the rights of workers and not just those of business;

- they are embedded in an international social solidarity framework, in which every TU has an equal voice. This is reflected in the international architecture of trade unions, which involves

various regional and global representative bodies (like the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas, and the International Trade Union Confederation, etc.);

● trade unions can rely on a large body of international legislation, and on an institutional framework like the ILO, which is a United Nations specialist body.

TUs should be seen as development actors in their own specific right, and should not be limited by the same uniform requirements for short-term impact indicators, geographical concentration and thematic focuses as for other CSOs. The TUs that we interviewed not only expressed the need for a separate funding channel, but stated that the CSO channel should become more flexible, in order to come to terms with a holistic understanding of civil society.

A shift towards programme funding is positive; however, if the implicit emphasis on projects is maintained or enhanced, the trend could be towards de facto project funding, which has the potential to undermine the effectiveness of TU development work.

Recommendations

5.1 For donors

In this section, we present a number of recommendations, which can be understood as good donor principles towards TUs.

Recognising CSOs' diversity and support complementarity

Not only should CSOs be seen as actors in their own right, as stipulated by the AAA, but there is also a need within the heterogeneous CSO community to treat TUs (and other CSOs) as distinctive actors in their own right. It is counter-productive to treat the CSO community as one homogeneous group. In line with this analysis, TUs have added-value in specific areas of work compared with other CSOs. Instead of trying to harmonise and focus CSOs' development activities, their diversity should be embraced and supported.

Providing programme support

Donors should respect the specific nature of TU development work, and should adjust their support mechanisms accordingly. As TUs operate in a complex field, and with a long-term outlook, support mechanisms should be as flexible as possible. Genuine programme support, and preferably core funding are the preferred funding methods for increasing the effectiveness of TU development cooperation. Project support, even when disguised as programme support, risks undermining some of the aims and potential results of TU development work. Calls for proposals, and other tender processes that result in strong competition between CSOs are even worse, as they not only undermine cooperation between TUs and CSOs in general, but also

primarily tend to favour specialised NGOs that are already well established. The European Court of Auditors' report (2009) has also confirmed this trend.

Establishing framework agreements

Donors should view the use of framework agreements as a guarantee that their needs will be respected, together with those of TUs. If the framework agreements entail strict responsibilities and obligations for both sides, a relationship based on trust and respect should be established. In such an environment, donors should be able to release their grip on TUs and make room for more flexible support mechanisms, as advocated above.

Realising the limitations of a strict focus on LDCs

Donors have to realise that an exclusive focus on LDCs implies an under-use of TU's potential and redistributive capacity. In line with the second recommendation, TUs should be seen as complementary to those NGOs that are focusing on the poorest countries. They should be recognised as development actors, who contribute to the mitigation of unsustainable inequality levels in MICs, a category that accounted for more than 70% of the world's poor in 2007-2008 (Sumner, 2010). Geographical conditions should preferably be decided in consultation with the civil society sector.

Creating flexible PCM obligations

As Pratt (2009: 1) has argued, donors need to be aware, 'that frameworks which emphasise one view of effectiveness may result in a loss of diversity and autonomy for civil society'. This statement refers to the increased emphasis on managing for results, as a way to increase development effectiveness. Although demonstrating results is essential, and is also recognised as such by TUs, an overly strict focus on these issues could actually undermine effectiveness, if the administrative burden, or the pressure to simplify project designs for the sake of measurability becomes exceedingly high. A better balance should be found between donor needs, based primarily on accountability concerns, and on what is actually beneficial for the programme on the ground.

5.2 For TUs

The study also raises a number of issues that TUs should consider, in order to work towards more effective support mechanisms.

Becoming more proactive

Generally speaking, TUs should become more proactive in terms of emphasising their specific features and of stressing their priorities. The Decent Work Agenda could be used as a starting point in this respect.

Being aware of compliance

In line with the previous recommendation, TUs should dare to challenge donor policies more systematically and openly, and should sometimes take the step of venturing into the unknown. Part of the TU community has had the tendency to stick to practices out of habit, instead of truly questioning which practices are in fact best suited to their needs. More experimentation with PCM instruments would be welcome. The experiences with alternative PCM approaches are an interesting experiment in this regard. Creative and innovative thinking among TUs should be enhanced.

Enhancing mutual learning structures

There are divergences between TUs in terms of the level of professionalism with which they approach PCM and RBM requirements. TUs with greater expertise in these areas should take responsibility for sharing their experience with others. Mutual learning structures based on good practices and on the dissemination of information should be enhanced among Northern and Southern TUs. The working groups in Denmark, and the TUDCN could serve as examples. Equally, the open dialogue on PCM between civil society and the Swiss Government is a good example.

Enhancing cooperation with the private sector

It is essential that TUs take a proactive stance in the debate on the role of the private sector in development. As experts in the field of labour and economics, TUs are well placed to influence this debate, as they demand that attention be paid to redistribution and fair labour practices, and not just to economic growth.

Enhancing cooperation with other CSOs

In line with the previous recommendation, TUs should maintain and enhance the scope of cooperation with other members of CSOs. Mutual grounds and comparative advantages should be identified, and ideally, an institutionalised structure should be set up.

Raising awareness of neglected issues

TUs are well suited to increasing awareness of global issues like unfair trade agreements, perverse agricultural policies, and migration, which are not receiving the attention they deserve, due to increased government control over their agenda.

	2008			2009		
	Amount of government funding in absolute amounts (EUR)	% of gov funding in your total budget for development cooperation	Own contributions used for development activities	Amount of government funding in absolute amounts (EUR	% of gov funding in your total budget for development cooperation	c d
CDFT (France)	50,000	5%	262, 587	0	0	
TUC (UK)	372,156			1,620,172	30%[1]	
FNV Mondiaal (Netherlands)	15,522,000	92%	1,391,000[2]	10,633,000	88%	
ISCOS (Italy[3])	413,352	17%	889,323	1,995,240	58,63%	
SASK (Finland)	3,560,000	85%	628,000	4,742,000	84%	
LO (Norway)	387,480	90%	38,748	387,480	90%	
ELA (Spain)	0	0%	58,681	0	0%	
LCGB (Luxembourg)	21,250	85%	3,750	21,250	85%	
OGBL (Luxembourg[4])	/	/	/	748,800	66% + 4%	
SGB (Switzerland) Solifonds	0	0%	509,000	0	0%	
Solidar (Switzerland[5])	4,000,000	33%	0	4,000,000	33%	
APHEDA (Australia)	574,000	12%	4,669,000	1,855,000	43%	
ICTU (Ireland[6])	88,000	87%	11,000	88,000	87%	
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Germany[7])	75,000	97%	2,250	80,000	97%	

2010			2011			
Own contributions used for development activities	Amount of government funding in absolute amounts (EUR	% of gov funding in your total budget for development cooperation	Own contributions used for development activities	Amount of government funding in absolute amounts (EUR)	% of gov funding in your total budget for development cooperation	Own contributions used for development activities
214,421	0	0	365, 104	0	0	432, 000
70%	1,410,488	30%	70%			
1,464,000	10,633	85%	1,876,000	9,038,000	90%	1,029,000
833,532	727,347	30,70%	910,319	/	/	/
851,000 (16%)	4,948,000	82%	1,055,000 (18%)	4,530,000	81%	1,131,000 (19%)
38,748	426,179	90%	42,618	426,179	90%	42,618
83,397	0	0%	85,622	0	0%	89,388
3,750	4,250	85%	750	4,250	85%	750
360,000	748,800	66% + 4%	360,000	748,800	66% + 4%	360,000
550,000	0	0%	533,000	0	0%	534,000
0	4,000,000	33%	0	4,000,000	33%	0
2,510,000	1,905,000	36%	3,440,000	2,965,000	46%	3,550,000
11,000	88,000	87%	11,000	65,000	87%	8,450
2,400	80,000	97%	2,400	/	/	/

JTUC-Rengo (Japan)	7,000,000	18%	2,000,000	6,700,000	19%
DGB-Bildungswerk (Germany[8])	2,379,626	95%	124,303	2,671,811	95%
UGT-P (Portugal[9])	90,000	100%	0	70,000	100%
Iscod (Spain[10])	2,930,000	36%	644,950	3,883,800	40%
CCOO (Spain)	2,091,553	80%	397,334	3,172,500	80%

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1 The TUC does not provide specific financial data for development activities, but only for all international activities.

2 Equivalent to the solidarity funds of FNV trade unions.

3 ISCOS has two additional sources of funding. First, EU budget grants, which provided 47%, 87%, 14.54%, and 24.31% of amount of tax-payers' money distributed by the Government.

4 Figures are rough estimates. The calculation is as follows. OGBL Solidarité Syndicale has two main projects, for which 2/3 amount equivalent to 4% of the total budget that has been received by the Government.

5 In rough terms, Solidar receives 1/3rd of its budget from the Swiss government, 1/3rd from other institutional donors, and 1

6 Figures are a rough estimate, and are calculated as follows: the ICTU has two development lines: one for the development o A second development line is development cooperation in the South, which is 100% financed by the ICTU. These are more irr

7 FES received €130,000,000, €139,000,000 and €132,000,000 in 2008, 2009 and 2010; around 55% of that amount wa part of FES' work on promoting democracy, and is embedded in its general political work, it is difficult to determine the exact a

8 Figures for 2011 are provisional.

9 The budget that we refer to is channelled through CEFOSAP, the professional trade union training institute.

10 This figure refers to national governmental funding. When combined with other governmental sources of funding (i.e. regio

1,900,000	6,200,000	20%	2,000,000	5,700,000	20%	2,600,000
135,989	2,882,767	96%	134,512	2,795,847	94%	166,611
0	105,000	100%	0	107,000	100%	0
600,000	3,875,000	43%	600,000	4,693,000	55%	650,000
348,697	3,172,500	80%	369,981	3,172,500	80%	383,180

its budget in 2008, 2009, and 2010 respectively. Second, ISCOS is one of the potential beneficiaries of the 5x1,000 budget, which is an

rds of the financing is provided by the by the Luxembourg Government. The Government also assists with the administration costs, for an

/3rd from individual donations.
f education in Northern countries, where the total budget between 2008 and 2011 was €265,000, 87% of which was financed by IrishAid.
egular projects, because of which it is difficult to calculate the exact budget.
as directed towards development cooperation. In addition, around 3% was self-funded. However, as trade union cooperation is an integral
amount that FES spends exclusively on trade union cooperation.

onal funding), the overall dependency on government funding is much higher.

APPENDIX 2 TU support mechanisms questionnaire

1. Background information

- Country
- Organisation

Contact person: name, position, email address, and telephone number

2. Mapping of trade union support mechanisms

2.1. What is the structure of your organisation's development budget?

2.1.1. Where do you receive your funding from? Please provide a percentage breakdown for each actor, i.e. national government, local government, multilateral bodies, and/or the private sector in terms of your organisation's overall development[23].

2.1.2. Are these funds unilateral or does your organisation also receive joint funding?

2.2. Which of the various CSO and/or trade union funding mechanisms are used by the back-donors who fund your development work[24][25]?

2.2.1. Do you receive mainly project or programme support?

2.2.2. Do you receive funding through framework agreements?

2.2.3. Do you receive core funding?

2.2.4. Have you received funds through calls for proposals?

2.2.5. Does your organisation make use of specific budget grants, like grants for Educational Development, Humanitarian Aid, or Human Rights?

2.2.6. Are there self-funding requirements, and if so, what is the percentage?

2.2.7. Does the back-donor also provide direct support to TUs in developing countries?

2.2.8. Does your organisation work through intermediary networks and/or organisations as part of your development programmes?

2.2.9. Are you encouraged to apply for funding in cooperation with other TUs or CSOs, i.e. pooled funding?

2.2.10. What is your view of these different funding mechanisms?

2.2.11. What, in your opinion, are the advantages and the disadvantages of the different mechanisms?

2.2.12. Has there been any change in the funding mechanisms (from project to programme for instance)?

2.3. What are the main current debates or reforms in your country (and at the multi-lateral level) where CSO and/or trade union support mechanisms are concerned?

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23 Ask this information via email prior to the interview (key policy document).

24 Based on the typology drawn up by NORAD (2008: 21) and by Hedman & Mcdonnell (2010: 23).

25 Ask for background material, e.g. a key policy document (from the TU and the back-donor), and for financial information on: the % of the budget that is channelled towards CSOs (out of the overall ODA), the % of the budget that is channelled towards trade unions (out of the whole budget that is directed to or through CSOs).

3. Government development agenda

3.1. Do you have to subscribe to a government development agenda?

3.1.1. In terms of development principles?

3.1.2. In terms of geographic or thematic focus?

3.1.3. In terms of legal status? Is it a requirement for NGO status?

3.1.4. To what extent does this affect your access to funding?

3.1.5. To what extent is this problematic for trade unions?

3.1.6. How do you bring these donor requirements into line with the needs of your partners in the Southern Hemisphere?

3.2. Has the CSO sector been consulted regarding the development of CSO support mechanisms? And have trade unions been consulted specifically?

3.2.1. Regarding the general debate?

3.2.2. Regarding specific agreements with the back-donor?

3.3. What is your experience of the relationship with the back-donor and/or government (partnership, mutual understanding, unequal, or conflict-ridden)?

3.4. How do you see the future in terms of donor support for trade unions (increase or decrease)?

4. PCM approaches

4.1. Can you give your opinion on the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approaches that are demanded by donors?

4.1.1. In terms of project design and/or planning?

4.1.2. In terms of monitoring and/or reporting?

4.1.3. In terms of evaluation?

4.1.4. In terms of results-based approaches and of detailed long term planning requirements?

4.1.5. Can you choose your own indicators?

4.2. Are the existing support mechanisms for trade unions predictable?

4.3. How does this affect your organisation's development activities?

4.3.1. In financial terms?

4.3.2. In content terms?

5. Diversity among CSOs

5.1. Do the existing support mechanisms for CSOs recognise the diversity in the CSO field?

5.1.1. Where recognising different actors (NGOs, social economy, private business, and trade unions, etc.) is concerned, do support mechanisms for the various actors in this broad group of CSOs differ?

5.1.2. In terms of recognising different roles for CSOs (service providers, experts, actors in the promotion of democracy, etc.)?

5.1.3. In terms of recognising different organisational cultures (e.g. membership-based, or democratically elected, etc.)?

5.1.4. In terms of partnerships and alliances (e.g. through a network-logic, through the international confederation, and cooperation with NGOs, etc.)?

5.2. What are the specific attributes of TUs where the previously mentioned issues are concerned?

5.2.1. What added-value would you say that TUs provide in the development field?

5.3. Does the political nature of trade unions affect access to existing support mechanisms?

5.3.1. In thematic terms, given that political work, advocacy, mobilisation, and opposition are key aspects of trade union activities?

5.3.2. Does the political colour of a government determine trade unions' access to development funding?

5.4. Are there any additional issues that you would like to mention regarding TU support mechanisms for your organisation?

6. Cross-divisional issues[26]

- Good and bad practices and/or donor principles
- Changes over time (long-term and short-term: in relation to the financial and economic downturn)
  Comparison between trade unions and other CSOs (including private business)

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26 Are a guiding line throughout the interview.

APPENDIX 3 List of respondents

Name	Country	Organisation	Function
Henrik Als	Denmark	LO/FTF Council	Programme Coordinator
Frédérique Lellouche	France	CFDT	Head of Cooperation- Institut Belleville/Département international
Lotte Ockerman	Belgium	ABVV-FGTB	Project Manager - Department for Trade Union Cooperation with the Southern Hemisphere
Stijn Sintubin	Belgium	ACV-CSC	International Department
Maresa Le Roux	Belgium	ACLVB-CGSLB	Programme Coordinator for Development Cooperation
Nina Larrea	Sweden	LO-TCO	Method Development and Quality Assurance
Dian van Unen	Netherlands	FNV Mondiaal	Head of Department at FNV Mondiaal
Riitta Soveri	Finland	SASK	Programme Manager
Nina Mjoberg	Norway	LO	Head of the International Department Solidarity Section
Mark Hankin Rudy Porter, Dona Dobosz	United States	Solidarity Centre	Director of Government Affairs Field Officer, M&E Specialist
Gemma Arpaia	Italy	ISCOS	Coordinator Italian and Global Activities
Annie Watson	UK	TUC	International Development Advisor
Ken Davis	Australia	APHEDA	International Department
Reiner Radermacher	Germany	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung	Global Trade Union Project Coordinator
Hideyuki Hoshima	Japan	Jilaf	Exchange Programme Group Director
Hitoshi Takezume	Japan	Jtuc-Rengo	International Division Director
David Joyce	Ireland	ICTU	Development Department

Robert Schadeck	Luxembourg	LCGB	Development Department
Jean Christophe Schwaab	Switzerland	SGB	Development Department
Laura Gonzalez de Txabarri	Spain	ELA	Development Department
Raquel Pereira	Portugal	CEFOSAP	International Relations Assistant
Felix A. Ovejero Torres	Spain	CCOO	International Trade Union Cooperation Secretary
Luis Correia	Portugal	UGT-P	Deputy Secretary
Andrew Drews	Luxembourg	ONG OGBL Solidarité Syndicale	International Cooperation Manager
Zoltan Doka	Switzerland	Solidar	International Trade Union Cooperation Manager
Marta Manrique	Spain	Iscod	Technical Cabinet Coordinator
Ute Bartels	Germany	DGB-Bildungswerk	North-South-Network Divisional Head

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