

Review of Activities 2009–11



INTRAC exists to support civil society organisations. We seek to increase the effectiveness of civil society organisations that are committed to human development, including gender equity, participation of the socially excluded, social justice, security and peace, in all parts of the world. INTRAC believes that civil society is key to establishing democratic societies and that civil society organisations play a key role in promoting sustainable development in a just society.



Brian Pratt

Executive Director's message

The greatest challenge I find in writing this is how to summarise so many activities over this two-year period when they cover such a wide range of different types of work, from conferences, workshops, training, research, strategic planning for major NGOs, evaluations, publications, and much more. Our work has also shown a rich geographical diversity, including most countries of Europe as well countries throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Does this reflect the threat of mission creep? No, everything we do has the focus of strengthening and supporting civil society in one way or another.

In recent years, the roles and functions of civil society have seen serious revision in many quarters. The development sector has come to realise that civil society, as the space between the market, state, and individual household, is a far more important and vibrant concept than has previously been recognised, particularly by governments.

The functions and depth of civil society go well beyond the work of those NGOs which have appeared (primarily in the past generation) as a part of the 'aid business'. INTRAC has found it exciting to reach out to this wider range of civil society organisations (CSOs), including

trade unions, human rights and environmentalist membership groups, burgeoning professional organisations, and faith-based organisations (FBOs) of all hues.

It is important that INTRAC continues to learn from the in-depth exposure we are privileged to have into such a large number of organisations. Our work often reaches to the heart of their very being, from developing strategic visions, through to helping them with their own evaluation and learning trajectories.

Our challenge as an organisation is to add value to our individual training courses and consultancy work by convening ideas and people, and trying to move debates forward based on our collective experiences. We need to celebrate and support the functions of civil society in nurturing healthy societies and political systems, and providing a web of relationships of mutual support and work.

The summary of our activities in this booklet is intended to give an overview and highlights of our work; additional material is available on our website (www.intrac.org).



Geof Wood

Chair's message

Post-9/11, the steady evolution of counter-terrorism measures posed acute challenges for civil society globally, closing down the space for advocacy and legitimate protest against non-democratic regimes and injustice.

During the period of this review, INTRAC completed significant work that reveals negative re-alignment between the state and civil society in many parts of the world, rich and poor, and significantly in the Middle East. It is no coincidence that there should be a reaction to this closure of political space, especially manifested in the 'Arab Springs' across North Africa.

Of course, we cannot yet judge the longer term outcomes of upheavals in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Bahrain, nor potential ripple effects in neighbouring societies. Entrenched interests resist the calls for justice and rights, and do not disappear overnight, as we have seen in Egypt.

At the same time, we have plenty of evidence from around the world of a resurgence of civil society action in resisting corrupt, unaccountable governments. In South Asia, for example, both Pakistan and Bangladesh

returned to democratic politics, of a kind, following military regimes, while the anti-corruption and pro-poor movements in India have succeeded in mobilising a generation of new activists, drawn significantly from the emerging middle classes.

As we look forward, we can expect a growing significance of civil society action in the states of the ex-Soviet Union. INTRAC will strive to build on its distinguished record of supporting the non-governmental sector in Central Asian states.

With ongoing financial crises around the world, the protection of citizens' rights and livelihoods against the austerity solutions of retreating elites has never been more important. With many new actors fighting for and entering these political spaces, for example in Greece, the work of INTRAC enters a new, exciting era.

Our areas of work

On the following pages you can read about the work that our consultancies, research, programmes, and training teams have been doing in our main areas of focus:

- **Civil Society Initiative and strengthening civil society**

INTRAC is dedicated to strengthening and supporting civil society globally. We have done this through training programmes in a multitude of areas including South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. We feel that civil society is under pressure from several directions, including a security agenda, repressive governments, and attempts to corral civil society into a limited role as sub-contractor to the state and international agencies. Our independence in this area and research and support are key to a healthy civil society.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**

M&E has always been one of our strengths. In the past two years, we have organised and expanded our training programme, published materials on several aspects of our experience, advised many agencies on their systems, and held workshops and an international conference.

- **HIV/AIDS in the workplace**

INTRAC has been running a learning programme for CSOs on dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace, as HIV/AIDS has a devastating impact on many CSOs and their staff. The programme's goals are twofold: to share

and document inter-organisational learning on dealing with HIV/AIDS in the workplace; and to influence international NGOs and donors to take HIV/AIDS into account in their funding policies and practices.

- **Aid architecture**

INTRAC has been engaged with the flow and function of international aid for many years, and changes in aid policy that affect civil society are of particular interest to us. We track interactions of aid flows, donors, policy, and civil society. Recently, we have focused on legitimacy, transparency, and accountability; aid effectiveness and the Paris Declaration; and cooperative research with our NGO Research Programme members on trends and issues in aid.

- **Working with faith-based organisations**

With a long history of cooperation with faith-based organisations, INTRAC is well-placed to explore the influence of an organisations' faith identity on its operations (international and external) and its relationships. INTRAC's work with FBOs has taken place in both consultancy and training contexts.

- **Fragile states**

This is a newer area of our work, particularly in research. INTRAC seeks to understand the multiple roles of civil society organisations in the context of vulnerable or weak states.



Amir Jina 2009

Woman engaged in textiles work, Bangladesh

Civil Society Initiative and strengthening civil society

Much of INTRAC's recent work has focused on strengthening civil society, which is defined as the space between the individual/household and the market and state. From research to consultancies, from training to publications and conferences, you can read about INTRAC's efforts to strengthen civil society here.

In addition to our publications, consultancies, and programmes, we maintain a critical view of the relationship between aid agencies and civil society, and concerns that civil society could be swamped by international development agencies and assistance. We have continued to work on appropriate ways of supporting civil society in different contexts, including capacity building and other specific forms of support.

Amir Jima 2009



Building up strength – a young man shows off his outer strength, at Salaam Baalak in India

Research

Building on our the Cyprus Civil Society Strengthening Programme (2007–08), the EC Cypriot Civil Society in Action Programme 2010–11 in Cyprus explores how Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot civil society organisations are working together to bridge the historical divides between the communities.

This builds trust, cooperation, and reconciliation, contributing directly and indirectly to peacebuilding in Cyprus. Our research improves understanding of civil society's role in promoting reconciliation in Cyprus, and disseminates findings on a critically under-researched subject. This project, begun in June 2010 and implemented by our Cyprus office, is expected to result in the following outputs:

- seven case studies of different CSOs contributing to cross-community peacebuilding
- a booklet summarising the case studies and synthesising some of the learning that emerged
- a research briefing paper on developing trust and cooperation in civil society
- policy notes, in the appropriate languages, targeted to a variety of policymakers and influencers

- a conference, in Cyprus, dedicated to the theme of building trust and cooperation, and disseminating research findings among other CSO actors
- an online toolkit for CSOs, designed to help them start or support similar initiatives, inside and outside of Cyprus

Consultancies

British Council – Civil Society Support Programme, Ethiopia

We put together a concept note on Ethiopia civil society support for the British Council and CDRA, and we were awarded the contract in September 2010. The Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) Ethiopia will bring together multiple donors (managed by the British Council) in a five-year project intended to develop Ethiopian CSOs. This support will focus particularly on expanding the reach of these CSOs, to serve marginalised and poor populations, and provide them with more equitable and effective services.

DFID – Building capacity of State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI), Nigeria

INTRAC is the current Capacity Building Adviser on DFID's 'SAVI' in Nigeria (2008–14). We have supported the process of building partnership alliances (civil society – media – State Houses of Assembly) around advocacy issues to strengthen the voice of the 'demand side' to prompt and support DFID's 'supply side' partners to engage with civil society and increase accountability. INTRAC's support has included strengthening partners on gender and social inclusion issues, through the Gender Network in Kaduna and disability organisations in Lagos, Enugu, and Kaduna.

DFID – Accompaniment, Nile Basin Discourse (2008–12)

INTRAC supports the civil society network Nile Basin Discourse in an advisory capacity, helping them push governments in the Nile region for an agreement on the use of Nile water resources. We advised on key aspects of implementation and M&E of the Civil Society Engagement in Nile Cooperation and Development project, ensuring overall coherence of purpose between the NBD secretariat and the National Discourse Forums, and institutional development.

SMILING project – Capacity building and technical assistance

The third phase of the SMILING project in Bangladesh, implemented with the Bangladeshi capacity building NGO PRIP Trust, started in the second half of 2009. INTRAC's assistance included designing capacity building interventions; developing effective participatory M&E systems; training; mapping CSOs; research and learning activities; and developing resource materials.

INTRAC also had several projects throughout the Middle East: we completed training with the Syrian Platform for NGOs, which was evaluated in June 2010; helped the King Khalid Foundation carry out training with Saudi CSOs; provided training for the Saudi Ministry of Social Affairs; and conducted capacity building training for the Omani Civil Society Department of the Ministry of Social Development.

Training

In this period we ran three organisational development courses which were designed to help participants to improve organisational performance and self-awareness. A total of 20 people attended these courses. Participants rated their overall experience on this course an average of 8.1 out of 10. Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 8.4.

In 2011 we introduced the Advanced Organisational Development course which covers the topic in more depth, looking at issues such as decentralisation, 'nationalisation' of country offices, and developing new organisational business models and structures.

We ran two Advanced Partner Capacity Building courses over this period, designed for CSOs working to support the capacity development of their partners. These five-day courses helped experienced practitioners to strengthen their expertise in the design and implementation of partner capacity building programmes. A total of 28 people attended these courses. Participants who attended our Advanced Partner Capacity Building courses in this period rated their overall experience an average of 7.8, and the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 7.6.

Publications and events

- Beauclerk, J., B. Pratt, and R. Judge (2011) *Civil Society in Action: global case studies in a practice-based framework*, Oxford: INTRAC.

This new book from INTRAC uses case studies from around the world which show a clear framework for

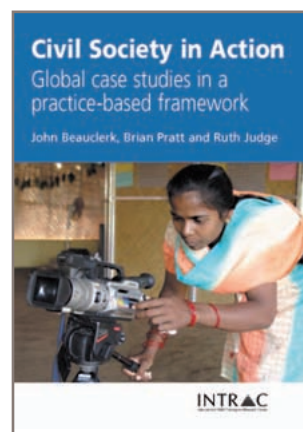
understanding the nature and role of civil society, prove that civil society is alive and kicking, and makes recommendations for more effective civil society strengthening.

- Dawson, E. (2011) 'Reflections on Building CSO Capacity to Integrate Gender and Diversity Equality', Praxis Note 58, INTRAC.
- Stalker, C., S. Singh, R. Macleod, C. Moberly, and J. Knight (2011) 'Empowered to Influence – Capacity Building for Advocacy', ONTRAC 47, INTRAC.
- Stalker, C., with D. Sandberg (2010) 'Capacity Building for Advocacy', Praxis Paper 25, INTRAC.
- James, R. and R. Macleod (2010) 'World Cup Special: How to Build a Winning Team', Praxis Note 51, INTRAC.
- Lönnqvist, L., with N. Huda, N. Kabir, R. Zevin Kaisari, M. Khandker, and S. Saha Chandra (2010) 'Shortcut to the Frontline: Supporting Local NGOs on Climate Change in Bangladesh', Occasional Paper Series, INTRAC.

These and more resources, for all our key themes, are available in the 'Resources' section of the INTRAC website.

The May 2009 NGO Research Forum focused on civil society innovation, rethinking practice, and transnational advocacy (particularly, North-South alliances to influence policy). We also plan an Oxford-based conference for December 2011 – Civil Society at a New Frontier – to examine the challenges and opportunities presented by economic growth.

Brian Pratt attended The Foundation for the Future workshop in Jordan, and INTRAC made a presentation at the Social Development Forum in Saudi Arabia (both in June 2009).



Comic Relief – Peer Learning Programme

Beginning in 2010, INTRAC is facilitating the PLP, part of Comic Relief's Common Ground Initiative. We work with UK-based small and diaspora-led organisations that support African development, to enable them to better support effective programmes and exert a greater influence over UK and international development debates and practice. Activities include workshops, action learning sets, one-to-one support, and benchmarking clubs. As part of this project, INTRAC produced a briefing paper on diaspora groups and development.

I have been to a few of these types of workshops recently: this was by far the best! ... the speakers were excellent, easy to understand, able to engage with participants, overall very good and informative ... I enjoyed the whole thing.

Participant at a PLP workshop

Spotlight on Central Asia

Supporting civil society

INTRAC's new three-year Central Asia strategy, adopted in 2008, commits INTRAC to new work with national and regional networks advocating for social justice; and to deeper engagement at a local level, to strengthen participation of CSOs in development programmes.

The external environment was difficult: food prices rose, government control tightened in many countries, and a second revolution in Kyrgyzstan led to tragic and extensive loss of life. This April 2010 uprising led to a new provisional government. Consequently, most donors have put new initiatives on hold. Civil society is critical of the provisional government, but largely favours the proposed new constitution, which promises a parliamentary system. INTRAC works closely with the Dutch NGO ICCO on new ideas for supporting democracy and conflict prevention in Kyrgyzstan.

Civil society in Central Asia is increasingly differentiated, with very specific priorities and pressures in each of the five countries and weak regional networking. The revolution in Kyrgyzstan heightened neighbouring governments' alarm and cultivated reluctance to see the country's civil society as a regional model. Kazakhstan developed a government funding system for NGOs, changing the landscape for local activists. Advanced NGOs work with expert legal and human rights counterparts to act as watchdogs. At the local level, there remains a great need for civil society support. INTRAC's position has been to respond to requests and to take advantage of opportunities where they arise.

Previously, INTRAC's Bishkek office built activities around a single main programme for ICCO's NGO partners in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. This programme ended in 2009, then we completed our knowledge management project, consolidated NGO learning, and launched a community leadership programme for women and youth. Charles Buxton, the programme manager, also completed a two-year consultancy on ICCO's new programmatic approach.

Innovation in action

Through its long-term commitment to work in the area, INTRAC has developed some innovative methodologies for strengthening civil society in Central Asia:

- **Action learning groups for NGO managers and community:** Nearly 60 people took part in two seven-month series of meetings, over two years in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, all working on a self-determined project (e.g. team building, new M&E systems introduction, development of new approaches for vulnerable groups in the community).
- **INTRAC's community leadership programme:** Run twice in 2009–10 for a total of 50 participants, this programme developed alternative models of activism and leadership, including support to small local projects (exhibitions, round tables, development of blog sites). INTRAC built up a core of people, materials, and ideas that we have transferred to other projects in 2010–11.

Following this, INTRAC worked in four smaller programmes, with NGOs and local government. With ACTED Tajikistan, we provided much-needed training for officials and community leaders at the local government level. With Christensen Fund, we trained environmental and cultural NGOs in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. With Shyrak, a disabled people's organisation, we will organise a leadership programme for women and help develop a lobbying network across 12 Kazakhstan provinces, within the EU's Non-State Actors programme. With Keik Ocara in Ashgabat, we returned to the youth leadership scheme from 2008. The first module of the Turkmenistan programme ran in March 2011.

The Central Asia Open Training programme runs four courses each year, on organisational development, management, and M&E. The programme remains very popular. Consultancy and training clients include Red Crescent Kyrgyzstan, Swiss Red Cross, Ministry of Social Protection Kyrgyzstan, World Bank Health Programme Tajikistan, Amica Germany, Aga Khan Development Network, Helvetas Tajikistan, and Swiss Development Cooperation.

Publications

- Buxton, C. (2011) *The Struggle for Civil Society in Central Asia: crisis and transformation*, Sterling VT, USA: Kumarian Press.
- Moldosheva, A., B. Bagyshbaeva, and K. Abraliev (2011) 'Leadership, Gender and Youth: Reviewing the Old and Experimenting with the New', Praxis Note 59, INTRAC.
- Wardle, C. (2010) Building the Capacity of Village Communities to Manage the Provision of Clean Drinking Water: Lessons from Kyrgyzstan', Praxis Note 57.
- Djankulova, K., N. Temirova, and M. Sobirdjonova (2010) 'Using Action Learning Sets Methodology in an NGO Capacity Building Programme', Praxis Note 53.
- Zharkevich, I. (2010) 'The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Political Accountability in Fragile States: the case of Tajikistan', discussion paper, INTRAC.
- Musabaeva, A., I. Zharkevich, A. Moldosheva, and C. Buxton (2010) '15 Years of INTRAC in Central Asia', ONTRAC 45, INTRAC.

INTRAC continues to translate ONTRAC into Russian, distributing it online and in hard copy around Central Asia.

HIV/AIDS in the workplace

HIV/AIDS in the Workplace learning group

HIV/AIDS has an immense impact on CSOs in Africa and Asia. CSOs are losing invaluable staff and management time through sickness and funerals; morale is depressed; and medical costs and insurance are steadily rising. While a few are starting to respond to the reality of HIV/AIDS in the workplace, many are struggling to adjust. They need quality capacity building support to respond adequately.

For three years INTRAC has facilitated a learning group of almost 50 practitioners who provide capacity building services in the area of HIV/AIDS in the workplace (supported by ICCO and Cordaid). These practitioners – consultants, trainers, local and international NGO staff from 15 countries – have enhanced their knowledge, skills, and competence in capacity building. As a result they provide higher quality services to help CSOs become more resilient to HIV/AIDS.

INTRAC has helped the group to learn from each other in four main ways:

“You have been an amazing support to our work ... giving us space to talk about our work, to learn from others and to write about it. My experiences in the INTRAC workshops have been amongst the best in my life.”

- 1) Helping practitioners reflect and learn from their own experiences of providing capacity building services. They have written Praxis Notes to distil their learning in an accessible style and format for others' learning. INTRAC has given mentoring support to members in how to undertake action learning processes and how to document this appropriately.
- 2) The group has undertaken multi-country applied research projects contracted by INTRAC to analyse critical issues such as donor support for, informal CSO responses to, and actual costs of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.
- 3) The group has also met face-to-face at international learning weeks, held in Nairobi. These events have been a mixture of case studies, open space discussions, research feedback, field visits, and discussion of practical tools and techniques.
- 4) INTRAC also facilitated ongoing communication amongst members, through quarterly e-bulletins, updating members on activities, outputs, learning events, and news from group members.

Achievements

This learning group has clearly had a significant impact on the members. An external evaluation revealed that 97% of respondents felt their capacity had improved significantly, quite a bit, or moderately as a result of being part of the group. The vast majority felt they had been able to apply this to their work with CSOs.

This group has helped create a novel and important body of knowledge; prior to the project, there was almost nothing written about HIV/AIDS in CSO workplaces.



Joyce Mataya 2010

The HIV/AIDS in the Workplace learning group

Looking to the future

While the funding from ICCO and Cordaid has now come to an end, the project continues informally. The knowledge and skills that members have developed will continue to be applied with CSOs. The supportive peer relationships that have been built up will generate opportunities for shared learning for many years to come.

Publications

- Mwaramba, B. (2011) 'Doing it by Yesterday: Accelerated Workplace Policy Development', Praxis Note 60, INTRAC.
- Westerhof, N. and W. Azashe (2010) 'Low Cost and Effective HIV and AIDS Workplace Responses: Experiences from Ethiopia, India and Uganda', Praxis Note 56, INTRAC.
- Smith Phiri, R., with A. Wainaina, A. Navele, et al (2010) 'Looking After Number One: Donor Support for HIV and AIDS in the Workplace', Praxis Paper 24, INTRAC.
- Smith Phiri, R. and Project Empower (2010) 'The Means is the End: Reflections on the Process of Developing HIV Workplace Policies', Praxis Note 50, INTRAC.
- James, R., L. Satali, J. Mataya, S. Saud Akhtar, Y. Fleming, and E. van der Zweep (2009) 'HIV and AIDS in the Workplace', ONTRAC 42, INTRAC.

Monitoring and evaluation

M&E is a key strength of INTRAC, and permeates our work in several departments. These pages outline some of the M&E work we have done in these two years.

M&E consultancies

Amnesty International – Impact assessment of different forms of activism

INTRAC created a detailed project plan to guide the implementation of the Impact Assessment of Activism project, and to bolster the general understanding of how impact assessment tools and methodologies can be used in human rights activism. In addition to advising and supporting methodology choice, INTRAC carried out the second part of this assignment, facilitating the implementation of the project. INTRAC provided advice, tools, and support to AI teams to help them assess the impact of different activism forms.

GOAL – External evaluation of partnership capacity building

The evaluation provided evidence of how the partnership approaches adopted with partners in each of the three countries of the study (India, Sierra Leone, and Uganda) align with and support the partnership approach of GOAL.

PricewaterhouseCoopers and DFID – Establishing M&E Framework for the Climate and Development Knowledge Network

The network's objective is to enhance developing countries' access to high quality, reliable, and policy-relevant information on climate change and development through a combination of knowledge management, research, advice, and information services and strengthening their research capacity. INTRAC developed an M&E system for the network, and helped develop a knowledge hub and commission research. INTRAC leads on the M&E and impact assessment components.

Save the Children Norway – Thematic evaluation of partnership

This evaluation's main purpose was to provide insights into SCN's work with local partners in the countries where it works, and build learning and ensure accountability by providing evidence of impact of cooperation with partners. This involved providing oversight of different implementation models; identifying and documenting good practices in cooperation with government and civil society; contributing to increased knowledge and understanding by bringing the organisation up to date on research/evaluation findings on partner cooperation; making recommendations; and assessing impact against intentions/objectives for the partnership and the contextual and organisational settings.

Monitoring and evaluating with Habitat for Humanity Cambodia

INTRAC has been providing support to Habitat for Humanity Cambodia (HFHC) in developing an M&E framework for enhancing HIV/OVC programmes with holistic housing solutions, building on existing capacities within HFHC and its implementing partners. In collaboration with a local research organisation, INTRAC is designing and will implement a baseline study to identify indices to allow HFHC to measure changes in: health status, wealth status, participation in communal social activities, and wellbeing.

The baseline survey provides data on the current situation of beneficiary families, and creates a learning hub within HFHC where participation in the process has provided a creative understanding of the value of M&E in holistic programmes which needs to include housing solutions. INTRAC is developing the M&E framework, using indicators developed with input from a consultation workshop with the implementing partners and a focus group, to show the impact of housing on HIV/AIDS and children.

Swedish Mission Council – Organisational evaluation

INTRAC conducted an organisation-wide evaluation of SMC to help them become more relevant, effective, and assertive in their work. The results contributed to SMC's new strategic planning process for 2013–15. SMC underwent an extensive organisational development process in 2000–01, leading to reorganisation of membership and a new sense of identity and purpose for SMC. We sought to determine how the changes had enabled SMC to play a more effective external role in contributing to change, and how internal changes and greater systematisation had improved quality and performance.

Transparency International – multiple projects

INTRAC has worked with Transparency International on several consultancies. Three of note include:

- Finalising TI Vietnam's M&E system development
- M&E review of Transparency and Integrity in Service Delivery in Africa (TISDA) programme
- Conceptualising and developing TI's Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation system, to support TISDA

Zambia Governance Foundation – Development of M&E system

INTRAC supported the planning and development of a detailed M&E framework for documenting the impact of ZGF's activities. In line with INTRAC's commitment to participatory approaches, the development proceeded in

consultation with ZGF staff and partners. INTRAC also provided training support, with the resulting learning being recorded for future use.

Further examples of INTRAC's consultancy work in M&E include:

- DFID: completed a review of current civil society policies and practices of a group of multi- and bilateral donors, to inform DFID's own policy
- Westminster Foundation for Democracy: developed an impact monitoring system to improve democracy in parliaments; performed an assessment of their three-year programme for democracy in Ukraine
- British Council, with Higher Council for the Affairs of People with Disabilities – Jordan: supported HCAPD to finalise its M&E framework; also wrote three chapters for the national Disability Strategy 2010–15

M&E training

From 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2011 the training team ran 16 successful M&E courses including: Introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation, Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation, Impact Assessment.

A total of 204 participants attended the three Monitoring and Evaluation courses, seven Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation and six Impact Assessment courses over this period. Participants that attended our M&E courses in this period rated their overall experience an average of 8.3 out of 10. Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 8.2.

Our training department has also recently completed internal reviews of advocacy and organisational development, and is currently building a secure site for trainers, consultants, and staff to enable remote access to resources and materials, and to encourage more sharing of learning and ideas.

Publications and events

INTRAC remains an important resource for M&E information and learning; of the top ten downloaded documents, five are papers on M&E. INTRAC's M&E resources include the following titles:

- O'Flynn, M. (2010) 'Impact Assessment: Understanding and Assessing Our Contributions to Change', M&E Paper 7, INTRAC.
- James, R. (2010) 'Monitoring and Evaluating Learning Networks', M&E Paper 6, INTRAC.

Popular M&E courses

Our most popular course, with 17 participants, was the Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation course, facilitated by Max Peberdy, which took place on 5–9 October 2009. Participants who attended our courses rated their overall experience an average of 8.3 (out of 10). Participants rated the extent to which their aims were fulfilled an average of 8.2.

Excellent! Without a doubt, one of the best courses I've been on.

Paula Feehan, Strategic Planning Manager, Action Aid

- Giffen, J. (2009) 'The Challenges of Monitoring and Evaluating Programmes', M&E Paper 5, INTRAC.
- O'Flynn, M. (2009) 'Tracking Progress in Advocacy: Why and How to Monitor and Evaluate Advocacy Projects and Programmes', M&E Paper 4, INTRAC.
- James, R. (2009) 'Dealing with the Dilemmas in Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building', M&E Paper 2, INTRAC.
- Garbutt, A., B. Pratt, and K. Wright (2009) 'Monitoring Flexible Funding: Navigating the Challenges', M&E Paper 1, INTRAC.

“Thanks for your efforts in researching and disseminating this kind of materials. I work as a development worker in Kenya for a small community based organisation. Sharing these with other networking members enables us to get new information that shapes new direction.”

Wafula Ferdinand

The May 2010 NGO Research Forum covered M&E and corporate social responsibility in development, and led to two papers. The report and executive summary are also available on INTRAC's website.

- Zharkevich, I. and R. Judge (2010) 'From Corporate Social Responsibility to Corporate Accountability and Beyond', Briefing Paper 25, INTRAC.
- Simister, N. (2009) 'Developing M&E Systems for Complex Organisations: A Methodology', M&E Paper 3, INTRAC.

INTRAC's 7th Evaluation Conference – M&E: New Developments and Challenges – will be held in June 2011, in the Netherlands, in partnership with PRIA (India) and PSO (the Netherlands). It will explore new initiatives, approaches, issues, and challenges in development M&E.

The architecture of aid



Esen Turusbekov / DFID 2005

Improving rural electricity supplies, Kyrgyz Republic

Building on the ideas in a series of briefing papers and an ONTRAC (38) on the Paris Declaration and aid architecture in 2007–08, INTRAC has continued to lead in identifying changing realities of aid architecture.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed in March 2005, lays out an approach to addressing aid effectiveness reform. It was the subject of the third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Accra, Ghana, in 2008. The questions surrounding the Paris Declaration centre largely on enabling the participation of civil society in defining, implementing, and monitoring development policies and strategies. This should allow the linking of aid effectiveness to actual impact. Civil society participation in high-level policy arenas is quite constrained, and there are worries that this participation, when it does occur, may simply be tokenistic, a way of legitimising the aid effectiveness agenda. These concerns become still more pertinent in the rapidly-shifting aid environment of today.

The world is clearly changing, and with it the challenges to civil society globally. We see traditional aid programmes closing or reducing, such as the Dutch aid programme. Meanwhile, new forms of organisation are emerging. Old ideas about the nature of the state and society are being reviewed, challenged, and redefined.

Recent events in the Middle East in many ways reinforce the wisdom of the decision by INTRAC to focus not only on

simple poverty programmes but also wider issues of civil society and social justice. The revolt by citizens against illegitimate governments reinforces our belief in the political component of civil society.

With the increasing number of countries reaching middle-income status through high rates of growth over the past 15 years, many of the resource constraints to the reduction of absolute poverty are being removed. This, however, highlights the greater importance of issues such as redistribution and equality in overcoming structural constraints on the poor.

Despite the narrowing space for civil society in some parts of the world, we see other people reacting against this and managing to overthrow corrupt dictatorships. As funds for civil society strengthening shrink in favour of technical, short-term physical actions, we see how these will not resolve long-term poverty without the changes in power and political structures: civil society strengthening is more, not less, important.

In an era of economic growth it is no longer sufficient to argue that what keeps people in poverty is the lack of clean drinking water or proximity of a clinic or primary school; we can see that these services, important though they are, do not resolve the underlying causes of poverty. As is now being argued, the bottom billion now also live in middle-income countries, not just in the least developed and/or fragile states.

This environment presents many challenges for INTRAC, but we are learning to meet these in a period of reduced funding and changed funding patterns. We continue to work in contentious areas including Central Asia and the Middle East, and we strive to continue to develop and expand our civil society support work in these and other areas.

Publications and events

- Giffen, J. and R. Judge (2010) 'Civil Society Policy and Practice in Donor Agencies', report for DFID, INTRAC.
- Pratt, B., J. Hailey, B. Jones, and S. Cavanna (2010) 'What Next for INGO Structures?', ONTRAC 44, INTRAC.
- Pratt, B. (2009) 'Civil Society and Development – Challenges from European Governments?', Briefing Paper 24, INTRAC.
- Pratt, B., R. Tandon, and T. Pinzas (2009) 'How Will the Global Recession Affect Development?', ONTRAC 43, INTRAC.
- Pratt, B. (2009) 'Legitimacy and Transparency for NGOs', short paper, INTRAC.
- Pratt, B. and T. Myhrman (2009) 'Improving Aid Effectiveness: A Review of Recent Initiatives for CSOs', long paper, INTRAC.

The November 2009 NGO Research Forum focused on INGO restructuring and accountability issues, and was attended by about 60 participants from major INGOs. The papers and presentations, including some by Dr John Hailey and

Beverley Jones, are available from the INTRAC website. More information about the NGO Research Programme can be found at www.intrac.org/pages/en/ngo-research-programme.html.

This forum led to an ONTRAC issue (44: What's Next for INGO Structures?), containing the following articles:

- 'What next for INGO structures?' B. Pratt
- 'INGOs of the future: cohesion and fragmentation' J. Hailey
- 'The experience of an organisational demerger: some lessons' S. Cavanna
- 'The Lion and the Dragon' B. Jones

In the future

The May 2011 NGO Research Forum will focus on 'Alternative Development Actors and Changes in Aid Architecture', and will look at new private donors, diaspora groups, and the upcoming Busan forum on aid effectiveness.

We will soon have completed and made available Briefing Paper 27, 'Courting the Diaspora', which looks at emerging roles of diaspora groups in the international development industry.

In December 2011, the NGO Research Forum will complement our 20th anniversary conference, which will look at challenges and opportunities for INGOs as civil society faces a new frontier.

Aid Effectiveness briefing paper

'Improving Aid Effectiveness: A review of recent initiatives for CSOs', by Brian Pratt and Tove Myrman

There is an ongoing debate about aid effectiveness and the range of initiatives which exist to address it. This INTRAC briefing paper reviewed recent aid effectiveness initiatives that focus on CSOs, examining four questions:

- 1) What are the different types of initiatives?
- 2) What are they trying to achieve?
- 3) Are they the right responses to the issues they set out to resolve around aid effectiveness?
- 4) What alternatives might there be to achieve the same goal?

The paper concludes that effectiveness initiatives range widely in form, style, and enforcement, but often miss out on measuring impact on beneficiaries in favour of measuring other factors, such as accountability, service quality, justification, or standardisation. In the face of substantial and likely irreversible changes in the global economy and geo-political power relationships, we must re-think aid effectiveness measures, using quick and relevant processes.



Working with faith-based organisations (FBOs)

Though INTRAC is not an FBO, a significant proportion of the groups with whom we work are faith-based. Many of our key clients are also engaging and re-engaging more actively with their faith identity. Importantly, the external environment for FBOs is changing: official donors are increasingly demonstrating interest in the interaction of faith and development; and both the EU and the UK have passed legislative changes about discrimination on the basis of faith. A number of FBOs are asking INTRAC to help them respond to this changing environment. In some cases however, being designated as faith-based may be unhelpful or less relevant for groups; indeed, some associate it with US-style George Bush politics. We seek to keep the complexity and flammability of faith at the centre of our work, to engage faith with great care and sensitivity.

INTRAC worked with a variety of congregations and FBOs worldwide, providing different types of tailor-made training, with topics ranging from M&E, advocacy and policy influencing, strategic planning, project management, and organisational development. We also conducted an impact evaluation of funded projects in Africa.

Working with the Swedish Mission Council

SMC commissioned INTRAC to conduct a learning evaluation process, to be completed in May 2011. The process was aimed at providing information that would enable SMC to reflect on, and draw lessons from, the relevant areas of learning identified. The evaluation process also helped give some meaning to why and how SMC works, and to help it grasp the implications of the changes in the external environment.

The success of this consultancy rests on its nature: it is a highly participative process, based on facilitated group discussions and semi-structured interviews with a wide range of people with insights into SMC and how it works.

Some of the FBOs we worked with in 2009–11 included:

- Agha Khan Foundation
- Baptist Missionary Society
- Caritas Europa
- Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid
- Catholic Overseas Development Agency
- Christian Aid
- Christian Organisations Research Advisory Trust
- Council for World Mission
- DanChurchAid
- Danish Mission Council
- Irish Missionary Resource Service
- Mísean Cara
- Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary
- Norwegian Church Aid

- Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies
- Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
- Swedish Mission Council
- Tearfund
- Traidcraft
- World Vision
- Y CARE International

Training

In 2010, INTRAC provided two single-day open training courses on working with FBOs.

Publications and events

- James, R. (2010) 'Managing NGOs with Spirit', chapter in A. Fowler and C. Malunga (eds.) *NGO Management – the Earthscan Companion, 2nd edition*, London: Routledge.
- James, R., J. Benthall, C. Rakodi, L. van der Wel, and M. Abuarqub (2010) 'Faith in Development - Coping With Paradox', ONTRAC 46, INTRAC.
- Aiken, A. (2010) 'Assessing the Impact of Faith: A Methodological Contribution', Praxis Note 55, INTRAC.
- James, R. (2009) 'Handle with care: Engaging with faith-based organisations in development', *Development in Practice* 21(1): 109–117.
- Saddiq, N. (2009) 'Capacity Building and Islamic NGOs: Insights from Malawi', Praxis Note 48, INTRAC.
- James, R. with CABUNGO staff (2009) 'Faith-Based Organisational Development (OD) with Churches in Malawi', Praxis Note 47, INTRAC.

“This publication is really well written, its content and structure has been invaluable to me and those I have shared it with.”

Elisabeth Frimann

Brian Pratt chaired the advisory group for the University of Birmingham and DFID Research Centre on Religion and Development. He and Rick James contributed to workshops and conferences at the centre, and we are now preparing a special issue of *Development in Practice* on religion and development, slated for summer 2012.

In the autumn of 2009, INTRAC attended the seminar series on faith and development hosted by The Tony Blair Faith Foundation, DFID, Islamic Relief, World Vision, and Oxfam. The series explored why faith matters in development; the role of faith communities in conflict resolution and health care and education; how faith groups can bring ethics into the marketplace; and how they care for the environment.

Civil society and fragile states

The phrase 'fragile state' encompasses a wide range of states, and the criteria for inclusion in the list of fragile states vary between organisations and authors. States' attitudes to classification as fragile or conflict-affected also vary widely: some states may not wish to be called fragile, whereas others choose to refer to themselves as a fragile and/or conflict-affected state. The category of fragile states itself is also contested by some. A comprehensive definition of fragile states would include failing states and those at risk of failing, in their authority, legitimacy, or ability to provide basic services.

Defining fragile states as failing states is also problematic. First, many low-income and developing countries lack the capacity to provide basic services and this may be more attributable to factors beyond the state. Therefore, categorising a state as 'failed' on the basis of service provision failure alone is not helpful. Second, it may be more helpful to talk about fragile and conflict-affected contexts rather than states. This is because in reality fragility, conflict, and insecurity may extend beyond the borders of one state into another, or it may be that only one region within a state is affected by fragility, conflict, or insecurity.

Finally, it is important to recognise that the concept of fragile and conflict-affected states is a political and policy tool. It is rooted in the World Bank's concept of Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS), which itself emerged from a World Bank taskforce on approaching countries later labelled as fragile states. Classification as a fragile and conflict-affected state therefore often leads to the recommendation and implementation of certain sets of policy prescriptions by donors. This functionality is often glossed over within the discourse on fragile and conflict-affected states.

INTRAC is concerned with the role and development of civil society in insecure contexts, where the fragility of the situation stems from state weakness, repression, war, or other politically-related causes. Civil society has a crucial role to play in these situations, be it providing services or creating opportunities for peacebuilding and dialogue. There is tremendous diversity within and between fragile contexts, and continuous analysis of and responsiveness to differing



Building transitional shelters for those displaced by conflict in Sri Lanka

UNOPS Sri Lanka / DIFD, 2009

and very dynamic situations is vital. CSOs and NGOs often face high operating costs and risks in these contexts, and work in an environment of mistrust and poor social cohesion. They must also face the 'two-track' dilemma, whereby state capacity development may actually be hampered by civil society and NGOs creating an alternative route or track for service delivery that does not engage sufficiently with the state. As many states undergo profound political changes and the changing aid structure affects everyone, this will continue to be a very important area for future research and work.

Publications

- Zharkevich, I. (2010) 'The Changing Face of the 'War on Terror': New Developments in Counter-Terrorism Legislation and its Impact on Civil Society', Briefing Paper 26, INTRAC.
- Tukker, H. and R. van Poelje (2010) 'Capacity Development in Humanitarian Crises: Practice and Lessons Learnt about Strengthening Civil Society Organisations', Praxis Note 54, INTRAC.
- Zharkevich, I. (2010) 'The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Political Accountability in Fragile States: the case of Tajikistan', long paper, INTRAC.
- Dowst, M. (2009) 'Working with Civil Society in Fragile States', Briefing Paper 23, INTRAC.

The May 2011 edition of ONTRAC (48) will address civil society in conflict and post-conflict contexts, including contributions from the Cyprus programme, Saferworld, Progressio, and ICAP.

Planning for the next two years

Research

During the coming two years, we expect to:

- continue developing the NGO Research Programme
- keep delivering on core research functions (including publication of ONTRAC and regular briefing notes and papers)
- organise conferences and workshops; strengthen our partnerships with academic and research bodies (including convening the Development Studies Association NGO Study Group)
- produce research relevant to civil society and development, particularly on changes in aid architecture, private donors, civil society in emerging economies, trends in M&E, and organisational development
- provide research support for INTRAC's programmes in Central Asia, Cyprus, and Africa (Ethiopia in particular)

Consultancies

During the period we successfully won a number of substantial pieces of work that have increased the number of days contracted and being delivered nearly fourfold. Several will be delivered in the next financial year, including:

- An evaluation of Plan's Pan African Advocacy work
- IDRC – support to their Acacia network on using research for policy influencing
- An evaluation of the British Council's Mirpur-UK project

- An evaluation of donor collaboration (The Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, Comic Relief, Elton John Foundation, and CIF) for HIV/AIDS work in Malawi
- A substantial training programme for NGOs/CBOs funded through the British Embassy in Pakistan

We expect to continue developing our consultancy work; expand our reach on key themes; continue integrating new quality systems in our work; and increase our associates.

Training

We attended several NGO training provider meetings, alongside training directors and senior managers from People in Aid, Bond, Bioforce, RedR, and Mango. With these partners, we are exploring several crucial areas:

- fulfilling the needs of the sector and working cooperatively
- training impact assessment: learning, accountability
- trainer's competency framework and assessment
- accreditation, certification plans, and opportunities

We expect to continue working with other training providers to improve and expand our courses and their relevance.

We recently conducted two internal thematic reviews, in advocacy and organisational development/capacity building. We plan to continue to develop a secure online site for remote access of resources and materials, and encourage more sharing of learning and ideas. Additionally, the Central Asia Open Training programme for 2011 plans six workshops in Bishkek and Dushanbe.

Publications and events

The M&E conference will be held on 14–16 June 2011, in the Netherlands; we will examine particular case studies in more depth to further our learning on M&E.

INTRAC 20th Anniversary Conference will be held in Oxford at the end of 2011, and will look at growth and its impact on civil society: how civil society might cope with the end of 'added civil society' as donors withdraw. The resulting materials will be freely downloadable.

We also expect to produce a large volume of free resources from our work on peacebuilding and civil society in Cyprus, including CSO case studies, a series of policy notes, a research briefing paper, and an online toolkit for CSOs on peacebuilding activities. There will also be a sharing and dissemination conference in Cyprus on peacebuilding and civil society.

ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010



The road ahead – Obo, Central African Republic

Our activities in brief over 2009–11

Ran **34 training courses**

- with **369 participants** from **78 countries**

Worked with over **130 organisations**, on over 170 pieces of work

1 book produced (Beauclerk *et al.* 2011, *Civil Society in Action*)

Papers and notes written and made freely available:

- **14** Praxis Notes
- **4** Praxis Papers
- **6** ONTRAC issues
- **7** M&E series papers
- **3** Briefing Papers
- **3** other short papers
- **7** other long papers

Conferences, events, and workshops

- **3 international conferences planned:**
 - June 2011: 7th Evaluation Conference, Netherlands
 - October 2011: Civil Society and Peacebuilding, Cyprus
 - December 2011: INTRAC's 20th Anniversary Conference, Oxford
- **5 NGO Research Forums:**
 - May 2011 (upcoming): alternative development actors and changes in the aid architecture

- November 2010: accountability and impact, and challenges to humanitarian response and civil society support
- May 2010: M&E and corporate social responsibility in international development
- November 2009: INGO restructuring and accountability issues
- May 2009: civil society innovation and transnational advocacy

• **3 seminars:**

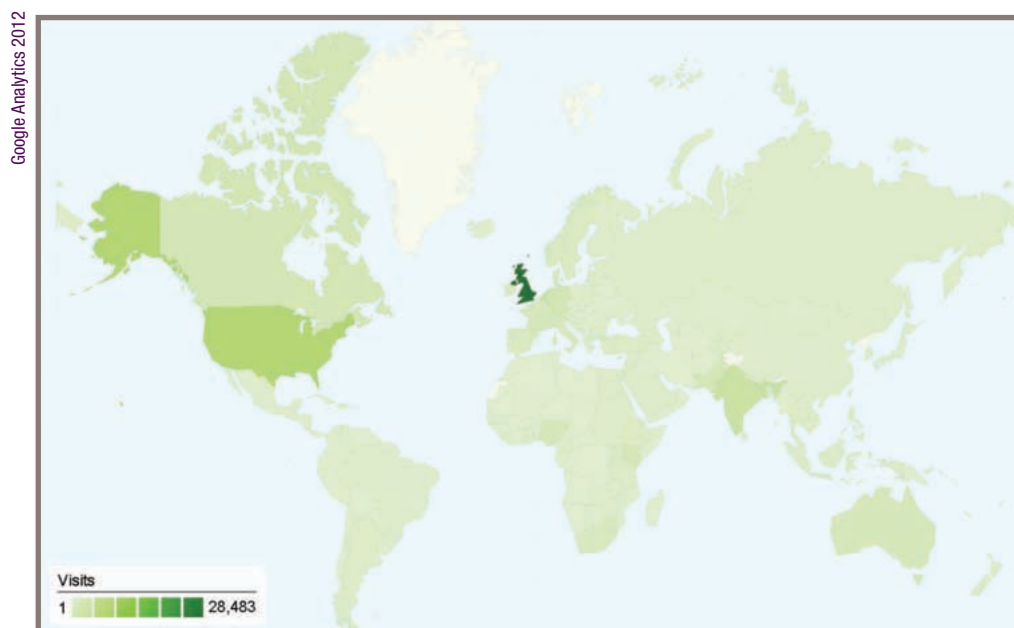
- Two on 'Future Directions in International NGO Structures: Decentralised Management, Alliances and the Recession', held in both the UK and again in Denmark in 2009–10.
- One on M&E: 'Accountability without Impact?', UK, 2010.

• **4 workshops** for the Comic Relief Peer Learning Programme 2010–11:

- Introduction to PLP
- Fundraising for success
- Effective governance
- Strategic planning

Our website as a hub and resource

- Over **142,600 visits**, (63% new visitors)
- Over **712,600** page views
- Over **47,000 downloads** of **751 documents**
- Visitors from over **200 countries/territories**



INTRAC's website visitors come from over 200 countries and territories around the world

Trustees

We would like to thank the following individuals, who have served as INTRAC trustees over 2009–11:

Geof Wood – Chair

Rosemary Preston – Vice Chair

Graham Nixey – Treasurer

Belinda Coote – Trustee

Pat Holden – Trustee

Janet Momsen – Trustee

Trevor Rees – Trustee (joined Oct 2009)

James Rowland – Trustee, finance committee (retired Sept 2010)

Paul Thornton – Trustee

Pat White – Trustee

Key donors

We would like to thank the following key donors for their generous support:

DFID, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Taylor & Francis, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EC, Comic Relief, British Council

Our partners

We would also like to thank our partners for their hard work and support:

PRIA, PSO, NGO Research Programme members [Christian Aid UK, Concern Worldwide, Cordaid, DanChurchAid, ICCO, Norwegian Church Aid, Oxfam Novib, Save the Children Denmark, Save the Children Sweden, Tròcaire], CDRA



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