The Newsletter of

INTRAC
International NGO Training and Research Centre

ontrac

No. 41   January 2009

viewpoint

This is civil society

At our conference in December 2008, 'Whatever Happened to Civil Society?', more than 140 people from 40 countries got together to move towards a common understanding of the critical importance of civil society in the world today. Discussions were focussed around what we see as the five key functions of civil society: generating the social basis for democracy; promoting political accountability; building social trust, reciprocity and networks; creating and promoting alternatives; and supporting the rights of citizens and the concept of citizenship.

Discussions were based on 40 case studies and plenary presentations. While some speakers felt that civil society had been "neglected", or "forgotten", many others also felt that we had "rediscovered" its real meaning by focussing on these five functions, and the conference had contributed towards this rediscovery.

What emerged is that it cannot be stressed enough that civil society does not imply a collection of NGOs working for the aid industry. Civil society should not be assessed by categorising the organisations within it (e.g. membership, NGOs, CSOs, etc) nor by the type of activities developmental NGOs carry out (e.g. literacy training, health, water, education).

Instead it was agreed that we need to understand what underpins civil society, what its role is within society and within the nation state.

The case studies strongly underlined the importance of civil society in a range of contexts, and through many types of activity – from legal reform, use of the media, small scale community initiatives, adaptation of technology, and policy engagement. This ONTRAC provides representative examples of the case studies used at the conference.

Participants at the 2008 conference

We looked at the problems of strengthening local capacities and competencies, and concluded that sometimes development practice undermined rather than promoted citizen-based action and voice. To avoid this we sought to understand and explore those cases where there had been successful collaboration between different stakeholders and concluded that collaboration was possible, but not if certain groups tried to monopolise civic space and grow to the detriment of local civil society.

Many INGOs at the conference reflected concern about their roles in this process and some felt that international funding had not always benefited longer-term support to civil society as it had led to local imbalances in resources and energy. As more countries enter 'middle income status' and foreign funding is withdrawn it has become more urgent to rediscover the real roles of civil society, if civil society is to meet the challenges in the absence of external funding.

The conference concluded with asking how can we regain the lost decade of civil society support? How can we redress the balance which puts civil society strengthening as an end in itself rather than just a means to provide services?

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The full text of these case studies and 36 more are available to download at www.intrac.org/pages/cstudy.html

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Choosing examples of each of the functions of civil society was difficult given the rich material presented at the conference. However, the following illustrate the discussions well. The first describes the difficult line between political activism and what is considered appropriate work by civil society in young countries with fledgling political systems. The second, considers the promotion of political accountability, by looking at the role of political journalism and cooperation with CSOs to bring justice for victims of police torture. The third case, on producing social trust, reciprocity and networks, uses the experience of HIV/AIDS support groups in Peru – how these groups' initial closeness and energy disappeared when large-scale HIV programmes started. The fourth function is illustrated by the innovative use of computers to spread indigenous farming expertise online for farmer's groups in Kerala, India. And finally an example from Nicaragua shows how CSOs have used the unusual space they have under the constitution to promote better services and improved humanitarian relief despite being seen as competitors of the government.

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Generating the social basis for democracy

Civil society – for political solutions with political parties

Central Asian countries have adopted democratic governance systems in the post-USSR period, but this democracy is weak and shallow – governments are authoritarian and citizens are alienated from decision making. In these countries civil society organisations (CSOs) are now realising that political solutions are needed, and have started deepening democracy by protests, actions and by engaging with opposition political parties.

NGOs are strong institutions

NGOs only emerged in the 1990s as an integral element of civil society in post–Soviet countries. At first, NGOs played a "first aid" role, implementing activities to alleviate the lives of people suffering from the transition to a market economy. Simultaneously they learnt to develop project proposals, build relations with donors and other NGOs, and collaborate with the authorities. At the end of the last century, many NGOs realised that they were a good resource to solve social problems. NGOs emerged which understood that mitigating problems on the surface did not bring long-term results. Activists and lobbyists, movements for solutions to local problems, and alliances to influence decision-making also appeared and NGOs started a more political approach to solving social problems.

In the last three years NGOs have started to build relations with political parties who share their ideas of justice, democratisation and fair governance. Today, NGOs attempt to collaborate with political parties on certain issues, although with great anxiety.

Civil society in authoritarian countries

Why – in spite of the risks and debates about the inappropriateness of NGO politicisation – do representatives of civil society in Kyrgyzstan look for more effective ways to influence political decision-making through collaboration with political parties?

The five countries of Central Asia have authoritarian regimes. There is little economic progress and no social protection of ordinary people living in poverty. There are also frequent human rights violations and corruption at all levels of government. The government is dysfunctional. To compensate, NGOs

carry out enormous work and considerable funds are spent. Nevertheless, we are not satisfied by the development of our countries.

CSOs have been disappointed many times, and there is widespread scepticism about working with legal and policy institutions. The conditions that would allow NGOs to take the measures needed to influence development are not present. Moreover, those who reveal the causes of existing problems – often corruption and non-fulfilment of government obligations – are threatened and intimidated.

Deep-seated problems need political solutions

Many NGOs, especially those working on human rights, feel that there is no sense in continually fighting these consequences – and that it is impossible to work with the causes of the problems. We need to look for new ways to solve problems and to stop imparting legitimacy to our governments who declare commitment to democracy simply in order to receive financial assistance.

Is necessary to work with political parties to improve the political space. However, in Kyrgyzstan, opposition political parties also do not have a long history and are only just starting to develop. NGOs in our country have wider knowledge and experience than political parties. This is thanks to the assistance of donor organisations and colleagues of the northern NGOs, and NGOs' motivation to study and solve problems in their communities. Therefore, collaboration with NGOs helps political parties to work more dynamically with their electorate.

Civil society and parties against corruption

In 2006 Center InterBilim held a big protest march against the government. There was a big movement to "Reform the Constitution", later the movement "For Justice" and in 2008 a Public Parliament was created in parallel with the official, corrupt Parliament. All these cooperation initiatives were successful in terms of consolidating progressive forces. Such collaborations frighten our northern colleagues who don't want to be blamed for interference in internal affairs. Also, joint actions of NGOs and political

parties are not appreciated by our governments, who criticise NGOs for excessive politicisation. We should acknowledge that donor agencies rarely support the participation of NGOs in large-scale actions in the struggle for rule of law, against corruption, and for justice.

> **NGO–political party collaboration frightens our northern colleagues who may be blamed for interfering in internal affairs**

But many such issues can not be resolved at the negotiating table. Our interference against growing injustice is necessary when an elected minority tries to impose on and control the majority. We should get rid of this 'ostrich policy' and learn to accept the truth – certainly if donor agencies want their funds to be spent effectively instead of just for the next 'tick box'.

Influencing from the inside

Due to unclear laws that limit NGOs involvement in politics, and double standards of northern governments and international institutions established for the development of democracy in the southern countries, we, the southern colleagues, suffer from contradictory statements of higher officials. For example Mr Brishambo, the head of OSCE, called Kyrgyzstan "the leader of democracy in Central Asia". He said this when visiting Kyrgyzstan on a day when law enforcement bodies were harassing participants of a peaceful march.

Such statements enable our authoritarian governments to continue outrages in relation to civil society. Representatives of civil society have to rely on ourselves to continue to struggle for justice. This means readjusting NGOs away from being service organisations.

We should look for ways to collaborate with all institutions that share our values: those who fight for democracy and justice.

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Promoting political accountability

Civil society and media against torture in Kenya

Kenya's history is replete with violations of human rights and widespread repression. Between 1963 and 1998, the state under the KANU party used torture against its critics. Most of these critics were arrested and detained without trial while others were 'eliminated'.

Advocacy journalism in action © Linda Lönnqvist, 2008

The 1990s saw emergence of a human rights and good governance civil movement to act as critical agents of change. CSOs emerged to improve people's knowledge of rights and to articulate grievances against violent repression. From the outset, relations between the KANU government and civil society were tense. The government saw civil society and opposition political parties as synonymous. Civil society, on the other hand, saw KANU and the government as representing the status quo, not change.

This situation continued after the December 27, 2007 disputed presidential polls that left trails of human rights violations and the media paralysed. With the emergence of a grand political coalition, the media is bound to act as an opponent of the state in the absence of multiparty democracy, paving way for a more open playing field – which includes working together with human rights CSOs.

Human rights and advocacy journalism: how it works
One of the many tools used in human rights advocacy is 'advocacy journalism'. It engages the media to end impunity and help hold perpetrators accountable. An advocacy organisation usually sends a team of human rights monitors to investigate any allegations. If a case is reported and documented, consent is then obtained from the victim to use the documentation for

publicity. Journalists then publish the case either in newspapers or the electronic media. The impact of the media can spark a national debate, and influence public opinion.

Kenya has a flourishing free press and human rights advocacy officers have a wide range of newspapers and radio stations to work with. Advocacy officers start by contacting different editors and journalists, discussing the concept of advocacy journalism, supplying information of the alleged violation case and supplying specific questions for the journalists to take up. For the journalists, gathering information from the police is often difficult, but possible. After the journalist runs the story, the human rights organisation then decides how to intervene: making a case immediately or helping victims to launch a formal complaint to the independent Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

> **Advocacy journalism can spark a national debate and influence public opinion**

Justice for torture victims?
The Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) and the consortium against torture applies advocacy journalism to defend the rights of torture victims. In cases of torture reported against the police, the victims often face obstacles in obtaining the necessary documentation to press charges. Victims complaining of torture or ill treatment by the police are required by law to report the allegations to the police station before being issued with police complaints form 'P3' – which has to be certified by a police surgeon. Victims must prove that they were subjected to torture and that the act was intentional and systematic.

Advocacy journalism is a practical approach to real issues. Take the case of Kimani Njoroge, a 17-year-old street boy who was shot and arrested in Nairobi by the Kenya Police Reserve on allegations that he had committed a violent robbery. He was taken into custody and was repeatedly tortured. For five days, his friends and relatives looked for him and were often harassed and intimidated by

police officers at the Central Police Station when they went there to seek assistance. The case was reported to the IMLU, and there was an appeal through the media to track Kimani down. This prompted the police to disclose his whereabouts.

The media later published Kimani's ordeal in the newspapers, calling for the police to release him. The Nairobi Provincial Police Officer replied and acceded that Kimani was in the custody of the police despite the central police earlier denying it.

IMLU in action
IMLU responded by visiting the police station with journalists and doctors – and were denied access. Together they camped outside the police station and witnessed the police sneaking Kimani Njoroge out and taking him to Kenyatta National Hospital. They followed the police convoy to the hospital and managed to get an interview with Kimani Njoroge. He was blind, and doctors confirmed that Kimani had sustained a gunshot wound through his left eye. His health state and age did not deter the police from charging him the following day for violent robbery.

Kimani Njoroge remained in custody for 18 months during his trial – and was eventually acquitted because of lack of evidence. Court reporters, using advocacy journalism, kept up the pressure on the proceedings and kept the case in the public eye.

The outcome of the case prompted IMLU to make a formal complaint over the shooting and torture of Kimani. The police refused to issue the P3 form necessary to make a complaint. During the long battle to get a P3 form, IMLU brought the case to the Commissioner of Police, the Attorney General and the Director of Criminal Investigations. While the resulting public debate about police violence was raging, the commissioner of police disbanded the Kenya Police Reserve and started an investigation into the Central Police Station. In this uphill struggle to hold authorities to account, Kimani Njoroge now has his P3 form and has commenced the journey for justice.

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Building social trust, reciprocity and networks

Rivers and stones: activism by citizens with HIV

Does the condition of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) affect the way that they live their citizenship and participation? What are the challenges and possibilities of participation as full citizens for PLHA? A case study on the Global Fund in Peru helped to answer this question.

Fieldwork in Lima took place with the collaboration of the main networks (platforms) of PLHA and different actors related to CONAMUSA. The methodology relied on analysing metaphors, focus groups and participatory techniques that helped the activists to tell their stories. Activists drew "The river of my participation" (sharing stories of political awareness and their relationship with their personal experiences through waterfalls, eddies, tributaries and stones) and expressed how they experienced their participation in CONAMUSA through different images. Two key ideas were stressed during the research.

Idea 1: 'Necessity participation'

"Here the State made the issue invisible, and we, the activists, had to pay for that. It was like paying something to make the problem of HIV AIDS visible, but using your face. Many of us had to appear in the media, although nobody would have liked to be have their diagnosis made public." **HIV activist**

The perception of time affects citizens' practices. 'Necessity participation' happens in urgent situations: when the lives of the people involved are at risk unless they take action – that is, participate. In the case of PLHA, the diagnosis is a crucial

moment that changes the way that people look at their lives and their political action.

Besides this, urgent participation creates 'necessity identities'. Once the immediate urgency is addressed, the levels of participation tend to decline, as there is not enough time to develop either a long-term agenda or political identities beyond immediate concerns. In Peru, activism started to decrease when the free ARV treatment was available in 2004. Steven Robins (2005: 12) mentions that this tendency has also been observed in the UK, where some activists state that "AIDS treatment killed activism".

Idea 2: Micro-participation

"How do you create an activist? First, as there were no medicines nor anything that could save you, people with HIV started to create GAMs (support groups) and that helped. With time, some people decided to change, and stopped just hugging each other and started to demand rights." **HIV activist**

There are different, but interrelated, levels of involvement in participation. What happens at the macro-political or inter-institutional levels is related to the most personal and immediate experiences. I called this personal dimension 'micro-participation'.

Hearing activists' stories, a common turning point after the diagnosis was joining a mutual support group (GAM). These spaces allowed PLHA to have a very personal experience, sharing

concerns, fears, experiences and problems in a group of peers, providing an alternative to the typical power dynamics in the individualising biomedical approaches. To acknowledge the importance of the personal dimensions of politics in HIV/AIDS activism implies considering GAMs as an example of the personal as political.

GAMs may even be considered as sites of radical possibility as they encouraged a process of political awareness among activists, giving the opportunity to have an initial form of organisation that later turned into other groups and platforms of activists. GAMs are crucial independent spaces for a model like CONAMUSA, which may be understood through the theory of invited participatory spaces (Cornwall, 2004), with power dynamics among ministries, NGOs and communities of PLHA.

Relevance for development organisations

The concepts of 'necessity participation' and micro-participation can help development institutions deal with the problem of aid to fight HIV/AIDS having the unintended consequences of weakening the movement. The difficult question is how outside agencies such as the Global Fund can support already existing, vibrant and valuable initiatives such as support groups, without undermining them.

Findings include that supporters should give more time to develop long-term agendas, to use stages in funding, and to realisethat participation relies not only on the national CCM but on other "alternative spaces" and networks, whose democratic practices are important but usually overlooked.

The strategy has to rely on the personal – GAMs. GAMs should also be considered in international principles like the GIPA Principle (greater involvement of people with HIV/AIDS). Finally, the participation of PLHA has to be understood with its contradictions and dilemmas, in order to develop adequate participatory models.

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HIV/AIDS activists' training activity

Creating and promoting alternatives

Composting online: using telecentres to share farming expertise

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can play a major role in improving knowledge transfer in small-scale agriculture. The experience of the Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement (RASTA) in Kerala, India, shows that farmers are keen to use online communications, information and videos to learn from each other about farming. When new methods lead to productive results, farmers are happy to embrace new technological alternatives.

People have their own solutions

Kerala, one of the southernmost Indian states, is populated mainly by people who make their living from agriculture – either as producers or as farm labourers. The crops used to be subsistence crops, but agriculture has become more market-oriented in the past 50 years. Now, farmers grow spices, coffee and fruit for sale in addition to paddy rice. While people have neglected soil and water conservation, agricultural practices have become more intensive – there is increasing use of pesticides and fertilisers. This has created water shortages, deforestation and environmental problems in Kerala. In 2004 there was an agricultural crisis when these environmental problems were compounded by falling prices for crops, job losses, and pest attacks.

RASTA has worked with Keralan women for 25 years. It runs thrift and savings groups and self-help groups for women. Self-help groups (SHGs) are groups of 10-12 women who meet each week to mobilise savings and discuss their plans. A strong leadership and sense of collective action evolves among group members within two to three years and this collective strength is often guided towards starting new or alternative livelihood activities. Over the years RASTA has found that the self-help group approach is highly effective for empowering women and finding appropriate livelihood activities. Since agriculture, the primary livelihood sector, was facing a crisis, RASTA has placed much emphasis on training farmers in sustainable agriculture production systems, knowledge sharing, field extension services and diversification of crops.

Agricultural knowledge transfer

RASTA has been supporting agricultural knowledge transfer for over 20 years and has learned the importance of collective farmer-to-farmer learning for improving agriculture. Farmers often receive biased information from e.g. fertiliser sales people, whose advice focuses on selling products rather than supporting sustainability.

To counteract this, RASTA set up a Village Knowledge Centre in 2004, run by the local women's SHGs. This centre holds documentation of successful sustainable farming practices, both traditional and modern, that RASTA has collected over the years.

Even though farmers have traditional knowledge and receive some information from the media, they had not been satisfied with the available information before the establishment of these centres. Farmers are looking for practical information on solving pest and disease issues. Many farmers requested information on marketing as they are unaware of the market price of the crops they sell – they are at the mercy of the wholesale dealers who buy for low prices. This is very important in a region were the majority of the crops cultivated are cash crops. Many farmers also need information on livestock management.

In 2006, RASTA upgraded the knowledge centre into a telecentre. The state of Kerala is very supportive of exposing the population to the benefits of technology, and the Ministry of Agriculture has set up similar information and networking platforms – but not at the village level. Thanks to an EU-funded project, RASTA could involve the local women's federation in setting up the computers and internet access at the telecentre.

From the field to the net

A telecentre is a public place where people can access a variety of communication services. The telecentres are equipped with computers and the internet. They focus on facilitating knowledge exchange between farmers, community groups, research institutes and intermediary organisations. In this way, farmers can ask questions from agricultural experts in research institutes. The questions are translated into English by the female telecentre operator and emailed to the expert. Farmers can also phone experts directly.

The information available comes from both local and research sources. Good practices in agriculture have been collected from the villagers, farmers, experts, research institutions etc. These good practices are documented

A Keralan filmmaker working on best practice videos

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The information is available in the village and is visual

Civil society seen as a competitor

systematically and stored in the telecentre database. The web-based tools at the telecentre include a website, a database of examples (including videos) and a discussion forum.

An important aspect of the telecentre is that the information is made available in the local language (Malayalam), referring to local conditions and crops (see www.farmfriend.org). The video clips of good practice – made by a team of five local women – are a popular way to disseminate the knowledge. Farmers are most interested in viewing the videos and have shown interest in replicating the practices.

The results of setting up telecentres for agricultural information are overwhelming: there has been a sudden shift in the ways that the farmers, especially women, look at agriculture. Many of the technologies illustrated through videos and text have been replicated by local women farmers. One advantage is that the information is available in their village itself and that it is visual. There are many cases were women agriculturalists have learned and applied new composting methods through the telecentre – not only in Kerala, but as far afield as in West Bengal, thousands of kilometres away.

Local ownership of local content = success

The experiences from RASTA in Kerala shows that community-run telecentres can bridge the gap in knowledge in agriculture, provided it is supported by a good content development team and a pool of experts. Providing content in local languages and using video clips are excellent communication tools. Providing information offline is also useful in areas were internet connectivity is weak. Community ownership and not-profit ways of working ensure the sustainability of the centre. One favourable factor in these areas is strong women's self-help groups, which catalyse the successful implementation of project activities.

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Civil society in Nicaragua has been able to engage politically because citizens have the right under the Nicaraguan constitution to organise and engage in political matters. Using this practical application of citizenship, Coordinadora Civil, a civil society umbrella body, has been accustomed to taking an active role in policy engagement as well as in service delivery.

However, recently the new government has started to see CSOs as competitors for the support of the people, and competitors for foreign development funds. The government is able to marginalise civil society's constitutional rights by ignoring the pre-existing engagement structures.

Hurricane Mitch mobilised civil society

Reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch led to the emergence of an organised civil society with a new conception of itself.

In October 1988 Nicaragua was severely devastated by Hurricane Mitch. At the time, the government's inability to deal with supporting the victims and reconstructing the infrastructure of the country became very apparent. Citizens' organisations joined together to respond to the emergency. They channelled external funds and cooperated with government institutions to help reach many affected citizens and regions.

The 300 citizens' organisations involved in the reconstruction joined together in December 1998 as Coordinadora Civil para la Emergencia y la Reconstrucción (Coordinadora Civil or CCER). CCER is an umbrella organisation of a range of citizens' organisations: NGOs, social sectors, guilds, labour unions, church organisations, and other sectors of society characterised by their vocation to non-profitable service for those in need, and by their autonomy in relation to the State, government, churches, political parties, and entities linked with market activity. Each member of the Coordinadora has its own specific objectives but all unite in the Coordinadora's goals of influencing public policies through building up a strong citizenship by generating conviction and consensus.

CCER's political activities
CCER's activities quickly moved beyond hurricane relief and reconstruction. CCER conducted a social audit of the government's use of foreign emergency funds and made a thorough survey, with 10,000 respondents, about the effects of the hurricane, and the effectiveness and transparency of the aid people had received. The survey findings were widely published.

Civil society strengthened through clashes with government
Unexpectedly, these successes led to a clash between civil society and government officials. The government's lack of concern for the population's basic needs left it open to criticism, and created competition over foreign emergency funds. But in spite of the government's legislative attempts to sideline CSOs and monopolise all the available funds, CSOs were able to survive, and to neutralise these attacks. This was specifically due to the prestige and recognition they had gained among the population for their role in the hurricane emergency. They emerged more invigorated and with a strong sense of unity, both from having worked together on the emergency, and from having faced the threats from the government together.

Nicaragua's constitution: citizenship for civil society
Several citizens' organisations worked in 2003 to draft a law on citizens' participation to take to the National Assembly – 'Law 475'. In preparing the draft, citizens organisations were starting to conceive themselves as "civil society": the organisation of those citizens who are not part of "the political class controlling the public power" and who strive to participate with the government in their own legally approved manner in the public political decisions of the country.

Law 475 has a mandate in the Nicaraguan Constitution: "Citizens have the right to participate under equal conditions in public matters and in the management of the State", Constitution Art. 50. This supported the National Assembly's decision to approve the Law.

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and the concept of citizenship

by the state

The Constitution's articles 4 and 50 also recognise that private citizens – and groups of citizens – have the right to engage in matters of managing the state. Law 475 uses this constitutional right of groups of citizens to engage in "political incidence", interpreted as the right for civil society to hold political opinions.

However, the members of the political class see this provision of the Constitution as a way for civil society to share political power – and tend to ignore this constitutional mandate as much as possible.

One example was seen in the National Council of Economic and Social Planning, CONPES. This council was established by presidential decree and included substantial civil society inputs. Under the previous president, CONPES became the main, well-functioning, body for civil society representation to the state. However, this body of people from outside the political classes was mistrusted by the National Assembly.

On the inauguration of the current president in 2006, CONPES was ignored. In 2007 it was restructured according to new structures that contradicted the system under Law 475. It excluded the most vocal CSOs in favour of more party-affiliated members. Citizens' participation in the shape of autonomy, criticism and debate is discouraged under the new CONPES, and service delivery is supported.

Coordinadora Civil has a strong track record of political comment and engagement, demonstrations, criticism of neoliberal policies and support of the fight against poverty. However, their autonomy and outspokenness provoked a confrontation with the current government in 2007: "We favour that autonomy and independence because we feel ourselves being a part of civil society and believe that our Constitution and Law of Citizens' Participation demand civil society to be autonomous and independent, and we owe our citizens that example of integrity."

But the present government wants civil society to align with the goals of the party. And when they feel resistance, they persecute and try to repress civil society as much as is feasible. Civil society has been accused in semi-official media of being allied with the campaign of the "International Right" to discredit and destabilise the Nicaraguan Government. One piece of "strong proof" put forward is the use of the slogan "DEMOCRACY, YES; DICTATORSHIP, NO" in civil society marches. Coordinadora Civil and civil society generally are now treated as dangerous enemies of the state. Meanwhile, owners of large capital are appointed as official 'people's' advisors to the Supreme Council of Private Enterprise, and violent gangs who suppress protests against election fraud have been armed and named patriotic "Sandinista Activists".

There is real cause for concern. Will the regime in Nicaragua evolve towards a more authoritarian one, in clear disregard of the norms of democracy so clearly delineated in Nicaragua's Constitution and in the Law of Citizens' Participation?

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Finding out more

These case studies are only a handful of the 40 presented at the INTRAC conference "Whatever Happened to Civil Society". The others deal with areas like community radio in Madagascar, local authorities in Palestine, partnerships with government in South Sudan, women's rights in the Middle East, and the legitimacy of INGO field offices. All these presentations and case study papers (five pages long) can be downloaded at www.intrac.org/pages/cstudy.html

The conference also dealt with wider issues such as challenges for different types of CSOs, how we define 'civil society' in different languages, faith in organisations, ways forward for different types of stakeholders, and of course – moving beyond "civil society". These plenary session presentations are available at www.intrac.org/pages/plenary.html

Don't miss the inspirational presentations from the likes of Kumi Naidoo and Alan Fowler!

You can also read INTRAC's latest thinking on civil society by downloading the conference background papers at www.intrac.org/pages/cseventmain08.html

Finally, INTRAC would like to thank lead facilitator Valli Yanni for her impressive efforts in making the conference happen.

Richard Holloway from the Aga Khan Development Network presents

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INTRAC training

For more information on the courses below, please visit **www.intrac.org/training.php**
or email **training@intrac.org**

Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation

16-20 February 2009
Duration: 5 days
Location: Oxford (Residential)
Price: £999
Explore monitoring and evaluation in depth. You will learn how to develop a cost-effective monitoring and evaluation system that can generate enough information and quality data to provide a development agency with a reliable understanding of the outputs, outcomes and impacts of development initiatives. This course is for practitioners who already have M&E experience.

Strategic Relations, Coalition Building, and Networking

25-27 February 2009
Duration: 3 days
Location: London (Non-residential)
Price: £475
This course looks at the relationships between NGOs as part of strategic development processes. Learn about the different types of relationships that have different impacts on development and on the organisation. Explore your issues, power balances and expectations in order to improve organisational effectiveness. The course is for practitioners who already understand the basics, but need the skills to take their coalitions and networks to the next level.

Partner Capacity Building

9-13 March 2009
Duration: 5 days
Location: Oxford (Residential)
Price: £999
This course helps you to understand capacity building occurring at different levels in the context of inter-organisational partnerships and social partnerships. We will look at cutting edge issues such as reverse accountability, transparency, and how donor power affects relationship dynamics. Learn a range of models and tools associated with designing and implementing organisational capacity building initiatives with partners. Find out how to engage in a learning process that brings mutual benefits to the partnership.

Advocacy and Policy Influencing

23-27 March 2009
Duration: 5 days
Location: Oxford (Residential)
Price: £999
This course gives you a thorough understanding of how to influence the policy making process in your own context. You will learn skills to help you formulate and plan effective advocacy strategies. Improve your ability to lobby decision makers, and gain confidence in relating to the media – give new life to your campaigning!

So, You Want to be a Trainer?

31 March-2 April 2009
Duration: 3 days
Location: London (Non-residential)
Price: £550
The course is designed for those who have little or no experience of being a trainer. It will equip you with the skills, tools, and creative techniques to design and deliver a training event in a way that makes learning enjoyable and effective. You will have the opportunity to learn, practice and to improve upon your presentation and facilitation skills in order to help build capacity in others.

Had Enough of PowerPoint? A new toolkit for the experienced trainer

3 April 2009
Duration: 1 day
Location: London (Non-residential)
Price: £200
The course is designed for those who have experience of being a trainer. The day will be packed with new and creative ideas, techniques and exercises for ensuring an effective learning event. This course will be fun and of great use to those of you who regularly run training events. If you believe that training is about watching PowerPoint slides whilst a trainer reads the content then this course is not for you!