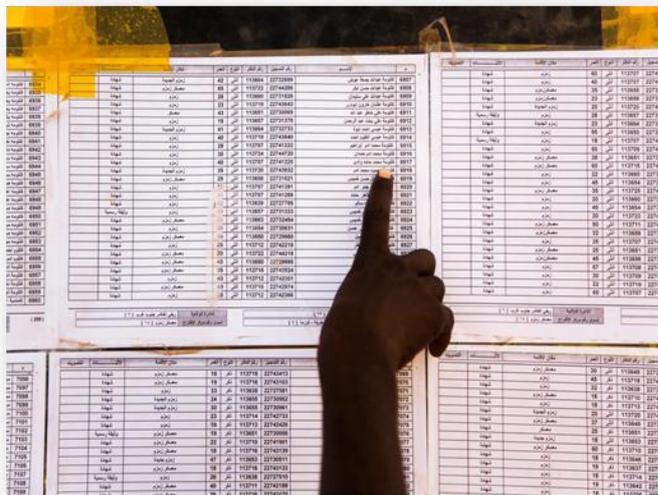




DANISH INSTITUTE FOR
PARTIES AND DEMOCRACY

POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT: LESSONS LEARNED



A SYNTHESIS OF EXPERIENCES
WITH POLITICAL PARTY SUPPORT

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Photo on Cover

Darfur Voter Checks Registration List on First Day of Sudanese Elections.
Photo: UN Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DIPD	Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
DFID	Department for International Development
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PPA	Political Party Assistance
PPAA	Political Party Assistance Actors
SADEV	Swedish Agency for Development Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUKTION

Opsamlingen af erfaringerne vedr. strategierne for og resultaterne af støtte til politiske partier internationalt er på det seneste kommet mere i fokus. Der rejses en række overvejelser og kritikpunkter, som det er vigtigt at lære af i fremtidige projekter. Nedenfor er et kortfattet rids af hovedpunkterne i betragtningerne. Efterfølgende er der en opridsning af ideerne til en bedre fremgangsmåde og herunder de vigtigste overvejelser for at arbejde frem mod det forventede resultat.

Syntesen er lavet som et input til DIPDs serie af demokratiworkshops for de danske politiske partier som led i bestræbelserne på at sikre erfaringsudveksling, facilitere gode partnerskaber og effektive demokratiprojekter. Det er håbet, at lokale partnere og øvrige internationale aktører på området også vil finde syntesen brugbar.

Der er i syntesen fokus på bilateral støtte til enkelte partier. Flerpartistøtten og støtten til flerparti-dialog, flerpartiplatforme, m.v. er ikke omfattet her. Det har imidlertid i løbet af processen med at samle syntesen vist sig at netop partistøtte i en flerpartiramme synes at være den modalitet, som en lang række aktører nu peger på.

Metoden i syntesen her bygger på en sammenfatning af en række evalueringer og studier, der er gennemført i løbet af de sidste 5 år indenfor støtte til politiske partier (Political Party Assistance; PPA).

Hovedparten af materialet er tematiske evalueringer eller program evalueringer dækkende en række indsatser indenfor partistøtte. Andre er evalueringer af de samlede indsatser fra forskellige donorer i en række udvalgte lande. Endelig er der enkelte rapporter, som sammendrager de generelle erfaringer med partistøtte og de fremherskende modeller for partistøtte, som har været anvendt gennem de seneste år. Faktisk er det således, at Greg Power netop færdiggjorde sin syntese af støtten til Parlater og Partier her ved udgangen af 2011 (Power, 2011). Ligeledes har UNDP iværksat en global konsultationsproces for at identificere erfaringerne, som vil resultere i deres nye strategi vedr. støtte til politiske partier i april 2012. Vi har også kendskab til projekt reviews og interne statusrapporter, men en stor del af dette materiale er desværre stemplet fortroligt fra opdragsgivernes side.

Vi har valgt at præsentere materialet gennem en kort syntese på hvert felt efterfulgt af kernecitater fra hvert studie, for således at give læseren direkte adgang til kilden. Det er dog ikke sigtet her at være udtømmende på området, men at fremhæve de vigtigste pointer. Af hensyn til omfang er ikke alt tilgængeligt materiale medtaget. Syntesen gennemgår de dimensioner, som typisk bør dækkes ved projekt design og som typisk udgør hjørnestene i en evaluering – formål, relevans, metode, effekt, etc. Endvidere ses der på de dilemmaer og svagheder, som hyppigt er nævnt i evalueringerne og analyserne. Afslutningsvis sammenfattes de bud, som forfatterne giver vedr. en bedre måde at drive partistøtte på.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years more focus has been placed on drawing the lessons regarding strategies for and results of international support to political parties. In this connection a number of observations and critical remarks are made, which it is important to learn from when developing future projects. In this report a brief synthesis of the main points is presented followed by a collection of ideas to engage in a better way in support of political parties and their democratic mandate – in particular some of the important considerations in order to work towards the intended outcome.

The synthesis is drafted as an input to DIPD's series of democracy workshops for Danish political parties aimed at facilitating sharing of experiences, good partnerships and effective democracy projects. Hopefully, local partners and other international actors in this field will also find the synthesis useful.

The synthesis focuses on bilateral support to individual parties. The support to multi-party platforms or multi-party dialogue etc. is not included here. However, in the preparatory work we have noted that party support in a multi-party setting is a modality, which several actors are in favour of or recommends.

The method used in the synthesis is a compilation of evaluation and studies, mainly conducted during the last five years in the field of Political Party Assistance (PPA).

The majority of the documentation is thematic evaluations or programme evaluations covering a number of intervention types within political party support. Some evaluations look at the total support from a number of different donors in a given country. Finally, there are a few reports, which highlight the general experiences with political party assistance and the dominant forms of support used during recent years. Actually, at the end of 2011 Greg Power just finalised an overview of Support to Parliaments and Political Parties (Power, 2011). Likewise, UNDP has initiated a global consultation process to identify the experiences, which will result in UNDP's new strategy for support to political parties to be published in April 2012.

We have chosen to make the presentation as a short synthesis on each theme followed by key quotes from each study in order to give the reader direct access to the main source. However, the aim is not to be exhaustive, but to bring to the fore key points. For reasons of brevity, not all accessible documentation is included. The synthesis presents the dimensions, which normally are to be addressed in a project and which typically are included in an evaluation – objective setting, relevance to context, implementation strategy, effect, etc. Moreover, the synthesis draw out a number of dilemmas and weaknesses, which frequently are mentioned in the evaluations and studies. Finally, the ideas and suggestions made by the researchers and evaluators for “a better way” are presented.

1 ASSUMPTIONS

All Political Party Assistance (PPA) rest on certain assumptions – some implicit and others more explicit, but in all cases it is extremely important to critically revisit the key assumptions underpinning the intervention logic. This is closely related to the notion of how the intended change can be brought about. The issue of assumptions runs across all the other following dimensions and remains one of the main points of critique of the manner in which PPA is constructed.

Some of the underlying assumptions linked to political party assistance (PPA) often constitute a self-defeating avenue. Critics hold that too often political party assistance actors (PPAA) intervene on the basis of the assumption: it worked for us – it will work for them too.

- *It seems to be taken for granted that party support will be meaningful and constructive, whatever the circumstances. This is not the case, different countries, different regimes and different problems call for a good understanding of the local specifics and for different approaches (Amundsen, 2007: 28).*

When it comes to organisational development, which was the focus area for Norwegian Democracy Support projects, Carothers notes that the stated or unstated theory that guides party aid providers is made up of the following core assumptions:

- *Exposing top party officials to the need for change and the ways of accomplishing it will lead them to believe in the need for and possibility of reforms and put them into practice.*
- *Training up-and-coming young and mid-level party cadres will turn them into agents of change within the parties who over time will find ways to make reforms come about in their parties.*
- *Identifying and training reform-oriented local leaders and cadres within a party will help them to make use of their distance from the party's central hierarchy to try out important reforms and then over time to push these reforms "upstream" to the party's main organisation (Carothers, 2006:187-8).*

2 CHANGE THEORY

Understanding how change happens and our ideas about how it can be facilitated is often called change theory or change strategy. Basically, it is the road of moving from A to B. Change theory is thus the bridge between the initial objectives at the start and the impact at the end which is not restricted to the project itself, but reflects the greater dynamics and power structures in society.

The evaluations often bring to the fore that in Political Party Assistance there is a lack of best practice, lack of strategies and clear notions about how political change happens. Often PPA supports relevant activities, but these activities may not be sufficient to bring about the intended change. The lack of clarity in change strategy is linked to problems identified in setting realistic objectives in PPA and results in poor impact (Chapter 12)

- *Generally, (there is) a lack of policies or strategy papers that deal with party assistance (Carothers, 2008: 9).*
- *Lack of clear concepts of and strategies for international party assistance are contributory factors that cannot be ignored (Bader, 2010).*
- *Apart from the overarching goal of promoting democracy, there is no agreed general framework among the actors operating in this field about what party assistance is supposed to achieve and how it should be implemented (Catón, 2007).*
- *It is vital to know what kind of change is really needed in order to decide on how to get from the situation where you are right now to get to the situation where you like to be (NIMD, 2011: 7).*
- *There is almost no evidence of a strategy for managing these activities towards particular outcomes (Power and Coleman, 2011: 9).*
- *Few projects seem to be underpinned by a clear understanding of how political change happens. They seem to be premised on an assumption of linear progress, so that certain activities will inevitably lead to certain results (Power and Coleman, 2011:23).*
- *A strategy for change and a well thought out methodological approach needs to be developed in the youth area (Norad, 2010:11; Catón, 2007: 18)*

3

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Context is the general term describing the overall environment, in which a certain activity or project is placed. Context refers to historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, the involved actors and the dynamics at play in a given situation.

Regarding context analysis in political party assistance, two main weaknesses are commonly identified: Firstly; poor context analysis combined with a tendency to export blue-print or organisational brands to various countries. There are many examples of actors within PPA having developed a certain training or a certain modality for capacity building, which is replicated in various countries, without sufficient adaptation. Secondly, even when the context analysis is solid and including elements of political economy analysis, incentives and power dynamics, these insights do seldom translate into the project design or overall change strategy.

- *Limited understanding of local conditions induces copying of programmes from one country to the next (Bader, 2010:13).*

- *Preset standardized designs not well-adapted to their particular context and mechanistic methods of implementation (Carothers, 2008: 8).*

- *Commentators on international party assistance note how these activities generally tend to be supply driven rather than based on contextualised understandings of the role and needs of political parties in the countries to which the assistance is directed (Amundsen, 2007; Catón, 2007; Power, 2008).*

- *The need to move away from viewing political parties in isolation, as they cannot be easily separated from the wider political system (Wild and Foresti, 2010:2).*

- *Overall, while the principle that “context matters” appears to have gained ground, there was relatively little evidence of a systematic move from understanding context to tailoring support to context (Wild and Hudson, 2009: 23).*

4

POLITICAL SYSTEM ANALYSIS

One element of the context analysis, which is often inadequate, is the political system analysis. Political system analysis can be made in many ways, but generally covers political regulations and laws, political institutions and political processes – often called the overall governance system.

The evaluations and studies highlight that too little attention is given in political party assistance to the overall governance system and the significant importance for the rules of the game and subsequently incentives related to building capacity, accountability and responsiveness within political parties.

It matters a lot whether the project will unfold in a presidential or a parliamentary system, whether a Westminster model (first-past-the-post) or a proportional representative model is in place, and how and if the party laws regulate the establishment and conduct of political parties.

- *That political parties are bound up in their wider political systems, and reflect a given context, seems an obvious point, but it has not necessarily been reflected in much of donor support to political parties to date. Instead, generalisations have commonly been made about party systems and parties within them across a range of very different contexts (Wild et al., 2011: v).*

- *Electoral system choices can have fundamental effects on political party development (Carothers, 2008: 12).*

- *That political parties are bound up in their wider political systems, and reflect a given context, seems an obvious point, but it has not necessarily been reflected in much of donor support to political parties to date. Instead, generalisations have commonly been made about party systems and parties within them across a range of very different contexts (Wild et al., 2011: v).*

- *Understanding the universe of informal rules which effectively shape many of the incentive structures and conduct of political parties remains key (Wild et al., 2011:2).*

- *Either way, the type of political system does affect internal party dynamics, of governing and opposition parties.... The particularities of electoral legislation go a long way towards defining the number of, and interaction between political parties. This is more than an issue of whether elections are free and competitive. It has to do with the particular incentive structures for party conduct that relate to the rules of electoral competition. The particular forms and degree of proportional representation or majoritarian system, whether there is an open or closed party list system in place, or the rules for electing the president, are central in defining the number of political parties that can compete, and the rules of the game for political interaction (Wild et al., 2011: 2-3)*

5 GAP FROM ASSESSMENT TO PROJECT DESIGN

Most political party projects start with an initial assessment before the actual project is designed and the basic architecture of the project is drawn.

The key finding is that there is often a gap from assessment to design in political party assistance. Even when a solid political system analysis is made, this information is seldom used to inform the design of the project itself.

This weakness is also prevalent in other areas of governance assistance. DFID initiated a number of comprehensive governance and political economy studies in several cooperation countries only to find years later that the studies had little influence on the subsequent design of governance programmes. In conclusion, the recognition that politics and power matters did not easily imprint on the actual interventions for a host of reasons including the neutrality principle.

- *Moving away from the temptation of the technical towards methods of assistance that are politically nuanced and politically engaged is a much deeper challenge..... Political analysis of the constraints on governance reform often point to a simple but damning central conclusion: Power holders directly benefit from existing governance deficiencies and various structural factors constrain opportunities for far-reaching reform (Carothers and de Gramont, 2011:7).*
- *Donors are struggling to translate their strategic insights [regarding the political economy] into project designs on the ground. Ultimately, the way 'managing for results' are interpreted by donors may, in fact, be undermining both the quality and impact of political programmes in the long-term (Power and Coleman, 2011:8).*
- *Yet, these insights [regarding long-term change horizons] rarely translate into project design (Power and Coleman, 2011:23).*
- *For the basket funding model in Nigeria, despite interviews revealing a clear understanding by external actors of the highly political challenges involved, there appears to be a mismatch between this political awareness and recourse to top-down, supply driven technical assistance, aimed at building the capacity of party leadership in a number of ways. This does not seem to engage with the identified challenges of a dominant party system, divisions along ethnic, religious and regional lines and the prevalence of patronage (Wild et al., 2011:13).*

6 STRONG LOCAL OWNERSHIP

Local ownership refers to the local partner taking ownership of the project and being committed to the changes, which the cooperation seeks to bring about.

Local ownership is good for a host of reasons. It safeguards against eternally imposed agendas, it facilitates sustainability, it fosters accountability, etc.

However, the reports have two interesting observations: Firstly, the local ownership is still quite weak in a large number of cooperation projects. Secondly, the whole domain of political party development is very much considered as internal matters and hence there is considerable hesitation to involve external actors in the political epicentre. In short, it is hard to influence the operations of political parties. This resilience to external influence can be attributed to a number of factors, but obviously any political party should first and foremost be accountable and responsive towards its own constituency. In this regard it is argued that international assistance may cause a problem.

- *While local ownership is seen as key to success, it is in PPA paradoxically mentioned as one reason why, political parties are difficult partners for assistance providers, as Peter Burnell and Andre´ Gerrits have pointed out in the opening contribution to this collection. They identify three major reasons for the limited success of international party assistance: first, the ‘specific method of party aid’; secondly, the ‘unfriendly political environment’; and thirdly, the strong local ‘ownership’ of political parties that makes external influence so difficult (Bader, 2010).*

- *The demand of these (local) organizations... does not necessarily reflect what is most strategic in a party system perspective (Sadev,2009:ix).*

- *Our research has shown that, locally owned programmes are still thin on the ground (Power and Coleman, 2011:21).*

- *The democratic right of one man, one vote is no longer valid when donor resources push in certain directions, and the principle of party accountability to citizens is broken when donors set conditions for support (Amundsen, 2007: 5)*

- *In fact, donor support may lead to the establishment of even more political parties just to get access to the basic subventions... Another problem is that donor assistance to parties may increase political polarisation. High levels of polarisation may lead to increased conflict and political stalemate (Amundsen, 2007: 5)*

7

PROJECT DESIGN

Project design concerns the overall architecture of the project, answering the key questions about why, where, when, who and how. The critical observations relating to design of projects within Political Party Assistance are not few in number. Several of the critical observations also relate back to the above mentioned weak context analysis, inadequate political system analysis and the difficulties in making the projects build the bridge between the current situation and the future change.

- *Party assistance has two weaknesses that may sound contradictory at first: it lacks systematic methodology and it is insufficiently contextualized. The first weakness means that there is no general framework for what party assistance is supposed to achieve and how programmes should be implemented. This does not mean that there are not successful programmes. At the general level, however, no such framework exists. The second weakness refers to the fact that assistance providers tend to apply the same solutions everywhere or to copy experiences from other countries. Yet each situation is different, and if assistance is to be effective, it has to be tailored to specific context (Catón, 2007:17).*
- *Recent ODI research highlights flaws in some dominant models of support. Political programming is still, to a large extent, based on a 'hit and hope' strategy (Power and Coleman, 2011: 9).*
- *The effect of the design problems ... can be summarized as poor planning and design resulting in unrealistic objectives, a focus on outputs rather than outcomes and a mismatch between activities and outcomes (Power and Coleman, 2011:23).*
- *Parliamentary strengthening projects still try to train MPs in 'oversight' or legislative scrutiny rather than addressing why these issues are given such a low priority in the first place. Similarly, party assistance projects encourage models of good party organisation, ideological coherence and mass membership, but fail to convince the partnering parties why these things matter, or who they might help them (Power and Coleman, 2011: 51).*
- *Flexibility [in design] cannot be used as a substitute for strategy (Power and Coleman, 2011: 52).*
- *The methods of implementation used are at times inadequate to meet the nature of the highly political processes of party development and contestation involved (Wild et al., 2011: vi).*
- *What complicates matters further is an apparent disjuncture between implementers 'micro' level objectives and evaluation, and the 'macro' level step changes expected from these inputs (Wild et al., 2011: 19).*

8 OBJECTIVES

Setting objectives refers to identifying what the aim of the political party support is all about. Different actors may have different opinions about what the aim should be. Some are preoccupied with the aim of strengthening the political party structures, while others are asking how the political parties can be of greater benefit to the society and the electorate at large.

However, it seems that objective setting in PPA is first and foremost struggling with three challenges: Firstly, the challenge of actually being relevant and reflecting properly the context analysis; secondly, a technical challenge in being realistic, measurable, attainable with suitable indicators. Finally, the challenge of daring to address issues related to political power dynamics.

- *Project objectives are often vague and performance indicators are usually lacking. The way projects are identified and selected does not ensure that they strategically address the problems of the party system (Sadev, 2009: ix).*

- *Problem analysis should be strengthened and broadened in order to ensure that projects strategically contribute to democracy and well-functioning party systems (Sadev, 2009: xi).*

- *Organisations often have poorly defined objectives and indicators, inconsistent use of terminology and focus on outputs instead of on political outcomes (NIMD, 2011:3).*

- *The most common approach to party support, has involved funding, through an implementer, for capacity development and technical assistance (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 2).*

- *There is often a failure to penetrate the socio-political fabric of the recipient society and engender locally-driven processes of change. Why then, does the standard method show such persistence? The most apparent explanations are that the method is simple and straightforward, and party aid is sometimes as much about relationship-building for political purposes as about stimulating reform (Carothers, 2008: 9).*

9

FRATERNAL/SISTER PARTY SUPPORT

The common form of support to political parties is often called the Fraternal Model or Sister Party Support, where political parties in western societies enter cooperation with parties in the Global South.

Many critical observations are made regarding the underlying assumption that an ideological match can be identified. It is moreover argued that very often the support rendered is addressing generic challenges in the parties that apply to most parties regardless of ideology. Finally, many political parties in Africa and Asia are believed to be structured around many other factors than ideology (regional bonds, ethnicity, personality, etc.) and especially the capacity to develop ideological positions and policies is weak.

- *Common forms of assistance seek to link ideologically aligned parties, again through bilateral funding, and often with a focus on peer to peer activities like exchange visits (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 3).*
- *Advantages are the common ideological link between the provider party foundation and receiver political party, which may be the basis for greater mutual understanding and trust, and allows for greater access and influence within the receiver party. Disadvantage: is the difficulty of finding ideological partners in countries where the European left-right spectrum does not define party life (Carothers, 2008: 8).*
- *The left-right spectrum has decreasing relevance in many parts of the developing world, especially in Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East, where parties instead mobilize around religion, ethnicity and other social affiliations, or personalities (Carothers, 2008: 8).*
- *Some of the parties seek to model these activities as ideologically neutral democracy aid and prefer multi-party projects. Other parties emphasise the political nature of party assistance and prefer bilateral projects (Norad, 2010: xiii).*
- *Particularly problematic is attempts to link ideologically aligned political parties from different regions. In Uganda, political parties are open in acknowledging that this ideological link is largely meaningless (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 3).*
- *To start with the sister to sister model, our analysis finds that the presumed ideological link between parties remains weak (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 12).*
- *In practice, therefore, there are no de facto 'counterparts' to political parties from European or other Western contexts. This can render party identification ad hoc and selective, effectively creating a lottery as to which parties are promoted or supported. Thus the key assumption of the sister model... seems flawed in the Ugandan context. Moreover, the potential for this to do*

harm – for example where it disproportionately favours a party which is not politically relevant in Uganda, remains a significant challenge (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:13).

- *Technical assistance to party to party support with a weak ideological base does not seem to adequately engage with the wider structural challenges and constraints which shape political parties and their development in Uganda (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 24).*
- *Support that seeks to link ideologically aligned political parties from different countries is particularly problematic. Some donors and funders of party support are already beginning to recognize where this form of support is not appropriate and are supporting alternative approaches (Wild et al., 2011: vii).*
- *Aid under the flexible resource approach often ends up yielding a nonstrategic scattering of activities. The assistance is not guided by serious underlying research or analysis of what impulses for change actually exist within the party, the favourability of the political context for change, or the impact of technical assistance on internal party reform. Furthermore, senior people in these parties tend to describe the field representatives of Western party foundations as pleasant friends, but distant outsiders to the real internal workings of the party (Carothers, 2008: 8).*
- *In addition to limiting accusations of partisanship, the multiparty approach is also advantageous because it facilitates efforts by the aid provider to think about the common overall problems of a party system. The main disadvantage of this approach is the greater difficulty in creating a closer party-to-party relationship between the provider and recipient (Carothers, 2008: 9).*
- *Another challenge is possible partisanship, amateurism and short-term horizons. Technical expertise on political parties and party systems in democratising and transitional countries is still lacking in the international arena, and there is an even stronger need for local experts. Consolidation of a genuine multiparty system is a long-term process. Political conviction, partisanship and eagerness can sometimes override non-partisan and long-term considerations. This is an inherent problem of “sister party” support (Amundsen, 2007: 6).*
- *In regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as parts of Asia, parties with the same ideological profile may not exist and “party-hunting” missions are absurd. This is why the party-to-party approach is better suited in countries situated closer in terms of geography and ideology, like Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and Latin America (Amundsen, 2007: 15).*

10 TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

In political party assistance there has been a very large use of training and workshops for party leaders, council representatives, etc. The predominant approach with focus on training and workshops is put under serious attack in the evaluations and reports at hand. While recognising that training and workshop can be important and needed ingredients, it is argued here, as generally within development assistance, that sustained change requires much more.

The lack of more comprehensive capacity development approaches combined with absence of measures to address the drivers or obstacles to political change are put under scrutiny.

- *The temptation of the technical. This was the belief that deficiencies in governance could be substantially alleviated through technical assistance. These programs relied heavily on capacity-building with the idea that training would lead to improved governance (Carothers and de Gramont, 2011:5).*
- *Trainings are often short, one off events without follow-up, and frequently led by “fly-in” experts who lack substantial knowledge of the local scene and teach from a set script (Carothers, 2008: 9).*
- *A menu of teaching components which is regularly used for the training of its own members, and which may or may not have been modified to be relevant in a foreign context. The knowledge and techniques that are imparted to participants at seminars mainly consist of the “tools” of party work, i.e. discrete sets of “how to” knowledge, for instance on recruitment, how to organise a congress or how women can become more assertive in public meetings (Norad, 2010:13).*
- *Projects based on the training of trainers (ToT) approach or similar decentralised methodologies. As we have seen, several Norwegian Democracy Support projects did in fact employ such decentralised approaches, but as the present and previous evaluations indicate, these projects have failed to realise the sought for “snowballing” effect. The evaluation of Senterpartiet’s projects in Tanzania questioned the budgetary spending on costs related to the Norwegian project partners’ participation in seminar activities in Tanzania (Norad, 2010:26).*
- *Previous evaluations of NDS projects highlight the limitations of the standard method of seminar training that the political parties employ in their projects. Seminar training tends to take the form of singular events, or “hotel meetings” as they were referred to by Kenyan politicians, which are easily forgotten by the participants (Norad, 2010: 26).*
- *The use of short-term one off training was not seen as a particularly useful method, as it did not contribute to long term shifts for the parties involved (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:16).*

- *This highly technical approach appeared to be struggling in the face of the political challenges parties faced in Uganda (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi 2010:13).*
- *However, while the majority of the parties interviewed identified a lack of capacity and technical skills as major challenges, they also felt that implementers involved in this form of support maintained fixed ideas of what form assistance should take, reinforced by the use of external consultants. There was a common view that they 'came with their proposals and parties have to fit within them' or that they 'develop what they think parties need'. In part, this seems to reflect the assumptions behind the stated aims for this support, which focus on technical inputs to build capacities of parties in key areas, leading to an approach in implementation which tends towards technical, and at times blueprint, methods (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:17).*

11

MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Monitoring is an on-going process to ensure that the project is on track and it entails following up on the milestones of the project. Reviews are normally understood as an assessment of the project in view of its immediate objectives and often seen as a management tool. Evaluation is an independent assessment of the overall achievements and impact of the project.

In the field of political party assistance monitoring and evaluation is a bit of a catch 22. In the first place the main finding is that PPA has been subjected to little systematic monitoring and evaluation overall. In turn this means that we know little about how the monitoring and reviewing is taking place in the various projects and the lessons learned.

There has been too little attention to the value of monitoring and reviewing as a tool for achieving the objectives and little recognition that intelligent monitoring and intelligent use of reviews in itself can be a strong change instrument. Moreover, many of the problems encountered in monitoring and evaluation are linked to the previously mentioned vague objectives setting, absence of indicators, and lack of baseline data.

- *Party aid organizations rarely engage in or are required to take part in rigorous, independent evaluations of their work (Carothers, 2008: 8).*
- *Party assistance has been to only a slight degree subject to monitoring and evaluation or to academic research (Norad, 2010: 5).*
- *All models of support to political parties in Uganda seem to struggle to measure and analyse the impacts and results of their work effectively. Party to party support appears to offer the most under-developed approaches to monitoring and evaluation (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 4).*
- *What is most striking about the field of party assistance is the almost complete absence of monitoring and evaluation (Power, 2008:18).*
- *Overall, party to party support tends to focus more on outputs than on trying to measure that longer term impacts (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:21).*
- *Where assumptions do not seem to adequately reflect the realities of the political context, this clearly poses challenges for the measurement of results (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:23).*
- *Across all of the case-studies, there is a clear need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation (Wild et al., 2011: vii).*

12

IMPACT

Impact is generally understood as the longer term changes resulting from the project or development interventions. Impact is thus addressing changes beyond the immediate output or result of the project and impact relates back to the overall democratisation objectives for the project.

The weak practices in monitoring and evaluation alluded to above have of course implied that the documentation of impact in turn falls short. Nevertheless, a number of studies reach conclusion that the impact of PPA in terms of strengthening democracy, improving political culture and building the capacity of political parties to perform their key functions have been very limited and often irrelevant.

The very pessimistic picture which prevails is probably worth a scrutiny in itself. Moreover, it is evident that many of the characteristics of PPA - such as short term perspective – in itself makes longer term impact difficult. Finally, many of the evaluations and studies have actually not used impact assessment methodologies.

In brevity, the findings are that impact is limited on the structure and organisation of the party; on the conduct of the party leaders; and on the wider political system. However, there are areas which generally get a slightly positive score and that is efforts at supporting women and youth in political parties and working with political parties at the local level. Yet, also here there are warnings voiced regarding the assumption that training young party cadres will turn them into agents of change within the parties and make reforms come about in their parties. It takes more to change a political culture than young party members receiving training.

- *There is widespread scepticism among scholars about the ability of party assistance to have a considerable impact on parties (Bader,2010).*
- *PPA rarely has transformative impact, despite the hopes and sometimes beliefs of its providers (Carothers, 2006).*
- *[on political party assistance] The effects are likely to be modest, the consequences marginal to political development (Burnell, 2000).*
- *In most project studied, the Team found prospects for longer term impact on the party system quite dim (Sadev, 2009: viii).*
- *Urgency to measure result in PPA not only because of public accountability but also because most organizations have a higher need to focus on desired results and to focus more on the outcomes and impact rather than just output (NIMD, 2011:3).*

- *Impact assessment is still in its infancy, little work has been done by the (PPA) sector so far and the need to show impact on the long term is increasing (NIMD, 2011:8).*
- *International support for parties often seeks to moderate these (party) deficiencies, but the impact of party assistance seems difficult to trace (Rakner, 2010:1252).*
- *It is widely recognized that political party assistance can take years to bear fruit ... Direct and quantifiable attribution of outcomes to political party assistance is usually impossible (UNDP, 2006: 80).*
- *A recent evaluation report of NIMD's work in Zambia noted that beyond the summing up of workshops and meetings, party representatives interviewed could not identify lasting effects resulting from bilateral funding (Rakner and Svåsand, 2010:1265).*
- *The potential for achieving the aims of organizational improvement is probably limited because of several factors; the overwhelming importance of the presidency combined with the first- past-the-post-system is likely to spur further party fragmentation.*
- *The methods employed particularly in relation to exchange visits had very limited impact on the development of the political parties involved (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:15).*
- *There remains a significant evidence gap in terms of the impact of party assistance (Wild et al., 2011:19).*

13

JUSTIFICATION OF POLITICAL PARTY ASSISTANCE

In view of the findings above it is relevant to recall the justification of assistance to political parties. It would be unfortunate if the bleak picture painted above would lead to the conclusion that Political Party Assistance is not justified. On the contrary; just as political parties are justified and needed in a political representative system, assistance to political parties is needed and justified. The challenge is to find a better way. Below are a few key points on the justification of political party assistance.

- *Political parties are often enmeshed in corruption, both in attempting to gain power and in exercising power once they have it. Efforts to find systemic methods to reduce corruption without addressing the party domain are incomplete. More generally, attempting to support positive political reform, including greater accountability, without engaging with political parties leaves out a key set of actors in the overall political process (Carothers, 2008: 7).*
- *The acknowledgement that Political parties are the cornerstones of representative democracy. Political parties and party systems are necessary for functioning democratic governance systems and appropriately designed political systems that are free, open and rights-based help to enhance effective democratic governance (EISA, 2010: 1).*
- *In terms of parties' organizational functions, these include recruiting leaders, presenting election candidates and developing competing policy proposals that provide voice and choice. Political parties require as much nurturing and attention as other social and political institutions, including parliaments, governments departments, non-governmental organizations or election management bodies, which receive both scholarly attention as well as technical assistance and development aid (EISA, 2010:2).*
- *There is, however, increasing recognition of their (political parties) importance, not just during elections, but in relation to a wide range of governance and accountability processes (Wild and Foresti, 2010:1).*
- *Pro-democracy, pro-poor, pro-development policies and the inclusion in society of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and minorities have been used as arguments to justify support to particular parties (Amundsen, 2007: 5).*
- *Political parties are important, even indispensable from a good governance perspective, and thus eligible for donor support (Amundsen, 2007: 1).*
- *A well-functioning party system is a prerequisite for representative democracy. Political parties are the main channel between citizens and political decision-makers. Political parties are essential both for the emergence and the consolidation of democracies.... Besides, politics matters. The quality of polit-*

ical parties influences the quality of political institutions, and the quality of the political institutions determines the quality of development policies and economic management. People also have a fundamental right to choose their political leaders. Basic human rights include the political rights of association and representation and ultimately the right to change the government peacefully, through elections (Amundsen,2007: 1)

14

A BETTER WAY

In determining a better way it is of course essential to come to grips with what a political party is (unlike other civil society organisations), how the particular political system works and in what way the electorate would like to see their parties function.

There are a number of manuals, resource books, toolkits and guides available, which seek to outline a better way of engaging in political party cooperation. However, many of these have been around for a while. Either they have not been use properly or their use has rendered the results, which have been outlined above. As noted, there is not a large body of normative approaches or best practices within PPA, and the various manuals that do exist shall not be repeated there.

Rather, in brevity below is a listing of the ideas presented in the studies and evaluation, which have been perused there. They all provide suggestions – simple as well as complicated - for a better way of providing support to political parties with a view to enhance their proper functions in the democratization processes. Hopefully, they also foster debate and creativity in developing innovative measures in political party support.

The suggestions, not surprisingly, fall in the same categories as outlined above; proper context analysis, prudent strategies, well defined objectives, lean and intelligent monitoring, etc. Most importantly perhaps is the attention given to the overall approach to enhancing the role of political parties in democratisation processes.

CONTEXT

- *Assess a political party situation more extensively to prepare a deeper analytical framework for party assistance (Catón, 2007).*
- *As political parties are embedded within wider political systems, programme design for party support needs to be underpinned by strong context analysis. This should go beyond one off or static analysis to be integrated into programming and monitoring. This implies working more at the party system level, on a cross party basis where possible (Wild et al., 2011:vii).*

APPROACH

- *Be aware of critical junctures and moments for change i.e. after a poor election outcome the party may be mature for serious reform (Carothers, 2008:10).*
- *Best principles, as opposed to best practice, must be selected from democrat-*

- ic systems and that these must be tailored for specific country contexts (EISA, 2010: 6).*
- *Some programmes do better in addressing the realities of the incentives and structural challenges that shape party development (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 3).*
 - *Best fit – Governance experts have increasingly embraced the idea of “best fit” rather than best practice. Instead of importing Western models, a best fit approach focuses on helping support institutions that are appropriate for the specific context in which they operate (Carothers and de Gramont, 2011:11).*
 - *Give attention to demand for governance – not just supply (Carothers and de Gramont, 2011:11).*
 - *These challenges suggest the need to go beyond purely technical objectives.... recognizing the incentives and power dynamics at play (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:13).*
 - *Direct support may be appropriate, but process is everything. Political intelligence and engagement is crucial. Need for strategies for engagement with dominant party and risk mitigation (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 26).*
 - *[There is a] need for a more strategic approach which deals more directly with the political factors influencing the performance of parties and parliaments (Power and Coleman, 2011: 16).*
 - *The problem is usually not the MPs’ lack of understanding, but the incentive structure that governs their behaviour. Programming needs to focus on changing these incentive structures, rather than simply “teaching or training” MPs.....This means that donors have to work with the grain of political will within the parliament of party and work with, or around the various incentive structures which determine the effectiveness of the institution (Power and Coleman, 2011:16-17).*
 - *Democracy assistance work, in so far as it seeks more transparency, accountability and representation, means a redistribution of political power. ... (Power and Coleman, 2011:17).*
 - *The conception of what is achievable over what timeframe needs to be based on a more realistic assessment of how political change happens (Power and Coleman, 2011:17).*
 - *Two tactics seem to be emerging: First, the benefits to the local partners need to be sequenced, so that they are only delivered once particular milestones or indicators of progress have been met. Second, programmes need to be built around a package of reforms rather than single issues (Power and Coleman, 2011: 53).*
 - *Two lessons emerge from this study: ensure that minimum conditions are met*

before engaging...: commitment from all major political parties to 'play by the rules' and not resort to extra-constitutional methods.....;and buy in from the entire political leadership....(Murphy and Lyne-Mangueira, 2011: 39).

- *When it comes to the modality of interventions, four lessons emerge from this study: 1) make long-term commitments...2) design flexible projects that can respond to changes in the political landscape and opportunities emerging and 3) invest in people and relations (Murphy and Lyne-Mangueira, 2011: 45).*
- *Some models, in their design and implementation, do see to incrementally address some of the incentives and power dynamics of political parties in each country (Wild et al, 2011: VI).*

PROBLEM DIAGNOSIS & PROJECT DESIGN

- *It is important to distinguish between internal and external issues that affect political parties' function (EISA, 2010: 28).*
- *Any programme regarding capacity building of political parties need to start with a participatory diagnose of the needs in capacity building (UNDP, 2006).*
- *It highlights the importance of an effective process of design, including in-depth assessments of parties to inform programming (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 4).*
- *A strong process for designing programmes (which is responsive to context) and building political intelligence and relationships of trust with political parties seems key (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010: 26).*
- *The most successful projects are those which first allow for significant flexibility in project implementation; and second, establish realistic political objectives (Power and Coleman, 2011: 9).*
- *Systematic planning and implementation; comprehensive needs assessment; scenario development & thorough monitoring and evaluation (Catón, 2007: 22-24).*
- *The importance of a process of design which allows for in-depth analysis and provides the space to think broadly about how some of the key structural challenges might be addressed (Wild and Foresti, 2011:16).*

IDEAS

- *Use "third-country" trainers – experts from other new democracies (Carothers, 2008: 9).*

- *Useful work is helping center-left parties connect more effectively with trade unions or interest based NGOs (Carothers, 2008:10).*
- *Address the gap between elitist parties and civic activism (Carothers, 2008:11).*
- *Some initiatives use brokering, negotiation and high-level political engagement – an area often overlooked in discussions of political party support. (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 3).*
- *There are examples of effective and tailored capacity development, but this requires some level of party institutionalisation (Wild and Foresti, 2010: 4).*
- *Focus on strengthening the representative function of parliaments and political parties; stimulate South-South knowledge – sharing; focus on promoting norms and standards; select approaches carefully in political party support (Murphy and Lyne-Mangueira, 2011:41).*
- *Make long-term commitments; design flexible projects that can respond to changes in the political landscape and opportunities emerging (Murphy and Lyne-Mangueira, 2011:45).*
- *Go local - at the local level, outside assistance can weigh more heavily and efforts at community mobilization can be more effective (Carothers and de Gramont, 2011:10).*
- *Greater reflection on the range of roles possible for those supporting or engaging with political parties including a stronger emphasis on brokering, facilitating and negotiating could also strengthen political engagement (Wild and Golooba-Mutebi, 2010:4).*
- *Newer approaches include grant making and inter-party dialogue (Wild and Foresti, 2010:3).*
- *In considering the content..... emphasis should be placed on strengthening the representative function of parliaments and political parties; .. strengthen efforts to promote women’s participation in politics; ... strengthen efforts to promote youth participation in politics... [and] stimulate south-south knowledge-sharing ... and focus on promoting norms and standards (Murphy and Lyne-Mangueira, 2011: 42-43).*
- *A second area of more effective party assistance is support which more explicitly engages with structural constraints in a given context.... A third area of more promising party assistance is the provision of very tailored support, which can capitalize on some specific opportunities (Georgia) (Wild et al., 2011: vi).*
- *According to a number of interviews with party representatives in Georgia, what could make a real difference would be the ‘serious money’ needed to*

fund long term engagement through high level strategic advice with Western or regional experts (Wild et al., 2011:15).

ANNEX 1.

LITERATURE

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