

# Latin America policies of European NGOs: Recent trends and perspectives

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## Introduction

Over the past decade, some key changes have taken place in Latin America which have gradually affected aid policies and priorities of the international donor community. The impact of globalisation, the crisis of the neoliberal orthodoxy (see the peso crisis in Argentina), and the popular response to privatisation and rising inequality has triggered a whole new agenda. Migration and remittances, decentralisation and local resource generation, rising criminal violence by youth gangs, just to name a few trends, have changed the previous context in which democracy, human rights and inequality were the key issues.

Against the background of this changing context, many in Latin America believe that European aid agencies are gradually withdrawing from the region. After almost three decades of constantly growing aid disbursements to Latin American partner organisations, a general diversion of aid from Latin America to poorer regions such as Africa seems to be an inevitable trend. In particular partner organisations in the relatively more prosperous countries such as Brazil, Peru, Colombia and El Salvador fear that they will be affected by these reductions of foreign aid.

During a seminar in July 2004 in Quito (Ecuador) with representatives from the Latin American Association of Private Development Organisations (ALOP) and a dozen European donor NGOs (or private aid agencies) this issue was discussed in more depth. It was clear that not enough data are available to substantiate the claim that European non-governmental aid to Latin America is effectively decreasing. Therefore it was decided to initiate a study that would map previous, current and future policies of the most important European donor NGOs in Latin America. That is, those donor agencies were listed that had performed a key role over the past decades in contributing to structural poverty alleviation and by supporting capacity-building programmes aimed at social change.

Although not all these donor agencies necessarily had been supporting members affiliated with ALOP, the Quito seminar rather quickly arrived at a consensus to focus the study on a group of eighteen key agencies (see Table 1) and two European networks (CIDSE and Eurostep). Based on a systematic collection and analysis of key data, the study was to provide a concise balance of recent policies and practices of these European non-governmental donor agencies. In addition, an assessment was to be made of the future perspectives of agency policies in the medium and long run in Latin America. The study would thus provide a better overview and understanding of the projections and policies of the various European agencies, which would then facilitate a common agenda with Latin American partners and joint advocacy strategies in the near future.<sup>1</sup> In the discussions in Quito the hope was also expressed that the study would contribute to the search for a new type of partnership between European and Latin American NGOs in the near future.

The underlying purpose of this exercise was therefore very clear from the start: all organisations involved were convinced that a total withdrawal of this more committed structural nongovernmental aid could possibly undermine many important capacity-building and civil society strengthening initiatives currently undertaken in Latin America. Over the

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<sup>1</sup> See also the ALOP position paper presented in Quito by Mariano Valderrama and Eduardo Ballón (2004) '*Las relaciones de las ONGD de América Latina y las agencias privadas de cooperación internacional europeas en el contexto de la globalización*'.

years so many important experiences and lessons had been generated in the region which, in one way or another, were likely going to be beneficial also for other regions in the world.

The assumption that Latin America has been a crucial environment for innovation of social policies and a pilot area for new forms of aid delivery was therefore at the heart of this *mapeo* or ‘mapping exercise’. These experiences and innovations had to be analysed in more detail. But there was no consensus that European agency budgets for Latin America were effectively being cut. Some agencies even suggested that aid budgets had remained at a constant level. A more thorough review on the basis of empirical data was therefore required.

The objective of this study was to get a compact overview of current and future Latin America policies of the key European NGOs as a basis for mutual discussion and joint activities between European and Latin American NGOs. The following central research question was formulated: *How do the European (non-governmental) agencies envisage their future policies and relationships (agenda, priorities, funding allocations) with Latin American partner organisations?*

In order to answer this question, a range of sub questions were identified on changing policies, funding schemes, lessons, future plans and trends. The crucial questions were:

- What have been the main policies (agendas, thematic and geographical priorities, funding allocations) of the European NGOs in Latin America between 1995 and 2004?
- What is the main difference of the activities supported and relationship maintained in Latin America and other continents?
- Looking back over the past few years, what can be learned from the Latin America programme(s) of the European agencies?
- Which experiences of European agency co-ordination in Latin America of the past decade stand out, and why?
- What are the current trends in Latin America policies regarding geographical priorities, themes, and intervention strategies?
- What are the domestic circumstances and debates that can possibly influence the direction of agency policies towards Latin America?

A team of independent researchers collected data from the participating European agencies between November 2004 and January 2005 according to a common format (a checklist). These data were analysed and resulted in the present report. A draft of this report was discussed with representatives from ALOP and various European agencies and the corrected version was used as the basis for the Spanish translation. The data analysis and the drafting of the report were co-ordinated by Kees Biekart (ISS, The Netherlands).<sup>2</sup>

The report is structured in the following way. We will first assess in Chapter 1 trends and perspectives in priority countries and regions. Chapter 2 then analyses the trends in thematic priorities over the past decade and what agencies are currently proposing in their latest policy papers. Then in Chapter 3 funding allocations by European NGOs are analysed, and the question is examined whether budgets for Latin America are decreasing or not. Chapter 4 looks at the trends in selecting partner organisations and also examines the perspectives for co-ordination and joint lobbying work, and identifies some of the central issues that need to

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<sup>2</sup> The team consisted of Christine Witte (Germany), Matthias Hucke (Germany), Angela Wood (United Kingdom), Fabio Poelhekke (Netherlands) and Kees Biekart (Netherlands), who was as a team leader responsible for the final analysis and the draft report.

be discussed in the dialogue between European donor agencies and their Latin American partners. Then, in Chapter 5, the key lessons that can be learned from European donor interventions to Latin America are examined. In the concluding chapter the main findings of the study are summarised, combined with some pointers for further discussion.

A final word of thanks is due to all the agency representatives that gave their valuable time to collecting data and answering the long list of questions from the research team. We hope that the resulting report will be useful for all parties involved and that it will benefit future NGO policy-making in relation to Latin America, but also in relation to other regions.

**Table 1:  
Overview of key data of 2004 of the  
European agencies participating in the mapping exercise**

Agency	Country	Overseas budget mEUR**	LA budget mEUR	% LA budget	Nr of LA country progr.	Nr of LA partner organ.
Misereor	Germany	99,8	43,5	43,6 %	22	944
Novib	Netherlands	116	24,5	21,1 %	11	200*
Oxfam-GB	United K	135*	23,0*	17,0 %	20	n.d.
ICCO	Netherlands	130	21,0	16,2 %	11	180
Cordaid	Netherlands	150	17,4	11,6 %	11	300
Hivos	Netherlands	65	16,2	24,9 %	11	269
EED	Germany	105,6	15,8	15,0 %	17	145
SNV	Netherlands	59,3	12,8	21,6 %	5	285
Pan p Mundo	Germany	46,2	12,0	26,0 %	21	190
Intermon	Spain	25	11,6	46,4 %	12	209
Diakonia	Sweden	28,1	10,0*	35,7 %	9	129*
Trocaire	Ireland	37,2*	9,0	24,2 %	12	188*
Christian Aid	United K	118,4*	7,8*	6,6 %	11	132
IBIS	Denmark	20,6	7,3	35,4 %	5	70
CCFD	France	30,0	3,0	10,0 %	14	100
Oxfam-B	Belgium	10,3*	2,9*	28,1 %	10	25
Danchurchaid	Denmark	38,0	2,7*	7,1 %	3	25
11.11.11	Belgium	4,1	1,1	25,6	5	16

\* Figures of 2003 or 2003/04

\*\* Total overseas budget of agency: all project expenses, generally excluding agency overheads. Some agencies also include here their 'global programmes', and/or their advocacy activities in the North.

# 1. Trends and perspectives in priority countries

This first chapter will analyse the development of prioritising countries in Latin America and the Caribbean by the European NGOs. We will analyse which shifts have taken place, especially in terms of ‘phasing out’ particular countries and regions, and what the perspectives are for defining country priorities in the near future.

## 1.1 Trends in geographical priorities (1995-2004)

European NGOs have supported partner organisations in virtually all (independent) countries of Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decade, with the exception of a few (more prosperous) island states in the Caribbean (such as the Cayman Islands). Even in small countries such as Belize and Saint Vincent, there was always at least one European agency present throughout the past decade. A general trend is that over the past ten years the number of Latin American countries where organisations have been supported has remained pretty much constant at a level of around 20 countries (8 in Central America and 12 in South America). Only in the Caribbean a slight decrease was visible from 10 to 8 countries, after the withdrawal of agencies in the late 1990s from Barbados and Trinidad & Tobago.

In Central America and in South America, however, it is clear that several policy shifts have occurred for countries that had been prioritised by the European agencies. In order to make these shifts visible, country priorities were assessed by looking at three reference years: 1995, 2000 and 2004. Table 2 provides a ranking of those Latin American and Caribbean countries that were mostly supported by the (eighteen selected) European agencies in these three years. Several interesting trends can be derived from this table.

First of all, the inventory reveals that twelve countries stand out as preferred countries by European private aid agencies.<sup>3</sup> Basically it concerns four Central America countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras), six countries in South America (Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador) and two in the Caribbean (Haiti and Cuba). Other countries, such as Paraguay and Mexico, were on average supported only by a minority (44 %) of the selected agencies.

What does this tell us? Well, it makes clear that the European NGOs have been rather constant in their preferred priority countries, and that this priority choice is actually rather small. It appears that the majority of agencies already had been reducing their programmes in many other countries in the early 1990s, generally due to efficiency pressures. Only the German agencies and Oxfam-GB are still active in 20 or more countries (see Table 1). All the others have concentrated their efforts in these twelve countries.

The trend of concentration is even more explicit than it seems. In Table 2 it can be seen that five of these so-called priority countries really stand out, since they have been supported by at least 80 % of the European agencies involved in this mapping exercise. If a ranking had to be

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<sup>3</sup> In Table 2 we only highlighted those countries that had been, on average, supported by at least half of the 18 selected European agencies over the past decade.

made, Peru clearly leads the list, followed by Guatemala, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras. Of the other countries mentioned above Colombia, Haiti and Brazil are still supported by more than two-thirds of the agencies, while Ecuador and Cuba still are preferred by slightly more than half of the agencies. This also implies that the remaining 60 % of all the countries supported in Latin America and the Caribbean by European NGOs are prioritised only by a minority of agencies.

**Table 2**  
**The countries mostly supported by European NGOs between 1995-2004**

	<i>Country</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Aver</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Peru	17	17	16	16,7	93 %
2	Guatemala	16	16	16	16,0	89 %
3	Bolivia	16	16	15	15,7	87 %
4	Nicaragua	16	16	14	15,3	85 %
5	El Salvador	16	16	12	14,7	82 %
5	Honduras	14	15	15	14,7	82 %
7	Colombia	14	13	13	13,3	74 %
8	Haiti	14	13	12	13,0	72 %
9	Brazil	13	12	12	12,3	68 %
10	Chile	14	12	7	11,0	61 %
11	Ecuador	11	11	10	10,7	59 %
12	Cuba	7	11	11	9,7	54 %

Source: calculations by the author based on information provided by the selected European NGOs

A second visible trend is that the concentration of priority countries went hand in hand with a reduction of agencies per country over the past decade. This holds in particular for South America, where a number of countries are clearly on the ‘phasing out list’. Clear examples are Chile, in which half of the European agencies still maintaining programmes in 1995 had left the country in 2004. The same (but less dramatic) is true for Uruguay, Argentina and Venezuela, for Costa Rica and Panama (Central America), and in the Caribbean for Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. This can be explained by the ‘relative wealth’ of these countries: due to their higher BNP per capita they are no longer fitting the criteria of many co-financing schemes of European governments.

On the other hand, a high BNP per capita is not everywhere an explaining factor. Mexico and Brazil, for example, did not experience this rapid decrease. According to many agencies this is due to the high levels of inequality in these countries, with high numbers of inhabitants living in ‘poor’ and ‘extreme poor’ conditions, justifying a continuation of European NGO interventions. This is underlined by the agency focus on the poorest regions in these countries, such as Chiapas in Mexico and the North-Eastern region of Brazil, and on some key social movements (such as the landless movement MST in Brazil).

The only country that seems to escape the trend of concentration and reduced agency presence, and where agency activity has substantially increased over the past decade, is Cuba. The improved diplomatic relationships between the European Union and the Castro government have provided favourable conditions for European NGO support to Cuban partner organisations, particularly in the area of human rights promotion. To a lesser extent Honduras also seems to have become a ‘more favourable country’ for the European NGOs,

also visible in the recent establishment of several regional offices of European agencies in Tegucigalpa during the reconstruction operations to deal with the devastation caused by hurricane Mitch in 1998.

**1.2 Newly emerging priority countries**

A related trend is a visible shift in priority countries. Some countries were always more preferred than others, whereas some widely supported countries such as Chile started to lose their preferred status already in the early 1990s. In order to get a better idea about these priorities, we asked the agencies to provide us with information on which country budgets had been the highest in the period 1995-2004. Agency budgets are of course not an entirely accurate indicator, as the larger countries with more inhabitants tend to lead these tables. However, despite these obvious limitations, a top ten can be easily made of these shifts during the last decade, as is visualised in Table 3.

**Table 3:  
Latin American countries with on average the highest  
funding allocations by European NGOs (1995-2004)**

	<i>1995</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>
1	Brazil	Brazil	Brazil
2	Peru	Peru	Bolivia
3	Bolivia	Nicaragua	Colombia
4	Nicaragua	Honduras	Peru
5	El Salvador	Guatemala	Guatemala
6	Guatemala	Bolivia	Nicaragua
7	Colombia	Colombia	Haiti
8	Chile	El Salvador	Honduras
9	Cuba	Haiti	El Salvador
10	Uruguay	Argentina	Mexico

Source: calculations by the author based on information provided by the selected European NGOs.

Not surprisingly, Brazil continues to be the country with on average the highest funding allocations per agency, generally followed by Peru. Interestingly, over the past five years some shifts have taken place here that point at new priorities. For example, Peru apparently is losing its priority status which we had identified in previous paragraphs, whereas three countries have risen in priority lists of the European NGOs: Bolivia, Colombia and also Haiti. Not surprising is that three other countries (Chile, Uruguay and Argentina) have clearly lost their preferred position, which can be largely explained by the return to democratic governments after the end of military rule and by the lower (average) poverty levels.

In Central America the position of Guatemala has become more central in agency priorities, whereas El Salvador is gradually phased out by many agencies that used to have large programmes in this country in the post-war period (such as Diakonia, IBIS and Hivos). This trend of delayed reduction of post-peace accord funding was already foreseen in an earlier



study.<sup>4</sup> The two poorest countries in Central America (Nicaragua and Honduras) have maintained their priority position, albeit often with lower funding allocations (as will be shown later on). Remarkable is also the ‘return’ of Mexico to the higher ranks of funding priorities, which can be explained by increased support to partner organisations in Chiapas but also by active support to advocacy efforts of Mexican networks against the new American Free Trade Agreement.

In short, the most important trend in geographical priorities over the past decade has been that European NGOs have reduced the total number of countries in which they support their programmes. A concentration has evolved towards a group of around a dozen countries, of which Brazil is still getting on average the largest amount of European NGO allocations, and in which old favourites (Peru, Nicaragua, El Salvador) have been replaced by new ones (such as Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala). However, the feared ‘withdrawal’ from South America turns out to be only valid for the ‘richer’ countries such as Chile, Uruguay and Argentina.

### **1.3 Perspectives for priority countries in the near future**

On the basis of the survey amongst agency representatives, we can make some predictions about future preferences for priority countries in Latin America. The impression is that after concentrating geographical priorities over the past few years, it is not likely that major changes will occur in priority countries in the near future. Some European agencies, such as Trocaire, indicated that they will opt for a more regional approach in the coming years, linking up partners in countries such Peru and Bolivia or Nicaragua and Honduras that are working on PRSPs. This search for (regional) synergies is also voiced by other agencies, basically in order to increase the impact of individual interventions.

As was analysed above, some Latin American countries are likely going to be cut more in their donor budgets in the coming years as their per capita GNP is considered to be too high to fit average poverty criteria. It is expected that this will affect in particular the Central American countries El Salvador and Guatemala. In fact, El Salvador already has been phased out by several European governments, such as the Danish government which perceives El Salvador as being ‘too rich’ to be eligible for future development cooperation. This will have consequences for Danish NGOs that depend on government funding, such as IBIS and Danchurchaid. Guatemala, despite its elevated per capita income, is still high on the priority lists of many European agencies given the widespread poverty among the Indian population and also because of the problematic human rights situation in the post-conflict period.

The overall tendency is that the agencies will not further reduce the countries where they are currently operating, but rather that efforts and funding will be more focused. If countries still will have to be erased from priority lists, these are likely going to be the more prosperous countries in South America and in the Caribbean as several agencies have expressed. The process of concentrating geographical priorities by the European NGOs, however, is apparently finalised in Latin America.

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<sup>4</sup> Biekart, Kees (1994) *La cooperación no gubernamental europea hacia Centroamérica: La experiencia de los ochenta y las tendencias en los noventa*. San Salvador: PRISMA, p. 17-19.

## 2. Trends and perspectives in thematic priorities

We requested the agencies to list their thematic priorities over the past decade and asked them whether any explicit shifts had occurred in these priorities. We tried not to influence their answers by giving prefixed options, but rather went for collecting open answers. This resulted in an impressive list of themes and policy priorities that were summarised in Table 4. A number of rather explicit tendencies can be identified from this list, especially if the findings are compared with trends that were found in earlier studies of the 1990s.<sup>5</sup>

The priority themes mentioned by the agencies can be clustered roughly in eight categories (Table 4). The frequency of the top five priorities of all the participating agencies was calculated, providing a certain ranking to these priority themes over the past decade. The main trends resulting from this ranking are discussed below.

### 2.1 Seven trends in thematic priorities (1995-2004)

The first clear trend is that *political participation*, and everything related to this theme, has been the most frequently mentioned priority theme by the European NGOs. Human rights promotion, especially in a more political sense of promoting political participation by excluded groups, has been a key target of the European private aid agencies over the past decade. Some agencies in particular stressed the area of civil society building (Hivos, Bread for the World, Trocaire), whereas others focused more on increasing citizen's participation (Danchurchaid, ICCO, Misereor). Rather than emphasising human rights abuses, or guaranteeing rights for refugees and displaced people, agencies have started to focus more on civil and political rights and on the development of active citizenship.

This emphasis on practising citizenship is closely related to the focus on local governance, which also has been more often prioritised by the European agencies. The aim was to increase citizen's participation at the local level, stimulate collaboration between civil society groups and municipalities, and providing 'local spaces' for political participation in countries in which the national governments are inaccessible for citizens. Democratisation has generally shown better advances at this local level, which was targeted in particular by Diakonia, Novib, IBIS and SNV. Interest has grown in processes of decentralisation and also in new forms of local governance, such as 'participatory budgeting'. In terms of excluded groups for which participation had to be enhanced, particular attention was given (by Intermon, IBIS, Hivos and Oxfam-Belgium) to organisations of indigenous people in the Andean countries and in Guatemala and Honduras.

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<sup>5</sup> In a study of ten years ago on European agency agendas in Central America the following trends in priority areas were identified: productive projects, support to refugees and displaced, socio-economic rights, regional coordination, administrative capacity-building of partners, alternatives to structural adjustment, support to victims of HIV-AIDS and sustainable development (cf. Biekart, 1994: 20-24). See also Sparre, Ulrik et al. (1992) *Cooperation across the ocean: The Nordic NGOs and Central America*. Managua: CCOD.

**Table 4:  
Central priorities of the European agencies towards Latin America (1995-2004)**

<i>Theme / priority</i>	<i>% of agencies</i>
<b>Political participation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion / protection of human rights (both political and civil rights)</li> <li>• Strengthening civil society, increasing citizen's participation</li> <li>• Local governance and local participation</li> <li>• Participation of excluded groups (in particular indigenous movements)</li> </ul>	89 %
<b>Socio-economic rights and economic development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of economic and social rights</li> <li>• Fair trade and sustainable economic development</li> <li>• Micro-credits, productive projects</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility, production chains, WTO, trade</li> </ul>	72 %
<b>Rural livelihoods</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods</li> <li>• Environment, natural resource management</li> <li>• Food security</li> </ul>	67 %
<b>Basic social services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health, health education, especially HIV-AIDS</li> <li>• Education (regular and adult)</li> <li>• Habitat and urban livelihoods</li> </ul>	50 %
<b>Partner development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational strengthening, leadership training</li> <li>• Institutional strengthening, lobbying, networking</li> <li>• Alternative funding sources</li> </ul>	50 %
<b>Conflict, peace-building and reconciliation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict prevention (mostly Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala)</li> <li>• Youth gangs and 'new violence'</li> </ul>	44 %
<b>Gender</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access of women to resources and decision-making</li> <li>• Domestic violence and security for women and children</li> <li>• Reproductive rights</li> </ul>	39 %
<b>Humanitarian aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency relief aid</li> <li>• Disaster preparedness</li> <li>• Post-conflict</li> </ul>	22 %
<b>Others</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture and arts</li> <li>• Development education in the North</li> </ul>	11 %

Source: Information collected from documents and interviews with the selected European NGOs

A second explicit trend of the last decade is a strong emphasis on *socio-economic rights and economic development*, which is also a broad area in which new tendencies are visible. From the mid-1990s onwards the emphasis had been in particular on 'productive projects', the provision of micro-credits and efforts to make partner organisations more financially self-sufficient. This was also in view of a gradual withdrawal of the European NGOs from partner organisations that had been supported for over several decades, especially in South America.

In the late 1990s new elements were added, such as attention for ‘fair trade’, new free trade agreements and negotiations related to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which was one of the Oxfam International priority advocacy topics in recent years.

More attention for socio-economic rights also reflected a joint Oxfam focus on the ‘Right to Sustainable Livelihoods’, in which communities and excluded groups are supported to get better access to markets and land, and where indigenous groups are encouraged in efforts to claim their historical rights. Attention for this second generation of human rights has increased since the early 1990s, and it is interesting to see how explicit these have been put on the agendas of many European agencies a decade later.

This focus on socio-economic rights has two other angles in which relationships with the private sector and the market are emphasised. One is the area of micro-credit provision, which has expanded especially in South America (Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia), often as part of programmes to contribute to self-sufficiency of partner organisations. It has become an area of major innovation since it incorporated participatory approaches, environmental concerns and gender criteria.

The other market-related area so far received less attention, but still has quite some potential: keeping private business to its commitment towards ‘corporate social responsibility’. Trade unions as well as local NGOs have been working on this topic in Brazil, Peru, Chile and Colombia, and the interesting development is that local organisations working on trade issues (including fair trade) have incorporated these efforts to promote social responsible behaviour by market actors. By connecting it to network development and improving production and consumer chains (and more generally, by linking this up with civil society building) a new set of linkages between state, market and civil society has emerged. (This point will be further elaborated below).

A third general trend in agency priorities is that *rural development* and in particular *agricultural production* has become less prominent, although it still is an important area of attention for the agencies, especially in Central America. Several agencies indicated that they had reduced their support to traditional rural development projects – which often had been closely linked to the promotion of sustainable agriculture – and that they had shifted their attention from production to creating better market conditions for agricultural products. The ‘sustainability’ aspect has also lost its dynamic: after the environmental focus of the early 1990s, attention for explicit environmental criteria seems to have been vanished. Only 22 % of the European agencies under review were still paying explicit attention to the environment or ‘natural resource management’ as part of their programme priorities. The topic partly has been mainstreamed, but – according to several NGO representatives – has also been erased in the priority lists or integrated into the promotion of for example food security programmes.

The fourth visible trend in agency priorities over the past decade was the continued interest for *conflict resolution, peace building and reconciliation*. In Peru and in Central America of the mid-1990s this was of course a key issue. After the peace processes in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala attention for conflict resolution continued in countries such as Colombia and Mexico (Chiapas). Guatemala was still getting considerable attention in the decade after the 1995 peace accords, also because of the high crime rates (especially affecting women) that are apparently linked to unresolved post-war problems. It was this wave of so-called ‘new violence’ in Latin America – in particular visible in the large cities and capitals – that spurred many European agencies to support initiatives aimed at conflict prevention and

resolution, reintegration of (former) youth gang members, arms control measures, and in general, initiatives trying to tackle the destabilising effects of violence and impunity.

A fifth trend that can be identified is that *gender and gender mainstreaming* have been constant and important focal issues for most agencies. Explicitly mentioned were security for women, but also access of women to decision-making spaces, markets, and organisations, plus attention for reproductive rights and its consequences. Throughout the 1990s it was often argued by (generally male) representatives of Latin American partners that ‘women’ and ‘environment’ were two fashionable issues, *temas de moda* that would go out of fashion very soon. Our findings point, however, at an opposite trend: thanks to – or maybe even despite - efforts to mainstream gender issues, these have remained a priority for 39 % of all the agencies reviewed.

A sixth trend over the past decade was the attention for *humanitarian relief and disaster preparedness*. This topic gained especially prominence after the devastations following hurricane Mitch in Central America in 1998, which struck Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. European NGO support was aimed to prepare the population better for disasters such as earthquakes, flooding and mud waves. Special attention was given to environmental degradation in urban areas as a result of which the number of victims had been rising. An indirect consequence of increased emergency assistance after Mitch was the renewed interest of many agencies for supporting activities in Honduras.

Finally, a seventh trend that has been valid also for other regions: many agencies have adjusted their policies towards *output-related criteria*, in particular the ‘rights-based approach’. This approach was incorporated by the Oxfam agencies in 2000 and later also by many others. The major difference with the earlier ‘needs-based approach’ is the particular attention for partner performance and the introduction of results-based management tools. With the gradual reduction of priority countries in Latin America, the search for new sources of finance is nowadays also included under the umbrella of ‘partner development’.

Apart from these trends, it is also important to note that many priorities that were already identified in the mid-1990s have kept their importance throughout the past ten years. One of these ongoing priorities is primary health care (with special attention for people affected by HIV-AIDS), and of course education. These basic social services are still accounting for a substantial amount of total European agency support, though less than in 1995.

Novib, for example, decided in the mid-1990s not to stick anymore to the ‘Copenhagen target’ of channelling at least a quarter of its total overseas resources to basic social services. Instead, it decided, as part of the newly introduced rights-based approach, to put more pressure on national governments to comply with their duties to deliver these public services. Other agencies, such as Trocaire, made similar decisions to cut down drastically on health programmes and to refocus on civil society and community building, human rights and participation.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that some European NGOs always stick to particular areas of preference (be it a rural or urban focus, a more political or economic emphasis, etc.) and that certain specialisations amongst the European agencies have been a normal feature (for example Hivos with culture and IBIS with education).

## 2.2 Future thematic priorities and strategies

What can be expected in terms of changes in priority themes for the next couple of years? The shifts in thematic priorities that were outlined above point in general terms at more attention for political processes, socio-economic and cultural rights, rural livelihoods and food security issues. Agencies indicated that these trends are likely to be central to European NGO policies over the next couple of years. However, in the interviews we also spotted some slight changes which require some closer analysis.

The overall trend in the newly developed Latin America policies is one away from the delivery of basic social services towards national advocacy campaigns to commit the state to take responsibility for these social services. This is not to suggest that social service-delivery is no longer important, but it seems that it becomes more integrated with macro developments and with national policy-making. For example, one gets the impression that European agencies are going to focus their results more in terms of the *Millenium Development Goals* (MDGs), of course, also because this is being promoted by the bilateral and multilateral agencies. But central to the MDGs is the idea, or at least the intention, to showing more clearly the results of external interventions. This visibility of results continues to be a cross-cutting theme.

An important coincidence is that over the past two years a range of new governments came to power in Latin America led by presidents with a progressive background. It still has to be proven that this will really make a difference, but it will likely facilitate the implementation of a more politicised social service programme aimed at poverty reduction and social justice. The expectation is, therefore, that policies and programmes of European NGOs will get more opportunities to really deal with unequal power relations, which in turn suggests a renewed politicisation of their Latin American programmes. Key words used by the agencies are 'synergies' between various actors, regions and countries, and 'joint advocacy initiatives' in order to get this agenda implemented. However, agencies approach this in different ways and do not emphasise the same issues.

Misereor expects to focus more on health issues and on working with youth groups, Trocaire foresees more attention for migration issues, violence and security, rural poverty reduction and trade issues. The Oxfam agencies indicated that they would stick to their priorities, but probably pay more attention to human security in all its aspects. Diakonia and 11.11.11 also perceive that trade and debt issues will continue to be central in agency priorities over the coming years, whereas IBIS expects more attention for education as its core theme.

In sum, what is visible is a common approach towards more 'political work' with a central role for 'lobbying and advocacy', whilst at the same time agencies keep searching for their own 'niche' in order to become even better in what they are doing well already. This need to have a clear profile has become more accepted and is no longer seen as a source of competition or as an obstacle for joint action. To the contrary, on some thematic issues it is very likely that agencies will work together more closely over the coming years. Topics that were mentioned here included migration, conflict resolution and peace-building, and trade issues. These are likely going to be some of the key topics for the next few years, in which the 'creation and promotion of more synergies' is the central slogan in order to maximise the use of more scarcely available resources. That brings us to the topic of funding.

### 3. Trends and perspectives in funding allocations

One of the main concerns of the Latin American partner organisations is that funding levels from European NGOs have gone down in recent years or will rapidly decline in the next couple of years. Special attention was therefore given to these funding levels during the mapping exercise. Again, we took the same three reference years (1995, 2000 and 2004) to detect any major changes in the agency budgets for Latin America, and compared this to the overall overseas budgets.

#### 3.1 Levels of funding to Latin America (1995-2004)

This part of the survey was not easy, as we had to process and compare many different figures. Some agencies were unable to provide us with accurate figures, which was actually a bit surprising. But at the end we managed to collect the majority of the data. While we did expect a reduction, both in terms of relative as well as absolute funding levels for Latin America, the pattern of the past decade turned out to be more complex. (See Table 5).

**Table 5:**  
**Trends in relative funding allocations by European NGOs to Latin America**

Agency	Country	Reduction funding?		% of LA budget of total overseas budget		
		LA	GEN	1995	2000	2004
Intermon	Spain	NO	NO	66,0	n.a.	46,4
Misereor	Germany	NO	NO	n.a.	n.a.	43,6
Diakonia	Sweden	NO	NO	n.a.	n.a.	35,7
IBIS	Denmark	YES	YES	34,2	43,1	35,4
Oxfam-B	Belgium	NO	NO	35	25	28,1
Pan p Mundo	Germany	YES	NO	n.a.	n.a.	26,0
11.11.11	Belgium	NO	YES	29,3	29,7	25,6
Hivos	Netherlands	YES	NO	36,3	31,6	24,9
Trocaire	Ireland	NO	NO	21	28	24,0*
ICCO	Netherlands	NO**	NO	30	25	23,0
SNV	Netherlands	NO	NO	22,0	24,0	21,6
Novib	Netherlands	YES	NO	35,8	28,4	21,1
Oxfam-GB	United K	NO**	NO	n.a.	n.a.	17,0
EED	Germany	NO	NO	16,8	16,3	15,0
Cordaid	Netherlands	YES	NO	25***	26***	11,6
CCFD	France	NO	NO	n.a.	n.a.	10,0
Danchurchaid	Denmark	YES	NO	6,7	7,6	7,1
Christian Aid	United K	YES	NO	n.a.	12,8	6,6
Totals		Yes=7	Yes=2			

\* Figures of 2003 or 2003/04

\*\* Slightly, but not significant

\*\*\* To be confirmed

First, there has been a gradual reduction of the *relative budget allocations* to Latin America, especially after 2000. But since agency budgets also have grown substantially over the last few years, the funding volume for Latin America in absolute terms does not seem to have

been decreased significantly.<sup>6</sup> In fact, one can even detect a slight increase between 1995 and 2000. Even if this can be largely explained by additional relief aid for the victims of hurricane Mitch, it is still an increase and not a gradual reduction of aid disbursements to Latin America as it was feared by many partner organisations.

The second and quite remarkable tendency is that the large majority of European agencies have experienced no budget cuts whatsoever for Latin America over the past decade. When there were at all budget reductions for Latin America, this only applied to one-third of the agencies interviewed. Only two agencies (IBIS and 11.11.11) were faced with nominal reductions of their total overseas budget, basically due to new priorities of their governments on whose resources they depended. But only in the case of IBIS did this effectively lead to a reduction of their Latin America budget. For 11.11.11 funding levels for Latin America actually remained the same.

For most of the other agencies where the Latin America budgets were reduced, it was generally a slight reduction (in the cases of Danchurchaid and Hivos), or a relative reduction barely affecting the total expenditures for Latin America (ICCO, Oxfam-GB and Christian Aid). Danchurchaid, for example, never had a high budget for Latin America, and the reductions in the new century were relatively small. Hivos had experienced a constant reduction of its Latin America budget – which had been as high as 65 % of the total overseas expenditures in 1987 – and a gradual reduction was therefore inevitable.<sup>7</sup> In the meantime, Hivos' overall budget went up quite sharply, which basically compensated the relative decrease in spending for Latin America.

Only within three European agencies the Latin America budgets have gone down more or less substantially over the past decade: Novib, Cordaid, and Bread for the World. Let me review these agencies in more detail. Bread for the World actually effectuated a 25 % reduction of its Latin America budget over the past three years. The main reason was that it decided to focus more on Africa, especially to deal with the enormous challenges faced by the HIV-AIDS crisis in that region.

For Novib the reduction started already in late 1999 but was initially compensated by overall funding growth and additional credit funding. Within a three year period the Latin America budget was reduced in absolute terms with 30 %. The justification was threefold: (i) Latin America had become 'too rich' and had received disproportionately more resources than Africa, (ii) Novib had become the second largest partner in a coalition (Oxfam International) that primarily focused on direct poverty reduction strategies with massive funding for service delivery (largely in Africa), and (iii) policies for Latin America were emphasising less costly lobbying and campaigning activities, structurally combating inequality. The reduction also required a drastic reorganisation of Novib's South and Central America bureau, but with a Latin America budget of EUR 25 million in 2004 Novib still belongs to the largest European non-governmental donors in Latin America.

Another Dutch donor agency, Cordaid, reduced its Latin America budget with a radical 50 % between 2000 and 2004, despite a growth of overall funds for the agency. Was it still a

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<sup>6</sup> In a minority of cases we encountered problems finding reliable data on agency budgets, overseas budgets, and the share that went to Latin America.

<sup>7</sup> Hivos is currently in the process of an internal reorganisation in which the current regional desks will be replaced by sectoral bureaus. Although not yet affecting funding allocations, it is not unlikely that this reorganisation will put Latin America less prominent on the Hivos agenda.



quarter of Cordaid's total overseas funding that went to Latin America in 2000, four years later this had dropped to only 11 %. The explanation of this drastic move had to do with a refocusing of Dutch development aid in general towards Africa, due to poverty figures and ongoing crises. Some observers also commented that for many years Cordaid's Latin America budget had been disproportionately high compared to the Africa budget, although other reasons also seem to have played a role. After all, Cordaid was a merger of several Catholic agencies (among which the former Cebemo), in which the Latin America department always had been an influential player. Too influential, according to insiders, which might explain why it was internally decided to dismantle the large Latin America programme following a number of staff changes.

In short, our survey indicates that it is simply not true that European NGOs on average have reduced their Latin America budgets over the past decade. There has been a reduction of budgets to Latin America within only a minority of the agencies (around 30 %) that were involved in the survey. In particular those agencies that used to have high disbursements for Latin America (higher than 25 % of the total overseas expenditures), seem to have lowered this level in favour of poorer countries in other regions.

### **3.2 Perspectives for funding levels in the near future**

For the coming years it looks like the Latin American budgets of the European agencies are on average not going to change very much. After a previous period of growth in the late 1990s, it is likely that budgets will remain stable at this level, providing that no new emergencies in the region will occur. Novib, for example, expects that there will still be a slight reduction of its Latin America budget until 2006, but that the decreasing tendency has reached its bottom level. According to Novib, the challenge is now to consolidate the reduced programme and to reinstate key qualities of the Latin America department, such as the search for alternative income generation strategies and innovative approaches.

Many agencies, among them Oxfam-Belgium, Hivos, and Diakonia, expressed that they will have to search for additional funding opportunities from other major donors, in particular from the European Union, but also from the embassies of other countries. This rather new trend of European NGOs acquiring funding from official donors of other European countries is already visible in several Latin American countries, and is likely to become more important. This search for new funding is also stimulated by the European governments, such as in the Netherlands, where pressure is put on the co-financing agencies to find additional funding from alternative sources up to a quarter of their total income.

These donors of the European NGOs, the so-called 'back donors', are probably going to perform a more prominent role in the coming years. In particular within the European governments and their international co-operation departments, voices become stronger that Latin America needs to be phased out as a target for development co-operation. What makes Latin America important, in this view, is its potential for trade and investment. This tendency is not really new, since it has been going on for over a decade now. Some European governments, such as Spain, even increased their budgets for development co-operation to Latin America, but Spain is the exception to the rule of a general withdrawal (see Denmark, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom, and the European Commission). The Danish agencies in particular have seen a rapid reduction of DANIDA's programme in Latin America, leading to cuts of around 50 % in just four years.

The main argument used by European governments for reducing their Latin America budgets is that countries of this continent mostly belong to the category of middle-income countries. The consequences are that European NGOs have to better justify their activities by pointing out more clearly their motivations to intervene in Latin America. Several agencies have argued that Latin America's problem is about 'inequality' rather than 'poverty', and that various related issues (migration, violence, etc.) stem from the complications caused by an unequal income distribution. As we saw in the previous chapter, this more political approach might also contribute to keep funding levels for Latin America rather unchanged.

The Oxfam agencies, for example, expect that their work on livelihoods will stay constant or decrease relatively speaking, whilst the work on democracy and decentralisation will increase. The livelihoods issue has been strong recently because of the connection to the trade campaign. All the issues related to democracy promotion are likely to become increasingly important with the emergence of a new campaign that is related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are serving the role of a good institutional anchor.

In sum, funding levels have not gone down dramatically over the past decade, at the most slightly, and levels are not going to drop dramatically either over the next couple of years as most of these are based on longer term agreements. What is going to change over the next few years are the sources of income for European NGOs. In Germany, for example, a significant reduction of income from churches will affect the level of co-funding that church-based organisations can secure. In many other countries a similar tendency can be seen in which a larger proportion of European donor NGO income will have to come from other official donors, market-based actors and from private donations.

## **4. Trends and perspectives in partner selection**

A further area in which we have been mapping trends and perspectives is related to the choice of partner organisations and new types of relationships with these partners. We focused in particular on such topics as agency co-ordination, joint lobbying and advocacy, but also on the way in which partner relationships have been phased out. The last part of this chapter looks at the future perspectives that the European NGOs foresee in their relationships with Latin American partner organisations.

### **4.1 Trends in partner selection preferences (1995-2004)**

A field in which gradual changes were expected was related to the character and the number of partner organisations of the European NGOs. One assumption was that a tendency of more concentration would imply that the total number of partner organisations would decrease, whilst the funding allocation per partner would increase slightly.

In our study we did detect this tendency, although not over the entire decade. As far as we could get hold of numbers (see Table 5), 64 % of the European agencies had more partner organisations in 1995 than in 2004. On the other hand, this implied as well that 36 % of the agencies have more partners now compared to ten years ago. A reduction of the number of partners is especially visible in the past 4-5 years, as figures were still on average rising in the late 1990s.

Part of the reduction of the total number of partners can be explained by decreasing budgets, as was discussed in the previous chapter. But other developments also are playing a role. Agencies such as Hivos had invested considerable funding into a large group of smaller partners (especially in the area of culture), but started to realise that it was too expensive to maintain this network of smaller partners. After all, there is a minimum amount of funding that justifies each employee at an agency. Or to put it bluntly, as one interviewee did, agencies are punished by their 'back donors' for having small partner organisations. The system encourages a trend towards supporting larger programmes with even larger organisations, as these minimise the overhead per donor Euro spent.

Other agencies, such as SNV, acknowledge they now have more partners (which they nowadays call 'clients') than ten years ago, but that relationships have become substantially shorter. This is not the general trend though. Overall the tendency is rather for longer term and 'strategic' partners (as emphasised by Christian Aid, Cordaid, and Trocaire), rather than for shorter term project-oriented partnerships. The trend of gradual reduction can also be explained by the fact that concentration and reduction of partners has had a stronger impact on South America than on Central America, as was also concluded in Chapter 1. Many European agencies maintained (and sometimes increased) the number of partners in Central America, often due to additional emergency programmes in the post-Mitch period.

Apart from the numbers, it was in particular interesting to assess whether the *type* of partner organisation also had changed over the past ten years. Table 6 provides an overview of the major changes in the partner networks, which show similarities but also some striking contradictory developments.

One of these contradictory trends is that support to membership organisations and community-based organisations over the past ten years was gradually replaced in favour of (often specialised) NGOs. This is a trend we noticed for example at Intermon, Diakonia, IBIS and Hivos. On the other hand, agencies such as Trocaire, 11.11.11, and CCFD had been going in an opposite direction by providing more direct support to grassroots organisations.

Another (and probably related) contradictory trend is that some agencies decided to move their focus from a rural orientation to more urban-based partner organisations (Cordaid, Diakonia, Oxfam-Belgium) often with what Diakonia calls a more ‘political advocacy-oriented focus’. Other agencies seem to direct their attention more to rural areas, either to work more directly with smaller organisations (Trocaire) or to target indigenous groups and their networks better (IBIS).

A common development is that most of the large ecumenical NGOs in Latin America that were traditionally supported by the Protestant agencies over the past decades have been phased out gradually. ICCO, Christian Aid, Danchurchaid and Diakonia all decided to end their close relationships with huge partners such as CEPAD (Nicaragua), CIEDEG (Guatemala) and CCD (Honduras). The main reason for terminating these long-term partnerships was that these NGOs had become very large multi-purpose agencies that were simply not delivering well enough according to the new performance criteria.<sup>8</sup> The ecumenical edge that had been important for so many years to determine partner relationships over the past decade had become less important compared to for example the output quality.

The survey also suggests that the European NGOs over the years tend to have given more support to partner organisations that work directly with (local) governments. Oxfam-GB indicated that the time is over that ‘non-governmental was equalled to anti-governmental’. Political lobbying and advocacy work has become more central to agency preferences, as we have seen in the previous pages, and some argue therefore that a renewed politicisation (*una repolitización*) of European NGO aid is becoming visible. However, when reference is made to the 1980s, the political angle is of course very different from the period in which liberation movements and their support organisations were supported. Political work is nowadays aiming at maximising political impact of campaigns and results of development projects, and involving membership organisations more directly into national and global campaigns.

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<sup>8</sup> This pattern became apparent in a number of independent evaluations of these ecumenical counterparts in Central America in the period 2000-2001. In fact, after detecting serious internal ‘growth problems’ (due to a number of reasons, including the provision of large post-Mitch emergency aid), and little willingness to adapt to new agency criteria, partnerships (often of several decades) with these NGOs were subsequently ended. Still, these ecumenical NGOs have been of enormous historical importance, and their fascinating histories still would have to be written up in order to pass on the lessons to a next generation.

**Table 6**  
**Characteristics of European agency partner organisations in Latin America**

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Nr of partners 2004</i>	<i>Three main changes in partner characteristics between 1995 and 2004</i>
Cordaid	300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From project, to programme, to strategic partners</li> <li>• Preferred support to organisations showing results</li> <li>• From rural to more urban partners</li> </ul>
SNV	285	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From partner to 'clients': more clients for a shorter period</li> <li>• Shift from micro to meso-macro clients</li> <li>• More governmental clients than ten years ago</li> </ul>
Hivos	269	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift towards more specialised organisations</li> <li>• Shift from social organisations to more specialised NGOs</li> <li>• Trend towards supporting larger partner organisations</li> </ul>
Oxfam-GB	n.a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More partner sharing amongst Oxfam agencies</li> <li>• Partners reflect more OI campaign goals</li> <li>• More engagement with governments: NGO does no longer mean 'anti-governmental'</li> </ul>
Novib	200*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small partners have been phased out</li> <li>• More support to NGOs working with private business</li> <li>• Preferred support for partners with horizontal/vertical linkages</li> </ul>
Intermon	209	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From social movements to more NGO support</li> </ul>
Pan para el Mundo	190	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less support to physical infrastructure, more empowerment</li> <li>• More lobbying and networking</li> </ul>
Trocaire	188*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trend towards supporting more strategic partners</li> <li>• Central America: increased support to CBOs and social movements</li> <li>• Shift from urban to rural focus</li> </ul>
ICCO	180	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From project to institutional relationships</li> <li>• More concentration, more search for synergy</li> <li>• From sustainable agriculture to production oriented partners</li> </ul>
EED	145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After merger: more smaller organisations</li> <li>• Mostly ecumenically oriented (education, media)</li> </ul>
Diakonia	129*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less support to GROs, more to (national) NGOs</li> <li>• Less support to church-based organisations</li> <li>• From rural and small, to national with more political edge</li> </ul>
Christian Aid	132	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From one-off grants to longer term partner support</li> <li>• Sharp reduction of number of partners</li> <li>• More diversity in partner portfolio</li> </ul>
CCFD	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More direct support to grassroots organisations</li> <li>• More lobbying in the North</li> </ul>
IBIS	70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift from mass organisations to more innovative NGOs</li> <li>• South America: from NGOs to Indigenous organisations</li> <li>• Still sticking to old well-known partners, rather than innovation</li> </ul>
Oxfam-B	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on partners with a political agenda</li> <li>• More attention for advocacy with GROs</li> <li>• Trend from rural to more urban partners</li> </ul>
Danchurchaid	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less relationships with the traditional ecumenical NGOs</li> <li>• More focus on linkages between local organisations and national and global networks</li> <li>• More diversity in partner network</li> </ul>
11.11.11	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From local to national organisations</li> <li>• Increasing support to regional partners</li> <li>• More support for membership organisations and their networks</li> </ul>

\* Figures of 2003 or 2003/04

This increased attention for political work was also reflected by a general concern to reinforce micro-macro linkages and to encourage partner organisations to connect up with others in a similar region (ICCO called this ‘maximising synergy between partners’). Was lobbying a decade ago an activity of some specialised NGOs, it seems that European NGOs want these NGOs to really listen to their constituencies and to be accountable to them, and, even more important, to show that these multiple micro-macro linkages are actually beneficial to organisations working at the grassroots level.

A final trend that can be identified in the overview of Table 6 is that agencies prefer to support the more specialised NGOs, giving less priority to ‘those NGOs that are (or have been) capable of everything’ (as Novib puts it). And, along similar lines, agencies tend to pursue a more diversified partner network than ten years ago. Christian Aid and Hivos opted for a reduction of the total number of partners in recent years, but they also considered this to be a quality impulse towards diversifying their partner networks. This was complementary with earlier remarks about not sticking anymore to ‘traditional’ or ‘natural’ partners, which was very much the situation of a decade ago. An important result of this development is that the partner organisations of the various agencies have become more alike, compared to a decade ago.

In sum, over the last decade the total number of partner organisations of European NGOs has overall decreased, especially since 2000. However, over one-third of the European agencies reviewed still maintain partnerships with more organisations now (in 2004) compared to ten years before. This reduction of partners is overall stronger visible in South America and less so in Central America. The type of organisation has indeed changed over the years: more support to specialised (rather than generalist) NGOs, more diversity in the partner portfolios and more emphasis on micro-macro linkages and relations with (local) governments.

#### **4.2 Trends in campaigning and lobbying**

A clear trend is that lobbying and advocacy campaigns for Latin America and with Latin American partners have increased over the previous years. This trend will even become stronger and is part of what some (such as IBIS) consider being a ‘re-politicisation’ of their programme. Several agencies, notably ICCO and other Dutch agencies, have decided (also due to governmental incentives) to dedicate a quarter of their budget to advocacy activities in the North. In the case of ICCO this also implies collaboration with a number of strategic partners in the Netherlands and Europe to increase synergies. This is quite relevant given the comments by many agency representatives that it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the public attention for Latin American issues in Europe.

What are these campaigns aiming at? Apart from trade issues, as was mentioned above, the European agencies will focus in the coming years on pressing national developments (Colombia, Bolivia, Guatemala) and on PRSP and trade (in particular with the EU), migration issues (especially in Central America), external debt and socio-economic rights. It is also expected that more joint lobbying campaigns with partners will be initiated and that European platforms such as CIFCA and PICA (of the Protestant agencies) and the ecumenical Process

of Articulation and Dialogue (PAD) in Brazil will play a more prominent role in these campaigns.<sup>9</sup>

Oxfam GB expects that campaigning will continue to grow, although it depends on the extent to which institutionally it will be possible to develop a global campaign force. This is likely not to happen in the UK or Europe in general, but rather in the Latin American countries themselves. Here organisations are becoming more strategic in terms of their campaign agenda and they are doing more for autonomously. This is important, according to Oxfam GB, because national campaign work can better address cultural specificities and language, whilst local activists also better understand their own political culture, public opinion and their local media. Agencies such as Oxfam Belgium are therefore aiming at strengthening this trend of building up local campaigning capacities.

### 4.3 Expected trends for the near future

Related to the intervention strategies that were discussed earlier in this chapter, European agency representatives predicted that the trend towards more programmatic and process approaches, and away from the traditional project approaches, will sustain itself in the years to come. Trocaire expects to provide more multi-annual funding, rather than year-by-year allocations. Many agencies also foresee that the number of partner organisations will be reduced further, but that the quality of these relations will be increased. ICCO, for example, expects that more South-South co-operation between partners (generally on advocacy) also implies higher qualification criteria for these partners. Hivos indicates that it will invest in more knowledge-sharing with and between partner organisations.

Another interesting development that came out of our interviews is that several agencies are planning to expand their local presence and/or their offices in the region. Misereor for example is planning to establish *oficinas de enlace* (liaison offices) in a couple of Latin American countries to support partners and facilitate dialogue processes. Hivos is planning to open up an office in South America, whereas the Oxfam agencies also consider expanding their network of local offices. So it seems that the trend towards more political work goes hand in hand with a stronger local presence of the European NGOs.

A number of other important topics and themes were mentioned by agency representatives that would be worthwhile analysing here. First of all, several big global issues may impact on Latin America in the coming years, and thus on partner organisations. *Security* is the obvious one and the growing European (official) donor trend to shift money away from development to pay for their interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and several African countries (such as Sudan) are indirectly related to the withdrawal of donors from Latin America. The role and influence of the United States government in this development, in particular related to donor withdrawal from Central America, is critical.

*Aid effectiveness* continues to be another big issue; the performance of both official aid and NGO funding in Latin America has not always been that impressive. This is also linked to growing inequality in Latin America to the highest levels of economic and social inequity in the world. This has an impact on both official and private ‘donor fatigue’ and requires greater

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<sup>9</sup> The PAD process is an interesting joint initiative between a group of European ecumenical agencies and their partner organisations in Brazil looking for ‘a new solidarity’. See ‘*International solidarity in the new millennium: Facing old and new challenges*’, Rio de Janeiro: PAD, 2003.

attention from European NGOs as to how this can be tackled. After all, donors are dropping countries that are considered to be ‘ineffective’, and this will impact on NGO funding from co-financing. Many European official donors are now focusing only on a few countries in Latin America and some want to ensure that their co-financing via NGOs is also concentrated on these countries. However, this might also offer new opportunities, as reduction of bilateral cooperation to a country might be compensated by giving compensatory funding via European NGOs.

*Transparency and (anti-) corruption* have become important themes in Latin America. The perception is that corruption is growing and is not limited to the state and the private sector. The process of liberalisation and privatisation of state industries and services has generated immense corruption with politicians benefiting and the culture of impunity has corroded values in society regarding corruption. Local NGOs are certainly not immune from these trends.

*New social and political actors* are emerging in the region. The collapse of influence of some key civil society actors from the past (notably the trade union movement and peasants associations) is an illustration of important shifts that have taken place in Latin American societies. It implies that the European agencies will need to find new ways of working to promote the defence of rights of vulnerable groups. In Central America there is a feeling that civil society is losing its influence, rather than extending it. There are many divisions and it is hard to influence public policies. There is little new thinking and there is yet little capacity to articulate a vision for what ‘human sustainable development’ means in the new century. On the other hand, the important role of (radical) social movements in bringing about progressive political change in many South American countries is promising. It also highlights an increased linkage of these movements to transnational networks, a process that has never been that strong from a grassroots perspective.

*Governance issues* are now more critical than before. There is widespread public dissatisfaction with the political process and politicians. Fewer people believe in the benefits of democracy and the current political system. Given the history of authoritarianism in the region this is a motive for serious concern. In addition, the World Bank and IMF continue to exert huge leverage over development policies and development actors (especially on Latin American governments and bilateral donors). The World Bank has a virtual monopoly on development research in Latin America and is often the only voice heard. With trends for donor harmonisation and alignment of ODA policies, the World Bank and the IMF will play a bigger role in the coming years. And as they are not known for promoting serious empowerment, their promotion of ‘bland civil society alliances’ may lead to further fudging of the issues of injustice and power distribution within and between countries.

The *European Commission* is currently one of the largest donors in Central America but makes no serious contribution to the development of pro-poor public policies. The EU came late to participate in the PRSP process, structures for accessing their funds have become overly bureaucratic for both governments and NGOs, private consultancies and companies are now the beneficiaries of many contracts displacing both EU and local NGOs; there is a serious lack of transparency in the allocation of funds and virtually no accountability mechanisms; their country strategies and regional policies for the various “zones” of Latin America are prepared with little consultation with civil society groups.



All these issues mentioned above suggest that there is a huge common agenda for organisations from Latin America and the European Union to jointly push for a better use of public resources, especially at the EU level. This is where ALOP comes in as a potentially important channel for feeding and supporting these joint campaigns, along with other Latin American networks, and this is also where the commitment of many European NGOs still will have to be proven. Providing a solid follow-up to the Quito discussions of July 2004 and putting the common agenda into practice will be a crucial condition for realising a breakthrough in this discussion.

## 5. Learning from Latin America

Over the past few decades European NGOs have built up an impressive history of experiences and interventions aiming at poverty reduction and social change. The question is: what has been learned from all these experiences and interventions? Which key lessons have been incorporated into new European NGO policies? Is there anything in particular which stands out in Latin America and which can be considered as crucial and relevant lessons for other regions? This chapter looks at NGO experiences in the various sub-regions of the continent, and assesses whether any key lessons can be drawn from European NGO interventions of the past decade. Special attention was given to the lessons learned from co-ordination among donor agencies.

### 5.1 Lessons from Latin America

We asked the agency representatives to look back at previous years and to judge for themselves what had been learned from their experiences and interventions. The responses were generally quite frank, but rather diverse. Some agencies emphasised lessons from their own role as a donor, others came up with lessons related to intervention strategies or development approaches. Below, the most important lessons learned are outlined and analysed.

One of the most frequently mentioned lessons dealt with the importance of establishing *strategic alliances*. More specifically, agencies seem to agree that initiatives towards setting up networks (at local, national and global levels) as key instruments to facilitate lobbying and campaigning at all these levels have triggered a breakthrough over the past decade. These more systematic and collaborative lobbying efforts illustrate what some agencies call 'strategic alliances', which in several cases have demonstrated a capacity to achieve tangible results and influence global agendas. Examples are the debt campaign, the WTO summit in Cancun (where a coalition of Southern countries led by Brazil took position against the powerful Northern members of the WTO), the PRSP processes and the *World Social Forum* (WSF). These more global interactions also benefited the influence and thus the legitimacy of the European agencies in their home countries.

A key element in this lobbying work is that coalitions of social movements and NGOs no longer strictly maintain 'anti-governmental' positions, but that these strategic alliances are being formed together with Northern and/or Southern governments, international financial institutions (such as the World Bank) or UN agencies such as UNDP. Especially the Oxfam agencies stress that they have learned to cooperate with global institutions over the past decade and that they managed to play a stimulating role in the 'globalisation for social justice movement' that has picked up so much dynamic after the WTO summit in Seattle in 1999.

A second major lesson comes from the faith-based European agencies, both from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. They seem to have learned that *Church-related organisations are not by definition the most ideal implementers of development-oriented programmes*. The churches are still considered as important actors in, for example, contributing to peace and reconciliation, but no longer as key development agents.

This has also had consequences for the European agencies themselves: The Swedish Protestant agency Diakonia explained that it had watched the downwards development of the ecumenical development movement (especially in Central America) with some regret, but it had learned that a more autonomous position from the Swedish churches was in fact a better option. Trocaire, the Irish Catholic agency, maintains however that the Church continued to be an important instrument for community organising and civil society building, especially in those areas where the Church was the only institutional structure.

A third lesson mentioned by several agencies is that its *support in the longer term to partner organisations eventually has paid off*. Latin America shows many examples where prolonged support to partners has contributed to a lobbying and advocacy capacity that compared to other regions of the world is superior in terms of quality and impact. Christian Aid, for example, points at the flexible role of European agencies and their position as a *partner* in these processes, giving advice and some resources, rather than determining the processes from the outside. It does recognise the problems of how this can be combined with increased demands for accountability, and thus with more formal relationships. Other agencies also pointed at this tension, but all agree that partner relationships with Latin American partners are often more mature than anywhere else.

These partnerships with a higher degree of ‘trust’ and ‘confidence’ are generally favoured by the agencies, as they generate more benefits in terms of policy formulation, allow more transparency, more mutual learning and are therefore often part of arrangements with ‘institutional support’. Especially the Dutch, German and Nordic agencies emphasised the importance of these ‘strategic partnerships’ that also proved to be crucial for the North-South lobbying campaigns that were mentioned earlier.

A fourth lesson commonly drawn by the European agencies is that the emergency aid following hurricane Mitch in 1998 has re-emphasised the need to improve *agency co-ordination*. Many lessons were drawn from the post-Mitch relief operation, which was probably the biggest ever in the region, but central was the lesson that working closely together as agencies in such a crisis situation helps to prevent lots of post-disaster implications of external aid. Several key partner organisations in the Central American region had been over-stretched and over-funded due to Mitch, which had sometimes contributed to their demise.

Finally, a point that was mentioned frequently by agency representatives was the need for *synergy* between partners and to look for complementarities between donor initiatives towards a similar region, community or group. This becomes easier if donor agencies have less countries and a more reduced number of partners, making them better capable of assisting efforts towards more synergy. Many agencies also mentioned in relation to this point that they have considered to strengthen their local presence in Latin America, which can benefit advocacy possibilities but also enhances learning opportunities. But partner organisations themselves are also collaborating better than a decade ago as they see the added value of networking and joint advocacy initiatives.

## **5.2 Differences between Central America and South America**

European agencies identified several differences in the way they operate in South America and in Central America. A difference is made between the Mercosur countries and the

(poorer) Andean countries. Most of the Mercosur countries have already been phased out, although many agencies definitely will continue their support to partners in Brazil, especially those that are involved in regional advocacy efforts, research and innovative activities.

Partners in the Andean countries currently are getting most attention in South America, with special attention for land issues, trade, productive projects, food security, and (such as in Colombia) on conflict resolution. Central America has generally different priorities, also because the Central American countries are poorer and their close proximity to the United States has made them work more closely together compared to South America. In Central America there is generally a more rural and agricultural focus, compared to the South, where the emphasis is more urban.

One of the main differences identified by the European agencies is that the social fabric in South America is better developed than in Central America. In the Andean countries civil society building is restricted to supporting indigenous organisations, whereas in Central America more attention is paid to organisational strengthening, network building and advocacy for public policies. In South America this advocacy is better developed and issues are generally more subtle (fight against inequality, corruption, etc.) rather than outright poverty and growing (urban) violence as it is being targeted currently in Central America.

But agencies also warn for gross generalisations: both regions have many issues in common: trade agreements, decentralisation, migration, and impunity, to name just a few. The Central American countries (except for Costa Rica) are in all these issues seen as being more vulnerable. However, the main difference is rather with *whom* the agencies are working, and in South America there is more choice for partners. These are generally also more experienced and have better developed capacities. Some agencies hope and expect that experienced South American partners can function more as supportive think tanks for Central America.

### **5.3 Possible lessons for other regions**

If it is true, as often has been argued, that many lessons learned from Latin America can be beneficial to other regions, in particular to Africa, then what are these lessons? We posed the questions a bit broader to the European agencies in order not to restrict their possible answers. In the following analysis the various lessons and differences are presented in a number of clusters.

#### *Civil society development*

The most frequently mentioned difference between Latin America and other regions is the strength of civil society. Agency representatives pointed out that Latin American's social organisations and NGOs have a longer history, are stronger compared to Africa and more homogeneous compared to Asia. The lessons that Latin America can offer for Africa are therefore related to mechanisms of strengthening organisations, setting up networks and engaging in advocacy activities. In addition, Latin America has developed a tradition of exchanging experiences and learning networks where the Africans can benefit from. Some agencies also refer to important experiences with longer-term partnerships in Latin America, and to the importance of innovations developed by these longer term partners, which were often applied later also in other regions.

### *Focus on socio-economic rights*

Latin America also generated lessons in relation to its experiences with the promotion of social, economic and cultural rights, and with the role of partners in the debate on corporate social responsibility. In Latin America the focus of European agencies it is not so much poverty reduction, but rather on tackling inequality and developing alternative sources of income (for example with micro credit schemes). Combined with a stronger set of social actors and institutions, many partners in Latin America have moved beyond the strict realm of direct poverty reduction and social service-provision to tackle this inequality.

### *Campaigning against free trade agreements*

One of the agencies remarked that one of the special features of Latin America is that the consequences of globalisation are more clearly visible here compared to other regions. This is reflected in the privatisation of public services, international migration (especially to the United States), the increased ease of transmitting remittances, but also in the increased regional trade patterns. One of the key campaigns of this moment is directed against the US governments desire to creating a free trade zone of the Americas that would no longer protect national interests. The fact that this is campaign is run by a combined effort of governments and social actors, broadly supported with activities in all countries of Latin America, illustrates a particular regional coherence and commitment that is not (yet) present in other regions.

### *Local development and decentralisation*

A fourth area where Latin America has demonstrated some important advances is related to experiences and experiments with new forms of local governance, often facilitated by the new decentralisation policies of national governments. Important lessons can be drawn from these practices, especially on how to involve local non-governmental actors into a more participatory form of local governance.

### *Strong links between Europe and Latin America*

Several agencies emphasised the point that historically the bonds between Europe and Latin America have been quite strong, due to colonisation and migration patterns and the prominent role of the Churches. Especially the Catholic Church has played a key role: there are for example more Church-based partners in Latin America than in Asia, but they are also much more radical, as the Church in Latin America has a bigger voice in society. Since the 1980s there has been much more democratic space and the liberation theology of the Catholic Church has been crucial in developing grass roots organisations in Latin America.

## **5.4 Agency co-ordination and the role of networks**

Agencies were asked to give an opinion about their co-ordination efforts with other agencies in relation to Latin America. We also asked them what their perception was of the role of ALOP and on which points improvements should be made in terms of co-ordination.

Most European agencies interviewed are generally part of at least two co-ordinating platforms: a national platform of NGOs (such as GOM<sup>10</sup> in the Netherlands, la Coordinadora

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<sup>10</sup> GOM stands for “Co-financing Agency Platform”, though recently changed its name into MBN, which means ‘Broad Co-financing Platform Netherlands’, which in turn was one of the driving forces behind PARTOS, an even broader network of Dutch agencies receiving co-financing funding for development from the Dutch government. See [www.partos.nl](http://www.partos.nl).

de NGOs in Spain, BOND in the UK) and a European or global network. These international networks are often mentioned as the most important platforms to co-ordinate activities and advocacy initiatives with other European agencies.

The Catholic agencies in Europe (in our survey CCFD, CORDAID, Misereor, Trocaire) are organised in CIDSE and seem to be quite satisfied about the way it is operating, especially in Brazil, Peru and Colombia. CIDSE is considered to be a key network because the Catholic agencies involved have many partners in common, creating lots of possibilities for synergies and exchanges of experiences. But CIDSE agencies also work as part of other (local) networks, or on thematic issues, such as the Soya initiative.

The Protestant network APRODEV has gone through a process of restructuring as it was periodically less effective, according to the member agencies. Several Protestant agencies making up this network (in particular ICCO, Christian Aid, Diakonia, Danchurchaid) have promoted other forms of cooperation, such as PAD (Dialogue and Articulation Platform) in Brazil and PICA (in Central America). This type of cooperation is based on shared partnerships rather than on an institutionalised coordination structure (such as Oxfam). Some believe that APRODEV still has a potential to play a more prominent role in coordinating the Latin American activities of the Protestant agencies.

Other networks, such as EUROSTEP have also lost their dynamic role for Latin America, as EUROSTEP is primarily dealing with the EU-related ACP countries. The *Alliance 2015* (Hivos, IBIS and several other European agencies) is picking up speed, although it is considered to be still a rather diverse combination of agencies. This is not the case with OXFAM International (Novib, Intermon, Oxfam-GB, Oxfam-BE) which has developed over the past few years as a rather close network with lots of common activities and partners. Within CIFCA many agencies have found a useful platform to work together on issues related to Europe and Central America.

The problems encountered by co-ordinating with other (European) agencies are related to the fact that the global campaigns on specific issues (such as on debt, MDGs, HIV-Aids, etc.) are often a lot easier than the co-ordination among agencies in relation to particular countries or issues. Often these various levels are not aware of co-ordination efforts, leading to what someone called 'coordination schizophrenia': innovations in one network can for example be neutralised by a very traditional way of working in other networks.

One of the key challenges of the agencies is to standardise their reporting criteria, organisational demands and other requirements. This has been an old desire of the (Latin American) partner organisations, used to delivering over a dozen different quarterly reports to their donors. In some countries (such as in Brazil) the ecumenical agencies have developed interesting steps in this direction and it would be a challenge when these could be replicated.

**Table 7: Examples of ‘favourite’ case studies** <sup>11</sup>

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Characteristic experience or case study</i>
11.11.11	OIDHACO (Colombia): network of 30 European NGOs, concerning human rights in Colombia;
Bread for the World	Does not want to emphasise just one programme as it had lots of successful ones all over Latin America especially in the area of: 1. Human Rights: Support of projects and building of human rights structures; 2. Promotion of land Rights of the native population 3. Food Security
CCFD	Bolivia: Nina Programme; Mercosur Programme
Christian Aid	The Colombia programme because: (i) C’Aid is one of the few agencies working in the country; (ii) C’Aid has a strong programme with grass roots groups focusing on local advocacy. Local advocacy, which is supported from the country office, is joined up with advocacy carried out in London; (iii) There is good intra-agency coordination in the UK (UK and Ireland) and in Europe (through OIDHACO).
Cordaid	n.a.
DanChurchAid	Honduras: Plataforma Agraria: Reasons: (i) Broad platform, (ii) Linking national and local towards international level, (iii) Diverse: churches, NGOs, GROs, research institutes
Diakonia	Honduras: OCDI; maybe entire Honduras programme
EED	Peru: Arariwa (Asociación Arariwa para la promoción técnico- cultural andina) in Cuzco. Project: “Participation of the civil society in communal and regional development policies and strategies in the Cuzco Region”
Hivos	Peru: Vía Libre (NGO working on HIV-AIDS information and acceptance) Nicaragua: Humboldt
IBIS	Guatemala: Educational reform programme: teacher training, bilingual education; Partners: CNP, RE, COPMAGUA
ICCO	Bolivia: Fin Rural (Bolivia): consortium of microfinance institutions. Peru: Manuela Ramos (Peru); innovative women’s organisation Brazil: FASE (Brazil): sustainable forestry; key partner for decades
Intermon	Nicaragua Programme: 5 essential components at two different levels: (i) National level: political influence and gender equity; (ii) Local level: development of production; disaster preparedness; civic participation; gender equity.
Misereor	Brazil: CIDADE (Centro de Assesoria e Estudos Urbanos); CPT (Comissao Pastoral da Terra); examples of successful functional chains, linkages with regional, national and international levels. CIDADE is also interesting example of S-S and S-N exchange.
Novib	Mexico: VAMOS; Brazil: IBASE; Peru: Labor
Oxfam-BE	n.a.
Oxfam-GB	Latin America: Fair Trade Movement (not the campaign but the products)
SNV	Bolivia: Land right programme (Santa Cruz)
Trocaire	Colombia: Human rights programme Central America: post-Mitch

Source: interviews with agencies

The role of ALOP is in general positively valued by the European agencies, at least by those that know ALOP well. It is highly appreciated that ALOP plays such a key role in generating a common position from a relevant group of Latin American partner organisations towards the IMF, the World Bank and the EU. The importance is that ALOP has maintained its

<sup>11</sup> We asked all the agencies a rather difficult question: if they would be asked to characterise their support to Latin America by mentioning only one successful project or programme, which one would that be, and why? In Table 7 an overview is given of these examples. Some agencies mentioned entire country programmes, whereas others pointed at particular partner organisations or sectoral programmes.

presence in these debates for a longer period of time, whereas other networks such as Jubilee 2000 and SAPRIN were only short-lived initiatives.

There are also concerns about ALOP in terms of its legitimacy (*who are they actually representing?*) and in its limited focus on (and presence in) Central America. ALOP is also encouraged to strengthen its ties with existing networks such as the Alliance 2015 and Oxfam International on anyone of their key campaign themes. This mapping exercise actually reveals that several key European agencies are indeed interested to get to know ALOP better. ALOP representatives are therefore urged to establish better contacts with US and European agency staff in order to improve communications and exchange information.



## Summary and conclusions

Many Latin American partner organisations that received support from European donor NGOs in recent years for contributing to structural poverty alleviation had expected that these agencies will gradually withdraw from the Latin American region. It is feared that funding will decrease and these funds are going to be channelled to Africa and other (poorer) regions of the world. This expected withdrawal was and is, however, generally based on irrational fears rather than on hard evidence. Therefore, a number of European and Latin American NGOs, gathering at the *Foro Social de las Americas* in Quito in July 2004, decided to make an inventory of changing policies and priorities of European NGOs towards Latin America. The idea was that only with solid data it would be possible to really confront these expected policy changes.

The inventory that followed, a so-called ‘mapping exercise’ (*mapeo*), involved 18 European NGOs and two European networks of NGOs and was implemented by a team of five researchers that gathered data and interviewed representatives of these European NGOs. The first part of this mapping exercise focused on changes in policies, funding, and priorities in the last ten years of European NGOs in Latin America, while the second part also looked at lessons learned and at future policy intentions. The key question here was: “how do European (non-governmental) donor agencies envisage their future policies and relationships with their Latin American partner organisations?”

By combining the analysis of trends over the past decade with findings on future policy perspectives, ten main conclusions have been elaborated:

1. A process of *geographical concentration* has taken place which seems to have been completed for the current moment. European NGOs over the past decade have gradually concentrated their funding allocations to partner organisations from an average of 18-20 to about 10-12 priority countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. New priority countries (such as Colombia, Bolivia, Guatemala, Cuba) have replaced previous ones (Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador), and the number of European agencies active in the same country has reduced too. Despite fears that they were going to be ‘phased out’ for being too rich, Brazil and Peru (and even Mexico) remain part of the priority list. Other priority countries include Honduras, Haiti and Ecuador. It also appears that European NGOs do not necessarily follow the bilateral programmes of their governments when these pull out of particular countries.

2. Throughout the past decade, European agencies have shown increased attention for *political and socio-economic rights*, going beyond the protection and promotion of basic human rights in oppressive contexts. What has been added over the years are new themes (improving local and national governance, combating corruption, encouraging citizen participation, better access to markets, etc.) in combination with an overall assessment framework: the rights-based approach. The relevance of the rights-based approach is that it has linked up human rights with tangible poverty indicators, which has extended the reach beyond basic political and civil rights towards the productive sphere and towards for example peace- and security-building. The difference with a decade ago is that joint lobbying and advocacy is not longer an activity of a ‘radical’ individual agency but has become a more

integrated part of all European agency activities, generally in close collaboration between likeminded agencies.

3. A common approach is becoming visible in which *a more political agenda* with a central role for lobbying and advocacy is combined with specialisations of the various agencies. After all, each agency keeps searching for its own 'niche' in order to become even better in what it is doing well already. This urge to have a clear profile has become more accepted and is no longer seen as a source of competition or as an obstacle for joint action. To the contrary, on some thematic issues it is very likely that agencies will work together more closely over the coming years. Topics that were mentioned here included migration, conflict resolution and peace-building, and trade issues. These are likely going to be some of the key topics for the next few years, in which the 'creation and promotion of more synergies' is the central slogan in order to maximise the use of more scarcely available resources.

4. *Overall funding allocations to Latin America by European donor NGOs have not been reduced*, contrary to what was expected. Only a handful of agencies had to reduce their Latin America programmes, but due to the relative growth of agency budgets, overall disbursements to Latin America have been maintained at a constant level between 1995 and 2004. In particular those agencies that used to have high disbursements for Latin America (higher than 25 % of the total overseas expenditures), seem to have lowered this level in favour of poorer countries in other regions. Funding levels are unlikely to be dropping dramatically over the next couple of years either. What are rather going to change are the sources of income for European NGOs. Bilateral income will probably decrease as well as co-funding schemes, which for decades have been the main sources of income for many European agencies. The trend is that a larger proportion of European donor NGO income will have to come from other official donors, market-based actors and from private donations. This will probably have repercussions on the conditions attached to future aid disbursements.

5. Over the last decade the *total number of partner organisations of European NGOs has overall decreased*, especially since 2000. However, over one-third of the European agencies in our survey still maintained partnerships with more organisations now (in 2004) compared to ten years before. This reduction of partners is very visible in South America, but less so in Central America. Moreover, this tendency is part of a general concentration effort by European NGOs: fewer countries and fewer partners are hoped to contribute to more visible and tangible results.

6. There is *no common tendency in the type of partner organisations supported*: neither more NGOs, nor more social movements (be they rural or urban). The trend over the past decade has been towards supporting more specialised (rather than generalist) NGOs and to diversify the partner portfolios. Partner organisations were generally encouraged to get involved in lobbying their governments, realising better micro-macro linkages, and to work more directly with and complementary to local governments. But there is no common pattern among the European donor NGOs to prefer a particular type of partner organisation: the pattern is specialisation with diversity.

7. All these issues mentioned above suggest that in less than a decade an interesting *political momentum* has been created (or maybe 'recreated') with a potentially huge common agenda for organisations from Latin America and the European Union to jointly push for a better use of public resources, especially at the EU level. ALOP and other Latin American networks can play a crucial function here in feeding and supporting these joint campaigns, and this is also

where the commitments of many European NGOs still will have to be proven. The prospects are good, as many European NGOs have decided to put more energy into advocacy, including adding considerable budgets to these activities. Providing a solid follow-up to the Quito discussions of July 2004 is therefore a crucial condition to move forwards, whereas putting the common agenda into practice will be the key test for realising a breakthrough in a new and longer term European-Latin American collaboration.

8. Many lessons can be learned from European NGO interventions in Latin America that are possibly going to be useful for other regions in the near future. One important lesson on which agencies seem to agree is that initiatives towards setting up networks (at local, national and global levels), and the creation of 'strategic alliances', have been key instruments to facilitate lobbying and campaigning and triggered a breakthrough over the past decade on issues such as debt and trade. Another lesson is that it pays off to support partner organisations over a longer period, at least if during this period capacities are built up that will generate a multiplier effect (through for example increased lobbying capacity). Furthermore, important lessons were learned in agency co-ordination, leading to a search for synergies within and with other agency programmes.

9. Although co-ordination efforts have improved between European donor NGOs as well as between Latin American networks, there is still *a sense of 'coordination schizophrenia'*: innovations in one network can easily be neutralised by a very traditional way of working in other networks. This calls for more mutual co-ordination efforts between these networks. An important challenge for European donor agencies is to standardise their reporting criteria, organisational demands and other requirements. This has been an old desire of the (Latin American) partner organisations, used to delivering over a dozen different quarterly reports to their donors. In some countries (such as in Brazil) the ecumenical agencies have developed interesting steps in this direction and it would be challenging to replicate these elsewhere.

10. The *role of ALOP* is quite positively valued by the European agencies, at least by those that know ALOP well. It is highly appreciated that ALOP plays such a key role in generating a common position from a relevant group of Latin American partner organisations towards the International Financial Institutions and the EU. However, there are also concerns about who ALOP represents (legitimacy) and if it really manages to cover regions such as Central America. Agencies that do not know ALOP well are also more sceptical. But the mapping exercise also highlighted that several of these more sceptical European agencies are indeed interested to get to know ALOP better and to do more work together in the future. ALOP representatives are therefore urged to establish better contacts with US and European agency staff in order to improve communications, exchange information, and to take the lead in intensifying a joint debate on European-Latin American relationships for the near future from a citizen's (and maybe at times even a grassroots) perspective.

## Appendix I: Checklist

### Checklist mapping research for ALOP and European agencies on Latin American policies (November 2004)

#### Central question:

How do the European (non-governmental) agencies envisage their future policies and relationships (agenda, priorities, funding allocations) with Latin American NGOs in the year 2010?

#### A. Basic data of the agency:

- A1. Name agency
- A2. Staff members interviewed: (including function)
- A3. Total number of staff of the agency (2004)
- A4. Total number of staff for the Latin America department (2004)
- A5. Latin America staff as percentage of total staff
- A6. Total overseas budget of agency (2004)

#### B. Data on Latin America policies

- B1. What were the key thematic priorities of the Latin American policies of the agency over the past 10 years (1995-2004)? (*Mention a maximum of five*)
- B2. Has there been an explicit shift in priorities (from one key priority to another one)?
- B3. What were the key activities supported in Latin America over the past 10 years (1995-2004)? (*Mention a maximum of five activities*)
- B4. In which Latin American countries is the agency active in 2004? And does this differ from 1995 and 2000? (*Please specify these countries in a table*)
- B5. What was the total budget for Latin America in 1995, 2000 and 2004? (*If these data are available, please also give figures for intermediate years; please provide table*)
- B6. What was the percentage of the LA budget of the total agency budget in 1995, 2000 and 2004? (*If data of intermediate years are available, please give these too*).
- B7. Which three Latin American countries supported by the agency had the highest budget allocations in 1995, 2000 and 2004?
- B8. Did the agency have special reasons for prioritising these countries?
- B9. Does the agency have a (separate) Latin America policy document?

#### C. Partner organisations in Latin America and budgets

- C1. How many partner organisations did the agency have in total in Latin America in 1995, 2000 and 2004?
- C2. What have been the three main changes over the last ten years in the characteristics of the partner organisations supported?
- C3. Which typologies have been used by the agency for classifying these partners? And what are the main trends between 1995 and 2004? (*Examples of typologies can be:*)
  - *Organisational* (NGOs, social organisations, networks, grassroots organisations, etc.)
  - *Thematic* (health, education, income-generation, habitat, etc.)
  - *Formal/informal*
  - *Etc.*
- C4. Have agency funds for Latin America overall been reduced in recent years?
- C5. If these were reduced, what were the main reasons?
- C6. If budgets for Latin America were not reduced, can this be explained?
- C7. Did the agency develop exit strategies for its partner organisations? If so, how and with which criteria?
- C8. If no exit strategies were used, why not?

**D. Lessons from the past:**

- D1. What is the main difference of the activities supported (and relationships maintained) in Latin America and other continents? *(Give short examples and explanations)*
- D2. What are the three key lessons of the Latin America programme(s) of the agency, when looking back over the past decade? *(Lessons might be based both on evaluations, as well as on personal assessments).*
- D3. Is there a visible difference between trends in Central America and South America? Or between regions within South America? *(Distinguish between funding trends, changes in partner networks, trends in priorities)*
- D4. What is the overall judgement of the agency about co-ordination with other aid agencies?
- D5. Which experiences of European agency co-ordination in Latin America of the past decade stand out, and why?
- D6. How is the position of ALOP perceived by the agency?
- D7. Does the agency have ideas how to improve co-ordination with ALOP in the future?
- D8. If the agency would be asked to characterise its support to Latin America by mentioning one successful project or programme, which one would that be, and why?

**E. Future perspectives**

- E1. What are the likely trends for the near future (up to 2010) in the agency's policies towards Latin America regarding priority countries?
- E2. And regarding thematic priorities?
- E3. And regarding preferred activities that are supported?
- E4. And regarding favourite intervention strategies?
- E5. And regarding funding allocations?
- E6. And regarding campaigning and lobbying?
- E7. About the future of the Latin America programme of the agency: what are the expected pre-conditions, incentives and/or constraints related to the back donors?
- E8. What are the domestic circumstances and debates that can possibly influence the direction of the agency's policies towards Latin America in the near future?
- E9. Other trends or opinions or comments that are relevant for the study?

## Appendix II: List of persons interviewed

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Place / date interview</i>
Koen Warmenbol	11.11.11	Coordinator for Latin America	Brussels, Dec 2004
Jérôme Faure	CCFD	Coordinator Latin America and Caribbean Department	Paris, Dec 2004
Andrew Croggon	Christian Aid	Head of Latin American, Caribbean and Global Division	London, Dec 2004
Genoveva Tournon y Galdeano	CIDSE	Latin America and Asia Continental Platforms and Education Development Forum coordinator	Brussels, Dec 2004
Margriet Nieuwenhuis	CORDAID	Head Latin America Department	The Hague, Dec. 2004
Katja Levin	Danchurchaid	Coordinator Latin America Desk	Copenhagen, Dec 2004
Mattias Brunander	DIAKONIA	South America Desk Officer	Stockholm, Dec 2004
Peter Ottoson	DIAKONIA	Central America Desk Officer	Stockholm, Dec 2004
Uwe Asseln- Keller	EED	Head Latin American Department	Bonn, Nov 2004
Simon Stocker	EUROSTEP	Director	Phone, Jan 2005
Camilo Tovar	EUROSTEP	Project assistant	Brussels, Dec 2004
Dineke v/d Oudenalder	HIVOS	Head Latin America Department	The Hague, Jan 2005
Nicola Bromosehalm	IBIS	Programme Officer South America	Copenhagen, Dec 2004
Morten Bisgaard	IBIS	Education Advisor/LA Dept	Copenhagen, Dec 2004
Gitte Weise Hermansen	IBIS	Programme Officer Central America	Copenhagen, Dec 2004
Karen Andersen	IBIS	Head of South Department	Copenhagen, Dec 2004
Erica Wortel	ICCO	Ex Head of Latin America Buro	Utrecht, Oct-Nov 2004
Willemijn Lammers	ICCO	Head of Latin America Buro	Utrecht, Nov 2004
Xavier Palau	Intermon	Co-ordinator for Central America and Caribbean	Barcelona, Dec 2004
Ana Artazcoz	Intermon	Co-ordinator for South America	Barcelona, Dec 2004
Heinrich Brötz	Misereor	Head of Latin American Department	Aachen, Nov 2004
Theo Bouma	NOVIB	Director Project Department	The Hague, Nov 2004
Robbert van den Berg	NOVIB	Head Latin America Bureau	The Hague, Nov 2004
Liesbeth van de Hoogh	NOVIB	Project Officer South America	The Hague, Nov 2004
Paul Franssen	NOVIB	Head Central America Bureau	The Hague, Nov 2004
Erik van Mele	Oxfam Belgium	Co-ordinator Latin America	Brussels, Dec 2004
Constantino Casasbuenas	Oxfam GB	Policy Advisor South and Central America, Mexico and Caribbean	Oxford, Dec 2004
Henning Reetz	Brot fuer die Welt	Head of Latin America Department	Stuttgart, Nov 2004
Marnix Mulder	SNV	Co-ordinator Latin America	The Hague, Nov 2004
Annalisa Murphy	Trocaire	Programme Officer Bolivia and Brazil	Dublin, Dec 2004
Emiliana Tapia	Trocaire	Programme Officer Peru and Ecuador	Dublin, Dec 2004
Patty Abozaglo	Trocaire	Programme Officer for Colombia	Dublin, Dec 2004
Sarah McCan	Trocaire	Programme Coordinator for Asia and Latin America	Dublin, Dec 2004
Sally O'Neill	Trocaire	Regional Director Central America	E-mail, Dec 2004

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Brot für die Welt: <http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/ueber-uns/index.php>

CCFD: [http://www.ccfid.asso.fr/ewb\\_pages/s/soutenir\\_developpement.php](http://www.ccfid.asso.fr/ewb_pages/s/soutenir_developpement.php)

Christian Aid: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/aboutca/index.htm>

Cordaid: <http://www.cordaid.nl/index.asp?mID=5707>

Danchurchaid: <http://www.dca.dk/usr/noedhjaelp/DCAweb.nsf/UNIDInformationsdokumenter/8F3E0E0F92BFD0ED41256C8C00320AB7>

CIDSE: [http://www.cidse.org/list\\_press.phtml?text02=CIDSE&lang=en&lang\\_help=en](http://www.cidse.org/list_press.phtml?text02=CIDSE&lang=en&lang_help=en)

Diakonia: [http://www.diakonia.se/main\\_eng.htm](http://www.diakonia.se/main_eng.htm)

EED: <http://www.eed.de/en.home/>

Eurostep: [http://www.eurostep.org/detail\\_page.phtml?page=index](http://www.eurostep.org/detail_page.phtml?page=index)

Hivos: <http://www.hivos.nl/english>

IBIS: <http://www.ibis.dk/uk/>

ICCO: <http://www.icco.nl/delivery/icco/en/>

Intermon: <http://www.intermonoxfam.org/page.asp?id=1098>

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Novib: <http://www.novib.nl/en/content/?type=article&id=5099>

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