



Facilitating a participatory approach

Conference paper by Amira Hussein

One can claim that for many years the relationship between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and donors was defined in terms of financial support and not technical cooperation and support. Accordingly, there is a need for changing the concept of collaboration from »donorship« to »partnership«.

However, recently, many donors such as EU, and financial institutions such as World Bank have started involving CSOs in consultations aimed at understanding the needs and defining together the goals for development in each country.

On the other hand, a survey on how donors could better engage CSOs was implemented in June 2011 on 50 leading Egyptian CSOs. The recommendations included securing more funding »for institution-building and core funding for local CSOs to help them grow and sustain themselves. As most current donor support is largely restricted to short-term projects and programs implementation. This support should also take into consideration public image challenges facing Egyptian civil society and should encourage stronger public outreach and communication efforts.«

Facilitating the application process for funding has been also an important request for most NGOs. CSOs invest a lot of efforts in complicated application processes, rather than being engaged in a discussion that leads to better designed sustainable projects. There is also a need for an objective monitoring and evaluation process to ensure good implementation. Despite the fact that many CSOs consider the participatory approach to be best suited to provide capacity-building in addition to funding and to maintain »ownership« given to the recipient organizations, in practice this is not the prevailing approach used by the majority of donors.

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