Review of Mission East

2021

Final Report

Vagn Berthelsen

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACAP: Accessibility, Communication, Attitude, Participation

BoH: Bridge of Hope

CHS: Core Humanitarian Standards

CRPD: Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities

DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

EU-CORD: European Christian Organizations for Relief and Development

General Assembly: GA

GESI: Gender and Social Inclusion

GRPD: General Data Protection Regulation

HEAD: Himalayan Education And Development.

HHM: Health & Hope Myanmar

HRBA: Human Rights Based Approach

IA: Integral Alliance

KIRDARC: Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre

LNOB: Leaving No One Behind

ME: Mission East

HHUK: Health & Hope United Kingdom

PANT: Participation, Accountability. Non-discrimination, Transparency

PDO: People with Disability Organization

PLF: Partnership Listening Forum

RM: Rural Municipalities

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

Secretary General: SG

SPA: Strategic Partnership agreement

SPC: Strategy Partnership Commitment

TSD: Together for Sustainable Development.

SWC: Social Welfare Council (Nepal)

UIES: Universal Inclusion Education System.

WWS: Women Welfare Services

Executive Summary and recommendations

ME has the capacity to manage the present program phase.

1. Organisation capacity

Organizationally 2020 was a turbulent year for ME. ME has for all purposes managed to overcome the organizational difficulties well. The new Chairman has played a prominent role in managing the transition in Denmark, the Brussels office Director served as interim SG and a new SG with a relevant background and strong credentials started 1st of January 2021.

ME works with disaster response and rural community development. The humanitarian capacity of ME is relevant in the context of the CISU grant/development in various ways. The CHS certification is an acknowledgement of capacity and procedures which adhere to standards and that relevant policies are in place concerning HR, risk and anti-corruption, and there are logistical as well as technical capacity advantages.

ME's reporting is detailed, concise and the relevant management systems and professional competencies are in place. ME has a focus on six intervention areas and inhouse capacity is complemented by ex-house consultants in the bigger interventions. Refer criteria 8 (results framework and M&E system) below.

ME's 'popular engagement' is discussed under criteria 12 (below).

2. Financial management and administrative capacity

The CISU financial monitoring review was completed 2.3.21 and recommends certain changes related to administrative guidelines, separation of duties and procurement procedures. None of the recommendations are 'serious' and all have been accepted by ME. Deloitte completed in February 2021 a review of ME's accounting policies for income and has two observations and recommendations: The administration fee should only be registered as income when funds have been spent, and this will according to ME be followed through in 2020. This in turn is linked to a recommendation to ME to ensure an adequate equity.

Financial reporting from partners is a monthly process with partners reporting to ME and consolidating these into monthly budgets vs actual reports for each project and each country. There is an active interplay between financial reporting and program staff following a template set of questions.

3. Analytical capacity and learning

ME's results framework, M&E, reporting and knowledge management is elaborate and provides a sound platform for analysis, which is generally also reflected in the reporting. ME has long term presence and contextual knowledge of the four countries in the program, based on analysis with partners (refer also point 7 below on programmatic analysis and references to the CHS certification including risk analysis).

ME's 'workbooks' are used as a standard MEAL and management tool, and the partner 'growth plans' are conducive for partners' organizational learning and dialogue with ME (refer criteria 8 below). ME's own growth plan is updated annually and takes the point of departure in recommendations made in the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) cycle.

Learning is pursued via the MEAL system and is complemented by initiatives like the 'partner listening forum' exercise and initiatives to learn across countries (although postponed because of COVID19), and the knowledge management center provides a common basis.

4. Delivering and documenting results

ME reports (performance report 2020) that progress and achievement of results in 2020 are globally considered successful. The report details the program components per country, including the extra grant for climate change in Nepal and the COVID19 response (with reallocated funds) which obviously changed the context in all countries and resulted in delays of program activities. The program is however, largely on track.

Results are well documented in the workbooks. Output indicators are simple and mainly quantitative while outcome indicators are more complex and mainly qualitative. There are examples of indicators and targets which could be more concise but nothing that merits substantial criticism. Policy influence plans agreed with partners ensure attention to a rights-based approach, holding duty bearers accountable, but the context in the four program countries vary considerably. The policy influence goals are ranked as changes we 'expect to see', 'like to see' and 'love to see' and are color coded based on an assessment of progress achieved.

Cost effectiveness is pursued monthly as partners' reporting on actual expenditure are discussed between program and finance staff and followed up in discussions with the country team and with partners. The 2020 report has a reflection about the match between the high number of partners/countries compared to the financial volume of the program (page 11).

5. Strategic orientation. Strengthening civil society in the global south and relevance to the SDGs

The program is focused on the resilience and inclusion of some of marginalized people with a 'Leaving No-one Behind' lens. The marginalization has different dimensions and includes both individual marginalization (PwD, women, youth) and societal marginalization (Christian minority in Myanmar, remote districts in Nepal, ethnic minorities). A number of SDGs are addressed notably SDG 2 (hunger), 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (inequality), SDG 13 (climate change), SDG 16 (governance) and SDG 17 (partnership) via the program.

There are good examples of innovative practices in the program leading to overall changes at outcome level.

ME's partners' capacity varies and are supported either via country offices (Nepal and Tajikistan) or directly from Brussels (Myanmar and Armenia). The combined effort of working with the key partners to build their capacity and working with the partners' efforts to capacitate local civil society is strengthening civil society role and ability to influence societal development and thus addressing SDG 16 (governance).

6. Relevance of civil society partners and relevant networking/global connectedness

As noted above ME's partners are contributing to the development of civil society within their areas of thematic interventions and contributing to the fulfillment of the SDGs.

ME's main partners are all long-term partners and generally speaks well of the relationship with ME (BoH: 'A peer to peer relationship'). ME has taken varies initiatives to include partners more and has signed 'partnership commitments' with the partners. This is a concrete way of effectuating a mutually binding partnership and most likely more relevant than an overall partnership strategy.

ME is an active member of Integral Alliance (IA), an alliance with 21 INGO members with a shared Christian background and of EU-CORD (European Organizations for Relief and Development), an advocacy network with 24 members focusing on issues like ECHO, policy coherence, inclusion of PwD, the SDG framework.

7. Theory of Change and program synergy

The overall strategy of ME is consistent and aligned with overall Danish development strategy including the strategy for support to civil society. The overall ToC outlines civil society and CBO support and capacity building leading to increased 'agency' and improving the practice and policy of duty bearers, which in turn leads to increased inclusion of marginalized groups (women, PwD, children) and resilience. The overall ToC is reflected in country strategies or national ToC.

ME accepted the recommendation from the capacity assessment from 2018 to enhance contextual analysis and cited the compliance with the relevant CHS indicators on context and risks and needs. The drafted new country strategy for Nepal (2021-25) has a relevant level whereas the previous strategies are too basic.

ME has a long-term presence and contextual knowledge of the four program countries. The balance between the three dimensions of the change triangle differs between the program countries because of the different contexts.

The synergy between the four program countries was questioned in the discussions leading to the current program grant. ME sees 'inclusion' of marginalized groups – PwD, women, children and minorities – as a common denominator, which makes it relevant for partners in all four countries to discuss experiences. ME tools and methodology (templates, accountability and complaints mechanisms, civil society capacity building etc) has facilitated interaction across countries. Bilateral initiatives have been taken.

ME works in the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance. The nexus is a highly profiled ambition in the (current) overall Danish development strategy but does not feature in the assessment criteria for the civil society fund, and ME does not pursue this element in the CISU program. However, the COVID19 pandemic made ME's 'WASH' capacity relevant in the context of Nepal. Refer 13.1. in executive summary.

8. Results framework and M&E system

As observed in the capacity assessment from 2018 ME has a strong results framework. An overall ToC for ME and a results framework for the CISU grant. For the individual country, the framework consists of a Country Strategy (if ME has a Country Office, otherwise a ToC), a ToC for the CISU grant and a Results Framework which outlines activities, outputs and outcomes. Further, a 'workbook' serves as project management tool and a monitoring plan and 'growth plans' and 'policy influence' plans complement the workbook.
Financial reporting is not an integrated element in the M&E system but is conducted on a monthly basis per project and country.

9. A Human Rights Based Approach

ME's program is to a very high degree focused on 'leaving no-one behind', targeting the rights of PwD, women and girls and ethnic or religious minorities, often in hard-to-reach areas. The PANT principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination and transparency are generally pursued.

10. Sustainability

Working with a RBA has a lot to do with financial and political sustainability to do and ME's ToC reflect this approach. The focus on resilience links to environmental sustainability, and 'social sustainability' basically depends upon ME's partners being a genuine and accepted part of society, which clearly seems to be the case. ME and partners pursue financial sustainability by seeking a diverse funding basis.

11. Financial resources and cost level

This review has no special observations regarding the budget set up and transparency. ME has a significant own funding accounting for more than a third of the total budget and more than the total allocations from the Danish state, including CISU and humanitarian funding. The financial expenditure and cost effectiveness is monitored on a monthly basis.

12. Popular engagement and development education

ME has 6300 individual supporters and 2400 individual members (1900 of these are also supporters). ME rooting in Denmark is primarily based on church related communities and the membership is predominantly Christians with an active engagement in the church. The 'DNA' of ME is based on Christian values – compassion for fellow human beings ('næstekærlighed') – but is also that ME reach out to faraway / remote places and people where few others venture.

The outreach to the Danish society is good/fair for an organization of ME's size. Development education activities have for the last year been COVID19 dominated but other themes have been covered as well, including sustainable agriculture and empowerment of PwD and women.

13. Special themes

13.1. Nexus activities

ME works in the nexus between humanitarian and development assistance. The nexus is a highly profiled ambition in the (current) overall Danish development strategy but does not feature in the assessment criteria for the civil society fund, and ME does not pursue this element in the CISU program. However, the COVID19 pandemic made ME's 'WASH' capacity relevant in the context of Nepal. The strategic and concrete advantages of pursuing the nexus potential can be pursued further but must be based on a joint understanding between ME and CISU.

13.2. MEs popular anchorage

ME's statutes are rudimentary and in need of revision to clarify the roles of the General Assembly, Board and secretariat and consolidate the internal democracy.

ME's public fundraising in Denmark is impressive and private fundingdonations accounted for more than 36% of the turnover in 2019, more than funding deriving from the Danish state.

ME's organizational model is not seen as undermining the Danish anchorage.

Recommendations

Recommendation (1). ME to consider number of countries/partners in program portfolio depending upon total (CISU and other donor funding) program funding to avoid undermining cost-effectiveness.

Future country strategies are elaborated and at the level of the Nepal strategy for 2021-25 (presently in draft format and not approved) and focus on analysis and context related to the planned intervention.

Recommendation (2). ME to pursue options for joint learning and synergy across countries, building on existing initiatives and promoting a systematic approach. Focus areas could include organizational development, advocacy and inclusion.

Recommendation (3). ME to consider simplifying / amending the results framework and M&E system to ease partners' obligations. The system is impressive and relevant, but while there are many overlaps between different elements, the financial reporting is not integrated in the M&E system.

CISU to consider if the localization agenda can be promoted by allowing more flexibility around formats and procedures for South partners depending on track record, levels of funding and context.

Recommendation (4). ME to include discussions around nexus work in the upcoming discussions around a new ME program strategy to explore the potential role / synergies further and possibly define itself more in this regard. ME to consider with donors (CISU) how the potential conflict with the donor 'grant boxes' can be resolved.

Recommendation (5). ME should amend the statutes and clarify roles and authority of the general assembly, the Board and secretariat respectively and consider how to strengthen and consolidate the internal democracy.

ME should consider how to increase interactivity with the membership and/or with other segments of the Danish society, for example through a strategic cooperation with other NGOs (disability organizations as one example).

Recommendation (6). Nepal specific recommendations, for more detail refer 3.2.1. in this report or the Nepal field visit report: Strengthen women's formal representation and use of formal entry points to influence decisions and policies; Enhance the trust between the CSO alliance and local government and assist local government with technical capacity; Build on gains within social and economic empowerment to change policies and practices more structurally.

1 Introduction

Mission East (ME) is an international NGO working across the relief, rehabilitation and development spectrum, founded in Denmark in 1991. ME has an annual turnover of 73,8 million DKK (2019 figures). Over a three year period the CISU grant contribute 12,6 million DKK and over a four year period a DANIDA humanitarian SPa grant contribute with 76 million DKK. The CISU grant covers the period from 2019 – 21 and includes four countries – Nepal, Myanmar, Armenia and Tajikistan. This report is a review of the CISU funded program including two, later added, components related to climate change (Nepal) and COVID19 (reallocation of funds).

The overall objective of the review is to assess the capacity and performance of ME in delivering results to support learning and relevant organizational development. Specific issues to be addressed are i) nexus learnings from ME's work with development and humanitarian aid in fragile as well as in more stable countries and ii) ME's popular anchorage in perspective of the organizational set up with a Brussels office in charge of programs and finances and the head office in Copenhagen in charge of communication and fundraising. The ToR are included as annex 1.

The review was conducted by Mr. Vagn Berthelsen, assisted by Ms Era Shrestha who conducted the in depth-study of ME activities in Nepal, including a field visit to the Karnali province where the program activities take place. The activities in Armenia, Tajikistan and Myanmar were reviewed long-distance with

virtual interviews with partners and ME staff and where possible, third party stakeholders. The formal start of the review was 1st February and the draft report submitted 17th March.

Vagn Berthelsen would like to thank ME staff and ME partners for being open and helpful in accommodating the review. A special thanks to ME staff in Nepal and the staff of KIRDARC, the main partner in Nepal, for their efforts and assistance during the field trip.

2 Review findings and analysis

2.1. Contextual developments and the program.

The COVID19 pandemic has obviously been a game changer globally. ME was allowed to reallocate funding for prevention activities in the four program countries (refer 3.2.). The impact of COVID19 goes beyond the immediate needs for awareness raising, hygiene measures, equipment and control. The pandemic has disrupted market access, affected food prices and food security, and changed national priorities. There is need to adjust to what may become a 'new normal' and to consider programs in countries and regions in this perspective.

ME works in volatile countries although the expectation has been, that some countries were stable and others fragile. The volatility became very apparent in Myanmar in the beginning of 2021 when the military took control through coup. At the time of writing parliamentarians have been jailed, demonstrators have been killed and public servants are at strike. ME project staff are in danger and the project has temporarily been put on hold. In Armenia a war broke about between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, ending in December 2020.

2.2. Mission East 2020

Organizationally 2020 was a turbulent year for ME. The Secretary General (SG) and founder of ME was first laid off, later reinstated and end of year stepping down and now in a role where he may be drawn upon for consultancy purposes on an ad hoc basis. In the process a new Board and new Chairman were elected at the General Assembly (GA) which decided to reinstate the SG. The reasons for the disagreements were partly issues related to the role a SG can/should play, decision-making processes which had not been amended to match the growth of ME and unclarities around ME's accounting practices.

ME has for all purposes managed to overcome the organizational difficulties well. The new Chairman has played a prominent role in managing the transition in Denmark, the Brussels office Director served as interim SG and a new SG with a relevant background and strong credentials started 1st of January 2021. Initiatives have been taken to clarify internal decision-making processes and initiatives have been taken to strengthen the financial oversight function in Copenhagen. The turbulence has not affected the income from private donations negatively, 2020 was in fact a record year (refer popular anchorage section).

There has been stress related issues among staff in the given situation, but the turn-over of staff in 2019-2020 has not been alarmingly high. In 2020 three staff members have left the Brussels office, 3 staff members have left the Copenhagen office. Judging from the interviews and the reports analyzed the staff has a high professional standard.

2.3. Analytical capacity

ME's results framework, M&E, reporting and knowledge management is elaborate and provides a sound platform for analysis, which is generally also reflected in the reporting. Reference is made to especially 4.2.

2.4. Learning

The performance report has some COVID19 reflections. Partners were not prepared for the sudden changes required to enable program implementation without direct contact and without access to sophisticated technology. Vulnerable and marginalized people are more affected by the effects of emergencies. It should be considered to have some flexible funding in the program to cater for such situations.

Partners interviewed and ME local staff speaks positively about the knowledge center run by ME. It is accessible and provides relevant templates and relevant information material about program methodology.

A 'Partner Listening Forum' exercise initiated by Integral Alliance has been a successful exercise to ensure that partners' voice and concerns are heard, and that the Grand Bargain localization agenda gets substance. The initiative covered five countries and engaged 47 organizations. Key themes discussed were about power and control. Although initiated based on humanitarian work it was followed up in Nepal with partner KIRDARC organizing and inviting other NGOs in. A report by Marty Pritchard from March 2020 documents the process and the learnings. Refer 4.2. for further info.

3 Overall progress and performance of the program

3.1. Theory of Change, program strategy, coherence and synergy

ME's strategy (2015-2020) is consistent and aligned with the main areas of the Danish Strategy for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Action. The vision, which is to 'empower people and communities in crisis-affected countries to lift themselves out of poverty and marginalization' is in line with 'The World 2030' strategy including the 'promotion of human rights, democracy and gender equality'. The mission, which is 'to help vulnerable populations, supporting communities' capacities to organize and assist themselves, through activities ranging from disaster relief to development assistance' is in line with the Strategy for support to Civil Society. A process has been initiated by the new SG to formulate a new strategic plan.

The overall ToC outlines civil society and CBO support and capacity building leading to increased 'agency' and improving the practice and policy of duty bearers, which in turn leads to increased inclusion of marginalized groups (women, PwD, children) and resilience. The overall ToC is reflected in country strategies or national ToC (refer 4.2.).

The synergy between the four program countries was questioned in the discussions leading to the current program grant. It is correct that Armenia and Tajikistan are focused on disability whereas Nepal and Myanmar are focused on livelihoods/resilience. However, in Nepal, a disability organization (HEAD) is now a partner in the project area. ME sees 'inclusion' of marginalized groups – PwD, women, children and minorities – as a common denominator, which makes it relevant for partners in all four countries to discuss tools, methodology and advocacy approaches. A joint partner meeting planned for 2020 was postponed because of COVID19 but was envisaged for joint learning. Between countries, partners in Myanmar and Nepal have been connected to discuss advocacy learnings, and climate change and adaption may be a future theme to explore jointly. Armenia partner BoH has assisted Tajikistan partners. ME tools and methodology (templates, accountability and complaints mechanisms, civil society capacity building etc.) has facilitated interaction across countries.

Coherence as defined by DAC is about the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions (internally or externally) in a country, sector or institution. Generally, ME work in settings which are not

NGO-crowded and the risk of overlapping/contradictory interventions not great. In Myanmar the two partners supported are well aligned and coordinates closely with the church; in Armenia the partner is a leading NGO in the disability movement; in Nepal there was some observations about coherence, refer 3.2.1. ME is a member of Integral Alliance (IA) which is set up to enhance and coordinate disaster preparedness and coordinate big disaster operations refer 4.0.

3.2. Progress towards meeting present program phase results.

ME reports (performance reports 2020) that progress and achievement of results in 2020 are globally considered successful. The report details the program components per country, including the extra grant for climate change in Nepal and the reallocated funds for COVID19 prevention, which obviously changed the context in all countries and resulted in delays of program activities. The program is however, largely on track. The following country observations complements the progress report and are based on interviews as well as analysis of relevant documents.

3.2.1. Nepal

A field study was commissioned to have an in-depth review of project activities in Nepal. The field study included a visit to the remote Karnali Province. The ToR for the Nepal study and a summary of the Nepal report are included as annex 3 and 4 in the annex section of the main report.

The program in Nepal have defined three overall outcome components about i) CSO and CBO capacity to influence policy processes and empower women and ii) duty bearers' inclusion and priority of marginalized groups and iii) resilience including climate change (climate change added later). A fourth outcome linked to COVID19 was added. The report is structured under these headings.

The context for the Nepal program is the Peace Accord from 2006 which was followed up with a new constitution in 2015 which explicitly introduced measures for greater inclusion of marginalized communities and women and Dalits. Further, the constitution paved the way for decentralization of power to local governments and Nepal was subsequently restructured as a federal state with three tiers of government – the local, provincial and federal levels.

Outcome 1: Civil society as agents of change. The outcome is defined as 'CSOs and CBOs in Sarkegad have increased ability to influence local level policy processes and services, to make them more inclusive and accountable, and CSOs are key actors in empowerment of women and marginalized groups'.

Karnali is a far away and marginalized province with few resources. Women, PwD and Dalits have not been considered rightful citizens and while cultural practices are deeply entrenched, concepts of rights based approaches, rule of law, participation and good governance are new.

The targeted communities are organized 10 women's groups (260 members) and 10 adolescent girl's groups (264 members), formed as inclusive groups including Dalit women, PwD, single women and economically poor women. Facilitators are in charge of conducting training sessions over a 9 month period on literacy, numeric/financial skills, income generation skills as well as human rights/empowerment issues. These community groups are organized in an informal network called the CSO Alliances at ward level and in one CSO alliance at Rural Municipality (RM) level.

Results: Women find themselves empowered, being able to sign their own name and taking collective action against not least the practice of Chaupadi (women during menstruation being forced to live for 4 days in cowshed, food being flung to them as 'untouchables') and stopping it. The community groups are now engaged in governance issues which is new, and the CSO Alliance members are now aware of their

role as 'watchdogs', having a complaint mechanism as an entry point to engage the local government representatives. The improved awareness and skills for dialogue are important and contribute to participatory, inclusive and informed governance practices.

Barriers: The women see themselves as mere participants rather than as playing a leading or prominent role, and there is a lack of a formal mechanism for them to represent the CSO Alliance. PwDs are not very vociferous either. Several advocacy initiatives have been taken but the groups have insufficient capacity for critical reflection and analysis, and local government sees KIRDARC as pulling the strings. Review of the public dialogue meetings (kachari) indicate that issues raised are mainly social problems without linking these to the larger structural problems and critical questioning of governance agendas are missing. The complaints mechanism is not fully used, and the tradition is to raise grievances verbally and to accept things as they are (a 'let it be' attitude).

Recommendations: Strengthen the women's groups formal representation to enable further ownership and leadership; Strengthen the empowerment model used and the use of the complaints' mechanism; strengthen the CSO Alliance's engagement at ward and RM level with the women's groups in a stronger position.

<u>Outcome 2: Duty bearers realize rights of marginalized and vulnerable.</u> The outcome is defined as 'Marginalized groups are better supported by local policy provisions, including budgets (which have increased), local representatives use inclusive and accountable planning'.

The local government was elected in 2017 and the political restructuring is still in its enfant stages with functional mechanisms, procedures and practical issues being unclear or not institutionalized. The elected representatives have a sketchy understanding of their role and resources and technical capabilities are limited. The approach is to engage the 'demand side' (outcome 1) and to provide training, technical input and facilitation to RM and women representatives in issues like good governance, inclusive planning process and accountability, rights to information and services as well systems for planning and monitoring.

Results: Greater awareness on issues around inclusion, rights and entitlements of marginalized groups and climate change; new policy frameworks; participation in public meetings, establishment of a planning and monitoring committee to facilitate dialogue with citizens and an established complaint mechanism; Recognition of the importance of the CSO alliance and in general peoples' engagement in local governance.

Barriers: Duty bearerss are absent for long periods of time and the turnover of staff is high as Karnali is a far away and not attractive posting; a general mismatch between government's priority to infrastructure vis-à-vis citizen's priorities about needs, justice, equity and inclusion; an at best, uneven application of policy frameworks and systems established to promote good governance as decisions are taken arbitrarily, complaints not registered nor systematically addressed; albeit recognized, the CSO Alliance can be seen being hijacked to settle personal/political scores.

Recommendations: Strengthen the relationship between the CSO Alliance and the local government so that the former becomes more than a 'claim maker'; devise strategies for support the local government's technical capacities; focus on policies and practices with a likely impact for the marginalized communities.

<u>Outcome 3: Resilience</u>.' Global South partners increase resilience of vulnerable communities, including via improved food security and strengthened and diversified livelihoods'; 'Global South partners improve inclusion of marginalized groups, including access to services and participation in community life'; 'Women of Sarkegad RM are socially and economic empowered and have improved access to economic services'.

'Increased engagement of vulnerable groups in climate change adaption actions for improving livelihood security'.

Results: The Dalit, disabled and single women group members reported to have felt welcome and participate as equals; the perception of women have changed as they earn money via income generating activities and are perceived as earners and even entrepreneurs; the social networks have been expanded and enabled women social activism which has changed gender norms, notably the chaupadi practices; information about climate change.

Women's empowerment, quotes from Nepal field visit report

"every household have something or other to sale, may be few extra eggs or some grains, but we never had the confidence to sell, or felt we need to ask our husband's permission to sale it or send them to sale. Now since we have learned to recognize the numbers and can use the calculator, we don't hesitate to sell ourselves. We don't ask our husband, we just sell it".

"when we don't have money for monthly saving, other members help". *"we don't need to look elsewhere for financial emergencies"*. *"earlier we were not trusted even with a rupee, now I can easily access 40-50 thousand rupees"*

"I had saved money for 5-6 years, from what my husband gave for household expenses. He was surprised to learn about it when I said I wanted to invest the saving to open a shop, after the training on shopkeeping, and immediately agreed to support me. He even stopped drinking as he said if my wife has dared to venture into this, I should also not waste myself and support her".

Ward chairperson: "now women are no longer thumbprint user. They can read and write. They can earn money. We cannot say anything to them, if we do they will go and make noise [with their group]. Earlier we used to call them witch, prostitute. Now we have to be careful on how we refer to them. Now we don't use such language".

Barriers: Income generation activities need to be taken to the next level in entrepreneurship to ensure investment in sustainable livelihoods; women's participation should go from physical participation to greater agency and representation in relevant local government committees; the collective social engagement can be enhanced if the process can graduate from a 'we are teaching them' and a 'women are raising their concerns' to a collective process where the men are and the larger community is engaged; climate change activities have started fairly recently due to COVID19 lockdown and are hard to judge, but links to other climate change projects seems weak and there may be a need to ensure the technical capacity in this respect and to ensure that the groups' action plans are monitored and followed up. ME plans to build the technical capacity and build linkages to other projects, a collaboration with the National Climate Change Support Program in Sarkegad.

Recommendations: Strengthen the income generation component with additional support for entrepreneurship and market linkages; strengthen women's participation and agency by promoting their active role in key committees; build on gains in changing gender norms to work for deeper structural changes in religious and cultural practices; ensure that the climate change program is properly linked to and coordinating with other climate change projects.

Outcome 4: COVID19. 'Increase the resilience of poor and marginalized communities to reduce the impact of COVID19'.

Results: The COVID19 response was instrumental in establishing the Disaster Management Committee, and local authorities worked with the project team to plan and implement the humanitarian response, building on the CHS standards; the WASH expertise was put to use and information disseminated and hygiene equipment accessed; food relief was important for the local committees.

3.2.2. Armenia

ME's partner in Armenia is the disability organization Bridge of Hope (BoH), which focus on inclusive education, inclusive economy and social inclusion. ME has supported BoH since 2002 starting with relief assistance following an earthquake. CISU funded support started in 2011. ME supports BoH directly after closing the country office.

BoH is a leading organization in the disability movement in Armenia. Two evaluation reports – 'Living Together, Learning together' from 2020 by Tanja Kern is a end of project evaluation of the project supported by ME / CISU and the 'Strategy to Mazimize the Inclusive Learning Environment ('SMILE') for children' evaluation from 2018 by Stephanie Olmore for Open Society Forum - sustain the observation that BoH has played a key role in advancing the rights of disabled people in Armenia and in providing strategically important services.

Advocacy results include ratification of The Convention of the Rights of People with Disability (CRPD) in 2010 and ensuring that the CRPD was included in the SDG process; The Ministry of Education's adaption of a model for the Universal Inclusive Education System; in 2021 a statement before a UN Commission on the Rights of People with Disabilities (a regional consultation) on 'From isolation, invisibility and segregation into inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. Identifying and overcoming barriers to the successful process of deinstitutionalization'. Other organizations are contributing, but BoH plays a leading role. The systemic changes in Armenia are indeed exceptional.

Strategic services are outlined in the evaluation by Tanja Kern: 'Within the framework of the project, former special schools transitioned from providing direct educational services to becoming psychological-pedagogical support centers, offering services at school-, regional- and national level. 65 mainstream schools in Yerevan were supported to offer inclusive education to referred children with disabilities and special educational needs.' And further: 'The strong cross-sector collaboration, sound planning and disciplined implementation effectively supported the smooth transitioning process. BoH`s passion, expertise, experience and recognition as key player in (disability) inclusion enabled the organization to influence policy and practice.'

The SMILE evaluation is equally positive: 'The data collected as part of the evaluation confirms that the project activities had an impact on inclusive practice and smooth transitions. A measurable, positive, change in practice occurred between the baseline and final data collection. This was particularly true for the sub sample of 12 teachers who received a pre (baseline) and post (final) observation.'

2020 has been a difficult year for BoH. Staff downsized from 160 to 78 due to a government policy change regarding providing social services and a subsequent loss of income. Before the change 5 organizations provided the services, but government wanted to spread this out and now 55 organizations provide these services. The extra grant from September 2020 for the COVID19 response was delayed because of the war with Azerbaijan (the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war) but will commence 1st March 2021.

BoH value the partnership with ME which is considered a 'peer-to-peer' relationship. According to an informant BoH found that ME's (earlier) presence with a country office strengthened its advocacy position, assumingly because of increased legitimacy. BoH finds that the knowledge center run by ME is useful for

them for example to establish proper complaint mechanisms and accountability and financial management systems. ME is an important partner for BoH providing around 28% of the turnover of BoH.

BoH is a strong organization which has achieved exceptional advocacy results for the rights of people with disabilities. A long-term strategic approach has been significant in mainstreaming disability work and supporting inclusion of PwD. The area of disability is an area where it is possible to do rights-based advocacy. On the one hand BoH will continue to need support from external sources also in the foreseeable future, on the other hand it is relevant to discuss a possible exit point for ME also. Discussions should include special milestones and include greater donor diversification.

3.2.3. Tajikistan

ME supports two partner organizations, Zarshedabonu and Nuri Ummed, which are both disability organizations. They work in different regions / districts but with (roughly) the same approach: They screen villages to identify children with disabilities and facilitate the formation of Parents Support Groups (PSG) in dialogue with the community leaders. The PSG is formalized and registered as an NGO (public organization) which can then legally operate and conduct trainings, fundraise and other activities. The village PSGs (19 and 30 respectively for the two organizations) form a district level 'Association of Parents' – and at national level the 32 associations are organized in a National Coalition of Associations to better speak on behalf of persons with disabilities. The two partner organizations also run rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities, funded by the government (small budgets), and renewed annually after a tender process.

2020 was a difficult year in mainly two ways. COVID19 affected Tajikistan as it did to other countries, and partners distributed hygiene kits, conducted awareness raising and established a hot line as part of the response. Further, ME's support to the two partner organizations were suspended. To Nuri Ummed due to incorrect reporting to authorities, to Zarshedabonu due to a suspicion of too high procurement prices in relation to another donor grant. ME acted with due diligence, both cases were possibly/probably not mismanagement and both organizations have been cleared. ME has signed an agreement for the remaining CISU grant period and is extra alert on possible cases.

The NGO context in Tajikistan is 'post-Soviet'. There is no expectation that CSOs should exist – not even the church is an important factor. The formal framework is very restricted, people are careful to speak and do not wish to offend government. Nationally, NGOs have no say, locally, there is a little more freedom. The last 5-10 years has seen a positive development though with small openings. One such example is that local governments are now giving grants to partners to run homes for people with disabilities.

The support to PSGs is relevant both from a needs-based and rights-based perspective, as the PSGs can play a role in supporting the children with disabilities and as they can be an embryonic basis for the development of a civil society. It will however take quite some time before a strong civil society will materialize. The COVID19 response was reportedly relevant and timely. The country office is sustained by the cross-border WASH program, which is not linked to the CISU grant.

3.2.4. Myanmar

ME supports two partner organizations in Maraland in (western) Chin State directly, Health and Hope Myanmar (HHM) and Together for Sustainable Development (TSD). Maraland has a population of roughly 100.000 of which 1/3 lives in Myanmar and 2/3 in India. HHM and TSD are the only established NGOs in Maraland apart from the (strong) Mara Evangelical Church and they work closely together, also in the Maraland COVID Prevention Committee. The organizations support a number of CBOs – Maraland Youth/Women/ Students and Farmer Family Groups (FFG) and Self Help Groups (SHG).

HHM is an NGO which aims at bringing hope and development to the people of Maraland through activities within primary health care, education and security. HHM works in a close partnership with Health & Hope United Kingdom (HHUK). TSD is focused on sustainable development. ME's primary focus is food security via sustainable farming methods, nutrition awareness and capacity building.

HHM and TSD highlights the results achieved within sustainable agriculture and resilience. Slash and burn techniques are common but farmers have been taught land use planning, circulating crops and planning for 70% food and 30% cash crops. Reportedly incomes have risen and the low status of being a farmer has changed. Other elements are technical support, nutrition tuition, equipment and strengthened resilience.

The capacity building of the CBOs is a long-term haul as many are illiterate and decision-making follows the norms of a patriarchic community, making 'real' inclusion of women and youth difficult. The Village Administrative Councils (VACs) are the lowest administrative unit of government, the VACs are elected locally and take the decisions affecting village life. The VACs tend to think that the CBOs should do the necessary work and that their own role is mainly to allow / decide. That said, the support to the CBO level has potential as these organizations do 'advocate' (when meeting the VACs) and may be the seeds for future democratic and human rights gains, not least when organized at a higher (federative) level.

HHM and TSD moved (with the church) fast to establish the COVID19 prevention committee and started prevention activities in April, ahead of government. 58 villages were targeted, and components were the formation of village committees, awareness raising, purchase of face masks and hand-gel and organizing a check system for people coming and going. While Myanmar has more than 100.000 cases the villages have presently no single incident. Despite the remoteness of Maraland this is a significant result.

COVID19 is now overshadowed by the political crisis following the 1st of February coup. People are angry and do not pay attention to COVID19. Public servants are on strike, including health workers and banks and shops are closed. The former CEO of HHM is in exile and is now a prominent leader in the protests against the coup, and the project is exposed to retaliation. Further, the vaccine assistance agreed with India and other external support options may be put on hold as the coup is condemned and sanctions applied. The border to India is closed which is serious for Maraland as this is their lifeline for export and import. Food shortage may quickly be a reality and it will be relevant if not necessary to shift the mode of operation towards relief rather than development at some point.

ME is a valued partner and the support to capacity building appreciated. It is a strength that ME and HHUK coordinate, complement each other's efforts and expertise and can help if funds are delayed or similar. HHUK has for the time being a support person in Yangon which benefits ME also.

ME's formats and demands regarding the financial system has been a challenge in a context where many are illiterate and there is no tradition for vouchers. HHM had difficulties with the Excel system and double entries. HHUK had a more flexible approach which allowed for the transfer of data via iPad. Assumingly ME requirements mirror donor requirements, but it is debatable if the right balance between, on the one side, capacity building and safeguards against misuse of funds, and on the other side the political ambition of 'localization' and partners in the driving seat has been found.

Results are reportedly strong within sustainable farming and resilience and more embryonic in capacity building at the CBOs at community level. HHM and TSD will need further capacity building and a long- term partnership is important to sustain results as there are no other NGOs operating there. The complementarity between ME and HHUK's support is of great benefice as is the close coordination between HHM and TSD. The volatile situation in Myanmar may well last for a longer period and combined

with the COVID19 there is a need to consider which support is needed and relevant in the short and medium term. ME's has the prerequisites to operate in the nexus between development and humanitarian support, but the logistics are challenging. The project may risk retaliation from the military.

## 3.3. Popular engagement and development education

ME's work is guided by a 'Strategy for popular engagement 2018 – 21' which outlines eight key strategic approaches focusing on increasing digital presence on social media, developing the loyalty program, getting new members, increasing the public engagement etc. The strategy is complemented by a Digital Strategy (drafted expecting approval in 2021), a Design Manual and a Brand Manual will be finalized once the new strategy for ME has been approved. This is in line with the recommendation (no 7) from the CISU capacity assessment in 2018.

ME's public fundraising in Denmark is impressive and private donations accounted for more than 36% of the turnover in 2019, more than funding deriving from the Danish state. Despite the organizational challenges in 2020 the public campaigns generated the highest amount achieved so far, reportedly because of a clearer focus and attention to current affairs.

ME's outreach in numbers:

source	2018	2019	2020	
www	19.037	23.827	20.161	visitors
newsletter	2450	2650	2760	recipients
Facebook		4000	4200	followers
Media	376	390	422	articles

ME has 6300 individual supporters and 2400 individual members (1900 of these are also supporters). The database was 'GDPR cleaned' in 2020. The members and supporters receive a bi-monthly newsletter and ME's magazine. The members are geographically spread evenly in Denmark mirroring the spread of the Danish population as illustrated in the inserted graphic.
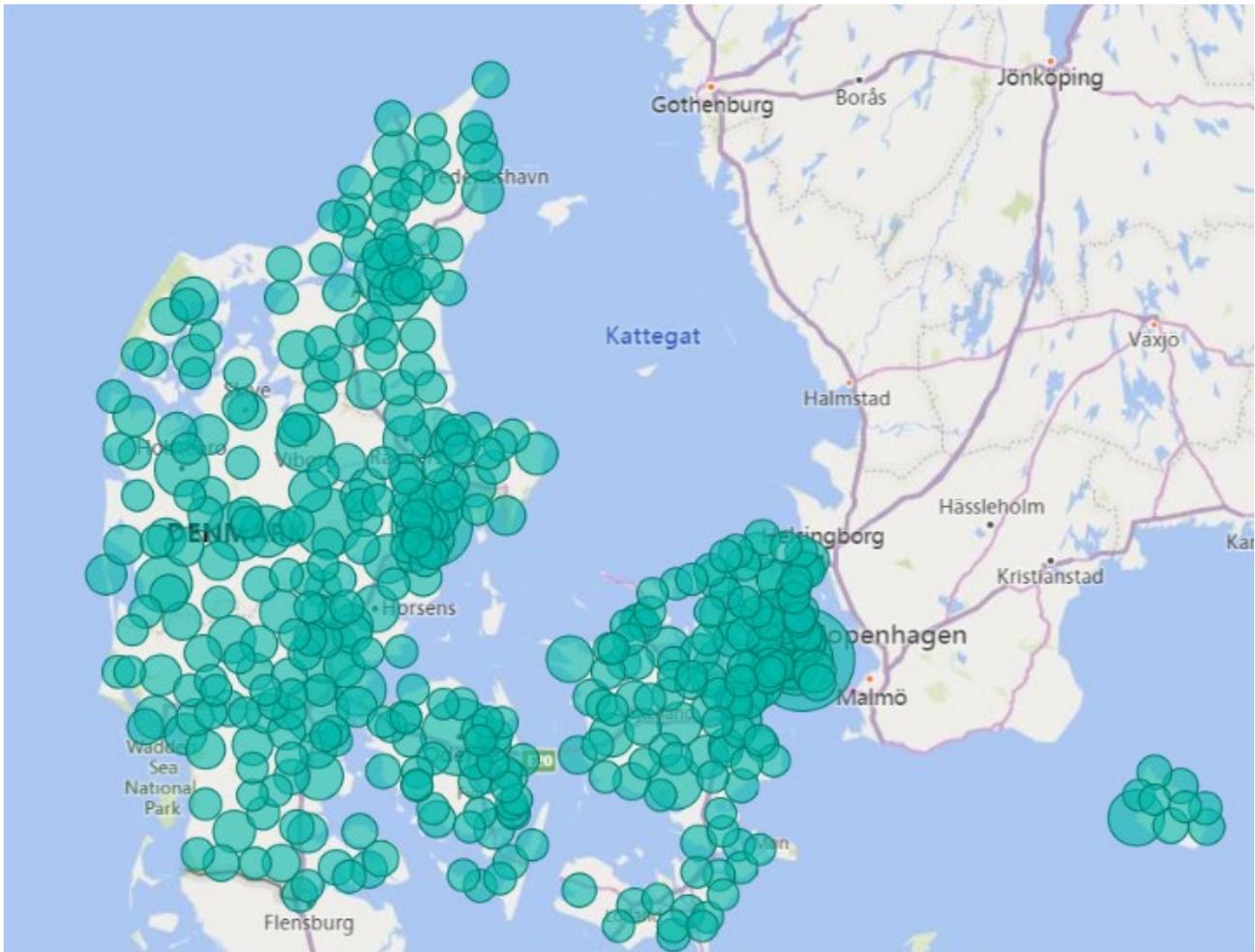
The statutes of ME are rudimentary for an organization of MEs size. The general assembly is not well visited, and a small number of members may enforce decisions on the organization which are not well thought through. Further, the small numbers may also have a bearing on who can be elected to the Board with no attention to which competencies the Board may need to oversee the work of the organization.

ME rooting in Denmark is primarily based on church related communities and the membership is predominantly Christians with an active engagement in the church. The 'DNA' of ME is based on Christian values - compassion for fellow human beings ('næstekærlighed') – which is communicated in the language and thematic covered. The church communities in Denmark include free churches (frikirker), evangelical Lutheran churches of Denmark (folkekirker) and Y's Men clubs (a Rotary like set up under the YMCA umbrella). The DNA is also that ME reach out to faraway / remote places and people where few others venture.

ME's focus on disabilities in the programs has also resulted in some cooperation and outreach to disability organizations in Denmark. Further, ME has activities with some schools and companies some of which are combined with lectures.

The development education funds are used to get pictures and videos from the program countries and for the lectures. Staff in Copenhagen link up with program countries directly but program staff in Brussels are consulted to avoid mishaps. ME's ethical code around communication adheres to CHS standards and are quite strict but the fundraising messaging is more focused on charity than on rights.

ME's is a member of Global Focus but is not seen as a very visible member.

ME's statutes are rudimentary and in need of revision. ME's public fundraising is impressive and indicates a solid backing. The supporter and membership figures are fair/good for an organization of ME's size. Fundraising is prominent in the popular outreach. There may be room to develop more interactivity with the membership and/or further develop the cooperation with other Danish NGOs, for example disability organizations, to reach new segments of society.

4 Mission East's and partners' capacity

4.0. Applicant and partner capacity

ME has presently (2020) 11 staff members in Copenhagen (headquarter) primarily focused on overall management, communication and fundraising and 16 staff members in Brussels in charge of program, finance, HR and IT. A Berlin-based sister organization has 5 staff members and is primarily focused on fundraising in Germany. Refer 2.2. concerning the internal turmoil in 2020.

Related to the CISU program ME has country offices in Nepal and Tajikistan and support partners in Armenia and Myanmar directly, the latter in cooperation with a UK-based NGO (Health and Hope UK) who has a liaison person in Yangon. ME argues for a context specific approach with direct support being the preferred option to strive for, but not always possible to exercise, since the level of capacity, nature of operations and the political context varies.

ME has a big humanitarian portfolio (not related to CISU but mainly DANIDA financed via an SPa) and programs in North Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria/Lebanon and is certified under the Common Humanitarian Standards (CHS). ME has an internal growth plan which is updated annually and takes the point of departure in recommendations made in the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) cycle – and is internally labelled the 'CHS improvement plan'. ME works with disaster response and rural community development within six intervention areas - Emergency Relief; WASH; Food Security; Livelihoods; Disaster Risk Reduction and Disability and Inclusion. The key operational approaches are inclusion, resilience and accountability and partnership.

The humanitarian capacity of ME is relevant in the context of the CISU grant/development in various ways: The CHS certification is an acknowledgement of capacity and procedures which adhere to standards and that relevant policies are in place concerning HR, risk and anti-corruption. The technical capacity within the humanitarian portfolio is relevant for the ability to work in the nexus in volatile settings. And there are logistical advantages in places like Tajikistan where the ME country office is sustained by the WASH program run cross border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.
ME is an active member of Integral Alliance (IA), an alliance with 21 INGO members with a shared Christian background. The membership ranges from very big organizations ('Food for the Hungry', US, 'Tearfund', UK) to very small organizations. The focus is disaster preparedness and coordination / cooperation in big disaster operations (Haiti, Nepal, Lebanon). IA is committed to the localization agenda, and in Lebanon 19% of funds went to local partners, in Nepal 14%. ME is also active in EU-CORD (European Organizations for Relief and Development), an advocacy network with 24 members focusing on issues like ECHO, policy coherence, inclusion of PwD, the SDG framework. EU-CORD also seeks to engage in capacity building of South partners by creating a learning space.

ME has signed 'partnership commitments' with the partners, outlining joint commitments and ME and partners separate commitments in the partnership. Partners' capacity varies considerably. BoH in Armenia is supported from Brussels and has reportedly developed significantly over a long time-span and is a strong

organization with capacity to influence at national level. HHM and TSD in Myanmar are also supported from Brussels and are strong in a Chin State / Maraland context. Zarshedabonu and Nuri Ummed are supported via the country office and are less strong but with potential as they, according to ME, are at the same level as BoH 10-15 years ago (disregarding the problems encountered in 2020, refer 3.2.3.). KIRDAC in Nepal is supported via the country office but is a fairly strong organization with activities in 21 districts, the majority of which are in Karnali Province. KIRDAC led the Partner Listening Forum discussion in Nepal and was invited to lead the discussion on nexus activities in EU-CORD and as such play a role at the national level.

Even if ME's partners' capacity vary they are all at an 'NGO level' and they are all engaged in building the capacity of organizations which are generally at an 'CBO level': Focused at the community level, smaller organizations working primarily with local, grassroot issues and with local authorities.

The organizational strength is relevant in a many ways: First and foremost because of the partners' ability to (with support from ME) to deliver the results envisaged in the overall strategy for support to civil society and in the 'Change Triangle'; Because of the organization's ability to diversify the funding basis, develop new technical skills as required (related to for example climate change, COVID19, accountability standards etc.) and sustain activities; But organizational capacity is also decisive to determine when the partner can best be supported without a country office or when an exit strategy should be discussed.

4.1. Implementation of recommendations from capacity assessment

A capacity assessment from 2018 was the basis for ME's CISU program. ME has regularly updated the follow up on this, the latest progress reported by February 2021. The follow up has been thorough and the reporting detailed and satisfactorily. The recommendations and follow ups are commented under the relevant sections in this report but summarized the follow up have been as follows:

4.1.1. A more systematic and wholistic approach to context assessments and analyses. ME regularly produce updates including context analysis as part of the monitoring and M&E system. ME is in compliance with CHS indicators. ME's draft Nepal strategy has a relevant level of information.

4.1.2. Consistent procedures for evidence-based learning. The workbooks and partner growth plans are important elements in ensuring regular learning. The knowledge management center provides easy access for partners to relevant formats and methodologies. Initiatives by Integral Alliance (partner listening fore) and bilateral initiatives are important elements.

4.1.3. Partner participation in analysis, management aspects and learning. Partners are included as recommended and partners report about a close relationship with ME ('peer to peer') and the joint 'partnership commitments' (see 4.1.6) as well as ongoing dialogue in the monitoring process are clear indications of this endeavor.

4.1.4. SDG references included in results framework and used for advocacy. 'Leaving no-one behind' is at the core of ME's program and program documents have relevant SDG references. Partners have used SDG as an advocacy platform (Armenia, BoH) and this will be pursued further by ME.

4.1.5. Strategic framework as program organization. ME has an overall program strategy and new one (2021-2025) in the making. Country strategies or ToCs provide the policy framework for the programs in the countries. The new Nepal strategy has a relevant level, the previous one was basic.

4.1.6. More formal partnerships with long-term partners. ME has made strategic partnership agreements with key partners in Myanmar and Nepal with joint as well as reciprocal commitments. An internal review of these is planned. The agreed partner growth plans are part of this 'cycle'.

4.1.7. Popular engagement strategy finalized and including fundraising as well as popular engagement. ME has adopted a popular engagement strategy with eight strategic objectives including growing the member basis, assuring the quality of the information material and enhancing the ME brand. This review has a follow up recommendation on popular engagement.

4.2. Results framework, M&E, reporting and knowledge management

As observed in the capacity assessment from 2018 ME has a strong results framework. The set up is elaborate and include the following elements: An overall ToC for ME and a results framework for the CISU grant. For the individual country, the framework consists of a Country Strategy (if ME has a Country Office, otherwise a ToC), a ToC for the CISU grant and a Results Framework which outlines activities, outputs and outcomes. Further, a 'workbook' serves as project management tool and a monitoring plan and 'growth plans' and 'policy influence' plans complement the workbook. The growth plans and policy influence plans were developed to ensure sufficient attention to these key elements in the CISU grant, whereas the workbook is an ME developed tool used in all countries, where ME operates and including both DEV and HUM activities.

Financial reporting is not an integrated element of the M&E system. Financial reporting from partners is a monthly process with partners reporting to ME and consolidating these into monthly budgets vs actual reports for each project and each country. There is an active interplay between financial reporting and program staff via monthly meetings in country offices between Director and Finance Manager and at head office monthly operations- finance meetings (MOFM) including program managers and finance controller, following a template set of questions. Based on this program managers will discuss with partners or country team.

The Most Significant Change methodology is used to solicit change experiences and stories which can also be used for development education purposes. The Nepal review noted that the MsC methodology is not followed 'by the book' with all formal steps taken but is rather used 'ad hoc' to add flesh and blood to results achieved, highlighting individual stories.

Output indicators are simple and mainly quantitative while outcome indicators are more complex and mainly qualitative. There are examples of indicators and targets which could be more concise but nothing that merits substantial criticism.

The policy influence goals are ranked as changes we 'expect to see', 'like to see' and 'love to see' and are color coded based on an assessment of progress achieved. This is a good way to signal both expectation and to encourage further ambition.

Knowledge management and learning is promoted in various ways. Internally in countries the workbook / M&E set up is conducive for learning and if the REFLECT methodology is used well can built on 'bottom-up' reflections. Between countries ME has a central role in teasing out, what may be relevant for cross learning between countries. Partners' direct interaction (advocacy session between Myanmar and Nepal, disability learning between Armenia and Tajikistan examples), but joint learning across the four countries is also interesting. 'Inclusion' is a common denominator and a joint session (like the one planned for 2020 but postponed) a relevant way to pursue joint learning. While the knowledge management center seems well managed and is appreciated by partners and country office staff, it is probably mainly useful for accessing relevant documents (formats, requirements, methodologies) rather than learning.

In terms of innovation the Partner Listening Forums (refer 2.3.) as a good initiative to ensure that partners' perspectives are heard without peer pressure to say what the donor wants to hear. The overall report by IA, not covering ME specifically and focusing on five countries including Nepal, had critical remarks about the level of engagement of partners and found there was 'room for improvement' and recommended to 'push the boundaries. Though stated as an initiative within humanitarian activities ME has with KIRDARC carried this over in development arena which tallies with a recommendation from the report to see localization across the spectrum of relief, recovery, rehabilitation and development.

Another example is the SEED initiative.

The SEED approach for sustainable farming has been introduced and piloted over three 'CISU' phases. In the first phase food security was identified as a focus area and the SEED approach chosen to enhance food availability and do away with slash and burn practices. This was an approach not known in Chin State. Capacity building was provided on the technical aspects and visits arranged for selected Family Farmers Groups to model farms elsewhere in Myanmar and in Thailand. Training was arranged in SEED, land and water management and agricultural inputs and equipment provided. New crops were introduced (and rice provided for the first year to mitigate risks) and farmers were supported in registering their land. The current phase builds on a review and includes new groups of FFGs and promotion of sustainable farming.

4.3. Financial resources, administrative capacity, budgets and cost-effectiveness

ME has a sound financial basis with roughly 1/3 deriving from public funds, 1/3 from the Danish state (DEV and HUM funding) and 1/3 from other sources (German donors, UN, EU). Roughly 60% is spent on relief work and 30% on development work.

Financial management has so far been implemented from Brussels but ME has decided to strengthen the overall capacity, probably by keeping program and project financial management in Brussels and having overall financial management in Copenhagen.

Deloitte has in March 2021 completed a report analyzing ME's systems and procedures. One aspect is recommended to be changed as it does not follow common standards: The administration fee should only be registered as income when funds have been spent, and this will according to ME be followed through in 2021. This in turn is linked to a recommendation to ME to ensure an adequate equity, which will be more urgent now as the changed accounting practice will be a serious drain of the current equity.

As mentioned above (refer 4.2.) financial reporting from partners is a monthly process with partners reporting to ME and consolidating these into monthly budgets vs actual reports for each project and each country. The active interplay between program managers and finance controller makes it possible for ME to monitor expenses and assess cost efficiency.

The 2021 online financial review (completed 2.3.21) has some observations and recommendations, none very serious and all accepted by ME.

The capacity assessment has no recommendations regarding financial management. The original budget forwarded to CISU was assessed to have too high costs for consultants which was corrected in the approved budget.

5 Assessment of specific issues

5.1. Work in the 'nexus' between humanitarian and development assistance

ME work across the humanitarian, rehabilitation and development nexus. Events in 2020 / 2021 has underlined the volatility of the countries ME is working in with a regional war in Armenia in 2020 and the military coup in Myanmar in 2021.

ME does not highlight potential nexus elements in the CISU program documents which on the contrary highlights the development aspects. This is understandable as ME was perceived as mainly a humanitarian actor which had to prove its 'development credentials' and quite logical as Danish development assistance is still financed via separate boxes for humanitarian and development activities. However, the nexus agenda feature prominently on the political agenda and it is relevant to discuss if the criteria for receiving funds actually reflects this ambition.

The 2020 progress report says that partners were not prepared for and at first not able to respond to the COVID19 threat. However, the Nepal experience is a good example of how expertise within WASH was put to good use as part of the prevention measures initiated and quite important as migrant workers returned to their communities after being kicked out of India.

An example of cross learning and relevance is the Partner Listening Forums initiated by Integral Alliance and actively followed up by ME in Nepal. This initiative is an important example of how INGOs can learn of and improve their own practices, and although undertaken with a humanitarian point of departure it is as relevant within development to push the localization agenda forward.

Resilience is a key element in ensuring sustainability and has many facets. A strong civil society, capacity understood broadly as well as livelihood activities are all aspects of building resilience. Successful efforts to ensure duty bearers' responsibility in general and for vulnerable and marginalized groups especially is another aspect.

ME does not work with the 'peace' dimension (the so-called 'triple nexus') but reportedly work with a conflict sensitive approach. In Nepal, KIRDARC was however engaged in post conflict activities which mitigated local conflicts which had come about during the civil war.

5.2. Danish anchorage in perspective of the roles of the Copenhagen and Brussels offices

ME's organizational set up is different from most other organizations and has raised questions about ME's anchorage in Denmark in relation to CISU requirements in this regard. Reference is made to 3.3. about popular anchorage and development education which outlines ME's popular anchorage and development education work.

The big and medium sized Danish NGOs engaged in development have different organizational models. Some are working in a federation, others in a confederation, others in more loose networks and very few (if any?) as 'stand alone' organizations. This 'internationalization' trend has accelerated over the last 10-15 years allowing NGOs to respond more globally with activities and advocacy and with the aim of enhancing overall capacity, using resources more effectively and fundraise more professionally.

The federation model is the most far reaching and although there are different ways to design a federative model the key is that an international center has authority which previously rested with the members, often with members complementing with responsibility for delimited / specialized tasks. A confederation has a smaller center and more authority rests with the members.

ME has the sister organization in Berlin (ME Germany) and works with Integral Alliance on disaster response and preparedness and with EU-CORD on advocacy issues on policy coherence, ECHO predictability, inclusion etc. plus in a few other strategic partnerships.

ME's organizational model is in this perspective not seen as undermining the Danish anchorage.

6 Conclusions

- ME has the organizational capacity to manage a program grant from CISU. The management and M&E system is strong and conducive for learning. ME has overcome the organizational turmoil in 2020 well.
- Financial management and administrative capacity is adequate and recommendations from CISU annual review and Deloitte review accepted and will be followed through.
- ME has the capacity to undertake context analysis and risk management, to engage partners in this and to pursue evidence-based learning and innovation.
- ME has with partners documented results at outcome level within the 'change triangle' with cost efficiency pursued on a monthly basis.
- ME is strengthening civil society in the global south, both (NGO) key partners and CBOs at a lower level. ME has a clear focus on 'leaving no-one behind' and the SDG framework.
- ME entertain long-term partnerships with well positioned partners and works with mutually binding 'partnerships commitments' and growth plans to enhance capacity.
- ME has contextual knowledge which informs the ToCs and strives to build synergy between the program countries with a focus on 'inclusion' and joint methodologies and tools.
- ME has a strong results framework and M&E system which is conducive for monitoring the change triangle elements including advocacy results.
- ME has a focus on a Human Rights Based Approach and the PANT principles.
- ME's program strives at pursuing the different dimensions of sustainability.
- ME's budget management is up to standard. ME has a significant own contribution and partners aim at mobilizing supplementary resources.
- ME has a strong supporter network and a fair number of members rooted in church communities across Denmark. Development information include rights-based stories.

7 Recommendations

Recommendation (1). ME to consider number of countries/partners in program portfolio depending upon total (CISU and other donor funding) program funding to avoid undermining cost-effectiveness.

Future country strategies are elaborated and at the level of the Nepal strategy for 2021-25 (presently in draft format and not approved) and focus on analysis and context related to the planned intervention.

Recommendation (2). ME to pursue options for joint learning and synergy across countries, building on existing initiatives and promoting a systematic approach. Focus areas could include organizational development, advocacy and inclusion.

Recommendation (3). ME to consider simplifying / amending the results framework and M&E system to ease partners' obligations. The system is impressive and relevant, but while there are many overlaps between different elements, the financial reporting is not integrated in the M&E system.

CISU to consider if the localization agenda can be promoted by allowing more flexibility around formats and procedures for South partners depending on track record, levels of funding and context.

Recommendation (4). ME to include discussions around nexus work in the upcoming discussions around a new ME program strategy to explore the potential role / synergies further and possibly define itself more in this regard. ME to consider with donors how the potential conflict with the donor 'grant boxes' can be resolved.

Recommendation (5). ME should amend the statutes and clarify roles and authority of the general assembly, the Board and secretariat respectively and consider how to strengthen and consolidate the internal democracy.

ME should consider how to increase interactivity with the membership and/or with other segments of the Danish society, for example through a strategic cooperation with other NGOs (disability organizations as one example).

Recommendation (6). Nepal specific recommendations, for more detail refer pager 3.2.1. in this report or the Nepal field visit report): Strengthen women's formal representation and use of formal entry points to influence decisions and policies; Enhance the trust between the CSO alliance and local government and assist local government with technical capacity; Build on gains within social and economic empowerment to change policies and practices more structurally.

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CIVIL SOCIETY FUND (CSF)

Version 2021-01-08

TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW TO PREPARE FOR A

NEW PROGRAMME PHASE

Background regarding review of Mission East (here after *the applicant organisation*) programme "Developing civil society for inclusive and resilient communities."

For CISU to consider and eventually approve an application for a grant for a new phase of a programme, the applicant organisation and its partners must have demonstrated, through efforts in regard to the ongoing programme phase that the current grant is managed satisfactorily and that programme objectives are achieved and implementation is managed effectively and adjusted to experience gained.

Accordingly, CISU requires a programme review to be undertaken focusing on what has been achieved during the implementation of the current programme and whether the programme remains strategically relevant to civil society in the context of intervention. The review shall further confirm that the applicant organisation and its partners have the required capacity to manage and implement a programme in light of the assessment carried out when the CISU appropriation committee approved the current grant.

Throughout the assignment CISU programme guidelines from 2017 constitute the point of reference.

The applicant organisation's previous programme phase learning and track record

A summary of the *programme organisation's* key learning in the previous programme phase is described in the preliminary continuation note (see end of document for description). Previous experience and interventions of the applicant organisation are furthermore described in the Track Record attached as Annex 1.

Funding level

The funding base calculated as average annual budget is DKK 3,230,000. This totals for the period covered by the proposed programme (2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025) DKK 12,920,000.

Issues to consider in the preparation of a programme (identified jointly by applicant organisation and CISU)

Based on the lessons learned from the current programme phase and the track record, the following specific issues are to be included in the scope of work (see 4.1 below) for this review:

- ME has partnerships in both fragile and stable contexts, and works with both humanitarian aid and long-term development, which allows for programme interventions in the nexus field between the humanitarian and development, e.g. in relation to resilience. In the review, it should be assessed how the programme link to learning and the possible connections and synergies between humanitarian and development interventions.

- ME is organised with HQs in Copenhagen and Brussels. The HQ in Copenhagen is responsible for communication and fundraising, while the one in Brussels take care of programmes and finances. Moreover, ME has locally registered offices in a number of countries, including Nepal. In the review, it should be assessed how ME is anchored in Denmark (CSP guidelines 2.1 page 14) and how the programme draws on the potentials and synergies, as well as addresses challenges liaising between different ME offices in different countries.

Objective

The overall objective of the review is to assess the capacity and performance of the applying organisation in delivering results under its present programme phase with a particular view to stimulate learning and support relevant organisational development.

The specific objectives are to:
- Assess documented performance and results achieved in the current phase of the programme as well as to extract and assess lessons learned with a view to improving future outcomes and objectives as well.
- Address the 2-3 specifically selected issues for the review (section 1.3)
- Assess the applicant organisation and its partners' capacity in light of the programme assessment criteria.

The report shall present a substantial analysis and clear recommendations; i) for the applicant organisation to address when preparing the concept note and programme document, and ii) for use of CISU's appropriation committee as a basis for its decision regarding the application for a programme grant.

Outputs

Review plan
By Mid-February, the consultant will in consultation with the Danish CSO develop a brief plan for the operationalisation of the review. This plan has to be approved by CISU.

Draft Report
A draft report will be presented for the applicant organisation, CISU, and other relevant stakeholders on the preliminary findings and conclusions of the review. The draft report shall be shared three working days prior to the debriefing workshop.

Debriefing workshop
A debriefing workshop will be held to present the main findings and recommendations to the applicant organisation and CISU.

Report
The final review report shall reflect on the inputs given at the debriefing workshop (3.3), and shall moreover follow these formalities:

- Maximum 15-20 pages excluding annexes.
- Follow the format presented in section 10.
- Include an executive summary of maximum 3 pages summarising main findings and recommendations including whether the applicant organisation is assessed as having demonstrated capacity to manage the present programme.
- Include clear recommendations on maximum 6 key issues to address when the applying organisation will formulate a concept note and programme document.
- Include the following annexes: ToR, list of main stakeholders, documents consulted, and other relevant annexes identified by the consultant.

Scope of work
The ToR for the review should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the assessment criteria listed in annex 1 to the programme guidelines and main issues deriving from the track record (see 1.3 above).

Review of ongoing programme phase

Overall performance and strategic approach
Re: Applicant organisation: assess how follow up on the external capacity assessment carried out as basis for the present programme phase has taken place as part of the programme, including organisational structure and management, professional capacity, role as civil society actor in Denmark, networking, and international

affiliations. The review shall assess whether the organisation has made adequate follow-up to recommendations from the latest Kap/App or Rev/App carried out as basis for the present programme phase.

Re: Contextual developments, programme implementation and results: assess the contextual developments and how they have been addressed by the programme. Assess progress made towards the achievement of documented results at outcome and output levels in the current programme phase.

Re: Programme strategy and synergy: assess the current programme synergy, including coherence between programme outcomes, and how these relate to possible proposed new thematic areas, partners, countries, etc., outlined in the Continuation Note, and in issues to consider in the preparation of programme (see 1.3).

The review shall mainly be based on the existing programme document and assess its achievement and current status. The review shall furthermore draw on the applicant's performance reporting, including reporting submitted for CISU for the deadline 1st March (this deadline must be considered in scheduling the review).

The consultant will present findings on programme achievements and key learnings based on the review of the current programme phase.

Method

The review will include, but not necessarily be limited to, four main methods: i) desk review of relevant documents, ii) group and individual interviews with partners and relevant stakeholders, iii) field visits, and iv) debriefing workshop with applicant organisation and CISU. The review will combine work in Denmark and a field visit to a selected programme country/region. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic situation field visits by the consultant might not be possible. If the consultant is unable to travel s/he will be required to hire a local consultant, with relevant competencies and knowledge to conduct field visits and interviews. Expenditures to local consultants must be included in this budget. Involvement of additional partners can be done either via phone/online conference. The consultant will be responsible for identifying and contracting a local consultant for the task.

Document analysis
- Review of all relevant documents

Group and individual interviews with relevant stakeholders
Should at least include:

- The applicant organisation board, staff, and/or volunteers
- Relevant partners
- Relevant Danida staff (if applicable)
- Relevant CISU staff
- Responsible CISU assessment consultant
- *[Include others as found relevant]*

Field visit (if necessary, done by local consultant)
List core activities:

- Interviews with partners at both operational (secretariat) and political level (board) and, if possible, target group representatives
- Debriefing meeting/workshop

Debriefing workshop presenting draft report attended by:

- Applicant organisation board, staff and/or volunteers
- Relevant CISU staff

Team

The assignment requires a consultant with extensive experience from working with development CSOs, preferably in the context of partnerships between Southern and Northern CSOs. Further, strong analytical skills are required to compile and process large amounts of data from documents and interviews. Excellent communication skills are necessary to engage with a variety of different stakeholders. Prior experience from conducting capacity assessments and reviews is considered an asset. Likewise, specific geographical and thematic experience corresponding to the proposed focus areas of the programme will be prioritised in the shortlisting of an external consultant. When possible, local consultants with required competencies and knowledge about local context can be recruited to conduct field visits and interviews. Expenditures to local consultants should be included in this budget. Payments and contractual matters are handled by the consultant.

Management of the review

CISU is commissioning the present assignment and CISU management is responsible for contracting issues, for signing TOR and for the final approval of the review report. Payments and contractual matters related to the local consultants are handled by the consultant.

The appointed CISU Advisor is responsible for briefing the consultant about the task and day to day administration and arrangements.

There is an absolute maximum ceiling of DKK 150,000 all-inclusive for this assignment. The assignment will have to be planned and invoiced within this absolute ceiling.

Time schedule

- The assignment will be carried out in the period 1st February 2021-14th April 2021.
- Introductory meeting: 25th January 2021, afternoon.
- The draft report will be shared by the consultant with the applicant organisation and CISU at least three days prior to the debriefing workshop and no later than by 23rd March 2021.
- The debriefing workshop will be held between 15-26th March 2021.
- Deadline for the final report is 7th April.
- Evaluation of review process with CISU: mid/end April, either in writing or meeting.

Budget

The budget is regulated and approved by CISU after proposal from the consultant (see also detailed budget attached to this ToR). Within the absolute ceiling of DKK 150,000 the budget covers the following:

Consultant's Fee (Danish and local)	
Travel cost	
Accommodation	
Per diem	
Please add if other reimbursables to local consultants	
Other cost (specified)	
Total amount	

The consultant's fee is an all-inclusive flat rate (VAT included) for the assignment based on the estimated days to be used. CISU is as mentioned above responsible for contracting the consultant.

Travel, accommodation and per diem according to the Danish state rules and rates. There cannot be paid any expenses or extra fees in addition to the budget without justification and prior approval from CISU and only within the overall ceiling of DKK150,000.

A detailed account of reimbursables shall be submitted to CISU (see format on last page of these ToR).

Annex 2. Interviews conducted

Mission East, Denmark/Europe:

Betina Gollander-Jensen – Secretary General (Cph)

Kim Hartzen – former Secretary General of ME

Torben Andersen – Chairman of Board

Alex Ramos-Pena – Progamme Coodinator, Myanmar, Nepal (Brussels)

Peter Drummond Smith – Operations Director, (Brussels)

Koen Lauter, Program Coordinator, Armenia (Brussels)

Mags Bird, Program and Strategy Coordinator (Brussels)

Joohi Haleem, Program Coordinator, Tajikistan (Brussels)

Kostyantyn Bazkenov, MEAL Coordinator

Nicki Davies-Jones, HR (Brussels)

Karen Bendix, Public Engagement (Cph)

Stakeholders.

Marie Bechgaard Madsen, HUM, DANIDA

Phillip Jan Marsden, HUM, DANIDA

Jan Eyre, Director, Integral Alliance

Ruth Faber, Director, EU-CORD

Jeef Bech, Director of Secretariat, CISU

Jacob Thorsen, Advisor, CISU

Solveig Nielsen, Administration Advisor, CISU

Sten Andreasen, Consultant / CISU

Mette Müller, International Director, DH.

Nepal:

Ujjwall Amatya: Country Director ME Nepal

Armenia:

Susanna Tadevosyan, President of Bridge of Hope

Tajikistan:

Sakari Koivula, Country Director for ME

Dilorum Ashurova, Programme Officer, ME

Myanmar:

Dr Sakie: CEO, Health and Hope Myanmar

Chris Jones: CEO Health and Hope UK.

Rev. Mai Ki: CEO Together for Sustainable Development

Annex 3. Terms of reference Nepal field visit

Terms of Reference

Review of Mission East Nepal program, funded by CISU

Background

Mission East (ME) is a Danish NGO with a program in Nepal. ME receives funding from a range of donors among these CISU. CISU is an umbrella organization for small and middle-sized NGO's and administers DANIDA funding to these organizations. The middle-sized NGO's may apply for program funding (rather than project funding). To be accepted for this, the NGO's organizational capacity is scrutinized before an application can be considered. Once an application has been granted the NGO has a relatively high degree of autonomy in implementing the program. Following this, reviews will be undertaken with three year intervals to determine how the NGO has performed (results) and how the NGO has developed or maintained its capacity to continue to receive program funding.

The review in Nepal is part of this review. The overall ToR for the review of ME are valid as the overall framework for the Nepal review (annex 1). The present ToR provides the more specific terms for the Nepal review.

Objectives

The **overall objective** of the consultancy in Nepal is to provide an input to the overall review regarding progress and achievements of the ME Nepal program and ME's capacity to implement the program.

Immediate Objective 1: Assessment and verification of the results achieved by ME as envisaged in the results framework and as reported by ME in the program period.

Immediate Objective 2: Assessment of the use and quality of the monitoring system applied by partners and identification of promising practices as well as learning.

Immediate Objective 3: Provide recommendations on how to further improve the general level of performance by partner organizations, monitoring of progress and gender mainstreaming.

Scope of work.
The review shall focus on activities funded by CISU. If funding from other donors is mixed with/integrated in/influence the CISU funded activities this shall be taken into consideration but these activities shall not be reviewed as such.

The review shall use the standard DAC criteria evaluation criteria (annex 2) with a focus on the outcome of ME and partners' activities.

Points of special interest.
- The balance between needs based and rights-based approaches taken.
- The advocacy efforts undertaken towards duty bearers.
- Methodologies applied to enhance ownership, participation and inclusion.
- The division of work and roles between ME and partners.
- How COVID19 measures were taken and how they impacted the work.
- If there has been a mix of development and humanitarian interventions (nexus) in the program period the benefits and challenges encountered.

Methodology
Key methods and tools to be used during the field studies are i) document review, ii) interviews iii) focus group discussions/validation sessions.

The field studies shall apply a participatory approach, including an appreciative inquiry with focus on identifying what worked well, without taking eyes off the challenges, possible insufficiencies of project design, implementation, monitoring – and relevant learning.

Output and time frame.
A power point presentation or outline of main findings to be submitted after the field trip. A draft report to be submitted for approval. A final report in cooperating possible comments and questions.

Part 1. Study documents and interviews in Katmandu with ME and partner organization before field trip (first two weeks of February)
Part 2. Field trip from 24th February (expected length 9 days)
Part 3. Preparing PP and report, debriefing with ME and partner. The draft report should be forwarded 15th March at the latest, PP preferably before.

The report should not exceed ten pages but can contain annexes. These are optional but must include a list of people interviewed.

Annex 4. Executive summary of Nepal report

The objectives of the CISU program in Karnali are i) to increase civil society's ability to influence policy processes, ii) to increase local authorities' policy and practices and iii) to increase the resilience of local communities, including (a later added) component about climate change adaptation. The focus of the interventions are marginalized groups including women, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities like the Dallits.

The backdrop of the program is the constitution adapted in 2015 which paved the way for inclusion of marginalized groups and for a federal state with a three-tier system, local, provincial and federal.

The field visits documents results and barriers and challenges. What stands out most is the empowerment of women and adolescent girls who are organized in groups. They have learned basic skills and have gained the confidence to speak up. The Chaupadi practice has been stopped and women have been able to earn their own money and make savings to invest. Authorities are more aware of marginalized persons' rights, public meetings are held and a complaint mechanism established. The relationship between civil society and the authorities has gained from the efforts made to combat COVID19 as ME/civil society took the initiative, a joint committee established and activities undertaken to build awareness and promote hygiene.

 Barriers and challenges relate to increase women's agency and ability for critical analysis and to change deep rooted cultural and religious practices structurally. Local authorities have a weak capacity and Karnali being a remote posting staff are frequently changed and absent for long periods. Climate change initiatives have been delayed because of COVID19 and it is too early to assess this part of the program.