

**SECOND REPORT  
2003**

**On the  
PPA**

**between  
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE  
AND DFID**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- Since the first PPA report was submitted in December 2002 International Service has been developing certain key aspects of its work. This has been with a view to ensuring that the objectives contained within the PPA are effectively delivered and also, going beyond what is contained in the PPA, to begin mapping out key themes for the future.
- Through improving our monitoring and evaluation we have strengthened our ability to learn lessons from our work. This was a key objective of the PPA and one taken very seriously within the organisation.
- The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year has enabled us to reach out to new audiences, target new funders and effectively raise our profile regionally and nationally.
- Overall, our programmes have been experiencing moderate growth, particularly in Africa. Clear thematic approaches have enabled us to look at our impact on specific areas such as human rights and micro-finance with useful lessons being drawn out.
- Our development awareness work has been reaching new audiences and we have had an extremely positive reaction to our first Schools Pack, My Village, My Life. We have also developed new partnerships with the International Cooperatives Alliance and Common Purpose, the leadership training organisation.
- In this report we will be concentrating on the key developments since 2002. Further documentation is available but we have aimed for conciseness and clarity. Appendices have been kept to a minimum for ease of reading.

**OBJECTIVE ONE: To deliver a high quality programme to facilitate sustainable development according to local needs and priorities in all International Service programmes.**

**A) Involve partner organisations in the development of country strategy papers**

Country strategy papers were not revised during 2003 but involvement of partners continued to be a key theme. This was reflected by their involvement in three in-country workshops which took place in Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Mali as well as their contribution to evaluations which took place in Palestine and West Africa.

**B) Consolidate and expand programmes in response to partner demands**

As stated in the introduction, we have been able to consolidate and to some extent, moderately expand our programmes. We have done this primarily in response to our decision that a thematic approach is the most effective way of delivering a high quality programme. This means that whilst partner demands are important, we have also sought out new partners whose focus fits our strategies more directly. We have therefore sought to consult representative bodies within the countries whose opinion can be said to be objective, about where best to concentrate our resources and maximise impact.

In Brazil we have added a new geographical focus in the North-East of the country where we are having discussions with the Ministry for Food Security to analyse the prospects of working with them on a hunger eradication programme. We are also initiating partnerships with organisations supporting small-scale agricultural production in the driest part of the country.

We have also been exploring the possibility of extending our work into Benin and Togo and a number of visits have been made to explore possibilities. One of our partner organisations already covers work in Togo and there is a logical thematic connection with the work we are doing in Mali and Burkina.

**C) Identify skills gaps and provide suitably skilled development workers**

The identification of skills gaps which we can effectively fill is a key task of the IS Field Office and through revision of our project appraisal documents we have sought ways to do this more effectively. The focus of this has been to demonstrate **“the extent to which the application of development worker approaches is linked to successful outcomes in the projects supported”** as stated in the purpose level indicators of the PPA.

During 2003 there were 75 active development workers, 31 new d.w.s were posted and there were 6 early returns. The level of satisfaction expressed by partners remains high. This is monitored through six monthly meetings with partner

organisations and final debrief interviews. Selection remains a key activity. Use of our revamped website for recruitment has increased the number of relevant applications we receive and reduced the number of general enquiries which are not appropriate. Generally the quality of applicants remains high with the majority having Masters degrees or above, several years experience and language skills. Recruitment of regional personnel has remained static there are indications that these workers can be particularly successful in certain sectors.

#### **D) Hold regular consultations with partners to strengthen partnership and shared learning**

As stated in A) above, partners are involved in our annual in-country workshops and evaluations. For example, in Bolivia a workshop on the contribution of development workers to the Municipalities (who have been devolved considerable power through the country's decentralisation policy) took place in September. The objective of the workshop was to initiate a process of reflection and lesson learning analysing the best of use of skilled human resources in capacity building of the municipal entities. This was attended by DFID Bolivia staff.<sup>1</sup>

In Brazil a workshop was held in November in conjunction with four other European "volunteer-sending" organisations (DED – Germany, MLAL – Italy, UBV – Sweden, Volens/Itinerans – Belgium) to analyse the value of international cooperation in the form of development workers. Partner organisations participated and identified strategies for the future.

In Mali a workshop was held in July to allow d.w.s and partners to exchange views on a range of issues including organisational management, fund-raising and communication. The informal networking that went on was particularly productive and has led to new initiatives including collaboration between a rural radio and an urban NGO network addressing the issues of urban child labour.

In December a workshop was held to analyse feedback on the micro-finance evaluation that had just taken place. New models of collaboration were discussed including the facilitation of skill-sharing between organisations.

In Burkina Faso a workshop focussing on strategy and fund-raising took place involving 17 partner organisations and 15 d.w.s. This gave participants key skills in fund-raising and taught us that a highly relevant theme ensures good participation and attendance. The involvement of the World Bank, the EU and Christian Aid in this event added to its usefulness.

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<sup>1</sup> For a full copy of the report on this workshop please contact [pgonzalez@unais.org.uk](mailto:pgonzalez@unais.org.uk)

## **E) Improve impact assessment techniques on the part of both International Service and project partners**

Through working with PARC during 2003, we have carried out a comprehensive revision of our monitoring and evaluation system. This is based around an innovative process, which aims to test our theories of what constitutes a successful placement. The main elements of the M&E system are as follows: -

- i) Global and Country Strategy level – to what extent does our strategy support global and national policies as laid out in the Millennium Development Goals and PRSPs
- ii) Impact and Outcome of field work – the effect that d.w. placements have on the capacities and conditions of the partner organisations and their beneficiaries
- iii) Approaches – to what extent the IS approaches have been applied and in what way and how much they contribute to results achieved at impact and outcome level
- iv) Lessons learned – the conclusions drawn in the field about placements and projects and how they are implemented and communicated internally and externally.

An evaluation carried out late in 2003 on “The Impact of International Service's Support to Partners with Projects in the Microfinance Sector in Mali and Burkina Faso”<sup>2</sup> concluded that “d.w.s are found to have considerable impacts on the organisations with whom they work, primarily in the form of institutional capacity building:. ...these influences combine to improve the sustainability, both institutional and financial, of the partner organisations, which in turn enhances the likelihood of the programmes being able to offer sustainable services to their clientele”. The evaluation also identified a number of areas for potential growth and change including a more thorough needs assessment of potential partners, a greater emphasis on collaboration and exchange between partners and d.w.s and a revised definition of partnership with project partners becoming more proactive and committed to learning.

An evaluation carried out in the spring of 2003 on “The Impact and Continuing Need for International Service Development Workers in the Human Rights Sector in Palestine” concluded that “there is uniform agreement on the ongoing need for d.w.s in this sector”<sup>3</sup> and that “the most significant issue for IS to address in this context are the needs for both a strategy related to supporting human rights organisations in Palestine and a more significant presence on the ground”. Given the severity of the conflict in the region the report also noted that “d.w.s have

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<sup>2</sup> For full report please contact [ewilson@unais.org.uk](mailto:ewilson@unais.org.uk)

<sup>3</sup> For full report please contact [pgonzalez@unais.org.uk](mailto:pgonzalez@unais.org.uk)

played an increasingly important role, for example, in the context of the severe movement restrictions in place in the West Bank and Gaza and the limitations on overseas travel ...Palestinians referred to d.w.s as an important presence which deters IDF violence ...their familiarity with international networks and organisations as well as their knowledge of how to lobby these entities means they play a critical role”.

The findings of evaluations are always shared with our partners whose participation is essential to the process.

**OBJECTIVE TWO: To develop a “Capacity Building Approach” to the eradication of poverty applying this principle within International Service as well as in our work overseas**

**A) Establish meaningful partnerships based on mutual accountability and inter-dependence**

As noted above, all IS project partners take part in workshops and evaluations as well as being consulted twice yearly through regular monitoring meetings. However, it has become clear that one of the themes for our new Strategic Plan from 2005 onwards will be redefining partnership in order to make it more effective in terms of impact, policy change and mutual commitment.

By developing a portfolio of placements we aim to maintain a balance between long-standing partnerships and new collaborations. This balances our portfolio of risk and it was noted in the micro-finance evaluation that “the ADAC and CAEB (long-standing Malian project partners) cases appear to have been wholly positive, with clear impacts from previous d.w.s visible and reported by staff. These relationships are further solidified by successful funding relationships, with partners investing satisfactorily in reporting etc”

The importance of helping our partners in Africa obtain funding for their activities has been stressed through in-country consultations and during 2003 we obtained funding from Comic Relief and the EU for work with partners in Mali and Burkina Faso. We also provide a small grants fund, which d.w.s can access to facilitate their work. This has proved to be very successful and has led to a number of innovative initiatives, which motivate both the d.w. and the partners. According to the independent evaluator who reported on the impact of our micro-finance work in Africa “the impact on the partners of the Small Grants Fund is considerable: this format appears to have multiple positive impacts for both the d.w. as for the partner”.

In Brazil, as a result of our institutional relationship with an organisation that has strong capacity building focus (Interage) two of our partners are now taking part in a year-long resource mobilisation programme.

In Bolivia many partner organisations are now contributing towards d.w. costs which has had a positive effect on their commitment to the partnership and has improved the monitoring of placements.

In Palestine it has not been possible to convene meetings of groups of partners due to travel restrictions but our partners in the region have expressed their continuing gratitude to IS for our steadfast collaboration and flexible approach to working in a very unpredictable area. Due to the dramatically deteriorating economic situation in the region, partners who were previously able to contribute towards the costs of their d.w. are now no longer able to and this has led to honest and open negotiations between IS and partners. The vital role of international staff in networking has been brought to the fore during this time with many positive results<sup>4</sup> .

## **B) All staff are encouraged to improve their skills and knowledge and value learning**

A significant achievement for the organisation in 2003 was the awarding of Investors in People status following a rigorous assessment by IiP personnel. This came about after recognition that as our work is all about people, we need to be setting ourselves high standards for people management which we can then look to translate to our work in the field.

This year we have revised our staff training policy to ensure a closer fit with our key objectives. As a result of this two of our Field Directors spent a month at Sussex University on a 4 week intensive course in Development Management. Our Annual Staff Meeting again had a strong training element this year focussing on gender awareness and the use of human rights instruments in development contexts. Staff turnover was zero during the year and the Anniversary activities had a positive effect on morale as we attracted more attention and organised more events.

At field office level on the job training and coaching is encouraged for example, in Mali local staff have been trained in financial management tools which can then also be passed on to partners.

## **C) Improve reporting formats to demonstrate sustainable impact**

As explained in 1E) above, we have thoroughly revised all our reporting documents<sup>5</sup> and have begun to introduce them. This has taken longer than expected, as there was a need to discuss them in detail at our ASM in October.

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<sup>4</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation Report IS Palestine Programme 2003 available from [elsebeth@unais.org.uk](mailto:elsebeth@unais.org.uk)

<sup>5</sup> For a full set of new reporting formats please contact [elsebeth@unais.org.uk](mailto:elsebeth@unais.org.uk)

This means that we are not yet in a position to produce comprehensive aggregated data on impact based on these new formats.

The Programme Monitoring Tool, which Field Directors produce annually, was amended with a view to extracting more useful information on impact. This addresses each placement and summarises the main achievement and significant changes that have taken place, puts them in the context of the Country Strategy and Global Strategic Plan and draws out information on lessons learnt, “human” impact and policy influence. For a full set of the latest Programme Monitoring Tools please contact our Programme Development Coordinator at [elsebeth@unais.org.uk](mailto:elsebeth@unais.org.uk).

#### **D) Improve training and orientation of development workers in capacity building and skills exchange**

We have continued to include our highly rated one-day course on capacity building in our preparation week. We have also introduced a beginner's course to human rights run by an experienced human rights specialist, which aims to familiarise d.w.s with the language and tools of human rights and looks at how they can be applied in a development context. We have also worked with Lovells law firm on ways to mainstream this issue and ensure that it is a key feature of our future work.

The recent evaluation of micro-finance projects looked closely at the training aspects and capacity building work of our development workers. One of the conclusions was that “the need to motivate staff is as important as the training delivered. In this area it appears that d.w. results to date have been very positive as there has been little staff leakage from the partners where d.w.s are undertaking a training +motivation approach.”

On the whole, across all our programmes a strong theme is the continued need for capacity building within both NGO structures and local government in areas such as fund-raising, good governance, staff training and strategic planning. We are very well placed to provide skilled personnel with these backgrounds and we have seen the benefits, which flow from working consistently on these themes. It is not without its frustrations however. Many NGOs are so resource poor it is difficult for them to engage in the activities they need to focus on while they struggle for survival. Local government structures are complex and for example in the case of Bolivia often demonstrate weak governance due to corruption, political in-fighting and low levels of competence of elected members. We therefore need to ensure that we work with municipalities, which fulfil certain basic criteria where change is achievable. Many funders do not wish to support capacity building per se but prefer to fund projects based on health, sustainable agriculture etc. We also recognise that we need to do more to share lessons both within country and between programmes about what works well and where we have been less successful. We have begun to address this in a number of

areas and have developed a Disability integration project covering both Mali and Burkina based on the experience we have gained in this field.

**OBJECTIVE THREE: To promote the concept of Global Citizenship and improve organisational capacity to represent the concerns of our partners in Northern policy forums**

**A) Develop new partnerships/alliances with sectors of UK civil society**

This year two important new alliances have been formed based on a common interest in promoting clear messages about development. We have made an extremely promising link with the International Cooperative Alliance, attending their AGM in Oslo and also arranging meetings with regional reps in Bolivia and Burkina Faso. It is intended that we will share key information on issues of mutual interest such as women's participation and labour rights through their website and other publications. It is also pleasing to note that the placement of a d.w. is being planned with the ICA office in Burkina Faso based on capacity building and campaigning.

We have also formed a partnership with Common Purpose Leeds. Common Purpose runs educational programmes and activities for leaders of all ages, backgrounds and sectors. We were invited to contribute a "Window on the World" at their Matrix Training Programme for leaders, which takes place one day per month. So far we have led sessions on economic choices made by African villagers and good governance in Bolivian municipalities.

Becoming involved with these organisations gives us very useful outlets for dialogue with sections of society we would otherwise not be in touch with. In the case of Common Purpose, the participants are influential people who we hope may wish to become more involved in our work. We will also use the courses as leverage to gain access to staff newsletters etc thus reaching a far wider audience.

In 2003 we submitted an application to DFID's Development Awareness Fund to further expand this work of constituency building and awareness-raising based on our own unique archive of development material.

We have developed links with the Universities of Leeds and York with a view to finding placements for students within NGOs. As a pilot 145 Leeds students were interviewed with 96 interested in a short placement in a UK NGO and 51 expressing a preference for an overseas placement. We already arrange internships for students from York both in the HQ and overseas.

The University of Leicester has invited us to run a workshop for trainee teachers based on our schools pack.

Askham Bryan Agricultural College has invited us to contribute sessions to their sustainable agriculture modules.

These various links enable us to reach out to new audiences and get them thinking about the MDGs and how we can get there. So far, response has been extremely positive based on feedback and evaluation from participants.

## **B) Initiate relevant campaigns on development issues in coordination with our overseas partners**

Over 100 delegates from 20 different countries met for workshops and key-note speeches at a two-day conference on “Mainstreaming Disability in Development” in November 2003.

Delegates with day to day experience of struggling for disabled peoples' rights at the grassroots felt very strongly that the present invisibility of disability in development is degrading and unjust, furthers exclusion and violates disabled peoples' human rights.

The majority of countries are working to develop a specific UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. A conference was held on this topic organised by IS in 2001. Richard Howitt MEP who spoke at both conferences said “A UN Convention on disability should be a legally binding instrument, with a full reporting mechanism, these are the demands made by the disability movement and demands certainly made by us at the conference organised by International Service two years ago here in London (Disability Rights – A Global Concern, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2001) calling for support for such a resolution. **Coming to conferences like these does make a difference.**”

IS organised this conference together with Action on Disability and Development and Disability Awareness in Action using money from the European Year of Disabled People. We were able to bring 10 of our own partners to London to attend the conference, all of whom represent disabled peoples' organisations. This theme will continue to be an important one for us as we have found that we are able to play a facilitating role in bringing disparate groups together who have a common interest in the issue of disability rights. This promotes networking, information sharing and effective lobbying for policy change. Far more needs to be done to ensure that major development funders actively seek to mainstream disability. <sup>6</sup>

On the issue of the **Occupied Territories** International Service submitted four papers to the International Development Select Committee's Enquiry into Development Assistance and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This took considerable effort on the part of the Field Office, two d.w.s and two partner

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<sup>6</sup> For the full text of the Conference Report please see the website on [www.international-service.org.uk](http://www.international-service.org.uk)

organisations and was very much welcomed by Hugh Bayley MP, IS Trustee and member of the Select Committee.

We also worked with the British Embassy in Tel Aviv in researching the case of the killing of two nurses in El Wafa Hospital in Gaza, an IS partner organisation. This helped to raise the issue with the Israeli army at the highest diplomatic level.<sup>7</sup>

**C) Launch “Making Connections” designed to link professional groups, academics and other civil society organisations in the UK and beyond to our work in the field.**

As explained in A) above, we have been following a strategy of “Making Connections” with a wide range of civil society groups both in the UK and internationally. This strategy will be developed further in our new Strategic Plan and the learning we have gained from our experience to date will be very useful in informing that.

At the moment there are 30 separate civil society groups signed up to our Making Connections scheme ranging from university departments to family groups and including a number of professional, non-development bodies. There has been some response to the messages from d.w.s, which we are passing on, but this needs improving. Regular 2/3 page d.w. messages are sent to the subscribers and these will soon be posted on the website. We expect to add video clips soon. Messages from d.w.s have exceeded our expectations in their insightful, frank and humorous content and it is a scheme we will continue to develop.

**D) Enhance the scope of our website to publicise campaigns, publish research and create links to other NGOs.**

We are continuing to expand the scope of our website and during 2003 developed special sections for the Anniversary events, for alumni and for the Disability Conference. We are averaging 15,000 hits per month and the bulk of our recruitment now comes through web-related promotion of posts. We have added links to relevant organisations and plan to use video clips to add interest.

We now have websites in both French ([www.is-mali.com](http://www.is-mali.com)) and Portuguese, facilitating access and understanding of the people and partners of the countries we work in.

**E) Other Development Awareness initiatives**

The promotion of “My Village My Life” Global Citizenship Resource has gone extremely well since its launch in April 2003. 187 copies have gone into circulation, about half were sold and the remainder given to DECs, teachers

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<sup>7</sup> For copies of the submissions made please contact [mvelayati@unais.org.uk](mailto:mvelayati@unais.org.uk)

involved in the creation of the resource, the IS Board and project partners. The take-up from DEC's has been encouraging with six ordering multiple copies for sale. We are expecting reviews from the Council for Environmental Education and Girlguiding UK, the latter referring to the pack as "this excellent resource".

Updates will be placed on the website from February 2004 after a second visit to the schools and people featured in the Pack. This will involve requesting feedback from monitored schools. A full evaluation of the production, promotion, use and impact of the resource will be carried out next year.

**OBJECTIVE FOUR: International Service will seek to enhance its position as one of the leading British NGOs sending development workers through increased fund-raising and profile raising**

**A) Play active role within BOND, BVALG and other relevant national/international NGO networks**

Participating in the wider NGO networks is an important aspect of our work in order to keep abreast of developments in the sector, share information and ensure that NGO's voice is heard. During 2003 we continued to chair and host BVALG and organised a variety of activities including a meeting with the new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Gareth Thomas MP. The IS Chief Executive is a member of the BOND Executive and its External Relations Committee and we are actively involved in the EU working group and the Funding Group.

IS Brazil is active in a network of European volunteer-sending NGOs which shares ideas and lessons on best practice. IS Brazil has also played a key coordinating role in organising meetings between UK NGOs in Brazil and the DFID and EU offices in Brasilia. In Bolivia we are active members of the CONGI a coordinating body of International NGOs and our Field Director is Coordinator of the Working Group on Municipal Development. In April 2003 this group organised a seminar on "The Use and Access of Public Funds in Municipalities" attended by DFID staff.

In Burkina Faso development workers and partners have attended meetings of the Micro Finance Professionals Association to promote lesson learning in the sector. We are also members of COMUREC (a national committee composed of representatives of the government, civil society and disabled peoples' organisations).

**B) Implement Fund-Raising strategy and diversify sources of funding**

During 2003 we obtained a grant from the EU for work in Burkina Faso. We also worked with a fund-raising consultant to look at ways of increasing income from other sources using the Anniversary Year as a hook. Following a reception at 10

Downing St in December we are following up several of the guests who have access to large sums of money.

Comic Relief gave us some start-up money for an innovative children's rights project in Mali, which will soon be submitting an application for increased funding following evaluation.

We are planning to establish a "Corporate Forum" to encourage business people to give their time to helping us access trusts and funds within industry and the Chief Executive of Nationwide Building Society, Phillip Williamson, has agreed to chair it. The general funding climate is quite tight and we are keen to establish relationships with new funders.

### **C) Through increased campaigning and activities, enhance the profile of International Service**

As described in Objective 3 above, we held a successful conference on "Mainstreaming Disability in Development" in November of 2003. The main focus for the year was our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which we used to raise our profile nationally and regionally and to gain contact with potential new supporters.

There were various events organised throughout the year including a Reunion of Former Volunteers, which took the form of a weekend of activities including a reception at the Archbishop of York's Palace, a workshop and a party. We made contact with over 500 former volunteers and have now developed a new database of alumni in order to stay in touch with this important group of people more effectively.

Events took place in the field to mark the Anniversary including a reception held in Bolivia hosted by the British Ambassador and the presentation of a Human Rights Award to Andrea Flores, a Bolivian women's leader. In Burkina Faso more than a hundred people took part in a ceremony to mark our 50<sup>th</sup> Year including disabled people, NGOs and government reps and a play entitled "Who Am I?" was performed by the Marbayassa theatre company underlining the problems faced by disabled people in daily life. This was highly effective in raising awareness of this issue.

During the year over 1,000 people were added to our contacts database increasing it by nearly 50%. The longer-term strategy is to use this database for fund-raising, development awareness and campaigning purposes.

The main event of the year was the Human Rights Awards held at the House of Commons and hosted by our patron Jon Snow. This received national coverage and has led to a great deal of interest in our work as we are not traditionally seen as being involved in human rights. Funding for next year's awards is now being

sought and we are widening out the criteria so that any BVALG agency can nominate for the various categories.

By focussing on human rights in this way we are able to highlight the importance of human rights in the development agenda and bring new people into the debate. A further 285 people have been added to our database in relation to this event.

**D) Produce media strategy aiming to get news about our work out to a wider audience**

During the Anniversary Year we were able to significantly increase the amount of press coverage we received. Articles about our work appeared in The Guardian and in several regional newspapers as well as local radio coverage and magazine coverage. Useful lessons have been drawn from this and we are planning a workshop later in 2004 to consolidate this experience and produce a comprehensive strategy on our approach to the media.

Our concern is to communicate effectively the issues that matter to our overseas partners and we will do this together with other NGOs, through networks such as BOND or in our own right. As a form of public information, the media is a powerful actor and deserves serious attention from all who wish to improve public perception of development issues.

January 2003  
Jane Carter