

Minority Rights Group International

**EVALUATION
OF
MINORITY RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME**

**April 2005
Final Report
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CB | : Capacity Building |
| CEDAW | : Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women |
| CESCR | : Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| CPR | : International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| COHRE | : Centre on Housing Rights and Eviction |
| DFID | : Department for International Development, UK |
| ESC | : Economic, Social and Cultural |
| ESCR | : Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| EU | : European Union |
| FIAN | : Food First Information and Action Network |
| HR | : Human Rights |
| ICESCR | : International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| ICCPR | : International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| ICD | : Information and Communication Department |
| ICHRP | : International Council for Human Rights Policy |
| ICJ | : International Commission of Jurists |
| NGO | : Non-Governmental Organisation |
| MDG | : Millennium Development Goals |
| MR | : Minority Rights |
| MR&D | : Minority Rights and Development |
| MRG | : Minority Rights Group International |
| OD | : Organisational Development |
| OHCHR | : Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| PME | : Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| PRSP | : Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers |
| RBA | : Rights-based Approach |
| RtD | : Right to Development |
| SDC | : Swiss Development Cooperation |
| Sida | : Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| TOR | : Terms of Reference |
| WB | : World Bank |
| WCAR | : World Conference Against Racism |
| WGM | : Working Group on Minorities |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings and recommendations of an evaluation of the Minority Rights and Development Programme undertaken by Minority Rights Group International during the period 2001-2004. The programme seeks to promote minority rights (MR) in development processes and planning and can in many ways be conceived as a pilot-project due to its explorative and pioneering character and relatively limited scope.

On relevance, effectiveness and results of the programme, the evaluation has made observations at two levels.

At the overall strategic level MRG is found to have been a pioneer in seeking to enhance MR in development and to establish linkages between the human rights and the development community. The overall relevance and justification of the programme can easily be confirmed. The pioneering work has necessitated an explorative and iterative approach. Yet, a more articulated strategy and change perspective could have enhanced MRG's performance.

At the operational level, MRG has realised the programme as planned in the EC proposal and carried out the activities in a professional and committed manner. The performance within documentation of minority situations, training of Donors, public workshops and seminars has been noteworthy. MRG has been able to exploit new windows of opportunity due to flexibility and an innovative perspective. The performance within policy analysis and advice has been outstanding and MRG has developed significant resources on MR in development and established an international discourse on MR in development.

Regarding outcomes, the aim of awareness raising among key development actors in Europe and also at local level has been achieved albeit with a limited scope. MRG has managed to place minority issues more strongly in some international development debates and certain outputs of the MR&D programme will continue to be means of creating deeper understanding of minority realities among academia, development workers and policy makers. However, much better scope of outcomes and multiplier effects could have been attained by a more considered change strategy.

The aim of documenting and analysing minority communities' and indigenous peoples' experience of development has been attained through a number of studies. Recommendations for pivotal change in development policy and practice have been made and a few agencies have started internal processes possibly leading to policy change or systematic capacity building to handle MR better.

The aim of strengthening of the capacity of minority-based NGOs to advocate for minorities' and indigenous peoples' rights has been achieved to some extent, but with quite limited scope. The capacity building in the MR&D programme has indirectly come about as a bi-product of the joint work around Micro and Macro Studies, of joint bilateral meetings with Donors and ad-hoc training and workshops. Not due to a designed capacity building strategy.

The aim of mainstreaming MR in development processes and ensuring the participation of minorities in development decision-making and implementation has not been achieved as yet. The strategies and activities put in place as part of the programme initially did not match such planned achievements very well. However, it can be said that the MR&D programme has contributed to enhancing recognition among some international duty-bearers of the relevance and necessity of considering minorities in development. *If* the efforts are sustained it may result in the agencies taking on an authoritative voice in the promotion of MR and in soft standard setting within development policies. Finally, capacity may be built both in the form of knowledge and skills within certain agencies that will allow them to programme in a manner that will benefit minorities better and avoid future direct violations of MR.

However, due to the pilot nature of the programme and the strategic weaknesses mentioned above the categories of work have not as yet brought about sustainable outcomes. The modest scope of the programme combined with a somewhat fragmented approach has made it difficult for MRG to demonstrate presence, permanence, persuasion and pressure in the long haul. Yet, there is no doubt that MRG has gained recognition as a professional, committed and leading actor in the promotion of minority rights in development. The MR&D programme has contributed to building MRG as a stronger defender for minority rights in development.

The efficiency of the programme has generally been high, but the sustainability both of MRG's own efforts as of the preliminary outcomes are at risk now that the programme has come to an end and future plans are still pending.

The overall recommendations are clustered around the following issues:

- Sustain the move within MRG from activity-based planning to change-led planning and develop the appropriate strategies within MR&D accordingly (p. 7).
- Improve on and articulate the rights based approach both in MRG's own programmes and in the advocacy, policy and training with external actors and partners.
- Strengthen the "Loop of 8" and seek to overcome the division between international and Southern by enhancing matrix management generally (p. 9).
- Maintain focus on MR as a special issue and concern in the advocacy activities, but pursue a more holistic RBA in development programming as a vehicle for ensuring MR (p. 20).
- Focus more on country level situations and actors in future efforts. Prioritise and target certain Donors, countries and partners around a selected set of targets. Select on the basis of the ability to exert permanence, pressure, presence and persuasion in the long haul.
- Give priority to acting in concert with other constituencies and build longer-term alliances for a common target. Collaborate with the other likeminded organisations, which already indirectly or directly work for minorities as part of their mandate.
- Explore the feasibility and potential of employing a legal litigation strategy together with likeminded organisations.
- Improve methods and quality assurance in capacity building (local partners) and in policy impact (Donors) .

Finally, a brief consideration of MRG's future strategy 2005-2007 in the field of MR&D points to the need for MRG to articulate the cutting edge of MRG's efforts more clearly while making sure to capitalise on the important progress made and the lessons learned during the past programme.

The evaluation has been conducted by Hanne Lund Madsen, MSc. International Development and International Human Rights Law, HLM Consult, Denmark.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report represents the findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from an evaluation of the Minority Rights and Development (MR&D) programme conducted during the spring 2005.

The evaluation has been undertaken upon the initiative of Minority Rights Group International (MRG) with the objectives of providing

- An assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and outcomes of the programme
- Lessons for future work and strategic orientation on the promotion of Minority Rights (MR) in development.

MRG is independent human rights organisation based in London, which has worked for the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples for more than 30 years. MRG is governed by International Council, which meets twice a year. MRG is not a membership-based organisation. The organisation works in partnership with around 130 partners in some 60 countries. The organisation has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights.

In the past MRG's work has been guided by four key objectives:

- Promoting the active participation of minorities and indigenous peoples in decisions affecting their lives
- Securing the implementation of international standards
- Advancing conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives
- Advocating the need for the integration of MR into development policies.

Thus, the present evaluation is unfolding within the fourth main strand of MRG's work. The project under review was undertaken during the period 2001-2004 with support from the EU Development Education Budget Line and with the main aim of

- Seeking to raise awareness of MR in relation to the design and implementation of European development cooperation activities and emergency relief efforts.

The project was undertaken by MRG in partnership with the Italian NGO Intersos. Intersos is an independent non-profit humanitarian organisation committed to assist the victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts. It was established in 1992 by a group of citizens committed to international solidarity, with the active support of Italian Trade Unions. Intersos' activities are based on the principles of solidarity, justice, human dignity, equality of rights and opportunities and respect for diversity and coexistence, paying special attention to the most vulnerable and unprotected people. Intersos is recognised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission and the main UN Agencies.

The objectives have been pursued through a mix of activities in the field of training, workshops, studies and publications, advocacy and policy advice.

The Consultant wishes to thank all those who have made themselves available for interviews and who have showed willingness to share important views and information in an open and frank manner. The Consultant wishes to express a special note of gratitude to MRG for engaging wholeheartedly in the process and for providing excellent support. A debriefing has been given to MRG and comments and suggestions have been reflected in this final report, which has been adopted by MRG. However, the responsibility for the content, findings and recommendations rests with the Consultant.

The evaluation has been conducted by Hanne Lund Madsen, MSc. International Development and International Human Rights Law, HLM Consult, Denmark.

2. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The TOR request an evaluation of the MR&Development programme. It is thus important to underline that the evaluation is not an overall evaluation of MRG's performance and work, but of a specific programme undertaken during a period of three years. Likewise, it is important to note that the purpose is an evaluation and not a review. Hereby, the focus is lifted from the details of the programme to seeking to analyse the overall efforts of MRG in promoting MR in development.

The evaluation has been undertaken by making use of a combination of evaluation tools in order to gain the best in-sights with limited resources. In reflection of the character of this evaluation the Consultant has combined an explorative and iterative evaluation approach with emphasis on appreciative inquiry methodologies with more traditional evaluation methodologies. Documentary review, self-evaluation, semi-structured interviews with Donor representatives, researchers and representatives from NGOs, intergovernmental institutions and local partners were employed (Annex II). At MRG bilateral interviews as well as a joint self-assessment workshop were undertaken to identify the relevance, achievements and outcomes of the programme and of the lessons learned for future approaches and work. In person interview were undertaken with main programme actors in Stockholm and Brussels, phone interviews have been undertaken with other actors and beneficiaries and consultation via email has been undertaken with MRG's partners in the programme. In all cases the purpose of the evaluation has been communicated in advance of the consultations. The total duration of the evaluation consultancy has been limited to 15 working days including drafting and debriefing.

MRG was consulted regarding the interpretation and operationalisation of key evaluation parameters. Regarding the evaluation of human rights work, the Consultant basically applies the same perspective as MRG, namely a rights-based approach (See Madsen, 2001 & Annex V).

The evaluation has been undertaken in light of a number of principles:

- A positive evaluation process is a shared responsibility guided by transparency and consultation
- The evaluation principles of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy are to be observed
- The integrity of the organisation, stakeholders, minority groups and other actors is to be respected.

MRG has shared an impressive amount of documentation and much is well suited for the purpose of this evaluation. However, MRG does not have a systematic monitoring and evaluation system in place and an evaluation was initially not foreseen or planned for within the programme, which in itself renders evaluation at this point more difficult.

Another difficulty encountered during the evaluation has been the relatively low level of cognisance of the MR&D programme among external stakeholders. Many of the key informants identified by MRG did not feel well placed to share experiences regarding the programme and very few had been acquainted with more than a single activity. This includes the so-called "main advocacy targets" of the programme and this finding is of course significant for the possible achievements of the programme (Chapter 4.3.6).

The consultations with partners have been limited both due to the constraints on travel determined by MRG and due to the well known weaknesses of questionnaires and long distance interviews. However, the evaluation has in this respect drawn on the detailed reports from partner meetings convened by MRG, the two evaluations of partners' benefit from MRG's activities (WCAR & training before WGM) seeking to identify up-stream and downstream impact and MRG's own collection of partner experiences related to the documentation activities (Micro and Macro Studies). However, the

Consultant regrets that the TOR did not allow for the participation of a Southern consultant identified by one of the local partners involved in the programme.

The programme operates with multiple log frames, changing objectives and conceptualisation of means and ends. This has called for certain methodological considerations, which will be shared in the report itself when relevant.

Finally, it should be clarified that MRG normally considers the activities under review as a programme. In this report the same wording will be used (MR&D programme) although the finding of the Consultant is that it is rather to be considered a project (p. 4).

3. BACKGROUND

The MR&D programme within MRG is an expression of an effort dating back to 1995 seeking to address MR in development. Wide consultations with minorities and indigenous peoples, governments, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations were followed by an international workshop with key stakeholders, 'Forming Partnerships', in Kathmandu, Nepal in 1999. This workshop launched the research and advocacy programme: 'Minority Rights and Development' (MR&D). MRG subsequently developing a three-year project proposal designed to fit the EC's Development Education budget facility.

The overall goal of the project as formulated in the EC proposal is as follows:

"Raise awareness of minority rights in relation to the design and implementation of European development cooperation activities and emergency relief efforts. The long-term goal [was] to increase the effectiveness of those programmes. Targets include[d] those working on development issues in the European Union, such as development policy makers, decision makers and donors. In particular: government officials and parliamentarians working on development issues from Italy, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK; those involved in development projects within EU institutions and European NGOs; and EU representatives in developing countries."

Awareness raising as an aim thus constitutes the first level of analysis.

However, MRG specified and elaborated upon the objectives of the project to cover four main objectives within an overall goal:

Overall goal:

To improve the economic and social position of minority groups and indigenous peoples by promoting a greater understanding of their rights among those responsible for designing and implementing development interventions.

Objectives:

1. To document and analyse minority communities' and indigenous peoples' experiences of development
2. To make recommendations for pivotal change in development policy and practice
3. To build strategic alliances in the donor and international development community to promote minority- and indigenous-rights-based approaches to development
4. To strengthen the capacity of minority- and indigenous-based and inter-ethnic NGOs to advocate for minorities' and indigenous peoples' rights and to participate more effectively in development

decision-making and implementation with development actors at the national and international level.

This constitutes the second level of analysis of achievements within this evaluation – the level of multiple objectives.

In view of the experiences gained during the programme implementation and in reflection of the general developments in the development discourse, MRG in the final year of the project perceives of the objectives as:

Overall goal: To contribute to an increase in the effectiveness and sustainability of development programmes.

Objective: To improve the capacity of key development agencies to mainstream minorities and indigenous peoples' rights within development programmes, and to improve the capacity of minorities and indigenous peoples in eight countries to advocate for their rights in development.

The third level of assessment thus mainly concerns mainstreaming.

The above presentation and development give rise to three important observations. It first of all highlights that the objectives against which the achievements may be assessed have been changing over time and that several layers of objectives were co-existing within the project. In the assessment presented in this evaluation report reference will be made to all three levels of objectives.

Secondly, it provides the first indication of an explorative and iterative approach of MRG within this field of work. It is a reflection of the fact that rights in development in general is a relatively new agenda. For MRG the project presented the first opportunity to work systematically on enhancing MR in development. Combined with other findings and considerations it provides the overall picture of a programme that in many ways may best be perceived as a pilot project. This again influences the framework in which achievements are assessed both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Finally, the above provides entry points to appreciating the underlying strategy of work and intervention logic pursued by MRG, which to some extent has been reflected in the project, but which also goes beyond the project itself. In other words, we see the embryonic profile of a rights based approach.

Moving on to the level of activities, the project was planned to conduct activities within the following main categories:

- Documentation and dissemination of studies on MR and experiences
- Meetings between MRD partners and development agencies
- Training for development agencies
- Workshop and seminars for development agencies
- Media Coverage and Strategic Networks (e-based)

In the course of time, in response to lessons learned and windows of opportunities, the programme has moreover made significant contributions within

- Policy development and advice
- Targeted advocacy initiatives.

Regarding the implementation, MRG and Intersos were to cooperate around the implementation of the programme. However, MRG was the initiator and main holder of the project and due to unforeseen developments, Intersos only participated in the holding of a few activities (Chapter 4.2). In the following reference is mainly made to MRG as the actor behind this project.

The MR&D programme is one global programme out of six global programmes and 10 regional programmes undertaken by MRG. The programme has had a total cost over three years of £1.416m. The total expenditure of MRG in 2004 was £2.085.000. The share of the MR&D programme expenditures was £172.103 – that is approximately 12.25% of the total programme expenditure – yet it still constitutes one of the larger global programmes of MRG.

4. PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

4.1. RELEVANCE AND JUSTIFICATION

The overall aim of seeking to improve the economic and social position of minority groups and indigenous peoples by promoting a greater understanding of their rights among those responsible for designing and implementing development interventions is considered highly relevant and justified.

The publications on minorities produced by MRG as part of this programme clearly document the many cases of economic and social marginalisation of minority groups and moreover highlight how development processes aimed at benefiting the poorest still do not reach minority groups significantly.

“The threats to the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples around the world remain undiminished. Entrenched discrimination means that in many parts of the world minorities remain the poorest of the poor, and yet are denied access to justice or to development opportunities to enable them to challenge their discrimination and to break out of long-term cycles of poverty. Grave human rights violations against minorities and indigenous peoples continue. Some 70 per cent of the world’s conflicts have an ethnic or religious dimension, and diversity is too often seen as a threat, instead of an advantage to be celebrated. As the global security agenda pursues its focus on the ‘war against terror’, many governments are taking the opportunity to clamp down on the rights and freedoms of their minority communities” (MRG 2004 Programme).

In determining relevance it is also important to note that MRG’s efforts in bringing MR onto the development agenda is very much a response to the call for such action among MRG’s partners in the Global South. Groups in the South with whom MRG was partnering, increasingly voiced their demands of greater attention to economic, social and cultural rights of minorities and thus to MR in development planning and implementation.¹

As to the need and relevance of seeking to create awareness of MR among development planners and policy makers, all consultations have confirmed the strong relevance and justification of this effort. Even though human rights in development have now been part of the development discourse for a decade, there is still insufficient understanding of the operational implications of such considerations. When MRG initiated the programme in 2000 Rights-based Approaches were not well known. Few development agencies have ensured significant knowledge among staff about human rights in development let alone about MR or human rights of minorities. Most observers and development actors find that international human rights NGOs like MRG have an important role to play in raising awareness and understanding of crucial human rights issues of pertinence to development programmes including MR.

The aim of building capacities of both minority groups and development actors to advocate for and manage in a proper manner minority issues in development in a proper manner is similarly considered

¹ Initially, the MR&D work was by MRG seen as concerning economic, social and cultural rights in development. Today, MRG considers that all rights –including civil and political rights- may be promoted or violated as part of the development process.

a much needed intervention on the part of MRG. The lack of capacities in this field is evident and few, if any, other international organisations offer this type of capacity building to these actors.

The relevance and justification of aiming at mainstreaming of MR may at first seem high as it is clear that MR are not at present systematically mainstreamed in development interventions. They are at best neglected and sometimes directly undermined. This is a problem, which it is both relevant and justified that MRG addresses. However, the question is whether the intervention logic and strategy of mainstreaming is the most appropriate vehicle in achieving the aims (Chapter 4.2).

Another indicator of relevance is the extent to which MRG's messages and concerns as raised in this programme are actually shared among key development actors and the extent to which the services and activities of MRG are in demand. The preliminary answer is that the MR&D programme exactly seeks to build such shared understanding of the situation of minorities, as many agencies at the moment do not have any particular recognition of MR. Hence the focus on awareness raising. On the other hand the relevance of MRG's efforts can clearly be appreciated by making reference to the many resolutions and proclamatory statements of high level bodies that call for an increased attention to MR issues in development and also point to the crucial role to be played by independent international actors such as MRG. MRG's engagement in this field is of course supported by the developing international standards on MR.

Finally, the MR&D programme is an effort to break the relative isolation of the human rights community and reach out to the development community. MRG is not only breaking new ground within the organisation, which has traditionally targeted actors and bodies within the international (and national) human rights regimes. MRG is a pioneer in establishing bridges between the human rights and development community and closing the gulf between the two, which for decades have prevented a holistic approach to human rights in development. Other international human rights NGOs, which traditionally only occupied themselves with civil and political rights, are also increasingly dealing with Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). However, few had in the late 1990s started to specifically target and address, let alone cooperate with, the development actors. The partnership with the humanitarian NGO Intersos is another expression of this trans-boundary effort of MRG.

The above findings underline the pilot character of this programme and explain the somewhat iterative and explorative approach that MRG necessarily had to adopt in the course of the programme. Chapter 4.5 elaborates on the benefits MRG would have obtained from seeing this effort more clearly as an explorative and pioneering effort. It would also have assisted MRG at an earlier stage to critically review the relevance and justification of the activities in reaching the objectives.

4.2. OVERALL STRATEGY OF WORK

In the project proposal there is no direct mention of a strategy of work, but rather the identification of activities related to the overall objectives. Thus, MRG has mainly been employing the categories of training, workshops, documentation and advocacy meetings to reach the overall objective.

Perceived as an awareness-raising project the link between objective and means are straightforward and logical. As any other typical awareness raising project, the MR&D programme makes use of a series of traditional awareness raising tools – publications, advocacy meetings, workshops, seminars, training, etc. These activities are well identified and the expected outputs of the programme have been delivered. MRG has exploited potential synergies between the various categories of activities and at this level the performance of the programme is very satisfactory. The Issue Papers and Studies on the situation of minorities could be used as inputs to international advocacy activities while at the same time build the expertise among local partners of how to conduct such a study. The Micro Studies could

also be used as input and cases in the training of Donor agencies and NGOs. The experiences gained through the training of Donors again provided useful inputs into a thematic paper on Donor policy and practices regarding MR.

However, when we move on to consider the activities in light of the four objectives (Level II) the link between the activities and the objectives becomes more blurred. It is less likely that the implementation of these activities will lead to an achievement of the objectives.

Considering the aim of enhancing MR by mainstreaming within development programming and enhancing minority groups' ability to participate in development planning, the discrepancy between objectives, strategy of work and activities of work only increases. MRG's own internal review in 2003 acknowledges these discrepancies and weaknesses. Again, it is important to appreciate the explorative character of this project for MRG and acknowledge that MRG's reflection on the programme developed a lot during the years, as did the underlying conceptual and strategic framework through which MRG conceived of the programme.

The change in perspective and ambition as reflected in the mainstreaming objectives did lead MRG to initiate new types of activities. Notably policy development and advice on MR. And it did make MRG use awareness raising activities in a more targeted advocacy manner. Similarly, the focus on workshops changed to being a vehicle of dialogue with critical actors and a door opener to more long-term cooperation around minorities. Also at this level MRG has gained some significant achievements with a number of Donors.

Nevertheless, the programme has somewhat had a dual identity. One identity encompassing the pre-planned operational activities according to a certain schedule in accordance with the EC project and another identity encompassing a much broader agenda concerning a paradigmatic change in favour of MR in development planning and impact.

At the strategy level the programme carries the same strengths and weaknesses as any other programme within MRG and reflects a broader transition process within the organisation: From an activity based planning to a change oriented planning. MRG coins it the following way in the 2004 report:

"We are also envisaging a strategic shift to make our [advocacy] work much more goals oriented, with the focus shifting from a presence at particular fora, to the delivery of the desired outcomes of our work. We will avoid being led by methods [activities] and will instead focus on a [advocacy] goal as the starting point and then select the most effective mix of methods that will influence the targets and achieve the goal. A major challenge for us will be to make the advocacy goals both sufficiently ambitious to represent real progress for minority communities on the ground and yet, given the limited power and influence that we ourselves can apply, ensure that they are reasonably achievable" (MRG Interim Report on Activities, Jan-July 2004)

Clearly, the MR&D programme would have benefited from such change-led planning, whereby the strategy of work would have been made much more explicit and, most importantly, would have been fitting the changes sought. Many findings and observations relating to the programme actually spring from this omission or can be explained by the activity based planning (Chapter 4.5).

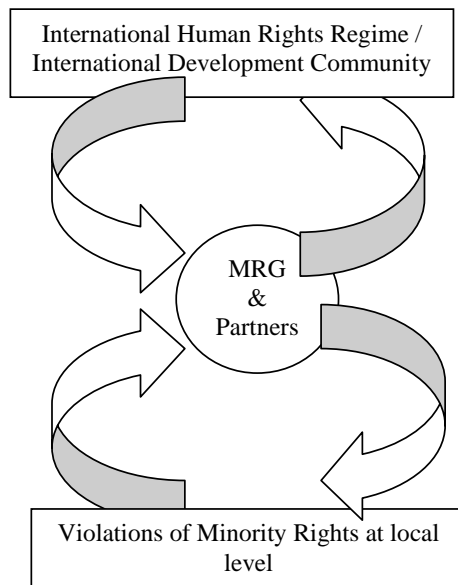
Core strategy of MRG

However, taking a view beyond the MR&D programme encompassing MRG's overall activities and drawing on the self-assessment session, it is possible to draw the profile of the "mode of operation" and strategy of work developed over the years, which seem to underpin all MRG's work and which is also employed in various ways in the MR&D programme.

The overall mission is clearly stated as “Minority Rights Group International (MRG) works to secure the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples worldwide, and to promote cooperation and understanding between communities”. The strategy at work to pursue this aim is in many ways internalised within the organisation, but it has not been well articulated and documented. Previous and present strategy plans do not very clearly spell out the underlying strategy.

The core of this strategy of work is that MRG is a human rights organisation working for MR and the human rights of minorities. MRG’s work unfolds on the one hand with reference to binding international human rights conventions and on the other with reference to the situation of minorities around the world. In the self-assessment workshop MRG found that the “Loop of 8” provides a good model for understanding how MRG works.²

Figure I. “The Loop of 8”



MRG perceives itself as a human right organisation per se and bases its work on human rights standards and principles. MRG places emphasis on the obligations of duty-bearers and the legitimate claims of rights-holders – the minorities both as a group and as individuals. MRG’s publications bear evidence of a high level of expertise within international law and human rights. MRG seeks to feed the experiences or cases of violations of MR into the international human rights system with a view to enhance standard setting and thereby facilitating the substantive, procedural and instrumental development of the international human rights regime. At the same time MRG seeks to gain recognition of a certain situation/violation and thus create political pressure for change at the local level.

Many consultations confirm that the local studies, which MRG is able to bring to the international level, are invaluable both in calling governments to comply and in elaborating a clearer understanding of the nature and characteristics of violations of MR. Vice versa, the work of the human rights machinery – however modest – may, if used in a clever manner (as MRG does), be important leverages in the local struggle and advocacy for a decent life and respect of MR.

² This model was developed by the Consultant, Hanne Lund Madsen, for FIAN International in 2004 and is found to grasp some fundamental processes in many international human rights organisations.

MRG is no exception to other international human rights organisations, where it is clear that it is in the combination of strategies and levels in the circular process within the “Loop of 8” rather than in the linear process within one type of activity that achievements and impacts are likely to occur. Also for MRG this has significant implications for the way MRG should conceive, structure and monitor its work in the future.

MRG has with the MR&D programme expanded its action outside the human rights machinery/community to include key development actors as duty-bearers, but the “Loop of 8” is still the basic pulse or epicentre around which the work of MRG evolves. MRG seeks to bring evidence of local situations of minorities to the attention of key development actors, firstly with a view to create *recognition*, secondly to persuade Donors to include a consideration of MR in their programming mainly by allowing minorities to *participate*, which combined with due attention to human rights principles will bode for less discrimination of minorities or a practice based on *non-discrimination* and affirmative action towards minority groups. The aim of standard setting within the human rights regime is matched by an aim of policy development and normative guidelines on MR in development among agencies. Once such policies are adopted they are to serve as platforms of action at the local level both among agencies country operations and among MRG partners that may advocate for compliance.

MRG agrees that it is relevant to consider the MR&D programme in light of the “Loop of 8”, whereby certain potential strengths and existing weaknesses transpires. First of all the actors involved in the programme, both local partners and targeted donor agencies have not readily seen their role in the overall strategy. MRG has been the main actor involved in the up-stream and down-stream processes. Secondly, the interlinkages between the up-stream and down-stream processes are somewhat handicapped by the organisational structure in MRG: a Northern advocacy department and a Southern programme department (Chapter 4.5). Yet it is a strength that the MR&D programme is an effort to include both departments in a joint undertaking. Thirdly, MRG (and local partners) have not had sufficient resources for completing the circular process within the existing narrow project framework.

Mainstreaming and Rights-Based Approach

MRG is considering itself a rights-based organisation and is calling for mainstreaming of MR and adoption of rights-based approaches among Donors and NGOs. While a number of reports and issue papers focus on the link between human rights and development, MRG has not developed an institutional understanding of mainstreaming or rights-based approaches and has not developed the strategy (a plan) for achieving a Rights-Based Approach (RBA) or a mainstreaming among various actors. MRG does not consider that their own programming has systematically been developed in order to be rights-based.

It may be argued that there are several ways of supporting MR in development. In a historic perspective we see at least three main ways being pursued. Direct human rights support has been the hall mark of much human rights work over the last centuries and most of the international human rights organisations have been engaged with providing in one form or the other direct human rights support to certain groups be it minorities, victims, human rights defenders, etc. The work takes a clear departure in human rights standards, but it is not necessarily rights based in the programming or strategic perspective. The second main way of ensuring MR is mainstreaming, which basically evolves around establishing promotional and safeguarding mitigation measures within existing programmes. And finally within recent years the attention to a RBA has increased.

A RBA perspective highlights the crucial importance of strengthening the interface - the vertical relationship between duty-bearers and rights holders from the community level up to the national and the international levels. It considers the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil at both the analytical

and operational levels and it emphasises the process rights of non-discrimination, participation and accountability (Annex IV). It enhances the duty-bearers recognition, authority and resources to comply as it enhances the rights-holders recognition of their rights, authority to claim and resources and ability to claim.

The self-assessment session clarified that MRG's intervention logic is based on the fundamental human rights of minorities, which places obligations on duty-bearers and accords rights to minorities. However, neglect and violations of MR take place on a daily basis due to the failure of Governments to comply with their obligations. MRG is seeking to identify and address the *factors of failure* through a combination of methods ranging from naming and shaming to soft persuasion and establishment of good practices through guidelines or training. For MRG a RBA signifies that the end goal of development processes is human rights enjoyment, that the situation should be analysed through human rights lenses and that the principles of non-discrimination, identity and participation should be mainstreamed in development programming.

So, while MRG has not been clearly articulate about it, a lot of rights-based thinking and programming is reflected in the MR&D programme. Unfortunately, this does not transpire in the recently adopted overall strategy of MRG.

The four objectives of the MR&D programme (Level II) neatly reflect a dual intervention strategy both vis-à-vis minority groups as rights holders and vis-à-vis the Donor agencies as duty-bearers. It places emphasis on one assumed factor of failure both in compliance and in claiming – namely lack of recognition and knowledge, which is to be addressed through awareness raising and capacity building. It seeks to mobilise the international human rights monitoring system in bringing compliance at local level, while bringing the local experiences as input to policy and standards development at international level.

However, MRG is mainly using only two of the process rights: non-discrimination and participation. The third, accountability, is not very visible in MRG's work on minorities in development. The question of participation tends to be addressed as a means for inclusion and good development programming. The right to participation as a human right that requires protection mechanism and ways of redress is not much explored. MRG is not making much use of the analytical and strategic framework of respect, protect and fulfil in the various categories of work, although some conceptual papers and the ESCR manual use the trinity of obligations.

From violations to the design of rights-conducive processes

Another characteristic feature of the underlying or embryonic strategy in the MR&D programme is the intended move from focus on violations accompanied by a shaming and naming strategy to the focus on the design of rights conducive processes and policies accompanied by enabling strategies (training and policy advice). This is not only innovative within MRG's programme portfolio, but certainly also in a broader perspective. MRG has, from the start, recognised the need for affirmative strategies to protect MR by developing in particular the international human rights regimes. Yet, while MRG is not a typical violations/case based organisation, much of the work has in the past evolved around reactions to a wrong – the discrimination of minorities. The MR&D programme is clearly setting a new course and has allowed MRG to function in completely new roles. However, the recent debate among leading international human rights organisations (Rubenstein, 2004) highlights the crucial importance of critically assessing the merits and trade-offs of each method and determining when the naming and blaming strategy, the enabling and cooperative strategy or the legal litigation strategy work best. MRG is presently moving into litigation strategies, which may also be used in advancing the MR&D agenda, especially in cooperation with likeminded human rights NGOs that presently pursue litigation strategies within ESC rights.

Working with and for partners

A third basic feature of MRG's mode of operation and strategy is the cooperation with minority groups and indigenous peoples organisations as partners both in the North and in the South. All lessons from development work underline the importance and relevance of such partnerships both for the local groups and for the international NGOs. With no membership base, the partners to a large extent form the constituency from which MRG as a professional staff driven NGO derives its legitimacy and from which MRG generates advocacy agendas, research data and local support. It is beyond the focus of this evaluation to consider the partnership in detail. Suffice to say that MRG has made efforts at including the partners in the identification of the programme, in the execution of certain activities of the programme and in internal reviews of the programme. Moreover the partners and their constituencies in turn are considered one of the main target groups and intended beneficiaries of the programme. That being said it is also clear that the MR&D programme, as the overall programme department in MRG, is in need of further development of partnership policies and especially the approach to capacity building. The crucial importance is underlined by the intention of MRG to enhance work at the national level, which corroborates with the recommendation of this evaluation to focus on national development processes and the actors involved. This will require a new role of the partners both formally as implementers of programme components and a sustained and targeted capacity building effort that goes beyond transfer of MR expert knowledge.

Special issue, special group rights and special mechanisms

A final strand, although somewhat subtle, in the MR&D strategy, which has come to the fore during this evaluation is the handling of MR as a special issue and a special group right. There can be little disagreement at the level of definition or in terms of the particular mechanisms of discrimination and repression minorities face. However, at the level of strategy and advocacy tactics a lot of interesting debates and reflection among stakeholders have been shared with the Consultant. The basic question is whether MRG is wise to promote MR as a special case, a special issue in need of special procedures and mechanisms as it is currently the case. Or whether MRG should seek other ways, discourses and means to the same end, namely to enhance MR in development. Past experience and practice in the human rights community have showed a strong proliferation of the "special groups, special rights and special mechanisms modality" and many consider it *the* way to advance a concern in the human rights regime.

However, in the development community this may not at all be the best way forward. In fact, while MRG's work is benefiting from increased recognition and attention to the link between human rights and development in general, there is at the same time a manifest fatigue regarding special issues and special concerns to be mainstreamed in development programmes. MRG's call for mainstreaming of MR comes at a time where Donor Agencies and County Office Staff for more than a decade have been overwhelmed by special issues to be mainstreamed right from environment to gender and most recently to prevention of HIV/AIDS, anti-terror measures, conflict mitigation measures, etc.

Interestingly, also within the human rights community warnings are increasingly being voiced that the continued call for special procedures and standards tends to move focus from implementation and compliance on the basis of existing obligations and tends to be a nail in the coffin of an already overwhelmed and somewhat dysfunctional human rights machinery.

Consultations clearly indicate that MRG needs to review the basic vehicle by which MRG seeks to advance MR in development and find a broader and more sustainable modality. Moving on from the mainstreaming of MR as a special issue to promoting a RBA, which will inherently bring out MR attention when relevant and needed may be a more promising road (Chapter 4.3.6).

Minorities and development: What point of departure?

In considering the fundamental strategy of MRG the question of MRG's definitions of minority groups and of development has come to the fore. However, opinions are as diverse on this question as in the human rights community in general. Some are calling for a much more focussed definition of minorities taking departure in the UN definition with emphasis on culture, language and religion while warning that MRG may be undermining its potential for dialogue and impact by talking about more types of minority groups. Regarding development definitions warnings are also voiced in terms of investing too much in the "misguided notion of the right to development". Yet other experts praise MRG's efforts at clarifying the nature and scope of the Right to Development (RtD). Linked to this is the related issue of whether MRG's focus is on the human rights of minorities or on the MR of minority communities and groups. The former requires emphasis on participation, access and enjoyment of rights on equal footing (non-discrimination) with other citizens. The latter requires much more focus on the rights that constitute minorities as minorities: religion, language and culture and hence the claims for recognition, identity and group rights. While it is certainly not an either or, the present evaluation finds that the MR&D programme is much more articulate and operational in regard to ensuring human rights of minorities as citizens than in regard to ensuring and promoting MR related to religion, language and culture and the corresponding claims for recognition, identity and group rights (Chapter 4.3.6.).

In conclusion, at the overall strategic level the two up-stream and down-stream processes are the essential pulse or epicentre in all MRG's work. They are closely interrelated as the one feeds the other and programmes should encompass the whole cycle. Combined with a relational approach focussing on rights-holders and duty-bearers and the focus on duty-bearers at various levels (local, national and international) this could be seen as constituting MRG's strategic cocktail. Having said that, the Consultant also finds that a multi-level approach deserves more attention and that the duty-bearer chain should be more clearly established in MRG's advocacy work. In doing so it is crucial to focus more on national level duty-bearers – a finding which corroborates with the recognition of MRG to pay more attention to national level strategies in the future.

It will certainly be of benefit to MRG to clarify and employ the constituent elements of rights-based planning within their own organisation and provide a consolidated overview of what MRG is asking from Donors in terms of mainstreaming MR and adopting RBA for minorities.

Moreover, MRG is recommended to carefully consider the strategic vehicles whereby MR may best be advanced in development planning and consider moving from the mainstreaming model to the RBA, where MRG may also form alliances with a wide range of organisations that are concerned about the neglect of children's rights, workers' rights, etc. MRG already has some experiences in this regard, which may be used as a platform in the future.

Finally, MRG is encouraged to further strengthen and nourish the move into setting frameworks for rights-conducive policies and enabling strategies, while at the same time considering the feasibility of using legal litigation strategies to promote MR&D.

4.3. EFFECTIVENESS

In the following a brief assessment will be made of the extent to which the activities led to achievement of the stated objectives and of which activities that proved most helpful in reaching the objectives. Attention to quality, appropriateness and lessons for the future will be given. However, reference is made to the observations relating to strategy and outcome underlining that outcomes of MRG's work seldom manifest itself as a direct effect of individual categories of activities.

4.3.1 Documentation

Project realisation has been satisfactory in that MRG has produced the planned five thematic reports (one with some delay) and has secured additional funding for the publication of a number of Micro and Macro Studies.

The thematic reports/ issue papers address a number of key issues in the field of MR in development. They range from a research project that addresses the link between MR and development (*Riddell*) to a baseline review of *Development, Minorities and Indigenous Peoples: A Case Study and Evaluation of Good Practice (Janet)* to an academic study on the *Right to Development (Salomon)*, a study on *Economic Exclusion (Justino & Litchfield)* and an analysis of how Donors address minority issues (*Tomasevski*). Finally, a manual on ESCR and a paper on PRSP is in the pipeline³. All of the issue papers were out-sourced to external experts except in the case of the Right to Development where the Legal Standards Officer was one of the main authors.

On achievements, MRG has managed to ensure a number of publications of very high quality that address crucial issues pertaining to MR in development. Several of them are the first of their kind and have attracted attention in the wider human rights community. They provide conceptual and analytical clarity, which has inspired MRG in its own thinking. Several of them also provide insights that could be of much value in designing the appropriate strategies and identifying entry points for promotion of MR&D.

Regarding methodology two reports will be considered in more detail. The good practice paper provides a very comprehensive introduction to the principles of rights-based programming, which in fact could inspire MRG in its own work. It moreover provides a good example of a project benefiting indigenous peoples and minorities partly because legal empowerment strategies were adopted. However, the insecurity of how a RBA translates into programming is evident in the paper. It also reflects an uncertainty within MRG as to what constitutes a good RBA practice. The paper does not succeed in applying the RBA framework in the evaluation of a concrete development programme for indigenous peoples. The programme is analysed in terms of its effectiveness in capacity strengthening, participation and improving wellbeing – the selection of the three categories is not well argued and the link to the RBA framework is weak. The recommendations as to how to evaluate the impact on minorities and indigenous peoples do not move beyond the established good evaluation practice and fails to highlight the strategic perspective of a RBA including the value added. Finally, in the opinion of the Consultant the programme chosen was a good example of a “direct support project” and not a programme conceived in a RBA perspective with a dual intervention strategy (p.9).

The manual on ESCR rights adds to the series of ESCR manuals that have been issued recently within the human rights community. It is a major achievement of MRG to be able to publish a manual of this volume and it reflects a considerable expertise and capacity. However, it is - necessarily - a repetition of a lot of the basic texts in ESCR, but with surprising little added on minorities. It is positive that the various articles on right to health, education etc. demonstrate the use of a consistent analytical and methodological framework. But it is unfortunate that several articles repeat a presentation of the fundamental characteristics of obligations in the trinity of respect, protect and fulfil, which could have been synthesised in an introductory and left the manual less voluminous and more accessible. The ESCR manual contains a guide to parallel reporting to UN Treaty Bodies, which does not bring anything new as to minority issues. It is quite superficial and leaves a lot to be desired in comparison to other existing guides.

³ The EC funding provided for the ESCR Manual, the PRSP Paper and three studies (Janet, Solomon & Justino)

The Micro and Macro Studies have been produced as planned. A total of 12 studies have been published, which seek to document the situation of minorities both at the local and national levels. The findings of the Consultant correlate with the internal review by MRG:

- The studies are short, succinct and accessible studies that give voice to minority communities
- The studies succeeded in presenting cases of negative experiences of minorities in development, but failed to find cases of good practice
- The partner-led approach did not always harmonise with international advocacy plans
- The studies provided opportunity for the communities to acquire new skills
- The studies are valuable authoritative advocacy resources for the partners.

Consultations confirm that the publications are an important part of MRG's external image and MRG is often praised for the high-quality and professional publications, which are considered a reliable and authoritative source of information. MRG is also commended for its ability to provide substantive contributions to various development and NGO fora – something that clearly is made possible due to the volume of publications and documentation. Because of this MRG is among several likeminded organisations considered more as a research and policy institute than a human rights advocacy organisation.

The studies proved useful in many more ways than planned for. The studies were mainly planned for international advocacy, but MRG on the way realised the obvious advocacy potential at national plan and hence included national advocacy plans as part of the initiative. This part, however, due to the late timing and resource constraints, did not come to play a significant role. The potential use of the studies for submission to international treaty bodies was also discovered in the course of the project.

This additional usage is a very positive added value of the studies and it is positive too that MRG shows flexibility to profit as much as possible. However, it also indicates certain lacunas in the advocacy and dissemination plans related to the studies.

Finally, the Consultant has found that MRG in the Micro and Macro Studies has missed the opportunity to employ a human rights framework for the study of MR in development and they appear quite heterogeneous in the analytical frame and methodology applied. The latter is partly due to the studies being undertaken by partners with large degrees of autonomy.

In conclusion, both the Micro and Macro Studies and the issues papers series is considered highly relevant for MRG's own work as well as an important contribution to the work of other actors in this new field. They have clearly contributed to making the situation of minorities visible, made targeted advocacy initiatives possible and thereby have enhanced recognition of MR. In one case the local partner and MRG succeeded in bringing a macro study through the "Loop of 8" gaining recognition of MR issues at both the local and international levels and creating pressure for change. However, in most cases the studies were made with insufficient preparatory and follow-up work within an overall strategy, which would be able to bring about significant outcomes. In the future it is considered more relevant to document MR by way of updating the World Directory on Minorities.

4.3.2. Bilateral Donor meetings

Regarding project realisation, the programme plan envisaged a series of bilateral meetings between minority based NGOs and European Development Agencies. The meetings were facilitated by MRG and aimed at giving local partners an opportunity to brief agencies on the findings of the Micro and Macro Studies, thematic reports and other experience. As such it should be considered part of the dissemination and advocacy strategy linked to the studies.

MRG has fulfilled the targets set regarding the facilitation of dialogues between partners and agencies and has thus ensured the dissemination up-stream of local realities of minorities as well as providing partners a chance to appreciate the policies and practices in place among Donors. For this evaluation only anecdotal evidence is available from minutes of meetings combined with MRG's own on-going reflection of the use and benefits of such meetings.

On achievements, MRG generally considers such meetings as empowering for the communities. The bilateral meetings are moreover found to translate into more immediate gains for the partners than attendance at international fora. Partners have established new contacts, which are supportive of their cause, while others have managed to present criticisms of the institutions concerned. Donors clearly indicate that they prefer well-defined and purposeful dialogues with a direct relevance or benefit to their work. Briefings by MRG and partners on particular country situations are thus considered very useful especially if MRG and partners are conversant with the policies and practices of the agency. Several Donors are actually in search of reliable and solid sources of information that may complement the official data provided by their respective partners – the Governments. Moreover, the “NGO imperative” translates into a need to document that relations are entertained with civil society. However, the balance is delicate and NGOs perceived like pressure groups may not easily find the door open unless backed by an important constituency or a well-framed advocacy agenda.

4.3.4. Workshops and seminars

On project realisation, the workshops and seminars planned for have by and large been conducted and with the intended circle of participants. Intersos has hosted two of the seminars. In fact MRG and Intersos have managed to host more workshops and seminars due to flexibility and preparedness to use windows of opportunity and joint initiatives with other institutions. The recent backstopping mandate for the Swiss Development Cooperation, SDC, implies a series of workshops and training that transcend the borders of the present project.

The seminars and workshops have clearly aimed at raising awareness to minority issues and seek to bring out recommendations for EC/Donor policy.

On achievements, it has been hard in this evaluation to assess the participant benefits from the workshops. Many participants who registered did in the end not find time to participate and others find it hard to recollect what the event was all about. Moreover, MRG's six months evaluation follow-up has not been issued.

The number of participants has not been high in the MRG launched seminars and often the participants from MRG and local partners have outnumbered the external participants. Some seminars have been a very long series of presentations of experiences of minority groups, which indicates a strong preoccupation among MRG and partners of being heard and bringing evidence to the fore, but perhaps less appropriate to the audience. The development of relevant and to the point recommendations emanating from seminars appears to be a difficulty. The follow-up of the recommendations with the appropriate authorities has been hard to ensure.

Yet, MRG counts some of the seminars as their main successes such as the EC seminar, where EuropeAid confirms the importance of paying due regard to MR in development. The seminars have also served as an icebreaker with certain agencies that have decided to retain MRG's services and expertise at a later stage.

An important feature of the MR&D seminars has been the bringing together of actors within the development and human rights community and the involvement of MR organisations or groups. The merits of the seminars have thus not only been to address the topic of minorities, but also to bring actors together, who seldom interact and entertain direct dialogue. The initial intent of establishing a

network among these actors never materialised and MRG never put real effort into it due to unclarity about purpose, outcome and feasibility.

MRG has proven innovative and alert in finding opportunities to present its message and has launched or participated in seminars on topics covering the link between conflict, MDG, poverty reduction and MR. However, the outcomes from the seminars could clearly have been improved if playing part of a more clear strategy.

4.3.5. Training

Project realisation has been satisfactory and more commissioned training is in the pipeline. The development of the training contents and modules has formed part of the project and MRG has had to convince Donors and NGOs to take on the training. Both factors, which underline the pilot nature of the project. However, today MRG appears to have arrived at quite an elaborate and well-designed training format and MRG has gained recognition as a training institution experiencing an increased demand from external actors.

On achievements, the different kinds of training are generally highly praised both due to the good facilitation of the training, the expert knowledge communicated in an accessible manner, the supporting documentation provided and the cross-boundary nature of MRG's project. In the training MRG is able to draw on the multitude of its strengths: hands-on experience of the realities of minority groups, high quality studies and reports, expert knowledge and experience of the workings of the international treaty systems and human rights law. The planning and policy culture of the development agencies, which MRG is targeting, is however, a new territory for MRG. In general, MRG is considered to fare well in communicating its message to the development community, but at the same time MRG needs to get more exposed to the workings of development aid in order to fully appreciate the environment and the institutions it seeks to influence and make its recommendations fit better.

The trainings combine the aim of awareness raising and seeking change in practice and policy. The latter in the manner that MRG actually provides recommendation for best practices, methodologies, lists of positive measures, etc. MRG underlines the need that agencies have established specific policies and practices in their dealings with minorities to ensure that they do not ignore minority issues in programming.

Clearly, MRG has been providing good training on a much needed topic, but little evidence of achievements in the Knowledge, Action, Behaviour (KAB) circle has as yet been experienced. The lessons learned mostly match several of the established "truths" around training.

- Ad hoc, once finished training has very little effect - especially in agencies with work overload, competing agendas and competition for attention
- The participants tend to be the already converted – thus reaffirming existing strongholds but creating little progress
- The propensity for asking for a follow up training is low, as the scarce training time will be used for other competing issues (HIV/aids, anti-terrorism, gender, impact assessment, etc)
- Training needs to be part of the human resource development plan and to have support from highest levels, which MRD did not always obtain
- Training needs to be "just in time" – responding to immediate performance demands and tailor made to the institution in question and its planning processes (MRG uses a general format and sometimes the level of the training does not match participants qualifications on the subject)
- Even practical suggestions for changed conduct among desk officers are counter measured by institutional procedures that do not allow for "individual creativity"

- MR presented as a “special issue” that need special attention tend to aggravate the fatigue already manifest in several agencies
- The complexity of minority issues and of MRG’s change agenda overshadows accessible and “doable” improvements

In light of the above, the longer-term cooperation with SDC, which encompasses a series of training, policy advice, country level advice, etc. is certainly promising. As for the workshops the training has been a way of opening an agenda that has been silenced for too long, enabling dialogue with key actors and providing templates for policy development.

Training of local partners has taken place through local workshops and the regular inclusion of MR&D in the “Neelan Tiruchelvam training seminar” conducted on an annual basis in Switzerland shortly before each session of the Working Group on Minorities (WGM). The facilitation of participation of partners in global conferences such as WCAR is also considered a way of capacity building by MRG. MRG has carried out independent assessment of the usefulness and impact of the Geneva training and the participation in WCAR. Some of the findings point to the following (mainly positive) outcomes of the overall training programme, in which MRG’s support may be attributed among a host of other factors:

WCAR participation provided examples of:

- Increasing the influence of an NGO with other NGOs
- An NGO getting involved in a UN (human rights) procedure
- Encouraging public debate on discrimination issues
- Getting involved in economic development initiatives
- Improving an NGO’s external communications
- Provoking a negative reaction.

Participation in Geneva training provided examples of

- Bringing about initiatives for law reform
- Increasing the influence of an NGO with the national media in its country
- Persuading recalcitrant Government officials to open a dialogue about MR issues as a result of repeatedly raising issues at UN and other inter-governmental organisation meetings
- Participating in the meeting of a separate treaty-monitoring body (Dottridge 2004a & 2004b).

In conclusion, MRG has been offering a high quality training resource to agencies and partners. Among partners examples of changed practice or impetus for new initiatives have been noted. Among Donors or NGOs this has not been identified. The limited scope, the ad-hoc nature of the training and the absence of other supporting mechanisms have limited the potential for capacity building, awareness raising and ensuring mainstreaming. The combination of tools and approaches now pursued with SDC are for that reason promising.

4.3.6. Policy advice and advocacy towards agencies

As evident from the above presentations, the workshops, training, bilateral meetings and documentation are also means by which MRG advocates and provide policy advice. However, this constitutes work of MRG where a more targeted advocacy intervention has been made or MRG has attained a position as policy adviser.

On project realisation, initially, this type of work - standard setting in the development community - does not constitute a work category within in the project, despite the obvious relevance in terms of influencing policy and practice. However, it has played a significant role in the project, which is also reflected in MRG’s internal reviews.

MRG intended to target a number of European Donors and persuade them to engage in or benefit from the activities of the project in the form of workshops, training, bilateral meetings, etc. The dual identity of the project mentioned earlier is perhaps most visible at this stage. MRG had a very ambitious agenda of seeking to mainstream minorities, but opted for a cautious, step-by-step approach seeking to break the ice and gain recognition at first of the relevance and importance of minority issues.

Establishing the cooperation with Donors did not prove easy in all respects. MRG was wise in focussing at the more promising relationships and using windows of opportunity.

On achievements, MRG today has attained a status that many other NGOs would wish for as policy adviser and expert consultant to leading agencies. On numerous occasions MRG has been called upon. MRG was invited to present a paper at the “Workshop on race and ethnicity in the millennium development goals: strengthening cooperation among development agencies” organised by the Inter-agency consultation on race in Latin America, and to input into the Task Force on Human Rights and Poverty of the UN Millennium Project.

UNDP and SDC are the two agencies, which have embraced MRG’s agenda the most and decided to invest resources and set in motion internal processes aiming at better policy and performance regarding MR.

UNDP has requested MRG to act as a consultant in the preparation of a policy (practice) note on minorities. Following a long process of consultations within UNDP and with an MRG expert panel, MRG has issued a background paper ready for elaboration into a policy/practice note of the UNDP. The paper reflects the best of MRG’s past research and advocacy work and argues the case for the integration of MR in development in a professional and convincing manner. UNDP has been impressed by the timeliness and high quality of MRG’s work, the appropriateness of the recommendations and the constructive – rather than blaming – perspective employed.

For reasons unrelated to MRG, UNDP has since 2003 as yet not been in a position to take the policy work forward, but efforts to this end are planned for 2005.

SDC has invited MRG to act in the capacity as external consultant with a so-called “Back-stopping Mandate”, which covers a series of training at headquarters and field offices, guidelines, checklists and advice on minority mainstreaming in existing development policies. It allows MRG to cooperate closely with a Donor agency at all levels from policy to implementation at country level to subsequent evaluation and the corresponding human resource development. At the same time it gives MRG the valuable exposure to the modalities of development aid and the framework conditions for advancing and refining its tools, types of training and policy advice.

The EC has also been the target of MRG’s advocacy, policy advice and training efforts, but it has not resulted in a more stable cooperation being established due to weaknesses within both MRG and the EC. MRG’s input to the Country Strategy Papers of the EC have not been acted upon as yet, but the Quality Assurance Group in Directorate for Development may consider including it as an annex in a briefing package to Country Offices.

Finally, MRG has enjoyed a broader cooperation with **Sida** including training in headquarters and at field level and on-going dialogue as part of the direct Sida global civil society support to MRG’s overall programmes.

The general findings emanating from the consultations with Donors are the following:

- Special policies on minorities: UNDP is positively considering a particular policy note on minorities and is expressing satisfaction about possibly being the first multilateral agency to

adopt such policy. Yet, even within UNDP there are mixed positions as to the prudence of issuing particular policies on each and every particular issue. All stakeholders in other agencies underline the necessity to move towards more coherent comprehensive frameworks that will avoid the endless list of added issues to be considered or mainstreamed. Most opt for the development of a rights-based approach, which will also consider MR where relevant and needed. MRG's call for special policies on minorities is met with direct opposition among some agencies.

- Tools and advice need to be tailor made: Any chance of success relies on the ability to make tailor made advice and tools that fit the agencies working modalities and enhance their performance rather than burden their performance. While considered useful, MRG's handouts, catalogues of action and principles are following a standard format and not reflecting the working processes of the agencies.
- Concrete and practical: MRG has great many good examples and specific pieces of evidence. But the recommendations are often considered somewhat abstract and lacking specific "how-to" advice. They fail to consider the many competing agendas and interests that agencies have to balance.
- Complex solutions to complex issues?: Ensuring that minorities also benefit from development interventions is generally found to be possible to ensure by employing the existing best practices of development planning. MRG is not advocating anything radically new in this regard. However, the question of protecting the group rights of minorities is considered much more complex and MRG is not found convincing in devising realistic solutions.
- Best development practice or new practice derived from MR?: In continuation of the above, it would be helpful if MRG can clarify how an application of existing good practices within development planning will benefit minorities and what additional requirements MR call for.
- Special projects, mainstreaming or rights-based approaches?: MRG is seen as tossing many methodologies on the table, but not having a clear definition and plan for what it entails in practice or explaining which methodology works best in which situations. In other words, MRG's core message on minorities could be clearer. Most agencies suggest that MRG promotes MR within a broader rights-based framework. Non-discrimination is at heart in the RBA and experience within UNDP shows that a rights-based approach to programming actually brought minority issues to the fore.
- Presence, permanence and persuasion: All advocacy lessons point at presence, permanence and persuasion as crucial to success. MRG faces problems in ensuring such permanence with more agencies at the time, both due to the limited scale of the project, the limited capacity of MRG as an organisation and the distances involved to Washington, Brussels, etc. The need for MRG to act as part of broader coalitions was frequently stressed.
- Entry points vary: For each organisation the feasible entry point that MRG may utilise may vary. In some cases the governance and human rights units may be the most appropriate entry point (the cases with UNDP, Sida and SDC), in others the conflict agenda may be the opening (DFID), in EC the Country Desks seem appropriate due to decentralisation and so forth. MRG will need to monitor the potential targets more closely.
- Strong argumentation of minorities within existing goals: MRG is considered eminent in arguing the case of minority protection as indispensable in sustainable development, poverty reduction and conflict prevention. MRG knows its field of work very well and demonstrates expertise both in local MR issues and international human rights law.

In light of the above it is also evident why the commissioned cooperation as in the case with UNDP and SDC works best. In both cases it is very clear what is to be achieved and the role to be performed by each party in order to move ahead. In the relationship with other actors it has sometimes been unclear if MRG was actually seeking to engage in a policy dialogue expecting certain measures to be taken on the part of the Donor or was just pleased to be given the opportunity to share its expertise

during a training. The intended outcomes of the MR&D programme have not been communicated clearly enough to those upon which the success to a large extent relied. One general weakness of the advocacy efforts within MRG identified as the tendency to “dip in – dip out” has also characterised the MR&D programme in certain aspects.

The possibility and ability of MRG to act on a commissioned consultancy basis is a much welcomed development, which may also provide new ways of influence and impact, new forms of income generation, new ways of ensuring human resource development and the development of new strategic niches.

However, it also calls for careful consideration of the tradeoffs. Donors often follow the devise that they cannot “fund and buy” at the same time to any significant degree. That is, they cannot both buy the independent expert services and advise from an organisation and contribute core funding to the organisations overall programmes. Another question is how the consultancy role may possibly influence MRG’s advocacy performance and readiness to exert pressure on the agency by traditional advocacy means. So far MRG concedes that the cooperation with UNDP and SDC somehow obliges MRG to take a constructive position and avoid raising direct criticism, which may derail the momentum or support for the policy note. MRG has thus refrained from “beating the drums” and expose the lack of progress on the policy note and instead opted for an awaiting position. This is clearly sound tactics, but it may at times clash with a demand from partners in raising an urgent and complicated matter or run counter to another programme agenda within MRG.⁴

The notable achievements in this field, however, also carry some less promising perspectives. MRG is putting all its efforts into a UNDP policy note on minorities, while at the same time being aware and issuing a critical report⁵ showing that even specific policies on minorities will make little difference and that policy notes have little impact at country offices. This corroborates with the general finding that international human rights organisations have been more successful in *pushing* international standards and policy development than ensuring the compliance and implementation at local level. In other words the local *pull* capacity has been too weak. It also reflects the fact that issuing a policy may generate no immediate costs, not even conflict, within an agency. However, when seeking to put it into practice it will influence existing patterns of resource allocation, priorities and power relationships and that is where the going gets tough. Few international human rights organisations have the capacity to exert presence, pressure, permanence and persuasion at each step of the implementation and impact chain. And if MRG aspires to do this, a new cooperation modality with local partners will be crucial.

In conclusion, policy advice and targeted advocacy have clearly proved the most successful activity in terms of engaging with Donors and moving in the direction of mainstreaming of MR in development. MRG has performed very well in this regard and demonstrated high levels of expertise, professionalism and tactical sense. However, there is still a long way to go before this translates into changed practice among the Donors and the local Governments as duty-bearers and into enhanced enjoyment of MR among minority communities. For that reason it is crucial that MRG seeks to employ strategies of multiple levels of influence. For instance, the initiative with UNDP could be complemented by bilateral Donors calling for minority protection at UNDP Donor conferences or at sessions of the UNDP Governing Bodies.

⁴ See also ODI, 2004: Tools for Policy Impact

⁵ An examination of approaches by international development agencies to minority issues in development, MRG, UN Doc E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2004.WP.5

4.3.7. MR&D advocacy at international human rights fora

As part of MRG's effort to establish the link between MR and sustainable development, MRG has used its well regarded position with several human rights bodies to also push the MR&D agenda in these fora, including the UN Commission on Human Rights, UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, UN Working Group on Minorities and the UN Working Group on the Right to Development.

Many have been the occasions where MRG has been invited to contribute with background papers or share their experiences. One such case was when MRG participated in the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent in February 2003 and was invited to present a paper on education and afro-descendants to the same Working Group in September 2003. MRG has made several submissions to the Working Group on Minorities, which has resulted in the working group now considering development issues on a regular basis.

Consultations confirm that MRG is considered one of the few international NGOs that have had substantive inputs and continued presence with the Working Group on Minorities and the Working Group on the Right to Development, through which the organisation has gained a lot of credibility. However, this achievement is also attributed to several other programmes and interventions of MRG than the MR&D programme.

While these efforts are not in focus in this evaluation it is important to note that MRG also in the human rights fora is making the case for a closer link between MR and development.

4.4. EFFICENCY

As mentioned in Chapter 4.2 MRG has been very conscious to seek multiple uses of the various outputs of the programme. This has greatly improved the efficiency of the programme and made it possible to run it within the limited budget available.

The ability of MRG to mobilise a large group of partners with local expert knowledge and experts of likeminded institutions also contributes to a high level of efficiency. Internal management problems may on the other hand have implied less optimal work processes.

MRG is characterised by a strong team of dedicated professionals, activist and volunteers. Such organisational cultures in small pioneering organisations normally correlate with a high level of effectiveness and ability to get the job done with optimal use of scarce resources. During this assessment no examples of high cost for a poor output has been identified.

In some regards, MRG has been too concerned with the efficiency and keeping costs low, which have negatively influenced the overall effectiveness and achievement of objectives.

4.5. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation modalities of MRG have changed and improved considerably over the years since the MR&D programme was initiated.

On planning, it is recognised by MRG that log frames were not included as a standard, which has allowed for the huge range of outcomes, goals, aims and impacts sought as a result of this work, and

the different levels (goal/purpose, output/outcome/impact) are not consistently or clearly differentiated. Nor was an evaluation planned for.

Nevertheless, MRG was very thorough in the preparation of the programme. Broad consultations were conducted. An advisory group with representatives from both the development and human rights NGOs and the research community was established. Partnership with the development NGO, Intersos, was sought, which was also a sound move in order to bring more development expertise into the programme. External consultancies were used to draw on the experiences of advocating towards the development community. The first thematic paper could be considered a feasibility study outlining possible ways of action.

Yet, these preparations did as earlier mentioned not materialise in visible and tested strategies for reaching the two main target groups and beneficiaries of the programme: capacity building of local partners and mainstreaming of donor practices. There are a multitude of reasons including the advisory group never being used much, the necessity of a try and error approach in a new uncharted territory, the predominance of an activity based planning in MRG, etc.

In the management and implementation the MR&D programme has benefited a lot from the established partnerships of MRG, the established advocacy roads within the human rights for a as well as the publication and media support of the organisation. The high performance of the MR&D programme could not be envisaged without the institutional backing within MRG as an organisation.

The programme cut across the programme and advocacy department with the two staff placed in each department and it aspired to be a programme managed according to matrix management. Unfortunately, the structural and cultural divisions of the two departments in the past have tended to make the matrix management an obstacle rather than a benefit to the programme. Nevertheless, a matrix management transgressing the predominantly north-south divide and encompassing the “Loop of 8” is clearly the way forward in MRG’s future change oriented campaigns strategy.

Management and capacity problems in some ways reduced the pace of the programme progress. Late notification from the EC regarding the approval left MRG with a higher workload for 2002 than anticipated. The partner organisation in Italy lost a dedicated human rights advocacy officer and had difficulties in delivering their contribution to the programme. Internal cooperation problems within the team also played its role. Despite these difficulties, the programme team has managed to keep the programme on track and even perform better than planned – partly due to high personal commitment and expertise.

Reporting and monitoring have been ensured in a solid and detailed way albeit no PME system as such has been in place. Apart from the periodic reporting to Donors, MRG has initiated partner meetings to reflect on the achievements and internal reviews have been conducted. At this occasion MRG has made efforts at gauging the contribution of the various activities to the attainment of the objectives and a lot of critical and in-depth reflection has been made. However, it seems that the capacity problems and budget limitations endured throughout the programme have made less room for addressing some of the critical strategic issues and impact considerations, which MRG’s own reporting and reviews brought to the fore. Nevertheless, the observations seem to have been fed into the overall strategy review of MRG and to have nurtured the development of the new strategic priorities and the much needed shift from an activity based planning to change oriented planning.

In the field of evaluation, MRD has started to clarify and operationalise the impact chain and how it relates to MRG’s work. Most of the reporting until now in MR&D as well as in other programmes has been activity (output) reporting and MRG realises that monitoring and evaluation at the level of outcomes and impact are needed too. However, MRG has not started to view its own performance and

achievements in a rights-based perspective, which in the opinion of the Consultant clearly would be beneficial if not indispensable for an organisation like MRG.

4.6. OUTCOMES

Due to the findings above, the assessment of outcomes at this stage presents a real challenge. It should be stressed that a lot of human rights work remain justified even if it is not in demand or able to bring about desired outcomes, due to the great range of actors that presently seek to maintain positions of power or privileges by neglecting or violating human rights.

Moreover, MRG explains a multitude of factors complicating the assessment of advocacy work, and a similar list could easily be presented regarding capacity building. However, in the opinion of the Consultant these factors are more linked to the fact that both capacity building and advocacy work for a long time has survived with very loosely defined targets. A RBA would facilitate the identification of changes related to obligations of conduct and obligations of result. Employing the impact chain would also provide increased clarity.

However, before seeking to synthesis the outcomes according to the main aims, the following is evident for the MR&D programme:

- It is in the strategic cocktail of the various activities that the outcomes and impact may materialise – not as a result of an individual activity
- Outcomes and impact increase when MRG and partners manage to pursue the full “Loop of 8”
- Outcomes are more easily achieved when MRG and the target institution share the aims to be achieved
- As all past experience shows, policy and practice change require a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach with permanence, presence and persuasion at each step in the development planning process right from policy, operationalisation, human resource development to monitoring and evaluation.
- Outcomes favouring MR may not be achieved most easily by going the direct way alone. Broader coalitions and constituencies backing MRG’s claims combined with broader human rights frameworks benefiting a wider set of rights, including MR, may more easily produce the outcomes MRG would like to see
- Facilitating change that will impact on the rights enjoyment among minorities will require a dual intervention strategy at country level.

For the present evaluation the assessment of impact has deliberately been left out. The TOR did not cater for the relevant methodology as impact on MR is to be assessed in terms of the trinity of substantive obligation/enjoyment: respect, protect and fulfilment and the trinity of process rights: non-discrimination, right to participation and accountability.

Outcomes may manifest themselves at the level of human rights regimes (internationally or nationally) or in the capacity of duty-bearers to comply with obligations, the capacity of rights-holders to claim and defend rights and finally in the capacity of third parties to intervene – the so-called human rights guardians or human rights defenders. In assessing the capacity to comply/claim the categories of a) recognition, b) authority/legitimacy and c) resources are useful to apply (Annex IV).

Many of the observations regarding overall strategy and achievements also relate directly to outcomes of the MR&D and reference is made to Chapter 4.2. Here, the synthesis of outcomes will be addressed from two angles:

- Synthesis of the outcomes at the level of MRG
- Synthesis of the outcomes at the three levels of objectives identified for the programme.

Outcomes at the level of MRG

Regarding outcomes at the level of MRG, the following has been identified:

- The South Eastern Europe programme of MRG has taken on the MR&D perspective and included a component that is focusing on ensuring that development programmes respond better to the needs of minorities
- Two partners have adopted the methodology of producing Micro Studies to document their case
- The MR&D programme has enhanced the advocacy profile on ESC rights
- The MR&D programme has supported the legal standards work within MRG
- MR&D training has been included in the regular MR and treaty monitoring training in Geneva

It must also be noted that MRG's expertise and experience in MR&D have been strengthened and developed in several ways, not least due to the fact that the programme in many ways was a pilot project, where MRG was learning, devising the strategies and developing training kits and policy memorandums in the process. Unlike four years ago, MRG now enjoys a track record in MR&D and is considered a credible and professional actor. Many want to associate with MRG and the services and expertise of MR&D are increasingly in demand. In the RBA terminology referred to above, it can be said that the MR&D programme has gained recognition, MRG has attained a status of authority and legitimacy in this field and resources have been developed to perform in this field. Regarding the latter MRG has developed the human resources, but the financial and organisational resources are still not secured.

In short, the programme has contributed to building a stronger defender of minority rights.

Outcomes according to objectives

The "extern successes" of the programme did not transpire easily in the evaluation workshop, despite the fact that MRG in broad terms is satisfied with what has been accomplished during the programme. It may relate to the professional modesty of MRG and to being in the transition from an activity-focus to a change focus, where critical questions have been posed by MRG itself: "while we are good at what we do, we do not know if what we do is any good".

External successes identified by MRG during the evaluation workshop:

- UNDP and SDC approaching for policy and expert advise and showing willingness to take on the MR agenda
- Approach from WB Social Development staff to collaborate with them on a three pronged minority focused project (Dalits, Afro-Americans and Roma) although project proposal failed to get support in internal bidding process
- Invitation to conduct training for BOND members and request for a second round
- The statement of Europe Aid Executive Director, Marco Franco, that MR should be accorded priority
- The Millennium Development Goals Reports included reference to minorities
- UNDP reports used MRG research
- UN Working Group on Minorities addressing development issues following MRG engagement
- Partners meeting with 13 different Donors in Nairobi, Kenya
- The Fiji-process, where the Macro Study was used for reporting to a Treaty Monitoring Body.

It transpires from the above, supported by other consultations, that the successes of the MR&D programme often are perceived in terms of gaining recognition: Both recognition of MRG as an actor within MR and development and recognition of the MR issues. Moreover, successes are perceived in

the perspective of “steps in a longer process”, where opportunities controlled and offered by others are vital for MRG in pursuing their agenda and goals.

At the first level, in accordance with the EC proposal, the aim of awareness raising among key development actors in Europe and also at local level has been achieved albeit with a limited scope. MRG has managed to place minority issues more strongly in some international development debates and certain outputs of the MR&D programme will continue to be means of creating deeper understanding of minority realities among academia, development workers and policy makers. However, much better scope of outcomes and multiplier effects could have been attained by a more considered change strategy.

At the second level, the aim of documenting and analysing minority communities’ and indigenous peoples’ experience of development has been attained. Recommendations for pivotal change in development policy and practice have been made and a few agencies have started internal processes possibly leading to policy change or systematic capacity building to handle MR. Strategic alliances in the Donor and international development community to promote minority- and indigenous-rights-based approaches to development have not been achieved. MRG is pretty much running solo in these efforts and while international networks exist between agencies and between NGOs on RBA in development, MRG has not focussed its energies in this direction. However, greater interaction and dialogue between development agencies and minorities and indigenous peoples have taken place as a result of the workshops and bilateral meetings.

Strengthening of the capacity of minority-based NGOs to advocate for minorities’ and indigenous peoples’ rights has been achieved to some extent, but with quite limited scope. The capacity building in the MR&D programme has indirectly come about as a bi-product of the joint work around Micro and Macro Studies, of joint bilateral meetings with Donors and ad-hoc training and workshops. Not due to a designed capacity building strategy.

At the third level, the aim of mainstreaming MR in development processes and ensuring the participation of minorities in development decision-making and implementation has not been achieved as yet. MRG’s recent examination of approaches by development agencies to minority issues in development shows that the environment in which MRG has been operating has been positive in that more and more agencies seek to embrace a RBA. However, MRG is disappointed that the consideration of minorities remains largely absent from policy documents and programming activities and that minority issues remain neglected. As rightly mentioned by MRG a paradigmatic change takes at least a decade to bring about. Nevertheless, the strategies and activities put in place as part of the programme initially did not match such planned achievements very well. The participation of minority groups in local decision-making and implementation of development programmes has not been in focus in the programme and no progress has been identified in this regard. Finally, MRG’s preoccupation with special policies and special mention of minorities may lead MRG to underestimate what a RBA can do for minorities.

In an RBA terminology, it can be said that the MR&D programme has contributed to enhancing recognition among some international duty-bearers of the relevance and necessity of considering minorities in development. *If* the efforts are sustained it may result in the agencies taking on an authoritative voice in the promotion of MR and in soft standard setting within development policies. Finally, capacity may be built both in the form of knowledge and skills within certain agencies that will allow them to programme in a manner that will benefit minorities better and avoid direct violations of MR.

4.7. SUSTAINABILITY

The final observation above leads directly to the question of sustainability and the paramount importance of being able to engage in a long haul. As this is a programme evaluation most attention will be given to sustainability of the intended outcomes. However, initially financial and organisational sustainability will be briefly commented upon.

MRG has proven its organisational sustainability as it is reaching its fourth decade of existence. The recent overall evaluation of MRG conducted by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in general gives a positive assessment of MRG's operations. The prospects that MRG should be able to continue its involvement in the MR&D areas are thus positive and the MR&D agenda has come to stay within MRG.

The financial sustainability is, as for most NGOs, highly dependent on Donors, but MRG has generally managed to raise assistance for its core programmes and to ensure a modest growth over the years. However, MRG has not managed to raise funds to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the existing MR&D programme. The sustainability of MRG's efforts has been hampered by the termination of the project. There are risks of losing key staff and creating uncertainty among cooperating partners as to MRG's ability to engage in longer commitments.

The sustainability is also hampered by the relatively low institutional capacity in this field within MRG and the high level of dependence on a few individual experts/officers. While MRG has positioned itself as an expert institution offering advice and consultancies, the cooperation with Donors' in this field still hinges on the profile of the individual staff and their performance.

Regarding achievements and outcomes these are clearly very perishable and transient. Awareness and recognition do not last long unless institutional procedures are put in place or advocacy groups constantly keep up the attention. MRG acknowledges that awareness raising and getting it on the agenda in itself bring no improvements to minorities, but stresses that it establishes the fertile soil for other more far-reaching initiatives. Hereby, the ability to pick up the momentum, stay in the circuit and seek more committed and accountable engagement is crucial. Again, permanence, persuasion, presence and pressure are key. Presently, MRG is not able to respond to the opportunities created or maintain the momentum established in the first phase of the programme. If action is not picked up immediately, there is a risk of missing out on a chance of harvesting in the second round the fruits from the first round of investments.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the report, lessons learnt and conclusions have been made relating to the categories of work and to overall strategies. Moreover, the executive summary draws together main conclusions and recommendation. This chapter will at the general level present the concluding observations and recommendations pertaining to MRG's overall strategy and achievements within the MR&D programme.

In conclusion, MRG has been innovative and pioneering in launching a programme, which seeks to address MR in development and build bridges between the human rights and development community. The programme has been executed by and large as planned in the EC proposal and in all categories of work MRG has demonstrated a high level of expertise, professionalism, flexibility, dedication and commitment. In terms of achievements the programme has contributed to create awareness among many actors both at the local and international levels on the situation of minorities and on the need to consider MR in development processes. Despite a less coherent strategy regarding mainstreaming of

MR, MRG has managed to engage key development actors in longer term processes, seeking to equip the agencies to pay due regard to minorities in development processes and support safeguarding and promotional measures within MR. Among local partners MRG has contributed to improve documentation of situations of minorities, greater recognition of MR in development and more confidence in advocating rights among development agencies. MRG has made an important contribution to the international discourse and operational thinking in the field and provided evidence and convincing argumentation on the imperative to consider rights in development in order to attain broader development outcomes as reflected in the Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Goals.

Key recommendations evolve around the following:

- Sustain the move within MRG from activity-based planning to change-led planning and develop the appropriate strategies within MR&D accordingly. Get a new MR&D programme going as soon as possible (p. 7)
- Improve on and articulate the rights based approach both in MRG's own programmes and in the advocacy, policy and training with external actors and partners
- Strengthen the "Loop of 8" and seek to overcome the division between international and Southern by enhancing matrix management generally (p. 9)
- Maintain focus on MR as a special issue and concern in the advocacy activities, but promote and pursue a more holistic RBA in development programming as a vehicle for ensuring MR (p. 20)
- Focus more on country level situations and actors in future efforts. Prioritise and target certain Donors, countries and partners around a selected set of targets. Select on the basis of the ability to exert permanence, pressure, presence and persuasion in the long haul
- Give priority to acting in concert with other constituencies and build longer-term alliances for a common target. Collaborate with the other likeminded organisations, which already indirectly or directly work for minorities as part of their mandate (FIAN on the right to food, COHRE on the right to housing) or engage in the push for human rights in development)
- Explore the feasibility and potential of employing a legal litigation strategy together with likeminded organisations
- Improve methods and quality assurance in capacity building (local partners) and policy impact (Donors) A more consistent RBA will facilitate a more stringent rights- and accountability-based advocacy style.

6. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Regarding future perspectives on MRG's work on MR&D it is promising that the overall environment in which MRG will be working is generally moving towards more human rights awareness, more rights-based approaches and more attention to economic, social and cultural rights. Of significance is also the recognition among Donors that investments have to be made in order to improve performance, which will provide new opportunities and entry points for organisations like MRG. Attention to conflict prevention and mitigation is also increasing, which may provide new scope for MRG's minority and conflict agenda. However, there are concerns that the anti-terrorism agenda, the fast track modality and the consensus model will in the end compromise the attention to and efforts made in favour of MR.

MRG is also concerned that some movements towards a paradigmic change regarding RBA may be experienced without the situation and rights enjoyment of minorities having improved considerably. MRG's own sharp analysis is in fact to a large extent undermining the optimism by which MRG engages and putting at question the relevance and justification of the outcomes, which MRG tries to

bring about. As mentioned above, MRG is well aware that a UNDP policy note on minorities may make little difference unless accompanied by other support mechanisms and drivers.

In the future strategy of MRG priority will be accorded to international institutions, in particular the World Bank and the OECD. While these are powerful players both vis-à-vis the bilateral Donors and the PRSP processes, it would be worthwhile to consider if MRG is moving ahead too fast before existing work is accomplished. In the opinion of the Consultant there is so much more to be done with regard to ensuring permanence, pressure, persuasion and presence in the impact chain of the existing agencies, which MRG has been working with already. Ensuring on the ground improvements for minorities would be the next immediate step to take and strengthen local *pull* capacity.

Priority will also be accorded to minority participation in PRSPs. Hereby MRG has rightly identified the modality according to which most decisions regarding development investment and processes in a country will be aligned. While initially a lending document, the PRSPs are here to stay as the dominant vehicle for development planning. The same goes for the MDG, which have generated wide support as the threshold against which progress is to be measured and as the compass for investments. The challenges facing MRG have not become fewer – on the contrary. While many development actors recognise human rights in their policies, while more and more national and regional mechanisms for human rights protection are being put in place, the fact still remains that the PRSP format and the MDG's are not a reflection of this. Many would argue that the PRSP and the MDG caused a setback of a decade's progress within the human rights and development agenda. Human rights NGOs are back at square one arguing the case for human rights in MDG and PRSP.

MRG is calling for minority participation and the reflection of their needs in the PRSP. MRG acknowledges the notorious weaknesses of the consultative processes and the disappointing experiences of other groups much more organised and allied at the international level than minorities, but still find that it represents the best hope of widespread influence. However, MRG does not stress much the crucial need for facilitating organisation of the minority constituency, which is an important precondition to participation in any meaningful way beyond that of professional minority NGOs.

In light of the evaluation of the MR&D programme, the concern is, however, mainly that the campaign formulation is void of any reference to human rights obligations or claims or rights-based approaches.

The aim of “improved international development cooperation for minorities” could imply a return to more directly targeted projects and interventions in favour of minorities, rather than a paradigmatic change either in the form of mainstreaming or rights-based approaches to development?

Moreover, the programme/campaign perspective fails to endorse the dual intervention strategy inherent in rights-based work (which was visible in the past MR&D programme), namely working with duty-bearers and rights-holders around a particular human rights problem or objective.

Finally, the campaign does not seem to reflect a lot of the lessons and critical reflections that MRG has learned and established during the course of the MR&D project, which could indicate that MRG is somewhat uncertain of its fundamental strategy and future direction.

ANNEX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of Minority Rights and Development (MR&D) programme Terms of Reference

The purpose of the MR&D programme is

- To strengthen the capacity of minority- and indigenous-based and inter-ethnic NGOs to advocate for minorities' and indigenous peoples' rights
- To document and analyse the experiences of minorities and indigenous peoples in development
- To make recommendations for pivotal change in development policy and practice
- To build strategic alliances in the Donor and international development community to promote minority and indigenous rights-based approaches to development.

This purpose has been pursued through a combination of advocacy, documentation and policy research and through training of Donor staff and partners.

Scope of Work:

1. Evaluate activities carried out between 2002 and 2004 of MRG's MR&D programme, find out the implications of the programme for stakeholders/beneficiaries involved and conduct a learning evaluation process leading to an independent assessment of the programme in line with established evaluation parameters of justification, relevance, achievements, effectiveness and outcomes. The evaluation will cover the following activities:

- Consultation with MRG staff and other actors in London
- Consultations in Brussels and Stockholm
- Review of all materials
- Conversations/email exchanges with partners
- Conversations/email exchanges with advocacy targets
- Feedback session to present and discuss the draft report with MRG staff.

2. Evaluate the main outcomes of the MRG programme as a whole and consider which of the activities were particularly useful in achieving the programme outcomes. The assessment of the particular activities should consider how they contributed to meeting the overall objectives.

3. Find out and assess the practical experience of partners/participants/stakeholders in advocating and promoting the rights to development for minorities. Compile specific examples of changes in situations, practices or in policies and consider how programme activities have contributed to these changes.

4. Find out any negative/unintended impacts or the main problems affecting progress of work by partners/participants and other stakeholders in implementing MR&D programme activities. Suggest learning points that can be extracted from there and changes that could be made to MRG's future programmes addressing these points.

ANNEX II

CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN

Briefing and self-assessment session at MRG London:

Corinne Lenox, MR&D Advocacy Officer
Samia Khan, Head of Programmes
Claire Thomas, Executive Director
Mark Lattimer, Director

In person interviews

Lee Sentes, BOND
Malcom Rodgers, Christian Aid
Sara Haglund, Sida
Hallgerd Dyrssen, Sida
Catherine Magnant, Relex, EC
Sylvie Proveur, IQAG, Dev, EC
Sergio Piarddardi, Dev, Pakistan, EC
Heino Marius, Relex, Pakistan, EC
Tove Pedersen, EIDHR, EC
Alan Dreanic, EIDHR, EC

Phone interviews

Martin Elliot, DFID
Pat Holden, DFID
Richard Martini, DFID
Luis Morago, Oxfam
Howard Mollet, BOND
Patric van Weerelt, UNDP
Loretta Peschi, Intersos
Paul Hunt, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health
Gudmundur Alfredsson, Raoul Wallenberg Institute
Clive Baldwin, MRG

Email consultations

Laure-Hélène Piron, ODI
16 Local Partners

ANNEX III: SELECTED LIST OF LITERATURE

In addition to the perusal of MRG's publications and periodicals, annual reports, Donor applications and reporting, minutes of meetings, draft strategies, statutes and administrative guidelines, the following literature has been of relevance to the evaluation:

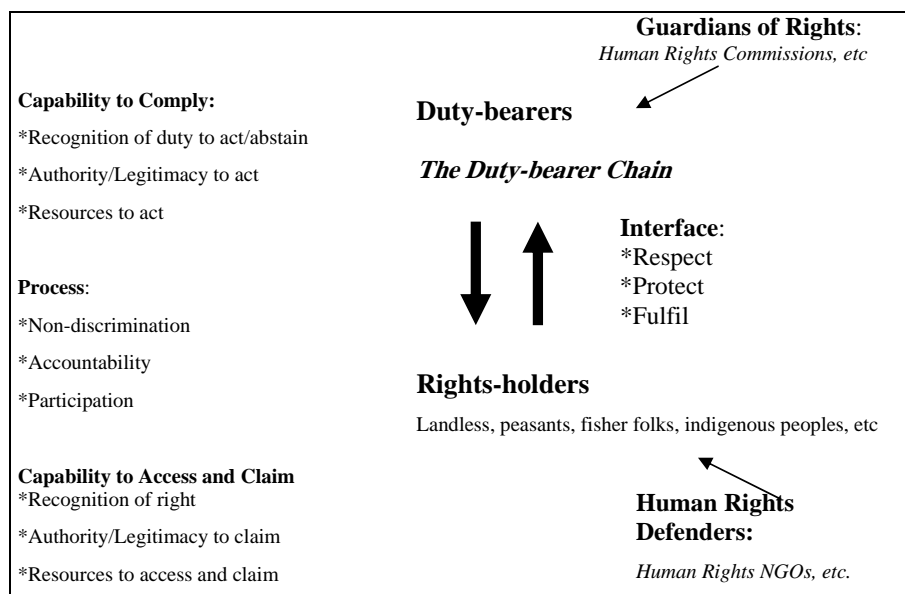
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ANNEX IV

RBA TEMPLATE

Constituent Characteristics of a Rights-Based Approach

International & National Human Rights Regime



Source: Madsen, Hanne Lund, 2003.

| | |
|--|---|
| Human Rights Framework | Specify which human rights the intervention will address. Specify pertinent recommendations from UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies (to be) addressed. Specify (expected) improvement of the national human rights protection system. |
| Rights-holders | Specify rights-holders (as beneficiaries or as claimants). |
| Duty-bearers | Specify which duty-bearers must change conduct (actors to be targeted). |
| Improving Human Rights: Respect Protect Fulfil | Specify (anticipated) improvements based on decreased violations and progressive enjoyment by rights-holders. |
| Improving Human Rights: Non-discrimination Participation Accountability | Specify improvements in terms of non-discriminatory practices (gender, HIV/Aids, ethnicity, language, etc.). Specify which accountability mechanisms that will be/have been strengthened. Specify how the right to participation ⁶ will be/ has been improved. |
| Capabilities to claim | Specify the anticipated/actual improvements in terms of the claim-holders' capabilities to claim. Recognition of their human rights and of the nature of the violation. Authority and legitimacy to act (public litigation). Resources (advocacy skills/financial) to act. |
| Capabilities to comply | Specify the anticipated/actual improvements in terms of the duty-bearer's capacities. Recognition of duty and responsibility (willingness) to act. Authority and legitimacy to act. Resources (human, organisational and financial) to act ⁷ . |

⁶ Participation as a right requires an institutionalised mechanism to be respected, protected and fulfilled. As with all rights, mechanisms of redress should be in place in case of non-compliance.

⁷ Source: Madsen, Hanne Lund, 2004.