Understanding and Supporting the Role of Local Organisations in Sustainable Development

David Satterthwaite and Gabriela Sauter

The role of local organisations in sustainable development

The roles of local organisations in poverty reduction and environmental management

All poverty reduction is local. This is easy to forget given how discussion and debate on the subject is dominated by bilateral aid agencies, development banks, national governments and international NGOs. But regardless of higher level commitments and decisions, what actually happens on the ground in particular localities is what makes the difference. Many barriers to poverty reduction are local — local power structures, land owning patterns and anti-poor politicians, bureaucracies and regulations. Much of what the poor require — schools, healthcare, water and sanitation, land, social safety nets, getting onto voter registers — must be obtained from local organisations within this local context.

Local organisations have a major role in addressing these realities, helping poor groups access entitlements and engage with government. They may be local NGOs, grassroots organisations of the poor, or even local governments or branches of higher levels of government. But they function on a local level, have intimate knowledge of the local context and should be accountable to local people. Many operate on very small budgets, outside the main funding flows and frameworks. Yet they are not isolated from larger governance issues; indeed, much pro-poor political change has been catalysed by local innovations and by political pressure from grassroots organisations and their associations.

This publication is one in a series of case studies and synthesis papers looking at the work of local organisations in development and environmental management. These publications were developed in collaboration with the local organisations they profile. They seek to encourage international funding agencies to rethink the means by which they can support, work with and learn from the local organisations that are such a critical part of pro-poor development.

David Satterthwaite is a Senior Fellow in IIED's Human Settlements Programme. His work focuses on poverty reduction and environmental problems in cities. He is currently working on the current and potential role of urban poor federations to significantly improve their lives and contribute to the achievement of other Millennium Development Goals. Contact details: Phone: (+44) 20 7388 2117; Email: david@iied.org. **Gabriela Sauter** is a research consultant for IIED, where she has been working on the local organisations series since March 2008. She has a Masters in Environment and Sustainable Development from the Development Planning Unit, University College London, with a particular focus on mutual aid housing and community strengthening for social sustainable development, and is shortly to start a PhD at the University of Toronto in local environmental planning in the context of tourism. She can be contacted at: Email: gabrielasauter@yahoo.ca

Executive summary

All poverty reduction is "local" in that it has to improve conditions on the ground for those living in a particular locality — for instance providing or improving schools, health care, water and sanitation, support for livelihoods or safety nets. Almost all aspects of good environmental management depend on local knowledge and local action. Thus, both poverty reduction and good environmental management depend on local organisations — for what they do on the ground, for the resources they mobilise, for the knowledge they bring, for the accountability they should provide to low-income groups. Indeed, the achievement of almost all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their associated targets depends on more effective, pro-poor local organisations.

Donor agencies are only as effective as the organisations their funding supports. International funding agencies may list the initiatives that they "implemented" but their staff do not actually implement these; they fund others to do so. The same is true for national governments. Thus, the quality and effectiveness of their funding is dependent on the quality and effectiveness of local organisations. The quality of donor agencies' engagement with those individuals, households and groups facing deprivation — for instance because of their low incomes and limited asset bases — is also dependent on local organisations.

There are many examples of local organisations that are remarkably effective at supporting sustainable development in their localities on very small budgets; for some, this is done on annual budgets of only a few thousand dollars a year. Some have been able to develop and sustain large developmental initiatives drawing mainly on local resources and capacities. These include both local NGOs and local grassroots organisations formed by the poor — for instance women's savings groups and self-help groups. Many local organisations have also pioneered ways of allowing the knowledge and capacities of poor or politically marginalised groups to be at the centre of development. And where organisations have drawn from external funding, many have used such funds in much more effective ways, spreading each dollar further and often developing revolving funds. Many local organisations have implemented initiatives that have catalysed further development in their localities and elsewhere. Many have also developed successful partnerships with local governments.

Although all the above might be acknowledged by international donor agencies, very little of their development assistance reaches these local organisations. Much of their knowledge, their work and their capacities are invisible to international agencies. Very few official bilateral or multilateral agencies are able to fund them. Or if they do, these are the exceptions, outside the main funding flows and frameworks. Even where funding is available for local organisations, the application procedures are often difficult to fulfil and the conditions attached to the funding unrealistic. And what is offered is often short-term, inflexible and must be spent within a time-frame that suits the donor. Local organisations often need what appear to external donors to be very small annual sums, but they are engaged in long-term processes that need long-term support; they may also need rapid increases in funding when new opportunities present themselves (or are negotiated).

In 2006, IIED invited some of its local partners to reflect on their experiences in local development and to consider what kinds of external funding best supported their efforts. This paper synthesises the main findings of this process, and the other six *Gatekeeper* papers in this batch (137a-f) each profile the work of six of these partners: Casa Pueblo in Puerto Rico, the Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES) in Peru, the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe, the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi, IIED-América Latina's Neighbourhood Credit Programme in Buenos Aires and the Pastoral Women's Council in Tanzania.

The research concluded that donor agencies should consider three possible ways forward:

1. Funding frameworks that can support many more local organisations. This also means funding that is more flexible and long-term for local organisations with good track records. Funding conditions should focus far less on what should be done, when and how, and far more on accounting for all funding used and on these organisations' accountability to local populations.

2. Creating funds from which the urban and rural poor can draw directly.

3. Setting-up local funds that are accountable and transparent to civil society organisations in their areas. Underlying this is a recognition that effective aid is about getting funds to the people and organisations that can be most effective at reducing poverty, including organisations formed by those facing poverty.

This brings many institutional challenges to donor agencies because it is very different from the understanding of aid effectiveness by the politicians and civil servants who oversee their work and control their funding.

Understanding and Supporting the Role of Local Organisations in Sustainable Development

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Introduction[1]

IIED's work on local organisations

Much of the work of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) over the last 30 years has been with local partners, especially within the work of the Human Settlements, Natural Resources and Climate Change Groups. These include both local research institutions and a wide range of local partners engaged in development and environmental management on the ground. IIED has long recognised the importance of local organisations. It has had a particular interest in what makes them effective and accountable and the nature of the (local, national and international) support that strengthens, scales up, or multiplies their impacts (see Box 1). In 2003, IIED decided to start engaging with its partners in rural and urban contexts, to draw lessons from their experiences and to use these to provide lessons for international donor agencies, governments and local organisations themselves.[2] In 2006, a new work phase was initiated, inviting some of IIED's local partners to reflect on their experiences in local development and what kinds of external funding best supported their efforts. This publication is one of a series of case studies and synthesis papers that looks at the work of local organisations in development and environmental management. All the case studies were developed with the local organisations: their staff were asked to suggest the kinds of external assistance that would help them be more effective and achieve larger-scale impacts. This publication series is intended to encourage international funding agencies to rethink the means by which they can support, work with and learn from the local organisations that are such a critical part of pro-poor development. But this is not neglecting the larger governance issues; indeed, for the last 200 years, much pro-poor political change was catalysed by local innovations and by the political pressure from grassroots organisations and their associations.

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1 This paper draws on profiles of six local organisations listed below, and the discussions with the people who prepared these profiles at a meeting in London in June 2007. It also draws on IIED's previous work on local organisations — see Bass *et al.* (2005); Satterthwaite (2005); and Bigg and Satterthwaite (2005).

2. See Satterthwaite (2003).

BOX 1. HOW DO WE DEFINE LOCAL ORGANISATIONS?

In most localities, there is a range of local organisations that are seeking to provide some developmental benefit on the ground — for instance through providing particular goods or services or managing local resources or working with low-income groups to help them get more voice and influence. This paper is particularly interested in those local organisations that work on the ground, seeking to reduce one or more aspects of poverty. These include local organisations formed by individuals or groups facing deprivation (for instance women from low-income households forming their own savings and emergency credit group). They include many community-based organisations, in all their varieties. They include many local non-government organisations (in all their varieties).

The term local organisation could include government organisations that operate on the ground providing public goods and services that have importance for local populations, including low-income groups — for instance schools, health centres, children's centres etc. This could include local organisations responsible for law and order including the police, although these may contribute more to poverty creation than poverty reduction. They may include local branches of larger supra-local government organisations. Whilst the work on local organisations of which this paper is part has a strong interest in the role of local government in development and environmental management, its focus is on the role of community based organisations, local NGOs or national NGOs with strong local action programmes. However, interaction with local government is often a critical part of their work. Many also work as intermediaries between external funders and community-based organisations.

Local private enterprises might also be considered local organisations, but these are not considered here, unless they have developmental roles beyond their usual business. However, some of the local organisations profiled also work with local enterprises.

This paper does not assume that all local organisations are good; indeed, it highlights how they can have key roles in creating or exacerbating poverty. Obviously, richer and more powerful groups form and use local organisations to advance their interests. In highlighting how, in one very powerful sense, all development is local, it does not seek to diminish the importance of development, reform and 'good governance' at all levels above the local, including district, region/province, nation and internationally. But the ultimate test of the effectiveness of these supra-local changes is whether they bring benefits on the ground to particular poor people in particular localities.

Source: *Human Development Report (UNDP, 2004)*

Development depends on effective, pro-poor local organisations

At their best, local organisations can allow external donors to support far more effective poverty reduction strategies and pro-poor natural resource management. Local organisations can ensure high levels of accountability to poor groups;[3] indeed, for many, it is these groups and their own grassroots organisations that are at the core of the local

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3. One issue highlighted by discussions with local organisations is the need to avoid the use of terms that stigmatise or inappropriately classify people and their organisations. People who face deprivation as a result of inadequate incomes or assets are termed "poor" which implies that they need external help and professional support. Yet it is so often their knowledge, capacities and engagement that are central to poverty reduction — and the changes needed for poverty reduction are not in what they do but in external policies and practices that disadvantage them or discriminate against them.

organisations' work. Local organisations can enormously increase the impact of each dollar of external funding by keeping down unit costs, mobilising complementary resources from households and community organisations and leveraging additional support from other groups. Many local civil society organisations have also demonstrated a capacity to develop successful partnerships with local governments that include setting precedents to show far more effective ways to act. But few official development assistance agencies have systematically sought to use the potential of local organisations (and also to learn to avoid supporting local organisations that lack the above characteristics). Indeed, the very structure of most official development assistance agencies prevents them from doing so.

Many barriers to poverty reduction and better environmental management are also local — for instance local power structures and land-owning patterns. Much poverty is created or perpetuated by unrepresentative, unaccountable local governments and by the anti-poor attitudes of local politicians and bureaucracies. This is difficult for official donors to address because they were set up to work with government structures. In general, in high-income nations, local governments or local offices of higher levels of government have important roles in development and environmental management, not in the creation of poverty and environmental degradation. But this was not always the case and building the competence, capacity and accountability of local government was a critical part of the development of all nations. Of course, a critical part of development today is addressing the failures or limitations of local government and this requires action and reform beyond the local — usually at national level. But the means by which poorer groups get protection from the law (and law enforcement agencies, including the police), access their entitlements and get to vote are through local governments, even if the legal and institutional base to allow them to do so depends on higher government levels. In addition, local NGOs and grassroots organisations are often making local governments more accountable and, where possible, working with them and showing them more effective ways to support local development and environmental management.

This suggests a need for donor agencies to support local organisations and local processes that are pro-poor. This includes grassroots organisations formed by poorer groups. Where possible, it should also support local governments, if they are prepared to work with such local organisations. But supporting local organisations is not only difficult politically, it is also difficult operationally. How does a donor agency know which local organisations to fund and what kinds of funding are needed in each locality? Addressing most aspects of poverty reduction and environmental management needs an intimate knowledge of local contexts and local organisations. It also needs to empower and support the groups that face discrimination, but it is difficult for any external funder to know who these are and how to support them. And how can this be managed by donor agencies that face strong political pressure to keep down their staff costs and have limited possibilities of setting up offices within recipient nations that are able to do this?[4]

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4. Some international donors have long recognised the need for stronger offices within the nations to which they provide assistance, but if this involves staff from their own nation, this also means higher staff costs and this is so often judged to be "inefficient" by the senior civil servants and politicians who oversee their work.

What role for local government in development and environmental management?

Before considering the role of local NGOs and community-based organisations, some consideration needs to be given to the role of local governments. In high-income nations, it is expected that local governments or local offices of higher levels of government contribute to most aspects of development and environmental management. It is taken for granted that water of drinking quality is piped to nearly every (rural and urban) home, that sanitation and electricity are available 24 hours a day, and garbage collected regularly — with the costs representing only a small part of average incomes. Schools, health centres, police and emergency services are available to all. There are local politicians to whom demands can be made and grievances voiced. Legislation and courts protect citizens from eviction, discrimination, exploitation and pollution. There are safety nets for those who lose their jobs or fall sick, and pensions for retirement. There are lawyers, ombudsmen, consumer groups and watchdogs to whom people can turn if they feel they have been cheated. And all of this is possible because of local government institutions overseen by democratic structures. Even if private companies or non-profit institutions provide some services, the framework for provision and quality control is provided by local governments or local offices of national or provincial governments. While coverage for some services may be sub-standard, and some groups ill-served, the broad web of provision adequately serves the vast majority of the population and has a central role in keeping down poverty and pollution and usually in protecting local environments.[5]

But in low- and middle-income nations, local governments or local offices of higher levels of government do not ensure all the above; in many locations, they fulfil little or none of these. Table 1 gives examples of the ways in which local governments can be either pro-poor or fundamentally anti-poor. These inadequacies or the anti-poor nature of much local government are reasons why civil society organisations like those profiled in this special batch of *Gatekeeper* papers have a much larger role in development. External funders worry about how such civil society organisations lack the accountability mechanisms that should come with local government through elected representatives. However, all these civil society organisations are more accountable to and transparent to low-income groups than most local governments in their countries.

Profiles of local organisations

It is rare for those engaged in local development to have time to write about their work; sadly, very little of what is published about development and environmental management is by practitioners with experience working in local development.[6] IIED therefore invited a range of institutions with whom it has worked in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to reflect on their experience in supporting local development (and grassroots

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5. This does not mean that they prevent the transfer of environmental problems to other regions or to the future; see McGranahan *et al*. (2001); Haughton (1999).

6. One of the reasons that IIED started the journal *Environment and Urbanization* 20 years ago was to provide an international journal in which practitioners could write about their experiences and reach a larger audience with their insights and concerns. Other IIED publications, including the *Gatekeeper* series and the journals *Participatory Learning and Action* and *Haramata*, have also sought to give more influence to practitioners.

TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTIVE AND UNSUPPORTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE REALMS OF POVERTY REDUCTION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	
SUPPORTIVE	**UNSUPPORTIVE**
Schools (pre-school, primary and secondary)	
Schools that are accessible to all, well served by books and teachers and with costs kept down (e.g. for fees, school uniforms, text books); special provisions to help low-income families keep their children at school and to ensure gender equality may be needed.	Education departments that make very inadequate or no provision for schools in many areas. Schools with high user charges (as formal charges, or through informal payments requested). Schools with large classes and inadequate educational materials (including books).
Primary health care centres, hospitals and emergency services	
Health services that are available and easily accessible to all, with strong outreach programmes for poorer areas, special programmes for vulnerable and at-risk groups and provision to keep down costs for users. Special outreach for all those with AIDS/HIV to provide counselling and guarantee the supply of needed drugs while avoiding stigmatising them.	Very inadequate or no provision for health care in many areas. Where provision is made, high user fees and inappropriate locations and opening hours mean long queues and make them difficult to use, especially for working people. Staff members who are antagonistic to and judgemental of "poorer groups" or particular groups (such as adolescents or specific ethnic groups). Inappropriate or no services for those with AIDS/HIV.
Providers of water, sanitation, drainage, household waste disposal and energy	
Service providers with a focus on ensuring adequate provision for all. Where resources are insufficient for universal provision through conventional systems, differential service standards and support for community partnerships ensure that poorer groups are reached with adequate provision.	Service providers who have little or no interest in reaching poorer groups within political systems that do not ensure that they do so. Provision for water and sanitation and, where needed, waste collection, are available only to richer groups in particular cities (and often provided at below cost). Refusal to provide any services in illegal urban settlements and most rural settlements.
Securing and protecting poorer groups' access to natural resources (land, forest products, water, fisheries)	
Local governments who work with and support organisations representing smallholders, pastoralists, indigenous people, fishing communities and other groups with limited asset bases and often unclear rights to resources. Their work focuses on protecting and enhancing these groups' access to resources and their capacity to manage these sustainably.	Local governments that primarily represent and serve the more powerful vested interests within their jurisdiction. Such local governments are often among the primary causes of poverty. Land registration systems that benefit the richer, more powerful groups. Governments undermining the successful natural resource management systems of local populations.

TABLE 1. CONTD.	
SUPPORTIVE	**UNSUPPORTIVE**
Relationships to small enterprises or informal enterprises	
Local governments which support associations of small producers, traders and builders, and work with them to increase opportunities for their members.	Local governments that work only with the associations developed by powerful groups, which often exclude small-scale entrepreneurs and capture resources and markets. Government harassment of informal enterprises.
Monitoring social and environmental impacts of business activities	
Local government with an active programme to monitor social and environmental impacts of business (for instance in relation to minimum wages, occupational health and safety, child labour, environmental pollution) and to work with local groups to develop the most appropriate local responses.	Local government that fails to prevent pollution and abuses of health and safety at work.
Planning and land-use management that influences the availability of land for housing in urban areas	
Local governments that actively work to ensure that land for housing is available at prices and in locations that serve low-income households wishing to build their own homes; also those that support provision of secure tenure for those living in informal settlements.	Local governments that do nothing or actively seek to keep poorer groups out of official land for housing markets, for instance by maintaining inappropriate standards for minimum lot sizes and infrastructure, and by having slow, costly, inefficient official procedures required to develop land for housing.
Providers of safety nets	
Official provision for safety nets to help those who cannot work or those with inadequate incomes, or official support for NGO or community provision of safety nets (including emergency credit) and community-based systems for guaranteeing food security.	Failure to provide safety nets or support community-managed safety nets.
The police, the legal system and local government bodies involved in ensuring the rule of law	
Providing the rule of law (including police services), and protecting poorer groups' civil and political rights. Also seeking to be supportive of poorer groups' livelihoods and to lessen discrimination and work towards greater gender equality. Often involves the police developing partnerships with community organisations.	Those who do not serve poorer groups (for instance with no police service provided), or who oppress them. In many urban areas it is common for poorer groups living in illegal settlements to be evicted and for informal enterprises (such as hawkers and sellers in informal markets) to be harassed. In many rural areas, government bodies and regulations undermine effective community-based systems of natural resource management.

TABLE 1. CONTD. SUPPORTIVE	UNSUPPORTIVE
Systems for voting and accountability to citizens	
Systems which give all citizens the right to and the possibility of voting for local government; political and bureaucratic systems in which poorer groups have access to senior politicians and civil servants to ensure that their rights are respected. This includes protection from forced eviction, and appropriate support in an emergency.	Local government that is not elected — or if it is, where little or no attempt is made to ensure that all adults are on the voter register and able to vote. In urban areas, those living in illegal or unregistered settlements are denied the vote (for instance, because they lack an official address). Politicians and a bureaucracy which are unresponsive to demands of poorer groups and to opportunities for working in partnership with them.
Relationships with organisations formed by smallholders, landless groups and "slum" dwellers	
Local governments that recognise the validity of these organisations and seek ways to work with them and support them. Also an active programme to change local government structures and regulations that impede development. Support for community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.	Local governments that oppose or ignore these organisations, and local politicians who refuse to respond to and work with them, unless they are allied politically to their party. No actions taken to support community-developed disaster avoidance and preparedness.
Definitions and measurements of poverty	
Local processes in which poor groups are involved to define and measure poverty and use this to support local poverty reduction strategies seeking to reach all poor groups; poor groups' involvement in monitoring poverty and the success of interventions to reduce it.	Poverty defined and measured by a national government agency, usually based only on consumption levels and with poverty lines making little allowance for the cost of non-food necessities. Poverty measurements based on representative national samples so they have little or no relevant data for local organisations, including local governments.

Note: The inadequacies of some service provision listed above may be due to non-state providers, including private companies or civil society organisations, and may thus appear not to be the fault of local governments. But where local governments sub-contract public services to other organisations or permit provision by independent organisations, they should ensure quality control and provision for all.

Source: Developed from *Satterthwaite (2005)*.

organisations) and to suggest how support from governments and international agencies could be made more appropriate. Each local organisation was also asked to reflect on how governments and international agencies can become more accountable to the people whose needs they seek to address.

These local organisations are not research institutions but institutions with a strong active engagement in local development, although some also undertake research as part of their work. Representatives from each of the profiled organisations met to present their initial findings, to exchange views and to collectively consider lessons and experiences — including issues that go beyond the local, such as changing national frameworks and donor structures so they better support local development. The participants also discussed how to communicate lessons learned and influence the wider development community, notably national governments and international donors.

To date, six local organisation profiles have been completed: Casa Pueblo in Puerto Rico, the Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES) in Peru, the Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) in Zimbabwe, the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi, IIED-América Latina's Neighbourhood Credit Programme in Buenos Aires and the Pastoral Women's Council in Tanzania. Summaries of their work are included below and the remaining papers in this batch of *Gatekeepers* outline their experiences in more detail. Many more local organisation profiles are being prepared, including profiles of Pamoja Trust (Kenya), Associates for Rural Education and Development (ARED) in Senegal, the local organisations involved in post-tsunami relief in Asia, the Technical Training Resource Centre in Karachi and a range of local organisations in Pakistan that have worked with the Orangi Charitable Trust.

The Urban Resource Centre is a Karachi-based NGO founded by teachers, professionals, students, activists and community organisations from low-income settlements. It was set up in response to the recognition that the planning process for Karachi did not serve the interests of low- and lower-middle-income groups, small businesses and informal sector operators and was also creating adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts. The Urban Resource Centre has sought to change this through creating an information base about Karachi's development on which everyone can draw. It also conducts research and analysis of government plans (to assess their implications for Karachi's citizens), advocates for change, mobilises communities, and draws key government staff into discussions. This has created a network of professionals and activists from civil society and government agencies who understand planning issues from the perspective of these communities and other less powerful interest groups. This network has successfully challenged many government plans that are ineffective, over-expensive and anti-poor and has promoted alternatives. It shows how questioning government plans in an informed manner by a large number of interest groups, community organisations, NGOs, academics, political parties and the media can force the government to listen and to change its plans, projects and investments. Comparable urban resource centres have also been set up in other cities in Pakistan, as well as in other nations (Hasan, 2008).

The Instituto Internacional de Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo (IIED-América Latina) has been supporting a **Neighbourhood Credit Programme** in informal settlements in Buenos Aires, Argentina since 1993. This is part of a larger programme of support to the

inhabitants of informal settlements and their organisations. The credit programme supports housing improvement. In the programme's most recent phase, the management of the funds was decentralised into separate neighbourhood funds in three communities, with each fund managed by local inhabitants. The credit funds' importance was not only in catalysing and supporting housing improvements, but also in strengthening community capacity by delegating project management to the grassroots. When supported by a partner civil society organisation with experience of intervention in the area, such community-based initiatives can be more flexible and more sustainable than top-down interventions. This case study suggests that project funding decisions for micro-credit programmes should take account of their potential to build social capacity, strengthen grassroots organisations, engage community participation and complement other local programmes (including improving relations with local government agencies), rather than focus only on financial sustainability (Almansi and Tammarazio, 2008).

The Association for Nature and Sustainable Development (ANDES) is an indigenous NGO that seeks to defend indigenous rights to genetic resources, traditional knowledge and landscape character in Peru. It was established in 1995 with volunteer staff and no funding and has grown considerably over the years, now working with 39 indigenous rural communities, many of whom live in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty. It has successfully bridged traditional Quechua principles with modern organisational models to assert indigenous rights to heritage in practical terms by establishing a new form of protected area: Indigenous Biocultural Heritage Areas (IBCHAs). These are locally and sustainably managed through community associations; form the basis for local enterprise (agricultural and cultural eco-tourism); involve and benefit marginalised groups; unite communities; encourage the participation of and negotiation by indigenous people; and create a model for future protection and development. The Potato Park was the first IBCHA, and brings six Quechua communities together to protect a 12,000 hectare area as a micro centre of origin of the potato and other native crops characteristic of Andean food systems. Intervention involves close collaboration with formal and informal Quechua technicians in researching, training and developing adaptive management models — a "project" rather than "service" approach that works with local politics. Although ANDES' work is rooted locally, it also influences national policy: to protect traditional resource rights; expose international interest/ideas to government; and push for new policy on protected areas, biodiversity registers, food security corridors, traditional knowledge, and agro-ecotourism. ANDES' initial government-funded development projects allowed formal recognition and credibility in its establishment as an NGO. Internationally, ANDES places strong emphasis on participation in international fora for dissemination and learning; forming alliances to oppose terminator technology and the privatisation of indigenous land; and offering novel approaches for donor organisations (Argumedo and Stenner, 2008).

Casa Pueblo formed in 1980 as a grassroots citizen group to oppose the government of Puerto Rico's intention to allow large-scale open-pit mining by international corporations in the central region. Its aim is to promote community self-reliance and community-based self-management, while conserving cultural heritage and local and national ecological integrity. It follows a "social transformation model" — the affirmation of cultural (local) values, reinforcement of self-esteem, and promotion of self-reliance and self-responsibility. Its approach emphasises community culture (i.e. through the use of art, music and field

action), information gathering, sound science and research, and self-sufficiency through community enterprise (coffee production, a community store and eco-tourism). The organisation has evolved from an informal anti-mining campaign to an organisation capable of influencing government policy on protected areas and forestry. Casa Pueblo has faced many difficulties, including opposition from vested interests in mining and government opposition or indifference. This was addressed through the diversification and inclusion of stakeholders and supporters, and gaining people's trust through openness, transparency, and inclusion of the community in the decision-making process. Casa Pueblo has developed ties at the local and national levels with relevant ministries, local donors and the media. Puerto Rico's international isolation due to its colonial political status has meant limited access to external funding, international fora and global community networks. Future plans focus on strengthening and protecting the goals achieved; improving the management structure to facilitate inter-generational changes; and encouraging horizontal growth through the social transformation of nearby and distant communities. It is also seeking alternative forms of financing that could enable scaling-up (Massol-González *et al.*, 2008).

The Pastoral Women's Council is a community-based organisation established in 1997 in Tanzania. Maasai pastoralist women lack property ownership rights, access to social services and the power to make decisions concerning themselves (i.e. marriage, education, access to health services). PWC is women-led and provides women with a forum for discussion, allows them to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of Maasai culture, to act on their findings, and to mobilise local efforts and resources, such as raising funds for community projects. PWC provides Maasai girls and women with opportunities for education as well as a revolving livestock programme. It established a small-scale agricultural development programme and it promotes women's rights and leadership by raising women's awareness and critical understanding of politics, legislation, women's rights and their role in development (e.g. through paralegal training, studies, talks by experienced guest speakers, meetings, and encouraging women to talk openly).

To date, girls have escaped forced marriage; women have gained confidence, skills, respect and knowledge in different areas; the credit scheme has provided women with tangible financial support; and girls are graduating from secondary school and are now teaching in PWC schools. Through its work, PWC has developed large networks and strong relationships with various international NGOs and donors, as well as district, village and regional government. These relationships have facilitated financial support and have influenced the passing of traditional land tenure structures and by-laws, as well as the establishment of government-led programmes that focus on the poor. Through the combination of these programmes, PWC has not only improved tangible aspects of Maasai people's lives (e.g. improved nutritional status, new sources of income, acquired access to land), but has helped women gain confidence, skills, knowledge, and respect (Ngoitiko, 2008).

The Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) has worked in the Matabeleland region of Zimbabwe, one of the nation's least developed regions, since 1980. ORAP mobilises people across communities to take charge of their development processes. Rooted in cultural practices—family connections, hard work, music and song—ORAP's approach has been to eradicate poverty by reconnecting people and rebuilding the social fabric of communities, and through empowerment, participation and self-reliance. It works

principally among rural communities — although its focus has expanded to urban areas as well. It sees the family as the base unit, and unites these into groups at different levels (family, village, umbrella, association). ORAP sees community groups not only as executing bodies, but also as channels for dialogue on development initiatives, philosophy, and approaches. It operates various programmes such as micro-finance, education, food security, community grant-making, and water resource management.
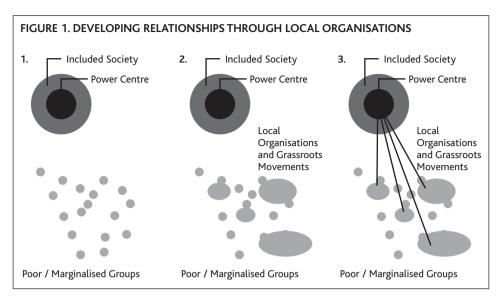
ORAP also emphasises developing relationships with external agencies, not only as sources of funding, but also for learning, idea-sharing, and partnerships. Among the lessons learnt over the years are the significance of respecting the wisdom and input of local community members, and including them as empowered members of boards, task groups, committees, etc. ORAP's experience shows how in many cases, having local members lead planning processes can ensure the greatest success. It has helped change people's perceptions of poverty and development and has managed to keep its projects and programmes going, even where external funding has ceased. ORAP's continued presence and work programme, despite the country's economic crisis (from 1999 to date) and the withdrawal of many international NGOs and other organisations, demonstrates the sustainability of such an organisation with its locally-driven nature, rooted in the community (Nyoni, 2008).

Diversities and commonalities

The diverse nature of local organisations is evident from the above summaries. We do not intend to compare these local organisations; the degree to which each is rooted in particular local contexts would make any detailed comparative analysis problematic. However, there are some common features:

- All have well-established work programmes with low-income groups, and give such groups central roles in setting priorities and undertaking initiatives.

- All seek to have high levels of accountability and transparency to "the poor".

- All seek to change government policies and practices—in part, by showing politicians and civil servants what community-initiated and managed processes can achieve.

- All have to deal with the difficulties faced by poor groups in getting tenure of land— some working in urban contexts, others in rural/agricultural contexts.

- All encounter or have encountered strong opposition from governments and from powerful vested interests.

- Most have had problematic relationships with international funders.

- All have sought to draw on local resources, including those generated by the low-income households and grassroots organisations with whom they work.

Figure 1 illustrates how the role of local organisations might evolve over time from: (1) exclusion; to (2) inclusion into local organisations as a result of strengthening and supporting community-based organisations; and (3) the development of working relationships and links with formal power centres (various levels of government, international aid agencies, and other donor institutions).

FIGURE 1. DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

All these local organisations have changed their work programmes over time, in part in response to external possibilities or threats, in part as successful initiatives showed new possibilities, in part because of demands from the individuals and community teams with whom they worked. Some act specifically on addressing the forces that create poverty — for instance the Urban Resource Centre's alliance building and networking in Karachi against the powerful nexus of real estate interests, private developers and government. See also Casa Pueblo's fight against powerful international mining interests in Puerto Rico and the Pastoral Women's Council's struggle against the government drive to deny pastoralists access to land in Tanzania. The four primarily rural organisations stress the importance of indigenous knowledge and capacity for development and environmental management, as well as the rights of rural communities to self-determination and the need to integrate local development needs with traditional resource management under community control.

Several of the local organisations have long-included a stress on the importance of local culture and the value of the knowledge and organisational capacity that this includes. For instance, for Casa Pueblo, what began as an anti-mining campaign with few active supporters developed into social transformation, using local culture as the unifying agent. The message became accessible to the local community through bulletins, *chiringas* (kite) festivals, press conferences, tree plantings, murals and music concerts with the slogan "*Si a la Vida, No a las Minas*" ("Yes to Life, No to Mines").

One of the most successful ways in which local organisations engage with governments is "precedent-setting" — demonstrating through particular initiatives their competence and capacity to different government agencies, to funders and to other community organisations (Patel *et al*., 2002; Patel, 2004). For many local organisations, including the many national federations formed by slum and shack dwellers in different African and Asian nations, this has become an explicit part of their work. Negotiating with government for support for, say, a credit scheme or a programme to improve water provision is much easier if government staff can be taken to see examples of such schemes at work. Allowing local organisations to develop such precedent-setting initiatives and then negotiate local support for comparable

initiatives is a key part of what external donors should support. As Arjun Appadurai noted, when viewing the precedent-setting used in India by the alliance of the National Slum Dwellers Federation, *Mahila Milan* and SPARC, this is the "politics of show-and-tell but it is also a philosophy of 'do first, talk later...' [and] it provides a linguistic device for negotiating" (Appadurai, 2001, 33). Not only does it facilitate a platform for communication and negotiation, but it produces tangible examples of alternative means. For example, in Buenos Aires, IIED-AL has demonstrated to local government that public responsibilities can be decentralised to responsible civil society organisations (including community-based organisations), although this government-civil society relationship is never easy to manage and maintain. Precedent-setting is also often used not only to show external agencies what is possible, but to encourage and support learning between community organisations. For instance, the work of ANDES and the setting up of the Potato Park helped to achieve co-operation between communities and individuals with competing interests.

One of the key roles of many of these local organisations is an ability to create spaces for interaction between diverse groups — for instance community-based organisations, local NGOs, different government agencies (from local and supra-local levels) and the media. Through such interaction, networks can be established and relationships developed — both horizontally across similar organisations and vertically through different strata of society and government. Also, where needed, alliances can be formed. Some local organisations also have important roles at the international level — for instance supporting visits from groups from other nations to see their work, helping to set up and support similar institutions in other nations and contributing to international environmental and human rights policies. Working simultaneously at different levels has enabled many local organisations to disseminate their work, influence other organisations and influence policy at the national and international levels. This has helped build a strong foundation for the organisations to work effectively with their partners.

The key approach of many local organisations is supporting local initiatives and grassroots mobilisation. Most share the common thread of participation, self-determination and inclusion, although the means by which this is done varies considerably. Some local organisations focus on particular groups — for instance the Pastoral Women's Council focuses on women, ANDES works with indigenous groups, and IIED-América Latina's Neighbourhood Credit Programme works with the inhabitants of informal settlements. The Urban Resource Centre in Karachi works with a wide range of community organisations but is more unusual in that much of its work is building networks and alliances between a great range of stakeholders to promote more pro-poor and participatory approaches to planning and governance and to oppose projects and initiatives that are anti-poor.

Donor and government constraints to local organisations' scaling up and effectiveness

Local organisations engaged in long-term work programmes, supporting grassroots groups and engaging, where possible, with government agencies can be hugely constrained by external finance. Often such finance ties all expenditures to specific outputs and

outcomes that have to be identified in advance, is linked to specific time-frames and must have budgets that are spent on time. Such requirements can inhibit the capacity of local organisations to respond to new opportunities — for instance if a local politician or government agency offers to work with the local organisation and its partners or if support is needed for something not in the original proposal.

Achieving pro-poor political change is also so often a long process, ill-served by short term, project-oriented support and "exit strategies". Many organisations, like the Pastoral Women's Council and ANDES, work over extended periods of time to help change the way women's needs and rights are perceived in society, sensitise groups to alternatives, and foster relationships between people, organisations, and government. Good development practice also means seeking to minimise costs (and dependence on external funding) and drawing where possible on local resources so in effect making external funding last as long as possible. But this is not convenient for external funders or the financial systems that monitor their performance. The processes by which the confidence and capacity of grassroots organisations is built can seem very slow to external funders—who may also object to the staff costs that this implies for local organisations supporting such processes.

Even in countries with strong, well-established democracies and where partnerships between local organisations and local governments have been established, there are often tensions and difficulties. Local politicians will often insist that they are the legitimate decision-makers 'for the people' because they were elected into office. In some cases, as in Peru, financial resources are highly centralised at the national level, leaving little to be channelled through to organisations like ANDES. Local governments are usually wary of any civil society organisation working within their jurisdiction that has influence and funding they cannot control. Where local government-local NGO partnerships have been developed, local governments (like international agencies) often treat the local NGO as a contractor, not a partner, greatly limiting the developmental scope of the local NGO.[7] There are also tensions between governments and community organisations, such as between government and communities' timetables and the impulse of the government to co-opt community leaders, especially around the time of elections.

Government agencies at different levels are often insensitive towards indigenous knowledge, language, and way of life, failing to recognise the value and significance of tradition and culture in poverty reduction and environmental management. Government conservation strategies, where they exist, also tend to exclude community involvement from traditional, sustainable use of local resources (see for instance the profiles of the work of ANDES and the Pastoral Women's Council).

Funding challenges for international donors

There are very large differences between the six local organisations whose work was summarised above in the scale of their budget and their dependence on international funding agencies. In terms of annual budgets, these vary from the equivalent of around US$60,000 to US$5 million. Additional local organisation profiles currently being developed include some

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7. See in particular the profile of IIED-América Latina's Neighbourhood Credit Programme.

local organisations with annual budgets of only a few thousand dollars. Obviously, the lower the annual budget, the more the possibilities of locally generated funding covering a significant part of this. All the local organisations profiled have sought to generate local resources to help fund their work; many have also used revolving funds and micro-finance programmes which draw on local groups' capacities to save and to repay loans.

Incompatibility between donors and local organisations

Many international donors, as they are currently constituted, would not be able to fund some of these local organisations, for the following reasons:

1. Many local organisations work in countries that are not on the funders' approved list, for instance "middle-income" nations, or that are not on the funders' "focus countries" list. Some local organisations work in countries that are denied official support because their government is deemed unacceptable, even though these local organisations are completely independent of the unacceptable government and have critical roles in poverty reduction.[8]

2. Many local organisations work in urban areas: many international donors have no urban policy and still assume there is too little urban poverty to justify working in urban areas.[9]

3. Little of the work of these organisations fits within the donors' framework for support. These frameworks often promote work on "projects" with specific deliverables. Instead, a large part of these organisations' work focuses on pro-poor political and institutional change or mobilising support to prevent initiatives that will create or exacerbate poverty.

4. Official development assistance agencies will always face difficulties in supporting local organisations whose work might be judged to be political. Of course, almost all forms of poverty reduction require some political change. It is impossible for any local organisation supporting and working with poor groups, who often face discrimination and government harassment, not to engage in initiatives that seek political change. Seeking more pro-poor and more accountable local governments and working with poor groups to avoid them losing their land can hardly be considered apolitical. In general, poverty reduction requires poor groups to be organised and to be able to challenge the state.

All the local organisations noted above have faced opposition from government agencies and as mentioned already, many have had to oppose government plans. This presents difficulties for any external funder. Indeed, in many instances, the nations with the most serious levels of poverty are those with unaccountable and untransparent governments that are most active in demanding that all aid pass through them and in opposing any aid to local civil society groups. However, again, it will only be through external funders' engagement with local organisations that ways forward can be found. All the local organisations mentioned above are not anti-government; indeed, all seek to work with and support government agencies wherever possible. All recognise that the scale and scope of what they can achieve would be greatly enhanced, if government agencies worked with them.

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8. Among the groups profiled, Casa Pueblo faces particular constraints in that it works in Puerto Rico which is a colony of the United States and most international funders would not fund initiatives there; ORAP also faces particular problems as many funders will not support work in Zimbabwe, even if this is not going to or through government agencies.

9. Despite the large and rapidly growing body of evidence to show high levels of poverty within urban populations in low-income nations and most middle-income nations and also to show the rapid growth in the number of the urban poor, many international funders still refuse to support initiatives to reduce urban poverty.

Differing expectations and time-frames

All the local organisations mentioned earlier have faced pressures from funding bodies to meet their funders' expectations, output requirements and operating procedures in ways that have affected what they can do. Some local organisations have refused external support for roles that they considered inappropriate — for instance the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi has refused funding and the offer of consultancies and support because of worries that this would compromise its capacity to take independent stands and that it would lose its connections with grassroots movements and organisations. Casa Pueblo has found its programmes and priorities at odds with some external funding agencies' guidelines. ANDES has found some funders' demands difficult — for instance the demands for matching funds. ORAP notes the difficulties it faces in managing relations with donors and finding a balance between meeting their needs and expectations, and those of ORAP members in the local communities.

Any institution working as an intermediary between funding agencies and local organisations has to struggle to reconcile the two different cultures and ways of working — for instance to reach an understanding with donors about what support is needed without compromising community processes and marginalising local organisations from the key decisions. It is so often difficult for a local organisation whose very structure and reason for existence is based on strong accountability and transparency to local groups to also meet donor agency requirements. Inevitably, the concepts and languages of the powerful government bodies and development institutions and the way they structure the means by which funding can be obtained will mis-represent local needs and priorities.

Of course, there will always be tensions and difficulties in reconciling funding systems that work well for local organisations and the structures of financial management and control required of international funding agencies. But perhaps because most official aid agencies and development banks have never given priority to funding local organisations directly, they lack the financial systems that serve such support. All the local organisations mentioned above are engaged in developmental processes that are long-term — for instance empowering indigenous or disadvantaged populations, promoting gender equality and human rights, and advocating for pro-poor and pro-environment government policies. They all have particular projects or initiatives within this. But international funding agencies' procedures often require a focus on these time-bound, short-term projects that also have 'exit strategies' that are unrealistic, when considered in local contexts. International funding agencies may be correct in encouraging the building of local capacities to sustain initiatives but these requirements are rarely based on any local knowledge about how realistic this is. Many local organisations have to reformulate their goals, objectives and working practices to fit in with the international donors' requirements and are then faced with serious problems in reporting on progress — because what they had to state in the procedures to get the funding ill-matches what they actually do. The reporting procedures required by many international funding agencies were also so often inappropriate to local contexts — for instance, too rigid or conflicting with particular features in each unique local context such as barter economies or informal labour.

External funding agencies do not want reports of failures, yet any local organisation working to encourage and support a range of pro-poor initiatives will have some initia-

tives that do not succeed or whose completion gets delayed by circumstances beyond the control of local organisations and their partners. But local organisations seeking pro-poor change need the freedom to try out new ways of addressing poverty and environmental management; also to take risks. Not all initiatives will succeed, and learning from those that did not succeed or were only partially successful is an important part of development and learning.

External demands for monitoring and evaluation

The different expectations and time frames discussed above also produce many difficulties for local organisations meeting external funders' requirements for monitoring and evaluation. The effectiveness of all the above organisations is difficult to evaluate using conventional indicators. How does an external evaluator assess changes achieved in the relationship between government agencies and grassroots organisations? Or decide whether other measures might have been more effective than those used? Or be able to judge what constitutes success? Several of the local organisations mentioned above noted their dissatisfaction with evaluators sent by their funders. They so often came on very short visits, did not speak local languages, and failed to see the long-term processes that are the foundation for a capacity to act, to innovate, to ensure consultation and inclusion. In addition, evaluations are often problematic because of the poor fit between what the local organisation actually does and the original proposal drafted to meet the funder's requirements for specifying outputs and outcomes. This is especially so if the external evaluator focuses the whole evaluation only on what was in the original proposal.

Inappropriate funding criteria

The focus of international funders on projects and tangible outputs also means a lack of funding available to support local organisations in all other aspects of their work, including supporting the long term processes noted above and funding for administration and basic office expenses. "We do not fund staff costs", "we will not fund capital costs", "we can only fund you for two years", "we cannot fund travel costs", "we can no longer fund you because the country in which you operate is no longer a priority for our agency", "we have changed our priorities and your work no longer fits within these" "your application cannot be considered until the next committee meeting in six months time"..... This need to fit work programmes into discrete projects often means a lack of continuity in external funding, especially when an organisation finds itself between projects.

It is also very difficult for local organisations to know which funders might support them. Application procedures for obtaining funding are often unclear about what will or will not get funded. Application procedures and requirements can be very onerous or even impossible for many local organisations to fulfil. They are so often designed for the convenience of the funder and their internal assessment procedures. Funding applications often get assessed by people with no knowledge of what the local organisation applying for funds does or its effectiveness. Funding applications get rejected with no details given to the local organisations as to why and very rarely with any possibility for the local organisation to contest this decision.

Funding agencies that are used to funding international NGOs or large, well-established local NGOs tend to assume that what works for these works for all local organisations. But some of the most effective local organisations have no possibility of meeting their funding criteria — for instance through something as simple as having no staff member who speaks the language of the donor and its application procedures. The funding framework is also ill-served by international agencies' tendency to treat local organisations as contractors or 'delivery mechanisms'; this might not be evident in the initial contact between the external funding agency and the local organisation but this becomes apparent when contracts are developed. Many local organisations are not "delivery mechanisms, who write proposals, raise funds and implement projects then produce a report."[10]

Many local organisations have to take measures to cope with funding insecurity that limits their effectiveness. For instance, such insecurity often means organisations hiring staff on short-term project-specific contracts. Many local organisations that have successfully built major work programmes with the support and encouragement of international funders then suddenly find themselves out-of-fashion with the funders or funding ceasing because the organisation has received funds for a certain number of years and must now become 'self-sufficient' or 'sustainable'. Some local organisations have sought to establish ways of limiting their reliance on international funding while others have limited their funding insecurity by drawing on a range of funders.

What would constitute a more appropriate international agency funding architecture?

If official aid agencies and development banks recognise the current or potential importance of local organisations in development and environmental management, then how can they increase the scale and effectiveness of their support to such organisations? It is difficult to see how they can do so within their current institutional structures, funding and auditing processes and within current conventional "wisdom" about what constitutes an efficient institution. They certainly lack the staff and structures to suddenly move to funding hundreds or thousands of local initiatives, most of which require very modest funding levels and many of which are implemented by grassroots organisations that have no bank account and lack the institutional structure required for receiving funds. The typical response among funding agencies to their lack of knowledge about local organisations is to make the application procedures for funding and the reporting requirements the main mechanisms for ensuring good use of their funding. But this so often means over-complicated and inappropriate procedures or conditions that inhibit or prevent funding reaching many local organisations, especially community-based organisations.

The increased funding given by donor agencies to budgetary support for national governments and the increased attention to donor harmonisation within nations may get national government buy-in but it does not necessarily get citizen buy-in — especially of "the poor" on whose poverty all donor assistance is justified. Reinforcing the role of national governments in development may be marginalising pro-poor local processes

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10. See the profile of ORAP (GK137d).

and the organisations engaged in these processes. There are good reasons for donors wanting proof of aid effectiveness — for instance through focusing on the MDGs and monitoring their progress — and on having all donors within each nation co-ordinate their work more and have it more focused on poverty reduction. But the way this is done so often marginalises local organisations. Both the donor agencies' responses to the Paris Declaration and discussions around national poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) are locating decisions and funding-control within national governments. Perhaps more to the point, if the importance of local organisations in development and improved environmental management is recognised, this implies a need to rethink the means by which these are supported. This goes far beyond some national consultation — for instance allowing a few NGOs to take part in discussions about PRSPs.[11] It needs an active process, not only at national level but within each region and district, to engage with a multiplicity of local organisations and work out how they can be supported, learn from and work with each other. Perhaps every locality needs its own PRSP process.

The ideal for local organisations would be funding available locally (i.e. in their city or district) from institutions that understand local contexts and that work in close partnership with them. This funding would be available quickly and flexibly with a minimum of conditions specifying what should receive funding and specifying funding conditionality. Such funding would be appropriate if funders:

- Do not demand that a set proportion of the funding comes as matching funds; instead the local organisation could be allowed to see what local resources could be mobilised.

- Do not demand that a proportion of funding is provided as loans that have to be repaid; instead the funder could work with the local organisation to identify activities that might appropriately generate partial or full cost recovery.

- Do not demand that the local organisation prove that it is working in partnership with local government; instead work with them to see whether such partnerships might be possible.

- Appreciate the importance of local organisations' long-term engagement for success.

- Do not put pressure on local organisations to spend.

Funding the kinds of local development processes pursued by the local organisations profiled here should not be done by "projectising" their work. Of course, this raises the issue of these local organisations' accountability upwards to the funding agencies and downwards to the groups with whom they work. But accountability upwards can be achieved by requiring careful and detailed accounting for all funding provided, rather than a large and rigid list of pre-conditions. Accountability downwards can be ensured from funding agency staff's close contact with each local organisation and checking the nature of their engagement with and transparency to the groups with whom they work.

Unfortunately, any official bilateral agency or multilateral development bank would face many institutional constraints if they sought to implement what is outlined above. It

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11. A discussion of national strategies is often too general, abstract and distant from the specific, location-based needs and priorities of grassroots organisations.

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would be far too staff-intensive, and if effective, may generate considerable opposition from national and/or local government. Indeed, one of the central difficulties facing international donors is the fact that the policies and practices of government agencies may be major factors in the creation or exacerbation of poverty. Many of the most effective local organisations are part of the opposition to these policies and practices — as can be seen in several of the local organisation profiles. It is not that any of these local organisations are against government; all seek to work with and support government, unless government policies are working against the interests of the local populations with whom they work. Many governments now impose considerable controls on the operations of local organisations.

Three possible ways forward might be considered by international funding agencies that recognise the important role that local organisations can have in development and environmental management:

1. For local organisations with a good track record (and perhaps existing relations with a funder), develop funding frameworks that are more flexible and long-term than conventional funding. The conditions imposed on these local organisations should focus far less on what should be done, when and how — and more on demanding careful accounting for funding used and careful checks on these organisations' accountability to local populations and local groups. These local organisations might also develop a capacity to fund a range of other local organisations and initiatives. It would also be preferable to have continuity in the funding agency staff managing this, as long as the local organisation approved this. There are precedents for this — for instance the capital fund provided by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida), known as the Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility (CLIFF). An alliance formed by two grassroots federations and an Indian NGO draw on this fund, as and when needed (Morris with Mullard and Jack, 2007).

2. Create funding from which urban or rural poor groups can draw directly. The International Urban Poor Fund, set up in 2001, has made funding available direct to grassroots organisations formed by slum or shack dwellers or homeless groups around savings groups and this has supported a wide range of initiatives. This has also shown how much can be achieved on the ground with modest funding, if this funding reaches representative organisations formed by the urban poor.[12]

3. International donors could experiment with setting up funds in particular localities within the nations that receive their aid to which local organisations could apply direct. Alternatively they could support existing local institutions that already do this. Here, the interest is in gauging the effectiveness of a fund set up in, say, Dar es Salaam or a low-income rural district in Ethiopia to which community-organisations could apply direct. Such local funds should also develop ways to become accountable and transparent to civil society organisations in their areas.[13]

12. For details of this, see Mitlin and Satterthwaite (2007).

13. See Mitlin (2008) for a discussion of the effectiveness of Urban Poor Funds set up by national federations of slum/shack dwellers, through which external funders can channel their support.

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