



ARTICLE

“Substantial Mutuality”: The Road to Trust between NGOs’ stakeholders

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Abstract

Multi-level governance materialises in the chain of influence between donors, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local partners and beneficiaries. This stepped relationship is often characterised by a degree of mutual mistrust and by divergent interests. It exists in a realm between formal highly bureaucratised and standardised development systems coupled with ineffective management practices, short-term agendas and lack of interpersonal relations, which undermine the creation of mutuality between the former and mostly informal stakeholders at the receiving end. This enquiry on “leadership as process” examines the role of NGOs in creating “substantial” mutuality in this chain of relationships. The data collected showed that there is a gap between upstream (donors and NGOs) objectives and the context in which they operate. The study concludes that by establishing mutuality and ownership NGOs can bridge the gap and limitations of the current system.

Keywords: multi-level governance; non-governmental organisations; leadership-as-process; trust; development agendas

1. INTRODUCTION

Multi-level Non-governmental organisations, or NGOs, meet the challenges of combining donors’ agendas and beneficiaries’ needs or demands. They are positioned as intermediaries at different positions in multi-level governance that provide the link between stakeholders. The potential of NGOs exercising process-based leadership in generating mutuality or trustfulness in this sphere is worth studying as NGOs cut across many different actors and interests. This will fill a gap in understanding the vitality of trustfulness between all the stakeholders within the chain. This article

demonstrates the critical role mutuality plays in the success of development projects. The emergence of interpersonal trust, understanding and power balancing in the downstream chain of influence: between donors, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and local actors (LNGOs), is a way to generate mutuality. The emergence of leaders will balance and align the interests of the different actors essential to create “substantial” mutuality and enable collective action. Leaders will have to build trust relations so that each member can understand the multiple constraints, issues, and motivations involved at different levels during the chain of influence. In this way, NGOs can be

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facilitators or moderators. Therefore, understanding and exercising leadership as process is a critical path for any project to be successful and sustainable. By contrast, in the absence of trust, there is a higher likelihood that the chain will be broken; be this because of potential institutional donors' strict agendas and requirements, or NGOs' incapability or unwillingness to listen and empower local communities. This article focuses on unexplored patterns of leadership occurring at every level of influence, thereby concentrating on leadership as process and the creation of mutuality between all stakeholders.

By adopting a different perspective, a new understanding of NGO workers' experiences is offered in order to deepen the understanding of development programmes from a leadership angle, and to introduce the concept of "substantial mutuality" between donors and beneficiaries. It is hypothesised that there cannot be mutuality without a leadership process, and that NGOs are central to generating and piloting this process.

This paper is composed of three main sections, each analysing the limits of the developmental world's systems and possible solutions; firstly, within the literature and, secondly, within practical applications, to finally analyse both with a systemic and leadership approach. The first part is divided into sub-sections sequentially describing NGOs roles, limitations and recommendations in the literature. The second part reiterates the same sub-sections, adapting them to practical situations with the views of interviewees' all working in the development field. The third part analyses mini-case studies reflecting on previous conclusions to assess how the development world functionates as a bureaucratic one; and to what extent aiming for mutuality can be an effective strategy for NGOs.

2. NGOS' ROLES TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE GLOBAL SYSTEMS: VIEWS FROM THE LITERATURE

The emergence of new sources of power in the Global South created a problem of negotiation between the local imperatives and the global structures.¹ Daniel Bell and Jean-Marc Coicaud even talk of a "Western-oriented agenda", too far from the "Third World" experiences.² The distance between rigid methodologies and local cultural norms creates tensions amongst the stakeholders.³ Beneficiaries will have a weakened ability to use market forces, and large, well established professionalised NGOs are more likely to attract foreign capital than smaller local structures.⁴ The unequal power, diverging objectives and methods between stakeholders leads to what Alan Fowler calls 'mutual mistrust'.⁵

NGOs therefore appear to have "various publics": donors, the general public, other NGOs, external verifiers and beneficiaries, and therefore need to promote bonds around shared values to balance the demands that are rarely aligned.⁶ They rely on their credibility to do so: they have to inspire trust, which can be built if common interests are shared, to attract donors.⁷ Peter Gourevitch, David Lake & Janice Gross Stein associate the alignment of demands to leadership as process and the quality to create mutual dependence, a pioneering approach in development studies.⁸

2.1. Development and limitations of the partnership approach

Originally, partnerships were supposed to reflect the solidarity between Northern NGOs (NNGO) and Southern NGOs (SNGOs), which pursued a common cause and addressed the weak recipient countries' ownership of development policies in dialogue, at the basis of their relations.⁹ Hence, it is considered as a

¹ Sanyal, Paromita (2006), 'Capacity Building Through Partnerships: Intermediary Nongovernmental Organizations as Local and Global Actors', *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 35(1), p. 66

² Bell A. Daniel & Coicaud, Jean-Marc (2007), *Ethics in Action: The Ethical Challenges of International Human Rights Nongovernmental Organizations* (New York: Cambridge University Press), p. 79

³ Bell & Coicaud (2007), pp. 90-92

⁴ Peter A. Gourevitch, David A. Lake & Janice Gross Stein (2012), *The credibility of Transnational NGOs, when virtue is*

not enough, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press), p. 115

⁵ Fowler, Alan (2000), 'Beyond Partnerships: Getting Real about NGO relationships in the Aid System', *IDS Bulletin*, 31(3), p. 2

⁶ Gourevitch, Lake & Stein (2012), pp. 23, 115

⁷ Gourevitch, Lake & Stein (2012), pp. 3, 18

⁸ Gourevitch, Lake & Stein (2012), p. 193

⁹ Fowler (2000), p. 1

multi-stakeholder approach to rely on each's competencies and work towards the same goals.¹⁰

2.1.1. Asymmetries of power

Indeed, the traditional system is composed of NGOs that form a donor-created or donor-led system carrying resources and authority from the core to the periphery and information and legitimisation from the other way.¹¹ Donors transmit a powerful language of established concepts of development, and for some authors INGOs appear as standard setters that marginalise smaller NGOs.¹² The inequality of power and clear hegemony of certain ideas, knowledge and sources of information counters the egalitarian ideology of partnerships and decentralisation.¹³ The institutional design of partnerships has affected local structures' room to manoeuvre and led to an absence of power and independence, especially among local NGOs unable to set their own priorities and agenda.¹⁴ SNGOs' resources depend on donor agencies funding conditions (the requirements that NGOs must adhere to), the effects of which are difficult to reconcile with ownership.¹⁵ Mistrust and fear eased their way into the relation as donors pursue their goals and NGOs have to fit into it.¹⁶ It suggests that NGOs have no place in designing their own projects for beneficiaries to implement, and that NGOs serve the purpose of mediating between beneficiaries and donors.¹⁷

2.1.2. Side effects of the implementation of some management practices

The enforcement of rational management practices has tended to realign southern orientations to match the changing donors' priorities, shifting the focus away from areas crucial to local beneficiaries and making it difficult to remain consistent with their original mission.¹⁸ The transposition of a uniform framework dominated by institutions seems far from approaches tailored to countries' histories and contexts.¹⁹ Relations shifted towards more contractual or formal interactions in the mid-late 20th century, diminishing the informal dialogue space and excluding people centred approaches.²⁰ Pressures to adopt a corporate-style or to conform to systematised and bureaucratic systems have given rise to a top-down approach and favours the "audit" or "report" culture at the expense of fieldwork.²¹ The lack of trust between donors and SNGOs thrusts donors to deliver aid indirectly through NNGOs.²² SNGOs are then forced to operate as sub-contractors as 'donors see you as an implementer of their ideas, not as the one who has to take the lead in transforming society'.²³ Targets and performance indicators have been favoured but are considered as a time-burden, an extra cost and requiring additional paperwork because of the weak coordination and lack of comprehensive understanding.²⁴ The shift to project and budget support in the neoliberal era turned out to be another limit to

¹⁰ Missoni, Eduardo and Alesani, Daniele (2014), *Management of International Institutions and NGOs: frameworks, practices and challenges* (New York: Routledge), p. 90

¹¹ Mawdsley, Emma; Townsend, Janet; Porter, Gina & Oakley, Peter, (2002), *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas. NGOs North and South*, (Oxford: INTRAC NGO Management & Policy Series), 14, p.4; Townsend, J.G; Townsend, A.R (2004), 'Accountability, Motivation and Practice: NGOs North and South', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5(2), pp. 272-273

¹² Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), pp. 1-3; pp. 272-273

¹³ Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 9

¹⁴ Michael, Sarah (2004), *Undermining Development: The Absence of Power among Local NGOs in Africa*, *African Issues* (Indiana: Indiana University Press), pp. 20-21
Elbers, Willem; Schulpen, Lau (2013), 'Corridors of Power: The Institutional Design of North-South NGO Partnerships', *Voluntas*, 24, pp. 49-50

¹⁵ Elbers, Willem; Arts, Bas (2011), 'Keeping body and soul together: southern NGOs' strategic responses to donor constraints', *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 77(4), p. 718

Elbers & Arts (2011), p. 713

¹⁶ Reith, Sally (2010), 'Money, Power, and Donor-NGO Partnerships', *Development in Practice*, 20(3), pp. 450, 452

¹⁷ Reith (2010), p. 450

¹⁸ Elbers & Schulpen (2013), p.51; Elbers & Arts (2011), p. 714

¹⁹ Fowler (2000), p. 5

²⁰ Elbers & Arts (2011), p. 715

²¹ Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 15

²² Lewis, David; Sobhan, Babar (1999), 'Routes of funding, roots of trust? Northern NGOs, Southern NGOs, donors, and the rise of direct funding', *Development in Practice*, 9(1-2), pp. 118-119

²³ Elbers & Arts (2011), p. 721

²⁴ Mawdsley, Emma; Townsend, Janet G. & Porter, Gina (2005), 'Trust, Accountability, and face-to-face

support and fund local initiatives.²⁵ The persistence of short-term approaches makes it hard for partners with less power to build strong staff and projects. Elbers & Arts have collected testimonies of SNGOs accusing donors' conditions of undermining their ability to undertake long-term planning- 'crucial if you want to develop a vision'.²⁶

The difficulties to pursue local priorities has resulted in tensions and bred mistrust between the stakeholders. Moreover, the resource constraints led to less visits to partners, though it is known to encourage sharing of ideas, and reduce malpractice although NNGOs tend to assume that local structures are similar to the northern ones and are left to situate themselves within the local context.²⁷ Paromita Sanyal analysed sides effects, among which are the lack of appropriate collaborators, the difficulties to share values with partners more preoccupied about their own survival, a distance with the field and an overreliance on changing donors' priorities.²⁸ However, Lewis and Sobhan propose an innovative analysis stating that the problem was more to do with a lack of imagination and adjustment to changing local conditions than a problem of being "instrumentalised" by the objectives of donors.²⁹

Furthermore, NGOs seem to be accountable to the donors, not the beneficiaries (i.e. their users).³⁰ Donors, similarly, are not accountable to their client but to their own governance structure, and for Julie Crespin the taxpayers are the principal stakeholders.³¹ This creates a considerable physical, conceptual and institutional distance between the original supplier of funds and the intended final users, which limits understanding and engagement with local actors.³² Though field offices are created, the short-term assignments, high staff turnover with temporary contracts and use of consultants makes it hard to create mutuality with local leaders, organisations and programmes.³³ The quest for greater accountability has reduced willingness to rely on trust.³⁴

interaction in North-South NGO relations', *Development in Practice*, 15(1), pp. 78-79

Missoni & Alesani (2014), p. 126

²⁵ Crespin, Julie (2006), 'Aiding local action: the constraints faced by donors agencies in supporting effective, pro-poor initiatives on the ground', *International Institute for Environment and Development*, 18(2), p. 433

²⁶ Elbers & Arts (2011), p. 719

²⁷ Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 20

Lewis & Sobhan (1999), p. 123

²⁸ Sanyal (2006), pp. 75-77

²⁹ Lewis & Sobhan (1999), pp. 127-128

2.1.3. Resistance

The main focus in the literature has been on the Northern donors imposing their will on Southern recipients, though Elbers and Arts have identified many strategies of response.³⁵ Undeniably, new actors or forms of association in the development world react to these malpractices and inequalities of power. At a local level, SNGOs use mutual dependence as leverage to achieve their goals, negotiate, persuade and personally engage donor representatives to build personal relations and trust thus creating mutuality of interests.³⁶ They have the possibility to create an understanding which goes beyond reports through face-to-face contacts.³⁷ New forms of association of partners have been created to negotiate these professional relations and gain power. They can gather in the form of alliances or networks, which emerged to provide solidarity, legitimacy in number, an exchange of information and platforms for joint advocacy.³⁸ Similar to partnerships, the alliance of partners depends on trust, shared values and personal relations to be effective.³⁹

2.2. Proposed solutions

2.2.1. Understanding of local situations

To address the remoteness of orthodox methodologies and local cultural norms, Missoni and Adelani called for a reconsideration of contexts in its multiplicity and complexity of geographical, historical, cultural, social, political, economic and environmental determinants.⁴⁰ By strengthening understanding, NNGOs could adjust to changing local realities as a support of SNGOs in

³⁰ *Ibid*

Townsend & Townsend (2004), pp. 272-273

³¹ Crespin (2006), p. 435

³² *ibid*

³³ Crespin (2006), p. 437

³⁴ Townsend & Townsend (2004), pp. 279-280

³⁵ Elbers & Schulpen (2013), p. 51

³⁶ Elberts & Arts (2011), pp. 724-728

³⁷ *ibid*

³⁸ Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 20

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ Missoni & Alesani (2014), p. 118

training, information and international coalition building.⁴¹

Mowjee lists the various key factors influencing funding relationships as trust, communication, understanding, shared assumptions and values, experience and knowledge of donor's institutional framework. A culture of trust can be achieved if NGOs start considering support to local NGOs not as an all-purpose solution but as a continuing dialogue.⁴² Being partners with grassroots organisations should be a core programme objective rather than a mean to implement projects.⁴³

2.2.2. Personal relations and new management practices

Reith advocates for the creation of personal relationships as a solution to acknowledge the real-life complexity of beneficiaries and erase mutual mistrust.⁴⁴ Face-to-face visits could then subsidise some parts of a standardised documentation.⁴⁵

The need for coordination, coherence, better alignment of programmes and harmonisation of practices as a way to reduce transaction costs and simplify communication tools has been proposed as a practical solution by several authors.⁴⁶ A coherent framework would allow capacity building and long-term programmes to fit into donors' agenda, thus having more impactful strategies.⁴⁷ Furthermore, NNGOs should raise the level of accountability of official development assistance by making connections between issues that are important in both Southern and Northern contexts: 'Northern NGOs need to get together and educate the donors'.⁴⁸ Donors and NGOs have to ensure the assistance is relevant to local priorities.⁴⁹ The creation of local offices to manage direct funds would be more relevant to create small numbers of quality relationships with NGOs, characterised by a trusting

"hands off" approach supported by frequent contact and communication.⁵⁰ For Emma Mawdsley, Janet G. Townsend and Gina Porter, NGOs should focus on the clients and on fieldworkers as well as NGO leaders.⁵¹ They talk about 'client evaluation for monitoring and evaluation', applying innovative management to the developmental world. SNGOs, on the other hand, could diversify the funds and be selective in the choice of partners and donors. They have a responsibility in requesting less external experts and more field visits.⁵²

2.2.3. NGOs as intermediaries

Many authors, among which Townsend, Gourevitch, Lake, Stein and Holloway recommended that NGOs act as buffers or intermediaries between donors and local structure.⁵³ Being at the crossroad of different interests, INGOs could be programme facilitators, and Holloway even campaigns for the "exit strategy": a long-term commitment from an INGO to build local capacity and slowly hand over the power.⁵⁴ For him, training and a gradual transfer of power to adjust to a new local leadership style will create management practices that reflect local realities while satisfying donor requirements: trust and mutuality then emerge from all stakeholders.⁵⁵ The leader at stake will innovatively 'inculcate a shared vision and ownership amongst the staff'.⁵⁶ Moreover, Missoni and Alesani argue for the creation of offices on the grounds allowing leaders to emerge as enabler, facilitator and global coordinator of initiatives.⁵⁷ Such focus on leadership as process in the development literature remains innovative. Sally Reith proposes an opposing view, in which NGOs' role should not be reduced to serve the purpose of mediating between beneficiaries and donors.⁵⁸

These proposed solutions would reduce some time burden while improving motivation. It could be a way for NGOs and donors to deepen their learning about

⁴¹ Lewis & Sobhan (1999), p. 128

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ Fowler (2000), p. 9

⁴⁴ Reith (2010), p. 452

⁴⁵ Mawdsley, Townsend & Porter (2005), p. 79

⁴⁶ Missoni & Alesani (2014), p. 129

Crespin (2006), p. 443

⁴⁷ Elbers & Schulpen (2013), pp. 52, 59

⁴⁸ Lewis & Sobhan (1999), p. 128

Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 72

⁴⁹ Lewis & Sobhan (1999), p. 122

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ Mawdsley, Townsend & Porter (2005), pp. 79-80

⁵² Mawdsley, Townsend, Porter & Oakley (2002), p. 72

⁵³ Townsend & Townsend (2004), p. 278; Holloway, Richard (1997), *Exit Strategies: Transitioning from International to Local NGO Leadership* (Washington: PACT), p. 6; Gourevitch, Lake & Stein (2012), pp. 115, 193

⁵⁴ Holloway (1997), p. 8

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 29, 43

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43

⁵⁷ Missoni & Alesani (2014), p. 129

⁵⁸ Reith (2010), p. 450

local realities and improve dialogue and more respectful partnerships. However, this implies a policy choice; and an over-reliance on personal interactions can, for some authors, affect the judgment of humanitarian workers.⁵⁹

3. PRACTICAL VIEWS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

Several interviewees were interviewed during one-to-one meetings for a few months in order to gather data on real-life situations in development programs. All seven interviewees work in the development sector, from local decentralised NGOs to major networks and donors, mostly in the UK and France.

3.1. A bureaucratic system

All the interviewees mentioned a bureaucratic system characterised by very complex rules (especially concerning the funding process) excluding trust. Similar to many authors, they denounce the rigidity of some actors that do not adapt to each context's specificities. A bureaucratic system is commonly characterised by an 'over-concern with procedure at the expense of efficiency or common scheme'.⁶⁰ The programmes, focused on short-term objectives, lead to a high staff turnover and discontinuities. The very demanding standardisation finally excludes smaller structures, less apt to respond to restrictive norms.

Pierre Micheletti, the Vice-President of Action Against Hunger, when asked about possible asymmetries of power in the relation between NNGOs and the European Union (a major donor AAH), talks about 'a technocratic heaviness with endless processes that force NGOs to be even more bureaucratic'.⁶¹ It is 'not a negative negotiation' but a system with strong procedural aspects that can sometimes hinder the adequacy of the programmes. Isabelle de Guillebon, the Director of the Senegalese Delegation of the Samu Social, considers that 'most institutional donors are soulless, with very complex procedures but they fund the majority of programmes, so you keep quiet'.⁶²

3.1.1. Away from local realities

Because the bureaucratic system is so procedural, local realities are often neither listened to nor considered. This translates into 'a big hypocrisy' for Participant A, a field worker for a decentralised UK NGO who wished to remain anonymous, who says:

'despite a decentralisation discourse, western values such as systems and planning are defended, but in some countries, it is completely out of their reality. Now all has to fit in one donor framework, with structural adjustments plans that are not even applied in the UK!'⁶³

For Micheletti, the transposition of the European democratic model to other contexts is not necessarily relevant or obvious and 'can raise issues with interlocutors that have different political histories and references'.⁶⁴ He embraces the trending views within the literature which denounced the transposition of a uniform institutional framework far from approaches tailored to countries' histories and contexts. He questions the capability of NGOs to intervene in new centres of power where they are not always wanted or fit in terms of competences to apprehend operational realities, struck with their old image of an Occidentalised world.⁶⁵ Keir Prince, the CEO of Adam Smith International, a global advisory company, added that:

'locals only influence the funding process if the needs they defend get close enough to donors' decisions and agendas. Most donors are westerners who follow their own norms and give little room to work with locals or talk to the beneficiaries'.⁶⁶

Similarly, for Isabelle de Guillebon 'visits of the local teams and the programmes are extremely rare from donors, whether private or institutional, making it hard for them to understand their situations, constraints and needs'.⁶⁷ In the same vein, Laurie Smith, the Head of

⁵⁹ Mawdsley, Townsend & Porter (2005), p. 80

⁶⁰ Oxford Living Dictionaries definition

⁶¹ Micheletti, Pierre, Vice-President of Action Against Hunger, Paris, 28/06/2018

⁶² De Guillebon, Isabelle, Director of the Senegalese Delegation of the Samu Social, Dakar, 20/06/2018

⁶³ Participant A, decentralised UK NGO, London, 17/06/2018

⁶⁴ Micheletti

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ Prince, Keir, CEO of Adam Smith International, London, 03/07/2018

⁶⁷ De Guillebon

Organisational Strategy and Planning for the British network Family for Every Child, denounces an 'imbalance in the discussion and a lack of practitioners more locally rooted, local or national organisations facing a "glass ceiling" in terms of representation'.⁶⁸ Keir Prince and Participant A agreed on the cause: a lack of trust from the donors to smaller local structures, always favouring civil society to distribute aid 'over village elders or beneficiaries', but without proof that they are more reliable. In the style of Missoni and Alesani, Prince thinks that donors will more easily fund Northern NGOs as 'they trust the West more, thinking NNGOs are easier to fund and that it is less risky for their credibility in case of failure', getting away from local realities. Participant A similarly declared that 'donors do not trust NGOs; they do not know what is relevant but still define trends as decision makers. They do not necessarily know or understand what we (NGOs) do or want to do'.⁶⁹

3.1.2. A very demanding standardisation

The bureaucratic aspect of the developmental world has also led to a standardisation of practices, language and norms which demands significant efforts from the NGOs to adapt to and may even lead to the exclusion of some of them. For Keir, 'we have to speak the language of donors and to do so we need good stories. You need to write love letters to the donors if you want the money: the rules of the game that are distorted (...) but you have to play by it'.⁷⁰ Though, like most of the interviewees, Keir Prince underlines that there are no intentional culprits but a bureaucratic system with language and education barriers. Furthermore, the language complexity with the use of 'buzz words' or the choice of 'sexy themes' can also exclude smaller structures 'who do not speak the same language or share the same cultural values' for Participant A.⁷¹ Hannah White, Responsible of the Communication of the Central Asia Institute in USA, considers that:

⁶⁸ Smith, Laurie, Head of Organisational Strategy and Planning for Family for Every Child, London, 15/06/2018

⁶⁹ Participant A

⁷⁰ Prince

⁷¹ Participant A

⁷² White, Hannah, Responsible of the Communication of the Central Asia Institute, Skype, 25/05/2018

'it is a difficult situation because there are a lot of expectations on NGOs to work a certain way and funders have their own objectives and goals they want us to accomplish. NGOs do not always have the capacity, flexibility or the money to be niche targeted, and it is becoming hard to get all the information donors want as often as they want it!'⁷²

3.1.3. A system focused on short-term objectives

Isabelle de Guillebon considers that 'most of the funding for humanitarian programmes are changing every two or three years with completely different objectives and agenda. Brussels has no idea of our needs, so they just switch their agenda', adding that she was refused funds to fix pipes and toilet lines that tended to leak in the courtyard but instead received money for other types of programmes less urgent but matching donors' agenda.⁷³ Moreover, 'they do not think in terms of programmes but in terms of project, which are more specific and short-term oriented'.⁷⁴ The mindset of certain institutions 'forces organisations to change in order to fit donors' agendas'.⁷⁵ This tendency to fund short-term projects has also led to a high staff turnover, often criticised in the literature. It is for Keir Prince the cause of a dangerous 'discontinuity causing strategic shifts hard to follow, as well as a loss of knowledge'.⁷⁶ The budget of each project must be spent meticulously to receive the same amount in the next funding, and 'people are punished for not spending the budget by fear of a loss of legitimacy, how ironic! They will prefer to spend it on cruises not to lose money than to speak the truth'.⁷⁷ Though, donors 'recognise the limitations and the issues of the current model but are still much more comfortable funding in the traditional way'.⁷⁸

3.2. Possible solutions

⁷³ De Guillebon

⁷⁴ *Ibid*

⁷⁵ Prince

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁷ De Guillebon & Prince

⁷⁸ Smith

Many practical solutions were suggested by the interviewees so as to improve specific relational dynamics. Most of them focused on the creation of trust, understanding, mutual interests to work together towards shared goals in order to build effective programmes and strategies. Interviewees also advised for the creation of a negotiation space with the donors as well as a tensioning with governments. NGOs can therefore appear as intermediaries who have to negotiate with different stakeholders: the local context, national bodies and international donors.

3.2.1. NGOs, beneficiaries and communities

Hannah White mentions the critical importance of ownership felt by local organisations and communities in the creation of intimate and trustworthy relations for successful outcomes. 'It starts from a human perspective: they want what is best for their people, and from there you decide how to phrase those conversations'.⁷⁹ In the remote areas of Pakistan, the Central Asia Institute (CAI) had to build mutuality and ownership from a religious perspective to build schools, education being an essential part of the Quran, accepted by Islam and encouraged by the prophet Mohamed. 'So, our partners on the ground talked about it from a context that was relevant to the community', and by talking "their language", 'people started to see the benefits of those programmes, and the involvement more than doubled in a few weeks'.⁸⁰ The condition to the creation of schools is the complete participation of the communities: 'they have to provide the land and the work force' in exchange for the materials. By putting involvement as the solo condition, 'the CAI integrated the communities and the projects became theirs'. It is for Hannah White 'the power of listening and seeing what is important for the community,' rather than pushing in when you are not wanted that makes a project successful: 'the community feels it is their schools'.⁸¹

⁷⁹ White

⁸⁰ *Ibid*

⁸¹ *Ibid*

⁸² Micheletti

⁸³ Fowler (2000), pp. 8-9

Lewis & Sobhan (1999), pp. 123-128

3.2.2. Integration of local competences and leadership styles

To apprehend the limits of the traditional NGO model, Pierre Micheletti advocates for the integration of local knowledge and the mix of NGOs' skills and knowledge. He therefore defends a desoccidentalisation (de-Westernisation) of processes, actors and competences.⁸² NGOs have to consider local partnerships not as a mean of implementation but as a core mission with continuing dialogue.⁸³ However, for him 'there is a real gap between the declared intention to transfer responsibilities and the dressed reality where a lot of resistance takes place'.⁸⁴ For instance, the NGO model of mobilisation is not evident, and 'our plasticity needs to admit that partnerships will not necessarily be on the same models of France and Europe, with understanding and open minds'.⁸⁵ A permanent reflexion on NGOs identity, practices and understanding of contexts are for Micheletti critical and essential actions for a transformation of the developmental world. Indeed, Participant A underlines that 'each context has its own views on developmental issues, and they are always the ones that know their locality better'.⁸⁶

Similarly, Keir Prince believes in a combination of competences, encouraging the employment of local people as 'I will waste time to understand a culture and rules that I will never truly get. By sub-contracting locals, I have legitimacy because I think of them as individuals and trust their knowledge and understanding of their own culture'.⁸⁷ The use of local skills and knowledge challenges the traditional idea of NGOs who consider the population only as beneficiaries, and for Hannah White:

'You need locals that you can rely on, and inclusiveness has proven time over time to be the most effective approach. Locals that know the system, can travel around, know the gossips. In the end, you have to trust individuals, even if it will never be a totally transparent system!'⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Micheletti

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ Participant A

⁸⁷ Prince

⁸⁸ White

Another tactic to bring local realities into programmes is for local structures to raise awareness about their needs and constraints, what Isabelle de Guillebon defends. She relates how:

‘The office in Dakar developed the vision of the Samu Social International by its local concerns. You need legitimacy, experience and good arguments to exchange and convince them (the NNGOs). At the end, it’s really working together towards change; and it is a matter of listening, exchanging and understanding. It is always about personal relations that can make things happen’.⁸⁹

3.2.3. *Better trust relations between NGOs’ headquarters and local teams*

Hannah White considers that it is all about relations, and especially long-term bonds that go beyond geographical and contextual distances, stating that ‘being around for more than twenty years, it adds legitimacy to the work that we are doing. It’s a multiplier effect at the long-term’.⁹⁰ She emphasised the importance of regular and face-to-face relations with the local partners:

‘I think that relationships are the most important thing of what we do. We Skype every week with the partners and I ask about their children and they ask about my family. That is a really difficult thing to do when you are thousands of miles apart on one side of the world, keeping everybody motivated on the same page’.⁹¹

Indeed, the model of the Central Asia Institute is primarily based on the construction of relations with partner organisations on the ground - in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. These local structures are the programmes implementers, ‘a sort of feed on the ground’ but also agent of change.⁹² They are in touch with communities, usually from those communities, and are the ones assessing the needs and potential costs for programmes.⁹³ As donor requirements and expectations

are sometimes difficult to achieve, and as ‘in some countries there is a lack of knowledge for reporting and funding acquisition for instance, we are trying to build the capacity of our in-countries partners’.⁹⁴ In this way, relations of trust can also improve capacity building and knowledge transfer for a better alignment of practices. The relation with partners functions both ways: ‘they help us connect with the communities and we help them to understand the processes of the donors’.⁹⁵ Similarly, Isabelle de Guillebon recommends a strong and day-to-day communication between the NNGO and SNGO on the activities, the needs or management practices; possibly with regular visits to the field.⁹⁶ It is by following the same logic that Family for Every Child (FFEC), a global alliance of civil society actors, is looking to work remotely ‘so now at least 90% of our staff is working remotely because we want them to be close to where members have to engage issues’.⁹⁷ All the interviewees strongly insisted on notions such as ‘exchange’, ‘negotiation’, ‘communication’ and ‘discussion’.⁹⁸

3.2.4. *The creation of a negotiation space with donors*

Interviewees recognised a proactive role of NGOs -both North and South- in discussing with donors and allowing for the creation of a negotiation space. For Hannah White, it is a ‘discussion back and forth’ between the NNGO and the donors.⁹⁹ ‘We try not to change the core values of the mission to fit a funding opportunity. Our real demands come from the community and we pack it for the funder without changing it’.¹⁰⁰

However, for Participant A and Keir Prince, even if the donors developed negotiation space with NNGOs, their relations with SNGOs are neglected due to mistrust, whereas it should be an essential link to implement effective strategies. He advises donors to understand the contexts as ‘they have high ambitions but do not take any risks. They should not put money in places they don’t even understand!’¹⁰¹ On the other side,

⁸⁹ De Guillebon

⁹⁰ White

⁹¹ White

⁹² *Ibid*

⁹³ *Ibid*

⁹⁴ *Ibid*

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

⁹⁶ De Guillebon

⁹⁷ Smith

⁹⁸ Smith, Barroy, Guillebon, White, Participant A

⁹⁹ White

¹⁰⁰ White

¹⁰¹ Prince

Isabelle de Guillebon also recommends SNGOs 'to prove their management efforts in order to be trustworthy. It's legitimate from donors to ask for reports and for a total transparency with the money of taxpayers. Smaller structures also need to adapt to donors' requirements, as they also have their own constraints. The relation of trust and exchange of good practice is on both side!'¹⁰²

3.2.5. *The creation of a long-term focus*

To address the discontinuity of short-term perspectives occurring in NGOs, Keir Prince recommends the creation of long-term relationships, with a managerial focus on staff consistency. For him,

'leadership shifts are what matters the most in organisations' culture, and NGOs need to stabilise it to keep the skills and knowledge within the organisation. Sometimes, it is about just one person, but his or her departure would put the organisation back into the previous situation causing a new strategic shift'.

He proposes two levels of solution:

'the theoretical one would be to cultivate relations with governments, staff, volunteers and local organisations to effectuate skills and knowledge transfer'. 'In practice, despite good intentions, the transition to staff consistency and trust between partners is still not established, and mistrust rules in some relationships'.¹⁰³

On the donor side, Isabelle de Guillebon favours a programme focus rather than specific and short-term project focus.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, Hannah White highlights that 'shifts in funding -between emergency and development - push NGOs to develop short-term projects, whereas you need long-term relations to develop trust and a balance between humanitarian and development aid'.¹⁰⁵

Alongside the creation of a long-term framework, interviewees emphasised the importance of a re-evaluation of the motivation of NGO worker and the

meaning of their mission. For Isabelle de Guillebon, too many development actors are focused on their short-term survival rather than a long-term focus, and:

'Institutions need misery to justify their existence. When I say that my objective is to close the Samu Social and be unemployed, a lot of people are shocked and have no interest that the development sector progresses. Whereas for me it will mean that nobody needs me around, and that autonomy has been accomplished'.¹⁰⁶

3.2.6. *Challenging governments*

For Pierre Micheletti, the most important typology should be the relation between NGOs and public authorities as the leverage of negotiation of an NGO is linked with its political sensitivity and economic system.¹⁰⁷ In France, out of the biggest NGOs, Médecins sans Frontières receives 2% of its budget from institutional grants; Médecins du Monde receives 50% of its budget from public funding and Action Against Hunger 75%.¹⁰⁸ Though according to him, 'it is not the ratio that determines autonomy, even private funds hinder independency'.¹⁰⁹ French NGOs are the product of a history and political sociology that made them turbulent actors for the government. He also underlines that NGOs are an essential part of the democratic landscape (doing public services), which is why governments finance and accept their critics. NGOs and governments, especially in France, have had crossed interests to brace in this accomplice arm wrestling.¹¹⁰ On the opposite, for Isabelle de Guillebon 'Southern governments don't care!' which constitutes a big obstacle to development and reliance on other public funds.¹¹¹

Towards a strong evolution of NGOs as intermediaries

NGOs can be facilitators, enablers or moderators of programmes being in the middle of diverse interests - the donors, their own interests, the local teams and beneficiaries. They can be seen as fundraisers and

¹⁰² De Guillebon

¹⁰³ Prince

¹⁰⁴ De Guillebon

¹⁰⁵ White

¹⁰⁶ De Guillebon

¹⁰⁷ Micheletti

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹¹ De Guillebon

programme implementers, working and exchanging on all sides. Participant A named it the “middle-men” approach: NGOs being at the centre of the chain of influence. ‘We have to reformulate the demands for the donors, as they don’t want to fund directly Southern projects. It is firstly out of constraint!’¹¹² Slowly this approach also serves capacity building, as ‘now we encourage Southern partners to undertake their own proposals’; but ‘I think you will always need a middle-man, at least as a “safety net” for procedures’. ‘INGOs are in this way setting a vision for the donors from SNGOs’ information as funders don’t know how to deal with SNGOs, not the opposite!’ ‘NGOs are creating a negotiation space to address this gap’.¹¹³

For Laurie Smith, considering NGOs as fundraisers remains a traditional approach. The alliance he belongs to, Family for Every Child, ‘does not believe in the concept of the Global North and the Global South and considers it an outdated paradigm’.¹¹⁴ For him, the traditional model is challenged as ‘knowledge and funding have sources that are changing, and the focus needs to be on how knowledge is transferred’, which is the reason why the alliance of 27 civil society organisations was created to work together towards similar goals.

‘We want Northern based local and national NGOs to be part of the network in the same as those that are in Southern regions. We believe that all of the NGOs have something to contribute and to reinforce each other’s practice, and something to learn from others’.¹¹⁵

Contrasting the fundraiser model, the NGO is here part of a bigger network of relationships in which:

‘All actors are mobilising and exchanging knowledge, collaborating and negotiating for key decisions and power’. ‘We really didn’t want to replicate the traditional model and become the donors’, ‘they (the partners) want to work together, and we will then provide budgets and pots of money to the working groups rather than granting to a member: we are now supporting that work’.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Participant A

¹¹³ *Ibid*

¹¹⁴ Smith

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹¹⁶ Smith

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*

The dissemination of ideas and practices works because ‘our job at the secretariat is to make sure the alliance is facilitating a high level of engagement: we’re basically providing the seeds funding’. FFEC is now ‘looking to move to a fully remote structure and at least 90% of our staff is working remotely because we want them to be close to where they have to engage issues’. Dynamic relationships of trust are here also key to successful outcomes, and FFEC ‘is constantly renegotiating its relations with partners, relating with them on a daily basis’.¹¹⁷

Though Keir Prince reminds that ‘being “translators” is already a progress, as locals are at least engaged and involved in the decision-making process’.¹¹⁸ Both the interviewees and the literature provide interesting insights on the system and its bureaucratic features. Studying in detail each relation and each apparatus were precious to establishing the relationships’ pattern. They also proposed various and rich solutions to address the system’s distortions and reduce its negative impacts. To extract the best out of this material and strengthen the solutions necessary to address gaps and misunderstandings, a systemic analysis of the developmental world is necessary.

4. A SELF-PERPETUATING SYSTEM

4.1 A lack of flexibility which hinders professionalism

As funds are extremely concentrated - most being provided by former colonial powers, the United Nations and Scandinavian countries - few actors, mostly institutional ones who have the ability to formulate policies and dominate decision-making processes, end up creating the norms and constraints applicable to all stakeholders.¹¹⁹ This uniform framework compels NGOs to align to certain rules and norms as well as to centrally defined policies. Though the issue seems to be more a lack of flexibility to changing local conditions than a problem of being instrumentalised by donors.¹²⁰ As it is commonly thought in the NGO world that only

¹¹⁸ Prince

¹¹⁹ Parker, Ben (2016) ‘The biggest donors of 2016’, IRIN, URL: <https://www.irinnews.org/maps-and-graphics/2016/12/20/biggest-donors-2016>, 30th of August 2018

¹²⁰ Lewis & Sobhan (1999), pp. 127-128

big structures will survive, they tend to enter a real “race for funds” applying to as many grants as possible and aligning their actions and programmes to this constraining framework. Core values and initial strategies may as a consequence be lost to adapt to a demanding standardisation, thus creating strong structural imbalances and perverse effects. Additionally, in this system described as profoundly bureaucratic, donors, governments and the public do not enable NGOs to face this bureaucratic burden properly. Indeed, only 7% of most institutional funding is assigned for NGOs’ administration expenses.¹²¹

Besides, the public also keeps a close eye on the administrative costs; considering that the money is always best used on programmes direct costs rather than for organizational purposes and efficiency improvement.¹²² Technocracy is thereby imposed on NGOs without having given them the resources to manage it. They therefore dedicate their limited resources (in time, people and competence) to the alignment to complex rules and procedures that are not adapted to their mission and environment. This happens at the expense of the proximity with fieldwork and projects answering the needs of beneficiaries. It prevents the allocation of resources to organize transversal workshops, lead more regular field visits, strengthen local partners’ capacity, ensure that projects monitoring & evaluation is capitalised upon and disseminated to others, or investing in modern IT project management tools. Another important side effect is that smaller structures, closer to the field, are excluded as they often cannot comply with bureaucratic requirements while they have the possibility to connect with communities and create mutuality. As a consequence of this situation, a major part of programmes are misaligned to the real beneficiaries needs and the *raison d’être* of NGOs.

Loss of meaning has become one of the major causes of the high human resources turnover as it strongly reduces motivation and causes stress. This limitation has severely hindered professionalism, expertise and in-house capacity building in NGOs. In this way, the system is partially ineffective and clearly inefficient.

4.1.1. An accountability and evaluation distant from beneficiaries

¹²¹ Unicef (2009), Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCA) and Small-Scale Funding Agreements (SSFA), p. 9

¹²² Trouvelot, Sandrine and Gingembre, Etienne (2017) ‘Associations: lesquelles méritent vos dons? 123 organismes

Altogether, these limits and gaps remain often hidden or overlooked because the actors are not held accountable to the beneficiaries, and even sometimes not more to taxpayers, but to other institutions and states. Evaluations are therefore not based on the beneficiaries’ criteria, but the taxpayers and governments, which has not created a beneficiary centred system. Donor and Northern NGOs struggle to evaluate their own impact. INGOs often limit their communication to a number of beneficiaries reached or, once in a while, pick up one story illustrated with carefully chosen images to highlight their institutional message. As a programme replaces another, the feedbacks and post-evaluation time is not adapted to the “humanitarian time” which requires longer periods for showing real results. Even though monitoring and evaluation are slowly becoming more and more required by donors to assess programmes outputs carried out by NGOs, it still remains insufficient. Finally, as results are not that convincing, and limits are diffusely perceived, institutions reinforce their policies and rules, thus increasing the undesirable effects. It is a vicious circle that is self-perpetuating. NGOs should focus on the “users” or beneficiaries, the fieldwork and local leaders to improve monitoring and evaluation processes.

So, there are real margins for improvement. The application of leadership as process is clearly an important part of the solution. Interviewees’ experiences have already proven how and why leadership approaches (the creation of strong, consistent and long-term relationships) can improve the system. These specific cases will consequently be analysed, verifying the hypothesis that mutuality cannot be created without the application of leadership as process and that NGOs are central to generating and piloting this process.

4.2. Leadership as process and the creation of “substantial” mutuality as a proposed solution

Process driven approaches - reaction to a situation, creation of mutuality and followership - constitute key paths to reform the development system. NGOs and leaders in NGOs are, before anything else, designers of

passes au crible’, Capital, URL : <https://www.capital.fr/economiepolitique/associations-lesquelles-meritent-vos-dons-1261693>, 29th of August 2018

their own projects and they associate with followers to implement them. By applying a genuine leadership as process approach, they can also become key intermediaries or “middle-men” and align divergent interests while fostering communication between the donors and beneficiaries. This position will also enable NGOs to refocus the system on its “end customers”, meaning the beneficiaries, and spur involvement around them. Below, different tactics and empirical experiences will be analysed with a leadership framework to illustrate and prove the hypothesis that NGOs have a key role in inspiring trustfulness and mutuality in the development sector.

4.2.1. Reaction to the situation

Leaders applying a leadership as process approach are defined as such as they react to a particular situation, event or context and offer a solution. The co-founder of the Central Asia Institute, Greg Mortenson, happened to be in Pakistan in 1993 as he was climbing the K2 summit.¹²³ After a fall and while trying to reach his companions, he reached a village and by talking to the villagers realised the severe lack of infrastructure Pakistan was facing. Governmental schools did not reach remote areas, and the rise of Taliban and Al Qaeda’s Islamic schools made it harder for the development of the region. It is from this situation that Mortenson, a climber and trauma nurse, decided to react.¹²⁴ He also witnessed hatred towards the USA, which forced him to create trust relations with village elders and local communities by proving his loyalty and good intentions over time.¹²⁵ What is ironic is that at first view Mortenson should have been the last person able to react to this situation and build mutuality with Pakistani villages: he was a white American with no development background, falling into the Pakistani culture and beginning his humanitarian career almost accidentally. But thanks to his and the villagers’ determination, they were able to react to these issues and reunite towards the same goal: the education of Pakistani’s children, and especially girls. Indeed, leadership behaviour depends on a particular kind of situation and differs with each situation.¹²⁶ Positive

outcomes using trust and adaptation to each context has thus shown the importance of leadership as process.

Similarly, Isabelle de Guillebon created piece by piece the Senegalese office for the Samu Social, having witnessed the situation of homeless children of Dakar. She fell in love with the country during a holiday trip and decided to settle there to change children’s conditions. She had no connections in Dakar, no experience in the development field, and none of these elements could have predicted the successful outcomes she achieved. Her skills and vision were developed in reaction to the context she was in.

4.2.2. Mutuality

Leaders in NGOs inspired trust and sought to build strong relations in order to create mutuality and trustfulness. Each case of leadership as process has a certain degree of mutuality, according to the intensity of relations between stakeholders, level of resources available and approaches applied.

Isabelle de Guillebon, by raising awareness of the Samu Social International on their local concerns and preoccupation, applied the strategies of resistance described by Elberts & Arts. She personally engages donor representatives to build trust relations. De Guillebon uses mutual dependence as a leverage to achieve change, by negotiating and persuading. She has engaged multiple stakeholders with face-to-face contacts going beyond the paper reality. The relentless efforts to engage with local actors, amongst which other NGOs, local structures or committees amplified the positive responsiveness of her followers. She was accepted as a role-model, comfortable with the local customs as well as the donors’ agenda. Her referent power – obtained by trust and interpersonal relations – as a French humanitarian inspired loyalty from different audiences, permitting her to create buffer zones of interest. Through her moral values of transparency and loyalty, she raises consciousness and mobilises energy to reach the change she aspires to. In this way, Isabelle de Guillebon is a model of transformational leader.

The case of Greg Mortenson in building “substantial” mutuality with communities is of particular interest as it was built out of a cross-cultural exchange. Despite his initial intentions to build a school, he soon realised that

¹²³ Mortenson, Greg & Relin, David Oliver (2006), *Three Cups of Tea*, (USA: Penguin Group), pp. 23-24

¹²⁴ Mortenson & Relin (2006), pp. 31-33

¹²⁵ Mortenson & Relin (2006), p. 73

¹²⁶ Bass and Stogdill (1990), pp. 563

a bridge was more needed, and changed his initial plans to respond to the demand.¹²⁷ Out of trust and dialogue, the CAI could overcome religious hostility and gender-based issues by communicating with the religious leaders, mullahs, community leaders and elders and by accepting their status and importance within the communities and for the sake of the projects.¹²⁸ He began to learn the customs, the language, praying with the communities without being himself Muslim.¹²⁹ Strong ties developed. Villagers took on the legacy of Mortenson's work, because they truly believed in it, thus proving the existence of a strong mutuality.

In the same way, Keir Prince decided to build "substantial" mutuality with Somali communities by trusting them. Conscious that he will never be able to fully understand the local culture, he opted for subcontracting and delegated responsibilities. His contacts permitted him to work in complex contexts, and to build long-term relations guided by the same goals: a better governance system and security. The Somalia Stability Fund aims to have a strategy relevant to changes on the ground, a community engagement and empowerment capable to bring strong local understanding and political networks as well as a local ownership with Somali-owned entities.¹³⁰ These values, combined with a long-term approach, created profound trust relations between the English fund and Somalis ownership of their organisations, future governance and networks. This framework created an exchange of influence between leaders and followers with a high degree of mutuality based on partnerships, equal power and understanding.

For Family for Every Child, trustfulness and hence "substantial" mutuality was created between the members of the board as they all have equal powers and aim towards the same goal: the creation of a functioning decentralised network. Interpersonal relationships have been created over regular meetings and has proved that this innovative model of leadership has a powerful impact on programmes and outcomes. As referenced previously, the practice within the development sector is often of competition between NGOs for meagre donors' funds. However, this alliance made sure NGOs could pressure the donors to prioritise local needs and

practice knowledge sharing as well as capacity building. All the local NGOs are trusted, feel responsible and believe in the alliance. The common goal, to reform institutions, proves that members of alliances tend to gather to inspire a change, and thus become transformational leaders using each one's strength to move forward.

4.2.3. Followership

By applying leadership as process and thus inspiring trust and mutuality, leaders gather followers around their cause. The interactive relation between leaders and followers is a dynamic exchange, operating hand-in-hand to set up a vision. The leadership applied by Isabelle de Guillebon illustrates the importance of leaders' visions to have followers. Little by little, she gained followership from Senegalese actors, other NGOs and institutions' representatives by proving her trustfulness. By being supportive, helpful and integrative of her staff, she applied genuine referent power.¹³¹ Her positive vision and commitments led the example and inspired followership. The NNGO structure, however, felt outdistanced and began to impede the actions of the Senegalese office. In this way, the creation of "substantial" mutuality can appear for other actors as a threat to their own influence, whereas they should reinforce each other. She emerged as a leader thanks to the followers who trusted her but without the position power – the influence one assumes to have by his title - the Northern structure offered her.

The case of Greg Mortenson is highly similar as he gained loyalty from different actors by being supportive and trustworthy. His focus on relationship building by being close to certain actors - village and religious leaders like the Shia leader of Northern Pakistan - inspired followership as the grassroot level. The trust he engendered helped him to get political, religious and tribal authorities on his side.¹³² In order to achieve his innovative vision of education as a path for peace, Mortenson and the members of the CAI needed to inspire respect and loyalty amongst communities. The commitment the staff showed by returning every few months to see the programmes inspired trustfulness.¹³³ The exchange of influence between leaders (the Central

¹²⁷ Mortenson & Relin (2006), p. 103

¹²⁸ White

¹²⁹ Mortenson & Relin (2006), p. 97, pp. 150-153

¹³⁰ Somalia Stability Fund (2014), Guiding Principles, URL: <http://stabilityfund.so/who-we-are/>, 1st July 2018

¹³¹ French & Raven (1962), p. 204

¹³² Mortenson & Relin (2006), pp. 189-191

¹³³ *Ibid*, p. 113

Asia Institute's staff and the community leaders) and their followers (the villagers) permitted the creation of innovative projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan where almost nobody did it before. But to make these projects viable, Greg Mortenson also had to inspire trustfulness amongst the donor community to fund its projects. Despite many failed attempts, Mortenson decided to search in the field he understood the most: the climber circle. After almost a year of struggle to raise funds, Mortenson convinced Jean Hoerni, a Silicon Valley pioneer to fund what would become the CAI.¹³⁴ There too, Mortenson used common experiences to create followership, and Hoerni stayed faithful to the CAI until his death. The mutuality was therefore built on both sides of the spectrum. Many schools and women's centre were created in these regions.¹³⁵ In this way leadership as process was essential to attract donors and align donors' policies and local communities' needs.

Another type of followership has been observed in alliances, where all the members are in a way followers and leaders of the initiative. In FFEC, all members tend to participate in the decision-making process with equal power. They work together with the belief that each one can contribute and reinforce the network's practices, knowledge and representation.¹³⁶ The assembly of members also provides guidance on what the board should prioritise or focus on: each member has a leadership role within the alliance and in the field. In this way, leaders and followers apply 'shared' leadership as responsibilities rotate among the alliance members, depending on the situation.¹³⁷ The relationship dynamic described in FFEC seems to go further along the leadership continuum with the practice of 'distributed' leadership 'in which the team leads its work collectively by creating norms of behaviour, contribution and performance, and by supporting each other'.¹³⁸ The organisational culture that alliances can offer are innovative approaches of followership. Their relations - leader-follower/follower-leader - is constantly re-negotiated in balancing power scopes.

5. CONCLUSION

This article found that the existence of bureaucratic apparatus has undermined the application of leadership as process within the developmental world because of an over-focus on short-term projects, administrative burden, donor compliance and lack of interpersonal

relations. This has resulted in implementation of programmes that are not focused on the local needs but aligned with donors' strategies only. Furthermore, ineffective management practices created a standardised framework that is not contextual or adapted to NGOs' environments. This lacking interoperability if not non-conformity of different levels of agency, as shown in the evidence, has resulted in a variety of "paper objectives" that has led to wastage of resources and "white elephant" projects. A "mutual mistrust" that has developed amongst developmental actors undermines the emergence of mutuality. Moreover, the importance of rules and norms has excluded smaller structures, often closer to the field, but unable to comply with these requirements. The systemic analysis examined and connected all these elements to describe a self-perpetuating vicious circle. Indeed, the technocracy imposed through a strict standardisation has generated a bureaucratic burden and a loss of meaning. Combined with the high turnover occurring in NGOs, professionalism and expertise are hindered, though necessary to develop sustainable strategies. Moreover, these gaps are often overlooked as accountability and evaluations approaches are not based on the beneficiaries' criteria, and NGOs therefore struggle to evaluate their own impact.

Therefore, the chain of influence occurring between the stakeholders (donors, NGOs, local actors and beneficiaries) reunites competing interests, governance, methods and objectives. Process based leadership is thus required to balance it so as to create mutuality and foster sustainable programming and multi-level governance. Indeed, empirical evidence has shown that the application of leadership as process was critical to create mutuality and inspire trust. This article found several approaches to create mutuality amongst which are the creation of local understanding and ownership, the creation of trust relations, new management practices or negotiations with donors. By examining the empirical evidence of Isabelle de Guillebon, Greg Mortenson, Keir Prince or Family for Every Child, it was found that the leadership as process approach is critical to inspire mutuality as well as followership. Leaders who focused on relationship building, capacity building, listening and empowerment became role models and gathered followers around their cause. The vision they shared

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 54-56

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 310-312

¹³⁶ Smith

¹³⁷ Grint (2010), p. 61

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 62-63

through the application of referent power showed the importance of process driven approaches to create effective strategies. Presumably, NGOs play a key role due to their central positioning in the chain of influence. Indeed, equitable engagements with followers in design and implementation of programmes entails trust and loyalty by answering their needs and keeping commitments. Communication, mutual interests and relentless efforts are therefore essential elements in inspiring trustfulness amongst stakeholders. Moreover, NGOs are key actors, but they are not the only ones and can find key allies into governments, institutions or local constituencies. Besides, restoring meaningful relations would be an opportunity for the development world. The creation of a value chain would certainly free time, which can be reallocated to a repositioning and profound change.

In this way, empirical findings have highlighted theoretical implications, as mutuality has been proven to be an effective strategy in the development world. The creation of sustainability in development programmes can be achieved through a participatory approach which creates a sense of ownership among communities. Therefore, the longevity of projects is ensured because its design is localised at the local level. Communities understand its value and are key actors of its implementation. Leadership approaches may thus be pioneers in development studies and practical development management by ensuring long-term strategies and meaningful relationships. The realignment of interests and practices may also be a way to reallocate resources and time, thus not consuming the time of potential leaders in NGOs.

This article underlines the complex collaborative elements which are essential for mutuality to emerge. However, because of the variety of contexts and the emergence of new models in the development world, no generalisations should be made. Further research is needed in order to establish the leadership dynamics in NGOs as this knowledge can contribute not only to the academic gap between leadership and development disciplines but also to formal policies and management approaches. NGOs could focus on the reformation of their organisational culture as well as the creation of meaningful relations of trust with local actors. The emergence of negotiation spaces with donors, institutions and governments is necessary to encourage, stimulate and generate the policy changes needed to apply these measures.

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