

## **Constructing a Southern Constituency for Global Advocacy: The Experience of Latin American NGOs and the World Bank**

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### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the challenges that southern NGOs face when seeking to participate as autonomous players on global NGO advocacy activities and construct a constituency for such activities. As newcomers to an already densely established system of transnational coalitions and networks constructed around an incredible array of problems, developing an agenda, establishing alliances with other groups, developing new skills and analytical capacities confront them. But at the same time the need to go through their own learning process, construct a constituency for such activities and be accountable to both its members and other groups within the region. Last but not least they face some complex ideological dilemmas on issues such as the relative emphasis on global or national and on sovereignty issues.

This implies at least the following challenges:

- focusing development NGOs on global advocacy and campaigning through a learning process;
- combining political advocacy with participation demands, including access to financial support;
- establishing advocacy relations with our northern counterparts;
- constructing relations with other regional civil society actors;
- developing accountability regarding its membership and other groups in the regional; and,
- choosing how to relate to country governments.

We would like to argue that southern NGO networks could be important mechanisms for southern NGO advocacy activities and constructing more horizontal relations with northern groups and coalitions. They can also help confront many of the challenges for that participation, and build collective capacities, that individual southern NGOs can not develop, given the changes that are happening within NGOs. Nonetheless southern networks should at the same time assure a collective capacity building process, including analytical skills and build within their networks better accountability practices and processes. At the same time northern NGOs should build more politically horizontal relations with such networks, assure that agendas are jointly built, give careful attention to issues raised by southern NGOs and respect the necessary learning process that is required. More generally, this implies moving global advocacy from northern led networks to the construction of coalitions. Transnational coalitions can assure mutual influence and accountability, be more horizontal in establishing relations between partners and thus be more democratic and effective in solidarity terms. This has not been the case in recent years.

We will mainly take as an example ALOP, a southern NGO network established by Latin American development NGOs in the late 70's. ALOP from 1990 decided at its Santiago assembly to build itself as a regional civil society actor and promote a more democratic, inclusive and equitable development for the region. The scenario for its new role would be regional and global development arenas and actors, with the understanding that its national NGO members would undertake national political disputes. From that moment ALOP has focused its activities on three main development arenas: multilateral development banks, with a special emphasis on the World Bank, the regional trade agreements, such as MERCOSUR, the Andean Community and the Central American Integration System and development aid.

This paper draws some lessons from ALOP's advocacy efforts *vis a vis* the World Bank, specifically regarding its participation on the NGO Working Group on the World Bank and the NGO World Bank committee, of which it became a member in 1994, and its global and regional chair from 1996. When ALOP decided to become a member its purpose was limited to opening space for NGOs on the new social investment programs, which it had monitored for a while, on a joint effort with the German NGO EZE. This original purpose was modified by events, which will be discussed at length later. From 1996 ALOP jointly with other southern NGO groups chose to bring changes to the working group that included efforts: to decentralise it and increase its constituency and bring new areas of concern to the group including participation and capacity building of southern NGOs and second generation reforms.

This paper is organised in four main chapters. In the first chapter we discuss some of the main trends within Latin American development NGOs, with special mention to their capacities regarding advocacy. On a second section we describe briefly ALOP's experience within the NGO working group on the World Bank. On a third section we analyse results of survey of 20 South American NGOs members of ALOP on attitudes towards the multilateral development banks; and finally in a fourth section we come back to some critical elements regarding construction of NGO constituency for global advocacy.

## **1. Latin American Development NGO Changes and Advocacy**

Even though southern NGOs have been participating on international campaigns from the mid eighties on areas such as environment conservation, debt or aid flows, global advocacy was done under the leadership of northern NGOs or individuals and with their resources. These campaigns had interest to southern groups as they became useful in creating space for their in country activities, and not necessarily because they thought they could influence more global processes. It is only when neo liberal adjustment policies de regulated the economies, diminished the importance of the state and opened southern countries to the emerging global economy, that Latino NGOs started to pay more serious attention to global affairs. This happened also when democracy became predominant in the region not only because elected governments took office in almost every country but also because it became the legitimate form of government(2). Citizen rights and democratic accountability became part of the main ideas organising activities of NGOs.

When southern NGOs started to pay attention to global processes they confronted an arena well under construction, where problems had more or less been defined, strategies and tactics had been established, NGO alliances and coalitions had been formed and much experience had been gained. This was especially true on campaigns organised

around policy and institutional reform. Southern NGOs and more specifically individuals, Latin American amongst them, were participating on such campaigns, but normally on a subordinate form: providing project information and political legitimacy to campaigns designed, structured and developed from the north and directed towards northern government decision-makers(3). This had to do not only with differences between political systems and the availability of public officials, elected or not, to citizens requests, but even more to the more global economic and power divide between the north and the south.

Constructing a stake as an autonomous player on the global advocacy arena implied significant challenges to Latin American NGOs, specially when they were going thorough an accelerated process of change regarding both their identity and their financial sustainability. NGOs were changing in many ways as a consequence of both the new political and economical environment and the diminishing support of aid channelled by northern partners to the region:

1. Their strong relation to traditional peoples organisations as trade unions and peasant federations was being substituted by a link to a more diverse set of social actors, including women, ethnic groups, and a new protagonism of NGOs as social actors under their own right.
2. Changes of main guiding principles of NGOs and in many cases of paradigms: while radical social change and socialism organised the ideology of most NGOs in the 60s and 70s; inclusive and sustainable development, consensus building and democracy are the ones organising NGO thinking on the late eighties and nineties.
3. Changes on program composition where some action lines lose weight: popular education or trade union political assistance and others develop strongly: micro finance, technical assistance or local development.
4. Reduction of the importance of social and economic research, both regarding financial and human resources assigned to it. More emphasis on action oriented programs.
5. Supporting market oriented activities of the poor through new and innovative forms of association, training and establishment of financial and service provision enterprises and in some cases contracting with the business sector.
6. Contracting with governments, both national and local, for social service provision.
7. New strategies for fund-raising including development of commercial activities cost recovery and local fund raising(4).

These changes have brought considerable strain and tension within the historical development NGO community: many have succumbed or have been caught by survival strategies, where NGOs took what ever was offered to them, reduced their staff, modified their contractual agreements with the employees. This in the long run affected their capacities and blurred their identity. In other cases NGOs have adjusted to the new environment, have become more professional, developed efficient management capacities, started social business ventures, including cost recovery and diversified their sources of income(5).

As Eduardo Ballon has stated this process has brought along identity changes amongst Latin American NGOs that can be described along three main concepts: changes on visions of development, changes regarding legitimacy and accountability, search for new sources of funding which establishes relations with other actors and organisations, such as business and the state.

It is our sense that these changes have also opened up opportunities for Latin American NGOs to influence social, political and economic processes by their own right or in coalition with other social actors. In many countries this is happening. A number of examples can be mentioned: NGO participation on processes leading to peace agreements in countries such as Guatemala or more recently Colombia; promoting new social policies as the Brazilian Campaign against Hunger and for Life or indigenous peoples rights in countries like Ecuador and Bolivia or assuring free elections in Mexico. For that purpose specific structures have been built that bring together NGOs, peoples organisations, grass root organisations and in many cases individuals.

At the same time new structures have been built by Latin American NGOs at the country level, regarding citizen initiatives and accountability struggles, some of them linked to specific aspects of country participation on global structures. In Nicaragua El Grupo de Cabildeo e Incidencia has been established as a voice for Nicaraguan groups on Consultative Group meetings for that country. In Colombia Viva la Ciudadania was established to advance citizen participation regarding the Constitutional Assembly and the building of peace. In Mexico, groups such as Ciudadanos frente al Libre Comercio and more recently Accion Ciudadana en relacion a la Union Europea, Ciudadanos por la Democracia and Convergencia mobilise citizens and social groups on different areas of concern. In Peru, Propuesta Ciudadana and in Ecuador el Foro Democracia y Desarrollo are also examples of NGO initiatives for national advocacy. Probably it is Brazil where these types of NGO initiatives have mushroomed in number and have become influential actors. Experiences such as the Rede Brasileira frente a la Banca Multilateral and the Campaña Nacional contra el Hambre, la Miseria y la Vida that have had substantive results regarding the establishment of country policies, through broad social mobilisation and dialogue with decision makers.

A certain number of new regional or sub regional NGO coalitions and networks, advocacy oriented, have also been started in the region. The most important cases are probably the Central American networks such as Concertacion, the greater Caribbean network CRIES and the ICIC coalition, which includes most Central American civil society networks(6). An other example of more at the regional level are groups such as El Banco Mundial en los Ojos de las Mujeres, with a strong gender perspective on Bank issues and the groups linked to the free trade discussions.

Most of these examples have in common a collective definition of the coalition purposes and rationale, the pulling together of human and financial resources, the definition of collective organising and direction mechanisms and procedures for accountability, the merging of different types of civil society organisations: peoples and grass root organisations, NGOs or cultural groups. At the same time all of these efforts, with the possible exception of groups linked to the free trade agreement discussion where country specific and crated around a national coalition ad agenda. International NGOs and coalitions and northern partners where brought in t support such national initiatives.

It is difficult to find sustained efforts organised from the south to do campaigning on transnational or global policy issues or on the reform of global institutions. This has almost always been left to northern NGO coalitions and campaigners. Advocacy was done by northern groups and was directed towards dealing with the Bank. It was only later that development NGOs and non-US northern NGOs joined the advocacy efforts, but the basic north south participation was not challenged, until the mid nineties. All along though, each

group had different agendas: while northern NGOs sought to change the Bank most southern groups were seeking to expand political space on their countries.

Nonetheless these new examples of campaigning in the south have the potential of becoming partners for transnational coalitions that search to influence international institutional reform. ALOP, a Latin American NGO network has started to develop it self as a regional civil society actor, willing to enter in new types of coalitions for global advocacy roles.

## **2. ALOP and the NGO Working Group on the World Bank**

ALOP is a Latin American development NGO network established in 1979 under the initiatives linked to the Hunger Campaigns of the seventies. As of 1998 it associates around 50 NGOs coming from 20 countries of the region, equally distributed among the main sub region. Members were chosen under strict scrutiny regarding both the closeness of their mission to ALOPs and their institutional and financial soundness. Regional and country balance is also considered, looking for an adequate geographical representation. From the activity side, even though most of ALOPs original membership came from the rural development area, from 1990 diversification was actively sought, looking for NGOs working on urban affairs, micro enterprise, sustainability, etc. Most of ALOP members are clearly action oriented, even though a certain number of them have research capabilities, specially on the social science field(7).

Most of its founding members are what are known today as the historical development NGOs of the region, established on the 70s and 80s, linked traditionally and working closely with peasant federations, trade unions and organisations of the poor urban dwellers. Up to 1990 most of ALOPs activities were centred on experience exchange, training and collective search for funding, mostly from their traditional north European partners. Even though differences could be found between members, most thought of their roles as basically serving popular organisations, which were, believed to be central actors for radical change. Their activities were organised around socio political education, popular organisation, and leadership development. Productive activities were thought as means to achieve those results.

At the beginning of the 90s, the return to democracy in the region and its acceptance and other changes, which were described before, created a climate for a strategic change on ALOPs mission: to become a regional civil society actor. While the definition of issues and arenas where such new role would be constructed, was not clear from the beginning, ALOPs leadership decided to start a dialogue with different social, business and state actors, including inter governmental organisations. It also decided to monitor a certain number of new policies that made their appearance by then, such as social investment funds. By 1994 problems subject to action were defined broadly: multilateral development banks, regional trade and integration agreements and aid and co-operation; as were the structures: the NGO working group on the World Bank and ICVA for the aid and co-operation issue(8).

The NGO Working Group on the World Bank and the formal structure the NGO World Bank Committee had been established in 1981 with the purpose to expand operational collaboration between the Bank and mostly northern operational NGOs. This mission and membership changed over time. Membership changed to include development policy

oriented NGOs and regional and country federation and networks and strengthen southern group membership. When ALOP came in was composed of 26 members: 2 international NGO, 5 NGOs from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe and 4 from North America and the Pacific. Membership included representatives from networks such as INTERACTION, EUROSTEP, APRODEV, OXFAM, CIDSE, ALOP and ANGOC, with in general a progressive attitude. From the mission point of view it evolved from operational collaboration to a policy advocacy agenda, through what has been called critical collaboration. It included the explicit search for discussions on the field of structural adjustment and participation(9).

Up to 1994 dialogue with the Bank on the main policy items chosen where in the best of cases of very limited impact and consequences. Detailed discussion of the structural adjustment policy impact in three countries: Mexico, Sri Lanka and Senegal went without serious discussion by the Bank. On the participation area a more constructive dialogue took place, but limited on its institutional impact. The participation action plan approved by the board and a Bank document on participation did not fully consider NGO points of view(10). This changed significantly owing to five sets of variables:

- the IDA replenishment discussion that implied a break with other bank campaigners and a decision to support the Bank in its dealings with the US Congress, against a general commitment by the Bank for IDA policy reform(11);
- the decision by the group to decentralise and further expand the groups constituency, which took the group to organise regional meetings of the group in every developing region, increasing exposure to an increased number of NGOs(12);
- the decision to broaden the dialogue with the banks management and the Board, which included not only the Banks President, the regional vice presidents, the Banks Economic Vice-presidencies, managers for critical departments of the Bank (HIPC, Strategic compact, Knowledge Management, OED, QUAG, etc.), but probably more important a decision to search for a direct discussion with the Banks Board(13);
- The definition of a global policy advocacy agenda which included participation, on which the group persevered, but also some new subjects as capacity building of Southern NGOs and Social Investment Funds. The regional dialogues opened up the agenda items bringing regional specific policy points(14); and,
- the strengthening of reformist positions within the Bank as a result of the election of Mr. Wolfensohn as president of the Bank, which includes bringing within some hard areas of the Bank more progressive staff(15).

While the last variable was a decision of member governments, the NGOs working within the group were largely responsible for the last four. In these strategic changes southern NGOs played a significant role, as they were responsible both for critical political decisions, such as IDA, but also regarding structure and agenda. Opening up the group to new members brought in accountability requirements that were almost absent in the past, it also democratised the group, changing its self-selecting character. This process evolved towards a formal restructuring of the group, approved at the last two general meetings of the working group and the Committee, that includes:

In the Latin American region the NGOWG on the WB organised four meetings, where probably some 200 NGOs groups have participated(16). This helped to considerably

expand the constituency of the group, specially considering the criteria used to invite groups to come: national or regional NGO networks with interest on Bank both representative as ABONG or de Colombian Confederation or the Peruvian Association or more specialised groups as the Brazilian Rede or the Nicaraguan Grupo de Cabildeo, but also more specialised NGO networks as the el Banco Mundial en los Ojos de las Mujeres. At the latest meeting the group elected a regional steering committee, representing such a constituency and geographically balanced(17). While it is still at its start and its future is not completely assured, the new regional working group has the potentiality of becoming a strong player. Its agenda includes advocacy on general issues such as gender and participation, but also relevant regional policy issues, such as Second Generation Reforms.

All of the regional meetings of the NGOWG where done in conjunction with the World Bank Vice-presidency and the presence of the Bank vice-president, Mr. Javed Burki. It included a set of policy discussions chosen on the initiative of NGOs, working through panels; reporting back of monitoring exercises; and, the definition of a certain number of agreements taken between the Bank and NGOs, which were followed up to the next meeting. The agreements developed incrementally between the four meetings, but some should be mentioned explicitly:

- The contracting of NGO specialists on all resident missions of the Bank in the region(18),
- The launch of a regional workshop and research group on Urban Poverty(19),
- The translation of Bank loans synthesis and of policy documents(20),
- The decision to push for participatory CAS exercises in a number of countries(21),
- The development of a gender regional action plan with strong NGO participation(22),
- The establishment of a Bank steering committee to deal with NGOs and the development of a region work plan(23).

The type of relation that the NGOWG established with the Bank falls along the definition of critical collaboration: an engagement which includes elements of both conflict and Cupertino and so reflects a mix of different and converging interests. It is an appropriate strategy when parties desire both substantive outcomes and a constructive relation with each other(24). This strategy differs from more conflict and protest strategies or with mere co-optation. As Jane Covey has stated this type of collaboration requires a learning process by which both parties accept the notion of mutual influence and evolve the capacities to achieve that goal(25). This type of Bank NGO relation does not preclude more conflict driven relations, on the contrary they can be mutually reinforced. One could even say that there is a type of Bank loans and Bank policies were a more adversarial attitudes are necessary, as has been the case in some of dam construction and resettlement programs and loans, some sector and global structural adjustment programs.

What have been the results of 4 years of critical collaboration between regional NGOs in Latin America and the Vice presidency? Influence of this process should be sought in relation to the three main areas of Bank activity regarding its country and regional work: regional policies, CAS and country portfolio and its impact on projects. While it is difficult to establish clear-cut objective criteria on the degrees of influence one could differentiate process and substantive results. On the process side access to information, consultation

and influencing decision making could be differentiated. On the substantive areas one could distinguish definition of concepts and strategies from actual implementation.

I would like to argue that most of the results of the regional NGOWG has been on process, but that spaces are open now for more substantive results. If we look at regional projects that have NGO involvement the change for the Latin American region is noticeable, all though not as important as in South Asia. NGO participation is more noticeable on social sector, environment and agricultural loans, while it is non-existent for multisector projects (normally the adjustment programs), electricity and urban development (1997 loans). Provisions for NGO/CBO involvement was stronger in three countries of the region: Brazil (20% of projects between 1973 and 1997), Mexico (14%) and Bolivia (26%). Nonetheless the level of involvement on most projects was very small. There is no readily available information on the size of the involvement for the region, but probably is slightly on the increase. Involvement is mostly on the implementation phase of the projects, but some increase is noticeable on the design phase(26).

As the recent monitoring of participation on a limited number of projects for the region showed that the depth and the breadth of NGO involvement varied considerably from country to country, depending not only of general policies, but also on the willingness of task managers, the attitude of government agencies and the general political environment and the more or less adversarial character of the project. There seems to be needed more strict and guidelines to guide NGO involvement, more incentives for task managers and more objective procedures that limit government political influences(27).

It is also noticeable a movement of the Bank away from adjustment loans and towards second generation reforms, social sector and human resources development loans, all though the recent financial crisis in the region wiped out most of the gains on this trend. 1998 and 1999 will probably show an increase on adjustment loans once again, demonstrating that SAPs for the region increased the vulnerability of the region(28).

<i>Projects with NGO Involvement as % of Total Projects</i>				
By region	1986-1994	1995	1996	1997
Africa	29	57	29	61
East Asia and Pacific	19	29	20	32
South Asia	29	67	16	84
Europe and Central Asia	12	29	23	24
Latin America and the Caribbean	20	42	26	60
Middle East and North Africa	11	29	8	41

On the policy areas advances are slight. One could mention basically the efforts on the urban poverty policy development area, the willingness to work together the second-generation reform policies and projects and advances on participatory CAS on some countries. This will require moving from a more reactive attitude of NGOs regarding policy



development to a more pro-active role, increasing the analytical skills and working with university and think tank specialists.

### **3. Developing Advocacy Capabilities within ALOP**

What have been the results of ALOPs involvement with the NGOWG on the WB for ALOP itself? Has it produced a learning process and have new skills been developed? How has ALOP organised itself for advocacy purposes? How has it influenced its relations with its northern counterparts? Up to 1998 most of the policy regarding multilateral banks was the responsibility of ALOPs board and the implementation was in charge of the executive secretariat. From 1998 on a special working group on MDB is being established and will comprise members of the NGOW and other NGOs active on the issue. To better define its strategy regarding the Multilateral Development Banks ALOP decided to ask three of its members to do an assessment of its policies, based both on a ALOP wide survey and regional discussions(29). While this assessment has not finished results for 21 South American NGO members of ALOP can shed some light on the internal impacts of ALOPs advocacy efforts(30).

Results of the survey cover three broad set of issues: involvement on MDB issues, assessment of MDB roles and views regarding MDB civil society and NGO relations and more specifically relations with ALOP. While the results show similarities between NGOS there are though differences between the Andean and the southern cone groups.

#### *NGO participation on MDB issues:*

- 80% of ALOPs members participate on MDB issues. Participation is defined as constant and systematic on 55% of responding NGOs and sporadic on 45% of cases. There were no differences among NGOs.
- Asked to define the means of participation, banks civil society meetings came up first, followed by training on MDB, operational collaboration, consultancies and analytical work. Very few had done work on Banks through advocacy with governments or the national congresses. While Andean NGOs had done more operational collaboration southern cone ones had done more consultations and training.
- Regarding participating on other networks on MDB besides ALOP 45% did and 55% did not, with strong differences between Andean and southern cone NGOs. There was a stronger presence of other networks in Brazil and Argentina.
- 76% of NGO had received some kind of financial support from MDBs, with out a significant difference among regions and at least 5% more tried but failed. Resources were linked to expert consultancy, implementation of projects and project monitoring and evaluation. The World Bank was the main source of funding in the southern cone (55%) and the IDB was among the Andean NGOs (78%)

#### *Appreciation on the Role of MDB at the country level*

- Regarding the priority activity at the country level, NGOs considered that large infrastructure projects, social policies, agriculture, second generation reform loans and structural adjustment were MDBs main priorities. NGOs were not generally aware of loans for the education and health areas. Andean NGOs though that agriculture had a high priority on their countries.

- Asked to make an assessment of Bank programs and projects NGOs gave MDB bad marks on almost every issues, with the exception of supporting big enterprise interests. Nonetheless better relative marks were given to supporting the most vulnerable groups and sustainable development. The worst marks were associated with eradicating poverty and citizen development.
- Regarding differences between the IDB and the WB, NGOs thought that operational collaboration was easier with the former, while policy discussion and openness to civil society concerns was better with the latter. IDB is also judged a more government linked Bank, not necessarily associated with SAP, while on the WB case the inverse is true.

*MDB relations with Civil Society in general and with ALOP specifically.*

- Regarding some of the most innovative initiatives of MDBs regarding civil society liaison officers and information access were better judged than inspection panel and participation policy. In general southern cone NGOs judged better these initiatives than their Andean counter parts. Probably the role of liaison officers made the difference between them.
- Regarding the main agenda issues to be prioritised by CSO on their relations with the MDBs, poverty eradication and agriculture came clearly on top, followed by human capital development, participation, SAPs and external debt. While Andean NGOs gave top priority to agriculture, southern cone NGOs gave more importance to poverty eradication and participation. Andean gave also more importance to SAP and infrastructure than their southern colleagues.
- Regarding the means to be used on their advocacy activities, tripartite dialogues including CSO, governments and MDBs came out first, followed by structured mechanisms for Bank NGO collective dialogues and the creation of autonomous NGO groups on MDBs.
- Regarding ALOPs activities on MDBs 90% new about the activities and 5% did not; 60% had participated on some of the activities and 70% planned to do in the future.
- Regarding judgement on results creating a space for dialogue and access to information was cited as the main result, becoming a recognised counterpart for the Banks and other CSO organisations and decentralising the NGOWG were mentioned.
- On the future, 95% of NGO members thought that ALOP should have an active role on MDBs. Search for transparency and MDB accountability was cited as the main purpose for ALOPs activity.
- Regarding main agenda areas for ALOPs advocacy role, poverty eradication and participation came out first, followed by agriculture, Bank reform and SAPs. Southern cone NGOs mentioned urban affairs as their third priority, while agriculture was the first.

#### **4. Some Concluding Remarks**

ALOPs experience seems to demonstrate that southern NGO networks can play an important role on global advocacy campaigns and construct a wider constituency for them. First of all work done by ALOP through the NGOWG has been successful as an internal learning process for ALOPs members. It made them aware of MDB activities, but also on NGO advocacy priorities. This learning process has also helped ALOPs members to play an extended multiplier role towards other NGOs and CSO, through participation on

meetings, panels and discussions on such organisations. Fatima Melo concludes that ALOP NGOs are being helpful on promoting a public interest on such banks. This role can be expanded even more, if NGO focus on creating national public spaces for MDB issue discussion and if their reach toward other CSO groups, as people's organisations. Experiences such as REDE, Grupo Consultivo para Cabildeo and Transparencia of Mexico are good examples of the first possibility. Rede is also a good example of the second; but this has to be expanded more.

ALOPs regional effort is also a good example on how collective strategies can be defined and implemented and how accountability can be constructed within the process. ALOPs needs though to building a larger accountability strategy regarding a broader coalition. The regional NGOWG can be a critical path in that direction.

Development NGOs such as ALOP members face a critical dilemma towards MDBs as these are seen simultaneously as sources of funding for their activities and actors behind structures of inequality and exclusion<sup>(31)</sup>. While this can hide a clear danger of being co-opted, it also sets a possible space for critical collaboration, where the struggle for openness, transparency and participation becomes a critical element of strategy, complemented by challenging the MDB policies on areas considered as sources of exclusion and inequality. In any case, networks such as ALOP can help develop such strategies, in the sense of challenging the Bank on their policies, while opening spaces for operational collaboration at the project level.

While some global agenda issues are identified, development NGO tend to make their choices in relation to their work priorities. Mostly rural development and agriculture oriented NGOs will choose such issues for their advocacy work, while more urban poverty oriented NGOs will choose urban management, urban service provision issues as priorities. This has to do with the critical mass available on each NGO, but also the area where critical collaboration has to be chosen. What seems important though is that NGOs tend to perceive the importance of more general issues, linked to the fact that these institutions are actors of globalization. Bank reform, second generation reform and SAPs area seen as issues relating to such MDB role.

ALOP NGOs tend to regard tri-partite dialogue mechanisms as the main channel for advocacy activities and structured and formalised MDB NGO dialogues as the preferred channels. The importance of the relation with governments is thus underlined, in the sense that they tend to see loans as the co-responsibility of Banks and government agencies. Bringing in governments, both the executive and Congress can greatly expand the accountability of these institutions. The push for participatory CAS and its disclosure is a good way forward in expanding on a more transparent and accountable policy design and implementation. This is not a struggle only for MDB transparency and openness, but for more open and participatory governance, as a road to inclusiveness.

The assessment done by NGOs on some of the MDBs more innovative policies, such as information disclosure, liaison officers, inspection panel and participation reveal that these are still nor sufficiently known. This is a good example of the distance that still exists between written policy and its enactment. There is still a considerable gap between them, where NGO monitoring can be critical in putting pressure in closing the gap.

Just a final note on implications of this experience for north south NGO relations. Most of ALOPs experience has been done with out any significant external support by its northern counterparts. It was financed through a bits and pieces strategy and time given by its own internal resources. Strangely enough some of the northern partners sit at the same NGOWG meetings, while on bilateral dealings advocacy is excluded from funding. In part this is a result of strict division of labour between the operational regional and policy departments that exist on many northern NGOs. But it is also a result of an explicit view that sees southern NGOs as basically operational and northern NGOs as political, specially regarding global issues. Some of these southern-based regional efforts are jeopardised by some of the northern NGO initiatives, that tend to attract individuals in support of their initiatives.

I would like to argue that regional NGO networks that prioritise advocacy should be seen as equal partners for global advocacy. They should be taken as real partners for transnational coalitions, where agendas are jointly constructed and partners accept to influence themselves and build mutual accountability mechanisms. This is a healthier way to construct a more equal, genuine and symmetrical partnership than the ones that exist up to now<sup>(32)</sup>. Northern NGOs have not to wait for those partners to come to age, because many of them are already well developed.

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#### *Pies de página*

1. Executive Secretary of ALOP and past chair of the NGO working Group on the World Bank, Ecuadorian sociologist and post graduate studies on economic development.
2. The tension between rapid de regulation and opening up of economies which in most cases expanded poverty and democracy has brought in many country populists' reactions, as citizens became disenchanted with traditional political parties.
3. When analyzing both project and policy coalitions Fox and Brown find that mutual influence and accountability were low on most policy coalitions and in many project coalitions, especially at the early stages. See Jonathan Fox and L. David Brown, Accountability within Transnational Coalitions, The Struggle for Accountability, The MIT Press, 1998, pg. 6.
4. M. Valderrama, Los acelerados cambios de las ONGs Latinoamericanas y el Fortalecimiento Institucional, ALOP-FICONG, Buenos Aires, 1998
5. M. Chiriboga, Evaluación del FEPP, una ONG ecuatoriana, Quito, 1998
6. Abelardo Morales and Martha Isabel Cranshaw, Regionalismo Emergente, Redes de la Sociedad Civil e Integración Centroamericana, FLACSO-IBIS, San Jose, 1997.
7. At least 8 of ALOPs members have been also members with CLACSO, the social sciences network in the region.

By 1993 at least two members of ALOP were already participating at the NGOWG: FACS of Nicaragua and DESCO from Peru. The decision to become a member was taken by the board of ALOP, but an active role on the group was not sought until the end of 1994.

9. Changes on the mission of the group refer to three central documents:

- a. the 1987 Consensus document that puts emphasis on southern participation,
- b. the 1989 Bangkok position paper which included a general critique of the Banks development strategy and
- c. The 1995 Bank Reform: Beyond the 50 Years Campaign, which defines the critical collaboration position.

For a general discussion of the role of the NGO working Group see, Jane Covey, Critical cooperation? Influencing the World Bank. In J. Fox and L.D. Brown, ob cit.

10. As a matter of fact the document was published with an addenda that included NGO critiques to the action plan.

11. Southern NGO members of the group criticized the "the rich not honoring its debt" attitude of the US republican Congress and some NGO critics. This position was supported by the US NGO coalition member, INTERACTION and other Washington based groups, in marked contrast with the more radical members of the 50 Years is enough Campaign which supported a cut on funding. This position which was followed up with pro active campaigning with donor counties gave the group leverage power with the Bank, which it lacked up to then.

12. Meetings were organized in Johannesburg, Bogota, New Delhi, Accra, Manila, Managua, Katmandu, Lima, and Montego Bay exposing the NGO Working group to over 500 additional NGOs. These meetings put the group in relation with regional vice presidencies a management group that had been mostly out of the loop from the policy discussions. It also helped the group combine general discussions to more sensitive to the region policy discussions. Up to the NGO working group only entry point had been the NGO Unit at the Bank.

13. Even though in many cases exchange with some members of the Banks management was limited to information exchange, it increased the over all knowledge of the groups and Committees significance. Probably the most strategic move was the decision to hold annual meetings with the Banks board, which opened considerable space for NGOs, but also increased the groups over all leverage.

14. The group brought to some of these discussions other relevant actors, including other donors, governments, foundations and other NGOs. This also increased the leverage power of the group, as did the capacity to monitor projects, bring synthesis of lessons and action points and do research on some critical areas.

15. While a judgment on Mr. Wolfensohns presidency will require more time, he can be linked to some serious changes of Bank policy, on issues such as multilateral debt, relations with the IMF, cancellation of the Arun III loan to Nepal, openness of the Bank to dialogue with diverse stakeholders, etc. His new senior economist has more recently brought to discussion within the Bank discussions such as global financial architecture, equality and redistribution, accountability, etc. subjects close to Bank reform campaigners.

16. Meetings were organized in Paipa, Colombia in 1995, in Montelimar, Nicaragua in 1996, in Lima, Peru in 1997 and in Montego Bay, Jamaica in 1998. The meetings were hosted by ALOP and CINEP, FACS, DESCO and CPDC and ADA and financed jointly by the Bank and the working group. Each meeting produced proceedings, which established the main agreements.

17. In the future the group will have to tackle increasing its constituency towards other civil society actors and groups. ALOP continues to participate through some of its country members.

18. By end 1998 the Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Brazil resident missions had contracted NGO liaison officers, while in Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay and the Caribbean were being replaced or appointed.

19. A workshop was organized in Rio de Janeiro, hosted by FASE on Urban poverty that brought together researchers, urban poverty NGO experts and Bank staff. At least two research and discussion work groups are being established as a result.

20. There has not been a visible result on this field, which continues to be of interest to NGOs.

21. Participatory CAS exercises were held in Colombia, El Salvador, Peru and in a more limited way in Ecuador. The fact that the CAS document is only available under government authorization limits the importance of this exercise and constitutes a critical element in Bank NGO relations. The Brazilian REDE worked through the Congress to assure that the CAS is disclosed, which was a significant NGO struggle in that country.

22. On this issue a regional gender action plan has been developed, but NGOs consider that their input was limited and were not consulted.

23. A regional steering committee was established under the presidency of the regional vice president, and with participation of representatives of the regions main departments.

24. Jane Covey, Critical cooperation? Influencing the World Bank, ob. cit. Pg. 108

25. Idem pg. 110.

26. This was one of the findings of the study done by ALOP on SIFs in Honduras and Guatemala and similar studies performed for El Salvador and Peru.

27. SIF monitoring demonstrated that resource disbursement was not guided only along poverty criteria, but also to more clientelistic government interests. In other cases decisions to assign specific project components to Peruvian NGOs were over ruled by mere prejudice of government officials.

28. This change can not be associated to NGO advocacy only, as other processes in the region have also weighted.

29. The study is being done under the leadership of Fatima Melo of FASE, Brazil and the contributions of Humberto Campodonico of DESCO, Peru and Rolando Mata of FUNSALPRODESE of El Salvador.

30. Some of these results could be modified once the Central American surveys are included.

31. In some cases these two attitudes within development NGO can be the responsibility of different NGO personnel.

M. Edwards, D. Hume and T. Wallace, NGOs in a Global Future: Marrying Local Delivery to Worldwide Leverage, Conference Background paper, Birmingham, January 1999.