

# Reinventing international development NGOs

## The case of ICCO

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# Introduction

- Development context rapidly changing
- INGOs need to reinvent themselves to secure relevance & survival
- INGO change processes largely remain black box
- Existing literature limited to organizational structure opposed to 'culture'
- Paper addresses knowledge gap through study change process largest Dutch INGO (ICCO)

# Methodology

- Questions:
  1. What triggered ICCO's reinvention process?
  2. In what manner did ICCO reinvent itself?
  3. What factors affected the change process?
  4. How 'deep' was the change process?
- ICCO = non-operational funder
- Founded in 1964, rooted in Protestant churches
- Change process 2004-2010
- Internal documents & interviews (former) staff-members

# Changes & Challenges

- In 2004 ICCO started process reflection
- Four key changes & challenges were identified:
  1. New complex global challenges
  2. Importance of ODA and traditional aid actors is declining
  3. Growing capacity of Southern civil society not matched by growing responsibility
  4. INGO-sector pre-occupied with organizational growth

# The change agenda

- Between 2005-2007 development change agenda
- Change agenda based on 3 pillars:
  - 1. Programmatic approach**
    - Coalitions which include 'unusual suspects'
  - 2. Co-responsibility**
    - Institutionalised Southern input in policy development through Councils
  - 3. Decentralisation**
    - Regional offices run by local staff
- Key slogan: 'less North, more South'

# The change process

- ProCoDe implemented in 2008-2010
- Implementation far from easy:
  1. Partners critical about change agenda
  2. ICCO-staff remained unconvinced about necessity decentralization
  3. ICCO-staff were profoundly affected
  4. Cleavage between ICCO's leadership and workplace

# The change process

- Implementation of ProCoDe succeeded because:
  1. Sufficient critical mass at top level
  2. Sufficient funding for implementation and generous social plan
  3. Widespread support for philosophy underlying co-responsibility
- To what extent ProCoDe break from the past?

# Continuity and change: beliefs

	Before ProCoDe	ProCoDe
<i>Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Development is a political process</li><li>▪ Local ownership is required</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Development is a political process</li><li>▪ Local <b>and global</b> ownership is required</li></ul>
<i>Civil society</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ CSOs play key role in development</li><li>▪ CSOs are actors in their own right</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ CSOs play key role in development</li><li>▪ CSOs are actors in their own right</li><li>▪ <b>Certain problems cannot be addressed by CSOs alone</b></li></ul>
<i>Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Value-based relations have both an intrinsic and instrumental value</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Value-based relations have both an intrinsic and instrumental value</li><li>▪ <b>Multi-actor coalitions required to tackle complex problems</b></li></ul>

# Continuity and change: practices

	Before ProCoDe	ProCoDe
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ICCO engages in funding and capacity building</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ICCO engages in funding, capacity building, <b>brokering and global lobby and advocacy</b></li></ul>
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ICCO works with civil society</li><li>▪ ICCO selects partners</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ICCO works with civil society, <b>business and government</b></li><li>▪ <b>Coalition members select their own 'partners'</b></li></ul>
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Partners take lead in project-design and implementation</li><li>▪ Southern involvement in policy development is ad hoc</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Partners take lead in <b>programme-design</b> and implementation</li><li>▪ Southern involvement in policy development is <b>institutionalised</b></li></ul>

# Conclusions

- Decentralization evoked most resistance:
  - It affected ICCO-staff most profoundly
  - Unlike Pro & Co, De did not follow from preceding analysis
- ‘Cultural continuity’ key factor in acceptance change agenda
- ProCoDe: appearance of major change but in practice continuity in many ways