



The **Spindle**

connecting innovators for development

**Annual report 2016**

30/03/2017

# The Spindle Annual report 2016

## 1. Introduction

The Spindle is the innovation platform of Partos<sup>1</sup>. It enables organisations and individuals to innovate together and to create a thriving community for social change. It connects innovators from Dutch and global – primarily Southern – development actors and supports them in transforming new ideas into innovative solutions. Our approach? Build an off- and online community of innovators; Identify emerging trends, challenges and opportunities and support the development of new ideas, promising new strategies and solutions in response. Ultimately this should lead to meaningful action for a more inclusive and sustainable society. See for more information our Inception Report (September 2016). On the basis of a member consultation we chose for innovation on the following four thematic areas: civic power, inclusion, use of data and new ways of cooperation.

### Assumptions and risks

In this section we discuss how we have managed the risks and assumptions which were identified at the start phase of the project, and explain any risks and assumptions that were not foreseen during the project formulation but that we have identified as likely to have an impact on the achievements of the project objectives.

- Assumption I:** social innovations are mostly hybrid combinations of existing solutions rather than "brand new inventions"
- Assumption II:** social innovations require open collaboration between actors and organisations that is cross sectoral and cross disciplinary
- Assumption III:** connectors have an important role in the innovation system
- Assumption IV:** there is a sense of urgency
- Assumption V:** there is a sense opportunity

On the basis of these assumptions we designed the Spindle to operate as a connector: a connector of ideas, actors and organisations, within the development sector and from across sectors; we formed an Inspiration Council consisting of innovators from a range of disciplines, we facilitate labs consisting of a combination of development actors and other innovators; our mailing list includes innovators from outside the development sector; the innovation festival program highlights also innovators and innovations from other than the development sector, that we think have a relevance for the impact that we are striving for.

With a survey among our member organisations, (of which 41 responded) we researched the sense of urgency that is being felt and on what topics. On the basis of that survey we were able to decide for the four thematic areas of The Spindle. In 2016 we focused on the trends in shrinking civic space, and the urgency we see for new forms civic power to defend and enlarge civic space (Partos Innovation Festival, Dutch launch of CIVICUS State of Civil Society Report in cooperation with CIVICUS and Oxfam Novib, and online debate about civic power in cooperation with ViceVersa and others). The Partos Civic Space Platform has over 35 members which reflects the urgency that organisations (development, human rights, environmental) feel on this topic.

The Spindle is in full operation since the Summer of 2016. We are proud of its successes so far but The Spindle still has to prove itself to its community as a platform for innovation that offers ample opportunities for cooperation on the ideas that exist.

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<sup>1</sup> Partos is the Dutch association of development CSOs with more than 100 members. The support that The Spindle offers is available to non-members too.

**Risk I:** Under some circumstances organisations feel themselves in competition, rather than in cooperation.

**Risk II:** There is a growing pressure on the capacity (finances and staff) of the organisations. And present financing mechanisms leave little room for experimentation.

**Risk III:** For innovation to have an impact it requires open involvement of the target group, southern partner organisations and other stakeholders.

Lack of capacity and room for experimentation is indeed a serious threat to the impact that we want to achieve. It makes that organisations carefully select the initiatives they want to take part in. Both risk I and II require from The Spindle a clear offer that fits the needs of the different individual organisations involved, and with a clear added value for their learning or innovation process. This challenges our assumption that through cooperation innovation will be easier achieved. Occasionally organisations were reluctant to openly share an innovation that they had worked on at the platform of The Spindle but in general there is a willingness to share, learn and innovate together. However also in those cases it remains important that everybody involved benefits of this sharing.

Experiences with the crowd sourcing of innovative ideas on the online platform have learned us that actual cooperation in labs between innovators and other actors from development organisations is challenging; mostly because of the given lack of capacity and other priorities of the organisation, partly also because of different paces. On the basis of these experiences we decided to slightly adopt our approach for the labs and the innovation cycle in 2017 and differentiate our offer:

**I:** an innovation cycle that incorporates The Spindle Innovation Awards for best idea and best innovation and the Festival in one trajectory, . To support ideation and the development of ideas into innovation we now develop a support program to with an inspiring kick-off meeting, and different kind of modules of support ("Summer Labs")for selected groups of individual innovators and their challenges, ideas and innovations.

**II:** In addition we will continue to support existing and new platforms and working groups on the topics of The Spindle where expert staff of development organisations are in the lead and set the innovation agenda. They will be actively consulted and where possibly involved as experts and potential partners in the innovations that were submitted for the Challenge.

**III:** A third line of activity will be organised to inspire the two processes described above. It includes inspirational sessions on topics of innovation like the shared economy and block chain, but also the Partos Innovation Festival and the trends reports on important innovative trends in the four topic areas.

*See for risk III also north-south learning and innovation*

## **2. North-South Learning**

North-South learning is a challenge for Partos as we have no direct contact with local CSO organisations. As indicated in the inception report we therefore work as much as possible through existing international networks and our member organisations. For north-south learning Partos established good working relations with CIVICUS in 2016: with Clara Bosco as representative of CIVICUS in our office, in the Inspiration Council of The Spindle, and in the Partos Civic Space Platform; with Mariana Belalba of the CIVICUS Space Monitor, also based in The Netherlands; with Suhani Bushan from CIVICUS (based in the Netherlands) who takes part in the Partos Leave No One Behind Platform; and with Patricia Deniz of the AGNA Network, network of national platforms for exchange on important trends and feedback from south based members from the network.. Alex Sardar, coordinator for Civicus of the Civil Society Innovation Initiative, spoke at the Partos

Innovation Festival about civic innovation and last but not least Danny Sriskandarajah was in the Hague at our invitation to be present at the launch of the State of Civil Society Report in The Netherlands as part of an event organized by Oxfam Novib in cooperation with Partos (a.o.).

In addition Partos became a member of the international platform Scanning the Horizon, initiated by the Berlin centre for International Civil Society.

We had two local activists (one from Azerbajdzjan and one from Uganda) talking about new ways of civic power at the Partos Innovation Festival. We had three labs that were initiated by south based innovators. We have one local organisations participating in a pilot project for the Exclusion Radar (Karuna Nepal).

We see these examples of southern involvements and contacts as just the first few steps to actual north-south learning. In 2017 we will organize more than one event to discuss grass roots innovation with ISS, The Prince Clause Chair Holder, The Centre for Frugal Innovation, Dutch CSOs and southern based academics and innovators at local CSOs.

### 3. Gender

The gender balance is good in The Inspiration Council. More women than men take part in the platforms and working groups. Only in the working group on data informed decision making women are in the minority (4 out of 9).

Gender sensitivity was one of the criteria that was applied during the selection of best idea and best innovation by the jury (also two women and one man). Some of the ideas and innovations brought to us addressed specifically gender issues: Thursdays in Black (Gender based violence), Pink Water Wave (solar powered water kiosks, run by female entrepreneurs) and a virtual platform to support female migrant domestic workers.

### 4. Project progress, achievements, deviations and adjustments

See table below

### 5. Financial Report 2016

See annex

#### Explanation of deviations:

The program started with an inception phase, including the recruiting of staff, the formation of the inspiration council, and the building of an online platform, the organisation of an online consultation of our members, a challenge, a jury and the actual launch of The Spindle with the The Spindle Innovation Awards at the Innovation Festival. These activities involved costs primarily covered by budget items *A. General Costs* and *B-1 Enabling Costs*. Activities on the other results (*B-2 Leave no One Behind*, *B-3 Civic Power*, *B-4 New ways of Working Together* and *B-5 Use of Data*) are because of this a little behind schedule and consequently less money was spent here.

Of the B-1 costs less money was spent on the Inspiration Council as budgeted, because we were able to do only one session this year, and because it did not yet involve any travelling of international members. The organisation of the Challenge was less expensive because we started with a modest set up.

B1 Enabling Environment – Outcome Results	Milestones 2016	Progress, achievements, deviations and adjustments
<p>Partos contributes to an <b>enabling environment</b> in which organisations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in joint learning and innovation</li> <li>2. Have funding agreements with donors with adequate provisions for innovation</li> <li>3. Have adopted measures aimed at establishing a conducive environment for innovation</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online platform launched, First 100 participants in online community;</li> <li>• First innovation awards granted;</li> <li>• Innovation Festival with 400+ participants conducted;</li> <li>• Two Inspiration Council meetings;</li> <li>• One tipping point meeting</li> <li>• bimonthly mailings, additional newsflashes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress and achievements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online platform launched with 100 participants.</li> <li>• The First Innovation Award (Tax Justice Campaign, Action Aid) and Award for Best Idea (Free the Seed by Silvia Quarta) granted.</li> <li>• An inspiring Innovation Festival organized with 350 participants.</li> <li>• The Inspiration Council established and one session organized, another prepared</li> <li>• No tipping point meetings took place.</li> <li>• 9 mailings of newsletters with highlights to a mailing list that grew from 0 to 587 individual subscribers, of which more than 500 represented 292 different organisations</li> </ul> <p>In cooperation with The Spindle, Vice Versa was able to build an <u>online knowledge dossier</u> about trends in civil society and civic space.</p> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>The Partos Civic Space Platform has representatives of 35 different organisations (including 10 non-Partos members, like Amnesty The International (The Netherlands office), Greenpeace International, Article 19, CIVICUS).</p> <p>The Partos Leave No One Behind Platform has representatives of 32 organisations (including CIVICUS, Voice and INCLUDE)</p> <p>A total of 46 different organisations participated in learning and innovation events that we organized during 2016 as part of The Spindle.</p> <p>A total of 169 different organisations were represented as participants in the meetings and workshops at the Partos Innovation Festival.</p> <p><b>Deviations and adjustments</b></p> <p>We have more than 100 participants in the online community but with little online activity, while offline so much is happening. In January 2017 it was decided by Partos and the 1% Club, on the basis of the first trial period, that the online platform does not meet the needs of the community or the innovation that we aim for.</p> <p>We had only a few representatives from the South at the Festival (5, including two from CIVICUS) and three labs that were initiated by innovators from the South. We had</p>

		<p>a number of contributions from activists in the South to the online knowledge debate on civic power, that we conducted with Vice Versa.</p> <p>As part of the online consultation we researched the measures taken by organisations to facilitate innovation. A follow-up research into the funding agreements or other measures taken by organisations will take place not before year 2018.</p>
<p>In the thematic cluster '<b>Inclusion of the extreme poor</b>' (or "Leave no one behind") The Spindle will contribute to innovation in five thematic sub-areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the extreme poor;</li> <li>• Addressing self-esteem;</li> <li>• Inclusive business and value chain development;</li> <li>• Addressing the digital divide;</li> <li>• Youth participation &amp; employment;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three labs initiated (Exclusion radar, self esteem, inclusive business development);</li> <li>• One lab results in publication (Leave no one behind).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress and achievements</b></p> <p>Three meetings of the Platform LNOB (25 members in 2016 but growing) took place with the average of 15 participants. Experiences were shared and presentations were given on the activities of Voice, Civicus and INCLUDE.</p> <p>A lab was made operational to develop "The Exclusion Radar", a tool to identify the excluded households. A prototype is being developed that will be tested in 2017 by the Karuna Foundation Nepal in 27 villages in Liam District. Two members of the Inspiration Council and The Leiden University are closely involved.</p> <p>A lab on self-esteem and exclusion was established to address the question: How can we effectively strengthen the self-esteem of the excluded and, at the same time address stigmatization and discrimination in communities.</p> <p>Youth Participation &amp; employment was subject of two workshops on the innovation Festival, one on waithood and one on the sharing economy. Two labs initiated by partners in the South were also concerning this subject.</p> <p><b>Deviations and adjustments</b></p> <p>No (intermediate) outcomes yet.</p> <p>The publication: "Leave no one behind! An inspirational guide on inclusion of ultra-poor and marginalised people in economic development was published in 2015 and put <u>online</u>. It was distributed (more than 75 .copies) among interested parties, for example those participating in the Voice Tender. No other publications were produced.</p>

In the thematic cluster '**Civic power**' The Spindle will contribute to innovation in the three thematic sub-areas mentioned below:

- The development of capacities for lobbying and advocacy;
- New approaches to lobbying & advocacy;
- New strategies and tools for monitoring and combating threats to civic space.

- Civic Space Platform in place with 20 participants, agenda and regular meetings;
- Launch in the Netherlands of State of Civil Society Report (SOCS) in cooperation with CIVICUS and Vice Versa ;
- Online debate on shrinking space and civic power conducted with Vice Versa;
- Online knowledge dossier on shrinking civic space with 15+ articles in cooperation with VV;
- One lab initiated on new strategies for CS actors in societies where space is shrinking.

### **Progress and achievements**

Three meetings of the civic space platform (35 members and still growing) took place, with on average 20 participants, Issues discussed related to new reports of incidents and trends in shrinking space and possible joint action. Two action alerts were shared through the mailing list. Information was shared about upcoming events and campaigns. Updates were shared of the country cases where organisations in the Strategic Partnerships cooperate with Embassies to monitor and defend civic space. Resource materials were shared via a page at the online platform of The Spindle.

In cooperation with Oxfam Novib the State of Civil Society Report 2016 was launched in the Netherlands, in the presence of the SG of CIVICUS, Danny Sriskandarajah. One lab was started on the Why and How of Private Sector involvement in the defence and enlargement of civic space.

One lab on protocols and actions to defend local partners and activists was initiated by members of the Civic Space Platform but has not started yet.

The CIVICUS Monitor, as a tool to jointly track civic space (beta-version) was introduced during a meeting of the Partos Civic Space Platform of which CIVICUS is a member

Civic Power was the focus theme of the first innovation cycle. It resulted in a number of labs but only four labs that actually addressed the issue of civic power: the lab on private sector & civic space and three (now inactive) labs on tax justice campaigns, gender based violence and 'deconstructing hate'. The topic of civic power itself may have been too much of an abstract concept for an innovation challenge. We decided to organize future innovation cycles around a more concrete and compelling call that reflects a certain urgency of the need for innovation.

### **Deviations and adjustments**

No attention was yet paid to capacity building and new approaches to lobby and advocacy. This is probably because organisations are now busy with lobby and advocacy strategies and capacity building as part of the Strategic Partnerships and more experience has to be gained first before lessons can be shared. Issues of capacity building for lobby & advocacy will be addressed during the second meet up, now planned for June 2017, that is part of a new informal learning initiative for organisations in the Strategic Partnerships. The initiative concerns a series of meetings (2-4 per year) to link and learn on the topics of the Strategic Partnerships, that was started by Partos and a small group of member organisations, at the initiative of SNV.

<p>In the thematic cluster '<b>Innovative ways of cooperation between organizations</b>' (or New Ways of Working Together) The Spindle will contribute to innovation in the two thematic sub-areas mentioned below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational &amp; financing models for North-South cooperation, alliances and international networks.</li> <li>• Cooperation with new, informal citizens' networks and movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One workshop on internationally networked organisations with 20 participants conducted</li> <li>• One new lab initiated</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress and achievements</b></p> <p>On 1 March 2016 directors and senior management staff of fifteen members of Partos met to share views and experiences about working towards-, and working in international NGOs networks. From this session it became very clear that there is a need for more exploration, exchange, and knowledge development in this field. Therefore, The Spindle initiated a series of workshop with the aim to further explore "the why, how and what" of internationally networked NGOs. On 8 September 2016 a group of NGOs representatives explored the question why it makes sense for development NGOs to engage in international networks.</p> <p><b>Deviations and adjustments</b></p> <p>At the moment we are exploring together with some interested organisations the possibilities to start a lab on block chain technology and its meaning for new ways of cooperation, sharing and financing that contribute to inclusive and sustainable development.</p>
<p>In the thematic cluster '<b>Innovative monitoring and evaluation</b>'(or "Use of Data") The Spindle will contribute to innovation in the three thematic sub-areas mentioned below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved use of monitoring, evaluation and research findings, IATI data and citizens' generated data;</li> <li>• Impact measurement of development projects; Monitoring cost-efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One lab results in publication on improved use of monitoring data</li> <li>• Two labs (one on IATI, one on Impact evaluation) results in prototype, pilot or publication</li> <li>• Promotion of two innovations launched</li> <li>• Two new labs initiated</li> </ul>	<p><b>Progress and achievements</b></p> <p>A publication with the title "Towards improved use of monitoring data – Lessons from Partos member organisations" was launched in May 2016. It is freely available <a href="#">online</a> . More than 50. hard copies were distributed among interested parties. One lab on data informed decision making was started with 8 participating organisation and had its first meeting in December 2016. Its members share experiences on cases of data driven decision making and choose for Uganda as a pilot case.</p> <p>Partos contributed to a learning event on IATI that was organized by Data4Development. A second event organized as part of The Spindle is planned for April 2017 and will focus on working with results in IATI (2<sup>nd</sup> lab).</p> <p>A proposal for a learning &amp; innovation trajectory on cost-efficiency was developed in consultation with a selection of Partos member organisation. It will start in Spring 2017</p> <p><b>Deviations and adjustments</b></p> <p>No further prototypes, pilots or publications were produced as yet.</p>

# Annex Financial report 2016

	BUDGET 2016	ACTUAL 2016
<b>A General Costs</b>		
staff costs	30.000	28721
<i>Own contribution Partos € 85.000 divided into:</i>		
financial management	contributed by Partos 10.000	10000
office costs	contributed by Partos 50.000	50000
m&e	contributed by Partos 12.500	4300
Own contribution external costs	contributed by Partos 12.500	13404
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>115.000</b>	<b>106.425</b>
<b>B OUTCOMES</b>		
<b>1 Enabling Environment (Cross Cutting)</b>		
online facilities & community building	50.000	41140
Inspiration council	10.000	2030
challenge	10.000	870
communications	10.000	12415
monitoring of trends research & publication	0	666
Innovation Festival	35.000	35000
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>115.000</b>	<b>92.121</b>
Total External costs	115.000	92121
Staff costs	160.000	155151
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>275.000</b>	<b>247272</b>
<b>2 Innovations on Inclusion of the Extreme Poor</b>		
Total External costs	35.000	7573
Staff costs	20000	19130
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>55.000</b>	<b>26.703</b>
<b>3 Innovations on Civic Power</b>		
Total External costs	40000	19388
Staff costs	40000	38312
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>80000</b>	<b>57700</b>
<b>4 Innovative ways of cooperation between organisations</b>		
Total External costs	15000	3347
Staff costs	10000	9565
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>25000</b>	<b>12912</b>
<b>5 Innovative monitoring and evaluation</b>		
Total External costs	25000	7341
Staff costs	10000	9565
<b>subtotal</b>	<b>35000</b>	<b>16906</b>
subtotal extern	230.000	129.770
subtotal staff	270.000	260.444
subtotal own contribution	85.000	77.704
<b>Totals</b>	<b>585.000</b>	<b>467.918</b>
Partos own contribution		77.704
<b>Allocation BuZa</b>		<b>390.214</b>
<b>Received BuZa</b>	1st Tranche	300000
	2nd Tranche	500000
<b>total</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>800000</b>
	allocation	390.214
<i>Specifications of all external costs upon request</i>	interest result	890
	<b>balance 12/31/16</b>	<b>410.676</b>