



The Spindle

connecting innovators for development

Annual report 2017

29/03/2018

1. Introduction

After its launch in Summer 2016 the Spindle, Partos innovation platform, was further tested and developed in 2017. While doing so we identified three different activity lines: I. Inspiration, II. Challenge and III. Themes & Working Groups. On all three lines we managed to implement a number of new activities, as such compensating for a delayed start of the project in 2016. Our thematic focus in 2017 was on Civic Power.

We decided to shift our intention from online to offline activity as it proved to be difficult to build an online collaborative community. What we needed was not a complex online platform, maintained by the 1% Club but a simple, easy to handle website. In addition we developed an intensive (offline) support trajectory in the form of innovation labs: The Summer Labs.

In 2017 we continued to build on partnerships with other parties for the implementation of our activities. We involved private sector organisations as Accenture and The Triodos Foundation in the jury for our innovation awards. We invested in relations with international and Southern-led networks.

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

These five assumptions are still valid: together they formed the point of departure for the design of our project's approach, and they remain valid for the implementation. In addition to what was already written about this in our Inception Report and Annual Report 2016, we can now add the following:

Assumption III: connectors have an important role in the innovation system.

We want to do more to facilitate the connectors within development organisations, Connectors, or boundary spanners as they are called in the literature, are individuals who have the capacity and personality to play a crucial role in the building of the kind of cross-organisational partnerships and collaborations that we need to make social innovation happen. In 2017 we started with a community of practice for individual innovators (by position and/or mind set) within the development organisations. In 2018 we will invest in the mapping of these connectors and their (joint) contribution to innovation, in order to tailor our support activities to their needs.

Assumption IV: there is a sense of urgency

We notice that management staff of organisations could do more to stimulate and enable innovation within their organisation. The day-to-day work of the organisation takes up most of the resources, leaving little capacity to think about adequate response strategies to the changes that are already taking place and that will shape our future. In order to strengthen the sense of urgency Partos, with the facilitation of The Spindle, started a six months' multi-stakeholder trajectory to explore the future and its implications for development organisations. The trajectory will eventually lead to a translation of these

implications in possible response strategies for development organisations. Next we will develop, in consultation with our members, a number of activities to support management staff in the further translation of these strategies to their organisation.

- 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 remains 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.

2. North-South Learning

Partos was established to support Dutch development organisations. For The Spindle to contribute to meaningful innovation of development cooperation we need to connect innovators from both countries in the North and in the South.

In 2017 Partos further invested in the international positioning of The Spindle and in the relationships with international networks as CIVICUS, the Agna network, The Horizon Scanning Platform of the ICSW and the Innovation4Change network.

Both CIVICUS and the AGNA network participated in the publication and distribution of *Activism, Artivism and Beyond*, a report with inspiring examples of civil society activism in a context of shrinking civic space.

Partos participated in a meeting of the Horizon Scanning Platform organized by the Berlin International Civil Society Centre.

The Jury for Best Idea and Best Innovation includes the female director of Solidarity Uganda. This year we had quite a few submissions from the South for the Best Innovation awards and the second prize was won by Yapili from Kenya. As part of the public voting for the Best Innovation Public Award we had voters from all parts of the world. It proves that The Spindle community is expanding to include innovators from many different countries around the world.

The Spindle established good working relations with Africans Rising. One of the founders of Africans Rising spoke to the audience at the Partos Innovation Festival about the importance of new development relations. Together with Africans Rising and WACSI we prepared for a workshop, organized with the NL MFA, on new and more equitable cooperation between civil society organisations in the North and in the South, as part of the International Civil Society Week in Fiji. In Fiji fruitful relationships were established with facilitators and representatives of the Innovation4Change network.

Late 2017 Partos established contact with other platforms in Europe working on innovation of civil society with the idea to form together an European hub and join the Innovation4Change network.

3. Gender

Gender sensitivity is one of the criteria that is applied during the selection of best idea and best innovation. The jury itself (6 members) consists of an equal number of men and women. The winner of the Best Innovation was *Free a Girl*, with a project to educate young girls, freed from sex work, as human rights lawyers.

Project progress, achievements, deviations and adjustments

See table below

4. Financial Report 2016

See annex

Explanation of main deviations:

The online platform that we had developed together with the One Procent Club for online collaboration was rarely used for that purpose. It proved to be difficult and time consuming to stimulate activity online. Most activity took place offline, the platform was used only to challenge, invite and showcase innovation. We decided to shift our intention from online to offline activity. What we needed was a simple, lean and mean website that we could easily handle and further develop ourselves. At the same time we invested in the organization of a series of labs, as part of the Innovation Challenge, that would help the innovators to develop their idea into pilots or prototypes. As a consequence the costs for online facilities & community building (B1) are significantly less than originally budgeted, as it now covers only the costs of the simple website. The costs for the Challenge are much higher than originally planned because of the costs of the Summer labs.

B1 Enabling Environment – Outcome Results	Milestones 2017	Progress, deviations and adjustments
<p>Partos contributes to an enabling environment in which organisations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in joint learning and innovation 2. Have funding agreements with donors with adequate provisions for innovation 3. Have adopted measures aimed at establishing a conducive environment for innovation. 	<p>Two innovation challenges conducted: ideas and innovations gathered, winner of best idea and of best innovation identified and awarded;</p> <p>Innovation Festival conducted;</p> <p>Trends report published;</p> <p>4 sessions with the Inspiration Council; their contribution to and participation in different activities;</p> <p>a meeting on frugal innovation organized;</p> <p>biweekly mailings;</p> <p>growth group of followers on social media;</p> <p>200 community members on Thespindle.org.</p>	<p>We decided to focus on one innovation cycle, including a Call for Best Ideas and the organisation of 5 Summer Labs on prototyping, and a Call for Best Innovation, both with pitch training, and an awards ceremony as part of the Partos Innovation Festival.</p> <p>The Trends Report focussed this year on inspiring initiatives of civil society activism in a context of shrinking civic space: Activism, Artivism and Beyond. In addition we started in November 2017 a six-month trajectory for a first joint exploration of the future of development cooperation and its meaning for development organisations.</p> <p>The Inspiration Council has had two meetings, in addition individual members actively contributed to different activities.</p> <p>The Spindle Community:</p> <p>A new website was launched for The Spindle, incorporating the lessons learned with the online platform that we built with the 1%Club; activities, within the different working groups and labs take place offline. The new website is used for communication about innovations: calls to innovate, invitations to meet ups, show casing of progress and results.</p> <p>The Spindle has a growing community, growing in numbers, growing in geographical distribution.</p> <p>In 2018 The Spindle has started to position itself internationally as a hub for innovation of civil society in development cooperation, linking up with other hubs and networks: CIVICUS, AGNA Network, Innovation4Change, Horizon Scanning Platform of ICSC. Within those networks The Spindle</p>

		<p>actively seeks cooperation with Southern based initiatives, In 2018 it cooperated with Africans Rising and WACSI.</p>
<p>In the thematic cluster 'Inclusion of the extreme poor' (or "Leave no one behind") The Spindle will contribute to innovation in five thematic sub-areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Identifying the extreme poor; → Addressing self-esteem; → Inclusive business and value chain development; → Addressing the digital divide; → Youth participation & employment; 	<p>Four meetings of the Leave no One Behind Platform, 2 new working groups established, 2 joint activities</p> <p>Exclusion Radar: prototype piloted</p> <p>Addressing self-esteem: idea shared</p> <p>Sharing economies: ideas shared</p>	<p>The Leave no One Behind Platform has a new coordinator: Ewoud Poerink, also coordinator of DCDD, and under his lead more focus is on lobby. Members of the Platform for example lobbied the Ministry for a policy to work with disaggregated data to make marginalized groups visible. Another important new topic that the Platform has taken on is inclusive business development</p> <p>The digital divide and youth participation were important topics as part of the Partos Innovation Festival. The Exclusion Radar is still in the phase of being piloted in Nepal. Attempts to raise additional funds for further testing and scaling failed so far.</p> <p>The Spindle has developed good relations and cooperation with the program staff of Voice on which we will further build in 2018.</p>
<p>Outcomes</p> <p>In the thematic cluster 'Civic power' The Spindle will contribute to innovation in the three thematic sub-areas mentioned below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 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. 	<p>Four meetings of the Platform, 4 working groups, one website with up to date resources</p> <p>First trends report, focussing on civic activism</p> <p>New strategies and tools for monitoring and addressing threats to civic space: publication</p>	<p>Three meetings of the Civic Space Platform took place in 2017, with as biggest achievements: the writing of counter narratives about civic space, and the cooperation in a joint campaign as part of the world wide campaign Together We Speak!</p> <p>Publication & meeting on inspiring initiatives of civil society activism in a context of shrinking civic space: Activism, Artivism and Beyond</p>

	<p>From Civic Space to Civic Power: Lab established</p>	<p>A working group led by Oxfam Novib organized a successful meeting on The Business Case of Civic Space, about the role of private sector parties in defence and enlargement of civic space conducted with 20+ participants, representing NGOs and private sector parties and including experts from the Human Rights Resource Council, CIVICUS and Article 19.</p>
<p>In the thematic cluster 'Innovative ways of cooperation between organizations' (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"> → Organisational & financing models for North-South cooperation, alliances and international networks. → Cooperation with new, informal citizens' networks and movements. 	<p>One publication</p> <p>Ideas shared</p>	<p>As part of a series of workshops on the Why, How and What of INNGOs, the How-questions was addressed in a workshop in April, in cooperation with Helga van Kampen and Rita Dieleman of Partnership Learning Loop. The final report of this workshop will be part of the final publication on the Why, How and What foreseen for this year.</p> <p>New ways of North-South cooperation: The Spindle participated in the organisation of a webinar on North-South relations that was initiated by the IOB as a follow up to their publication: Shifting Interests, Changing Practice; Key insights into the perceptions of Dutch Civil Society Organizations and their Southern partners about non-financial support. Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, CIVICUS, Africans Rising, and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) Partos organised a workshop on new ways of North-South cooperation as part of the CIVICUS International Civil Society Week in Fiji.</p> <p>A start was made of a new project in cooperation with The Broker and involving a.o. CIVICUS and VOICE, to produce an overview with examples of new partnerships and other forms of cooperation by civil society, amongst themselves and with other actors.</p>

<p>In the thematic cluster 'Innovative monitoring and evaluation'(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"> → Improved use of monitoring, evaluation and research findings, IATI data and citizens' generated data; → Impact measurement of development projects; Monitoring cost-efficiency. 	<p>Data informed decision making: working group, case studies, pilot conducted.</p> <p>IATI: One meeting, one report,</p> <p>Cost-efficiency: seminar</p>	<p>The working group on data informed decision making that was to conduct pilot studies into the use of data in decision making was transformed in inspirational meet ups to share practical experiences with data informed decision making for feedback, so called Open Teas. Members to the working group lacked the time and capacity to implement joint pilot studies into the use of data while at the same time they are keen to link up with colleagues and share experiences and lessons learnt in their work with data.</p> <p>In April 2017 we organized the learning meeting on results reporting in IATI with examples of good and inspiring practices presented to an audience of 60+ participants, mostly from development organisations, some from governmental bodies working on development.</p> <p>The Efficiency Lab was established in April 2017, in response to the finding from the MFS II evaluation that development organisations, evaluators and practitioners struggle with the concept of efficiency: How to measure and analyse efficiency? In order to answer this question a learning trajectory was developed. In November 2017 Partos / The Spindle organised a conference on efficiency, where the Efficiency Lab challenged three experts to recommend what methods to use in different, practical cases. Further follow up activities are under preparation.</p>
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Annex Financial report 2017

	BUDGET 2017	ACTUAL 2017
A General Costs		
staff costs	15.000	15.314
<i>Own contribution Partos € 85,000 to be divided into:</i>		
financial management	10.000	10.000
office costs	50.000	50.000
m&e	12.500	3.328
Own contribution external costs	12.500	4.189
subtotal	100.000	82.831
B OUTCOMES		
1 Enabling Environment (Cross Cutting)		
online facilities & community building	50.000	22.674
Inspiration council	10.000	5.086
challenge	7.000	48.145
communications	2.500	1.110
monitoring of trends research & publication	3.500	1.459
Innovation Festival	35.000	35.000
subtotal	108.000	113.474
Total External costs	108.000	113.474
Staff costs	120.000	121.402
subtotal	228.000	234.876
2 Innovations on Inclusion of the Extreme Poor		
Total External costs	40.000	20.014
Staff costs	37.000	40.375
subtotal	77.000	60.389
3 Innovations on Civic Power		
Total External costs	40.000	50.352
Staff costs	40.000	40.375
subtotal	80.000	90.727
4 Innovative ways of cooperation between organisations		
Total External costs	15.000	12.844
Staff costs	30.000	30.350

	subtotal	45.000	43.194
5 Innovative monitoring and evaluation			
Total External costs		25.000	27.593
Staff costs		30.000	30.630
	subtotal	55.000	58.223
	subtotal extern	228.000	224.277
	subtotal staff	272.000	278.446
	subtotal own contribution	85.000	67.517
	Totals	585.000	570.240
	Partos own contribution		67.517
	Allocation BuZa		502.723
	Received BuZa	balance 01/01/17	410.676
		received 05/07/17	350.000
		total	760.676
		allocation	502.723
<i>Specifications of all external costs upon request</i>		interest result	332
		balance 12/31/16	258.285