

Essay 10

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Civic Driven Change ~ Implications for Aided Development

As a framework for thinking and action, what can civic-driven change offer private aid agencies? Or more directly, even if there is a convincing and inspiring story about CDC, so what? Is this really anything new? And even if it is, what difference would it make in how people dedicated to the types of social change described in the introduction to this volume go about their work? This last essay draws on and goes beyond the contributions in this volume to start to answer these sorts of questions. In doing so, we pull together strands of insights, ideas and arguments that are far from final and definitive. While suggesting possible paths to be followed and strategies and practices worth pursuing, this analysis also suggests emerging issues and questions that merit attention. It does so primarily, but by no means solely, for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as (Northern) private aid agencies and their networks of partner organizations. In some senses, this focus runs against an important message that CDC sends: citizen-driven change in society does not belong to one 'sector' or type of organization. But an initial orientation towards private aid agencies offers a starting point for a wider discussion.

This concluding essay has three sections. The first revisits the rationale for the initiative and discusses the potential value of this CDC interpretation and view of change for private aid agencies in terms of (recapturing) their identity and advancing an own development philosophy. Section two provides suggestions about CDC application as a development strategy directed at five points of an institutional compass. Section three proposes practical steps that agencies could take to test what CDC might mean for them, allied to development tactics that pivot around the politics of small things and connectivity. In other words, it provides ideas about answers to the 'what do I do on Monday?' question asked by busy people with already overflowing work loads.

The value of CDC

The CDC initiative arose from a conviction that finding solutions to global problems cannot overly rely on states and markets. A group of eight respected international thinkers and activists on various aspects of civic action were invited to reflect on their vision and perception of civic-driven change. The resulting essays show why and how citizens have a vital role to play in addressing challenges faced by societies everywhere, but in their own right and in their own ways. An objective of this effort is to equip private aid agencies with an added approach to understanding social change and working out how best to deploy their experience, resources and efforts in ways that improve equity, counter marginalization and promote social justice.

A story of civic-driven change offers an additional set of ideas which can help agencies break loose from existing conventional wisdoms about 'aided development' and the constraints they bring. CDC is certainly not a panacea for development problems faced by development actors. But it can be used as a 'grounded framework' for critical self-reflection on development and change issues. It offers potential for adopting an approach that can (re)invigorate civic agents and agencies expressed in their own terms. Examples are:

- Reaffirming the force, experience and confidence of citizens in changing society of their own volition (without depending on external agents).
- Challenging other development discourses from a self-determined position with its own understanding, norms, measures and standards of 'civicness'.
- Dismantling the 'sectored' isolation of private aid agencies from the societies in which they live and operate, and explore their role in politics, business and family.
- Reforming development strategies and programmes to make them more civic-centric, for example by insisting on debating and (co-)setting the rules of participation.

- Challenging the 'externalization' route where private responsibility for what happens in society is 'paid-off' through taxation to become someone else's problem. For example, by convincing staff and their families of businesses which pollute (and are taxed) that they will, like everyone else, face the environmental consequences.

This CDC story relies on citizenship as necessary for agency, i.e., the capability and basic right of people to apply their energy in ways that expand influence and control over a shared future. Civic is understood in terms of specific values - particularly tolerance of difference and concern for the whole - that push societies towards a world order in which people behave as permanent 'guests' of each other and of the natural environment. In this way, the normative dimension of 'civic' differentiates itself from citizenship as a socio-political identity or status. This latter component of how people regard themselves usually co-exists with many other features of self - nationality, ethnicity, religious adherence, age group - that may be more powerful for what people do and how they relate to others in (in)tolerant ways.

The value and values of a CDC narrative described in the essays are one interpretation arising from some ten months of thinking and debate, often directly based on the authors' personal civic experiences. The result can therefore not be fully comprehensive. For example, important economic considerations are only dealt with on the periphery. The results are also not 'new' in the sense of introducing unheard of concepts or revealing an undiscovered chemical compound or magic force for social change. What the CDC framework does do, however, is to bring together what is scattered around development and other change landscapes in an original way, using a self-determined lens. What is 'new', therefore, is the combination of features that make CDC an attractive and broad analytical framework for pursuing social change.

The following key features can be mentioned (and the list is certainly not complete):

- The context-specific and power-related dimensions of what it means to be a citizen.
- The right to have rights (and the obligation to also have responsibilities).
- Explicit norms for (un)civic behaviour.
- Sensitivity to the power and use of language, information, media and communication.
- The 'non-sectoral' nature of citizenship - it is simultaneously a personal and shared identity.
- Civic values are not confined to the borders of civil society; they penetrate markets and states as well as the sphere of the family.
- Solving complex global problems is not served by excessively relying on a divide between public and private realms. CDC questions this division and connects private and commercial, and non-commercial and public interests within an overarching concern for the latter.

- Appreciating path-dependency in what change occurs and how - history matters.
- Attention to the 'spiritual' roots of values informing secularized change.
- Imagination as the driver producing and directing civic energy - world views matter.
- The function of civic agency in steering political systems towards deeper democracy, which recognizes the potency of people's capabilities for self-organization and engaging with the 'politics of the local', and which shows the inadequacy of political parties as the basis for future political systems.
- Taxation matters - for realizing rights and responsibilities and for the 'quality' of democracy.
- Acknowledging the ambivalent role of leadership - a potential for both unifying and dividing.
- Significance of horizontal links and rethinking the nature of 'local' as simultaneously global. All global events and forces play themselves out in people's 'local' lives and livelihoods. The allocation of costs and risks in supply chains and the recent near-collapse of the international banking system are examples.
- Awareness of the risks of promoting civic agency, associated with moral dilemmas about the roles of outsiders in promoting change for and by others.

These features are part of an interpretation of what citizens can and already do 'developmentally' wherever they are institutionally located. Obviously, many other perspectives were and are possible. For example, the past has seen an emphasis on civil society as a separate, autonomous actor, with labels and roles ascribed by others rather than from within its own discourse. The official, technocratic approach to accountability, allied to the drive for development results, overrides the value of the diversity that civic agency brings to social change. Similarly, there are simplistic assumptions about the division between public and private spheres of action that are patently over-idealized and 'politically correct' in a (neo-) liberal ideology.

But in the view arising from this initiative, for example, CDC enjoins states and market to 'participate' in people's 'projects' as their own agents of change, rather than the other way around. It recognizes that pathways to social change are often politically conflicted and uncertain: realities need to be factored in, not factored out, sidelined or ignored. Civic-driven change exhibits ebb-and-flow processes of cooperation, competition, conflict, co-production, harmony and resistance. *But central in this reading of civic-driven processes is the application of a particular value-base to citizenship in shaping its political expressions and engagements.*

What this might mean for the strategies of private aid agencies as well as for the relationships with their partner organizations is the subject of the next section.

CDC and aided practice - Implications for strategy

The essays provide settings and case examples of civic agency in action and the successes and problems encountered in doing so. What pointers do this and other experiences offer in terms of strategic issues stemming from CDC? With private development agencies in mind, this section provides preliminary suggestions about a framework for CDC strategizing and methods. This reflection is followed by the last section with practical ideas of steps that agencies can take - on Monday morning so to speak - to start exploring the adoption of CDC as a guiding narrative for their identity and work.

A guiding philosophy for CDC

An implicit theme connects the essays. It is perhaps best captured in the idea of a 'global commons': that is, a world of resources that must be shared and 'collectively managed' for the good of the whole. Some forty years ago, Garret Hardin wrote about the 'tragedy of the commons', describing an era where it made sense for individuals to exploit common grazing land by continually adding cattle to their herds. Unless properly managed, this behaviour eventually leads to self-destructive over-grazing where all suffer. Hardin argued that prevention of such a tragedy requires an extension of moral values beyond personal maximization. And, as subsequent studies by Eleanor Ostrom and others showed, there are many examples of an evolution of this type of moral, collective self-management that have been eroded or are under threat.

The problems societies face today signal inadequate 'management' of a sustainable global commons without sufficient (long-term) concern for the whole. Essays trace today's unwelcome situation to an over-reliance on economic growth that emphasizes accumulation over distribution and a moral and practical failure of (market-driven) party politics and democracy on many scales. Both processes feed instability and combine to disempower citizens as agents in charge of their own development, creating anxiety and complacency. A guiding philosophy of civic-driven change could, therefore, be one where the *co-responsibilities for sustaining the global commons* for everyone stand central. Simply put, a CDC philosophy is about citizens in all walks of life taking active responsibility for a shared future, by better controlling the institutions and power required to make it happen.

Strategic sensitivities and policies - attention to power, risk and sum games

Reflections on CDC towards an operational strategy confront private aid agencies with at least two issues that typically cause much debate. One is the issue of whether or not and how power is substantively factored into the 'theory of change' and, depending on the outcome, translated into development policies, practices and relationships.

And, considering the question of the estimates of the gains and losses involved decisions are made and for whom? The latter assessment is often translated as negative, zero or positive sum games. For CDC, private aid agencies need to have a clear position on how far they will go, for example, in supporting civic agency that, in its context and moment, needs to be confrontational.

As the essay of Evelina Dagnino shows, the power function of language defines the nature and ownership of 'knowledge' as a foundation for civic agency. Language dictates public and private discussion, communications and messages, particularly in favour of existing systems of control. One 'hidden' influence is to label 'reality' in ways that shape peoples' predispositions for or against civic values or causes them to misrecognize their 'objective' interests.¹ The processes involved act as a subtle force for gaining people's self-compliance with authority and acceptance of inequity. Command over language is often used to portray inevitability of the existing order - there is no alternative (TINA). A citizen's critical self-awareness is purposefully impeded.

In addition to language are more overt, visible, powers *to do, to act with* and *to exert influence over* people and processes.

Power 'within' often refers to gaining the sense of self-identity, confidence and awareness that is a pre-condition for action. Power 'with' refers to the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building. Power 'over' refers to the ability of the powerful to affect the actions and thought of the powerless. The power 'to' is important for the exercise of civic agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice.²

In stressing the importance of 'power to', the quotation signals the significance of increasing a capability to exercise citizenship. This dimension reflects Harry Boyte's arguments in favour of forms of political engagement and democracy that build this type of capability. CDC adds a normative focus in terms of this type of agency.

However, a challenge in such a strategy applied across actors is to do so in ways that do not simply allow more subtle and invisible forms of power to replace existing arrangements without actually changing the deeper (institutional) structures that sustain marginalization, poverty and other social ills. For example, suspicion about the real intentions of corporate social responsibility or investment (CSR and CSI) as true 'civic compliance' and solving social problems reflect this concern.³ Similarly, the way governance is reformed to include 'quotas' of women can be symbolic, designed to deflate and deflect opposition to paternalism rather than changing it. The point is to unpack 'empowerment' and institutional reforms to ensure that they are what they purport to be in terms of reorientation and changing the rules of the game towards civic values.

Changing the rules of the game often involves different sources of risk. Today's conditions of increasing globalization and interdependence are adding to uncertainty and instability: societies are moving to a more risky world order.⁴ A common response is to shift the risks of change from oneself towards those least able to counter and resist: that is, towards people who are already disempowered. The increasing number of suicides among poor Indian farmers is one example of these effects. The systemic shifting of risks associated with global economic change presents a scenario that calls for a rethinking of aid. The focus should change from macro growth to countering the micro effects of globalization which 'naturally' increases vulnerability amongst weaker groups: risk is more likely to 'trickle down' to the poor than will the economic gains of growth.

Another source of risk is highlighted by Shirin Rai - the personal consequences of civic assertion. The risks involved with aided civic action seldom feature in the analysis of development agencies, their interventions and logic frameworks. To do so would expose the relative 'safety' of agencies from the consequences of their support, particularly in promoting democratization. Aided civic-driven change calls for explicit attention to the issue of winners and losers and the realistic probability of creating the holy grail of a win-win change or positive sum outcomes of interventions. It challenges assumptions about power being structurally redistributed by negotiation or 'partnership'. History suggests that contention is as often

a feature of CDC as enlightened self-interest and a reasoned harmony model of change. The practical paradox and moral dilemma facing aid agencies is to recognize the potential and need for conflicted change in the path to empowerment. However, supporting this type of process usually means that the risks involved are carried by others. Importantly, therefore, aid agencies need to recognize that their behaviour can undermine civic-driven change in ways described by Evelina Dagnino.

Overall, applying a CDC lens to strategy calls for a more overt set of policies about supporting 'uncivic' means, such as civil disobedience, strikes, boycotts and blockades, to attain more civic, equitable and inclusive outcomes. Simply put, policies should answer the question: should agencies support social struggles or not? Or, do they, minimally, ensure that their way of working does not undermine this path to social justice?

Addressing many points of the compass

With the issues of power, risk and gains/losses in mind, the 'non-sectoral' perspective of CDC calls for a new type of broad, integrative approach to development. This section provides an indication of what might be in play for agencies that wish to take up CDC as a developmental story and approach to their strategy and practices. This is a preliminary stage of thinking about implications. What follows is therefore indicative, illustrative and far from a definitive way of going about things.

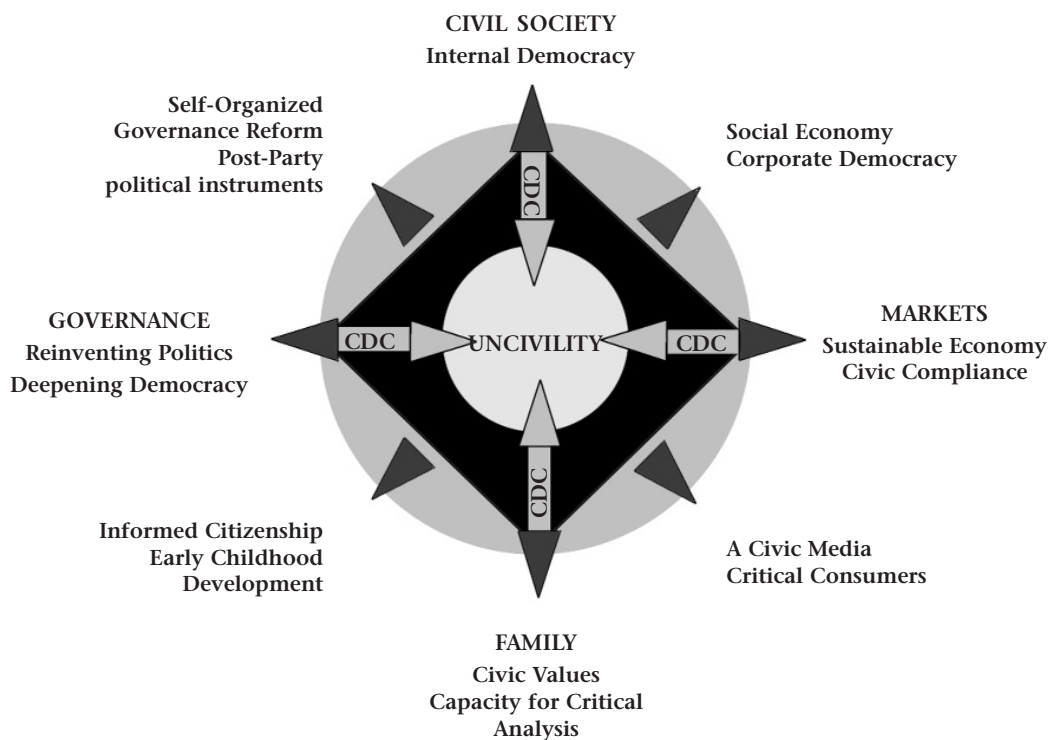


Figure 1. Civic-driven Change Compass

But to start with, an apparent paradox of CDC being an essentially autonomous process needs to be addressed. Civic agency is driven by imagined futures for society that people, as citizens, want to achieve. For private aid agencies, a strategic issue for taking CDC on board is to connect with and negotiate influence in the futures that people want to put their energy into. Social justice is a broad way of describing this quality of a social future worth aspiring to. The second challenge is how to reach such a future when altering power is a key element of what needs to be done. This issue appears in the problem of using uncivic means to eventually achieve civic ends discussed above.

A strategic approach to CDC would focus on bringing about civic reorientation to many points of the institutional compass (*Figure 1*) in synergetic ways within (and beyond) a state: in families, within civil society, as an operating attitude of governance systems⁵ and as a social values-driven market-place. The less visible, fifth, point of a CDC compass is time: recognizing that different types of civic change in different institutions require different durations. This means working towards 'joined-up' development, which reflects a systems way of thinking about change.

The overarching CDC task for private agencies is thus to promote and pursue the expansion of civic behaviour that is inclusive, tolerant, concerned for the whole - in all directions of the compass. This presents two major challenges. One is to tackle the forces and incentives that currently make uncivic behaviour a preferred way of functioning economically or politically. The imagined future is one where, over the course of time, CDC crowds out uncivic norms and behaviours. In terms of a theory of change, crowding out eventually works because uncivic behaviour demands preventive or remedial costs that society has to pay for. The Soviet Union illustrates that coercive force to gain stability and human security is not a (financially viable) answer in the long term. However, as recent reactions against civic agency and free media show, the presence of democratic institutions in the Soviet Union is, itself, no guarantee that coercion is not in play, simply that the means employed are more subtle. A right to have rights is significantly improved, but remains circumscribed in ways that reflect the country's historical moment.

A second challenge for aid agencies is to respond to the fact that, increasingly, problems making people insecure and the future becoming more uncertain do not respect physical and institutional borders. Social problems need to be fixed at all layers and scales of political organization. This calls for an organizational ability to work in a coherent, synergetic way from small to large with governments, businesses, families and other civic agents.

Civic development actors will need thoughtful readings of contexts so that short-term gains are achieved within long-term scenarios at different scales of change. As the start of a work-in-progress, what this might look like for each point of the compass is illustrated in *Figure 1*

based on where progress is already being made. Much of what is described will be familiar and is meant to be indicative of what can be achieved. But, in many instances, the difference will lie in moving beyond arguments of pragmatic self-interest and technocratic policies to a philosophy of responsible citizenship in all walks of life. In other words, progress in civic agency cannot be located in people's voluntary service after work. Nor can it be delegated to the paradox of 'philanthrocapitalism' exhibited in the rise of 'living foundations' - Bill Gates being the most prominent example - where the social dysfunctions of accumulation are externalized, only later to be redressed through tax-incentivized personal largesse at scales that 'privatize' public policy.⁶

Making governance more civic by deepening democracy is a compass direction which many development initiatives are already following. Gaining greater substance in citizenship is a common point of reference and action, particularly in complementing the decentralization of public administration and participatory decision-making. The World Bank's promotion of community-driven development, participatory budgeting and social accountability are examples. A CDC caution, however, is that an emphasis on technocratic solutions to making local government more effective and responsive may not be empowering in terms of the politics of the local. Deepening democracy is not primarily a technical task but one which alters political culture and its practical formations.

A good illustration is the experience of the Zapatistas in Chiapas (Mexico) with local self-government. Indigenous communities in Chiapas resisted Mexico's entry into the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). They feared that this agreement would only make them poorer, more marginalized, and less able to exercise their citizen's rights. The armed rebellion of the indigenous people in January 1994 organized by the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) was short-lived. After negotiating unsuccessfully for ten years with the central government on indigenous rights legislation, the Zapatistas declared their communities to be autonomous zones where 'good government councils' took over from the 'bad government' represented by corrupted and undemocratic mayors. These new councils manage resources and settle local disputes. In order to avoid the corrupt and patron-client patterns of the past, membership of the new councils rotates every month. This offers a wide array of citizens a direct opportunity to gather practical experience in leading (often complex) community affairs. This unique practice of autonomous local government seems to work, despite (or maybe due to) the virtual absence of external support. The slow pace of political change that the Zapatistas have introduced - part of a plan to move from a military to a civilian structure - reflect cultural values that are viewed as being incompatible with the neo-liberal governance practices applied elsewhere in Mexico.

Another illustration is provided by Jeffrey Goldfarb's historical analysis of Eastern Europe. Goldfarb shows how

6 small gains from civic agency can have large, positive socio-political effects. With the risk of official retribution, a decision by a grocer not to put up a 'Workers of the World' poster in his window was a sign of a 'redefinition of the situation' in Czechoslovakia discussed 'over kitchen tables' across the country. The eventual result was dramatic political reform. His conclusion:

'It is in the microstructures of social interaction that the innovations of political culture become apparent, as these innovations, in their interactive contexts, constitute public space. These microstructures, I suggest, form the foundation of democratic culture.'⁷

Civic-driven change via civil society would concentrate on three things. One is the advance of democracy within civil society. Another is the mediation of factionalism, intolerance and conflict within and between the constituencies and interests that these civil society groups stem from. The task is not to 'homogenize' or placate civil society but to make it more self-tolerant of its rich differences without recourse to the coercive instruments of government. The third task is, through processes of self-organization, to evolve forms of governance that actually work in terms of accountability and performance to people and motivate their active involvement in shaping their future. This will be a site of contention about the distribution of responsibility between people and government - recent food riots are one example, as are reactions against privatization of public utilities such as water and electricity. Reforming 'politics of the local' calls for less reliance on experts and more on lived experience with open access to information that can be aided by advances in communication technology. A challenge will be to connect civic self-organization at growing scales into formations that remain controlled by their constituencies.

In fits and starts and with much avoidance, commerce is slowly adopting towards a more civic corporate behaviour.⁸ This move suggests that a CDC perspective is already being supported by social pressures and economic forces. Such behaviour is not (just) an issue of making business sense but indicates that public accountability is not adequately satisfied by fulfilling regulations and paying taxes. Employees remain citizens with public responsibilities in their work. Publicly incorporated bodies face the challenge of democratizing their ownership and governance. Examples are reforms that increase shareholder oversight and reduce conflicts of interest embedded in many management incentives. In parallel, the fallacy of limitless growth would be progressively recognized by more investment in sustainable methods of production and consumption, requiring a better-informed public and honest advertising. The general point is that market-based economic growth is in itself amoral. It may be a necessary, but is far from a sufficient condition for reducing poverty and marginalization. Politics matters more in determining the conditions where the benefits of growth reach, and CDC suggests a robust, directive role for society in guiding how markets work - self-regulation has not proven up to

the task of advancing social justice.

Enduring paternalism means that CDC oriented towards families and households will continue to have a significant focus on gender relations and parental modelling that inculcates civic values of equity, inclusiveness and respect for those that are 'other'.⁹ The faculties needed to critically discern between contending information develop early in life. For CDC and deep democracy, an intergenerational challenge will lie in expanding early childhood education that shapes world views and capabilities or critical analysis. A challenging domain is reshaping governance so that politics is owned and controlled by people who are not subordinated to a parties' machinery. As the essays show, this is the site of unresolved debate and tension about how politics can be 'reclaimed' by a polity in ways that do not inexorably foster mistrust and the replacement of one hierarchy with another. The features of 'deep' or 'developmental' democracy described in the essays are a guide to both means and ends.

Finally, there will be a growing need to find places and means to de-sectoralize debate and exchange. Actors within institutional sectors need to start talking less amongst each other and more across boundaries towards the whole. Instances of this happening are emerging in relation to natural resources. One example is the Marine Stewardship Council - a multi-stakeholder group that establishes and monitors voluntary standards for sustainable fishing.¹⁰ Increase in formation and support to such intermediating forums and mechanisms will be of growing importance in a CDC agenda.

The fifth arrow for CDC is time. This dimension needs to be sensitive to types of change and the duration of processes likely to be involved. Three useful yard sticks are the time frames associated with: political cycles, the implementation of institutional reforms and intergenerational adoption of shifts in world views and pre-dispositions. A CDC frame cannot rely on project financing as a primary unit of analysis. CDC interventions need a time logic related to measures other than the mechanics of aid allocation and disbursement.

As a strategic guide, the compass model is multi-directional not only in terms of the institutions in and through which civic agency is pursued, but also in the multiple time frames that can be applied in each case. For example, shifting the common notion that taxes exonerate citizens from public responsibilities is an intergenerational task. Altering laws to make business management more accountable can be achieved in one political cycle. Establishing a neighbourhood recreational space might only take a few months. The point is to understand the nature of the processes involved and set appropriate time scales for effects.

CDC and aided change - implications for practice

For busy development people, the evidence, arguments and analysis made available by a CDC initiative may be

interesting but are not necessarily compelling if they cannot be practically translated into organizational reality: what should we do on Monday morning? Addressing this question is undertaken with some caution. There are a number of reasons for this. No two organizations are the same. What fits one may not suit another. The CDC initiative is premised on a conviction that for an alternative story or narrative to have value it needs to be critically reviewed and understood. It is not a technical fix to be quickly or painlessly inserted into organizational life. There are no shortcuts for working out if CDC can add value to organizational agency, i.e., not become a cosmetic endorsement to a new fashion. The stakes are too high not to be serious about deciding that CDC does (not) offer enough to pursue. Framed as questions, the following areas provide ideas about a Monday morning that introduces CDC to organizational debate.

The Monday morning question - self-reflection

The evolution in development thinking that CDC has to offer means that Monday morning, and probably for some time after, the practical issue is to instigate internal organizational reflection and debate. One way of thinking about doing this in practice is in terms of reflective tests that would also include key stakeholders and partners.

The identity test

A first step would be to test the organization's current civic identity when set against the idea of CDC as essentially a political agenda and multi-institutional task. Does it help a private aid agency to reflect on and 'reclaim' its own civic essence and bring greater consistency between values and practices? Does CDC as described so far clarify and provide language to help more critically articulate ideas and terms that have now become so mainstream and stretched that their original meanings are all but lost? Is there an erosion of the organization's civic identity? Is redress needed? Can CDC help?

The portfolio test

Looking across the range of activities being supported, in today's practice of private aid agencies has the political 'c' implicit in civic society and civic-driven change been replaced by the apolitical 'c' of customer, consumer or client? While not equally significant at any given moment, these and other identities are lived at the same time. Is it possible to be developmental towards poor people as consumers, clients and citizens at the same time? If so, how is this best undertaken?

To what extent are the agencies' portfolios of work and relationships informed by adequate, context-specific power analysis? What 'political project' does this represent? What are implicit or explicit assumptions about the interface with the political system? What types of institu-

tions feature in the portfolio and how are they strategically connected in terms of intended effects? Is civic agency being called for and supported from within them?

The intervention test

To what extent are the interventions supported by the organization civic-driven? Making a CDC reading would invite the following queries:

1. In how far is the 'right to have rights' being relied on or reinforced?
2. What is the degree of self-determination in the intended change?
3. To what extent is civic energy broadly exhibited rather than induced by prospects of external resources?
4. How strongly does self-organization feature?
5. Does the intended change represent a positive, zero, or negative sum game in the perception of which stakeholders?
6. What forms of power are in play in the intended change? Where are they located in what agents with what capabilities?
7. How are types of risk and their distribution factored into the anticipated processes of change? Are risks fully negotiated and understood in the relationship or intervention being negotiated?

The purpose of these types of test is to help private aid agencies establish where they are against a new development framework. To assess how far they are embedded in 'aided' models that limit a view on transformative social change and justice that, in reality, reaches far beyond what aid has to offer or can cope with. To revisit the past and evaluate the prevalence for working with sector-specific NGOs that often are an agency's self-reflections or clone. To determine where, for example, the Millennium Development Goals and complementarity with the Paris Agenda (on aid effectiveness) are seen as useful distractions. These are useful to the extent that they create opportunities and resources for micro self-organization and civic agency around the 'politics of the local' that can deepen democracy. They are a distraction in their technocratic emphasis and fixation on service delivery which bypasses the politics of access and civic responsibility. Civic agency becomes captured, locked in, 'projectized' and subordinated to state-centred agendas.

After testing

The practical point is for private aid agencies to transform themselves into 'civic agents' by developing capabilities to pursue 'local' strategies for social transformation within all types of institutions, remembering that 'local is many' and, when increasingly connected, is global too.

Spurred by the potential leverage on change stemming from advocacy, many private aid agencies have expanded from working on micro development projects, but rely on them for evidence - aided change is still the purview. For

8 relevance in society beyond aid, CDC suggests that the name of the game is to raise and consciously expand horizons in multiple directions of the institutional compass. In addition to ideas discussed previously, in navigational terms, setting a course to where the compass points could mean, for example:

- designing strategies that pursue context-specific synergies with political and economic players
- adopting priorities to work on the civic-political interface and expanding the right to have rights
- naming and confronting - as a major enemy of social justice - the 'trickle down' of the risks of accelerating globalization onto those who are already vulnerable, with economic growth understood as only a part of solutions
- taking a critical position on the public/private divide employed to abdicate the responsibilities of citizenship for the whole
- supporting innovations in political systems and instruments that do not repeat partysyndromes and the world-wide deep mistrust of those in public office
- initiatives that confront uncivic elements of society
- competencies and methods to identify and 'accompany' civic energy with sensitivity to undermining its politics
- de-sectoralizing 'partnership', deploying efforts across institutional boundaries
- re-skilling and organizational reforms that are not premised on project-based change and its management
- being more 'intelligent' about the power of communication and the media
- coupling useful technocratic problem-solving with civic self-organizing
- investing significantly in connecting, connecting and connecting civic agency across space, time and actors.

This and similar lists are located in a different way of thinking about aided change for social justice. As portrayed in the essays and their analysis, the interpretation of CDC described above does not easily invite incremental change to existing ways of analysing development problems and working on remedies. A more far-reaching reframing is called for. And, despite hopes and efforts to find one, the essays also re-emphasize that a single solution or blueprint for social change does not exist. What CDC does invite and provide, instead, is new grounds and opportunity for self-reflection and serious public debate about the future of private aid agencies, partner networks and their potential place within civic agency.

Notes

- ¹ Lukes (2005: 149).
- ² Gaventa (2006: 2)
- ³ Bendel (2000); Zadek (2001).
- ⁴ Beck (1999).
- ⁵ Governance is understood here as the political system and public administration and their interplay.
- ⁶ Edwards (2008).
- ⁷ <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/301087.html>.
- ⁸ See, for example, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, www.wbcsd.org.
- ⁹ See, for example, publications of the Bernhard van Leer Foundation, www.bvlf.org.
- ¹⁰ See: www.msc.org.

Readings

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