

## CASE STUDY

### **Changing our ways: making sense of complex multi-stakeholder systems change by using the four quadrant model**

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This case study systematises the experiences of the ICCO Alliance in introducing a multi-stakeholder approach in all of its relations with partner organisations and in its development cooperation practice. Using Ken Wilber's framework of institutional change, the author presents the internal as well as external influences that need to take place at the organisational level, the level of individual staff in these organisation as well as between organisations in the ICCO Alliance for the ICCO Alliance to be able to change. The change involves processes in which the ICCO Alliance changes from an organisation that works only through bilateral cooperation with partners to an organisation that seeks to work in multi-stakeholder arrangements with partners, that tries to do so herself in the ICCO Alliance and intends to promote this inter-organisational cooperative form for other organisations that are addressing the same issues in their work. The dynamics between the changes required at personal, relational, organisational culture and organisational systems levels are analysed in order to discover if, how and to what effect these dynamics have positive effects on the intended change, or are constraints or obstacles in really implementing the change towards working with a multi-stakeholder approach. Insights gained will help in identifying solutions for identified constraints, and also in identifying practices that have a positive effect that can be shared more widely with others. The author thinks that the experiences of the ICCO Alliance are worthwhile for others who intend to walk the pathway of change through promoting multi-stakeholder processes in the context of a much regulated development sector and strong practices that are not always conducive to good cooperative processes and creating shared added value.

**Keywords:** ICCO Alliance; organisational change; international development; case studies; multi-stakeholder processes

Multi-stakeholder literature tends to concentrate on the methodologies of multi-stakeholder processes, but overlooks the need to analyze the nature and impacts of different components of complex systems in order to determine where and how to intervene.

In this case study, I describe a very complex multi-stakeholder change process and the resulting changes. The 4Q (or Four Quadrants) model is applied to illustrate which elements of this system are changing/have changed. The paper illustrates how a highly complex change can be understood more clearly and how this increased understanding can offer simple but profound pathways to navigate this complexity.

This case study discusses the changes ICCO<sup>1</sup> needed to implement in line with its choice for the Programmatic Approach as its organizational strategy. The Programmatic Approach is a multi-stakeholder approach aimed at realizing systemic change. This case study does not discuss the actual facilitation of such multi-stakeholder processes, but rather it seeks to understand what the organizational consequences of this choice are, in terms of the organizational dynamics and institutional politics of ICCO, the ICCO Alliance<sup>2</sup> and their partner organizations.

The theoretical framework used is the Four Quadrants Framework, developed by Ken Wilbur. This framework was developed to enable an integral understanding of the various aspects involved in achieving major institutional and organizational change. The framework also allows an enhanced understanding of the processes and effects of multi-stakeholder change as well as the facilitation capacities needed to achieve success. As internal learning and OD advisor and coordinator, the author has been involved in this change process from the beginning of the practical 'learning by doing' process. Therefore this case study details her own reflections on the changes. These reflections are also embedded in well-documented reflection and systematization processes that accompanied the 'learning by doing' implementation process<sup>3</sup>.

## **Change drivers**

In 2006, ICCO celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a conference in which many of its partner organizations participated. The main reflection topic of the conference was:

*What is the reason why we have not made ourselves superfluous after 40 years of existence as was the intention of our founding fathers in 1966?*

The main question asked was:

*What do we need to do differently in view of the changing contexts, the increased capacities of civil society organizations after 40 years of support and endogenous development, the changing development policies, and a reducing support base for development cooperation in the Netherlands?*

This question and in particular some of the emerging answers, made ICCO reassess its own institutional identity.

## ProCoDe

The outcome of this reflective process was called 'ProCoDe'; a three-pronged institutional change process that should make ICCO fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and able to take on multiple roles in the changing stakeholder field. 'Pro' stands for Programmatic Approach, 'Co' for Co-responsibility and 'De' for Decentralization. The Programmatic approach is the first part of ProCoDe and entails a choice for a multi-stakeholder approach in our cooperation with partners. More importantly, it also seeks to initiate multi-stakeholder cooperation between partner organizations and other organizations in countries and regions that are working on the same problems or in the same thematic field. ICCO defines the programmatic approach as follows:

*A multi stakeholder process that leads to organisations working together based on a joint analysis, shared vision and objectives and clear perspective on the results of the cooperation. In such a process all actors can do different things, work at various levels and use their own strengths for the common purpose and objectives, as well as share some activities and in particular share and participate in the linking and learning processes. The programmatic approach does not only address single problems but aims at change in system.* (Baser & Morgan 2008)<sup>4</sup>

Co-responsibility intends to share decision-making about the direction of ICCO's work with informed actors in the regions in which we work. Regional Councils were established that have a direct advisory relation to the Board of Directors and the Regional Manager. This structure and process gives increased formal power of influence to local actors that don't have a funding relation to ICCO. However, in the perception of many partner organizations, it reduces their direct influence on ICCO decision-making and policy development and thereby changes our partnership relations.

The decentralization objective was to set-up regional organizations in 8 regions, in which local staff that have local experience, knowledge of relevant developments and contacts and networks with relevant stakeholders are employed. This change recognizes the increased capacity in developing countries. The cost is that about 200 staff in the Netherlands office will lose their job.

## Complexity

The choice for a multi-stakeholder approach was grounded in the analysis made during the conference; we live and work in a more complex world, in which processes and actors are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Single organizations do not cause complex and connected sets of problems (a 'problematic') and are therefore unable to singlehandedly solve them. 'Problematics' have many characteristics of social systems. New insights from complexity theory, for example in Complex Adaptive Systems thinking, show that these problematics cannot be

addressed effectively through a linear planning approach to change. For systems to change, new, non-linear dynamics are needed. These dynamics emerge from within the system itself, if guided well. Systems can be ‘tickled or nudged from within to find a new balance through disturbance of the existing situation. For systemic change to occur however, we need to invite the entire system to come into the change process necessitating a multi-stakeholder approach. This conceptual understanding of how change in complex systems can occur was the basis of ICCO’s choice for a multi-stakeholder approach in its partner relations. The Four Quadrants framework is one of the conceptual tools that can help us to understand whether and how change in complex systems is actually taking place.

### **The ICCO change journey: a condensed view through time**

ICCO as an organization is fundamentally changing its being, its relating, its acting and its thinking and it is trying to make all these changes in an environment where there are many other changes occurring. ICCO and 5 other Dutch development organizations entered into an Alliance which itself is a specific form of Multi-stakeholder cooperation in the context of the Dutch Civil Society Co-funding System. This took place four years before the Dutch Government made this the basis of the Dutch Co-Funding system for civil society organizations.

In ICCO, staff who were aware of losing their jobs in the foreseeable future, were at the same time challenged to start working from a thematic focus, rather than a geographical focus and from a more knowledge broker perspective than from a funding portfolio manager’s perspective. They were stimulated to start forming and initiating multi-stakeholder partnerships on thematic areas/problematics and to prepare their ‘portfolio’s’ for transfer to new colleagues starting work in the regional organizations.

### **New energy**

The period from 2007 – 2010, during which the last regional organizations and regional councils were formed and staff of the global office left the organization, was a true process of balancing internal dynamics and institutional politics. At the same time, it was a period of tremendous new creation; of forging new ways of working; of shaping a new organizational culture and; confirming what was valuable in the existing organizational identity and culture. Developing the organizational systems that enable the ‘organism’ of ICCO and the ICCO Alliance to work, perform, have results and contribute to a better life of the poor for which we ultimately work, was also needed.

In this period, ICCO adopted a strong, ‘learning by doing’ attitude and organizational resources were made available to learn from the experiences of change that we were undergoing. Learning facilitators were appointed, learning evaluations, appreciative

processes and many training and learning sessions were organized. Experiences were documented and shared and a Guidance Note for the Programmatic Approach was developed. An online communication, learning and knowledge support system was also developed.

### **The Four Quadrants of Change model**

I will, in the subsequent paragraphs, discuss more in detail what the introduction of a multi-stakeholder approach meant in terms of organizational dynamics and institutional politics. For this I will use the analytical model developed by Ken Wilbur, the Four Quadrants of Change model (Wilbur 1996, 1998, 2000).

The Framework suggests that a successful strategy needs to address four change challenges<sup>5</sup>. Quadrant 1 deals with intention, personal identity and ways of perceiving, quadrant 2 with behaviour and how it is developed, quadrant 3 with culture, beliefs and values and quadrant 4 with the structures and processes of social systems.

All of these challenges are related to the relations that individuals, or groups of people, have to systems and the way they relate to a systemic change process. The quadrant is related by means of two categories on the vertical axis; the individual and the collective (group) level, While the horizontal axis reflects the difference between what people experience and develop as their mindset (individually or collectively). The external column represents what people as individuals or collectives show in their behaviour as part of the system towards the outside world.

The broad change theories that are mentioned for each of the quadrants, show the assumptions behind change that are inspired from each of the quadrants. The idea behind the 4 quadrants is that change in a system involves change in each of the quadrants. Therefore, if we want to promote systemic change, we will have to actively seek to work with the changes that are reflected in each of the quadrants. Only if all four quadrants have coherent and effective change, the systemic change can develop into a new state of equilibrium. The first example shows a framework example (Waddell 2012: 105-107).<sup>6</sup>

In many change processes, in particular in change processes of social systems, sustainable change can only be achieved with separate sustainable changes in each of the 4 quadrants of the framework. This, too, is the case for ICCO, the ICCO alliance and its partner organisations:

*There is a tendency for change networks to focus on the exterior, both at the individual but especially at the collective levels. There is usually resistance to incorporating spiritual-psychological strategies, because this can conflict with the external action-orientation of most networks to get others to change and to focus on, physical technology, structural and intellectual change. Also,*

*inappropriate methods are often applied for a particular change challenge and goal.<sup>7</sup>*

Four Change Strategies		
	Interior	Exterior
I n d i v i d u a l	<b>1. Spiritual-Psychological:</b> <i>Concerned with changing one's own sense of being.</i>  Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of individual perceptions and capacity.</i>  Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deepening self-awareness</li> <li>▪ Developing one's knowledge, skills, competencies</li> <li>▪ Describing one's assumptions, values, mindsets, beliefs</li> </ul> Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meditation</li> <li>▪ Personal reflection and inquiry</li> <li>▪ Personal development of mastery through courses and apprenticeships</li> </ul>	<b>2. Inter-Personal:</b> <i>Concerned with developing relationships and personal networks.</i>  Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of how we understand each other and interact.</i>  Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Building trust, respect, mutual understanding</li> <li>▪ Raising awareness of interdependence</li> <li>▪ Reconciling inter-personal differences</li> </ul> Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity training</li> <li>○ Learning journeys</li> <li>○ Group encounters/retreats of exploration</li> <li>○ Collective development/conflict work</li> </ul>
	<b>3. Social and Cultural:</b> <i>Concerned with collective values of fairness and justice.</i>  Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of collective values and beliefs.</i>  Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collective goals and aspirations</li> <li>▪ Underlying values and beliefs</li> <li>▪ Implicit "rules"</li> <li>▪ Discourse, language</li> </ul> Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collective goal-setting and strategy creation</li> <li>○ Developing value statements and processes for actualization</li> <li>○ On-going media programs</li> </ul>	<b>4. Structural and Systemic:</b> <i>Concerned with governance, decision-making processes and institutions.</i>  Broad change theory: <i>It's all a question of processes, institutions and power.</i>  Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policies, legislation</li> <li>▪ Institutions, procedures</li> <li>▪ Allocation of resources</li> </ul> Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building political structures, agreements, frameworks, systems</li> <li>○ New accounting/reporting/measurement systems</li> </ul>

**Figure 1: Four change strategies**

In discussing ICCO's experiences, I will pay attention to what happened in all four quadrants, detailing the enablers and constraints in realizing the desired changes.

### The ICCO change story

I analyze what happened when ICCO (shorthand for ICCO, the ICCO Alliance and its partner network) undertook the major systemic change implied in starting to work with a Multi Stakeholder process approach, the approach called the Programmatic Approach (PA). The example of Wilbur's framework below shows some of the changes that have happened relevant to each of the quadrants, due to the introduction of the Programmatic Approach in the ICCO system<sup>8</sup>. The data/evidence for what I describe below stem from several sources and my own 'lived' experience during the last 6 years of guiding the introduction of the Programmatic Approach. The sources of data/evidence that are most relevant are the external evaluation report by Wortel and van Geene (2009), the systematization reports of the, 'Appreciating the Programmatic Approach' process and the final report of the action research into the state of the art of



Programmatic Cooperation in five action research sites. The documents are referenced in the endnotes and are published on the ICCO portal: Programmatic Approach Community<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 2: Presentation ICCO PA development<sup>10</sup>**

	<b><u>Internal</u></b>	<b><u>External</u></b>
<b><u>individual</u></b>	<b><u>Individual</u></b> <b><i>Values / Dispositions</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curiosity, humility and openness to engaging in the critical reflection required to foster learning</li> <li>Commitment/capacity/confidence to be present and authentic in PA interactions</li> <li>Intention to promote and strengthen both the spirit (culture) and discipline of inquiry and learning</li> <li>Openness to recognizing and exploring different perspectives</li> </ul>	<b><u>Relationships</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared vision and purpose developed in Alliance and with partners</li> <li>Sufficient trust for building and maintaining transparent and authentic communication within the decentral organization</li> <li>Shared sense of responsibility / ownership for Pro, manifest in shared investments</li> <li>Transactional cooperative forms develop between different stakeholders in the organizations</li> <li>Adequate attention given to dysfunctional relationship dynamics between individuals / groups / organizations that impede the kind collaboration, cooperation required for collective learning</li> </ul>
<b><u>Collective</u></b>	<b><u>Culture</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and clear ownership from key leaders/authorities in organization(s)</li> <li>Clear “norms” within the organizational cultures that learning is valued and recognized as an essential part of “doing the work” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical reflection / examining assumptions, testing new ideas is valued, not scorned</li> <li>Time invested in learning activities is recognized</li> </ul> </li> <li>Culture of open collaboration and sharing ideas, knowledge as opposed to withholding, protecting knowledge as private asset (competition)</li> <li>ICCO perceive itself as co-creator and not as ‘initiator and owner’.</li> <li>ICCO needs to be able to support and to let go</li> <li>ICCO can be something else than donor: has the culture <b>to be</b> something else</li> <li>Using communication tools (web-based) that are in sync with this culture</li> </ul>	<b><u>Structures / Systems / Procedures</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate access and distribution of resources required for the scale of change and learning initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit plan for learning on strategies, thematic areas, work processes</li> <li>Time for reflection, participation in learning activities is prioritized GO-RO</li> <li>People, financial resources made available GO-RO</li> </ul> </li> <li>Tools, procedures, and methods that are effective and viable for facilitating reflection and collective learning.</li> <li>Good and user-friendly information / knowledge management systems need to be further developed and implemented.</li> <li>Program PMEL systems and tools developed and implemented</li> </ul> <b><i>Skills / Competencies</i></b> Knowledge and understanding of tools, procedures, methods being proposed by PA strategy and ability to use them effectively

## **The individual level:**

### **The internal individual quadrant (mindsets, perceptions)**

#### *Key shifts*

When ICCO took the decision to embark on the change process implied in ProCoDe and in particular on the Programmatic Approach, many staff were program officers, or in ICCO's language, relations managers or financial officers. At the same time that the programmatic approach was introduced staff also were faced with many other changes. Thematic departments were established which replaced the geographical departments (Asia, Latin America etc.) and four functions within these thematic departments were created, namely; the program officers (relations managers), the thematic specialists (health, International markets, conflict transformation etc.), learning facilitators and financial officers. These new function profiles intended to contribute to strengthening ICCO's roles as knowledge holder, capacity developer and strategic funder.

The consequence of ICCO's intention to work in a multi-stakeholder approach were also that specialists and program officers jointly started to work on conceptualizing new thematic programs that would enable ICCO to realize its goals and to co-create and implement the programs with groups of partners joined together in specific coalitions.

This represented an entirely new role division for ICCO, who until then had worked in a partner approach that was based on bilateral relations between ICCO and a Partner. ICCO funded projects of partners and ICCO funded the individual organization's functioning and organizational strengthening costs (core funding and institutional funding). Some organizations were also supported with Technical Assistance for further Organizational capacity development (OD).

#### *Emerging results*

The Programmatic Approach required that specialists and PO's developed a mindset that was not partner centric but rather focused on engaging with stakeholders involved in change, regardless of whether or not they were funded by ICCO. Similarly, the approach demanded that ICCO staff develop a new identity of 'knowledge broker' and 'agent of change' in a given thematic field and in relation to inter-organisational cooperation. This was a starkly different identity than that of funder and thus, controller. They also needed to question the notion of being 'equal' to partners and recognize that so far, they had effectively worked in the often skewed power relations that come with the donor-recipient relationship. Further, this change in mindset needed not only to be developed with the incumbent staff but also be adopted by the incoming new staff in the Regional Offices.

The learning facilitators played an important role in helping staff make these very fundamental shifts by organizing various training and reflective processes on



departmental and organization-wide levels (using Appreciative enquiry, Open Space, Intervention, Action reflection cycles etc.).

### **The external individual quadrant: Inter-personal relations and behaviour**

#### *Key shifts*

Many of the limitations that we still face in implementing the Programmatic Approach in our practice are still 'caused' by our weakness in initiating and promoting multi-stakeholder processes that are not determined by the existing funding relation. ICCO staff wanted to remain with their funded 'partners' and partners did not want to share their cake with others. Partners were in cases administratively clustered in program coalitions, without the necessary widening, searching, analyzing and joint formulation of objectives and strategies having taken place.

In efforts to 'do' it in an MSP way, facilitators were often engaged to work with ICCO and the identified stakeholders (existing partners or wider group) to help inter-organizational cooperation to really develop. These facilitators were offered training by the ICCO Alliance to develop a good understanding of the partnership culture and behaviour implied in a Multi-Stakeholder approach. Facilitators often worked with coalitions and ICCO staff to grow from a marriage of convenience (funding) to a true love marriage (actors involved taking ownership over their cooperation).

The behaviour of staff also needed to change so that it was not the specialist or the PO that wrote the programme. Processes needed to be initiated in which ICCO staff, partner organizations and other stakeholders jointly embark on an analysis process to identify and better understand the system that needs to change. Stakeholder analysis, context analysis, thematic/ sector analysis and drivers of change analysis need to be undertaken. As a next step a Theory of Change is formulated that identifies the vision of change, a good description of the initial problematic to be addressed in the change process and strategies or pathways of how involved actors understood the process of change would unfold. This also implies identifying underlying assumptions and sharing these, to guide the necessary adaptation of strategies. Staff of ICCO needed to acquire the skills and competences to be able to guide these processes if not facilitating these themselves. Many trainings, workshops, appreciative inquiry processes, action research and coaching sessions supported the competency development process of staff of ICCO, of partner organizations and the facilitators/consultants involved (initially the Global office and later in the Regional offices).

#### *Emerging results*

The result of all this work is that there is a noticeable increase in the number of program coalitions that are developing ownership, governance, shared practices, linking and learning and are having an effective influence on change in the system. The roles ICCO plays are changing in the process from strategic funder to broker and co-knowledge and process creator. However, the variety of stakeholders involved in

the programme coalitions is still too much limited to ‘funded’ partners. Conditions need to be created for diversification of the stakeholders involved in program coalitions. Loosening the funding relation and diversifying the funding sources is imperative to ‘loosen’ the too tight bond between ICCO funding and program coalitions. This is also needed for ICCO and ICCO staff to become a true partner and co-creator and fulfil its other roles to the best of its abilities.

**Box 1: Noticeable increase**

Over the years of the implementation of the Programmatic Approach, ICCO has undertaken many learning and evaluation activities on the Programmatic Approach. These were, for example, the “Appreciating the Programmatic Approach” process, in which seven program development processes were followed in a two year process; the Action research on the Programmatic Approach in which five researchers followed and worked with 5 program coalitions for a period of five months; an evaluation which took place in 2010 and a second evaluation which is now underway. Many learning processes which allowed experiences to be shared, have involved staff of partner organizations, of ICCO staff and relevant consultants. These processes justify the use of the word ‘noticeable’, because over the years, we have seen that there are coalitions that start taking ownership over the program and their cooperation. develop Theories of Change that inform their joint work and jointly undertake lobbying and advocacy activities. The lessons learned have been shared with the organizations involved through many reflective papers and the Guidance note, which was based on these processes. However much still needs to be done and learning and adaptation never ends.

**Box 2: Evaluation of Programmatic Approach Ghana Forestry Coalition (ICCO-PSO-LWT evaluation 2012)**

*Towards impact*

With the growth of awareness and connection between the partners, the impact of the coalition started to increase. They developed a more coherent approach and this resulted in a bigger platform. With the growth of awareness and connection between the partners, the level of collaboration in terms of implementation and taking responsibility also increased. There is an open mode of communication between all the partners now, which helps to increase the quality of the ideas, but also the quality and professionalism of the coalition itself. Partners give each other feedback in a positive way and this creates a lot of energy in the group. It creates the ability to give each other recommendations about the best way of handling problems .

There has been a change of attitude; first everybody focused on their own goals and needs. Now, due to the collective reflections, there has been a change in the way people deal with each other and can also see and understand the goals and needs of someone else. The way the coalition works differs from approaching a single issue; they address more issues and different aspects of these issues together and at the same time. They work together on different levels and try to involve everybody in the program at different stages. In planning, design and implementation stages new actors can now be involved.

## **The Collective level**

### **The interior-collective Quadrant: organizational culture and mindsets**

#### *Key shifts*

Different characteristics of ICCO, the ICCO culture and the ICCO mindset play an important role. Firstly, ICCO is an organization with a culture in which the partnership paradigm is very important. The ProCoDe change process was the result of this partnership paradigm; we are equal, we both need each other to realize a world free of poverty and injustice, while inspired by a progressive Christian identity and set of values. Secondly, ICCO has become a bureaucratized organization, not least because we are so completely incorporated in the Dutch Development Funding system. This system has, over the 40 years of its existence, also changed. It was a system that supported Dutch civil society organizations to support young and upcoming civil society organizations in developing countries. The aim was to strengthen and build the overall capacity of civil society as an important actor in the balance between government and its population (private sector was not in the picture then). This was initially done through small projects and capacity development support. It became a system that is more bureaucratic, has more control mechanisms, has top down decision-making procedures and above all has bureaucratized and 'monetized' partnership relations. We are now the donor that holds the purse strings and thereby have unequal relations with partner organizations, contrary to what the vision of partnership is. This inequality of course also fully characterizes the relation of ICCO and its donor the Ministry of Trade and Development Aid. This reality, though recognized, is not always incorporated in the ICCO culture that still maintains the 'myth' of equality and joint visions of change as its ideology. The Programmatic Approach is also informed by this partnership paradigm; ICCO and stakeholders working together in a MSP to realize change and cooperation in which each actor/ stakeholder represents its own interests but is also able to work towards a common goal.

#### *Emerging results*

The biggest change in the mindset of staff and the organization was to change from a relations management perspective, where the administration of the 'account' was very important, to a more cooperative mindset. In a cooperative, the change to be realized is central. Actors involved are chosen and invited into a cooperative process (the coalition) because they are related to opportunities of changing systems and not because of existing financial relations that need to be managed now as a 'program'.

### **The external collective quadrant: the systems, procedures.**

#### *Key shifts*

In this quadrant I would like to pay attention to the systems and structures that ICCO needed to change for it to be able to adopt a programmatic approach. As was said before, ICCO has developed into a bureaucratic organization and therefore many of its systems and structures are in-line with the needs of a functioning bureaucracy;

planning, accountability, clear decision-making, task and role descriptions, communication and information systems etc.

Implementing the programmatic approach requires adaptations in the system which was originally set up to enable ICCO to function and perform under a funding centric operational model, itself based on working in bilateral relations with clearly identifiable partners. The Programmatic Approach requires a system that can deal with funding but also co-operation with multiple organizations. It requires a system that facilitates programs to be developed in a cooperative manner and not by an individual PO or specialist. It requires funding mechanisms that can fund work of non- legally registered entities (the coalitions). It needs to be able to work with coalition level contracts or MOUs. It requires a system that includes monitoring and evaluation processes that are self-led by coalitions, including ICCO and not ordered or 'managed' by ICCO. It needs long-term engagement and support for developing coalitions to process the institutional development aspects of the coalition, as well as the projects/ activities that are to be undertaken by the coalitions.

Decision-making about what to fund, determining the criteria for the funding and setting the norms of the intended results were always strictly the prerogative of ICCO. Now there needs to be much more dialogue about how to fund, what to fund, whom to fund and about what the intended results of the coalition's work are going to be. How this relates to expectations of the individual organizations that participate in the coalition and to the expectations of ICCO, is also important. In which manner the coalition is going to cooperate what ICCO's role is going to be in relation to the coalition and what the relation of ICCO is to non-funded actors in the coalitions are also very important issues that need to be discussed in the coalition.

#### *Emerging results*

Many of these systemic and structural issues have been highlighted and many a working group within ICCO has tried to address these issues. We still are faced with contradicting system and structure demands. Creating perspectives of long-term funding and process funding in times when there are deep cuts of ICCO's budget, leads to practices that are understandable from the budget perspective, but are not conducive to the Programmatic Approach . One year contracts with individual partners, cutting of process development funding, less availability of facilitators to accompany coalition development etc. are not fruitful in promoting multi-stakeholder processes that take quite some time to develop. Due to the budget cuts that ICCO has already faced and the foreseeable budget cuts in the future, ICCO is seeking ways to fund its own existence and performance in the near and longer term. This sometimes causes frictions in fundraising between ICCO's interests in fundraising and coalition's or individual partner's interests in the same fundraising opportunity.

The question also relates to what the emphasis in future strategic choices of ICCO is going to be; strategic funder or program manager for large donors of partner organizations, or, being a broker, knowledge holder, or innovator working in

cooperation with local stakeholders and in which combination these two different sets of roles will develop.

### **The way forward**

The Programmatic approach and therefore facilitating multi-stakeholder processes for systemic change, would in my perception, be served best by ICCO strengthening its broker, innovator, knowledge holder and co-creator roles and by placing its strategic funder roles as supportive to the other roles mentioned, thus creating opportunities for change to emerge. This would however be again a major institutional change for ICCO. Applying the Four Quadrants of Change Framework might help in thinking through the consequences of such changes so we can prepare ourselves for them. On another note, this paper shows that the systemic nature of the introduction of the MSP in ICCO has been undertaken without a good understanding of all of the institutional consequences. In itself, the Programmatic Approach is a complex change process that would justify undivided attention and leadership in the organization. However, the Programmatic Approach was part of an even more complex change process, (ProCoDe), which took place in a drastically changing development cooperation context. This has had severe compounding effects that have led to divided leadership attention, unfocused resourcing of the strategy, multiple contradictory changes occurring at the same time and in fact an insufficiently guided change process in a context marked by complexity.

In the future we will be continuously working in and responding to, complex contexts. So I think that we should learn from this experience and adjust our management and strategic decision-making to the needs of operating in such complexity and therefore create conditions for the emergence of change and not plan for linear change towards expected outcomes.

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#### About the author

*Hettie Walters* is fascinated by learning and change in organisations and society and  
have made this into her profession. As she says:

*Key for me is that it is all about people but that structures and underlying  
systems count when you intend to change sustainably. Change processes are  
never neutral, power issues are always involved. Having worked a long time  
on gender equality and women's empowerment I have learned that lesson.  
How to involve people in deep change, especially those that don't have a  
'voice' yet is one of the most crucial questions underlying my and the  
development sector's work.*

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<sup>1</sup> ICCO is the interchurch cooperation for development cooperation in the Netherlands. ICCO connects enterprising people in the Netherlands with people in 44 developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This involves working closely with local civil society organisations including educational institutions and businesses. ICCO Cooperation's member organisations are Edukans, Kerk in Actie and Prisma. The ICCO cooperation was preceded by the ICCO Alliance (2007-2012). For more information about ICCO please visit: [www.icco-cooperation.org](http://www.icco-cooperation.org)

<sup>2</sup> Since 2007 ICCO together with six other organisations formed the ICCO Alliance. The Programmatic Approach became the organisational strategy for the whole Alliance but it was in first instance ICCO that developed it, some members of the ICCO Alliance followed some years later.

<sup>3</sup> For a full documentation please have a look at: <https://portal.icco.nl/web/programmatic-approach>.

<sup>4</sup> A system is a set of interacting or interdependent entities forming a larger whole. These systems may include organisational systems, may have geographical boundary, often has multiple levels and actors. Systems have the capacity to change, to adapt when it is necessary in response to internal or external stimulus (Baser & Morgan, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> Ken Wilbur's work has culminated in the Integral approach and the Integral Institute and is based in Boulder, Colorado, USA. Wilber explains the need for an Integral Approach in the following way: "In our current post-modern world, we possess an abundance of methodologies and practices belonging to a multitude of fields and knowledge traditions. What is utterly lacking however, is a coherent organization, and coordination, of all these various practices, as well as their respective data-sets. What is needed is an approach that moves beyond this indiscriminate eclectic-pluralism, to an *"Integral Methodological Pluralism"*—driving toward a genuine "theory of everything" that helps to enrich and deepen every field through an understanding of exactly how and where each one fits in relation to all the others. Through the Integral approach, we reveal the previously unseen possibilities for a better, more compassionate, and more sustainable future for all of us." See more at: <http://integrallife.com/contributors/ken-wilber#sthash.mwUR06lF.dpuf>

He has published several books in which he outlines his ideas such as: A Brief History of Everything (1996), A Theory of Everything (2000), and The Marriage of Sense and Soul (1998). The centerpiece of Wilbur's grand synthesis is his four quadrant model (often denoted "AQAL", an acronym for "all quadrants, all levels"). I am not aware of any academic validation of this framework but acclaimed Organisational Development practitioners such as Steve Waddell, Ingrid Richter and her business partner Ray Gordezyk (a.o. Gender at Work) and other members of the International OD network: IODA have all been using the framework and reflect positively about its use. IDRC has also used the AQAL framework in evaluations.

<sup>6</sup> Steve Waddell (2012) Global Action Networks: Creating our Future Together. Bocconi University Press/PalgraveMacmillan.. Page 105-107.

<sup>7</sup> From the MSP portal of CDI-WUR Wageningen: <http://www.wageningenportals.nl/msp/>

<sup>8</sup> By Machteld Ooijens and Hettie Walters for IODA conference: August 2010 Budapest

<sup>9</sup> Consolidating Experiences of ICCO's Programmatic Approach; An evaluative study of the Programmatic Approach of the ICCO Alliance, Erica Wortel & Jouwert van Geene, December 2009

Synthesis reports of the Appreciating the programmatic Approach process 2010 and 2011, team of social learning consultants led by Context International, Working better together, final report of an Action Research process by a team of six Action Researchers in 5 programmatic Cooperation sites, July 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Prepared by Machteld Ooijens and Hettie Walters (P&D) for the IODA conference, 22-26 August 2010 Budapest  
<http://www.iodanet.org/home.dz>