

The Presentations: Summary

Count me In! (CMI!)

As Shereen Essof of Jass, member to the Count Me In Consortium stated at the beginning of her talk: social transformation requires a deep understanding of power and power relations, of the power that is needed for transformation and social justice. It requires from development organizations that they also look at their own power and how this affects their partnership relations. Lasting social transformation requires genuine partnerships, based on equality and shared ownership. CMI is a collaboration of five feminist and women's right organizations from the Global South and the Global North, working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs working on the intersectionality of gender and power. By shifting resources and power to the hands of women, girls and trans people, Count Me In! supports them to achieve the scale and influence necessary to secure lasting social change by implementing two strategies: 1. spaces for communities and 2. collective power in advocacy. Within the consortium decision-making is shared and organized at the different levels of the partnership. The position of the chair rotates. The evolution of the partnership remains a challenge and is a major topic of continuous learning. In her talk Shereen stressed the following important principles if you want to develop genuine partnerships: go beyond the formal structures, be aware of power, be responsible to your constituencies and organize joint learning.

Global Partnership for the prevention of Armed Conflicts (GPPAC)

GPPAC is a global network that links civil society to relevant actors at local, regional and international level to collectively contribute to the prevention of violence and armed conflicts (SDG 16). As Charlotte Crocket explained, the network was initiated by the Netherlands-based European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), but founded by 50 peacebuilding organizations. Since then hosting the secretariat of the network became the main line of activity of ECCP, which was recognized by the organization's new name, " GPPAC Foundation ", and a new board consisting mainly of the members from the Global South. GPPAC consist of 15 regional networks, each of them deciding on their own priorities and activities, each of them represented, together with 6 INGOs, in the International Steering Group that decided on global strategies. In addition there is a Global Strategy Group, an advisory body, that is formed by representatives of regional strategy groups. The main challenges to the network are that consensus-based decision procedures are slow and the diversity of the contexts where the members are active result in a diversity of needs and interests and a lack of strategic focus on the global level. The reality of the network also shows that it is important to be open about power relations and conflict and make your partners responsible to resolve it. While decision making processes may be slow and messages diffuse, working as a network with shared decision-making offers many advantages: you have pooled knowledge, imbedded peer learning, solidarity, level of protection to your individual members, access and continuity.

Oxfam Novib and the FAIR network

Since 2016, Oxfam co-created the Fiscal Accountability for Inequality Reduction – Even it Up! Program, for which Oxfam Novib's Strategic Partnership with the Dutch government is an important source of support. The FAIR-EIU program unites partners, Oxfam country and global teams in a joint approach to fiscal justice and citizen participation and is a coordinated effort in policy influencing and campaigning at national, regional and global level. Stefan Verwer of Oxfam

Novib describes the context in which the program takes place, as one characterized by a crisis in global governance and shrinking civic space, changing relations between INGOs and Southern civil society organizations and a crisis of truth with a rise in populism and fake news. Within the Oxfam Confederation and in its global partner-network Oxfam Novib tries its best to shift power to the South, supporting Southern initiatives and balancing influence within the Oxfam Confederation, a slow but gradual process. It is important to build on country priorities, while connecting these to global campaigns, involve Southern partners from the beginning and adapt a flexible approach when the focus needs to change. An important challenge is the pressure on local civic space in relation to global influencing. We need to strengthen civic voice and defend civic space, including digital space. Building a network takes time and provide more space to Southern civil society requires new ways of working: you need to stop controlling, grow trust and organize collective decision-making procedures.