Promoting the right to food: Evaluation of DCAs Global Food Security Advocacy Program 2011 – 2013

Official version

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Strategihuset, January 2014

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Recommendations
Since 2011 DCA has implemented a global advocacy program to promote food security among poor and marginalised population groups in developing countries. Alliance building and lobbying decision makers have been the main advocacy strategies used.

The evaluation concludes that DCA’s advocacy program has effectively influenced policy processes in Denmark as well as at the European and Global level, and that the program is relevant to DCA’s food security policy.

1. **Consequently, it is recommended that DCA continues to provide framework grants and own un-earmarked funds to global food security advocacy.**

The evaluation finds that the active investment – in time and financial resources – in alliance building and policy alignment among allies in Denmark (92-gruppen), EU (Aprodev), and globally (ACT) DCA has gained influence far above what DCA could have achieved if acting on its own.

2. **It is recommended that DCA continues to invest financial resources and time in facilitating coordination of and cooperation among members in all 3 alliances.**

The evaluation further finds that in order to strengthen sustainability of DCAs global advocacy work and made it less vulnerable to the loss of momentum that occurs when staff leaves the organizations or change positions, more can be done to institutionalize advocacy skills and capacities in DCA’s regional offices so that more advocacy capacity is built outside DCA’s headquarter.

To do so, it is recommended that

3. **DCA’s advocacy unit and regional office representatives engage in systematic dialogues about if and how a global advocacy component can contribute to realize the overall objectives the programs that are implemented by DCAs regional offices.**

Global advocacy is likely to remain a ‘nice to have’ feature in the busy work schedule of regional offices without such a closer link between regional program and DCA’s global advocacy.

In line with this the evaluation recommends that

- **Budget lines providing space for regional advocacy officers to develop hands-on skills in advocacy are provided as part of the regional program budgets according to relevant advocacy intervention identified (see recommendation 3 above).**
• DCA staff members at regional offices are exposed to advocacy training in line with training offered to local partners and that the training is closely linked to advocacy work already planned or under implementation.

• If DCA staff members at regional offices are to monitor and provide quality assurance and advice on advocacy work conducted by local partners in line with DCAs rights based approach, then it is further recommended that they are exposed to the live experience of international advocacy events as part of their capacity building. This will enable them to fully understand what advocacy is, the challenges, opportunities associated with it and the skills that it takes to be effective.
1. Executive Summary
Support for programs that provide immediate assistance and real benefits to poor and marginalized population groups is crucial in the world of development agencies. Yet, for relief to provide lasting results it can be just as crucial to address the underlying, structural causes of poverty.

However, measuring the effectiveness, outcome and impact of such interventions against the long-term need for change can be challenging: It is very rare that advocacy interventions addressing root causes of poverty and human suffering reach their long-term objectives in the normal 3-5 year period of development programs. Measuring advocacy interventions should therefore be done against results in the short and intermediate-term which indicates if the advocacy work is ‘on the right track’ and provides a valuable contribution towards the long-term objective.

This evaluation has focused on 3 intermediate outcome indicators against which issues of relevance, results, effectiveness and sustainability have been assessed:
- DCA’s contribution to alliance building and cohesion within alliances
- DCA’s ability to build relationship with and influence decision makers
- DCA’s internal capacity for advocacy

1.1 Relevance
It is DCA’s mission to address development concerns through support to direct services of local partner NGOs and by looking further upstream to the conditions and national and global policies, which are the basis for these concerns.

DCA’s food security advocacy strategy has contributed to do so – and to the overall goal of DCA’s food security program policy1 – by addressing key decision makers in Denmark, in the European Union and as part of the global climate talks (the COPs). The aim has been to ensure that the livelihoods of poor and marginalised population groups are sustained through continued access to fertile and cultivatable land and through compensation and restitution when land is lost. Land grabbing and climate change negotiations are seen as key threats and barriers in this regard.

The evaluation finds that both areas are relevant to DCA’s strategic goals, and to the lives of poor and vulnerable people benefitting DCA’s work. The evaluation also finds that the choice of focus areas are justified by research recognised internationally on the relationship between climate change and food insecurity2. Yet, the evaluation also finds that more can be done at regional office level to further specify how global campaigns on land grabbing and climate change contribute to fulfil specific country program objectives. This is likely to be key, both to the motivation of regional offices

1. DCA’s Right to Food Program Policy, objective 3 and 4
2. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, 2007 created huge in the ‘climate negotiation environment’ with a report that clearly demonstrate the clear relationship between climate change and eco-systems, water resources and food insecurity.
to prioritise future global advocacy interventions and to the sustainability of such interventions in the future (section 6).

1.2 Outcomes and results
The evaluation concludes that DCA’s advocacy program on the right to food has made a contribution to the international climate debate and negotiations and to mobilization and policy alignment of a global ecumenical climate movement which, compared to DCA’s size and the financial investment made, is unique.

While the results and progress of the global climate talks fall short of the ambitions and hopes of both the Danish government and the NGO sector, the recent COP 19 negotiations in Warsaw does indicate that DCA and the ACT alliance as contributed to defend important issues on the climate agenda. A decision to continue talks to further elaborate a definition on ‘private finance’ for climate investments turned out to be similar to a proposal brought forward by DCA and ACT. The ACT coalition also seems to have contributed to ensure that the issue of ‘loss and damage’ remained on the agenda for future negotiations, although in a form that is far from what ACTs would ideally want.

DCA has also contributed significantly and effectively to bring the issue of trade and human rights violations in the relationship between EU and Asia on the agenda of the EU commission, using and documenting the case of land grabbing in one of the DCA partner countries. DCA’s and Aprodev’s work on land grabbing led to a pressure on the EU commission from the EU parliament to initiate a formal investigation into the issues. While the Commission has so far refused, recent developments indicate that the director general of DG trade has asked his staff to reconsider the strategic links between trade and human rights as part of the directorate’s internal strategic thinking.

DCA’s ability to mobilize and provide access for its southern partners and other ‘southern voices’ to Northern/European decision makers and to global policy processes has been a particular added value in this process.

DCA has also been instrumental in mobilising and building alliances consisting of stakeholders from DCA’s program countries and in building their capacity to participate in international advocacy campaigns.

Graphically, DCA’s contribution can be illustrated as follows:
1.3 Effectiveness
DCA’s advocacy program has made use of two main strategies: Lobbying decision makers and mobilising local partners and other allies in Denmark, Europe and Globally. Feedback from decision makers interviewed indicates that both strategies have been effective and that they have appreciated the opportunity to discuss issues with DCA staff informally and outside the spotlight of public media.

Alliance building and mobilising local partners’ knowledge contributed to increase the credibility of the advocacy message that DCA wanted to promote in the case of land grabbing. In the case of climate change, DCA’s close dialogue with governments in developing countries represented ‘an asset’ and a source of knowledge that strengthened the interest of European and Danish decision makers in talking to DCA.

The evaluation finds that DCA’s ability to contribute to policy alignment within networks and to draw on the resources of its networks and allies (Aprodev, ACT and 92 gruppen) has enabled DCA to access decision makers and speak with more weight and impact than DCA could have done on its own.

DCA staff’s longer-term ‘investment’ in building relations and trust with decision makers at EU delegations, in the EU Commission and in the Danish Government has been useful in terms of fostering informal dialogues, exchanging information and presenting suggestions to identified challenges. This seems to have contributed constructively to agenda setting in all institutions targeted by the advocacy program, both in the case of land grabbing and climate change.

1.4 Sustainability and managing risks
In advocacy, sustainability is as much about achieving structural changes as about defending rights, policies and privileges from deteriorating. Sustainability for poor and marginalised population groups is achieved once the advocacy intervention has reached its ultimate objective. While this may be a long-term effort, sustainability in advocacy relates as much to an organization’s ability to sustain its own achievements and continue its efforts in the short, medium to long-term perspective.

Effective advocacy will always depend on the skills of individual staff members, the size and quality of their personal networks and contacts and their ability to use these contacts. Consequently, advocacy organizations will always remain vulnerable to organizational changes and staff turnover, which risk weakening the sustainability of achievements.

Yet, the evaluation found that DCA can do more to reduce that risk by strengthening and internalizing advocacy skills at its regional offices. This would contribute to strengthen the consistency of efforts, preserve valuable contacts and maintain a solid knowledge base, even if one staff member leaves the organization or changes position.
2. Introduction

During 2011 – 2013 DCA has implemented a global advocacy program with the overall purpose to ensure that the right to food is recognised and reflected in relevant governmental, intergovernmental and corporate policies and actions.

The advocacy program aims to contribute to the implementation of the fourth objective of DanChurchAid’s program policy on the Right to Food which stipulates that: DCA, partner organizations and Action of Churches Together Alliance (ACT alliance) are transparent and accountable, document violations of the right to food and actively advocate for governments to fulfill their obligations regarding the right to food.

The advocacy program was formulated as a framework document leaving open the exact definition of advocacy targets and policy processes to intervene in. Climate change activities were defined by a management decision to continue DCA’s its engagement in the global climate negotiations which began with COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2009. Other thematic areas were defined in a process involving DCA’s regional representatives and program officers in the spring and summer of 2011.

As a result, 3 thematic areas that would contribute to the program’s overall objective were identified:

- Climate adaptation and funding or climate change
- Land Grabbing
- Mainstreaming of the right to food in Danish and EU related develop and humanitarian policies

Graphically, the link between the program’s overall objectives and the thematic areas selected can be illustrated as follows:
Unpredictability is often ‘a given’ in advocacy, and specific advocacy interventions are to be defined and adjusted to the political context and windows of opportunity to contribute to wider political processes, public agendas etc.

This has been the situation of DCA’s advocacy program too. For each of the 3 themes identified, a number of activities have been identified while implementing the program and adjusted to fit the political context.

2.1 Purpose of the evaluation
In order to gather learning and experiences from the Food Security Advocacy Program 2011 - 2013 and to assess its relevance impact, outcome, efficiency and sustainability, DCA decided to conduct an external evaluation of its global advocacy work in November and December 2013.

The evaluation findings are described in this report.

A second purpose of the evaluation was to develop a monitoring framework for DCA’s advocacy work to improve DCAs ability to document its added value and contribution to policy development in Denmark and to global agenda setting. This framework is presented separately an in annex 1 to this report.
3. Methodology

As so many other advocacy processes, DCA’s advocacy program has been like chasing a ‘moving target’. Shifting political contexts and windows of opportunities has necessitated an ongoing revision of DCA’s strategic approaches so as to ‘stay clear’ of the program’s objectives.

Identifying feasible strategies and intermediate outcomes for advocacy projects operating under such circumstances is often a challenge: No matter how clearly a pathway to a desired long-term policy change goal is articulated, it may be impossible to predict or explain all the variables that might be important within the change process. What an organization thinks is a realistic expectation for change one month may become unrealistic given new circumstances the next month.

In response to this challenge, it was decided not to evaluate the program against the planned activities and projects implemented, but against the two main strategies used by DCA to achieve its overall objective. Both strategies are considered vital to achieve the program’s longer-term objectives.

The two strategies were

A) **Alliance building and support to international alliances (Act and Aprodev) and support to DCA partners and key advocacy stakeholders (Southern Voices).**

   Numbers matter in advocacy. The more we are and the better we are aligned, the stronger is our influencing capacity and the better are our chances to reach our goal. To determine how well then program has succeeded in building alliances and fostering policy alignment, the evaluation has aimed to assess the collaboration and alignment (dynamics inside coalition) of key coalitions in which DCA has been active, and the contribution made by DCA towards the work of Danish and international alliances.

B) **Relation building and lobbying of international and Danish decision makers and decision shapers.**

   Building relationships of trust is key to changing attitudes and motivate decision makers to support our case. To determine how well the program has succeeded in influencing key decision makers, the evaluation has assessed the extent at which decision makers and shapers targeted has actively promoting (parts of) advocacy calls of DCA and its allies in relevant political fora and made use of inputs and ideas suggested by DCA and its allies.

In addition, it was decided to focus on two of the 3 main thematic areas addressed by DCA’s global advocacy program on food security: Land grabbing and Climate Change. DCA’s work on climate change was selected because it represented the biggest component in DCA’s advocacy program and targeted global as well as national policy processes. Land grabbing was selected because it represented an advocacy issue targeting the European policy level. In addition, it was a theme that had been selected through a participatory process of involving regional programme
officers in identifying relevant global advocacy themes for DCAs advocacy unit in Copenhagen to address.

Assessing Internal Advocacy Capacity
Measuring the success of alliance building and lobbying as suggested above can provide valuable information as to the effectiveness and likelihood that advocacy initiatives will achieve desired outcomes.

Yet, such analysis provides little information about the likelihood that outcomes reached can be sustained, defended against setback or even built upon for further initiatives. To assess this issue, a focus on the resources and capacities – the “inputs” for developing and implementing advocacy strategies – that are necessary for the optimal support of effective advocacy has been included too.

In particular, the evaluation has addressed the issue of staff resources and the ability of DCA to communicate and create ownership to the advocacy work in all relevant parts of DCA³.

3.1 The challenge of attribution
Because of the complexity of advocacy and policy change efforts, it is rarely possible to attribute change to one specific actor. Seeking to do so will usually lead to an inaccurate conclusion and may even erode harmony within a coalition, if everyone will seek to take the sole credit for an advocacy effort.

Therefore, the evaluation does not address the issue of attribution. Rather the evaluation has looked for meaningful evidence of DCA’s contribution towards achievements made within the two strategic approaches (alliance building and lobbying) described above.

To do so, the evaluator has asked advocacy targets and alliance partners interviewed for the evaluation to assess the relevance and quality of technical support and advice provided by DCA. Targets have also been asked to elaborate how they think they have been able to use inputs from DCA in their work and how they think DCA has contributed to their work.

Finally, the evaluator was given access to a range of public reports, documents and internal correspondence between DCA and its allies and advocacy targets that would provide an indication of the how decision makers and other stakeholders value the nature of their relationship and cooperation with DCA.

³ This analysis cannot replace a full advocacy capacity analysis, should DCA wish to engage in this.
3.2 Limitations to the evaluation

It remained beyond the scope of the evaluation to assess all the projects and activities conducted under the framework of DCA’s program. To do so would hardly have been relevant either, as some projects were abandoned along the way.

Therefore the evaluator chose to focus on projects that were partly or fully realized. This choice does risk to bias the evaluation findings – providing a false impression that almost all anticipated sub-objectives were realized. This is not the impression that the evaluation would want to make.

Yet, focussing on projects with some kind of positive outcomes does provide more learning for the future than trying to learn from flawed projects or projects that were cancelled due to changes in the political context. While the latter may only provide us with a general impression of what not to do, successful projects provide us with more specific and useful information about ‘what works’, which could be replicated in other contexts.

Advocacy is about relationships – something which can best be observed and assessed ‘on the spot’. For obvious reasons, it was not possible for the evaluator to participate in alliance meetings or in DCA’s meetings and conversations with decision makers. Direct observation of the working dynamics, the quality of cooperation and relationships developed has therefore not been possible. Rather, the evaluation has had to rely on second hand information such as email correspondence between DCA advocacy staff, alliance partners and other stakeholders and on interviews with stakeholder with whom DCA has built a working relationship. To cope with this weakness, the evaluator sought to ‘cross check’ information received with at least one other informant so as to check the validity of information provided.
4. DCA’s Food Security Advocacy Program 2011 – 2013 – Land Grabbing and Food Security

As part of DCA’s global advocacy program on food security, DCA has worked to prevent land grabbing related to adverse or unintended consequences of EU’s trade agreement with countries in Asia and to ensure that developing countries access funding for compensation for loss and damages from climate related disasters and for climate adaptation.

The campaign on land grabbing included the preparation and publication of a report documenting how local communities are being impoverished and people are losing their homes because of the EU’s trade scheme (‘Everything But Arms’) that allows least developed nations, duty-free access to the European market. The logic of it is to increase investment, create jobs, foster economic growth and therefore reduce poverty and encourage development in the poorest countries. Yet the operations and investments of foreign companies under the scheme contribute to erode poor farmers and communities from their land.

The report was used to engage the EU delegation in Phnom Penh, the EU parliament and the EU commission in a dialogue about the adverse development and human rights consequences of the trade scheme. The work was done in cooperation with local partners, through negotiations and meetings with the EU delegation in Phnom Penh, through the Aprodev secretariat in Brussels and in cooperation with other Aprodev agencies.

The work on climate change included efforts to ensure that EU’s and the global community’s financial support to climate adaptation and mitigation in developing countries increase and that the Danish Government allocates additional funding to climate adaptation and mitigation.

To ensure this, DCA has worked actively to build a global alliance of local ACT fora and ‘southern voices’ within the Framework of Action by Churches Together (ACT), which could defend and speak on behalf for faith based communities internationally. The work has also included active lobbying and participation in the international climate negotiations (the COPs), where ACT delegates from all parts of the world have prepared themselves and coordinated their work to participate actively during the talks. The work has also included capacity building, advocacy trainings and direct support and advise on national climate lobby interventions and activities related to climate change, as well as a range of meetings with informal and formal contacts, dialogues and meetings with EU officials and representatives of the Danish Government.

The following two sections include an assessment of achievements made within the two overall strategic approaches used, both for the land grabbing and the climate change campaign: Lobbying and contribution to policy alignment and alliance building.
5. DCA’s lobbying efforts and contribution to policy change

To achieve the advocacy program’s objectives with the campaign themes of Climate and Land Grabbing, DCA has developed working relationships with representatives of the EU delegations (Land grabbing), the EU commission, the Danish Government, representatives of developing countries as well as negotiators and think tanks from other parts of the world.

In general, the program has adopted a ‘diplomatic’ approach to advocacy, which emphasised the need to build relationships of mutual respect and trust with key decision makers and the need to demonstrate that DCA and its partners had valuable information to contribute with to the work of decision makers.

4.1 Main achievements

DCA staff members’ in-depth knowledge about the human rights and development related consequences of EU’s trade agreement (land grabbing), their understanding of policy processes and knowledge of the positions and concerns of developing countries in the global climate talks, has been ‘an asset’ that strengthened the interest of decision makers to talk to DCA staff members.

So has DCA’s network and ability and offer to informally connect decision makers with informants and other stakeholders such as local NGOs or government representatives with whom no formal contact could be made.

Decision makers interviewed for the evaluation all valued DCA staff’s in-depth knowledge of the issue that they were trying to lobby, their understanding of the policy process and their ability to adjust calls and claims to an ambitious, yet still achievable level. This was taken as an indicator that DCA and its allies were prepared to understand the ‘real politics’ of the game and find the best possible solutions within that context.

The fact that DCA staff adopted a non-confrontational approach and left most dialogues and conversations with policy makers ‘beneath the public radar’, was also highly valued by decision makers interviewed. This made it possible for them to discuss issues and test ideas unofficially, and seems to have brought DCA in the position most favourable to any advocate: that of a friendly ally.

From this position, DCA has been granted space and trust to provide inputs to speeches and policy positions of decision makers from both developed and developing countries. DCA has been invited to participate in unofficial sessions and events and have been granted access to meet with high ranking negotiators and decision makers from several countries playing a key role in global climate talks.

A similar relationship of trust seems to have been built with representatives of the EU delegation in a DCA partner country (land grabbing), where DCA and its partners developed a fruitful cooperation and engaged in in-depth discussions about adverse developmental and human rights related consequences of EU’s trade agreement with Asian countries.
The value of public criticism

Although decision makers generally prefer that criticism is made behind closed doors or beneath the public radar, there are situations where public criticism for not taking action or for being too moderate can contribute to promote an advocacy cause. Several decision makers mentioned that sometimes such critique could help them defend a certain position or policy which – in the mind of other stakeholders – was criticised for being too progressive or flawed.

Decision makers prefer to know in advance that public critique is to be expected, however.

Networking as a means of building legitimacy

The relationship built with representatives from developing countries in cooperation with ACT seems to have played a special role in terms of granting DCA access to inner circles of policy discussions related to climate change. Through this cooperation DCA participated in dialogues, which both enabled successful policy input, and increased understanding and knowledge about the global politics.

Based on the positive working relationships developed, DCA, in cooperation with its alliance partners in Denmark (92-gruppen), Aprodev and ACT seems to have contributed to shape the agenda of the global climate talks and to bring the issue of adverse developmental and human rights consequences of EUs trade agreement with the DCA partner country to EUs own, internal, agenda:

DCA’s and Aprodev’s work on land grabbing led to a pressure on the EU commission from the EU parliament to initiate a formal investigation into the issues. While the Commission has so far refused, recent developments indicate that the director general of DG trade has asked his staff to reconsider the strategic links between trade and human rights as part of the directorate’s internal strategic thinking.

While the results and progress of the global climate talks fall short of the ambitions and hopes of both the Danish government and the NGO sector, the recent COP 19 negotiations in Warsaw does indicate that DCA and the ACT alliance has contributed to defend important issues on the climate agenda. A decision to continue talks to further elaborate a definition on ‘private finance’ for climate investments turned out to be similar to a proposal brought forward by DCA and ACT. The ACT coalition also seems to have contributed to ensure that the issue of ‘loss and damage’ remained on the agenda for future negotiations, although in a form that is far from what ACT would ideally want.
4.2 Opportunities for improvement
Feedback from decision makers interviewed for the evaluation indicates that DCA’s friendly approach to advocacy and DCA’s ability to contribute with important information, constructive ideas and contacts has played a crucial role in DCA’s and its alliance partners’ ability to impact policy processes.

The fact that it can be hard to imagine a more effective approach for influence may bring light to another issue considered by DCA.

Interviews with DCA staff during the evaluation process indicated a schism between the ‘low profile’ lobby work conducted and DCA’s own identity as a popular organization mobilising Danish constituencies. The ‘nerdy’ work of analysing policy processes, negotiating policy formulations, reading tons of bureaucratic reports and drinking loads of coffee with decision makers in corridors at all hours may not always match well with the wish to mobilise a Danish constituency. Neither may such a mobilization be as relevant or as effective to achieve the advocacy objective.

4.3 Recommendations
Rather than trying to solve the schism between the need to engage in lobby interventions and the wish to mobilize a Danish constituency is recommended that DCA considers carefully from case to case, when public campaigning among a Danish constituency is needed – either to generate political or popular attention to a cause or to strengthen the legitimacy of DCA to speak about a cause.

In the case of both land grabbing and climate change, the legitimacy for DCA to engage itself seems to have aroused from DCA’s close contact and cooperation with civil society organisations in communities affected by the issue, DCA’s solid knowledge of the issue and DCA’s membership of alliances that enabled DCA to speak on behalf of or as part of many other voices.

5. DCA’s contribution to alliance building
Alliance building has played a key role in DCAs global advocacy work on food security and has taken at least 3 forms – from reaching joint positions to coordinating and sharing information among a wider group of stakeholders:

- Efforts to harmonize and formulate joint positions with like-minded European or development agencies and civil society organizations – most notably within the ‘Danish 92-gruppen’ and (Aprodev), the Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe (Land grabbing).
- Efforts to mobilize new civil society actors, build their capacity to participate in the global climate advocacy work and provide access to decision makers and policy processes for ‘southern voices’ and civil society organizations in developing countries (ACT, climate change).
- Efforts to *coordinate and share information* with likeminded stakeholders including government representatives and think tanks and research institutes from all over the world.

Graphically, DCA’s alliance work can be illustrated as follows:

Substantial time has been invested by advocacy staff to meet with stakeholders and alliance partners, build working relationships, share information, plan and execute meetings, formulate joint statements and letters – and in some cases – organize joint events. The aim has been both to increase the number of allies (in particular in and around the ACT climate change work) and to strengthen alignment of members and affiliates to speak with one voice in front of decision makers.

## 5.1 Main achievements

According to staff and members talked to in 92-gruppen as well as Aprodev and the ACT secretariat, DCA staff have played a key role, both as formal chairs of alliances and working groups (ACT and 92-gruppen) and as informal leaders of coalitions (Aprodev working group on food security). By taking responsibility for sharing information among participants, developing policy papers, consulting members, drafting and circulating letters, instigating members, building advocacy capacity of new members and mobilizing them to talk to other peers, DCA has contributed both to strengthen the capacity of the alliances and to provide access for affiliated members and partners from the south to decision makers in the EU and in the Global Climate Process.

Informants state that it its work, DCA staff has managed to consider the needs, concerns and interests of all alliance members, to stimulate collaboration and compromises and to facilitate that new common ideas were developed by the group. DCA has also been careful to communicate decisions made by the group clearly and quickly to all members. As a result of the facilitation a working atmosphere seems to have been established whereby all members felt included in the work. As emphasized by one ACT member: *DCA would act as a coordinator, and wait for all of us to provide our inputs before DCA itself would add anything.*

In addition to facilitation of alliances’ meetings and joint advocacy efforts DCA has also contributed to build capacity of local ACT members and local ACT working groups to influence their own governments in the global climate negotiations. This has been done mainly through skype discussions about how the ACT alliance and local working groups could position itself in national and
international policy processes related to climate change and through direct exposure to and participation in the annual COP meetings. On a few occasions, more informal advocacy trainings have taken place too.

Informants interviewed state that this work has contributed to build capacity and policy cohesion within alliances - both as it relates to climate change and land grabbing – and that through this work – partners in developing countries have got access to international decision makers in the EU and at the global level.

In the ACT secretariat this has further led to a much stronger identification of the secretariat itself and its members with the global climate advocacy work, and that it has built a new confidence among members, that the alliance has a role to play and can contribute constructively to global policy negotiations.

Alliance building has not just benefitted alliances involved but also DCA itself. As active – and facilitating – members of alliances DCA has been able to promote its (shared) message with more assertiveness and impact than it could have done on its own.

This is particularly important in contexts characterised by multiple stakeholders such as the UN climate talks or within the EU, where – as emphasized by EU officials interviewed - organizations that are not united risk not being heard or not being taken seriously.

Being many, united and coordinated has also enabled DCA to benefit from the intelligence, inputs and time of many different allies. This has been particularly important during the recent COP events where ACT delegates coordinated their participation in meetings twice a day, thereby managing to cover many different sessions, gather information from several negotiation processes and defend ACTs position in many meetings at the same time.

Quantity further increased the legitimacy of the message and facilitated access to decision makers.

This was emphasised both by decision makers, alliance partners and members of the ACT and Aprodev secretariats who all felt, that the stronger the alliance was, the better is was connected to ‘real issues’ affecting ‘real people’ on the ground, the more the alliance could influence agenda setting.

Yet, DCAs investment into a looser affiliation with or contact to other stakeholders seems to have had a similar effect in terms of legitimacy. As described in section 4 above, DCAs network of contacts among think tanks and government representatives from developing countries strengthened the interest of European decision makers and officials to listen to DCA.

The case of land grabbing also points at the advantage of alliance building in terms of safety and technical expertise. To document the issue, DCA prepared a report pointing at adverse human rights and developmental consequences of EU’s trade scheme. The final report turned out to be so controversial that it had the potential of putting DCA’s own presence in the selected countries and
the safety of local partners at risk. Therefore it was decided to launch the report in the name of Aprodev and through Aprodev’s home page.

Based on the Aprodev secretariat’s in-depth knowledge of the working processes of the EU commission and the EU parliament, DCA received important inputs to policy recommendations, advocacy initiatives and relevant meetings to be set-up with EU officials. The secretariat also helped set-up meetings between delegations of DCA partner representatives and EU officials.

5.2 Opportunities for improvement
The need to consider alliance building and maintenance as a *dynamic, continuous and - at times - time consuming* investment into getting people to work together, understand the issue, align their positions and speak with one voice was emphasised in both cases evaluated (land grabbing and climate change)

The case of land grabbing further illustrates that important gains are at risk of being lost, if this investment is discontinued. Due to staff changes in the beginning of 2013, DCA could no longer commit itself to serve as the ‘link’ between local partners, locally based EU officials and Aprodevs office in Bruxelles, Neither was DCA in a position to coordinate positions between Aprodev organizations present in the partner country.

While the work on land grabbing does continue in Aprodev and among other Aprodev working group members, informants interviewed felt that DCA’s ‘missing link’ in terms of dialogue with the EU delegation in the partner country, coordination between Aprodev agencies and access to local organizations who could add ‘real faces’ to the story of the adverse human rights and development impact of EUs trade scheme risked reduce the credibility and legitimacy with which the alliance could speak on land grabbing, trade and human rights. The simple reason being that ‘DCA was no longer in the loop’.

5.3 Recommendations
The value of investing sufficient time in alliance building and facilitation can be hard to quantify and is therefore often at risk of being under prioritised in the busy world of development agencies. Yet, as the evaluation illustrates, alliance building has played a crucial role, both in DCA’s ability to access global climate talks and in terms of bringing the adverse consequences of EUs trade scheme to the EU agenda.

To fully recognise the role of alliance building and the continuous need to invest time and resources into keeping members updated and aligned, it is therefore recommended that DCA systematically allocates time (and budgets) into this part of its global advocacy work.

It is further recommended that DCA systematises reporting on its contribution to alliance building in areas of strategic interest to DCA. This is important not only to the RAM process recently introduced
by Danida, but also to DCA’s own internal understanding of how alliance building contributes to DCA’s own ability to reach its advocacy goals.

6. DCA’s internal advocacy capacity

DCA’s advocacy program on food security has been organized in and implemented from DCA’s Global Advocacy Unit (now merged into a newly formed unit on Program, Policy and Advocacy).

An amount of 5.075.000 kroner have been allocated from DCA’s framework grant with Danida and from own, un-earmarked funds. Unlike earmarked grants, this grant enabled the food security advocacy program to remain flexible and responsive to windows of opportunities as they occurred during the policy processes that DCA aimed to influence.

The grant has covered salary of a full time staff member and an unpaid, part time, intern for the climate work. From the outset, the grant also covered an 80% advocacy officer for the land grabbing component. Due to maternity leave and budget cuts, the position as advocacy officer on land grabbing was left empty during parts of the period and later reduced to a 40% allocation of time from another staff member.

In addition costs have covered memberships of advocacy alliances (92-gruppen, Aprodev and ACT) participation in global climate negotiations for ACTs climate working group, southern partners and sister organizations, meetings with governments in developing countries, newsletters as well as documentation and research.

The advocacy achievements described in section 4 and 5 is indicative of the strong individual advocacy capacity and commitment of individual staff members engaged in both land grabbing and climate advocacy; both in terms of facilitating alliance building and policy cohesion and in terms of building fruitful working relationships with decision makers.

Effective advocacy will always depend on the skills of individual staff members, the size and quality of their personal networks and contacts and their ability to use these contacts. Advocacy organizations will therefore always remain vulnerable to staff changes and turnover.

Yet, organizations can do a lot to reduce that vulnerability if advocacy skills and thinking is institutionalized into all relevant parts of the organization. A first step in this direction would be to ensure that advocacy ideas and campaigns are clearly communicated to all staff members and that all staff members understand why this work is important and how it contributes to the organization’s overall objective or – in some cases – the objective of programs implemented by DCAs regional offices. Commitment comes alive the when the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions are clearly answered and when people can relate the work to their own work or the general work of the organization.

As section 4 and 5 illustrate, DCA’s legitimacy in global advocacy and one of its main added values lies in its ability to provide access for its southern partners and other ‘southern voices’ to
Northern/European decision makers and to global policy processes. A role that is naturally placed with DCA’s regional offices which have a direct access to southern partners and information on the ground.

DCA’s regional offices in Jerusalem and Phnom Penh have employed a full time advocacy officer to conduct this task – the latter with a sole focus on climate change though.

In other regional offices are advocacy part of the job descriptions of program officers who spend most of their time providing and monitoring grants to partners.

While this proves that important steps have already been taken to strengthen the advocacy capacity of regional offices, several informants interviewed mentioned, that this set-up is not ideal. First, it was felt that time allocated for staff members to fully familiarize themselves with and practice the skills of advocacy was not sufficient – especially given the fact that the nature of advocacy differ compared to the nature of grant monitoring and project planning. Second, informants felt that in the busy work schedule of a regional office, challenged by donor and reporting deadlines, advocacy risked to be the first task not to be prioritized.

The difficulty of regional offices to find time to prioritize global advocacy – or to fully appreciate how global advocacy contributed to achieve their own program objectives seems to be confirmed by the fact that, in 2012, DCA’s advocacy unit offered advocacy training for all regional offices. No-one signed up. An advocacy training planned for DCA’s regional office in Malawi in 2013 was postponed till 2014.

Consequently, advocacy expertise and hands-on skills remains to a large extent within the advocacy unit of DCA’s headquarter.

And as a result, DCA remains vulnerable to staff changes – as was the case with the land grabbing campaign described in section 5 above: The combination of a reduction of staff in DCA’s advocacy unit in HQ and the change of regional representative in the DCA partner country de facto let to a cease of DCA’s contribution to coordinate local Aprodev organizations, and DCA’s effort to provide access for its partners to decision makers in the EU.

6.1 Opportunities for improvement

Advocacy and campaigning is an integrated part of still more national programs and projects supported by DCA’s regional offices. Yet, global advocacy that links local needs with global agendas
and provides access of representatives of developing countries to international policy processes and decision makers is still a relatively new discipline in DCA.

To fully integrate such interventions into DCA’s strategic approach and to strengthen sustainability and reduce vulnerability to staff turnover, regional offices should be provided more hands-on experience and capacity in advocacy. Such capacity should include

- Providing documentation to illustrate an advocacy issue.
- Building relationships with decision makers.
- Understanding policy processes
- Knowing how to present an argument and listen to the arguments of decision makers.
- Build and facilitate cooperation within alliances.

Yet, the poor response of regional offices to the advocacy unit’s offer to provide advocacy training suggests that more could be done to identify and communicate the value and contribution of global advocacy efforts to the objectives of development programs that regional offices are accountable towards.

Global advocacy is likely to remain a ‘nice to have’ feature in the minds of many regional offices as long as its value and direct contribution to the realization of regional program objectives remains unclear. Clarifying this link and developing Theories of Change that illustrates the connection between global advocacy goals and their contribution to program objectives in each program country may be a first step in this direction.

6.2 Recommendations

Provided that global advocacy – defined as linking local needs of developing countries to international policy processes and decision makers – is a priority to DCA’s future work, it is recommended that

- DCA’s advocacy unit and regional office representatives engage in systematic dialogues about if and how a global advocacy component can contribute to realize the overall objectives of programs implemented by DCA’s regional offices. Ideally such analysis and dialogue should take place when new programs are elaborated, or as part of program midterm reviews. (See the example box below)
- Budget lines providing space for regional program officers – or full time advocacy officers – to develop hands-on skills in advocacy should be provided as part of the regional program budgets according to relevant advocacy intervention identified (see bullet above).
- As most learning happens outside the training venue, it is further recommended that training workshops offered to DCA’s regional offices is closely linked to advocacy work
already planned or under implementation, so that staff members get an immediate opportunity to reflect on and practice what they have learnt.

- Exposing regional staff members to the live experience of international advocacy by permitting them to participate in international conferences is, if properly planned and reflected upon afterwards, another obvious opportunity to provide ‘real life advocacy training’ to regional office representatives.

### Linking global advocacy on climate change to regional programming – an example

In September 2013, DCA and ICCO engaged in a joint effort to promote climate change resilient livelihoods and sustainable food security of excluded and marginalized women and men in two districts in Nepal.

As a result of the planning exercise it was decided that one project objective would be that Government authorities provide services and support that is relevant to the productive needs of poor communities vulnerable to natural disasters.

To assess and possibly link DCAs global climate advocacy work to DCAs and ICCOs efforts in Nepal, a discussion between DCA HQ and DCA/ICCO Nepal could for instance be initiated on the following issues:

- What should an outcome of UN climate talks look like in order strengthen the Nepali Government’s ability to support climate vulnerable communities in Nepal?
- How can UN climate talks contribute to hold the Nepali government accountable to the needs and interests of vulnerable communities in Nepal?
- Based on an answer to these first two questions, to what extent would it be relevant and interesting for DCA and ICCO in Nepal to link a global climate advocacy component to its new food security project?

### 7. Conclusion and ‘lessons learnt’

Ever since its early years, development aid has had an uncomfortable relationship with politics: The humanitarian imperative matches poorly with the dirty, emotional, unpredictable and contested art of power and politics. While ‘traditional’ development aid is seen to deal with definite goals, with ‘relatively’ easily measurable signs of improvement, advocacy – and politics – is about conflicting visions and subjective values, with signs of progress hard to agree on.
In advocacy work, are questions from DCAs terms such as ‘are the benefits from the programme, especially at rights holders’ level likely to continue after the finalization of the programme’ therefore likely to be answered with a blank ‘No’. ‘Benefits’ are hard to find when measured in traditional development aid terms and achievements are easily lost again.

Traditional development aid has its shortcomings too, however. Despite important victories – including a remarkable reduction in the number of poor and food insecure population groups, large population groups still remain excluded from development processes. Even where states have specifically created opportunities for citizen participation and influence, certain groups, particularly the impoverished and the discriminated, have either been too alienated to engage in the processes or, when they have, they have been threatened, silenced or unable to speak the ‘right’ language. This is where advocacy has a say.

This evaluation illustrates that advocacy can make a difference and contribute to empower actors that would otherwise not have had the confidence, skills or knowledge to effectively speak out and defend their own interests. This is so, even though progress can be hard to measure and tangible results can take years – or decades – to reach.

The evaluation shows that

- **Continuity** is key to achieve an impact. It is the long term and steady investment into building expertise on the subject matter, relationships and trust with alliance partners and decision makers – even before they come into office – that has enabled DCA to get access to policy makers in Denmark and abroad and to capitalize on the benefit of size and numbers when speaking to decision makers from the platform of an alliance. It is also the continuity that has enabled DCA to earn a reputation in certain ministries and EU institutions as a reliable and skillful partner – and to maintain that reputation even in situations when the turnover of desk officers was high.

- **Lobbying** and relation building below the public radar is an effective means to gain influence. It is through the unofficial encounters that trust is built and it is during such occasions that concerns can be reflected and ideas can be tested without the – sometimes brutal – judgment of the public.

- Adopting a **public mobilization and awareness** component to an advocacy strategy may therefore not necessarily be helpful to achieve the advocacy objective itself. Public mobilization and awareness raising may serve other important purposes however, such as maintaining or strengthening the organizations’ legitimacy in its constituency or raise funds for campaigning.

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• **Alliance building** – understood as coordination of positions with stakeholders with whom DCA is only loosely or unofficially affiliated, as alignment with sister organizations or as cooperation with partners in developing countries – pays off. Although alliance building and the coordination work that it entails can be cumbersome and time consuming, numbers and size matter in advocacy. When organizations are many, coordinate and harmonize their positions the legitimacy – even of the individual organization speaking on behalf of or in line with the position of its alliance – increase.

Although the evaluation finds that DCAs strategic approach has been effective in terms of influencing policy agendas and mobilizing additional voices in support of DCAs advocacy work, it would be unrealistic to expect that an advocacy campaign of 3 years like DCA’s would have restored local farmers’ access to their land or that communities affected by climate related disasters got compensation for their loss, or opportunities to resettle somewhere else.

However, through a relatively modest investment in time and finances, DCA and its alliance partners have contributed to influence the policy agenda in the EU commission and in Global Climate Talks. DCA has also helped provide access and give a voice to some of those stakeholders that would otherwise have been silenced, because they were unable to ‘speak the right language’, understand the complicated processes of global politics or find their way through the bureaucracy and corridors of the EU commission.

In politics there are no guarantees. Yet, the likelihood that their voices are heard, that their needs, concerns and interests are taken into account when decisions are made and resources are distributed for the future is likely to increase when they are ‘inside the game’ of global politics rather than outside.
Annex I

Monitoring of Advocacy Interventions in DCA

What should we monitor? How should we do it?


The Model includes 27 indicators that Framework Organizations are to integrate and reflect upon as part of their reporting to Danida.

2 of these indicators relate to advocacy.

The purpose of this document is to provide inspiration and guidance for staff member in DCA who are to report on their advocacy work according to the 2 indicators included in Danida’s Resource Allocation Model.

1. What to measure?

According to Resource Allocation Model, DCA should report on the following indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Policy development and influence in Denmark</th>
<th>2. Global engagement beyond Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organisation accounts for its plans and achievements in relation to relevant policy influence and policy development in Denmark, elaborating on:</td>
<td>The organisation describes its contribution to global agenda setting and global engagement through a coherent approach, which is based on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. The strategic fit between the organisation’s global agendas/campaigns and the organisation’s policy engagement in Denmark</td>
<td>a. The linkage of the organisation’s global agendas/campaigns to the local level, including partner level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The relevance and validity of analyses of policy fields, actors, etc.</td>
<td>b. The relevance and validity of analyses of policy fields, actors, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Goal achievement measured against own objectives/targets</td>
<td>c. Goal achievement measured against own objectives/targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Reflecting on own or others’ best practice and lessons learnt</td>
<td>d. Reflecting on own or others’ best practice and lessons learnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Engagement in alliances/networks</td>
<td>e. Partners’ and own engagement in global alliances/network in a broad sense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Guidance on how DCA may report on requests related to both indicators:

2.1 Reporting on the strategic fit between DCAs global agendas/campaigns and the organisation’s policy engagement in Denmark (1a)

Reporting on the linkage of the organisation’s global agendas/campaigns to the local level, including partner level. (1b)

When reporting on the strategic fit between goals, objectives and the focus of advocacy campaign, organizations should describe why and how a campaign and an advocacy engagement in Denmark is relevant to the organization’s mission, and why and how global advocacy initiatives are relevant to the program objectives at country level. This can be done by comparing advocacy initiatives with mission statements, policy documents and program strategies, asking the question:

How and to what extent is our advocacy work in line with our political profile and priorities in Denmark and with our partner cooperation abroad?

2.2 Reporting of Validity of Analyses, Goal Achievements and Lessons Learnt (2b,c,d and to 2b,c,d)

To report on the relevance and validity of analyses of policy fields, actors, etc. (1b and 2b) organizations should have made such an analysis prior to the implementation of their advocacy strategy.

This can be done by developing a ‘Theory of Change’. A theory of change is your theory on how and why you think that certain actions will lead to a desired change. In other words, it is your analysis on how you think that you can intervene in the policy context.

For a guidance to Theory of Change (in Danish) See for instance.

When organizations have a theory of change – or another plan – they are ready to measure relevance, validity (1b, 2b) and progress against plans and objectives (1c, 2c).

See http://fagligtfokus.ngoforum.dk/index.php/tema-advocacy/manual-til-advocacy/5-dokumentation-af-resultater/5-1-monitorering-med-forandringsteori for a description about how Theory of Change can be used for monitoring of advocacy initiatives.

The two last pages in this document includes a simple example of a Theory of Change for an advocacy project and how this plan has been used to report on validity, goal achievement and lessons learnt.
Reporting on engagement in alliances (1.e and 2.e)

Numbers often matter in advocacy. The more we are and the better we are aligned, the stronger is our influencing capacity and the better are our chances to reach our goal. Reporting on the size (quantity) and the degree of internal alignment and cooperation (quality) can provide important information about the likelihood that we will influence the policy agenda we target. Even – or in particular- if we have not been able to make any tangible progress so far and even if our thinking about how we would achieve change (our Theory of Change) has turned out to be flawed.

Ways to measure quantity of alliances

1. Make a simple count.
   How many are you. Has the number of members increased or decreased in the reporting period?
2. Make a graphical illustration.

   Another way to illustrate quantity is to make a circle as illustrated below and place your contacts in the right category. Who are on board your alliance, how often do you stay in tough?
   Mapping your contacts helps you keep track of the size of our alliance and the frequency of our encounters. If you are not in contact frequently, this may indicate that your alliance is not so strong.

   Would you want to establish more frequent encounters with any of your contacts in the coming reporting period? Or to add new contacts?

   The model cannot only be used to quantify and map members in your alliance. You can also use it to map encounters with decision makers with whom you want to build or maintain a working relationship.
Ways to measure quality of alliances

Quality in alliances building relates to issues such as

1. **Level of common understanding of the problem and its solution.**

   Questions to reflect on in a reporting may include:
   - How much do you agree on the problem and its solution?
   - Are there internal disagreements?
   - How were they solved in the reporting period?

2. **Member’s commitment.**

   Questions to reflect on in a reporting may include:
   - How and with what resources do members participate?
   - Are members willing to contribute with their time when it is needed?
   - Have member’s commitment changed in the reporting period?

3. **The ability to act simultaneously and coordinated.**

   Questions to reflect on in the reporting may include:
   a. How well do you coordinate your work?
   b. What do you do to coordinate it?
   c. Have there been any signs of improved or strengthened coordination in the reporting period?