Evaluation of Woord en Daad's Policy Influencing Programme in the North (2008-2012)

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Contents

Executive summary 1

Chapter 1. Introduction and Context 6

1.1 Woord en Daad's Policy Influencing Programme 6
1.2 The objectives of the evaluation and the evaluation questions 7
1.3 Methodology for this evaluation 8
1.4 Methodological challenges and limitations 16
1.4.1 Time and timing 16
1.4.2 The concept of theory of change and complexity 16
1.4.3 The concept of outcomes and complexity 16
1.4.4 Validity, substantiation and triangulation 17
1.4.5 Confidentiality 18

Chapter 2. General findings: The assessment of the PI North programme and the six selected trajectories 19

2.1 Introduction 19
2.2 Haiti 19
2.3 TVET 23
2.4 Colombia 26
2.5 Development Cooperation General Policy (Partos) 29
2.6 SME – Small and medium enterprises development 32
2.7 Basic education 35
2.8 The ToC for the PI North programme 37
2.9 General findings: Theories of change of the PI North programme 42
2.10 General findings: Realized outcomes contributing to PI North objectives 46
2.11 Substantiation, contextualization and triangulation 47

Chapter 3. Answering the five evaluation questions 51

3.1 Getting results: Assessing the effectiveness of the PI North programme 51
3.2 Getting results: Assessing the choices of Woord en Daad 52
3.3 Getting results: Woord en Daad's added value 54
3.4 The connection with the needs in the South 55
3.5 Summarizing: Explanatory factors for the effectiveness 55

Chapter 4. Recommended points for discussion 57

Annexes 59

Executive summary

Context

'Woord en Daad believes that helping people in developing countries to exploit their potential can only be effective if the support is not limited to direct poverty alleviation. The support aims at the level of society and government too. Injustice and poverty are often maintained by decisions made on "higher level". Policy Influencing should contribute to results on the long term and if Policy Influencing is executed well, it will work out positively for the work of the partner organization.'[1]

For Policy Influencing in the North Woord en Daad asked for an external and independent evaluation of the activities for the period 2008 to 2012. During these years approx. 16 projects were executed under the Policy Influencing programme in the North. The following six trajectories were selected by Woord en Daad to be the sample for this evaluation:

- Lobby for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on national and EU-level
- Lobby for small and medium enterprise (SME) development/value chain development
- Lobby for education
- Lobby for the Colombia Platform
- Lobby for the Coordination Europe-Haiti
- Lobby with Partos regarding general development policy issues

The **main purpose** of this evaluation was to get insight in the choices Woord en Daad made and the different approaches used as well as their effectiveness.

Primary intended use of the evaluation findings was twofold. First for future policy development and second for guiding further choices in the current programme on (i) how to support partners and (ii) how to realize PI objectives.

The external and independent evaluator was given five **evaluation questions:**

Relevance

1. Can the choices of Woord en Daad be related to the political context?
    - Were certain opportunities to connect to the political context left unexploited?
2. Do the activities offer added value over what is offered by other lobby actors?
3. What choices have led to the focus within and between the lobby trajectories and why were certain trajectories started? Is there sufficient balance in the width and depth of the trajectories?
4. Was there a clear connection between the PI trajectories in the North and the identified needs in the South?

Effectiveness

5. How effective have the trajectories/programmes been?
    - What are the explanatory factors for the effectiveness (or lack of effectiveness) of the evaluated trajectories and the programme as such?

[1] Woord en Daad's Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

Every lobbying and advocacy evaluation is confronted with a number of **methodological challenges**. The most important are the complex and dynamic reality and that no objective truth exists regarding effectiveness of interventions, the relevance of the results and the contribution done by any of the participating organizations.

The key **methodological choices for this evaluation** were:

- The use of a Theories of Change (ToC) model to re-construct Woord en Daad's advocacy planning. A ToC presents a broad view of the desired change and the chosen strategy to contribute to that change. The evaluator uses a specific ToC format that is tailor-made for planning, monitoring and evaluation of complex societal or political change interventions.[2] A characteristic that distinguishes this format from other ToC models is that it gives insight in the 'why' of certain choices. The key function of this ToC tool in this evaluation is that it works as a baseline against which achieved outcomes can be mirrored. The process to re-construct the ToC for each of the six selected trajectories involved document review and a workshop with Woord en Daad's lobbyist and one of the programme staff.

- Outcome harvesting. This tool makes use of a definition of outcomes that is different from the usual OECD definition and in which the change of behaviour and/or policy of a social actor (person or organization) is central. Each outcome formulation consists of the description of the observable facts of this change, the relevance in the light of Woord en Daad objectives and Woord en Daad's contribution. A procedure similar to the above resulted in six documents, one for each trajectory, with each describing 3 to 5 outcomes. In total 25 outcomes were described which are all inserted in annex 2.

- The third step in this evaluation was to request external informants to respond to the 25 outcomes. The objectives were to substantiate and contextualize the outcomes, and to gain deeper insight in the pathways of change, the relevance of the result and the contribution made by Woord en Daad. In total, 10 interviews were held and 10 informants responded to a survey per email. 12 of the respondents were allies, 8 were lobby targets. Each trajectory had at least two respondents. All responses were on record, except for a few confidential statements.

Findings per trajectory. The report present these findings and intermediate conclusions for each of the six selected trajectories in the chapters 2.2 – 2.7.

After analyzing the **general theory of change for the PI programme in the North** the following conclusions were drawn:

- The elements in all ToCs are clear and logically linked to each other

- The ToCs are consistent with each other

[2] Woord en Daad already makes use of a theory of change but the way that is composed and used is very different from the concept introduced here. Woord en Daad's ToC reflects its vision of change but it is composed of different elements and is not used as a tool for planning. The ToC format introduced in this report has an added value not only for evaluation but also for planning.

- Trajectory-specific ToCs are consistent with the general PI North ToC
- Important advocacy strategies are *internal*, *fact-based* and *cooperative* AND work in coalitions
- There is a very strong focus on political actors in The Hague (and Brussels): targeting actors inside the system 'parliament - political parties – ministry – minister - embassies'. Are that always the best system-boundaries?
- No use is made of analytic tools such as actor analyses or power analyses in order to assess strategies or otherwise plan trajectories
- The PI North programme is large for one person to be responsible for, the issues are often complicated and WD's strategy is resource-intensive
- The choice to include Colombia and Haiti in the PI North programme is not well substantiated through partner participation or systematic analyses.

Answering the evaluation questions

Chapter 3 answers the five evaluation questions. Key elements of these concluding answers are:

- All choices made within the trajectories can be related to the political context
- Wood en Daad has a clear added value over what is offered by other actors. This lies mainly within the chosen approach and the role Woord en Daad's lobbyist is playing
- The TVET trajectory can be assessed as effective: the expected outcomes were largely achieved. The other trajectories were partly effective. Three trajectories, Colombia, Partos and Education, were not effective regarding the larger goals but achieved relevant adjustments in the way the policy decisions were implemented. Haiti was partly effective because some expected outcomes were achieved, others not. SME formally was effective as the expected outcomes were achieved. But these expected outcomes are weakly formulated, and were too easy to achieve. Therefore the overall assessment is: partly effective.
- Woord en Daad showed great capability to adapt to a changing context. This is visible in smaller outcomes when the lobbyist made use of sudden opportunities, such as the initiative from the Dutch MP Voordewind to visit Haiti, and in larger changes, such as the way the policy regarding TVET is changed by making use of the changes in the political mainstream
- The strategies as described in the ToCs were carried out as planned. One could say that Woord en Daad has remained true to itself.
- It is concluded that the following points are all related to each other: (i) Woord en Daad focuses strongly on political actors only; actors other than politicians and civil servants are seldom included in the pathways of change, (ii) Tools to make wider systems analyses (actor- or power analyses) are not used, (iii) The pathways of change that underlie Woord en Daad's intervention strategy are rather simple, and (iv) Only in a few occasions Woord en Daad has

identified mid-term and long-term objectives that are ambitious, realistic and measurable, in other words, SMART.

In chapter 4 final conclusions are drawn and topics for discussion are recommended.

1. ***It is recommended to consider the use of the Theory of Change-tool as it is introduced in this evaluation as a tool for planning PI North trajectories. This would help to be more explicit about the underlying assumptions, it would serve as valuable basis for discussing strategic choices with each other and it would create a fruitful context to determine SMART objectives for the short as well as the longer term. It would also be the context in which the mentioned systems- or actor- and power analyses will fit.***

2. In addition the impression arises that creativity is used when assessing strategies and intervention within the political network in The Hague but that Woord en Daad could be more creative in using actors outside that system. ***There is a variety of approaches that Woord en Daad could consider while it is recommended that Woord en Daad remains true to itself. The current approach is not ineffective and it seems to fit the organization. But it is the experience of the evaluator that in the longer term it is more effective to make use of different approaches: not only internal, but also sometimes external; and being more confrontational . Experimenting with these approaches is therefore recommended – preferably as result of a planning process as recommended above.***

3. The policy plan 2011-2015 in which *sustainability* is central presents the opportunity to genuinely integrate the ecological aspect of sustainability and connect to the political context without having to fear that this is a leftist issue. ***Is Woord en Daad willing to consider and analyze issues such as land conversion, agricultural commodity trade, and a much stronger integration of CSR?***

4. ***In summary this evaluation cannot conclude that the PI North programme would be more effective if it is limited to a lesser number of trajectories. But, each of the above considerations will take time if Woord en Daad wants to implement them. In other words, in order to create more space for more width and depth WITHIN trajectories – with the aim to be more effective - it is useful to consider the limitation of the amount of advocacy trajectories.***

5. The 25 outcome formulations each tell a story about an effective policy influencing intervention which is relevant to Woord en Daad's theory of change and to which Woord en Daad has contributed**. It is recommended to use them internally as well as externally as Woord en Daad has already invested in their selection, their formulation and their substantiation. Examples of such uses for communication are (i) for the quarterly feedback emails from the lobbyist to the Woord en Daad staff, (ii) for the yearly summary per trajectory from the lobbyist, (iii) organize specific learning sessions with programme staff, (iv) in Woord en Daad's yearly report to the public, or (v) in a specific publication/newsletter to Woord en Daad's stakeholders.**

A final conclusion regarding the evaluation methodology is that the evaluation methodology worked out well but the evaluation plan was too ambitious. It would have been better to have limited in advance the number of trajectories for the evaluation sample.

Acknowledgements

The author of this report would like to acknowledge the valuable inputs by all informants, interviewees and those who participated in the survey. This evaluation and its findings are strongly based on the data collected through their participation.

I would especially like to acknowledge Hanneke Post of Woord en Daad for her logistical and content-wise support throughout the whole evaluation process. Finally, I am grateful for the very constructive contributions to the evaluation process from Evert-Jan Brouwer, the main executor of the programme under evaluation.

1. Introduction and Context

Woord en Daad's Policy Influencing Programme

On its website Woord en Daad gives the following information on its background: 'Woord en Daad was founded in 1973 as a Non Governmental Organisation active in development. The founders were people from reformed orthodox protestant churches in Holland. As such, the organisation had no links with any church in The Netherlands from the beginning and has an interdenominational character. On the one hand, the founders were not satisfied with the strong ideologically polarised influence in the development organisations of the mainstream churches. On the other hand they could not stand the fact that their own churches did not undertake any action against poverty and marginalisation.'[1]

In its Terms of Reference for this evaluation Woord en Daad wrote: 'In 2007 Woord en Daad started with a programme for Policy Influencing (PI) with both a Southern and Northern component. The Northern component consists of lobby with several Dutch and international actors, such as the Dutch parliament or the European Union. The Southern component consists of support to partner organisations in the establishment of their lobby/advocacy plans and, where applicable, the seeking of and cooperation with specialised lobby/advocacy partners. Although Policy Influencing as such is, or should be a worldwide activity, within Woord en Daad the usual distinction North-South is maintained, mainly because of approach, history and present circumstances.'

'With respect to Policy Influencing in the South, Woord en Daad believes that helping people in developing countries to exploit their potential can only be effective if the support is not limited to direct poverty alleviation. The support aims at the level of society and government too. Injustice and poverty are often maintained by decisions made on "higher level". Policy Influencing should contribute to results on the long term and if Policy Influencing is executed well, it will work out positively for the work of the partner organization. That is also why Woord en Daad strengthens the capacities of its partners in the South. It is important that they are able to influence policy at national, regional or local level. (..) Within the Southern PI programme the operations of partner organisations should be the starting point for the identification of needs. The Northern PI programme links to those identified needs but also identifies broader developments in the Dutch and international atmosphere that influence the operations of our partner organisations either directly or indirectly.'

'For its Northern Policy Influencing Woord en Daad is part of complementary coalitions consisting of other NGO's in the North which are involved in shared issues. Besides these coalitions, Woord en Daad itself influences policy in the North on several issues too.'

The objectives of the evaluation and the evaluation questions

For Policy Influencing in the North Woord en Daad asked for an evaluation of the activities from their start in 2008 up to the end of 2012. The Policy Influencing programme in the North consists of at least 16 trajectories. The following seven trajectories were selected by Woord en Daad to be the sample for this evaluation:

- Lobby for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) on national and EU-level
- Lobby for small and medium enterprise (SME) development/value chain development
- Lobby for education
- Lobby for the Colombia Platform
- Lobby for the Coordination Europe-Haiti
- Lobby with Partos regarding general development policy issues
- Unforeseen lobby activities.

During the evaluation process it showed that the task to assess seven trajectories was too large and it was decided to focus on the first six trajectories and to exclude the 'Unforeseen lobby activities'.

The main purpose of this evaluation is to get insight in the choices Woord en Daad made and the different approaches used as well as their effectiveness. The outcomes of the evaluation will be used by Woord en Daad for its future policy development and for guiding further choices in the current programme on how to support partners and how to realize PI objectives.

Evaluation questions

Relevance

6. Can the choices of Woord en Daad be related to the political context?
    - Were certain opportunities to connect to the political context left unexploited?
7. Do the activities offer added value over what is offered by other lobby actors?
8. What choices have led to the focus within and between the lobby trajectories and why were certain trajectories started? Is there sufficient balance in the width and depth of the trajectories?
9. Was there a clear connection between the PI trajectories in the North and the identified needs in the South?

Effectiveness

10. How effective have the trajectories/programmes been?
    - What are the explanatory factors for the effectiveness (or lack of effectiveness) of the evaluated trajectories and the programme as such?

Methodology for this evaluation

The key challenge for this lobbying and advocacy evaluation was how to deal with a complex and dynamic reality. In the world of politics, development and social change, the use of *theories of change* and *outcome harvesting* gained currency, as there is a growing awareness that this is a complex working environment.

The three key methodological characteristics for this evaluation are:

- The use of a Theories of Change model to re-construct Woord en Daad's advocacy planning
- A definition of outcomes that is different from the usual OECD definition and in which the change of behaviour and/or policy of a social actor (person or organization) is central
- NOT to follow the linear chain of inputs→activities→outputs→outcomes→impact and then judge whether the planning was implemented and successful as foreseen, BUT to identify relevant achieved outcomes and then assess how relevant these outcomes are for Woord en Daad's objectives and how the organization has contributed to the achieved outcomes. This does include the identification of so-called emerging and unplanned outcomes. Therefore this approach requires a paradigm shift. From the traditional paradigm in which one plans that A leads to B and then evaluates whether A was implemented and led to B to this paradigm in which the evaluator starts with an identification of the relevant changes that were realized at the end of the programme. From there, the evaluator looks back and tries to assess how this change came about and how the organization contributed. For more explanation on this approach, see the description of the outcome harvesting process below.

The full evaluation design is described in the evaluator's proposal to Woord en Daad, which is presented in annex 1.

Document review

Many evaluations start with a review of the relevant documents. In this case an important part of this first phase was already executed by a staff member from Woord en Daad before Wolfgang Richert started his task as external evaluator. Through document review and interviews with the key actors within Woord en Daad this staff member produced a 23-page document with a description of each of the six selected trajectories and of the history of policy influencing by Woord en Daad. This document was the evaluator's starting point.

Reconstructing theories of change

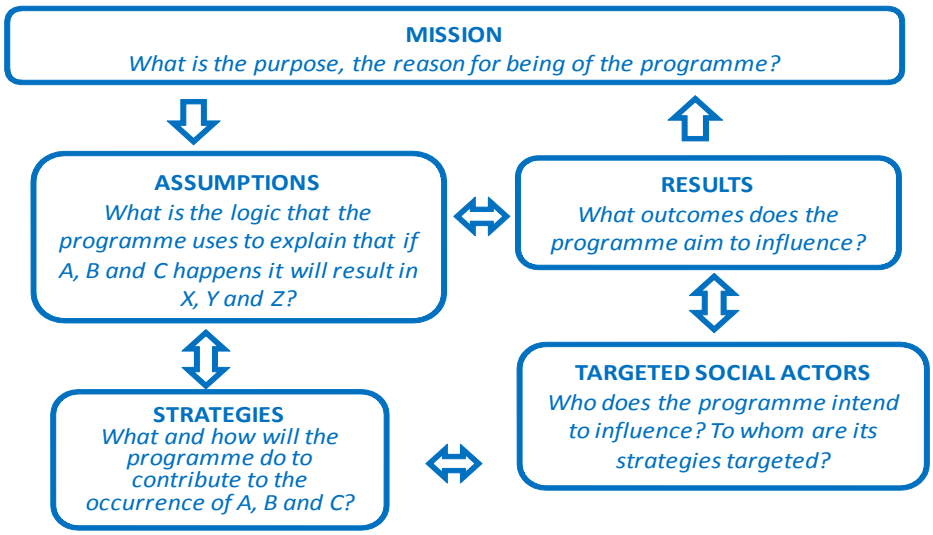
In its Policy Influencing programme, Woord en Daad faces so many variables and interacting factors that the organization has little certainty that its interventions will lead to the expected results; i.e., the results of their activities are to a large extent unpredictable. In addition, although the challenges faced may be clear – and often they are not – there tends to be disagreement amongst change agents about how to address them. Because each situation is so different and dynamic a successful approach to a given problem in the past can only rarely be replicated in new situations or other

contexts. In such a complex working environment, the methodologies, models, or logical frameworks of results-based management are rarely useful. They assume that you can predict a series of cause/effect relationships in the logical chain inputs→activities→outputs→outcomes→impact whereas in reality those relationships are highly unpredictable. In contrast, a theory of change (ToC) presents a broad view of the desired change and the chosen strategy to contribute to that change.

When using the term *theory of change* one has to be aware that many different concepts and definitions exist and that there is not a common agreement about what constituted a theory of change. Therefore already in the evaluation design in the proposal the evaluator suggested a definition based on work done by the Ford Foundation.[2] This definition is very useful for lobbying & advocacy evaluations and campaign evaluations and is slightly adapted by the evaluator to be even more useful. The next figure shows the ToC format that is used as a basic model for this evaluation, which can also be used by the organization as tool for planning.

Woord en Daad also has a ToC but it should be noted that the format below and how it is used is different from the ToC that is used by Woord en Daad. Woord en Daad's ToC is reflects its vision on change that gives direction to the organization and its partners. That ToC has different elements and is not used as tool for planning.

Theory of Change: Basic Model



This ToC summarizes what the plans, ambitions and strategic choices were at a specific moment in the past for a specific programme or trajectory. This way the ToC functions as a baseline against which outcomes that are achieved during the trajectory or programme can be measured. More specific the section with 'expected results' can be used as outcome indicators.

During the evaluation, the theory of change of each of the six selected trajectories was reconstructed in three steps:

1. The evaluator extracted a draft of the elements for each of these ToCs based upon written information provided by Woord en Daad;

2. An extensive interview/workshop was held with the lobbyist from Woord en Daad, Evert-Jan Brouwer, and one of the programme staff responsible for that trajectory. The aim was to further discuss and agree upon these elements;
3. The evaluator and the lobbyist finalized all six documents in an interactive exchange of emails in which often Woord en Daad documentation was used again.

These ToCs were finalized before the interviews with external informants started. Although they were not used in the interview, they served as relevant background information for the evaluator.

In addition the evaluator prepared a draft of a general ToC for the entire PI North programme but at that point in time this draft ToC was not further reconstructed and agreed upon as was done for the other six ToCs. The main reason was that it did not add insights needed at that moment while it distracted from the focus on re-constructing the six trajectory-specific ToCs. At the end of the interview process but before the analysis and interpretation of the data, the evaluator further re-constructed this ToC based on two key policy documents from Woord en Daad, one for the period 2007-2010 and the other for 2011-2015. This was done and finalized without further discussion with Woord en Daad staff.

The seven reconstructed ToCs are shown and discussed in the next chapter.

Outcome harvesting

The second key methodological characteristic of this evaluation is the use of a definition for outcomes that is different from the OECD definition. Outcomes are here understood as:

Observable changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, policies or practices of the people, groups, or organizations that have contributed, or potentially contribute to Woord en Daad's objectives and that were targeted by the PI activities.

This definition differs from the 'classic' and mainstream definition of outcomes, such as the one formulated by the OECD which says that outcomes are some kind of mid-term changes. The importance of the outcome definition used here is that it is more specific: it focuses on changes in the behavior, etc. of those people or organizations that are the targets of the policy influencing programme. In other words, influencing policy is influencing people or organizations. Evaluating policy influencing therefore requires evaluating the realized changes of those people or organizations as a result of that influencing. This specification is crucial for lobbying and advocacy evaluations - and other evaluations dealing with complex societal changes - as lobbying and advocacy are always about contributing to these changes of these social actors.

The most relevant outcomes to which the six selected PI North trajectories contributed were harvested in three steps, similar to those regarding the reconstruction of the ToCs: the evaluator prepared a draft of the achieved and relevant outcomes based upon documentation; extensive workshop with the lobbyist and one of the responsible programme staff to agree upon the draft descriptions; in an intensive exchange of emails, the evaluator and Woord en Daad's lobbyist finalized all outcome formulations.

This resulted in six documents, one for each trajectory, with each describing 3 to 5 outcomes. In total 25 outcomes were described which are all inserted in annex 2. An analysis and interpretation of these outcomes is provided in the next two chapters.

Below is an example of a full outcome description. This example is relatively short. Most of the 25 outcome formulations are longer.

Sample outcome

Issue: Small- and medium enterprises
Type of actor: Dutch Parliament
Type of change: Policy change

21. In 2011, the Dutch Parliament adopted a motion which demanded the State Secretary for Development cooperation to monitor more closely the implementation of the food security and agribusiness policy.

Description: On 20 October 2011, State Secretary Knapen published his policy letter on food security in developing countries. In the months before Woord en Daad had already noticed an alarming lack of accountability in the public documents of the MFA for the results achieved so far in this area. When the new policy letter was issued, Woord en Daad was embarrassed that this situation had not improved, but actually worsened. The day after, it published its analysis and shared it with the Parliament, based on the conviction that the Parliament should be enabled to get more insight into what really has worked and what worked not in the area of food security and agribusiness. Following the debate on 8 December 2011, the ChristenUnie tabled a motion together with GroenLinks which was adopted on 22 December 2011.

Relevance: This unplanned lobby action served to alert MPs to ask for full, continuous insight into policy results on food security, in a time of cabinet change and policy change.

Contribution Woord en Daad: In 2011, Woord en Daad advocated in the Parliament for a stronger accountability of promises made by the MFA, especially regarding food security. As said before, this was done by making an analysis of the policy of former Minister Koenders and comparing this with that of his successor, State Secretary Knapen, which was then sent to all parliamentary parties, and used by several of them in the debate with the State Secretary. Following the debate on 8 December 2011, Woord en Daad advocated especially towards the ChristenUnie, which tabled a motion together with GroenLinks.

Pathways of change

The chosen tools are models which attempt to catch the complex and dynamic reality in a simplified picture. The added value of such a model in an evaluation lies within its ability to highlight those aspects that are most relevant for the issue at hand and leaving the less relevant aspects of the complex reality out of sight. At the same time, one must not forget that the simplified elements on which the evaluation zooms in can be dynamic and interrelated.

The above is important because both the ToC model and the outcome harvesting tool can give the impression that things are not related, whereas in reality they often are. Relevant risks are the following:

- To think that the targeted social actors as depicted in the ToC are independently targeted, isolated from each other, while in reality some maybe targeted collectively

- To get the impression that the strategies identified in the ToC are independent from each other while in reality some may be related

- The concept of outcomes is strong because it zooms in on the most relevant changes in one actor at one moment in time. The underlying reality is of course that those changes are often the result of earlier efforts taken by different actors over a longer period of time. The outcome description gives the opportunity to capture this dynamic but that is not always easy to achieve.

In response to these risks the notion of a *pathway of change* is used. The use of this notion enables to not only identify that social actor A and social actor B are both targeted but that actor A was targeted in order to influence changes in actor B. For example: Target the media for attention which influences parliamentarians who then influence the minister. You can then also determine what the role of the advocacy organization has been in each of these steps. A similar notion is used with regard to outcomes: which expected outcomes are needed in order to achieve other outcomes?

The in-depth interviews/workshops with the staff from Woord en Daad in which the ToCs were reconstructed and the outcomes were identified were also used to identify these pathways of change. This exercise was done not continued after three trajectories. The main reason was that Woord en Daad's planned pathways were very similar for all trajectories. An example of the visualization of such a pathway is integrated in the Colombia paragraph in the next chapter.

Interviews and survey with external informants

After finalizing the theory of change for each of the six selected trajectories and formulating the 25 realized outcomes, external informants were interviewed or surveyed. Below is a brief description of the process. For more details on the external informants, see chapter 2.

- Interviews: For each trajectory at least two external informants were invited for an interview. A long-list of names was proposed by Woord en Daad. All were knowledgeable of the trajectory to which they were invited to respond because they were either involved as one of Woord en Daad's allies or as one of the lobby targets. The evaluator made a selection, discussed this with the lobbyist and then made his final choice. The main criteria for this choice were equal spreading and assumed availability – very high level people are often not available. Woord en Daad introduced the evaluation in an email to the interviewees, after which the evaluator contacted them directly. The result is that 10 interviews were held which was a response rate of 71%.

- Survey: After a similar process of inviting external informants to join a survey another 10 experts answered the survey. All were chosen from the same list using the same criteria. The response rate to the survey was 50%.

The objectives of the interviews and the survey were to substantiate the outcomes and to gain a deeper understanding of these changes, their context, their relevance and how Woord en Daad

contributed to them. Naturally, the interviews led in average to longer comments and more explanations of the context than the surveys.

Therefore, both the interviews and the survey followed the same intention to ask the informants to respond to those outcomes on which they are knowledgeable. The outcome descriptions were provided to these people[3] and used as a basis for the interviews and the email survey. The informants were asked to what extent they agreed to each of the three aspects of each outcome formulation, the factual description, the relevance and Woord en Daad's contribution. They were also invited to give comments on each section.[4] In addition, the evaluation questions 1, 2 and 5 were included in these semi-structured interviews and in the survey. The main difference between the interview and the survey was that the interviewees had more opportunities to describe the context and different viewpoints and that the evaluator could ask questions.

The next text box gives an overview of this interview and survey design.

[3] Except for the part on the contribution of Woord en Daad which for reasons of confidentiality were not shared with so called lobby targets, but were only shared with allies.

[4] An alternative approach for the interviews would have been to ask unprompted response to the relevant changes and then compare them with the outcomes that were identified by Woord en Daad. This approach was not chosen mainly for two reasons. First, the evaluator's objective with the interviews was primarily to gain deeper insight in the described outcomes, aiming for more depth instead of width. This is partly due to the fact that the evaluation dealt with six trajectories, many of them being content wise very different. Second, it is the evaluator's experience that this alternative approach does not result in a lot of information with added value for the evaluation process. For example, imagine one of the allies is an organization with strengths in public campaigning and the interviewee says that at some point they collected 40,000 signatures for a public statement and they feel that this was a more important outcome. Then the evaluator would have two opinions without a tool to compare them.

Text box: Key interview and survey questions

Outcome #

1. We would like to know to what degree you are in agreement with the factual description of this outcome?

[ ] Fully agree
[ ] Partially agree
[ ] Disagree
Comments if you like:

2. To what extent do you consider that we have described accurately the significance of this outcome?

[ ] Fully agree
[ ] Partially agree
[ ] Disagree
Comment, which again is fully optional:

3. To what extent do you agree with the contribution of Woord en Daad to this outcome?

[ ] Fully agree
[ ] Partially agree
[ ] Disagree
Comment:

Finally, an additional interview was held with the two members of the board of directors of Woord en Daad. The objective was to get the view of the management on some aspects of the ToCs, the outcomes and the information received from the external informants.

Analysis and interpretation

In the final stage of the evaluation process the outcomes were analyzed by categorizing the type of actor that changed and the type of change that occurred.

Answering the five evaluation questions took place by comparing the categorized outcomes, including the opinions of external informants, with the reconstructed theories of change.

Categorization

The above mentioned categorization of outcomes took place along two lines.

The first group of categories is related to the type of actor who changed. Categories are similar to Woord en Daad's target groups, such as allies, Ministers, civil servants, Members of Dutch or European Parliament. A table with an overview of this categorization is presented at the end of the next chapter in paragraph 2.10.

The second group of categories is the type of change. These were based on the so-called *priority result areas* identified as critical by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for the Joint Evaluation of MFS2 International Lobbying and Advocacy programmes.[3] The MFA requested that three priority

result areas should be addressed. This evaluation used these three categories and the specifications developed by NWO-WOTRO[4] which resulted in the following sub-categories:

Priority Result Area (by MFA)	**Sub-category** (by NWO-WOTRO, adapted by W. Richert)
Agenda setting	Network building
	NGO participating in decision-making process
	Supportive media statements
	Public support created
	Agenda of lobby target changed
Policy change	Policy change by targeted social actor
Practice change	Practice change by targeted social actor

A table with an overview of this categorization is also presented in paragraph 2.10.

While the Ministry envisions that these priority result areas are sequential, the reality can be different. For example: The theory is that a lobby programme goes through the phases of setting the agenda of the Minister, after which the Minister changes his policy and then his practice. The reality can be a practice change because the Parliament adopts an amendment which changes the practice of the Minister before he/she had changed his/her policy. This means that these are not always phases to go through to achieve the desired result. Two more remarks in order to clarify this categorization:

- The difference between agenda change and policy change in the political context. Not all statements of change also lead to real policy changes – certainly not in the political arena. Policy change needs to be more structural than one statement alone. For example, in response to a NGO report the Minister makes a statement in the public arena or in the Parliament announcing a policy change. That outcome is categorized as agenda setting debate can be a change in his/her agenda but is not yet a policy change.

- The difference between policy change and practice change in the Parliament. A parliament influences and controls the policy and practice of the government. Most of the parliamentary activities are policy changes, such as the adoption of a motion that asks more attention for TVET because this intervention influences the Minister to change the policy regarding this issue. Only in case the Parliament changes or adopts laws directly, it is considered to be a practice change.

Methodological challenges and limitations

The evaluation presented numerous methodological challenges which are explained hereafter.

Time and timing

One of the largest challenges of the chosen methodology was that the outcome harvesting procedure was much more time consuming for Woord en Daad staff than foreseen in the evaluation proposal and the outcome descriptions needed to be finalized for all six trajectories at an early stage of the evaluation process. Another challenge was to go through the outcome harvesting process for six trajectories simultaneously while each trajectory is time-consuming and they all had to be finalized at more or less the same moment. However, the high commitment and high level of flexibility of Woord en Daad staff, especially the policy advisor/lobbyist who was primarily involved, made it possible to produce high-quality outcome descriptions for all the chosen trajectories. In hindsight it would have been better to limit the amount of trajectories for this evaluation to not more than four.

The concept of theory of change and complexity

A major challenge during the reconstruction of the ToCs was to be aware of the timeline. The idea of reconstructing the ToC is to catch the thoughts and plans that the organization had in 2007/08. If those are not documented it is often difficult for people to distinguish what the thoughts were 4 or 5 years ago and how those thoughts developed and changed in time. One solution to secure that the given information was accurate enough was to write-up more information and not to comprise the elements too much. This resulted in longer descriptions of the reconstructed theories of change including information how for example the strategy was adjusted in the course of time.

The reconstructed ToCs summarize a large number of data, thoughts, decisions and plans that existed within the organization. A large amount of this information was documented; other elements were only in people's minds. Sometimes content of different policy documents is contradicting and in all cases the challenge is to reconstruct what the thoughts and decisions were in the past. A well-reconstructed theory of change presents the programme planning in a highly concentrated way.

The concept of outcomes and complexity

The notion to define outcomes as changes in other social actors that have been influenced by advocacy activities was new to Woord en Daad and its allies but it seemed convincing and workable to them. Nevertheless, outcome harvesting is complicated because the environments in which advocacy organizations operate are highly complex, open and dynamic. When a NGO or a coalition contributes to an outcome, the effect tends to be indirect, partial, and sometimes even unintentional. It generally occurs some time after the NGO's activity took place, and usually in concert with other initiatives of the NGO or of other social actors. In many cases, NGOs may not even be aware of changes in other actors, or if they are aware, may not know details of the change. Thus,

there is rarely a linear, cause-effect relationship between Woord en Daad's activity and an outcome. Causality is messy, multi-level and multi-directional, as well as unpredictable.

Some types of outcomes may feel awkward and are therefore more difficult to identify. Influencing a social actor not to take action – avoiding something undesirable from happening – can be a significant outcome but is often awkward to formulate as a change. In addition, there may be outcomes that could be considered as negative changes to which a NGO inadvertently contributed and which significantly detract from, undermine or obstructs a desirable result. A third type of outcomes that are relatively more difficult to identify are unintended outcomes. These are outcomes that are relevant for Woord en Daad's ToC, to which Woord en Daad contributed but still didn't intend to happen.

While the evaluator had an important role in this process, it was highly interactive with Woord en Daad staff and it is the Woord en Daad staff who had the final word in it. In other words, the outcome descriptions are Woord en Daad's own text.

The validity of these outcomes is based on the following factors:

- The person or people who carried out the activity or produced the outputs that influenced the change in another social actor identified and formulated the outcomes.
- A logically clear and plausible relationship between i) what changed in each social actor, when and where, ii) the significance of the change for the results to which Woord en Daad wishes to contribute, and iii) Woord en Daad's reasoning of its direct or indirect, small or large, intended or unintended influence on the change.
- Substantiation and triangulation through interviews with external informants – see below.

Of course, there are also limitations to the validity of each outcome.

- The outcome formulation is from the perspective of one organization – Woord en Daad.
- It is difficult to assess whether the whole organization would agree with the outcomes. The number of people involved is limited but is considered to be optimal.

Validity, substantiation and triangulation

Identifying and formulating outcomes has a strong element of subjectivity. The issue is not only if there has been a change, if it is significant and the degree to which the change can in some measure be attributed to Woord en Daad. Equally important is who makes that judgment.

The outcomes have validity because they were identified and co-formulated by the social actor – both the lobbyist and a programme staff member of Woord en Daad – who contributed to them and an external evaluator. This happened through a process in which both parties rigorously examined each outcome for a plausible rationale between what was reported as the change, its relevance and how Woord en Daad contributed.

Furthermore, 23 out of the 25 outcomes were substantiated by external stakeholders who all were involved in the change process, thus increasing to the validity of the outcome formulations. Interviews with external informants were recorded, except in two occasions, and minutes were sent for comments and corrections. Survey responses were in writing.

Finally, the interview with Woord en Daad's directors contributed to the triangulation of the identified outcomes.

In conclusion, the interviews and the survey served as substantiation of the outcomes by verifying the observable facts, as triangulation by gaining the opinion of other stakeholders, allies as well as lobby targets, and as contextualization because comments and opinions of the informants helped to understand the context of the changes.

The validity of the substantiation resides in:

- The informant being independent of Woord en Daad,
- The function of the informant being relevant to the evaluated issues and
- The willingness of the informant to go on record publicly with their agreement or disagreement with the outcome as formulated: answers to the survey were in writing; interviews were recorded after which the evaluator made summarizing minutes to which the informants agreed.

Confidentiality

All informants were asked to go on record but confidentiality was offered for those pieces of information with which the informant did not want to go on record. This led to a very limited amount of information that was marked as 'confidential'. This information is used in the evaluation process but in a way that the data is not traceable to the reader.

2. General findings: The assessment of the PI North programme and the six selected trajectories

Introduction

This chapter presents the general findings of the assessment of the Policy Influencing programme in the North. Each of the six selected trajectories is presented in a separate paragraph. Those six paragraphs include the reconstructed trajectory specific Theory of Change, the identified most relevant outcomes to which Woord en Daad has contributed with that specific trajectory, the substantiation and comments from external informants, allies as well as lobby targets, and finally some intermediate conclusions.

Regarding the formulation of the 25 realized outcomes, the six paragraphs below present only the titles of all the 25 outcomes in the period 2008-2012 which are relevant to Woord en Daad's PI North and to which Woord en Daad contributed. The full outcomes are described in annex 2.

Paragraph 2.8 presents briefly the theory of change for the PI North programme in general. This is not a trajectory and there are no specific outcomes attached.

The final three paragraphs 2.9 – 2.11 present analyses of the data on general level. General findings regarding the ToCs in 2.9, general findings regarding the outcomes in 2.10, and general findings regarding the substantiation and triangulation through external interviews in paragraph 2.11.

Haiti

Theory of change

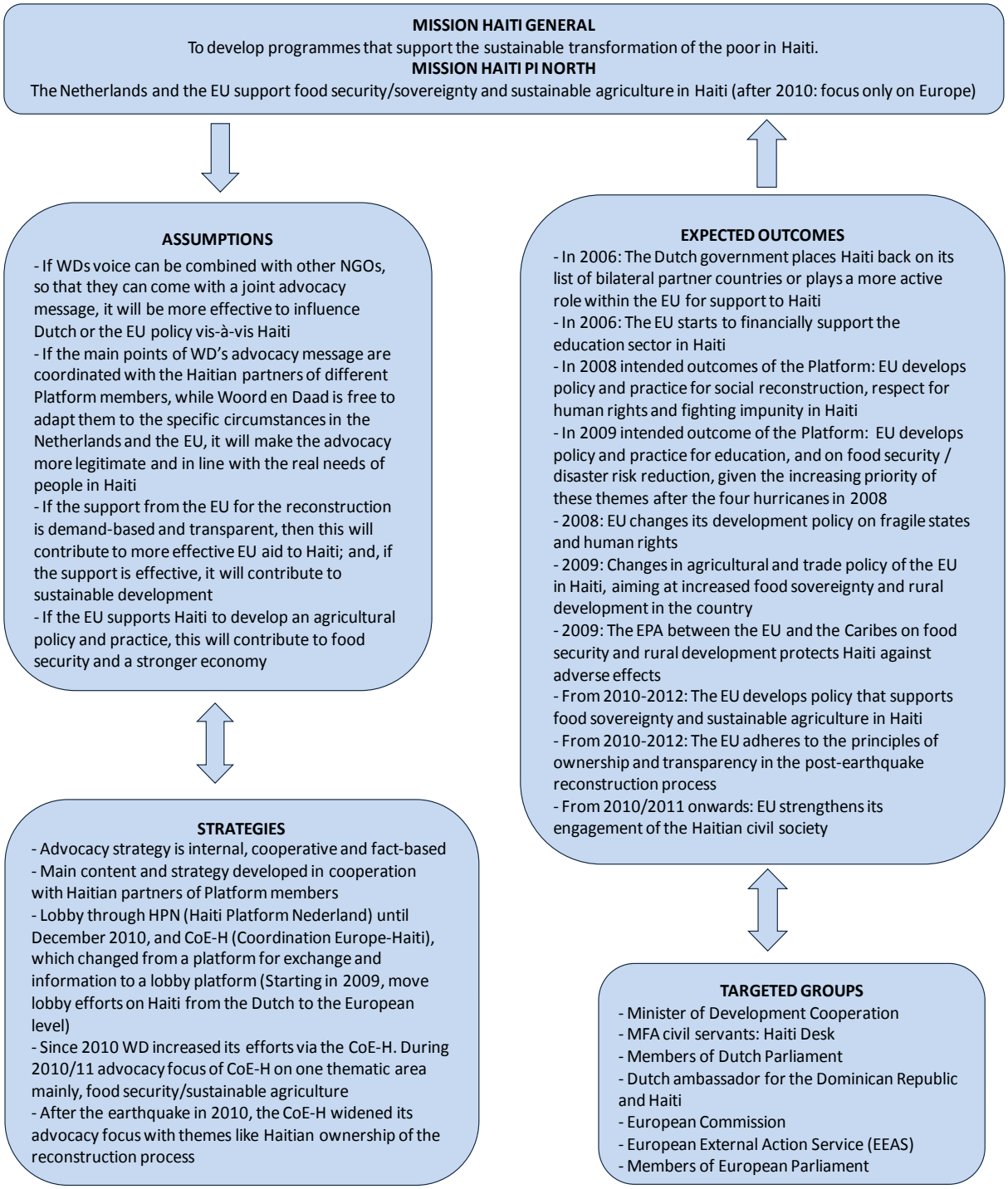
The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the Haiti trajectory within the PI North programme as it was reconstructed during the evaluation process. At the top of the picture, is distinguished between the *mission* or *overall objective* for the Haiti programme of Woord en Daad in general, including the country programme, the work with the partners, the lobby in the South etc, and the mission of the Haiti trajectory as part of the PI North programme.

A quick assessment of this ToC shows that in the first part of the evaluation period, 2008-2012, there was a greater focus on influencing actors in the Dutch political context and that this changed halfway that period to a strong focus on influencing actors at the EU level. It is further visible that Woord en Daad chooses to work in coalition with other NGOs.

An important strategic choice is that the advocacy is *internal*, *cooperative* and *fact-based*. This is the case for all six selected trajectories and it is therefore of relevance to explain these terms. An internal advocacy strategy means a direct way communication with the lobby target, e.g. through letters, emails or meetings. This is the opposite from an external advocacy strategy in which someone would attempt to influence the target through other actors or means, such as demonstrations, mass mobilization, publications, etc. A cooperative strategy means that the lobbyist tries to cooperate with

the lobby target, instead of treating him/her as an opponent or even as an enemy. This strategy requires that the lobbyist asked him/herself 'What does the other social actor need?' This can be for example all kinds of information. The term fact-based speaks for itself: if a lobbyist delivers information is normally more valuable if it is based on facts or research and not faulty or even misleading. It goes without saying that these three advocacy strategies work well if they are combined. If an organization wants to influence another social actor by choosing direct lines of communication, it would not make sense to perceive that person as your enemy and to give him/her faulty information.

A final observation at this point is that the expected outcomes, as they are re-constructed and presented in the picture below, have changed frequently during the evaluation period. While flexibility and adaptation are important in a dynamic and changing context such as politics, it can also be important to define mid- and long-term objectives. This ToC seems to shows a relative lack at this point.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

What changes have been achieved during the evaluation-period which are relevant in the light of the Haiti ToC and to which Woord en Daad has contributed?

Below are the so-called titles or one-liners of the five outcomes in the period 2008-2012 that are most relevant to Woord en Daad's Haiti trajectory and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en

Daad and its contributions, can be found in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in this issue should read those four pages in that annex.

1. Shortly after the three hurricanes Haiti in August/early September 2008, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, announced a one-time €3.3 million grant for humanitarian aid for Haiti.
2. In August 2010, the Dutch Member of Parliament Joël Voordewind visited Haiti and formulated a set of constructive political recommendations.
3. In 2010, the Europe-wide NGO platform Coordination Europe-Haiti (CoE-H) made substantial steps forward in its advocacy for food security and agriculture in Haiti.
4. In 2011-2012, the European Commission, through its local Delegation in Haiti, started to improve its policy regarding infrastructural investments by opening up the countryside and linking farmers to regional markets.
5. In 2012, a coalition of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) became convinced that the EU budget for Haiti is not spent in a transparent and accountable way. They strongly advocated towards the European Commission (EC) and European External Action Service (EEAS) for more transparency of the EU's aid spending in Haiti.

These realized outcomes show that the policy influencing within this trajectory focused on the Netherland in the first couple of years and then switched to the European Union where target groups were the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The five outcomes describe changes in five different actors. They represent achievements in line with what Woord en Daad planning (see ToC) and close reading of the full descriptions in annex 2 shows that the three outcomes on EU-level are related to each other and the issue of food security and sustainable agriculture in Haiti.

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

Haiti has been an important issue for Woord en Daad and for the PI North programme throughout the whole evaluation period. The evaluator communicated with three external informants: one interview with an ally, one survey with an ally and one survey with a lobby target. This is a relatively low response rate within the six trajectories which is mainly caused by the facts that all chosen informants are based in Brussels, that this dossier is also for them relatively 'distant' and that no personal interviews were offered.

The first two outcomes, which describe changes at the level of Dutch politics, remained unsubstantiated because it was chosen to focus on informants knowledgeable on the changes at EU level. This was considered more important to Woord en Daad.

The respondents had a high level of agreement with the three outcomes describing changes at the EU level and a moderate level of agreement with the relevance.

The outcomes show the result of Woord en Daad's choice to switch the lobby for Haiti in 2010 from mainly influencing Dutch politics to the EU. None of the informants challenged this switch.

The three outcomes realized on EU level are related to each other. Food security and sustainable agriculture were chosen as focus. One informant was of the opinion that Woord en Daad is too modest in the description of the relevance of outcome 3 as the desired policy change, which is to include food security in the EU policy, can per se only be materialized in the future – for the policy period 2014-2020. Similar to TVET, see next sub-section, the question then is how strong this issue is on the radar of the relevant decision makers and whether the NGOs will succeed in influencing the decision making in 2013.

Food security appears as an issue for the first time in 2010. This is in line with Woord en Daad's general policy switch in that period.

The final outcome describes a change regarding the transparency and accountability of EU's spending in Haiti. This switch in strategy is plausible to the evaluator but one ally responded that the coalition also took a risk with this choice. Firstly, content wise because it is a sensitive and unpopular issue in Brussels. Secondly, because the way of communication is more confronting which might damage the relationship that CoE-H has developed. Nevertheless, this more 'risky' path seems to be successful so far.

Some intermediate conclusions

- Comparing the achieved outcomes with the expected outcomes in the ToC it is to be concluded that the expectations are only achieved partly or moderately.
- This can either mean that the achieved outcomes are too weak, compared to Woord en Daad's own expectations, and that the trajectory was not effective. Or that the outcomes are the best possible achievements but that the weakness lies in the planning, namely that formulation of the objectives is weak because they are not SMART and/or that the amount of objectives is a problem - they are simply too many.
- 2013 seems to be a crucial year for the decision making whether or not food security and sustainable agriculture will be included in the EU policy for the next seven years. Is this assessment correct and, if so, did Haiti become a priority for the organization in 2013?

TVET

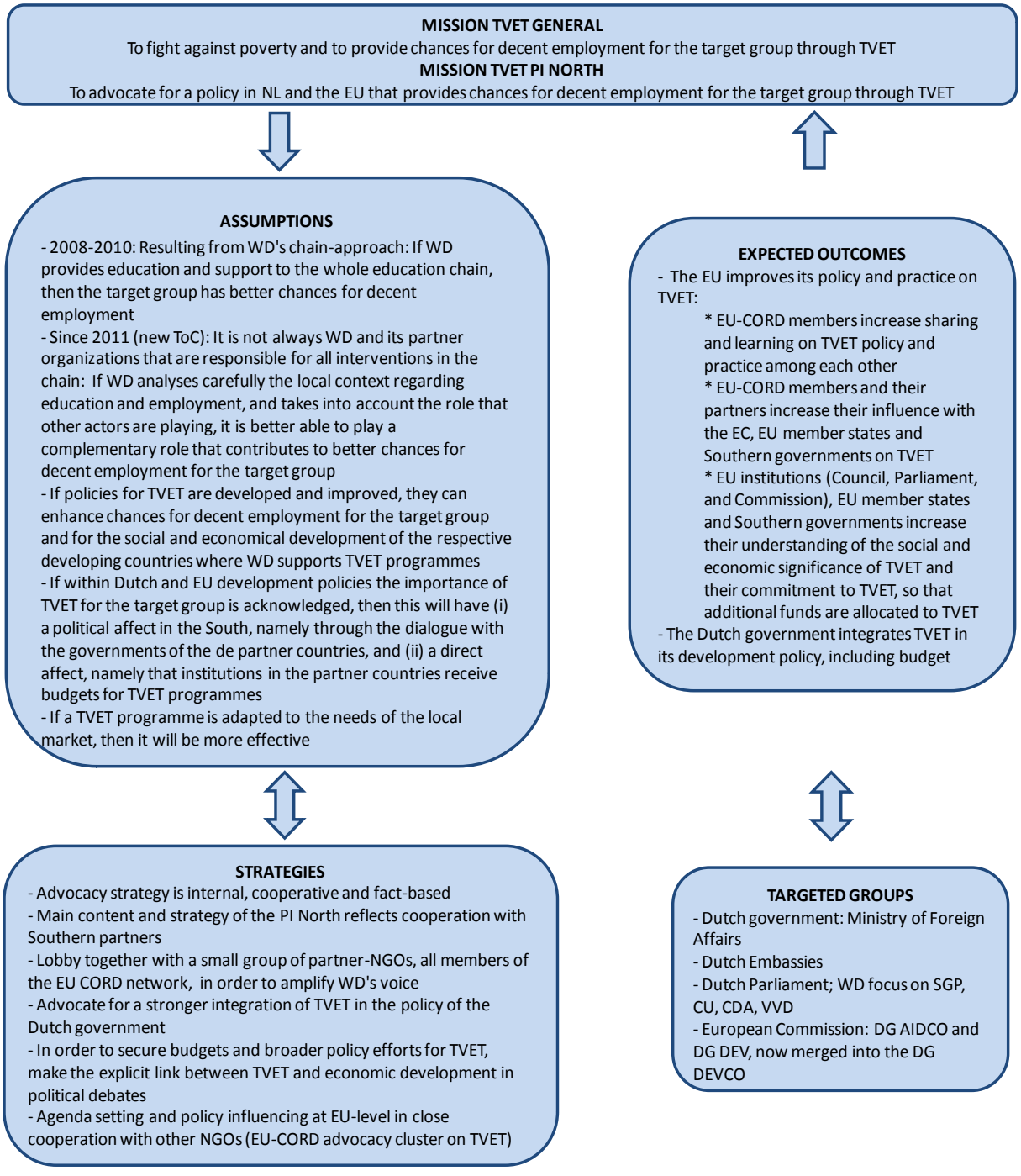
Theory of change

The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the Haiti trajectory within the PI North programme as it was reconstructed during the evaluation process.

Some observations at this point:

- Within this trajectory Woord en Daad advocates in the Netherlands as well as on EU level

- The assumptions reflect Woord en Daad's policy change in 2011 which introduced a different theory of change for the TVET programme
- Similar to the Haiti ToC is that the advocacy strategy is *internal*, *cooperative* and *fact-based*, that it is in cooperation with allies, and that the content and strategy must reflect the cooperation with Woord en Daad's Southern partners.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

Below are the titles of the five outcomes that are most relevant to Woord en Daad's TVET ToC and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en Daad and its contributions, can be found in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in the TVET trajectory should read those four pages in that annex.

6. In May 2009 the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented guidelines for Dutch Embassies on TVET.
7. In December 2010, in his response to a parliamentary motion on TVET as important instrument for economic development, the Dutch Secretary of State for Development Cooperation said that investments in TVET will not be reduced because of their economic relevance, notwithstanding the cuts on education in general.
8. In November 2011, the Dutch Secretary of State for Development Cooperation decided to stimulate Dutch Embassies to identify meaningful TVET interventions, specifically in the areas of water and food security/agriculture.
9. In 2009, 2010 and 2011, the European Commission invited EU-CORD to give input to its policy development on education policy.
10. In October 2011, European Commissioner Piebalgs launched the Commission's *An Agenda for Change* and mentioned TVET as an important intervention in its development policy.

Although these five outcomes describe changes in five different social actors close reading of the full descriptions in annex 2 shows that they in fact represent changes along two pathways of change. Outcomes 6-8 describe changes in the Dutch political context. That context was determined by fast governmental policy changes and several large budget cuts. Outcomes 9 and 10 show the results of Woord en Daad's involvement at EU level through the TVET working group of the EU-CORD partnership.

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

All informants fully agreed with the facts being described in the five outcomes regarding TVET but none of them fully agreed with how their relevance is described. Their comments reveal two interesting issues:

- NGOs wanted the guidelines in 2009 to be binding instead of voluntary (outcome 6) and wanted a separate TVET policy in 2011 (outcome 8). The involved civil servant from the ministry questions the usefulness and effectiveness of these objectives.

- Outcomes 9 and 10 describe changes at EU level. First that the EU-CORD establishes its position and changes agendas, then the first agenda setting by the Commission. One informant explained that the EU-CORD aims for getting an EU policy change regarding TVET in the policy period 2014-2020. This informant questions whether TVET is sufficiently 'on the radar' of relevant decision makers to achieve this ambitious objective.

The parliamentary motion that is described in outcome 7 reflects the transition in the Netherlands from a development policy that focuses on basic social services to a policy that focuses on economic development. The motion itself emphasizes the role of TVET in this new policy, which, according to

one informant, was the first time that this issue was spoken about in the Dutch Parliament. And outcome 8 shows the successful making of the link between TVET and the new priority issues over the cabinet Rutte-1.

Informants pointed to indistinctness in outcomes 6, 7 and 8 regarding the countries that are mentioned in which TVET programmes are started. This is as such a minor point but it is considered to be relevant because overall there are only very few indications of impacts in Southern countries. What does it mean that these facts are inaccurate?

Some intermediate conclusions

- The TVET trajectory can be considered as being effective. The issue was successfully set on the agenda of Dutch and European political actors. And decisions were taken in the Netherlands that were supportive of the issue while the general policy context was to limit the attention and the budget for development cooperation.
- It can be concluded that this issue was well chosen, that the timing was good and that Woord en Daad and its partners successfully made the link economic issue.
- Similar to the Haiti case, 2013 seems to be a very important year for the decision making whether or not TVET will be included in EU-policy for the next seven years or not. Is this assessment correct and, if so, did TVET become a priority for the organization in 2013?

Colombia

Theory of change

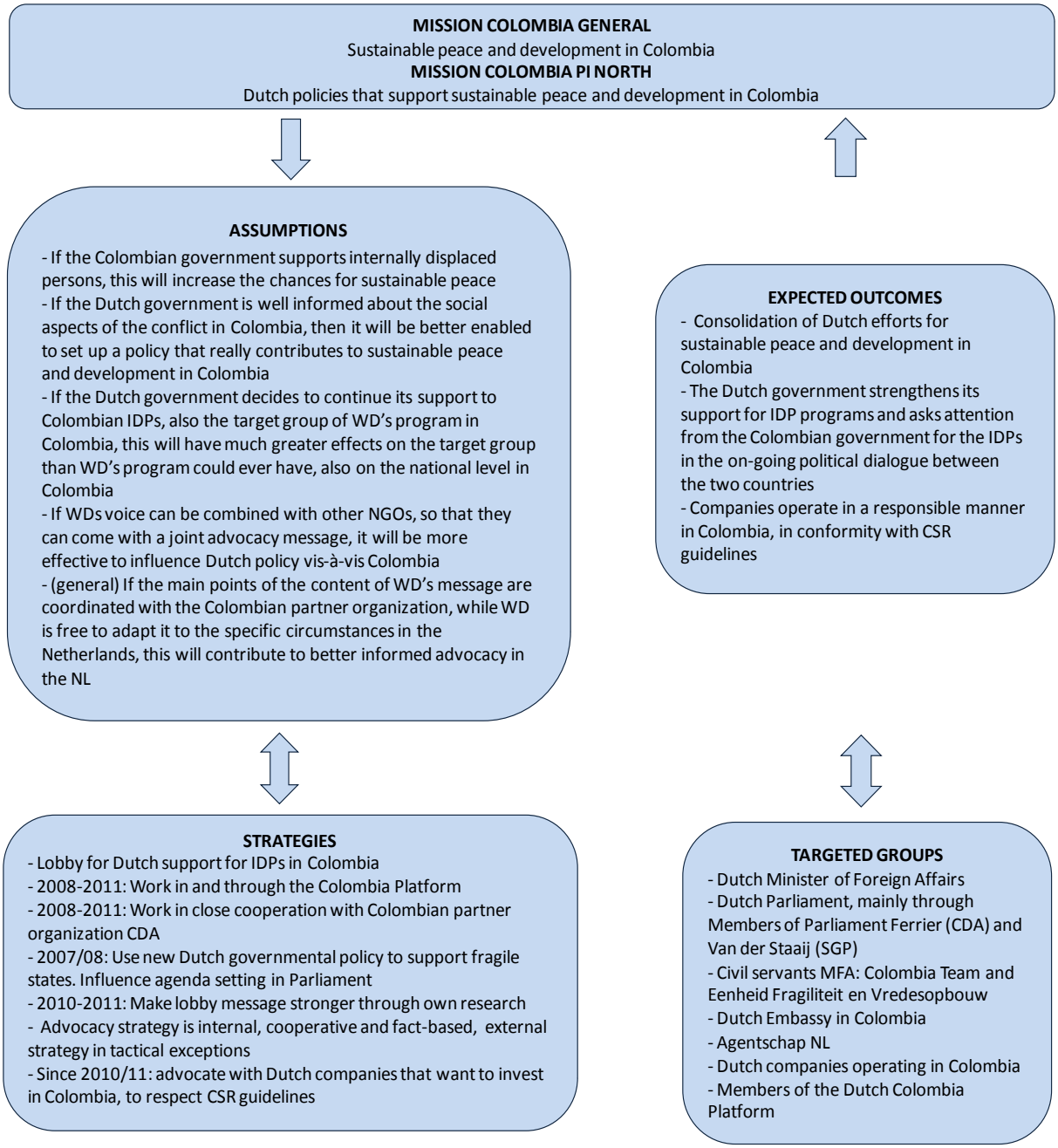
The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the Colombia trajectory within the PI North programme as it was reconstructed during the evaluation process.

An observation at this point is that the assumptions reflect thoughts on what changes in Colombia is desired, how this could or should come about and which role Dutch actors could or should play. These assumptions were not checked by the evaluator with Woord en Daad's Colombian partner but they certainly appear to be plausible.

In comparison with the other evaluated trajectory this ToC pays more attention to other than political actors, namely Dutch companies and the Agentschap NL, which is a semi-governmental agency playing a role in implementing CSR policies. However, no underlying assumption is formulated in the ToC that would elucidate which changes would be needed to achieve impact and why this would happen. Also, *companies* is a broad term. While one strategy distinguishes 'companies that want to invest in Colombia', the sector is not further analyzed – or if these analyses are available, they were not used with the PI North trajectory. This would certainly be a logical context to use tools such as actor- or power analyses. In such an analysis one would systematically assess which companies are doing what, to what extent they can be considered allies or opponent, how much power each of them has or how relevant their change in behaviour would be. As a result, Woord en Daad would be better informed to choose an effective strategy. In conclusion, the third

expected outcome regarding companies operating in a responsible way is less embedded in the ToC than most other expected outcomes in the six ToCs are. In other words, the chosen approach seems halfhearted.

Woord en Daad reduces its advocacy for Colombia in 2012.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

Below are the titles of the four outcomes that are most relevant to Woord en Daad's Colombia trajectory and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en Daad and its contributions, can be found

in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in the Colombia trajectory should read these complete outcome descriptions.

11. In July 2007, the Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, responded positively to recommendations given by Woord en Daad and its partners, recognized the problem of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Colombia, and provided a strong argumentation for his support to IDPs.
12. In 2009, in the final policy note for his policy in the Latin America and Caribbean region, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Verhagen, drew a picture of Colombia that was too optimistic.
13. In 2009-2011, the Netherlands continued its support to IDPs via UNHCR, WFP and ICRC.
14. In 2011, the Dutch government decided to finish the bilateral development relationship with Colombia.

Two of the four outcomes, number 12 on the too optimistic picture drawn by the Minister and number 14 on stopping the bilateral development relationship, are both negative changes. It takes courage to admit that they occurred. This transparency reveals that the results within this trajectory are not very positive.

On the other hand, outcome 13 is one of the few outcomes that have a more direct link with 'the South'.

There are no outcomes describing changes in the behaviour of Dutch companies.

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

The level of agreement of the informants with the four outcomes regarding Colombia is average.

Outcome 12 is linked to outcome 11. It shows that the change achieved in outcome 11, which was a constructive statement from the Minister, was not sustainable, possibly because of a change in government. Setting agenda's has little value without a strategy to influence policy changes, as well.

In his interview with the evaluator a civil servant from the Colombia Desk at Ministry of Foreign Affairs pointed at the fact that the Netherlands decided to still continue with the Embassy in Colombia. He was of the opinion that this offers many opportunities, for example regarding CSR policies, and that the overall development is not as negative as described in outcome 14.

Some intermediate conclusions

- Through this trajectory Woord en Daad did not achieve what was desired. None of the three expected outcomes is realized.
- Within this reality of negative political decision making the outcomes show that Woord en Daad and its partners successfully achieved adjustments in the way the new politics were implemented.

- Although Dutch companies have a role in Woord en Daad's ToC within this issue no relevant outcomes were identified. The approach lacks analyses and gives the impression to be halfhearted.

Development Cooperation General Policy (Partos)

Theory of change

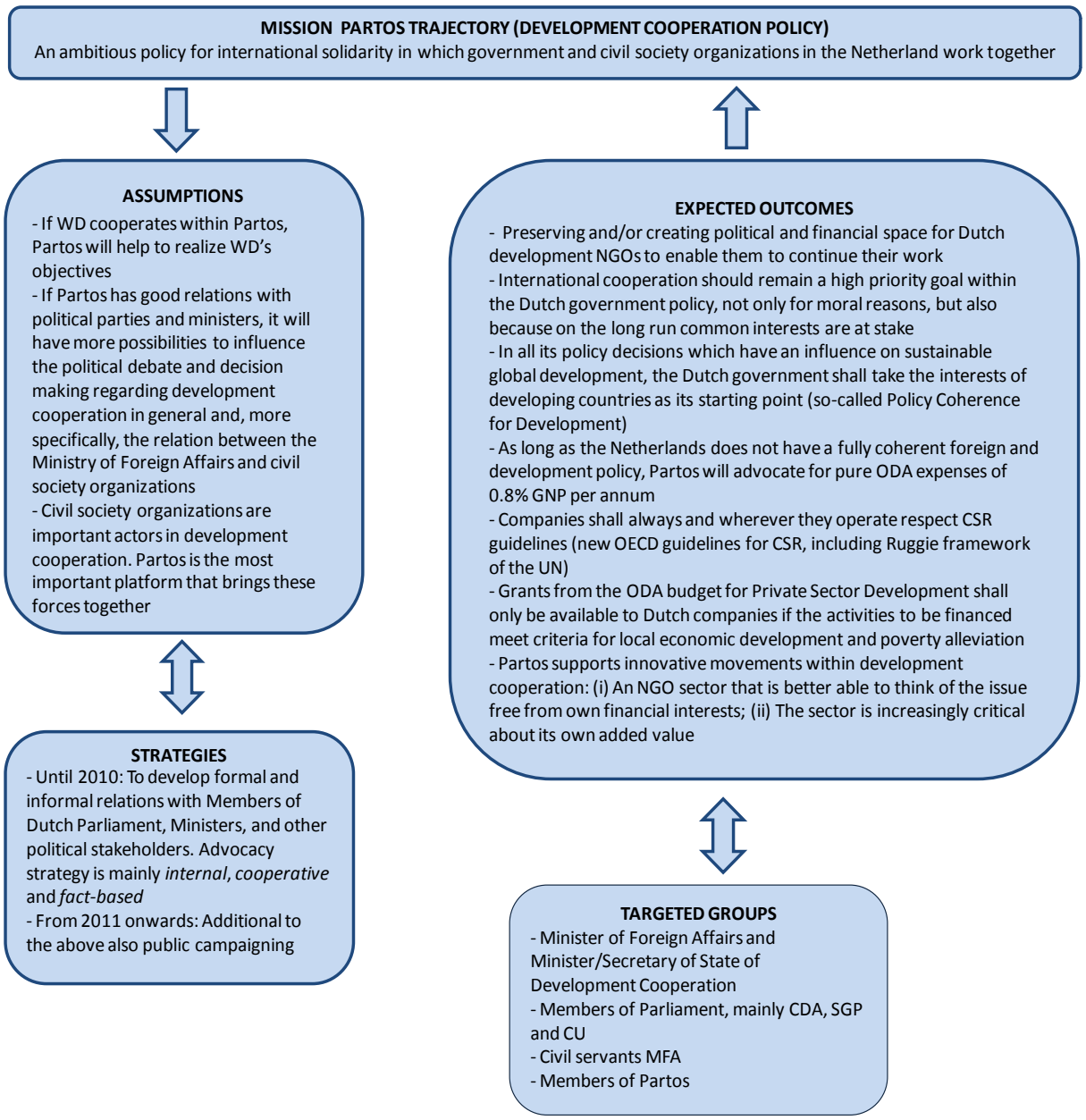
The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the so-called Partos trajectory within the PI North programme which focuses on general development cooperation policy issues.

It is the view of the evaluator that the assumptions are 'thinner' than in other ToCs. The idea is to cooperate with Partos and, through Partos, maintain good relations with the Ministers and the Parliament. Other underlying assumptions of how change could come about are missing.

The above is visible in the strategies which are more limited than the strategies in other ToC. It is plausible to the evaluator that it is a result of this lacking depth that when Partos decided to develop public campaigning Woord en Daad did not join the first time, *Genoeg is genoeg*, and had some regrets in hindsight when they joined the second time, *Je krijgt wat je geeft*.

The first six expected outcomes are derived by Woord en Daad's lobbyist from the Partos Annual Plan for 2012. In the years before, there were no clear or SMART objectives for this trajectory because it didn't work with a prior agreed lobby agenda. Nevertheless, these expected outcomes are in line with the so-called *end memos* which he writes since 2010.

As explained in chapter 1 network building and partnering-up with other organizations is one of the categories of outcomes used in this evaluation. It is for this reason and the fact this is an important strategy for Woord en Daad with consistent investments in platforms and coalitions that the last of the expected outcomes formulates an expected change in the behaviour of its allies within Partos.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

Below are the titles of the five outcomes that are most relevant to this trajectory and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en Daad and its contributions, can be found in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in the changes regarding the general development cooperation policy should read these complete outcome descriptions.

15. At the end of 2010, the Dutch Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Ben Knapen, announced large budget cuts on development cooperation, from 0.8% to 0.7% of GNP.
16. At the end of 2010, the Dutch State Secretary for Development Cooperation, Ben Knapen, decided to reduce the additional budget cuts on MFS-2 grants with another 12.5% (€50 million per annum from the total MFS-2 budget).
17. At the end of 2011, the Dutch Parliament adopted several motions requesting the cabinet to make sure that its new private sector policy fulfils international norms for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and contributes to poverty alleviation and sustainable development.
18. In April 2012, the final proposal for budget cuts in the so-called Catshuisoverleg was €1 billion lower than initially proposed by the PVV. After the fall of the cabinet, the five parties of the so-called Kunduz-coalition decided not to cut the 2013 budget for development cooperation at all.
19. In the preparations for the national elections in September 2012, Partos saw most of its standpoints translated in the political programme of the ChristenUnie, and to a lesser extent in the programme of CDA and some other political parties.

Similar to what was discussed with regard to Colombia outcomes 11 and 12, both outcomes 18 and 19 show that success or failure can also be a matter of luck. In the first case, the failure of the Catshuisoverleg was a big surprise to the public but it meant that the Kunduz-coalition could decide not to cut the budget for 2013 at all. In the second case, the VVD and PvdA were the winners of the elections but if they had decided to invite a third party to join the cabinet, which was expected by many political experts, it could have meant a much lower cut of the development budget.

Another matter of luck, but extremely relevant in the given context, is Woord en Daad's added value through its good connections with the SGP. Suddenly, there were moments in which the SGP had a decisive role.

It is the evaluator's assessment that outcome 16, which is an achievement for the budget of NGOs themselves, is an example of NGOs advocating for their own 'personal' interests, rather than for development issues. The question can be raised what this does to the public image of development NGOs, considering the *Zeitgeist*.

Outcome 17 is remarkable in the context of the other four outcomes. It focuses on the private sector policy of the Dutch government and represents an issue that genuinely fits Woord en Daad's profile and the policy switch made with the Policy Plan 2011-2015.

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

Four allies substantiated the five outcomes achieved through this trajectory. Interestingly, the level of agreement with the outcome descriptions is average, but more than average with regard to how the relevance is formulated.

Some of its allies do not agree with Woord en Daad's assessment of the effectiveness of Partos' public campaign as described in the full description outcome 18 regarding political changes in 2012 with the Catshuisoverleg and the Kunduz-coalition. This is a relevant issue as Woord en Daad is sensitive about the advocacy strategy being internal or external.

Some informants are of the opinion that the relevance of outcome 16, which is a relatively small and incidental change regarding less budget cuts than announced, is greater than described because the reasoning is also applicable to other situations. This is the second case in which an external informant responded that Woord en Daad is too moderate in its descriptions.

Some intermediate conclusions

- The overall picture of the effectiveness of this trajectory is similar to the one regarding Colombia. On the one hand, it is largely unsuccessful and includes negative political changes. These are not caused by the Partos activities but by economic and financial crisis and the political mainstream opinion that it is okay to cut the development budget. On the other hand, Partos, with Woord en Daad as one of the partners, was successful in attempting to adjust some of the worst impacts.

- This assessment is less clear regarding outcome 17 on CSR policies for companies within foreign policy: is that a real success or just a correction of a larger and undesired development?

- The discussions between Woord en Daad and other Partos members regarding the effectiveness of the two public campaigns are remarkable to the evaluator. It is not possible to draw further conclusions or even come up with a judgment because of the width of the evaluation and the lack of more insight but it is possible to identify these questions for discussion: What is the cause for Woord en Daad's sensitivity regarding this specific point and external advocacy in general? And what is the cause for Partos' sensitivity regarding Woord en Daad's critical position?

SME – Small and medium enterprises development

Theory of change

The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the SME trajectory within the PI North programme as it was reconstructed during the evaluation process.

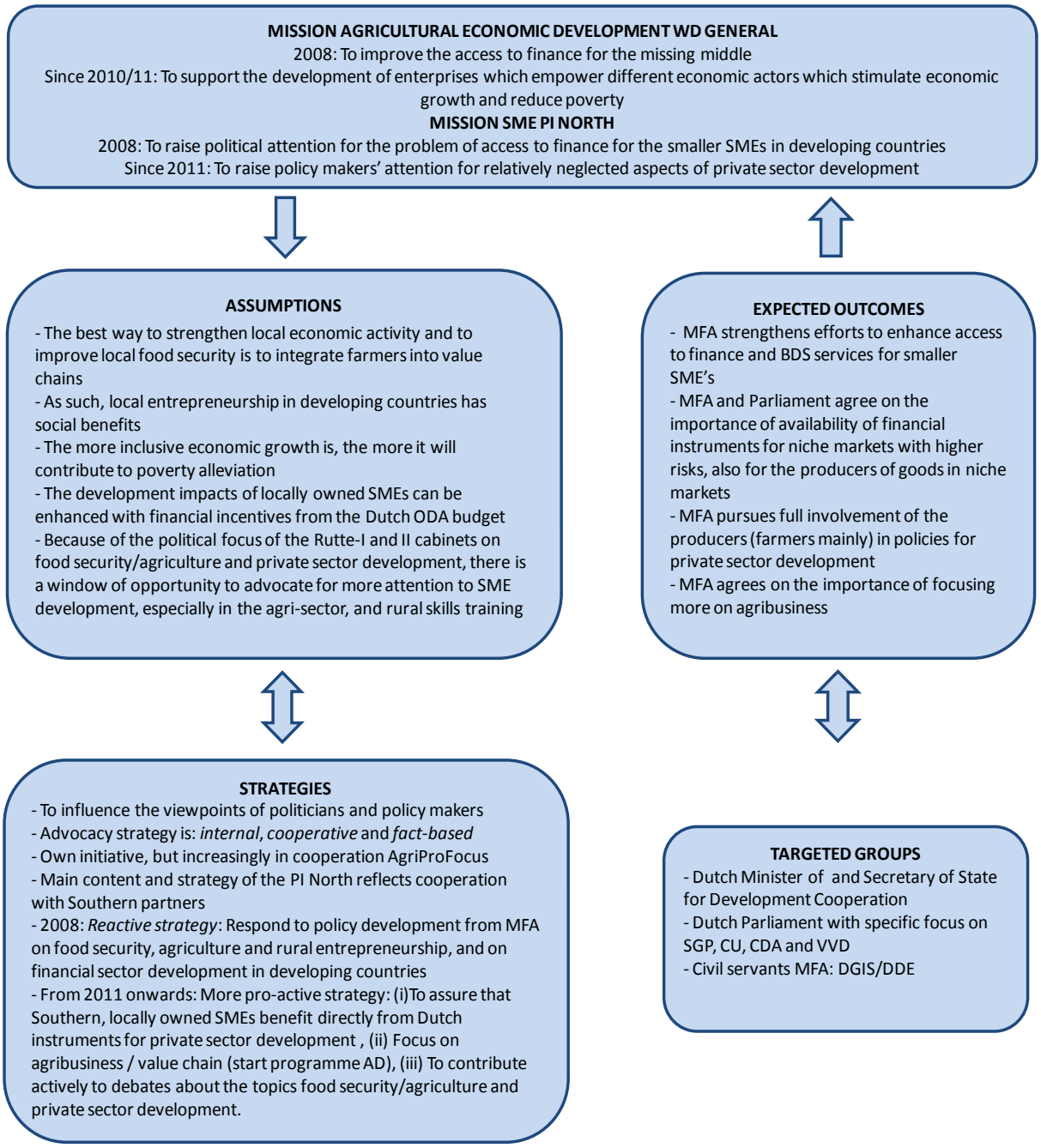
Four observations seem relevant at this point:

- More than the other trajectory-specific ToCs, this ToC reflects Woord en Daad's policy switch in 2011. The trajectory as such is newer and it was further developed jointly with the new policy

- The assumptions explain mainly which role SME's have in the South and how they can contribute to positive impacts. The ultimate role of Dutch politics is a financial one

- Only 1 of the 4 expected outcomes aims at a change in policy and practice. The other three focus on agenda setting towards that policy change

- Although this issue is all about enterprises and economic activities, the companies and entrepreneurs seem to have no role in the advocacy, neither Southern nor Northern.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

Below are the titles of the three outcomes that are most relevant to the SME ToC and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en Daad and its contributions, can be found in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in the changes regarding the SME trajectory should read these complete outcome descriptions.

20. In the second half of 2008, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation, Bert Koenders, recognized that there is a *missing middle* and says that the Netherlands would pick up the challenge to reach out to the missing middle with financial instruments (so-called meso-financing).
21. In 2011, the Dutch Parliament adopted a motion which demanded the State Secretary for Development Cooperation to monitor more closely the implementation of the food security and agribusiness policy.
22. In 2011 and 2012, the Dutch MFA and the Parliament paid more attention to at least two relatively neglected aspects of private sector development: the link between food security and vocational training, and the access to credit for rural SMEs.

Close reading of the full description of the first outcome learns that Woord en Daad made use of an opportunity to get involved and succeeded. But it was rather incidental. The changes since 2011 are more structural although they are still considered intermediate outcomes.

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

- There is an average level of agreement from respondents with the three described outcomes of the SME trajectory.
- This issue is a newer advocacy issue for Woord en Daad than the other trajectories. It is therefore logical that less relevant outcomes are achieved.
- One informant was of the opinion that regarding two outcomes Woord en Daad was too moderate in the assessment of the relevance. That person pointed to the € 100 million from the MFA for the GAFSP in relation to outcome 20 and to the level of integration of the CSR issue within Agentschap NL and IDH in relation to outcome 21.
- Nevertheless, two of the three outcomes are in the category of agenda setting and implementation is either unknown or weak.

Some intermediate conclusions

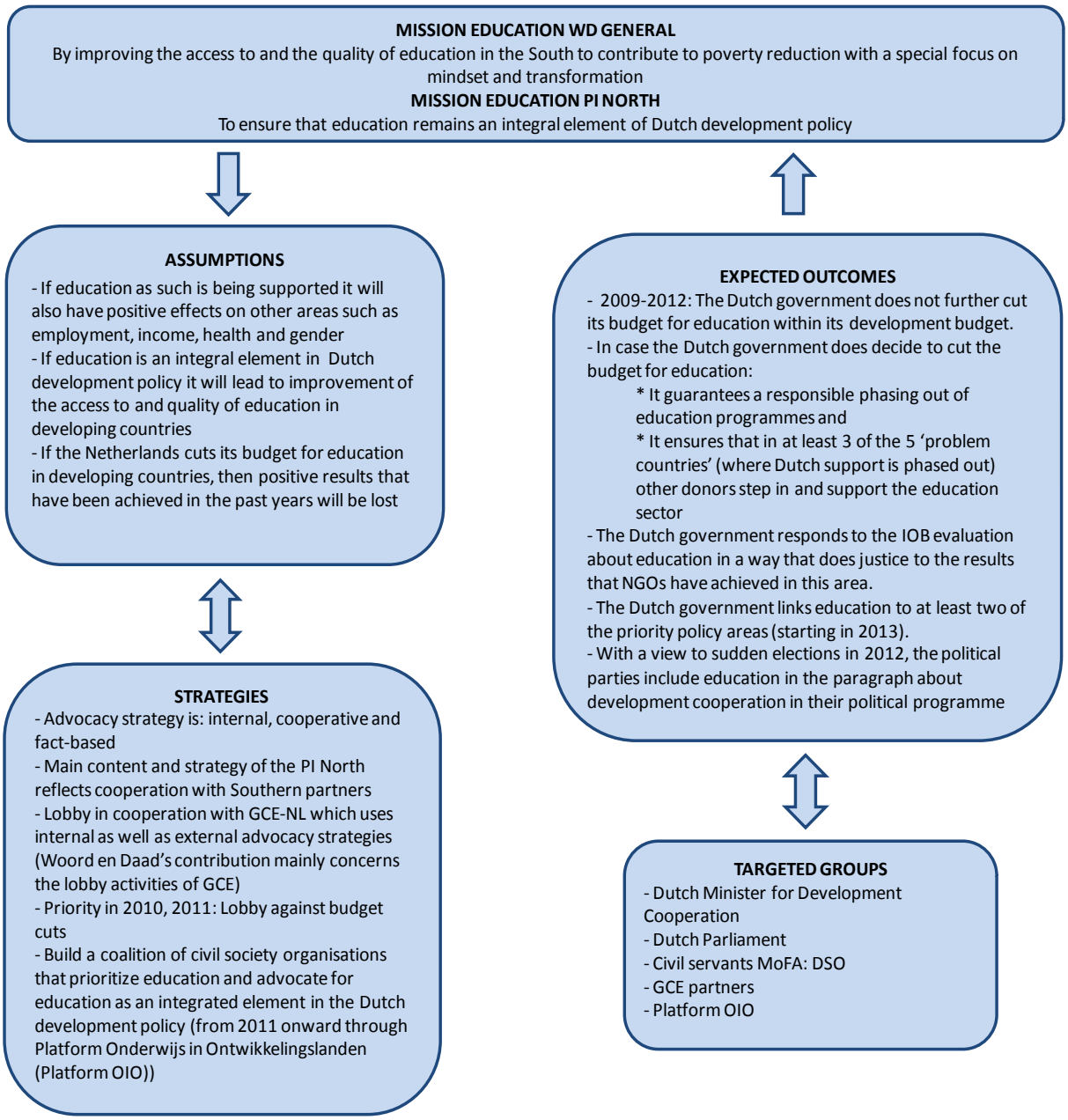
- Although focus for follow-up of earlier interventions was acknowledged by several external informants as strength of Woord en Daad's advocacy, the outcomes in this trajectory point to the risk of focusing on agenda changes. This is especially the case if in the ToC:
    - The mission mentions 'to raise political attention'
    - The strategy does not depict a pathway of change
    - The expected outcomes are not SMART. For example, two of the four expected outcomes want to achieve that the lobby target 'agrees on the importance of (..)'. When is this objective achieved? And if it is achieved, what then?

- The issue fits with Woord en Daad's profile and the switch that is made in 2011 regarding the focus on *sustainability*. It is also a niche and the issue obviously offers the opportunity to connect to the current mainstream development paradigm, which is economic development.

Basic education

Theory of change

The picture below summarizes Woord en Daad's theory of change for the basic education trajectory within the PI North programme as it was reconstructed during the evaluation process.



Realized outcomes to which Woord en Daad contributed

Below are the titles of the three outcomes that are most relevant to the basic education ToC and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These titles describe in one sentence 'who changed what, when and where?' The full outcome formulations, including more facts, the description of the relevance of that outcome to Woord en Daad and its contributions, can be found in annex 2. The reader with specific interest in the changes regarding the education trajectory should read these complete outcome descriptions.

23. While the Dutch government in 2009 decided to decrease the budget for education within its development policy and in 2011 decided to cut that budget almost completely, it also agreed to a responsible and coordinated reduction of its support to education programmes in bilateral partner countries.
24. On 16 November 2011, Dutch Secretary of State for Development Cooperation, Ben Knapen, sent a letter to the Parliament as a response to the IOB rapport "Education matters" and the sub study "Leren van NGO's" that included a balanced position about the role of NGOs in the education sector.
25. In the process towards the national elections in 2012, the political parties SGP, ChristenUnie, PvdA and PvdD included a positive position in their election programme on education in development policy.

These titles already mention the political dynamics with which this trajectory had to deal. It was almost a *Mission Impossible* to work towards positive and constructive changes

Information from interviews – substantiation and contextualization

Remarkably, the level of agreement with the outcome descriptions is higher than average, but much lower than average with regard to how the relevance is assessed. Three different allies were interviewed on this issue. Their level of agreement with the formulation of the relevance is low and the reasons that were given differ from each other. This points to strategic differences in opinion.

The issue 'basic education as an integral element of the Dutch development policy' certainly suffered strongly from the larger political developments, such as the trajectories Colombia and Partos that were discussed above.

Some intermediate conclusions

- The overall picture of the effectiveness of this trajectory is similar to Colombia and Partos: largely unsuccessful, negative political changes but with successful attempts to adjust some of the worst impacts.

- In other words, the short-term expected outcomes are achieved while the longer-term objectives, or the larger objectives, are not.

- The outcomes show that on the one hand this issue could be called a *lost cause*, on the other hand the *damage control* was relevant for the ultimate target group and was successfully done. Woord en Daad showed perseverance and well-managed follow-up.

The ToC for the PI North programme

History and background

It is explained in chapter 1 that a staff member from Woord en Daad prepared the factual descriptions of each of the selected trajectories and for the PI North programme in general. Those descriptions were based on data from internal documentation and several interviews. All that data was made available to the evaluator and was used as starting point for this evaluation process. The following is either quoted from that summarizing descriptions or based on it.

'Around its establishment in 1973 Woord en Daad decided not to be involved in lobby. One of the reasons for this decision was the 'general approach' in development cooperation at that time. In the 1970s development cooperation was mainly dominated by leftist movements and organizations with at times an activist character. This, of course, had its effect on the lobby approach at that time. Woord en Daad did not want to be associated with this leftist approach. Moreover, a part of the constituency of Woord en Daad believed that being involved in politics was irreconcilable with the Christian character of the organization. Finally, investments in PI were not easily justified since the results were not directly visible; it contrasted with the visible results of direct poverty alleviation.'

'A process to put policy influencing on the agenda of Woord en Daad started in 1999. This process was accompanied by the establishment of Prisma. (..) One of the other earliest activities in the area of lobby at the level of Woord en Daad was the involvement in a platform for Haiti, the Haiti Platform Netherlands, which was established in 2001. Haiti had disappeared from the list of partner countries of the Dutch government and the platform wanted to establish renewed attention for Haiti. More on this can be read in the description of the Haiti trajectory. A few years later Woord en Daad became involved in lobby for Colombia, also elaborated in one of the trajectory descriptions. In the following years lobby was discussed and further developed but was not yet integrated in the organization. In 2007 the organization decided that in order 'to effectively integrate lobby in the organization the time and dedication of a new personnel member was needed with affinity to the topic. This person was found through contacts with the parliament where Woord en Daad got acquainted with Evert-Jan Brouwer, at that time working as political advisor for the SGP. One of his first activities was to write a policy document for the period 2007-2010.'

'During the first years of PI work it appeared that the work load was too big for only one person, especially the combination of lobby in the North and in the South was difficult to combine. Thus, another person was employed for PI, Melinda Jansen, and she started in 2009.' After some time the two policy advisors separated their work in PI North and PI South.

In 2010 Woord en Daad published the Policy Plan 2011 – 2015 which 'contains the policy framework for Woord en Daad and its Southern partners' work (Woord en Daad c.s.) in Africa, Central and South America and Asia.'[5]

The content of the PI North programme and its theory of change

What is the PI North programme? What does it stand for? Which problems does it want to solve, why, where and how? These questions are all answered in the general PI North Theory of Change that is presented in the two figures on the next two pages.

The policy advisor who started at Woord en Daad in 2007 developed a policy plan for policy influencing for the period 2007-2010.[6] This Woord en Daad document plus two year plans[7] served as sources for the reconstruction of the ToC PI North in 2008. At the end of 2010, Woord en Daad agreed upon a new policy plan for the whole organization for the period 2011-2015.[8] That document was the source for the ToC PI North in 2011.

These two policy plans are, on paper, quite different from each other. Also, Woord en Daad's director pointed out that the Policy Plan 2011-2015 is a 'switch' in Woord en Daad's policy. It is therefore that it was decided to also split the ToC for the PI North in two parts. The first part became effective in 2008 the second part starts in 2011.

2008

MISSION WOORD EN DAAD
Woord en Daad wants to fight poverty in Africa, Asia and Central-America from a Christian perspective. Through local organizations we want to provide a decent existence for the poor. In order to realise this, we make an appeal to everyone's responsibility, both here and over there. Woord en Daad wants to be a strong and reliable link between our supporters and the poor in our work area.

STRATEGIES WD
The work of Woord en Daad covers three aspects:
- In the Netherlands: reflecting about issues surrounding poverty and wealth, together with our supporters.
- In the Netherlands and Europe: standing up for the interests of the very poorest: If necessary, we turn to the political establishment, the press and the business community to claim attention for the position of the very poorest.
- In the continents of Africa, Asia, and South-America: vigorously tackling poverty, together with our partner organizations. In this respect Woord en Daad has four programmes:
  - Education
  - Vocational Education and Training and Job Mediation (added in 2009)
  - Enterprise Development
  - Basic Facilities (health, agriculture, water)

MISSION PI NORTH
Definition PI: To defend the rights and position of the poorest by influencing policy makers on all levels of decision making.
Purpose PI: To change local, national and international policy, processes and structures that maintain or aggravate poverty and inequality.

STRATEGIES PI NORTH
- Beleidsbeïnvloeding zal moeten vallen binnen de drie WD thema's (onderwijs, arbeid en inkomen, of basisvoorzieningen). Beleidsbeïnvloeding voor, met en door de doelgroep zelf:
  * Projecten worden opgezet op basis van behoeften bij partners.
  * Er moet de mogelijkheid zijn dat (netwerk)partners van Woord en Daad betrokken worden bij informatievoorziening, visievorming en/of uitvoering van beleidsbeïnvloeding.
  * Waar mogelijk wordt rechtstreekse informatie van de doelgroep verwerkt in de lobbyboodschap.
  * De inhoud van 'lobbyboodschappen' wordt in hoofdlijnen afgestemd met de partners in het Zuiden, maar WD heeft bij de uitvoering van lobbyactiviteiten in het Noorden de vrijheid een eigen vertaalslag te maken.
- WD kiest waar mogelijk thema's die door andere organisaties niet opgepakt worden in het kader van beleidsbeïnvloeding. De 'niche' kan zitten in een thema, invalshoek t.a.v. een thema of een land (gekoppeld aan een thema). Wil Woord en Daad lobbyen op thema's of landen waar anderen al actief zijn, dan dient eerst onderzocht te worden of samenwerking mogelijk is.
- Zo mogelijk wordt eigen onderzoek ingezet als strategisch instrument bij beleidsbeïnvloeding.
- Bij beleidsbeïnvloeding werkt Woord en Daad in eerste instantie samen in Prisma- of EU CORD verband. In tweede instantie (en zo nodig) wordt daarbuiten gezocht naar samenwerking. Voor-waarde daarbij is dat samenwerking nooit onze missie en die van de partners in het Zuiden mag schaden.
- Het zwaartepunt zal liggen bij de minder publieke vormen van beleidsbeïnvloeding (overleg met Kamerleden en ambtenaren; vertegenwoordiging in platforms). Waar nodig zal echter publiciteit gezocht worden. Daarvoor kan reden zijn om de beleidsbeïnvloeding kracht bij te zetten, bijvoorbeeld door inschakeling van media. Het kan echter ook om draagvlak en betrokkenheid te creëren bij de eigen achterban (via de WD media). Juist vanwege de nauwe betrokkenheid en het herkenbare profiel van onze achterban liggen hier kansen.

2011

MISSION WD
The sustainable transformation of people living in poverty.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES WD
Woord en Daad c.s. have committed themselves to achieving the following objectives in the 2011-2015 period:
- Improvements in livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people – focussing on human and economic capitals
- Increased ability of people and communities to organise themselves, take leadership and act as an 'agent of change'-
- Multi-actor collaborations for increased access and improved quality of services in Education, TVET-JBS, Basic Needs, Enterprise Development and Agribusiness Development
- The development and support of Regional Alliances for enhanced effectiveness and sustainability of members; organizational and institutional development of partner organizations
- Change of mentality, mindset, life style and policy in the North and the South, benefitting livelihoods in the South.

THEMATIC CHOICES WD
- Education, consisting of literacy, (pre-)primary and secondary education and support for higher (professional) studies; this also involves elements of social work with the target groups and communities, as well as mindset change and life skills
- Economic Development, consisting of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Job and Business Services (JBS), Enterprise Development and Agribusiness Development
- Basic Needs, consisting of a basket of sub-programmes focusing on health, HIV/Aids, food security at Household level, water, sanitation and shelter.

STRATEGIES WD
- A Theory of Change that focuses on the sustainable transformation of marginalized, excluded and poor people to be empowered and enabled to take responsibility for their own development as well as that of others
- The principle or overarching theme for awareness raising and advocacy will be sustainability and sustainable chain development
- Focus on both the sustainability of its programmes and their results
- Include in each subtheme all four dimensions of sustainability: economic, ecological, social and institutional.

MISSION PI NORTH
To influence, both independently and in cooperation with others, the development policies of the Dutch government and the European Union in order to structurally improve the rights and situation of the poorest of the poor in developing countries.

STRATEGIES PI NORTH
- WD wants to raise the attention of its supporter base and of policy makers in the Netherlands and Europe for sustainability and sustainable chain development. In doing so, WD will focus on both the sustainability of its programmes and their results. Different dimensions of sustainability will be highlighted (economic, ecological, social, institutional).
- WD will focus on strategic cooperation which creates added value in its total (partner) network. Strategic cooperation will be developed and/or enhanced with the private sector/Business Platform (enterprise development), Driestar Educatief (education), Institute of Social Studies (enterprise development), University of Amsterdam (PMEL), Red een Kind (education and TVET-JBS), Calvijn College (TVET-JBS) and PSO and MDF (capacity development and networking).
- Subthemes are:
  - *Vocational training – employment – entrepreneurship
  - *Sustainable chain development
  - *Focus on the family
  - *Effectiveness and sustainability
- Other strategic choices in the Netherlands and the EU:
  - *Support Prisma and Partos regarding Foreign Affairs & Development Cooperation policy
  - *European Haiti Platform
  - *Columbia Platform

Observations

The two Woord en Daad documents that served as sources for this ToC were very useful for the identification of the elements *mission* and *strategies*. *Assumptions*, *target groups* and *expected outcomes* could not be identified. This is not surprising considering the fact that the advocacy work takes place along the lines of trajectories.

Important strategies defined for 2008 onwards are:

- Policy influencing should take place for, with and by the ultimate target group in the South itself[5]
- Woord en Daad chooses for its own themes and 'niche' whenever possible
- If possible Woord en Daad cooperates with Prisma or EU-CORD, or, if necessary, with other NGOs
- First choice is a not-public way of advocacy

The key element of the 'switch' to the new policy period 2011-2015, which is pointed at by Woord en Daad's director, is the introduction of the term *sustainability*. The general mission for Woord en Daad is now: 'The sustainable transformation of people living in poverty'. Sustainability in this context for Woord en Daad includes social, ecological, economic and institutional sustainability. It is the connection between these aspects that is relevant for Woord en Daad. In the practice of the debate on development policy many actors choose either a focus on economic development or believe that the focus should be on social and/or ecological aspects. In this context Woord en Daad staff often mentions the integration of the social and the economic aspect. In addition, sustainability for Woord en Daad also has the meaning that intended changes have to sustain, to continue in time.

Having said this, the strategies and thematic choices do not change substantially in 2011. Notable, and in line with the above, is a stronger focus on enterprise development and sustainable chain development. Two examples: (1) Food security is a new issue and Woord en Daad's intention is to always make the link with the market. (2) In a similar way education should be linked to employment opportunities.

[5] It is unclear whether the strategy 'with and by the target group' is only applicable to the PI South or also to the PI North. The source is the internal policy plan from 2007 which did not yet structurally differentiate between these two as it is done later. Therefore and also based on other documents, the evaluator assumes that it is also meant to be applicable to the PI North.

General findings: Theories of change of the PI North programme

Woord en Daad ↔ PI North ↔ 6 trajectories

How do these thematic and strategic choices relate to the six trajectory-specific ToCs on the one hand and how do they relate to Woord en Daad's general thematic and strategic choices on the other hand?

Comparison of the general PI North ToC with the six trajectory-specific ToCs leads to the conclusion that they fully correlate with each other. In other words, all six trajectories have a logical link with the general PI North ToC and with the general Woord en Daad policy and strategy. These general policies are developed in close cooperation with Woord en Daad's Southern partners and therefore it can be concluded that the six trajectories also have a logical relation with the existing programme in/for people in the South living in poverty.

The six selected trajectories include three themes, education, TVET and SME, two countries, Colombia and Haiti, and the last pays attention to the general development policy. The choice to include these three themes in the PI North programme is made in close cooperation with Woord en Daad's partners. The choice for the two countries is not based on an objective and comparative needs analysis which would answer questions such as: Which country has the largest need to get this type of support? What could be achieved and how? Why not a trajectory on Bangladesh or the Horn of Africa? While the Woord en Daad programmes in Colombia and Haiti belong to the largest in financial terms, the evaluator got the impression that the choices for these countries are mainly continuations from past decisions.

Although the process to reconstruct seven ToCs was time consuming it was remarkable that at no point it led to profound disagreements between the participating Woord en Daad staff. Almost all the information for the different elements of these ToCs was available in written Woord en Daad documentation and inconsistencies were limited.

Based on personal experience as policy maker, campaigner, advisor, planner and evaluator, the evaluator is of the opinion that the assumptions are the most difficult elements to determine in a ToC. At the same time they are the most important part of it. Many of the assumptions in the reconstructed ToCs could be found in Woord en Daad's policy documents. But in almost all cases they were not highlighted and formulated as such. In other words, Woord en Daad has assumptions regarding how the organization believes that change takes place, why and where but Woord en Daad is not explicit about this.

It is logical that some strategies recur in each of the trajectories' ToC, such as Woord en Daad's advocacy strategy *internal*, *cooperative* and *fact-based*[6], that the main content and strategy of the PI

[6] *Internal* means that the lobbyist chooses to communicate in a direct way with the lobby target instead of external/indirect, e.g. through public pressure. *Cooperative* means that the lobbyist cooperates with the lobby target, e.g. by delivering valuable information, instead of treating the target as an opponent. *Fact-based* means that opinions and information are based on facts.

North reflects cooperation with Southern partners[7], and that the lobby takes place in cooperation with other NGOs, preferably a well-chosen platform or coalition.

It is further notable that a large number of strategies change over time. To some extent this is logical and even necessary for a PI programme as changes in politics occur frequently which requires the capacity of quick adaptation to the changing context. Having said this, at some point the evaluator wondered whether some of these changes in (aspects of the) strategy also point at a limited focus. This question will be further elaborated on in chapter 3 in which the data that were collected during the evaluation process are analyzed and interpreted and in which the evaluation questions are answered.

An element related to the previous is that Woord en Daad does not use tools such as actor analysis or power analysis to make strategic choices. The lobbyist, who is extremely knowledgeable about the forces at play in the political arena in The Hague and Brussels, makes these analyses in his mind and then communicates to his colleagues what he chooses to do. On the one hand, there is a flow of information on what the issues and the needs in the South are. This flow goes from the Southern partners to Woord en Daad's programme staff and further to the lobbyist of the PI North programme. On the other hand, there is a flow of information from the lobbyist back to the organization and its partners about the strategic choices that were made to implement the policy influencing programme and about its whereabouts and achievements. Although the evaluator did not investigate this issue in-depth, he did not find indications that the organization invests in analyzing and discussing the context of an issue or the respective sector in order to come to a joint and informed decision.

All six selected trajectories very strongly focus on political actors in The Hague, and, in two cases, Brussels. The key targeted actors are therefore similar in all six trajectories: the minister(s), the civil servants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the parliament and its political parties, plus in the mentioned two cases the European Commission and Parliament. In three cases the embassy or embassies are targeted as well and in three cases partnering and network building with other NGOs was important which made these NGOs lobby targets in a certain period of time. Only in one case, other actors than mentioned are targeted: the Colombia trajectory also aims to influence Dutch companies operating in Colombia and the semi-governmental agency Agentschap NL.

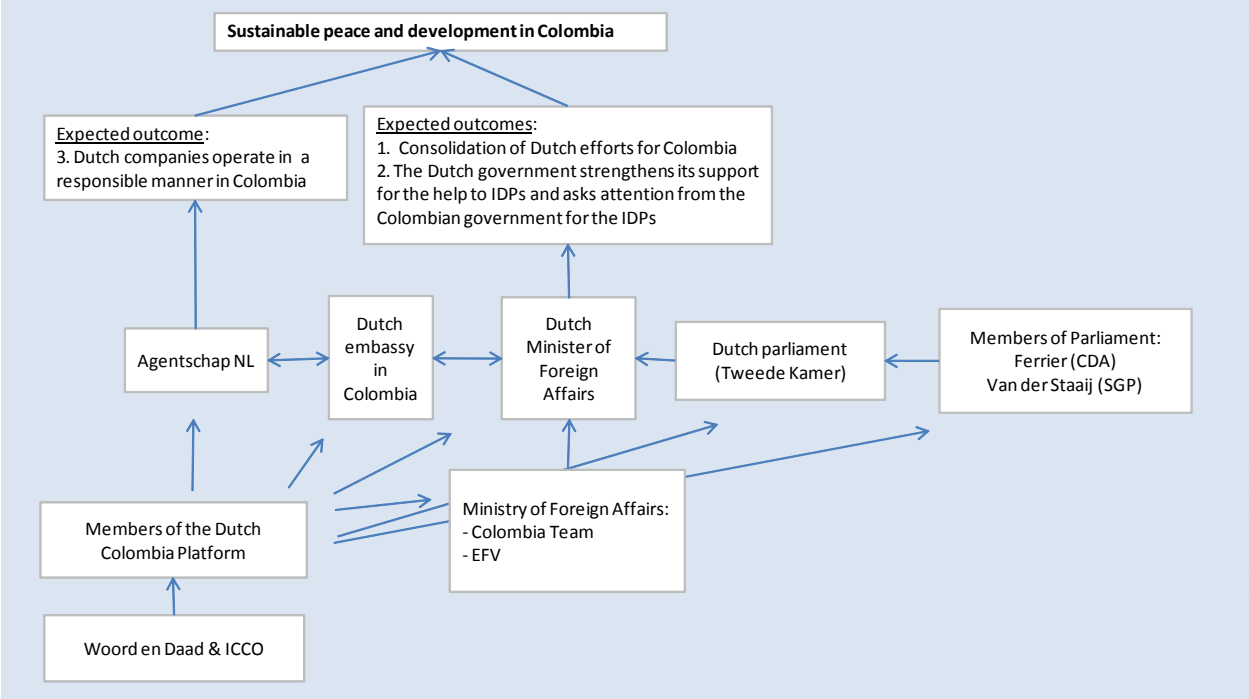
The above picture is logical as the objective of the programme is to influence Dutch and European policy. At the same time it is remarkable that wider actor analyses are not executed and that the chosen advocacy strategies are limited to the mentioned political actors.

In the introduction it was described that during the workshop to reconstruct the ToC it was also attempted to visualize the pathways of change. One example of this visualization is presented in the picture below: Colombia. This additional exercise was discontinued after three trajectories in which we learned that it has a high level of repetition. Woord en Daad's idea of a pathway of change seemed to be very similar for each of the six selected trajectories. This idea is that Woord en Daad - or the platform through which Woord en Daad operates - influences members of the Dutch

[7] Whether this has been the case in the practice is part of the answer to evaluation question 4. See paragraph 3.4 below.

parliament and in many cases also civil servants from the MFA. Both actors then influence the Minister for Development Cooperation who changes his/her policy in the desired direction. Some trajectories have a parallel pathway of change in the Brussels context. In other cases the Dutch embassy plays a role. The Colombia example is actually the only one in which Woord en Daad attempts to influence one additional semi-governmental agency through which Dutch companies operating in Colombia should be influenced.

Example of an expected pathway of change: Colombia trajectory



It can be concluded that the theories of change, especially if visualized as pathways of change, are relatively simple. That is as such not a judgment. Simple can be good, complicated is not necessarily better. Also, influencing policy makers and political actors is very demanding, because it requires a high level of knowledge, flexibility, strategic insight, the capacity to adapt to changes and a very high level of personal and communication skills. All of this is already complicated which is why complicated ToCs may not work well while simple ToC may.

Having said this, a strong focus as the above described approach brings the potential risk to miss opportunities. Political actors operate within systems that are wider than the relationships in The Hague or Brussels only. For principal reasons the evaluator cannot say whether opportunities have been missed without having assessed the whole system in which the decision making takes place. For example, the three trajectories Colombia, SME and Partos are about Dutch companies in one way or the other. And it would make sense to systematically assess the potential opportunities of trying to influence or get involved some of these actors - or the risks of not doing so because it is to be expected that the industry has its own lobbying trajectories.

Another example is that an organization as Woord en Daad with Southern partners and programmes in the South could bring some of its Southern partners – or other members of the ultimate target group – to The Hague or Brussels in order to advocate with a direct message to the target group.

Intermediate conclusions

Below are some intermediate conclusions with the aim to synthesize key insights from this chapter.

- All theories of change were reconstructed in a relatively short time which was possible because the basic Woord en Daad documents contain clear choices and had a high level of consistency.

- The output of this step in the evaluation is a set of ToCs in which the different elements themselves are clear and logically linked to each other. The ToCs are also consistent with each other, content wise as well as strategically; and the trajectory-specific ToCs are consistent with the general PI North ToC.

- Important advocacy strategies are *internal*, *fact-based* and *cooperative.* Network building and cooperating with other NGOs, preferably platforms/coalitions, is another characteristic of Woord en Daad's advocacy strategy.

- The ToCs show a very strong focus on political actors in The Hague, and, in two cases, Brussels. Only in one case Woord en Daad targets an actor outside the system 'parliament/political parties/ministry/minister/embassies'.

- No use is made of analytic tools such as actor analyses or power analyses in order to assess strategies or otherwise plan trajectories. It is the evaluator's impression that this is linked to the previous point. Woord en Daad considers targeting the political actors in The Hague relevant and it knows the system and understands its dynamics between the people and it contributes to achievements but Woord en Daad does not invest in analyzing the wider system with other actors and dynamics.

    - Assessing the role of businesses in the Colombia, SME or Partos trajectory would be an obvious analysis to start with: Who are the important actors, such as individual companies, persons or branch-organizations? What is their position towards Woord en Daad's objectives, are they supporters or opponents? Can their position be changed or used? Such an exercise would reveal opportunities that can be used and risks that should be avoided.

- The PI North programme is large for one person to be responsible for, the issues are often complicated and Woord en Daad's strategy is resource-intensive.

- The choice to include Colombia and Haiti in the PI North programme is not well substantiated through partner participation or systematic analyses. There is no doubt that the development issues in these countries are severe and that policy influencing in the North is useful. But the question if it would be less meaningful for the ultimate target group if Woord en Daad worked on Bangladesh or the Horn of Africa, for example, cannot be answered.

General findings: Realized outcomes contributing to PI North objectives

Each of the 25 outcomes that were identified describes a change in a social actor. In this paragraph the outcomes are categorized in two ways. First, by distinguishing which type of actor has changed. Second, by analyzing which type of change has occurred.

The table below shows which type of actors changed its agenda, policy or practice per outcome. This overview supports the intermediate finding at the end of the previous paragraph that Woord en Daad's PI North strategies are strongly focused on political actors in The Hague and Brussels: almost all changes are within a Minister, the Parliament or their Brussels' equivalent. The media, the public or other actors were not influenced in a relevant manner.

TABLE: CATEGORIZATION OF OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF ACTOR									
ISSUE	#	YEAR OF CHANGE	TYPE OF ACTOR						
			NGO	NL officials			European Union		Other
			Allies, NGO-coalition	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Dutch Minister	Dutch MP, MPs, political parties or Parliament	European Commission	MEPs or European Parliament	Media, public, other
Haiti	1	2008			X				
	2	2010				X			
	3	2010	X						
	4	2012					X		
	5	2012						X	
TVET	6	2009		X					
	7	2010			X				
	8	2011			X				
	9	2009-2011					X		
	10	2011					X		
Colombia	11	2007			X				
	12	2009			X				
	13	2009-2011		X	X				
	14	2011			X				
Partos	15	2010			X				
	16	2010			X				
	17	2011				X			
	18	2012				X			
	19	2012				X			
SME	20	2008			X				
	21	2011				X			
	22	2011-2012		X	X	X			
Education	23	2009-2011			X				
	24	2011			X				
	25	2012				X			

19 out of the 25 outcomes were changes in the policy and/or the practice of the targeted social actor. Another 5 were a change in the agenda of the targeted actor. Only 1 change is classified in

other sub-sections of the category agenda setting. The overview of the categorization of outcomes by type of change is given in the next table.

TABLE: CATEGORIZATION OF OUTCOMES BY TYPE OF CHANGE									
ISSUE	#	YEAR OF CHANGE	TYPE OF CHANGE						
			Agenda setting					Policy change	Practice change
			Network building	NGO participating in decision-making	Supportive media statements	Public support created	Agenda of lobby target changed	Policy change by lobby target	Practice change by lobby target
Haiti	1	2008							X
	2	2010							X
	3	2010	X						
	4	2012						X	
	5	2012						X	
TVET	6	2009						X	X
	7	2010						X	X
	8	2011						X	
	9	2009-2011					X		
	10	2011						X	
Colombia	11	2007					X		
	12	2009						X	
	13	2009-2011							X
	14	2011						X	X
Partos	15	2010						X	X
	16	2010						X	X
	17	2011						X	
	18	2012							X
	19	2012						X	
SME	20	2008					X		
	21	2011						X	
	22	2011-2012					X		
Education	23	2009-2011						X	X
	24	2011					X		
	25	2012						X	

Substantiation, contextualization and triangulation

Introduction

The original intention was to do in-depth interviews with 1 to2 external informants per trajectory, about 10 in total, and 15 to 20 interviews through a survey. In reality 14 external informants were invited to participate in an interview. The response was positive: interviews were held with 10 out of the 14 invited informants. Some covered more than one trajectory.

The survey was less successful regarding the response rate: 20 informants were invited, 10 responded positively and filled in the survey.[8]

A distinction is made between the two types of informants: allies or lobby targets. Some remarks need to be made in this regard:

- First of all, the term *lobby target* can sound a bit awkward. It is here not meant as synonym for 'enemy' or 'opponent'. Woord en Daad has chosen a cooperative advocacy strategy which means that they choose to cooperate with those social actors from whom they wish to see changed behaviour or policy. That is why Woord en Daad has a positive and constructive relationship with most of these actors, but in the context of this evaluation, they are still referred to as lobby targets. During the communication between the evaluator and these lobby targets it could be noticed that this role is clearly understood by all actors involved.

- Second, in most of the lobbying & advocacy evaluations in which the evaluator has been involved NGOs see the lobby targets more as an opponent or even as enemy. The result is that these lobby targets are often not willing to cooperate in an evaluation, or if they do, they answer less open and more biased. In fact, this is the first lobbying & advocacy evaluation in which the evaluator has been involved where the lobby targets have been approached as informants. The response was higher than expected and their attitude was cooperative.

- Third, a special category within the group of lobby targets are the Members of Parliament. Four Dutch MPs were invited to an interview, three responded positively but in the end, only one interview took place. These politicians have an agenda that is more than busy and constantly changing and therefore two intended interviews were cancelled.

- Finally:

    - In interviews and in the survey the allies were asked to respond to all three aspects of each outcome: the factual description, Woord en Daad's opinion of the relevance, and Woord en Daad's assessment of its own contribution
    - For reasons of confidentiality, lobby targets were not given the part about Woord en Daad's contribution to the outcome. These were only given to allies. The lobby targets therefore only substantiated the description and the relevance. But these informants were asked their general opinion on Woord en Daad's contribution to the respective outcomes
    - For the same reason, the interview with the Dutch MP was only based on the first aspect of the outcome formulations: the description. The positive result of this was that we had more time and were able to reflect on the outcomes of four trajectories. The limitation is that he substantiated only one part of each outcome. This contributed to the contextualization but was not counted as substantiation.[9]

[8] In one case two informants were in fact counted as one. The reason is that it was one response per email sent jointly from a Member of European Parliament and from his assistant with no opportunity to distinguish two separate opinions. In another case one informant received two separate surveys, one on *Partos* and one on *SME*. His two separate answers per email are counted as two responses.

[9] It is worth mentioning, though, that this informant fully agreed with all 16 outcome descriptions that we talked about.

The next table shows an overview of the respondents. In total 19 external informants responded to 62 outcome formulations. It should be noted that some informants responded to more than one trajectory and are therefore counted for each trajectory they responded to. Annex 3 gives a full overview of the external informants, to which trajectories they responded and which outcomes they substantiated.

Trajectory	Type of informant	Interview or survey	Total informants
Haiti	ally	interview	3
	ally	survey	
	lobby target	survey	
TVET	lobby target	interview	4
	lobby target	interview	
	ally	interview	
	ally	survey	
Colombia	lobby target	interview	3
	lobby target	interview	
	ally	interview	
Partos	ally	interview	6
	ally	interview	
	lobby target	interview	
	ally	survey	
	ally	survey	
	ally	survey	
SME	lobby target	interview	3
	ally	survey	
	ally	survey	
Education	lobby target	interview	4
	ally	interview	
	ally	survey	
	ally	survey	
All	*WD Directors*	*interview*	*2*

In addition, and at the end of the interview-phase, the evaluator interviewed two members of the Executive Board of Woord en Daad. This was an open interview in which opinions of the Board about the outcomes and their relevance were gathered, relevant for the evaluation questions 3, 4 and 5.

Analysis of the information from interviews and survey

Annex 3 shows a complete tabulation of the results of the substantiation of the 25 outcomes. It shows to what degree the informants agree with each of the three aspects – description, relevance, and contribution – of each outcome he/she responded to.

In summary, the tabulation shows that the chosen informants agree with most of the aspects of the outcome formulations:

- Of the 64 answers regarding the outcome descriptions, 50 fully agree, 13 partially agree, and 1 disagrees
- Of the 59 answers regarding the relevance, 35 fully agree, 22 partially agree, and 2 disagree

- Of the 48 answers regarding Woord en Daad's contribution, 39 fully agree, and 9 partially agree.

These figures show that the level of agreement with how the relevance of the outcomes is described is lower than the level of agreement with the two other aspects of each outcome formulation. Therefore special attention is given to this aspect when the evaluation questions are answered.

The level of agreement does not differ strongly between the six trajectories. It is the highest for the trajectories Haiti and Partos (General Development Policy) and lowest for TVET and Colombia.

The comments from the informants made during the interviews and those given in the survey contain valuable information and observations. They helped to gain better understanding of the outcomes and their context.

Some of the comments that are related to disagreements with the text or its context were briefly discussed with Woord en Daad's lobbyist. It showed that in some cases there is a simple misunderstanding and sometimes a not-surprising difference in opinion, especially when the assessment of the relevance differs. Altogether there was no reason to change the formulation of the outcomes.

All comments - except those that are marked as confidential - are made available to Woord en Daad as additional feedback and for its own learning.

3. Answering the five evaluation questions

In this chapter the five evaluation questions are answered in this order:

Paragraph 3.1:
- Evaluation question 5. *How effective have the trajectories/programmes been? (Effectiveness)*

Paragraph 3.2:
- Evaluation question 1. *Can the choices of Woord en Daad be related to the political context? (Relevance)*
- Sub-question 1.1. *Were certain opportunities to connect to the political context left unexploited? (Relevance)*
- Evaluation question 3. *What choices have led to the focus within and between the lobby trajectories and why were certain trajectories started? Is there sufficient balance in the width and depth of the trajectories? (Relevance)*

Paragraph 3.3:
- Evaluation question 2. *Do the activities offer added value over what is offered by other lobby actors? (Relevance)*

Paragraph 3.4:
- Evaluation question 4. *Was there a clear connection between the PI trajectories in the North and the identified needs in the South? (Relevance)*

Paragraph 3.5:
- Sub-question 5.1. *What are the explanatory factors for the effectiveness (or lack of effectiveness) of trajectories/the programme? (Effectiveness)*

Getting results: Assessing the effectiveness of the PI North programme

This section addresses specifically this evaluation question:

- Evaluation question 5: *How effective have the trajectories/programmes been?*

The TVET trajectory can be assessed as effective: the expected outcomes were largely achieved. The other trajectories were partly effective. Three trajectories, Colombia, Partos and Education, were not effective regarding the larger goals but achieved relevant adjustments in the way the policy decisions were implemented. Haiti was partly effective because some expected outcomes were achieved, others not. SME formally was effective as the expected outcomes were achieved. But these expected outcomes are weakly formulated, and were too easy to achieve. Therefore the overall assessment is: partly effective.

Woord en Daad showed great capability to adapt to a changing context. This is visible in smaller outcomes when the lobbyist made use of sudden opportunities, such as the initiative from the Dutch MP Voordewind to visit Haiti, and in larger changes, such as the way the policy regarding TVET is changed by making use of the changes in the political mainstream

The strategies as described in the ToCs were carried out as planned. One could say that Woord en Daad has remained true to itself.

It is concluded that the following points are all related to each other:

- Woord en Daad focuses strongly on political actors only; actors other than politicians and civil servants are seldom included in the pathways of change
- Tools to make wider systems analyses (actor- or power analyses) are not used
- The pathways of change that underlie Woord en Daad's intervention strategy are rather simple
- Only in a few occasions Woord en Daad has identified mid-term and long-term objectives that are ambitious, realistic and measurable, in other words, SMART.

Getting results: Assessing the choices of Woord en Daad

This section addresses these three evaluation (sub-) questions:

- Evaluation question 1. *Can the choices of Woord en Daad be related to the political context? (Relevance)*
- Sub-question 1.1. *Were certain opportunities to connect to the political context left unexploited? (Relevance)*
- Evaluation question 3. *What choices have led to the focus within and between the lobby trajectories and why were certain trajectories started? Is there sufficient balance in the width and depth of the trajectories? (Relevance)*

The first part of question 3 is already answered above: All six ToCs of the selected trajectories have a strong and plausible link with Woord en Daad's general thematic and strategic choices. Three of these six PI North themes are selected in close cooperation with the Southern partners: education, TVET and SME. The choice to advocate on Colombia and on Haiti, instead for example on Bangladesh or the Horn of Africa, is less supported through partner participation, although both countries are relatively important regarding the size of the country programme.

It is also already assessed that the choices that have led to the focus WITHIN the trajectories were all influenced by actual and present challenges. Hereby Woord en Daad remained largely true to the choices for its advocacy strategy as these are described in the ToCs. These are assessed as its main drivers and Woord en Daad is not easily convinced to choose a different strategy.

Regarding **question 1**, the choices for the trajectories Colombia, SME, education, TVET and Partos are all strongly related to the political context. Political opportunities arose for the issues SME and TVET. And within the general development policy (Partos) threats as well as opportunities were present. The Netherlands was one of the largest donors for basic education and Colombia was a partner for bi-lateral support and both were threatened and in that sense one can say that the choice for advocating for these issues was related to the political context.

Finally, the choice for Haiti in the Netherlands cannot be related to any specific political context. The switch to the EU level is more politically relevant as the EU has a budget for Haiti and Woord en Daad believes that that money could be spent better. In the current context it is not clear at all why Woord en Daad lobbies for Haiti and Colombia and not for other countries in which it has partners or programmes.

Sub-question 1.1, whether certain opportunities to connect to the political context were left unexploited, is per definition difficult to answer: the question can only be answered after the decision is taken from whom this judgment should come. This decision was not taken and that is one of the aspects where the chosen evaluation design comes short. Nevertheless, as evaluator who collected all the data in this evaluation and who has a strong background in politics and advocacy himself, the best way to answer the question is by giving my own assessment.

For one part this assessment is already given at the end of paragraph 2.9. Woord en Daad has a strong focus on the pure political context without analyzing the wider context or system. The most obvious choice is to use actor- and power analyses in order to assess the potential role companies can play for Woord en Daad within the context of Colombia, SME or the general CSR-policy.

The above is theoretical as long as Woord en Daad does not start to invest in such assessments. Even more theoretical is the question whether more could have been achieved if other objectives were developed. For example, Woord en Daad could decide that binding regulation to implement CSR guidelines are needed and that a long-term advocacy is promising. If Woord en Daad had taken this decision 3 years ago and had drafted a legal proposal and advocated for it, one might be closer to achieving this expected outcome. The types of outcomes are specific, ambitious and measurable. If they are also realistic and time-bound, then they are called SMART. There are not many SMART outcomes in the re-constructed ToC. Again, whether this qualifies as missed opportunities is theoretical. It is the evaluator's experience that working with such objectives creates opportunities and is a good way to make sure that one doesn't get stuck in short-term activities or too much influencing agenda setting.

Furthermore, specific opportunities lie within the Haiti and TVET trajectories in 2013 in Brussels. Not investing in these opportunities seems a waste of resources.

Finally, it is the evaluator's assessment that Woord en Daad has used many opportunities to connect to the political context and it has done so in a strong way. A specific strength lies in the connection between the social and economic aspects of sustainability which is visible in many choices of Woord en Daad and for which it is well known and respected. At the same time this raises the question why the ecological aspect of sustainability is relatively so much weaker. If Woord en Daad attempted to fully integrate that aspect it would possibly see more opportunities to connect to the political context. Here are some suggestions for issues that are social, ecological, economic and politically 'hot': the land issue, land conversion as cause for poverty, displacement and disaster for rural people and farmers, agricultural commodities traded to the EU as source for land conversion: soy, palm oil, biomass, indigenous peoples, and finally to really and fully exploit the CSR issue in a pro-active manner.

The second part of question 3 asks whether there is sufficient balance in the width and depth of the trajectories. In a rigor evaluation this question cannot be answered as the design failed to define

what is understood with *sufficient balance in the width and depth* and therefore also failed to collect relevant and objective data for this assessment.

But in its response to the draft report Woord en Daad requested the evaluator to give his professional opinion more often. Therefore the following answer is based on this professional assessment. It is based on indications and impressions only and not on clear and substantiated data.

The evaluator, very cautiously, has the impression that the programme is too wide. Reasons for this impression are the amount of trajectories and responsibilities spread over a large amount of platforms, coalitions and other relations. This all seems a bit too much. It is therefore possible that the lack of creativity in finding new ways to address the chosen issues or in defining outcomes, and the lack of investment in in-depth analyzes of actors, sectors, powers and systems is all a result of the above.

On the other hand, this impression might be wrong as none of the external informants had any complaints about not following-up, not showing-up or not delivering outputs – in contrary.

Getting results: Woord en Daad's added value

This section addresses this evaluation question:

- Evaluation question 2. *Do the activities offer added value over what is offered by other lobby actors? (Relevance)*

This added value lies in two aspects. First, the assessment of Woord en Daad's lobbying activities cannot be separated from the person Evert-Jan Brouwer. Answers from his allies reveal that he has a substantial added value which can be summarized as follows: he is experienced, disciplined and he is a very good writer, his lobbying capacities are very high, he knows exactly how the procedures in the parliament work and is always the first who is informed about events and opportunities in the parliament. One lobby target added to this list that the information from Woord en Daad/Evert-Jan is of a very high quality, which is an enormous compliment because it is a pre-condition for being successful with the cooperative advocacy strategy. The evaluator saw that Evert-Jan uses his diplomatic and communicative capacities to built long-term relationships with relevant actors, which is necessary for the execution of Woord en Daad's strategies. The only critical remark made by one ally in the context of the education trajectory. This person said that it can be annoying that Woord en Daad – in the person of Evert-Jan Brouwer but also otherwise – keeps emphasizing the role of TVET.

Second, the added value lies in Woord en Daad's choices for thematic niches. Respondents specifically mentioned TVET as such and the way TVET and education are linked to economic issues and Dutch SMEs.

The connection with the needs in the South

This section addresses this evaluation question:

- Evaluation question 4. *Was there a clear connection between the PI trajectories in the North and the identified needs in the South? (Relevance)*

In order to answer this question correctly, the evaluator should have investigated internal processes within Woord en Daad. This was not done, which is another shortcoming of the evaluation process. Again this is caused by a lack of time.

Nevertheless, a question regarding this issue was integrated in the survey to and interviews with allies and this issue was briefly discussed during the workshop with Woord en Daad staff on the ToCs and outcomes. Other sources of information are the ToCs and the outcomes themselves. Here is the summary of the received impressions:

- Two allies wondered whether regular strategic exchange between Woord en Daad's programme staff and Evert-Jan takes place.
- A substantial number of examples were given by allies of useful information/reports/cases that Evert-Jan made available and that were coming from Southern partners.
- Many allies have no knowledge of how Woord en Daad includes its partners or their knowledge.
- Woord en Daad programme staff and the policy advisor for the PI North programme explained that involvement of Southern partner organizations in most of the advocacy trajectory was only **indirect**. The lobbyist makes use of thematic knowledge of his colleagues at Woord en Daad, who are in touch with programme managers in Southern partner countries on a daily basis. So e.g. when a lobby document had to be written, the lobbyist asked input and comments from his Woord en Daad colleagues - and possibly of colleagues of other members in the respective coalition. He used their input on the assumption that it well **reflects** the ideas and expertise of Southern partner organizations.

In conclusion, the honest answer to the question is that the question cannot be answered with the available data except to lay-out the above impressions.

Summarizing: Explanatory factors for the effectiveness

This section addresses this evaluation sub-question:

- Sub-question 5.1. *What are the explanatory factors for the effectiveness (or lack of effectiveness) of trajectories/the programme? (Effectiveness)*

It goes without saying that the political climate regarding development cooperation in combination with the financial crisis in the period 2008-2012 has influenced the effectiveness of the trajectories and the PI North programme negatively. Decisions were taken to cut budgets, limit bi-lateral relationships and change priorities that were a result of the dynamics of the previous two decades and that were far beyond the control of Woord en Daad.

Having said this, the list of explanatory factors for Woord en Daad's effectiveness starts with the role the lobbyist is having. His knowledge and capacities are of very high added value. A less visible aspect is the evaluator's impression of good support the lobbyist gets from Woord en Daad's management and the coordination between the two.

A strong link to this factor is the fact that the PI North programme strongly focuses on political actors in The Hague and Brussels. Many of Woord en Daad's allies spoke very highly of the way the PI North lobbyist operates in this arena. According to them, this explains part of the effectiveness.

The third factor that appears to be crucial lies in the interrelated combination of aspects. Woord en Daad's has clear choices for its thematic focus which does not change quickly or unexpected. This is even more the case since the policy plan 2011-2015 is adopted. The issue *sustainability* offers the opportunity to link issue. This is what Woord en Daad does and what is also communicated to others. In addition, Woord en Daad has developed niches with these choices.

On the other side, there are some factors that possibly explain the lack of effectiveness. One is the earlier mentioned combination of aspects regarding the focus in political actors, the lack of the use of wider analyses and the relative weakness in planning, namely the absence of SMART mid-term or long-term objectives.

As mentioned above, the choice to focus on Colombia and Haiti seems to be arbitrary. Potentially this can undermine Woord en Daad's image, although none of the informants mentioned this as an issue.

It has to be recognized that this list is not complete. For example, the evaluator did not assess other external factors such as functioning of the different partnerships in which Woord en Daad operates.

4. Recommended points for discussion

Chapter 3 already includes all specific conclusions related to the evaluation questions. Therefore, here final conclusions are drawn and topics for discussion are recommended.

1. The focus on political actors in The Hague and Brussels is a strength and a weakness at the same time. Especially the combination with the lack of use of actor- and power analyses makes that potential opportunities might be missed. Also the lack of SMART mid- or long-term objectives is a weakness in this respect. ***It is recommended to consider the use of the Theory of Change-tool as it is introduced in this evaluation.[10] This would help to be more explicit about the underlying assumptions, it would serve as valuable basis for discussing strategic choices with each other and it would create a fruitful context to determine SMART objectives for the short as well as the longer term. It would also be the context in which the mentioned systems- or actor- and power analyses will fit.***

2. In addition the impression arises that creativity is used when assessing strategies and intervention within the political network in The Hague but that Woord en Daad could be more creative in using actors outside that system. Were the companies that visited Colombia asked to lobby for Woord en Daad? How could companies or economy students or professors get engaged in Woord en Daad's message? Why not bringing Southern partners or members of the ultimate target group to The Netherlands more often? Why not finding other ways to present long-term proposals, e.g. by way of writing a bill? ***There is a variety of approaches that Woord en Daad could consider while it is recommended that Woord en Daad remains true to itself. The current approach is not ineffective and it seems to fit the organization. But it is the experience of the evaluator that in the longer term it is more effective to make use of different approaches: not only internal, but also sometimes external; and being more confrontational . Experimenting with these approaches is therefore recommended – preferably as result of a planning process as recommended above.***

3. The policy plan 2011-2015 in which sustainability is central presents the opportunity to genuinely integrate the ecological aspect of sustainability and connect to the political context without having to fear that this is a leftist issue. ***Is Woord en Daad willing to consider and analyze issues such as land conversion, agricultural commodity trade, and a much stronger integration of CSR?***

4. ***In summary this evaluation cannot conclude that the PI North programme would be more effective if it is limited to a lesser number of trajectories. But, each of the above considerations will take time if Woord en Daad wants to implement them. In other words,***

[10] Woord en Daad already makes use of a theory of change but the way that is composed and used is very different from the concept introduced here. Woord en Daad's ToC reflects its vision of change but it is composed of different elements and is not used as a tool for planning. The ToC format introduced in this report has an added value not only for evaluation but also for planning.

in order to create more space for more width and depth WITHIN trajectories – with the aim to be more effective - it is useful to consider the limitation of the amount of advocacy trajectories.

If Woord en Daad wants to limit the amount of trajectories the question is of course, which. At this point no evident recommendation can be given, also because not all current trajectories were evaluated. A criterion for the selection should be the level of integration with the issue sustainability which is the main issue in the current policy plan. In line with assessments described above it does make sense to start assessing the country-trajectories using this criterion.

5. The history of the debate within Woord en Daad about the desirability of a policy influencing programme is long. The 25 outcome formulations each tell a story about an effective policy influencing intervention which is relevant to Woord en Daad's theory of change and to which Woord en Daad has contributed. These 25 stories Woord en Daad are perfectly usable in the internal as well as external communication. ***It is recommended to use them as Woord en Daad has already invested in their selection, their formulation and their substantiation. Examples of such uses for communication are (i) for the quarterly feedback emails from the lobbyist to the Woord en Daad staff, (ii) for the yearly summary per trajectory from the lobbyist, (iii) organize specific learning sessions with programme staff, (iv) in Woord en Daad's yearly report to the public, or (v) in a specific publication/newsletter to Woord en Daad's stakeholders.***

Final conclusion regarding the evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology worked out well but the evaluation was too ambitious. If we had limited the number of trajectories would have given more time to assess them more in depth and add one step after the interviews with external informants, namely some interviews with internals regarding choices and cooperation with Southern partners.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Proposal for the evaluation of the Northern component of Woord en Daad's Policy Influencing programme 2008-2012.

Annex 2 – All 25 outcome descriptions

Annex 3 – Overview informants and tabulation of substantiation

References

[1] Woord en Daad, 2011-2015 Policy Plan. Final version, February 9, 2011.

[2] Anne Mackinnon and Natasha Amott, with assistance from Craig McGarvey, Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation, 2006, www.grantcraft.org.

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[5] Woord en Daad, 2011-2015 Policy Plan. Final version, February 9, 2011.

[6] Beleidsplan beleidsbeïnvloeding 2007-2010 (internal).

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[8] Woord en Daad, 2011-2015 Policy Plan. Final version, February 9, 2011.