

# TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION WITH INDIA: WORKING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

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**OECD DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION WORKING PAPER 89**

Authorised for publication by Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director, Development Co-operation Directorate



# Working Paper

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Please cite this paper as Chaturvedi, S. and N. Piefer-Söyler “Triangular co-operation in India: Working with civil society organisations”, OECD Development Co-operation Working Papers, No 89, OECD Publishing, Paris.

## Abstract

India is home to a dynamic and vibrant community of civil society organisations (CSOs). Indian CSOs are often innovating to bridge development gaps and cater to the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Historically, India is a pioneer of triangular co-operation with first projects dating back to India's independence in 1947. Over the past decade, triangular co-operation has gathered momentum at the global level and India has been a champion of this. A specific Indian model of triangular co-operation is emerging through which India and its partners aim to leverage domestic development innovations and the strengths of India's diverse landscape of civil society organisations by scaling up bilateral co-operation and partnerships via triangular initiatives. Especially in African and neighbouring Asian countries there is a high demand to learn from Indian innovations and expertise, as they are considered to be easier to adapt to the local contexts. This paper provides insights into different ways of engaging in triangular co-operation with India and sets out opportunities as well as challenges in enhancing triangular co-operation in the future with a broad range of CSOs and government partners.

# Acknowledgements

This paper is the result of a fruitful co-operation between the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) India led by its Director General Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, and the Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) of the OECD under the leadership of its Director Jorge Moreira da Silva and the coordination of the Head of Unit of the Foresight, Outreach and Policy Reform Unit (FOR), Ana Fernandes. The lead authors of this paper are Professor Sachin Chaturvedi (RIS India) and Nadine Piefer-Söyler (DCD/FOR) with the support of Gwamaka Kifukwe (independent consultant, OECD), Sushil Kumar (RIS), Tish Malhotra (RIS) and Ritu Parnami (RIS). Invaluable comments and inputs on draft versions of this paper were received from Rajesh Tandon (Founder-President of PRIA and Chairperson of the Forum for Indian Development Cooperation, FIDC); Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay (Director, PRIA); Amitabh Behar (CEO, Oxfam India); Ashok Khosla (Founder and President, Development Alternatives), as well as Marilyn Cham, Kerri Elgar, Rolf Schwarz, Néstor Pelechà Aigües, and Jacqueline Wood of the DCD/FOR team. A special thanks goes to our peer reviewers Emily Bosch (DCD/RREDI) and Thomas Böhrer (DCD/GPP) for their excellent comments and suggestions to Najat Lachal (DCD/FOR) and Sara Casadevall Bellés (DCD/COMS) for the support in formatting this paper and to Stephanie Coïc (DCD/COMS) for the support with graphic design. The authors are also grateful to Karin Fällman (Head of Civil Society Co-operation at SIDA, formerly with DCD/FOR), who provided first ideas, inputs and contacts to kick-off the research on CSO involvement in triangular co-operation.

This paper would have not been possible without the inspiring, insightful and thought-provoking ideas of the interview partners, who have kindly shared their experiences with the authors of this paper. We spoke to eminent representatives of the Indian CSO community as well as traditional providers of development co-operation with a view of exchanging experiences and ideas for triangular co-operation with Indian CSOs. We are very grateful for all the contributions and recommendations that were shared with us and hope to reflect these well in this paper, which could be a starting point for further dialogue among the Indian Government, CSOs and members of the OECD DAC.

The idea for this paper was born at the margins of the fourth international meeting on triangular co-operation in Lisbon (April 2018) and taken up again at the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA+40) in March 2019. During the months of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, working in horizontal partnerships became more important than ever, with increasing incentives for partners to co-create innovative solutions to urgent development challenges. The authors of this paper finalised the research and interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. However, it should be noted that references to project experiences and information are collected prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

# Table of contents

Acknowledgements	4
Executive summary	7
1. Why do triangular partnerships matter?	9
2. Evolution of South-South and triangular co-operation	11
3. Global trends in engaging civil society organisations in triangular co-operation	15
3.1. Regional distribution: Africa is leading with strong CSO engagement in triangular co-operation	17
3.2. Sectors of engagement: CSOs build on their comparative advantages in triangular co-operation - social infrastructure & governance	18
3.3. Budgets and durations: CSOs in triangular co-operation - sharing costs for long-term partnerships	19
4. India's triangular co-operation – towards a model of partnering with civil society organisations?	21
4.1. Post-Independence years (1947-1964) – India's engagement in first South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives	22
4.2. Consolidating Indian bilateral South-South co-operation	24
4.3. Broadening partnerships and re-engagement in triangular co-operation from the late 1990s until 2014	26
4.4. Leveraging Indian experiences and expanding Indian triangular co-operation today	28
Scaling up bilateral co-operation to triangular initiatives	33
Building a strategic partnership with India as a global development partner	36
Spotting innovations of Indian CSOs with a view to sharing them with other countries to tackle similar development challenges	36
Aligning triangular partnerships with broader regional and global initiatives	41
4.5. Towards growing strategic importance of Indian triangular co-operation – further opportunities to step up CSO engagement?	42
Ideas for enhanced triangular partnerships	44
Conclusion and next steps for enhanced triangular partnerships with Indian CSOs	46
References	48
Annex A. List of interviews	53

## Tables

Table 3.1. Duration of triangular co-operation projects (CSOs engagement / all reported projects)	19
Table 3.2. Budgets of triangular co-operation projects	20
Table 4.1. SEWA-Afghanistan-India-USAID triangular co-operation	34
Table 4.2. Supporting Indian Trade and Investment in Africa – example of a large-scale triangular co-operation project between India and the United Kingdom	36
Table 4.3. Environmentally friendly cement for countries experiencing a construction boom	38
Table 4.4. Overview of DFID supported Indian CSOs in Africa	38
Table 4.5. Triangular co-operation among CSOs – leveraging Indian experiences of the Ashoka Trust	40
Table 4.6. Examples of trilateral training to share the innovations of the SELCO Foundation	40
Table 4.7. Evolution of India’s triangular co-operation	42
Table 10. List of interviews	53

## Figures

Figure 2.1. Three roles in triangular co-operation	13
Figure 3.1. DAC members’ support to CSOs (figures from 2018)	15
Figure 3.2. Regional distribution of triangular co-operation with CSOs	17
Figure 3.3. Sectors of triangular co-operation with CSOs	19
Figure 4.1. Timeline of Indian triangular co-operation	21
Figure 4.2. Government of India’s development co-operation to foreign countries from 1999-2020	27

## Boxes

Box 2.1. Triangular co-operation in the outcome document of BAPA +40	14
Box 3.1. Mexico, Germany and Save-the-Children	18
Box 3.2. Example of a triangular co-operation project with cost sharing among the partners: Madrasati – Safe and Creative School Spaces	20
Box 4.1. Early triangular partnership between India, the US and Nepal	23
Box 4.2. Triangular co-operation with Indian civil society organisations in Myanmar	24
Box 4.3. Example of regulatory challenges that CSOs face	25
Box 4.4. Indian CSOs that are active in triangular co-operation projects	31
Box 4.5. Example of a project scaling up Indian agriculture innovations – Tractor “Bullet Santi”	39

# Executive summary

India and its partners aim to leverage domestic development innovations and the strengths of India's diverse landscape of civil society organisations by scaling up bilateral co-operation and partnerships via triangular initiatives. Working through mutually beneficial strategic partnerships, many of these triangular initiatives are backed by agreements at the highest political level. At the same time, implementation of triangular co-operation projects happens mainly through non-governmental channels, notably civil society organisations, private sector, research institutes, universities and others. This combination of partnerships backed by governments and implemented by civil society organisations (CSOs) is a distinctive feature of India's re-emerging model of triangular co-operation.

India pioneered triangular partnerships early on, in the decades after its independence in 1947, is a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, and went on to create institutions and frameworks to support countries in Asia and Africa along the principles of South-South co-operation. After a pause in triangular engagement between the 1970s and the late 1990s, triangular co-operation has been re-gaining momentum since 2014. Given the country's regional and global importance, including as a member of the G20 and the BRICS, India today is a strategic partner in global development. Key partners in triangular co-operation are the United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Norway and increasingly Germany, Switzerland as well as the United Arab Emirates. Countries and organisations in the immediate South Asian and Southeast Asian neighbourhood traditionally benefit from co-operation with India, while triangular partnerships have also been established in Africa based on strong historical ties.

Through this triangular engagement, a mind-set change is gradually taking place, replacing traditional views of donor-recipient (vertical) relationships with more complex partnerships (horizontal) arrangements comprised of mutual learning, complementarity of approaches, networks and expertise, and benefits for all partners involved. Furthermore, from the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA, 1978) to BAPA+40 in 2019, new opportunities for triangular partnerships with non-state partners have arisen, as ultimately, all partners in triangular co-operation jointly pursue the goal of achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Against this background, this paper finds that Indian triangular co-operation serves developmental aims by:

- scaling up bilateral co-operation into and through triangular initiatives;
- building a strategic partnership with India as a global development partner through government and CSO channels;
- spotting innovations by Indian CSOs with a view to sharing them with other countries to tackle similar development challenges; and
- aligning triangular partnerships with broader regional and global initiatives.

In addition, the interviews and analysis conducted for this paper reveal the following:

- Since 2014, **new opportunities are opening for triangular partnerships** with India at the government-to-government level and are becoming increasingly evident at the level of CSOs as well.

- **With new flagship programmes India shares several facets of its development story.** Civil society may play an important role as a partner - moving forward an enabling environment is crucial. The domestic experience of Indian CSOs opens ample scope for sharing knowledge with other countries.
- **Several external partners, particularly DAC members are supporting Indian CSOs in Africa and Asia,** leveraging their skills and experience.
- **Clear documentation and recognition with facilitating measures may encourage CSO engagement in triangular co-operation.** Where the envisioned project focus allows and CSOs can add value to a South-South or triangular co-operation, it would be important to include CSOs from the beginning in project identification, design and implementation as partners. At the same time, engagement in triangular co-operation projects helps to build capacities of CSOs to engage in development co-operation with different partners – beneficiaries and facilitators.

Some action points and next steps that may be considered by partners in triangular co-operation include:

- **Increasing direct support to partner country CSOs** for engaging local CSOs. Enhancing the dialogue, spotting innovations and supporting scaling-up are necessary. Furthermore, tackling obstacles for Indian CSOs to participate in new projects, such as advance funding or payment upon receipt of the final project report, could be addressed.
- **Creating incentives for partner countries and CSOs to engage in triangular co-operation, and promoting the modality into mainstream discussions on development co-operation.** Often, the concept of triangular co-operation is known among partners in bilateral co-operation and there is scope to scale up and share project experiences with other countries, but the institutional structures, regulations and budgetary requirements are cumbersome. Furthermore, triangular co-operation projects are often planned on top of other responsibilities for staff in CSOs and co-operation agencies and budgets are allocated bilaterally. Investing in mainstreaming instead of *ad hoc* voluntary actions will be of utmost importance to leverage formal incentives and foster greater results and impact.
- **Investing in establishing, fostering and maintaining networks around topics, sectors, groups, CSOs or countries, through triangular co-operation.** Triangular co-operation networks can help connect CSOs, small-holder farmers, women's organisations, small co-operatives and others in projects around the globe to share their experiences and scale up successful solutions.
- **Moving from unilateral knowledge production and project design to co-creation among partners,** acknowledging that development innovation mostly happens in the Global South and with CSOs as key partners.
- **Using large global initiatives,** such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure (CDRI), as well as global and regional programmes of DAC members, to assess the feasibility of triangular co-operation projects or components.
- **Engaging in research on how triangular co-operation is contributing to tackling the COVID-19 crisis and to re-building back better for sustainability.** This paper could not focus on issues related to the health, social and economic crises triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. A valuable contribution to the global debate would be to focus on the role that CSOs can play in triangular partnerships geared at supporting those most in need.

The interviews conducted for this paper have shown great interest from governments and CSOs in sharing Indian experiences and innovations with other countries. The paper aims to contribute to an informed dialogue, and to shaping new triangular partnerships.



# 1. Why do triangular partnerships matter?

*“Triangular cooperation has become another important vehicle to combine the best of North and South, for the benefit of the South. India is working actively with countries like Japan, France, the US and the European Union and others to see how best Africa and Asia can benefit from this tripartite construct. While there are challenges of bringing together two different systems of assistance for a common cause, we are confident that we can overcome such technical hurdles for the larger goal.”*

*[Shri T.S.Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India at the Delhi Process V Conference on South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Exploring New Opportunities and New Partnerships Post-BAPA+40, New Delhi 22-23 August 2019]*

*“We need South-South and North-South Co-operation – in fact we need more of both. Moreover, we need to think about the synergies and complementarities. As such, triangular co-operation is a transformative modality that brings innovative and flexible solutions to fast-changing development challenges. It has proven to be a mechanism that incorporates the diversity of today’s development stakeholders, including from the private sector, civil society, philanthropy, academia and sub-national actors.”*

*[Jorge Moreira da Silva, Director of the OECD’s Development Co-operation Directorate at the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA +40)]*

The Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA +40) was a historical event: 40 years after the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was agreed, over 150 countries came back to Buenos Aires to show that South-South and triangular co-operation are central elements of international co-operation – and not just at the margins of the discourse and activities. Moreover, it called for co-operation with partners beyond governments, notably civil society organisations, research institutes, and the private sector<sup>1</sup>.

Triangular co-operation, trilateral, tripartite or triangular development co-operation<sup>2</sup> was explicitly mentioned among the themes and sub-themes of BAPA +40. In Buenos Aires, the international community reiterated that triangular co-operation contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the Outcome Document recognises in Article 28 that:

*“triangular co-operation is a modality that builds partnerships and trust, between all partners, and that combines diverse resources and capacities, under the ownership of the requesting developing country, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; and that it provides added value by leveraging and mobilizing additional technical and financial resources, sharing a wider range of experiences, promoting new areas of cooperation, and combining affordable and context-based development solutions under flexible arrangements and agreed shared modalities [...]” (UN, 2019, p. 8[1])*

<sup>1</sup> See also remarks by Jorge Chediek, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for South-South Co-operation: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1035271>

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this paper, these terms will be used interchangeably.

Triangular co-operation is a growing mechanism that brings together different perspectives and incorporates the diversity and multiplicity of today's development stakeholders. The optimal use of comparative advantages of skills, expertise and insights of different partners involved, strengthening partnerships and scaling-up opportunities are some of the factors driving this. Comparative advantages include building ownership and trust, promoting complementarity and increasing co-ordination in development co-operation, sharing knowledge and learning jointly, co-creating solutions and flexibility, enhancing volume, scope and sustainability, achieving global and regional development goals through strengthened partnerships for sustainable development (OECD, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>).

However, the concept of triangular co-operation is not new. For example, India has been engaged in triangular co-operation since the 1950s. What is new is the increased attention to triangular co-operation as a way to achieve the 2030 Agenda – attention from the South-South co-operation community, traditional providers of development co-operation, and development partners beyond governments and international organisations. Data collected by the OECD show that triangular co-operation is on the rise and, what is more, it is increasingly multi-stakeholder.

India is a case, where besides its vast experience with government-to-government South-South co-operation, bilateral North-South co-operation often involved civil society organisations. These networks and experiences are now useful to work in triangular partnerships with civil society organisations in third countries in Asia and Africa. In this paper, we follow Chaturvedi's (2016<sup>[3]</sup>) as well as Mawdsley's and Roychoudhury's (2016<sup>[4]</sup>) argument, that it is not possible to decouple the domestic and the international dimensions of state-CSO relations in India. In addition, it is crucial to show their evolution over time in order to understand today's partnerships, challenges and opportunities.

Against this background and given India's extensive experience in triangular co-operation, together with its history of vibrant and dynamic civil society organisations, this paper aims to analyse the evolution and lessons learned in Indian triangular partnerships. Embedding the specific Indian experience in the global context of South-South, North-South and triangular co-operation and CSO engagement, it will analyse Indian triangular co-operation.

Chapter 2 will provide a brief overview of overall global trends in South-South and triangular co-operation. Chapter 3 provides an overview of global trends of engaging CSOs in triangular co-operation, based on data of triangular co-operation projects collected in the OECD's online project repository. Chapter 4 will give an overview of India's experience in working in South-South and triangular co-operation and with civil society organisations from the early days of India's independence until today. In conclusion, the paper identifies an emerging Indian new model of triangular co-operation and next steps for enhancing triangular partnerships. Information on the interviews conducted to inform this paper are listed in Annex A.

While this paper is published during the peak of the global COVID-19 crisis, the experiences from triangular co-operation projects date prior to the pandemic. As a follow-up to this research, work on how triangular partnerships contribute to addressing the current crises would be valuable.

## 2. Evolution of South-South and triangular co-operation

From BAPA (1978) to BAPA +40 in 2019, new opportunities for multi-stakeholder triangular partnerships arose, and continue to rise. Triangular co-operation is gaining importance, not least with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action (AAAA), the document on *The Future We Want* (United Nations General Assembly, 2012<sup>[5]</sup>), the outcome document from the 2012 Rio+20 conference on sustainable development, the 2011 Busan conference, and more recently within the discussions of the G20 Development Working Group (DWG)<sup>3</sup>. Globally, there are growing calls for more support for triangular co-operation, which may provide additional resources for the implementation of development programmes and bridge divides between South-South and North-South co-operation, as well as chart new ways forward for development co-operation.

The re-emergence of triangular co-operation since the turn of the century coincides with a growing interest by countries, including India, to re-explore this instrument of engagement, not least as a means to achieve progress towards the collective commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to a UNOSSC report (UNOSSC, 2019<sup>[6]</sup>), the rise of this interest can be attributed to a combination of several factors including: increased trade between Southern States; gains (economic and governance) achieved by southern countries; a conscious drive to “shed the remaining vestiges of colonialism” (p. 24<sup>[6]</sup>); soft power; the emergence of non-state actors; and increased agency of countries from the Global South.

In this regard, different types of triangular partnerships have emerged in the recent past, including with civil society and the private sector, and their number is growing continuously (SEGIB, 2019<sup>[7]</sup>). This paper will focus specifically on triangular co-operation with civil society organisations, understanding civil society as:

*“The multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organises itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties. CSOs can be defined to include all non-market and non-state organisations outside of the family in which people organise themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain. They cover a wide range of organisations that include membership-based CSOs, cause-based CSOs and service-oriented CSOs. Examples include community-based organisations and village associations, environmental groups, women’s rights groups, farmers’ associations, faith-based organisations, labour/trade unions, foundations, co-operatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, NGOs and the not-for-profit media.” (OECD, 2012<sup>[8]</sup>)*

The visible impact of triangular co-operation is the diversity in development co-operation that this instrument brings to the table. The concept was initially perceived as a partnership between traditional providers of development co-operation, such as OECD DAC members or international organisations, and emerging economies functioning as pivotal countries in order to support less-developed and low-income countries.

Evolving definitions of triangular co-operation focused on triangular co-operation being a Southern-driven co-operation effort supported by a northern partner. In 2008, the United Nations Economic and Social

<sup>3</sup> Triangular co-operation has been recognised by the G20 as an innovative way to support multi-stakeholders partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda.

Council held the definition of triangular co-operation “as OECD DAC donors or multilateral institutions providing development assistance to Southern governments to execute projects/ programmes with the aim of assisting other developing countries (UN ECOSOC, 2008<sup>[9]</sup>). Similarly in 2009, UNDESA articulated triangular co-operation as “Northern development partners and donors, multilateral institutions or Southern partners providing cooperation to a Southern partner country to execute projects/programmes with the aim of assisting a third Southern partner country” (UNDESA, 2009<sup>[10]</sup>). A definition by (UNDP, 2014<sup>[11]</sup>) and in use by UNOSSC (2019) articulates triangular co-operation as “Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries, supported by a developed country(ies) or multilateral organization(s), to implement development cooperation programs and projects”. Similar definitions articulated were also articulated in the Nairobi Outcome Document (UN, 2009<sup>[12]</sup>) and (BMZ, 2013<sup>[13]</sup>)

Triangular co-operation is a dynamic concept and keeps on evolving. It is no longer only an engagement between members of the OECD DAC and developing countries. For example, India and People’s Republic of China have recently announced a co-operation agreement with Afghanistan; another example is co-operation between Saudi Arabia and India in Kenya to build a hospital or the IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) Fund (see Chapter 4 for more information) – all of which are southern-led triangular partnerships.

In recent years, triangular co-operation has evolved to a broader concept, moving away from a binary spatial categorisation of “North” and “South” (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[14]</sup>) to better reflect the complexity of the development co-operation landscape, where other stakeholders such as civil society organisations, philanthropy, academia and the private sector are increasingly involved in development activities within and across national boundaries. Thus, the geography of development co-operation is evolving through the emergence of ‘new’ development partners, as more countries take up a dual role of providing and benefitting from development co-operation at the same time.

With ongoing shifts in the international development co-operation landscape, actors are expressing different ways of collaborating to make best use of the diverse skills and experiences. A change is gradually taking place, replacing traditional views of donor-recipient (vertical) relationships (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[14]</sup>) with more complex partnership (horizontal) arrangements comprised of mutual learning, complementarity of approaches, networks and expertise, and benefits for all partners involved (OECD, 2019<sup>[15]</sup>). In fact, this is a great opportunity, as in triangular co-operation partners have the chance to break up existing logics, spatial conceptualisations and cultures of co-operating between the North and the South and to re-think co-operation.

Triangular co-operation can be understood in its entirety as the actors and the sectors of co-operation that have been evolving in different permutations and combinations, e.g. also referring to multi-disciplinary (engineers, psychologists, economists, and social activists) and cross-sectorial fertilisation of ideas to tackle a certain issue. An interview partner from Development Alternatives<sup>4</sup> illustrated this last point vividly when sharing his experiences with triangular co-operation from the point of view of a social enterprise and CSO. For a social enterprise the imperative is to tackle development challenges with local groups on the ground and scale up at the same time, following a business logic. Innovation is the most important “product” to market and these Indian innovations are often more suitable for the local contexts in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Scaling-up innovation requires different types of resources, not least financial investment to bring the idea from one context to another. Capacity development to adapt the innovation to the new local context is another important component which requires human resources and knowledge sharing.

In South-South and triangular co-operation, small, innovative projects that are kicked off with seed funding can go a long way in terms of impact. For instance, a triangular co-operation project on human milk banks that Brazil has been implementing with the World Food Programme at first only in neighbouring Latin American countries had an initial budget of USD 30 000. By the year 2020, it had been scaled-up to working

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<sup>4</sup> Interview on 26 May 2020

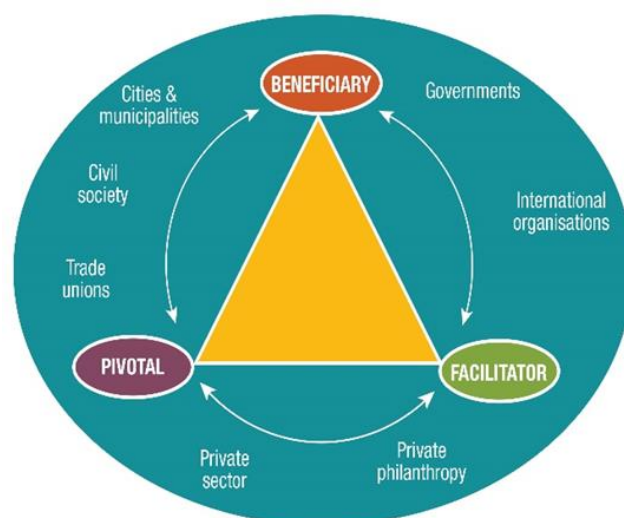
with 23 Latin American and African countries, plus Portugal and Spain, reaching millions of people (Government of Brazil, 2018<sub>[16]</sub>).

Triangular co-operation provides fertile ground to bridge different traditions in development co-operation and foster mutual understanding. It is possible to pilot new and innovative approaches to complement international development co-operation by expanding the space for different actors, including civil society organisations. Working with different partners will enrich development co-operation and enhance co-creation of solutions to developmental challenges (Piefer-Söyler and Pelechà Aigües, 2020<sub>[17]</sub>).

Discussions at BAPA +40, as well as the OECD international meetings on triangular co-operation in Lisbon (2012, 2013, 2016, 2018, and 2019) and discussions within the Global Partnership Initiative (GPI) on Effective Triangular Co-operation, are broadening the awareness, understanding, and practice of triangular co-operation. An emerging understanding emphasises the partnerships among the different actors and acknowledging that all partners work together and benefit from trilateral initiatives<sup>5</sup>.

For GPI members, triangular co-operation is based on the assumption that three roles are needed for an activity to be considered triangular, namely: (a) a beneficiary partner, (b) a pivotal partner, and (c) a facilitating partner. There may be several actors for each role, at each edge of the triangle, and roles may change over the life cycle of a project. All partners share knowledge and expertise, often encouraging innovation and co-creation through mutual learning, which can eventually lead to mutual benefits (GPI, 2019<sub>[18]</sub>). The relationship among the various stakeholders is graphically represented in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1. Three roles in triangular co-operation**



Source: Triangular co-operation in the era of the 2030 Agenda (GPI, 2019<sub>[19]</sub>), <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDdev/gpi-report-bapa-40>

<sup>5</sup> Further information and summaries of these events are available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/triangular-cooperation/triangular-co-operation-in-the-international-development-agenda.htm>

The BAPA +40 outcome document provides a clear mandate to step up efforts on triangular co-operation with a full article being dedicated to this modality (see Box 2.1).

### Box 2.1. Triangular co-operation in the outcome document of BAPA +40

The outcome document of BAPA+40 recognises the collective role of both South-South and triangular co-operation towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that no one is left behind. The document lays out a vision recognising the potential of both South-South and triangular co-operation, bringing in all relevant stakeholders, to address the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.

In paragraph 12, the outcome document recognises triangular co-operation as a complementary effort to South-South co-operation. It notes the potential of triangular co-operation to provide a 'broader range of resources, expertise and capacities' driven by the demand of a developing countries to assist them on their development trajectories, both for national development as well as to meet their international commitments.

Paragraph 28 highlights the potential of triangular co-operation as a modality for development co-operation that combines a diverse set of capacities and resources, adds value by leveraging and mobilising resources and combines affordable and context-based solutions under flexible arrangements. The vision can be detailed as follows:

- *Developed countries, international organisations, civil society and relevant stakeholders:* as partners in triangular co-operation to provide knowledge, experience and resources, based on the demand of a developing country.
- *Inclusive and Diverse:* where each partner can contribute according to its own capacities, coming together to establish and promote innovative solutions and partnerships.
- *Mobilisation of Additional Resources:* knowledge and expertise, technical and financial, necessary to meet the sustainable development goals.
- *Adaptable and Flexible Approach:* builds on complementary strengths of different actors to find innovative and cost-effective, flexible context-specific solutions to development challenges.

The outcome document further recognises the need to better understand triangular co-operation to make best use of its comparative advantages, sharing knowledge, learning jointly, and co-creating development solutions. It also welcomes ongoing efforts to enhance the development effectiveness of triangular co-operation (in order to reduce transaction costs and maximise the impact of triangular co-operation projects) and voluntary efforts to map and document good practices in triangular co-operation, such as the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation.

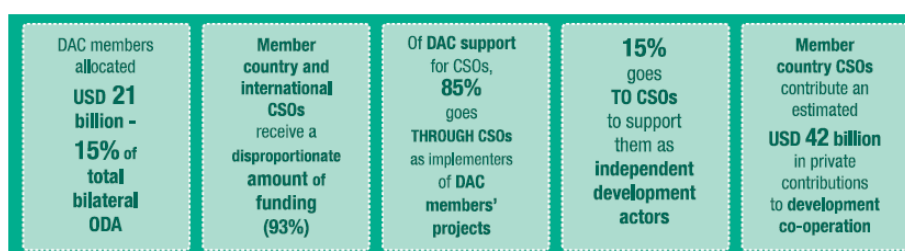
Source: Authors' own compilation, based on the "Buenos Aires Outcome Document of the 2nd High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation" (UN, 2019<sup>[1]</sup>), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3801900?ln=en>.

# 3. Global trends in engaging civil society organisations in triangular co-operation

The vibrancy of civil society organisations (CSOs) around the globe is contributing to fostering a new ecosystem for development partnerships, which can be complemented by elements of South-South and North-South partnerships in the form of triangular engagement. As a result, civil society is becoming firmly established as a crucial development actor in the global development co-operation architecture (FIDC, 2015<sup>[20]</sup>) and is playing a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (FIDC, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>). Recognising this contribution, SDG 17 specifically references CSO engagement as critical for achieving all SDGs based on a ‘whole-of-society’ approach.

CSOs support governments as implementing partners and are significant development actors in their own right. In 2018, DAC members allocated close to USD 21 billion for CSOs, amounting to approximately 15% of total bilateral ODA. At the same time, CSOs raise funds of their own, which according to OECD estimates reached USD 42 billion in private funds in 2018 (OECD, 2020<sup>[22]</sup>). It is noteworthy that 93% of funding goes to DAC member or international CSOs, and only 7% to local CSOs in partner countries. Furthermore, only 15% goes to CSOs to support them as independent actors, while 85% are channelled through CSOs as implementers of DAC members’ development co-operation projects (see Figure 3.1). Also, some providers implicitly or explicitly assume that the project co-ordinator of the CSO that is tasked to implement development co-operation projects resides in the home country of the DAC member, which excludes Southern CSOs from applying for funding, e.g. through calls for proposals<sup>6</sup>.

Figure 3.1. DAC members’ support to CSOs (figures from 2018)



Source: (OECD, 2020, p. 14<sup>[23]</sup>), Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society <https://www.oecd.org/publications/development-assistance-committee-members-and-civil-society-51eb6df1-en.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Input received from PRIA, 26 October 2020.

CSOs can add value through their extensive on-the-ground knowledge, local networks, sustained interaction with local beneficiary populations, and their ability to include people living in poverty and otherwise marginalised (Bandyopadhyay and Tandon, 2016<sup>[24]</sup>). CSOs have the capacity to bring the voices of those on the frontlines of poverty, inequality and vulnerability into development processes, and as such, to help meet Agenda 2030's promise of leaving no one behind (OECD, 2018<sup>[25]</sup>).

In addition, civil society organisations are highly specialised. Therefore, engaging CSOs allows for flexibility to bring in particular skills, experiences and insights for specific interventions, as well as for the overall project objectives. Partnering with CSOs is conducive to demand-driven and locally owned triangular co-operation initiatives. Many CSOs are already active in triangular co-operation and have years of development experience in countries that are now leading in triangular co-operation. Based on project data collected in the OECD's online project repository, CSOs take up different roles in triangular co-operation projects as:

- Implementers of projects;
- Partners contributing specific expertise, funding, networks;
- Dialogue and advocacy partners;
- Trainers for seminars, e.g. during a certain component of the trilateral initiative;
- Facilitators in scaling-up innovations;
- Delivering services;
- Beneficiaries, e.g. of training activities;
- Facilitators in de-centralised triangular co-operation, linking public and private partners at different levels of governance;
- Watchdog, ensuring accountability from all development partners;
- Voice from the ground, informing project implementation and embedding the project results among the beneficiaries of the projects;
- Continuous partners in the triangular co-operation projects, e.g. during times of elections or government changes, when the engagement of partners from the governments may be restricted.

Although governments and international organisations remain the primary actors in triangular co-operation, CSOs play roles that complement, but can be distinct from, those of governments or the private sector, and they often have comparative advantages.

The OECD aggregates information on triangular co-operation projects that countries and organisations have reported on a voluntary basis in its online project repository for triangular co-operation, which counts 758 projects<sup>7</sup>. Of these, 122 projects (17%) involve CSOs. In the following sections, some key messages that emerge from the data collected in the OECD's online project repository will be presented to embed CSO engagement in Indian triangular co-operation in a global context. A global overview will be provided of the regional distribution, sectors of engagement, as well as budgets and durations of triangular co-operation projects involving CSOs.

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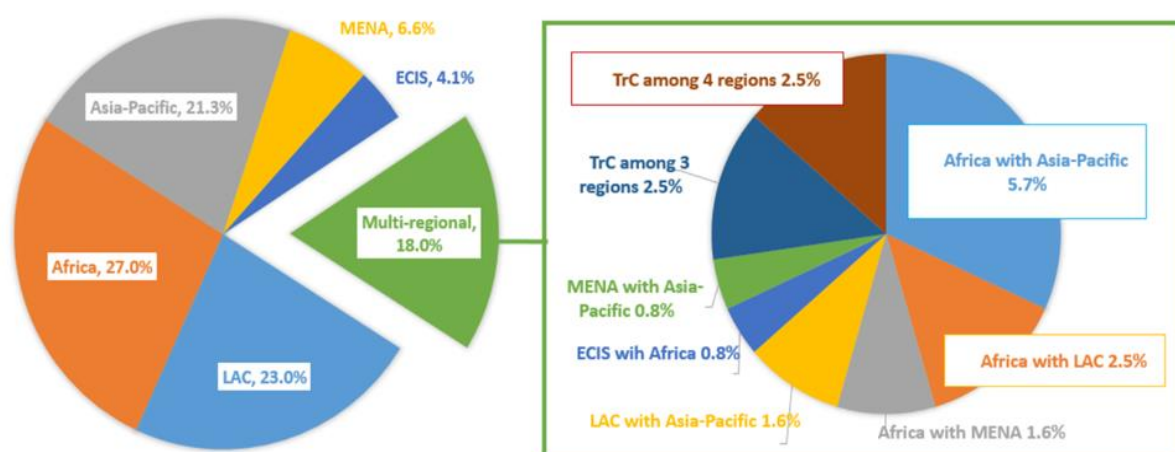
<sup>7</sup> Last updated in June 2019.



### 3.1. Regional distribution: Africa is leading with strong CSO engagement in triangular co-operation

Over one fourth of the triangular co-operation projects that involve CSOs can be found in sub-Saharan Africa (27%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (23%), Asia-Pacific (21.3%), the MENA region (6.6%), and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS, 4.1%, see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Regional distribution of triangular co-operation with CSOs



Note: The above figures are based on data that was voluntarily reported to the OECD. ECIS is a regional signifier comprising countries in the European Union, Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, Turkey and Central Asian states.

Source (OECD, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>), OECD Online Triangular Co-operation Project Repository, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/triangular-co-operation/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Furthermore, 18% of all projects with CSOs are multi-regional, i.e. experiences from one region are shared with partners from another region. Moreover, almost all of the multi-regional projects involve Africa (so that in total, 42.6% of the projects with CSOs collaborate with partners in Africa).

This trend is different from the general picture of triangular co-operation projects as well as from those involving the private sector (8% of the overall share), where the vast majority of initiatives can be found in LAC. One explanation for this divergence may be that many providers of development co-operation tend to focus their larger development projects and programmes on least-developed and low-income countries, of which many are in Africa and where local and international CSOs are often supported through development co-operation funds. Moreover, CSOs that partner with DAC members may have their strongest presence and comparative advantages to be included as partners in triangular co-operation in this region. CSOs in Africa are working closely with influential providers who can advocate for a role for CSOs in triangular co-operation. India's triangular co-operation follows a similar trend in terms of existing partnerships and projects are often hosted by African and South Asian partners.

Besides engaging in all regions, CSOs are also involved in joint initiatives with other non-state actors, such as the private sector and philanthropy. Nearly half (43%) of the projects that CSOs participate in involve other non-state actors, such as the private sector or academia, according to data from the OECD's online project repository.

### 3.2. Sectors of engagement: CSOs build on their comparative advantages in triangular co-operation - social infrastructure & governance

Civil society organisations are more present as partners in projects tackling issues related to the sectors of government and civil society (27%) and social infrastructure and services (18%) (see Figure 3.3). This trend is not surprising as many CSOs are organised around issues in these sectors, in other words, in social welfare services delivery, and in (broadly speaking) governance and advocacy related areas (see Box 3.1 for an example). Similarly, the largest part of ODA to support CSOs was disbursed to social infrastructure and services (47 %), government and civil society, health, education, agriculture and food security (OECD, 2020<sup>[22]</sup>). In addition, it is in line with findings on private sector engagement happening mainly in the infrastructure and energy sector – areas where the private sector can make good use of its specific expertise.

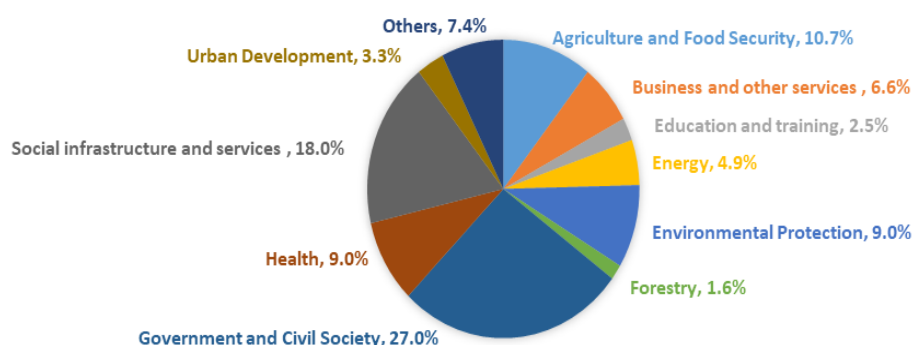
#### Box 3.1. Mexico, Germany and Save-the-Children

Migration is a global issue that requires global solutions. In this regard, the Mexican International Development Co-operation Agency (AMEXCID) worked closely with the NGO Save-the-Children in a project in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala with the support of Germany, on the prevention of migration of unaccompanied children and adolescents in communities of origin in countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America. The approach is to improve livelihoods and opportunities for personal, economic and social development in selected communities. The project is running for three years with a budget between USD 1 000 000 and 5 000 000. This case is an example of how through involving a CSO, trilateral partners can contribute to tackling one of the biggest global challenges of today.

Source: (GPI, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>), Triangular co-operation in the era of the 2030 Agenda, <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDdev/gpi-report-bapa-40>

Agriculture and food security (10.7%), environmental protection as well as health (9% each) were the third largest sectors. Interestingly, many of these trilateral initiatives were multi-regional. Fewer projects can be found in the area of business and other services (6.6%), energy (4.9%), urban development (3.3%), education and training (2.5%), and forestry (1.6%). This sectorial distribution is in line with overall trends of CSO engagement, as shown in a recent OECD study on how DAC members engage with CSOs (OECD, 2020<sup>[23]</sup>). Here, 47% were disbursed to social infrastructure and services, government and civil society, health, education and agriculture and food security. It is, however, noteworthy to mention that 31% of total bilateral ODA channelled to and through CSOs was disbursed to humanitarian assistance between 2017-18, notably in the area of emergency response (OECD, 2020<sup>[22]</sup>). Not many triangular co-operation projects could be found in this field, which may be due to the nature of having to respond fast and along well-established procedures in the case of emergencies. The modality of triangular co-operation is better suited for medium- to long-term partnerships to deliver technical co-operation than for the short-term, quick nature of emergency response.

Figure 3.3. Sectors of triangular co-operation with CSOs



Source: (OECD, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>), OECD Online Triangular Co-operation Project Repository, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/triangular-co-operation/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>

### 3.3. Budgets and durations: CSOs in triangular co-operation - sharing costs for long-term partnerships

The duration of triangular co-operation projects involving CSOs is longer than the overall average of reported triangular co-operation projects. This hints at the majority of initiatives being implemented as projects or programmes with a lifespan of two to four years (46%) or more (40.8%), rather than short-term activities, such as training or expert exchange, of up to one year (6.6%) or between one and two years (6.6%, see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Duration of triangular co-operation projects (CSOs engagement / all reported projects)

Duration of Project Activities	Projects with CSO Engagement		Projects Overall	
	No. of Projects	% of Projects	No. of Projects	% of Projects
Shorter than 12 months	8	6.6%	93	12.7%
Between 13 and 24 months	8	6.6%	85	11.6%
Between 25 and 48 months	56	45.9%	321	44.0%
Between 49 and 72 months	18	14.8%	97	13.2%
Between 73 and 96 months	8	6.6%	23	3.2%
Between 97 and 120 months	5	4.1%	11	1.5%
Longer than 121 months	5	4.1%	19	2.6%
n.a.	14	11.5%	81	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: No data was available for the duration of 80 projects overall and for 14 involving CSOs.

Source: (OECD, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>), OECD Online Triangular Co-operation Project Repository, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/triangular-co-operation/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

In line with longer durations, budgets of triangular co-operation initiatives with CSOs tend to be higher with 35.2% of the budgets ranging between USD 1 and 5 million. Comparing to the overall trend of triangular co-operation, this concentration to one budget range is a distinctive feature of the projects with CSO engagement (see Table 3.2). On the other hand, the number of projects with a budget that is larger than USD 5 million is relatively smaller compared to the overall trend of the triangular co-operation. Often public and non-state partners share the costs and contribute funds of the trilateral initiatives (see Box 3.2 for an example).

**Table 3.2. Budgets of triangular co-operation projects**

Project Budgets (USD)	Projects with CSO Engagement		Projects Overall	
	No. of Projects	% of Projects	No. of Projects	% of Projects
Under 100 000	8	6.6%	131	17.9%
Between 100 000 and 500 000	20	16.4%	127	17.4%
Between 500 000 and 1 000 000	24	19.7%	114	15.6%
Between 1 000 000 and 5 000 000	43	35.2%	126	17.3%
Between 5 000 000 and 10 000 000	1	0.8%	17	2.3%
Over 10 000 000	3	2.5%	30	4.1%
n.a.	23	18.9%	185	25.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: No budget data was available for 185 projects overall and for 23 involving CSOs

Source: (OECD, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>), OECD Online Triangular Co-operation Project Repository, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/triangular-co-operation/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

### Box 3.2. Example of a triangular co-operation project with cost sharing among the partners: Madrasati – Safe and Creative School Spaces

Triangular co-operation can tackle the challenges posed to host countries by the refugee crisis in the MENA region, as this project shows. It is a response to the Syrian conflict and the influx of over 660,000 registered Syrian refugees in Jordan, of which approximately a third were of school age. In a closely co-ordinated and jointly designed approach, the Madrasati Initiative, Jordan, Germany and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OPEC) strive to improve the quality of education, both for Jordanian and Syrian refugee students, to empower them through enriching the classroom and after-school learning and providing them with life skills that are necessary to contribute to social peace in the Jordanian host communities. All partners provided funding for this project with a two-year duration: USD 1 million came from the Madrasati Initiative, USD 720 000 from OFID, and USD 520 000 from GIZ.

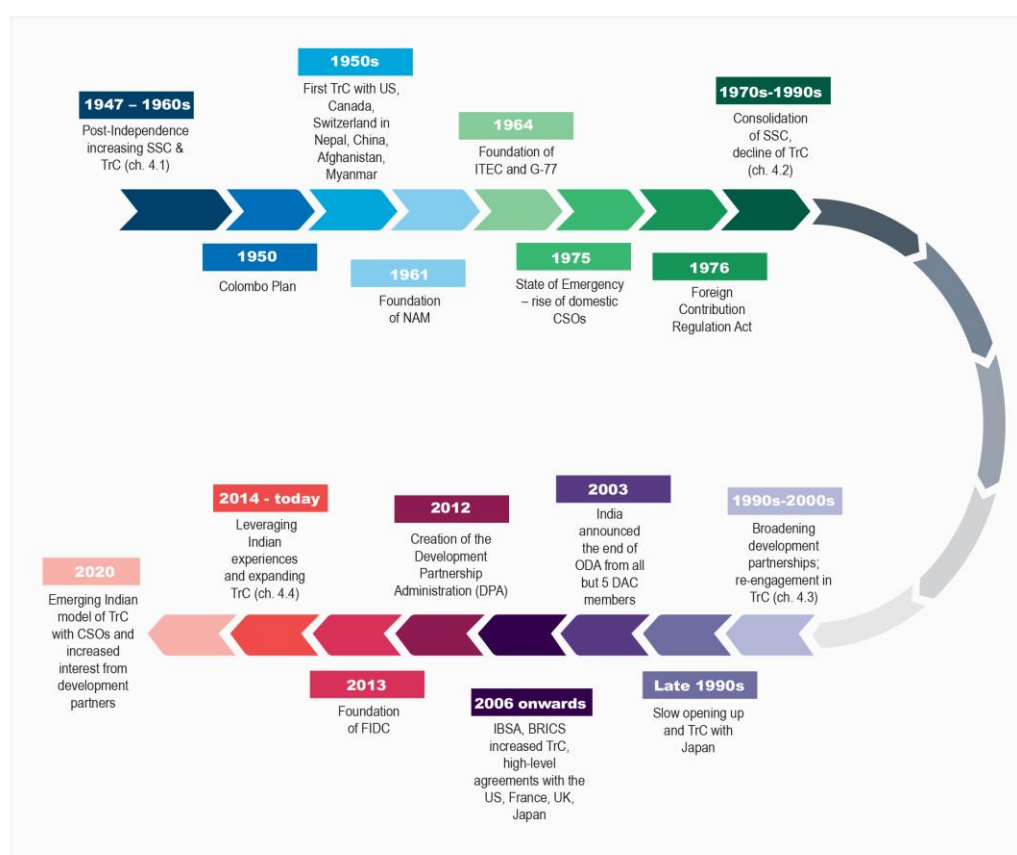
Source: (GPI, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>) Triangular co-operation in the era of the 2030 Agenda, <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDdev/gpi-report-bapa-40>.

This section has provided an overview of the global picture of civil society engagement in triangular partnerships, mainly with governments. In the next Chapter, the case of India will illustrate how CSOs engage in triangular co-operation projects.

# 4. India's triangular co-operation – towards a model of partnering with civil society organisations?

India has been involved in development co-operation ever since its independence in 1947, with first support given to its South Asian neighbours, war torn Europe in the 1950s and in supporting African states in their struggle against colonialism (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[27]</sup>). Throughout its history, Indian South-South and triangular co-operation have been characterised by both economic and foreign policy interests as well as a strong notion of solidarity - supporting post-colonial states - based on its own experience (Piefer and Vega, 2014<sup>[28]</sup>). Figure 4.1 provides a brief overview of the evolution of India's triangular co-operation, which will be discussed further in the following sub-chapters.

Figure 4.1. Timeline of Indian triangular co-operation



Source: Authors

India endorses the Bandung Principles of 1955 and has traditionally been one of the main advocates and speakers of South-South co-operation in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It follows the twin objectives of mitigating poverty and revitalising economic growth in partner countries (Sidiropoulos et al., 2015<sup>[29]</sup>). Due to its geo-political position, India's South-South co-operation has further focused on regional stability and good relations with its direct neighbours. Furthermore, countries with a large Indian diaspora have always been priorities for India's engagement (Piefer and Vega, 2014<sup>[28]</sup>).

#### 4.1. Post-Independence years (1947-1964) – India's engagement in first South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives

In 1950, together with other Commonwealth countries, India founded the Colombo Plan for Co-operation and Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia (short: Colombo Plan), which is the cornerstone and first instrument of Indian South-South co-operation. The Colombo Plan shares knowledge and provides financing from the economically stronger to the weaker states of South and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the Special Commonwealth Assistance to Africa Plan (SCAAP) lays the foundation for Indian cooperation with Africa. India took up a special role as beneficiary and provider of (technical) training for countries in Asia and Africa (de la Fontaine, 2013<sup>[30]</sup>) and (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[31]</sup>). Furthermore, India offered loans and grants mainly to its neighbours Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar through the Ministry of External Affairs (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[31]</sup>).

In the initial years after India's independence, more triangular partnerships appeared on the scene. Thus, India was already exploring the possibilities of triangular co-operation, when few countries were using this instrument. The pragmatism, purpose and commitment were quite evident in terms of exploring new modalities of partnership that the young Indian republic engaged in.

Having a shared history and experiences across the political activist spectrum of the anti-colonial struggle, the Indian state and civil society organisations started off during the immediate post-independence period with good relations (FIDC, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>).

*It is pertinent to note that the Indian government's engagement with CSOs dates back to 1956. The First Five Year Plan in India recognised CSO participation as the most effective way of enlisting public cooperation in the process of economic development. In 1956, a separate public cooperation division was set up within the Planning Commission to identify the scope and scale of engagement of CSOs in various development programmes, and to evolve methods and techniques towards this end. (FIDC, 2015<sup>[20]</sup>)*

In the first Five Year Plan, the focus was not so much financing for CSOs, but how to use their voluntary and in-kind contributions (human resources, knowledge, material, etc.) to supplement the Plan's resources. The Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC (2015<sup>[20]</sup>) noted that this is in stark contrast to the current situation, where CSOs are largely dependent on loans or grants from Indian central and state governments or support from DAC members. Despite CSO's main focus on domestic development issues, they occasionally also supported Indian South-South Co-operation abroad (see Box 4.2 for an example).

However, the outward engagement of Indian CSOs was constrained by certain legislative frameworks, which were more a reflection of inward looking economic policies with regulatory structure. During this time, the Income Tax Act (1961) was passed and CSOs are considered as non-profit entities if they receive an annual certification from the income tax authorities. The Act was drafted for disbursements of funds within India, in line with the main focus of CSO activities in the 1960s; disbursements outside of India may lead to a loss of the tax-exempt status (see Box 4.3), which may be reviewed in order to enable CSOs that wish to engage in development co-operation activities in third countries (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>).

In the 1950s, Nepal became the first country with which India engaged in triangular co-operation, making it one of the earliest examples of this modality (see Box 4.1). In this decade, partners from the DAC, e.g. the

United States, Canada, Switzerland and major UN agencies all were part of the caravan for change after India's independence.

#### Box 4.1. Early triangular partnership between India, the US and Nepal

India and the United States joined hands for the construction of roads and other infrastructure in Nepal. When India supported Nepal to build Tribhuvan Rajpath, a 130 km mountainous highway through Nepal at a cost of INR 30 million,<sup>8</sup> a dialogue was opened in 1957 with the United States for co-constructing a 1 500 km road network. India's contribution in the first instance, being INR 83.3 million drawn from the Ten Crore Aid Programme to Nepal. In June 1958, a tripartite telecommunication agreement between the governments of Nepal, the United States and India was signed to improve telecommunication between Kathmandu, and New Delhi and Calcutta (Kolkata since 2001); and to provide Nepal with an efficient internal telecommunication system. In 1971, India put in place a 12-channel variable frequency transformer (VFT) system linking Kathmandu by telephone and telex to major cities in the region.

Source: (MEA, 1958<sup>[32]</sup>) Annual Report 1957-58, <https://mealib.nic.in/?2386?000> and (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>) 'Expanding Frontiers, New Trends and the Way Forward' in The Logic of Sharing: Indian Approach to South-South Cooperation.

During this time, India engaged in different kinds of development partnerships openly and entered into six different modalities of triangular co-operation in the 1950s:

1. **Triangular partnerships to share expertise:** An example is India's partnership with the US in establishing a radio network in Nepal, once political upheaval in the country stabilised. In this partnership, India provided skilled workers to deliver the project with funding from the US (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[33]</sup>), (MEA, 1958<sup>[32]</sup>).
2. **Triangular partnerships with resource contributions from India** (see Box 4.1 for an example);
3. **Supporting freight charges for delivery of goods in a triangular partnership:** For instance, India provided support towards freight costs for a shipment of 1 000 tonnes of wheat donated to Nepal by Canada under the Colombo Plan (MEA, 1959<sup>[34]</sup>).
4. **Joint triangular support for migrants:** In 1964, after a major exodus from China, nearly 45 000 Tibetan refugees arrived in India. At that point, Swiss Aid Abroad with the Indian government established vocational schools at Bylakuppe, Chandragiri and Mainpat. The Indian government also established the Tibetan School Society for the education of Tibetan refugee children (MEA, 1966<sup>[35]</sup>).
5. **Triangular co-operation with multilateral organisations:** In 1959-60, India and the UN joined hands for a general fellowship programme in Afghanistan. Furthermore, with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Indian forest experts worked in Iran to share technical expertise in forest management. Similar efforts were made in 1965-66 with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Korea, when experts from the Indian Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, were deputed in Korea and fellowships were offered to get participants from Korea for further intense training at Calcutta (MEA, 1958<sup>[32]</sup>) (MEA, 1966<sup>[35]</sup>).
6. **Support for the engagement of Indian civil society organisations in triangular partnerships** (see Box 4.2).

<sup>8</sup> The exchange rate at the time of writing this paper was at about USD 1 to INR 70; in the year 1957 it was USD 1 to INR 4.76.

#### Box 4.2. Triangular co-operation with Indian civil society organisations in Myanmar

India supported organisations of its civil society to deliver on development priorities outside India through bilateral and trilateral partnerships. For instance, the Ramakrishna Mission<sup>9</sup> was supported in Myanmar (then Burma) for advancing development work. On his way to China, the first Indian Prime Minister Nehru inaugurated a set of quarters for nurses at the Ramakrishna Hospital in Yangon in 1956. In 1959, the government provided USD 20 000 as an *ad hoc* grant to this hospital with a subsequent annual grant of USD 7 000. A further amount (USD 5 000) was also given for disseminating social and cultural aspects of Indian life. The Ramakrishna Mission continued to receive support from the Government of India, as an example of leveraging the strength of civil society organisations to transmit unique Indian messages and development narratives across the world. In this context, countries with higher concentration of people of Indian origin were selected for support. In 1962, films and documentaries were distributed through Ramakrishna Mission in South Africa and Myanmar. Similarly, in 1963, the Ramakrishna Mission of Brazil was supported for organising a public lecture commemorating the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission, in August 1963.

Sources: (Bhattacharya, 2009<sup>[36]</sup>) Indians in Myanmar, India and development cooperation: expressing Southern solidarity (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[27]</sup>), (MEA, 1963<sup>[37]</sup>) Annual Report 1962-63, <https://mealib.nic.in/?2386?000>, and (MEA, 1964<sup>[38]</sup>) Annual Report 1963-64, <https://mealib.nic.in/?2386?000>.

## 4.2. Consolidating Indian bilateral South-South co-operation

With the initial evolution and substantive support in the 1950s, India's involvement in triangular co-operation slowed down in the decades to come, where India focused more on bilateral South-South co-operation. This was not least due to changes in Indian foreign policy during the Cold War period, coupled with India's active engagement in newly established Southern initiatives, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961 and the Group of 77 (G-77) in 1964.

In 1964, India institutionalised its bilateral training activities and technical co-operation with developing countries through creating the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation Programme (ITEC), which Chaturvedi (2012, pp. 180-181<sup>[27]</sup>) clusters into five main activities:

- Training and scholarships to study in India (for students nominated by ITEC partner countries)
- Technical co-operation projects
- Dispatch of Indian experts abroad
- Study tours
- Disaster relief.

The guiding principles of South-South co-operation, especially the focus on neither attaching conditionalities nor prescribing policies or questioning sovereignty of partner countries, took shape during this time and continue to guide Indian co-operation, as emphasised by Dr. S. Jaishankar, then Foreign

<sup>9</sup> The Ramakrishna Mission is a worldwide spiritual movement (known as Ramakrishna Movement or Vedanta Movement), which aims at the harmony of religions, harmony of the East and the West, harmony of the ancient and the modern, spiritual fulfilment, all-round development of human faculties, social equality, and peace for all humanity, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality, taken from UNESCO list of NGOs: <https://en.unesco.org/partnerships/non-governmental-organizations/ramakrishna-mission> (accessed 10 May 2020).



Secretary (currently External Affairs Minister), Government of India when speaking at the Conference on South-South Cooperation in New Delhi in March 2016 (RIS, 2016<sup>[39]</sup>). India's own knowledge culture is crucial for offering scholarships, training courses, study tours and exchange of experts to countries in Asia and Africa (Piefer and Vega, 2014<sup>[28]</sup>).

Over time, India has built its own model of engaging in South-South co-operation in the spirit of southern solidarity<sup>10</sup>, differentiating it to the newly established model of development "aid" of the OECD DAC. This period was also a phase when the Non-Aligned Movement was at its peak and India had little engagement with Western countries outside the Indian Territory. In these four decades, India became more inward looking with import substitution and self-reliance as core policy aims. Moreover, the wars with China (1962), Pakistan (1966), the fight for the creation of Bangladesh (1971), the Oil Shocks (1972 and 1979) and India's own nuclear explosions in 1974 at Pokhran, were some of the key events that led a shift in focus to domestic matters.

During this time, civil society organisations in India had limited engagement outside of the country. India witnessed a significant growth in CSOs domestically, particularly post-1975 (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>). Monitoring and regulating foreign contributions to CSOs, e.g. through ODA by DAC members, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act was first introduced in 1976. The Societies Registration Act is the third pillar of the legal framework for CSOs in India, which dates back to 1860 and allows the registration of entities generally involved in the benefit of society. Box 4.3 shows the challenges that are to be effectively addressed.

#### Box 4.3. Example of regulatory challenges that CSOs face

The Bharata Kalanjali Trust, registered as a non-profit organisation exempt from taxation, as foreseen in the Income Tax Act of 1961, brought a case to the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal of Madras in the 1980s. The objective of the Trust was to promote Indian classical and folk arts, particularly Kathakali. The Bharata Kalanjali Trust was invited to give dance performances in Nigeria – an invitation by the Nigerian government that was communicated through diplomatic channels of the Indian Government. Accordingly, the Trust prepared and artists travelled to Nigeria, gave performances and the expenditures were reimbursed by the government. However, the Income Tax Authority argued that the Trust's mandate did not imply promotion of dance outside India, hence any expenditure not incurred in India would not qualify for any kind of exemption; therefore, the annual tax assessment (1982-83) should be recomputed without any exemption on this expenditure. The case lasted for more than seven years, and finally it was ruled in favour of the Trust on the premise that the money was actually paid to the Travel Corporation of India, which was a domestic expenditure.

Source: (FIDC, 2015<sup>[20]</sup>) DAC Members and Engagement with CSOs: Emerging Experiences and Lessons, <https://fidc.ris.org.in/sites/default/files/4.pdf>.

Traditionally, CSOs have focused on all social and economic policy areas, leading to a great diversity of initiatives. Tandon and Mohanty (2002<sup>[40]</sup>) present a classification based on types of citizen association: 1) traditional and religious associations; 2) social movements; 3) membership groups; and 4) intermediary associations. The last category is most active in India's South-South and triangular co-operation. From the 1970s onwards and until India's liberalisation started in the 1990s, civil society organisations played three major roles (Bandyopadhyay and Tandon, 2016<sup>[24]</sup>):

<sup>10</sup> As per the principles established at Bandung 1955 and Buenos Aires 1978, among other conferences, conventions, and declarations.

- Awareness raising for critical developmental issues;
- Finding development solutions and addressing socio-economic problems of the society;
- Giving a voice to the most deprived parts of society.

Furthermore, Bandyopadhyay and Tandon (2016, p. 6<sup>[24]</sup>) argue that

*“In the wake of liberalisation during the 1990s, the state started withdrawing from many of its welfare responsibilities. Consequently, civil society is encouraged now to take up this new space and responsibilities”.*

What impact this had on triangular co-operation, will be explored in the next section.

### 4.3. Broadening partnerships and re-engagement in triangular co-operation from the late 1990s until 2014

India’s triangular co-operation only picked up speed when, in 1998, the Indian government introduced several economic reforms, opened up the external trade policy, foreign direct investment and deepened the external sector engagement. At the same time, India conducted a series of nuclear tests in the deserts of Pokhran, to which the global community reacted with sanctions. Through the nuclear tests, India asserted its strength and self-confidence as being an equal partner in global relations and with major (nuclear) powers (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>). The economic reforms resulted in higher economic growth rates - surpassed only by China. Ultimately, growth was viewed as the engine for self-confidence and self-reliance.

India participated in the regional review meeting of the Tokyo Agenda for Action, finalised at the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in October 1998. At a second meeting in Lusaka in 1999, India agreed to partner with Japan in development initiatives in Africa on a case-by-case basis, signalling a renewed willingness to collaborate with members of the OECD DAC (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>). The idea was to assign Indian experts to development-oriented projects funded by developed countries in areas such as information technology (IT), agriculture, small-scale industry, public health and education (MEA, 2001<sup>[41]</sup>). Moreover, Japan’s South-South and triangular co-operation dates back to engagement in the Colombo Plan – being a beneficiary first and then moving to a new role as provider over the years - so India and Japan look back at a long history of development partnerships.

Following this initial opening in the 1990s, the budget speech of 2003 signalled a major policy shift for Indian South-South and triangular co-operation on the one hand, and India as a beneficiary of official development assistance (ODA) on the other hand. It echoed Mahatma Gandhi’s strive for home-rule, which Indira Gandhi took up in her position of 1969 when she called for self-sufficiency of India.

*“Mr. Speaker, Sir, a stage has come in our development where we should now, firstly, review our dependence on external donors. Second, extend support to the national efforts of other developing countries. And, thirdly, re-examine the line of credit route of international assistance to others. [...] Having fought against poverty, as a country and a people, we know the pain and the challenge that this burden imposes for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s, owing overdue payments of substantial sums to India, I am happy to announce that we will be considering a debt relief package.” (Ministry of Finance, 2003<sup>[42]</sup>)*

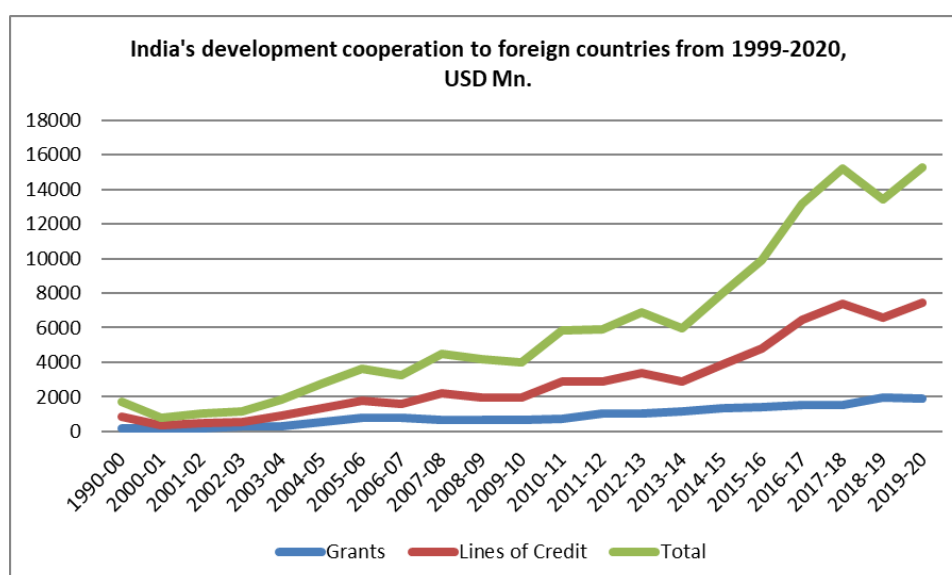
Following, the budgetary announcement and in the wake of economic sanctions after Pokhran II, including in the form of suspending development aid to India, the Government of India announced four major policy changes in 2003 (Chaturvedi, 2016, p. 34<sup>[3]</sup>):

- First, the ‘India Development Initiative’ (IDI) was established in the Ministry of Finance, aiming to promote India as ‘both a production centre and an investment destination’, with an allocation of USD 46 million for the period 2003-04. This was also intended to leverage and promote India’s strategic economic interests abroad (Ministry of Finance, 2003<sup>[43]</sup>). A new Division for Development Partnership was established within the Ministry of External Affairs.

- Second, India discontinued government-to-government development co-operation with all but six donors<sup>11</sup>. Formal guidelines were issued and specified that ongoing programmes may be completed, but co-operation would not be renewed, suggesting that they direct their assistance to those other countries more in need of ODA or else through CSOs in India or multilateral channels. This policy for partner countries allowed providers of development co-operation with more than USD 25 million per year to continue to provide assistance (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>).
- Third, the Indian government announced a major debt relief package for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (see quote above).
- Fourth, the delivery mechanism for lines of credit was moved from the Ministry of Finance to be delivered under the umbrella a new scheme called IDEAS (Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme) to be managed by the EXIM Bank of India.

In this regard, it is worth noting that India's development co-operation programme grew more than fourteen-fold between 2001 to 2019 (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>). It increased from USD 527 million to USD 7.8 billion (see Figure 4.2).

**Figure 4.2. Government of India's development co-operation to foreign countries from 1999-2020**



Source: (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>), RIS Database on development co-operation

During this period of change and uncertainty for development co-operation partners, not many triangular initiatives were established. An exception was the agreement between India and the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2003 to provide supply of high nutritious biscuits to Afghanistan to help feed schoolchildren (Chaturvedi, 2016, p. 25<sup>[3]</sup>) and RIS Database on Development Co-operation (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>).

Similarly, India's overall engagement in multilateral initiatives to provide co-operation for developing countries increased, as the India-UN Partnership Fund, IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa), and the BRICS initiatives show. In 2017, India pledged USD 150 million for the multi-year India-UN Development Partnership Fund. Since its inception and until 2020, 55 projects and proposals have been approved with a

<sup>11</sup> The European Commission, Germany, Japan, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States.

total contribution of USD 41.8 million. In August 2020, India pledged USD 150 million as support for developing countries during the COVID-19 crisis<sup>12</sup>.

Furthermore, on the global scale, the IBSA Trust Fund was founded in 2004 and became operational in 2006. It aims at supporting projects on a demand-driven basis through partnerships with local governments, national institutions and implementing partners. Initiatives are concrete expressions of solidarity and objectives range from promoting food security, to addressing HIV/AIDS, to extending access to safe drinking water – all with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. With a cumulative contribution of USD 35 million since its establishment, the Fund has partnered with 19 developing countries and has implemented 26 projects. Significantly, two-thirds of the IBSA funding has been allocated to assist LDC partners, 37% of the IBSA funding has been allocated for partners in Africa; 25% in Latin America and 21% in Asia and Pacific (RIS, 2019<sup>[45]</sup>).

The creation of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the regular BRICS summits since 2009/10 manifested India's alliance with the fastest growing economies, largest populations and countries of the South aiming for reform of the multilateral (financial) system. Partnerships with developing countries through the BRICS countries' newly established financial institution – the New Development Bank – provided different options in the global development co-operation system. At the same time, the BRICS meetings opened opportunities for CSOs to increase their outreach beyond the Indian borders by joining the Civil Society BRICS Engagement with regular meetings back-to-back to BRICS summits (RIS, 2016<sup>[46]</sup>).

The year 2012 marked another institutional turn in India's development co-operation. The Government of India announced setting up the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) within the Ministry of External Affairs. It has the mandate to manage and co-ordinate India's development partnerships with different Indian actors and partner countries.

All of these developments have had an impact on the role of civil society organisations. As the Indian Government asked most providers of development co-operation to stop providing government-to-government ODA to India, this opened up opportunities for DAC members to continue working with civil society organisations at the state, municipal and community levels throughout India (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>) and (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[27]</sup>). While some DAC members phased out their co-operation with India, others diverted funds from government institutions to CSOs to ensure sustainability of their development co-operation programmes and maintain co-operation with India.

#### 4.4. Leveraging Indian experiences and expanding Indian triangular co-operation today

India's approach to triangular co-operation evolved under the current administration of Narendra Modi (2014 to present). This includes increased engagement with the OECD<sup>13</sup> and DAC members, paving the way for new forms of partnerships – often initiated by high-level visits by Heads of States, such as former US President Barack Obama (2010), the meetings with former French President François Hollande at the Paris Climate Summit (2015), former UK Prime Minister Theresa May (2016), and former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2017). Studies by the South Centre and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB and South Centre, 2019<sup>[47]</sup>) as well as the OECD (2019<sup>[15]</sup>) have identified high-level political will as a key success factor of a conducive enabling environment for effective triangular co-operation.

<sup>12</sup> For more information see: <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/2020/08/04/india-contributes-15-5-million-to-india-un-development-partnership-fund-managed-by-unossc/>

<sup>13</sup> The OECD is fostering special relations with its key partners Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

India's ecosystem of development co-operation has also evolved, as the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) within the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is consolidated to co-ordinate India's bilateral, regional and triangular development co-operation, while the Ministry of Finance manages multilateral assistance and exercises administrative oversight over the concessional loans and the lines of credit provided by the EXIM Bank. According to the RIS database on development co-operation, in 2019, India's international development co-operation reached USD 7.8 billion ( bilateral grants USD 1.8 billion; LoCs USD 5.5 billion; Capacity building USD 37.80 million and multilateral organisations USD 332.49 million).

Interestingly, when looking at the follow-up and project implementation after these high-level political agreements on triangular co-operation were concluded, it is observed that while these were moving at different pace, CSOs were moving at a much faster pace in this regard. Rather triangular initiatives are implemented through CSOs, academia, research institutes or the private sector.

At the same time that Indian companies are going global, many Indian CSOs remain focussed largely on domestic issues, given the vast development challenges, diversity and heterogeneous needs in India. CSOs usually work locally in one State or district. They acknowledge that what has proven successful in one State, e.g. Kerala, might not work well in Bihar or another State<sup>14</sup>. A first step in adapting successful experiences to other contexts would usually happen within the Indian Territory, before considering to work abroad. It is worth noting that the government recently launched a corporate social responsibility (CSR) portal for facilitating collective and cross learnings with the private sector. The idea is to create a resource pool and find a way to "harmonise efforts," not just across companies, but also to "align" them with the priorities of the government in areas such as the Skill India, Digital Literacy, Financial Inclusion, and Swachh Bharat (Clean India) campaigns. This might be an interesting approach for Indian CSOs as well and may also pave the way for multi-stakeholder triangular partnerships – combining the diverse lessons learned from CSOs and the private sector.

Since the Indian independence movement, co-operation is framed as solidarity among Southern partners and favouring Indian foreign, trade, and economic goals – emphasising the principal of mutual benefits. Potentially, bureaucratic hurdles and restrictions on activities outside of India related to tax, registration of non-profit organisations and visa issues for work outside of the country might further influence Indian CSOs' activities abroad (Bandyopadhyay and Tandon, 2016<sup>[24]</sup>), despite the great potential for learning and exchange across borders.

Indian CSOs, both domestic as well as international CSOs based in India, also play a critical role in linking the domestic and global discourse. Yet, looking at the logics of operation, knowledge production and project design are mainly happening in the Global North, while development learning and innovation happens on the ground in the Global South<sup>15</sup>. This internal discrepancy is a challenge which international CSOs are keen to tackle and where triangular co-operation could play a vital role in facilitating exchange and joint learning. All interview partners for this paper agreed that learning and knowledge sharing among all partners is the key added value of triangular co-operation – the aim should be to achieve knowledge co-production. In this case, learning also includes understanding different development paths and acknowledging multiple modernities (Oomen, 2004<sup>[48]</sup>) in contrast to one theory of change for modernisation and development as often promoted by the Bretton Woods Institutions<sup>16</sup>. Continuous dialogue, communication, flexibility and sensitivity for different contexts are crucial to gain mutual benefits from triangular co-operation with CSOs.

Against this background, in 2013, the Forum for Indian Development Co-operation (FIDC) was created with the support of Ministry of External Affairs at RIS India as a platform for exchange and to foster exchange

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with a representative from PRIA, 21 May 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Based on observations by an interviewee from Oxfam India, 22 May 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Based on observations by an interviewee from PRIA, 21 May 2020.

and critical thinking on development issues. A multi-stakeholder dialogue with CSOs and academia took place in 2015 to discuss ways of facilitating Indian CSO participation in South-South and triangular co-operation to make use of the full and broad Indian development experiences (FIDC, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>).

Successful examples of Indian CSOs receiving government support to engage in South-South co-operation include the Barefoot college in Rajasthan, which offers solar engineering programmes to rural women from South Asia (Barefoot College, 2014<sup>[49]</sup>), Africa and Latin America as well as Jaipur Leg, which provides artificial limbs in Afghanistan<sup>17</sup> and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA – see following sections for more information on SEWA's work and the annual reports of SEWA<sup>18</sup>) (Mawdsley and Roychoudhury, 2016<sup>[4]</sup>). These and other examples can serve to inspire the transition from working locally to globally (Bhowmick, 2011<sup>[50]</sup>). For instance, SELCO Foundation is an example of a non-profit organisation, which includes sharing successful Indian experiences across the globe in its mission (see Chapter 4.4.3 for more details).

A distinct Indian model of triangular co-operation is emerging, which focuses on leveraging the strengths of India's diverse landscape of non-state and parastatal actors to address development challenges in third countries (Paulo, 2018<sup>[51]</sup>). Indian civil society organisations look back at long-standing partnerships with DAC members, which have often provided funding for domestic activities in India, including during times when India reduced the number of its development partners. As such, they have become key partners to share their experiences and innovations from India with other countries and regions through triangular partnerships (see Box 4.4 for an overview).

Yet, opportunities for Indian CSOs to submit tenders for project bids of traditional providers of development could be further explored. Often, Indian CSOs are not as familiar with the project requirements and application processes as may be the case for international CSOs or those in other parts of the world that are more dependent on ODA for funding their cause. The scale and scope of Indian CSOs is remarkable. Some of the above-mentioned CSOs have reached millions of people over the last decades and their innovations are in high demand in other developing countries, as Indian approaches are often very suitable and adaptable to the partner country contexts. Nevertheless, breaking down barriers between continents and connecting CSOs and people from India with African countries, for example, is often challenging – not only for political, logistical and bureaucratic reasons, but also in terms of maintaining and harnessing the energy and expertise from these successful projects.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> For more information see: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/jaipur-foot-to-provide-artificial-limbs-to-1000-afghans/articleshow/35344550.cms?from=mdr>

And: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/1742792.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1742792.stm) (last accessed 12 August 2020)

<sup>18</sup> SEWA Bharat annual reports can be found by following this link: <https://sewabharat.org/resources/annual-reports/> (last accessed 12 August 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Based on interview with a DFID representative on 23 July 2020.

#### Box 4.4. Indian CSOs that are active in triangular co-operation projects

##### Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA)

SEWA is an eminent women's organisation in India, which has contributed to creating jobs and economic support mechanisms, providing support for the large percentage of Indian women working in the informal sector. It was established in 1972, initially working with street vendors and committed to supporting poor, self-employed and informal-sector women workers in India. Over the years, SEWA realised that there are many similarities between the issues facing informal-sector women in India and various African countries. Subsequently, SEWA built close associations with unions and women organisations in Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa and the leaders have exchanged several visits.

Website with further information: <https://sweabharat.org>

##### Development Alternatives

Development Alternatives is a pioneer in leading sustainable development from practice to policy and on to delivery. It was established in 1983 with a mission to eliminate poverty and develop eco-solutions through scalable methods. Throughout the years, it has developed several eco-friendly, resource-efficient building material technologies and production systems. In certain settings Development Alternatives has worked with local NGOs and local governments across different Indian states and also outside India, particularly in countries like Malawi, Burkina Faso, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Bangladesh and Cuba. The sectors covered include construction, low carbon cement and environment friendly bricks, and there are also cases where Development Alternatives has also covered gender, water scarcity, environment and pollution.

Website with further information: <https://www.devalt.org/>

##### Sristi Innovations

A non-profitable company set up with the objective of strengthening the capacity of grassroots inventors, innovators and 'eco-preneurs' in the area of conserving biodiversity and developing eco-friendly solution to local problems. It is engaged *inter alia* in the areas of documentation, experimentation, search, development and diffusion of sustainable technologies and institutions (SRISTI, 2014<sup>[52]</sup>).

Website with further information: <http://www.sristiinnovations.com/>

##### SELCO Foundation

SELCO Foundation was founded in 2010 as an open source, not for profit, public charitable trust. It can draw on the experiences of SELCO India, a social energy enterprise established in 1995, which assesses the needs of the end-user and customises energy solutions for underserved communities-households, small businesses and institutions, improving quality of life and livelihoods. SELCO Foundation builds on these experiences of enhancing the capacities of energy enterprises to deliver energy solutions in different contexts, including beyond Indian borders. The aim is not to replicate SELCO processes but to share knowledge, models and lessons learnt that have helped build a sustainable approach to delivering energy access solutions for the poor.

Website with further information: <http://www.selcofoundation.org/>

##### Gram Vaani

Gram Vaani (or ‘voice of the village’) is a social technology company incubated out of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. It has created a major technology platform for rural areas in seven Indian states, Afghanistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Namibia and South Africa. Gram Vaani has promoted the use of simple technologies and social contexts to design tools, which do not need additional skills and yet facilitate sharing of experiences by citizens in rural areas. In several places, these tools have helped enhance the effectiveness of administrative responses to prevalent malpractice and corruption. The organisation is increasingly relying on ICT for running health and education facilities, details on school admissions and self-reporting on various data requirements by local administration.

Website with further information: <https://gramvaani.org/>

#### Consumer Unity and Trust Society International (CUTS)

Promoting consumer rights since 1984, this Indian worked domestically for several decades, before sharing its experiences with other countries in Asia and Africa. Together with other partners, CUTS has facilitated capacity-building and knowledge sharing in over 30 countries and with non-state partners.

Website with further information: <https://cuts-international.org/>

#### Digital Green

Digital Green leverages rural social networks to implement cost-effective and ICT-enabled knowledge exchange, behaviour change and accountability modelling. For instance, in Ethiopia Digital Green works with CSO and government partners to strengthen the government extension system for enhancing consumption of proteins in vulnerable or for popularising low cost irrigation technologies and locally relevant farming practices. Digital Green has also undertaken similar projects in Ghana and other parts of Africa.

Website with further information: <https://www.digitalgreen.org/>

#### Public Affairs Foundation

The Public Affairs Foundation is a knowledge-based service organisation committed to improving the quality of governance by providing advisory support and customised knowledge products to a wide range of clients in the public arena.

Website with further information: <http://pafglobal.org/>

#### Pratham

Pratham is one of the leading civil society organisations in the realm of primary education. Its Annual Status of Education Report has achieved distinct visibility and policy impact. Based on the experience in India, Pratham is also working in other developing countries, particularly in Africa and Southeast Asia, together with international partners. Pratham has also established Pratham Infotech Foundation for facilitating adoption of information technology in education and boost digital literacy to bridge the digital divide.

Website with further information: <https://www.pratham.org/>

#### Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC)

The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers creates global networks of urban poor, helping them explore solutions for urban communities. It is active in Asia, Africa and Latin America and works by sharing ideas and experiences, particularly from the point of accessing adequate land, infrastructure and housing. As most of the emerging economies are facing increasing pressures associated with urbanisation, it leads groups to provide adequate support mechanisms.



They also work at professional levels with urban planners for promoting some of the stated objectives.

Website with further information: <https://www.sparcindia.org/aboutsparc.php>

### ***Sewa International***

Some CSOs are registered abroad by Indians, such as Sewa International which is registered in the US and as a humanitarian, non-profit service organisation specialised on disaster relief and support. When cyclone Idai struck parts of Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe in March, Sewa International and the US along with its local partner organisations/volunteers provided remarkable support.

Website with further information: <https://sewausa.org/About-Us>

Source: Information compiled from the RIS Database, interviews with representatives of CSOs (see Annex A), (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>), CSOs in Indian Development Cooperation: Towards an Enabling Environment, <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/partners-in-asian-development-cooperation-the-role-of-the-ngos-and-the-private-sector/>, and websites of the respective CSOs.

Bringing the new dynamics together, the next sections will now illustrate the diversity of approaches and multiple roles of CSOs in Indian triangular co-operation. Information on the specific projects is drawn mainly from the RIS Database of South-South and triangular co-operation projects and the OECD's triangular co-operation online project repository, interviews, as well as websites and evaluations of the different programmes and projects, where available. Based on the data and interviews conducted for this paper, four patterns of engaging CSOs in triangular partnerships are emerging:

1. Scaling up bilateral co-operation into and through triangular initiatives;
2. Building a strategic partnership with India as a global development partner through Government and CSO channels;
3. Spotting innovations of Indian CSOs with a view of sharing them with other countries to tackle development challenges; and
4. Aligning triangular partnerships with broader regional and global initiatives.

### ***Scaling up bilateral co-operation to triangular initiatives***

Early examples of scaling-up bilateral co-operation to triangular initiatives include Canada, Switzerland and the United States (see Chapter 4.1) in the 1960s. The long-standing partnership with the United States is based on political will expressed at the highest levels of government. During the visit of then US President Barack Obama in November 2010, a new agriculture partnership between the United States and India to achieve an 'Evergreen Revolution for Africa' was agreed, in line with India's growing partnership with Africa for sustainable development (Arora and Chand, 2016<sup>[53]</sup>). The triangular co-operation envisaged adapting technological advances and innovative solutions to address food security challenges in Africa. USAID and the National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE) Hyderabad signed an agreement to provide specialised agriculture training to 1,500 professionals across Africa and Asia. On a pilot basis, three African countries were selected, namely Kenya, Liberia and Malawi.

In 2014, this triangular partnership was institutionalised in the "Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development" which was signed by both countries for a duration of four years. Furthermore, in 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and the U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the second phase of the "Feed the Future India Triangular Training Programme" (MoA, 2016<sup>[54]</sup>). In this programme, 32 Training programmes of 15 days duration were

conducted in India and 12 training programmes of ten days duration were held in 11 selected African and Asian countries from 2016-20 (USAID, 2019<sup>[55]</sup>).

Also in 2016, Amendment 1 to the joint Statement was signed during President Modi's visit to the US and extended its duration until 2021. Currently, the agreement expresses the intention of the US and India to work together and leverage their combined capacities to support other developing countries and address global development challenges. The areas of mutual interest are identified as follows:

- Regional connectivity
- Science, technology and innovation
- Capacity building
- Training for Africa and Asia
- Afghanistan
- Synergy building

The last area of 'synergy-building' specifically points to exploring the possibility of establishing public-private partnerships that complement government-led initiatives to optimise overall benefits and outcomes from such triangular collaboration (Government of India and USAID, 2016<sup>[56]</sup>). Many of these projects are implemented with Indian civil society organisations, which may partly be due to their extensive experience and expertise in the field, and partly due to the US approach of working with CSOs in its overall development co-operation<sup>20</sup>.

The example of working with SEWA shows how an Indian CSO leverages its extensive domestic experience to reach the target group of Afghan women (MoFA, 2016<sup>[57]</sup>) more effectively due to a different understanding of the context in the South Asian country and cultural proximity (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1. SEWA-Afghanistan-India-USAID triangular co-operation**

Project title	Economic Empowerment of Afghan Women
Countries/IOs	India, Afghanistan, United States
CSOs	Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA)
Objective	To work towards the empowerment of disadvantaged Afghan women
Description of activities:	Based on the Tripartite Statement of Principles between the Governments of Afghanistan, India and the United States, USAID facilitated SEWA's work to provide professional and leadership training to Afghan women. The Indian CSO provides skills in the areas of garments, embroidery, food processing and marketing to over 3,000 Afghan women. Some of these women (176) were trained to be trainers for next generations. A success factor for this project was that the knowledge and experiences of SEWA are closer to the realities of Afghan women and socially more acceptable than would often be the case for projects of other international NGOs or governmental development co-operation agencies from DAC members.
Project budget	USD 1.5 million
Project period:	2015-2018

Source: (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>) RIS Database and (USAID, 2019<sup>[55]</sup>) USAID project documents.

It is noteworthy that Afghanistan is a priority country for India's development co-operation. Co-ordination with other development partners in Afghanistan is well established. SEWA is a reputable CSO that has a history of working with the Indian government in vocational training programmes in neighbouring countries, such as, besides Afghanistan; Bhutan and Nepal. The triangular co-operation project in Table 4.1, has its origins in a project that SEWA was implementing with the support of the Indian government and the South

<sup>20</sup> Interview with USAID on 20 May 2019.

Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund, before USAID provided additional funding for the initiative<sup>21</sup>.

For all of its projects abroad, SEWA starts with a visit of the team from the partner CSO or country to SEWA's offices and projects in India – often involving government representatives from the partner country - to get a better feeling for the work of SEWA. Based on this experience, the partners select priorities for their planned project. When SEWA started working in Afghanistan, organised civil society was rare in the war-torn country, which is why the Indian CSO worked closely with the Afghan government. In this case, an Indian team went to Afghanistan for several months to identify local partners and training participants in close collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs. The strong links with the Afghan Government were crucial, as the Ministry provided a safe space for the selected Afghan women to participate in training on food production, embroidery and sales opportunities for their products in local and the SAARC markets. Furthermore, the Afghan government arranged safety provisions for the participating women and the SEWA staff living in Afghanistan for a considerable amount of time.

The bilateral South-South co-operation projects and the triangular partnership with USAID are regarded as successful in delivering services to some of the neediest and most vulnerable populations in Afghanistan (Chaturvedi, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>). In the experience of SEWA, more similarities among self-employed women or women engaging in home-based work exist across the globe than cultural differences. The commonalities of these women's life experiences would be a good basis for building global networks, transcending cultures and country-specific differences<sup>22</sup>.

Overall, the scope and impact of the India-United States example goes beyond the results of individual projects. It reflects the transformation of a former donor-recipient relationship among USAID and India to a partnership through which India and the United States collaborate to tackle global development challenges (USAID, 2017, p. 1<sup>[58]</sup>).

At the same time, there are some examples where a triangular initiative could not take off, when local sensitivities are not given enough attention. In 2009, the government of India proposed training of Afghan Village Administration on Indian Panchayati Raj Legislation. It was planned to be a large initiative and several DAC members, e.g. Switzerland, were interested in supporting the project. However, pre-mature announcement of full funding from India and difficulties in mobilising the necessary funds led to a termination of the project by the Afghan government.<sup>23</sup>

Another example of high-level political backing, followed by bi- and trilateral co-operation among research institutes, is the signature of a MoU between the Indian Council of Medical Research and the German Helmholtz Association in 2006. The MoU has been extended and amended in 2011 and 2017, and continues to serve as basis to study infectious diseases in India, South Asia, Africa and around the globe in a 4.5 million EUR project (Chaturvedi, 2012<sup>[27]</sup>) and (MoU, 2011<sup>[59]</sup>). In times of the COVID-19 crisis these kind of partnerships in the health sector with networks and expertise from the South and the North will be crucial to share good practices and leveraging expertise to benefit other developing countries.

Recently, India, China and Germany have been discussing stepping up their triangular co-operation with partner countries across the globe through a Regional Fund for Triangular Co-operation with Asia. Through the Fund India and Germany, aim to scale up and share experiences from their successful bilateral co-operation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with a representative of SEWA, 4 June 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with a representative of SEWA, 4 June 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with a representative of PRIA, 21 May 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Meeting with GIZ on 12 August 2020.

### ***Building a strategic partnership with India as a global development partner***

The United Kingdom is forming strategic development partnerships through its cross-government Emerging Powers Initiative and the cross-regional “Development Partnership Programme” of the Department for International Development (DFID)<sup>25</sup> with Brazil, China, India, South Africa, and the Gulf countries. These are also priority areas for triangular co-operation initiatives. During the visit of then UK Prime Minister Theresa May to India in November 2016, India and the UK signed a “Statement of Intent on Partnership for Cooperation in Third Countries” (UK Government, 2015<sub>[60]</sub>). It established a framework for co-operation between India and the United Kingdom until 2020 to jointly support developing countries to address challenges they face in a range of sectors.

The United Kingdom and India are exploring joint projects to tackle global challenges and provide global public goods in a broader way – without identifying concrete areas for co-operation. In contrast to the overall findings from the projects reported in the OECD’s online repository (see Chapter 3), some Indian-United Kingdom triangular initiatives are more programme oriented with longer durations ranging from five to eight years and budgets ranging between USD 5 to 38 million (see Table 4.2 for an example). A longer-term partnership vision as put forward through the UK Government is conducive to stronger shared commitment among the partners, more country ownership and knowledge sharing.

**Table 4.2. Supporting Indian Trade and Investment in Africa – example of a large-scale triangular co-operation project between India and the United Kingdom**

<b>Project title</b>	<b>Supporting Indian Trade and Investment in Africa (SITA)</b>
Countries/IOs	Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, India, United Kingdom, International Trade Centre (ITC)
Objective	Increased value of business transactions between India and selected East African countries by promoting investment, trade and technology partnerships
Description of activities:	<p>Despite an enormous untapped potential for trade expansion between India and Africa, data reveal that a limited number of products are currently being traded. India’s trade with Africa is concentrated in certain sectors and countries, and it is dominated by exports of primary commodities. While the potential for export diversification exists, it may not be realised without targeted intervention. With the growing importance of South-South co-operation, India’s expertise can be leveraged to build trade capacities in African partner countries through the sharing of knowledge, technology and lessons learnt. The project responds to the challenges that selected East African countries face in increasing and diversifying exports. It also addresses the trade priorities of the beneficiary countries so that they may achieve sustainable development. The objective will be achieved by enabling access to India’s market and facilitating investment and transfer of Indian knowledge, expertise and technology to East Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting public-private dialogue and partnerships;</li> <li>- Improving capacities of East African companies and trade support institutions (TSIs); and</li> <li>- Creating business linkages.</li> </ul>
Project budget	USD 30 million
Project period:	2015-2020

Source: Information shared by the International Trade Center (ITC) in (GPI, 2019<sub>[19]</sub>), Triangular co-operation in the era of the 2030 Agenda <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDdev/gpi-report-bapa-40>.

### ***Spotting innovations of Indian CSOs with a view to sharing them with other countries to tackle similar development challenges***

Indian CSOs have often developed their own endogenous solutions to development challenges, which are specific to the diverse Indian contexts of the 29 Indian States and often not even replicable in a neighbouring State. Triangular co-operation can be strong in spotting innovations and helping to adapt them to new contexts. This adaptation is not trivial and requires openness to learn, flexibility and sensitivity of all

<sup>25</sup> The research for this paper was finalised before DFID was closed and replaced by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), which is why references to DFID are maintained throughout the paper.

partners. Different local conditions require adjustments in processes, technology and the manner in which partners are involved in the project. It may be also necessary to find a partner who catalyses the move to another geographic setting (GPI, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>).

An example in this regard is Switzerland's approach to triangular co-operation and its support to innovations by Indian CSOs<sup>26</sup>. Besides bilateral and regional co-operation, Switzerland works in global programmes in its priority sectors to share experiences and build global knowledge sharing networks across the globe. Through this approach, countries which are not on the list of priority countries of Swiss development co-operation can still share experiences, as is the case with India, where bilateral co-operation was phased out following the announcements of the Indian government in 2003 (see Chapter 4.3) and co-operation with CSOs was continued<sup>27</sup>. Building on over 45 years of co-operation, in 2006, the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), acknowledged its commitment to a new type of collaboration with India:

*“The new Programme involves a shift from traditional/classical development co-operation, towards a collaboration based on common interests and shared investments, with the ultimate aim of reducing poverty. A key feature of this Programme is the exchange of know-how and technologies between Switzerland and India and the promotion of South-South cooperation.” (SDC, 2007<sup>[61]</sup>)*

Swiss global programmes are designed in a flexible manner to include a trilateral component to:

- Scale-up innovative experiences from one country or partner to others;
- Shape the global development agenda; and
- Promote South-South and triangular co-operation through global networks.<sup>28</sup>

The idea of building and promoting global networks through triangular co-operation projects was also mentioned by a representative of SEWA and deserves further exploration in international discussions as well as in programming development co-operation projects. In this regard global networks can be understood as:

*“Flexible groupings, usually temporary, distinguished by having a lower degree of formalisation than other structures or multilateral and/or multi-stakeholder co-operation” (Keck and Sikkink, 2019<sup>[62]</sup>).*

To build on sector-specific networks and to link contacts from bi-, tri-, regional and global co-operation through flexible, informal networks, small seed-funding and good knowledge management would be required by different development co-operation stakeholders. In return, exchange of local expertise, knowledge sharing and new project ideas could evolve.<sup>29</sup>

From the 1990s to the early 2000s, Switzerland worked with the Indian CSO Development Alternatives on creating brick-production technologies and systems, low-emission building materials, and industrial waste utilisation in India. These building products reached over 1 million homes in India. Based on this success, the project was shared with Bangladesh where the rapidly growing city of Dhaka faced increasing demand for construction bricks. An Indo-Swiss multi-stakeholder consortium worked in a triangular partnership to green the Bangladeshi brick industry through energy-efficient technologies (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>).

India is also the beneficiary of innovations which were spotted in other countries, as the partnership with Cuba and Switzerland in the construction sector shows (SRF, 2014<sup>[63]</sup>) and within the scope of the larger global

<sup>26</sup> Interview with a representative Development Alternatives on 26 May 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with a representative of the Swiss Development Co-operation on 20 May 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with a representative of the Swiss Development Co-operation on 20 May 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with a representative of SEWA on 4 June 2020.

programme “Global Energy Efficiency and Construction Outreach Programme (GLECOP)” shows<sup>30</sup>. Cuban researchers have developed an environmentally friendly cement called LC3, which has been adapted and further developed in partnership between Indian and Cuban universities, research institutes and the CSO Development Alternatives, facilitated by the support of the Swiss co-operation (see Table 4.3 for further information).

**Table 4.3. Environmentally friendly cement for countries experiencing a construction boom**

Project title	Environmentally friendly cement for countries experiencing a construction boom
Countries/IOs	Cuba, India, Switzerland
CSOs	Development Alternatives
Research institutes	Universidad de las Villas (Cuba), Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (Switzerland), Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in Delhi, Bombay and Madras
Objective	LC3 is established as reliable, viable and green cement
Description of activities:	In the production of cement, CO <sub>2</sub> is emitted through fossil fuel combustion and through a chemical reaction of the raw materials. Because cement is used widely as a construction material, its production contributes significantly to global warming. In Phase 1 of the project, EPFL in collaboration with partner institutions in Cuba and India conducted extensive research on a new cement type (LC <sup>3</sup> ) which emits 10-30% less CO <sub>2</sub> emissions compared to commercially available cements. Phase 2 of the project aims at preparing the grounds for large-scale production of the new cement by the industry, with a particular focus on India and Cuba.
Project budget	Phase 1: appr. CHF 4 million/ USD 4.2 million, phase 2: appr. CHF 3 million/ USD 3.1 million
Project period:	Phase 1: 2013-2017; Phase 2: 2017-2020

Source: SDC website with project overview for India, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/india/en/home/international-cooperation/projects.html>.

Furthermore, Development Alternatives worked in similar bilateral South-South co-operation projects in Africa, e.g. in Malawi (Arora and Chand, 2016<sup>[53]</sup>) with Germany, which shows the potential to build on both experiences and to consider scaling-up existing partnerships in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Asia.

The United States and the United Kingdom both leverage innovations from India for the benefit of other development countries. Smaller, exploratory projects, which aim at fostering research collaboration, promoting mutual learning and exchanging experiences across key development sectors, like agriculture, health, nutrition and natural resource management with clean technologies are at the heart of collaboration of DFID with several Indian CSOs in Africa (see Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4. Overview of DFID supported Indian CSOs in Africa**

Name of the CSO	Sector	Country
Digital Green	Agriculture, Health and Nutrition	Ethiopia, Ghana, Niger and Tanzania
Development Alternatives	Natural Resource Management and Clean Technology Solution	Malawi (yellow report)
Gram Vaani	Social Media Platform for Social Development	Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa
The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC)	Housing, Sanitation, Resettlement and Rehab	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi
Pratham	Child Literacy, Education and Computer Aided Learning	Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mali and Senegal
Pradaan	Livelihood and Rural Development	Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania
Public Affairs Foundation	Knowledge based services	Africa, South-east Asia and Central Asia

Source: RIS database (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>), see also Triangular co-operation in the era of the 2030 Agenda (GPI, 2019<sup>[19]</sup>), <https://www.slideshare.net/OECDdev/gpi-report-bapa-40>.

<sup>30</sup> More information on the Global Programme can be found here: [https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/de/home/themen/klimawandel.par2\\_projectfilter\\_page5.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2017/7F09918/phase1?oldPagePath=/content/deza/de/home/themen/klimawandel.html](https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/de/home/themen/klimawandel.par2_projectfilter_page5.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2017/7F09918/phase1?oldPagePath=/content/deza/de/home/themen/klimawandel.html)

Furthermore, one of the four development objectives of the USAID-India five-year country development co-operation strategy is to increasingly adopt innovations proven in India other countries. As a component of the bilateral co-operation programme between USAID and India, both countries selected 30 technical innovations, of which, by its mid-term evaluation in 2017, 21 were tested in another country (Junge et al., 2017<sup>[64]</sup>). The underpinning development hypothesis in this mid-term evaluation was for Indo-US triangular co-operation:

*By identifying evidence-based innovative approaches, products, and/or systems, and combining these with Indian financial and intellectual capital while partnering directly with and under the leadership of Indian organizations, USAID/India can deliver development results faster, cheaper, more effectively, with broader impact, and more sustainably in the areas of health, education, climate change, and food security. This strategic approach supports Indian organizations and alliances to identify, test, and scale-up opportunities for solving development issues in India as well as in other countries. As a result, the USAID/India partnership will transform to increasingly share in efforts to solve Indian and global development challenges (Junge et al., 2017, p. 43<sup>[64]</sup>).*

Examples include innovations in the agriculture sector (see Box 4.5) and the partnership between USAID and India to fast-track efforts to end HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka by 2025. USAID is facilitating the transfer of promising Indian HIV/AIDS treatment solutions, new technical skills and innovations from India to Sri Lanka by including Indian CSOs and Sri Lanka civil society and community-based organisations. CSOs have been engaged in training and identifying marginalised key populations to improve HIV testing. The trained CSOs have been positioned as learning sites for other CSOs to learn and adopt good practices (USAID, 2019<sup>[55]</sup>).

#### Box 4.5. Example of a project scaling up Indian agriculture innovations – Tractor “Bullet Santi”

USAID supports the Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions (SRISTI) to transfer the two- and three-wheel tractors “Bullet Santi”, seed dibblers, and food processors to Kenyan farmers. In India, these technologies have helped increase agricultural productivity and improved the resilience of more than one million households. SRISTI is forging new partnerships with the Kenyan private sector to transfer and deploy these same innovations in 10 counties of Kenya. Thus, USAID is working directly with a CSO to share innovations developed for the Indian context to address agriculture and food security in different regions of Kenya.

Source: (USAID, 2019<sup>[55]</sup>), USAID/India Details of Triangular Cooperation Programs (not publicly available).

In a different vein, Norway implements triangular co-operation through a model of mutual exchange between staff members of organisations in different countries. The Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC) believes in knowledge being shared in all directions among the participants. Networks of project partners apply jointly for project support and NOREC usually works with one co-ordinating institution which is responsible for the management among the other partners. Ensuring ownership of all partners and seeking equality among the partners is at the core of NOREC’s approach. Partners are often CSOs, research institutes, small enterprises or philanthropic organisations.

NOREC follows a different model of knowledge production through triangular co-operation by fostering equality of the knowledge that is shared by all participants. Two types of knowledge are typically produced in NOREC’s triangular co-operation projects:

- **Technical knowledge:** complementary knowledge on the issue of the triangular co-operation. For instance, in a project on environmental journalism, one partner was strong in writing, the other in reviewing and the third in compiling information.
- **Strategic knowledge:** inter-cultural understanding and conscious reflection of what was really learned in the triangular co-operation project beyond the sector-related knowledge. Project

preparation and de-brief seminar or weeks ensure that this part of the project experience is not lost and is used well in the sending organisation.<sup>31</sup>

Overall, in a multipolar world with various nodes in global knowledge networks, the centres of gravity for knowledge production are shifting. Knowledge seems to be produced more democratically, especially in triangular co-operation projects that are designed for knowledge flowing in multiple directions<sup>32</sup>. NOREC's approach is another model of scaling up innovations and sharing knowledge among partners in Asia and Africa, for instance in the Namsaling project in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5. Triangular co-operation among CSOs – leveraging Indian experiences of the Ashoka Trust**

Project title	Namsaling: Asia-Africa Rural Private Sector Development
Countries/IOs	Norway (NOREC)
CSOs	Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE, India), Namsaling Community Development Centre (NCDC, Nepal), FEDESMO – Forum for sustainable energy and development Mozambique, Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO), Young Volunteers for the Environment Kenya (YVE Kenya)
Objective	To exchange ideas on how to develop robust businesses in rural areas, in particular in the fields of renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism.
Description of activities:	The partners have been sharing best practices for developing sustainable business models. They have also worked together to create business plans, training programmes for entrepreneurs and promising marketing methods. Partners have also chosen to cooperate on topics such as access to finance as well as awareness-raising for renewable, energy-efficient and environment-friendly enterprises and technology. The latter includes innovations at household level in the fields of waste management systems and clean cooking stoves.
Project budget	USD 125,000
Project duration	2016-2019

Source: (NOREC and UNOSSC, 2019<sup>[65]</sup>), South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Action - NOREC Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation, [https://www.southsouth-galaxy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UNOSSC-NOREC\\_web.pdf](https://www.southsouth-galaxy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/UNOSSC-NOREC_web.pdf).

The Indian SELCO Foundation included in its mandate to scale up the innovations that the social enterprise SELCO India has made in providing energy to those most in need. It aims at looking for approaches that are not ad hoc solutions but provide access, affordability and quality in the long term for the poor. Through its Global Replication Trainings, which are supported by international partners, the SELCO Foundation aims to share these experiences with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Table 4.6 shows examples of training conducted since 2011 (SELCO Foundation, 2017<sup>[66]</sup>).

**Table 4.6. Examples of trilateral training to share the innovations of the SELCO Foundation**

Stakeholders	Details	Objectives	Key partners
Energy enterprises, investment managers	2011: trained 10 participants from Tanzania, Ghana, Togo, Mali, Nicaragua and Costa Rica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer best practices from SELCO</li> <li>Peer-peer sharing of innovative processes across different countries</li> </ul>	E+CO (investor), IRENA, Applied Materials Foundation, Lemelson Foundation
Energy enterprises, financial managers, incubation centres	2013: 32 participants from Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replication of key processes across enterprises and financial institutions</li> <li>Strengthening the role of local incubation centres</li> </ul>	IRENA, ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), 2ie

<sup>31</sup> Interview with two NOREC representatives on 17 June 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with two NOREC representatives on 17 June 2020.



Energy enterprises, incubation centres	2014: 30 participants from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Egypt, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening holistic thinking</li> <li>• Strengthening the role of incubation centres</li> <li>• Replication of key processes across incubation centres and energy enterprises</li> </ul>	IRENA, Council on International Educational Exchange (CIIE), DFID
Microfinance Council of Philippines (MCPI)	2016: participants from several Philippine NGOs, co-operatives, foundations, and private sector	Learn from the experiences of SELCO in the provision of decentralised sustainable energy solutions via local financial institutions	MCPI DevSea Team, Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Luxembourg, SELCO
Energy Enterprise trainings	2015, 2016, 2017: 50 local enterprises from West Africa, held each year in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nigeria	Transfer best practices from SELCO, particularly around technical design, business plan development and financing	IRENA, ECREEE

Source: (SELCO Foundation, 2017<sup>[66]</sup>), Global Replication Trainings, <http://www.selcofoundation.org/selcoecosystem/global-replication/>.

### ***Aligning triangular partnerships with broader regional and global initiatives***

Examples of Indian CSOs engaging in triangular co-operation through exchanges in regional and global initiatives are another model of partnering trilaterally. An example starting in the 1990s, is co-operation through the Commonwealth, a group of 54 member states. In 1995, the Commonwealth promoted civil society interaction on development experiences for the first time at a Ministerial Meeting in Wellington, New Zealand. The Indian CSO PRIA provided necessary inputs and remained engaged in the process, as it expanded to CSO co-operation and CSO-to-government collaboration on development issues across the globe. An example to highlight here is the exchange with small island developing states (SIDS) in the Caribbean and the Pacific, which had the chance to diversify their partnerships through the platforms created within the scope of the Commonwealth<sup>33</sup>.

Other global fora, such as the G20 or the BRICS have dedicated tracks for civil society engagement, namely the C20 and the Civil-BRICS. This opens further avenues for collaboration and exchange. Large global coalitions have always attracted Indian CSOs to play an important role on global canvass. This ability to register presence in the global space largely came in with the strength of human resources, structural learnings and ability to contribute to multi-country programmes. Indian CSO voices on the global level, be it through local CSOs or Indians taking up senior-level positions at international NGOs and organisations, are impactful, as India has a global reputation of having a vibrant CSO scene catering to the needs of those most in need. As a result, triangular co-operation could play a catalytic role in coalition building, campaigns and stand-ups<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, the intellectual space occupied by CSOs is also important in developing synergies among different actors. In this context, the role of the Third World Network (TWN) or the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) are worth mentioning. Based on unique Indian experience these actors also bringing in capabilities to re-think development<sup>35</sup>.

The Indo-French leadership to create the International Solar Alliance (ISA) is another prominent example of high-level will to engage in triangular co-operation with global reach (Paulo, 2018<sup>[51]</sup>). Following the India-Africa Summit in 2015 and a meeting of member countries to prepare for the 2015 Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris and the signature of the Paris Agreement, India with the strong support of France launched the International Solar Alliance. Its headquarters are in India and it aims at promoting the use of solar energy among developing countries, often through the support of CSOs from India or in partner countries.

<sup>33</sup> Information provided in an interview with a representative of PRIA on 21 May 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Information provided in an interview with a representative of Oxfam India on 22 May 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with a representative of Development Alternatives on 26 May 2020.

The good bilateral relations between India and Japan, building on previous collaboration within the Colombo Plan, led to a large initiative in the Indo-Pacific. In 2017, at the margins of the annual meeting of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Gujarat, India and Japan showed growing levels of ambition to work in triangular co-operation through the Indo-Japanese plan for an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). An early triangular co-operation project was agreed through a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sri Lanka, India and Japan in 2018. The aim was to set up a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Colombo. This partnership went beyond governments and involved private companies from India (Petronet LNG), Japan and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. While the main focus is on a business-to-business partnership, there may be scope in the future to include CSOs as India and Japan are stepping up joint work in social and health sectors in Africa, e.g. building a cancer hospital in Kenya or capacity development for small- and medium-sized enterprises (Mittal, 2020<sup>[67]</sup>).

#### 4.5. Towards growing strategic importance of Indian triangular co-operation – further opportunities to step up CSO engagement?

Summarising, Table 4.7 shows the evolution of India's triangular co-operation with its first peak in the early years of India's independence (1950s and 60s) and the second peak from 2015 until present. From this overview, a diversification of partners, scale and scope of Indian triangular co-operation can be observed. Whilst following India's independence, small trilateral initiatives mainly benefitted the immediate Indian neighbourhood, today, strategic partnerships are the basis for new projects, as discussions on triangular co-operation between the European Union and India also show (Peral and Sakhuja, 2012<sup>[68]</sup>).

**Table 4.7. Evolution of India's triangular co-operation**

Year	Partner 1	Partner 2	Sector	Additional Feature
1957	United States	Nepal	Established road network	United States and India both provided technical and financial support
1959	Canada	Nepal	Wheat Supply	India provided support towards freight costs for wheat donated by Canada
1958	United States	Nepal	Established radio network	United States and India both provided technical and financial support
1964	Switzerland	India/China (Tibet)	Tibetan Refugees	India provided space to 45 K refugees and Swiss provided education support
1999	Japan	Africa	TICAD	India agreed to assign experts for development projects in IT
2003	World Food Programme (WFP)	Afghanistan	Supply of high nutritious biscuits	India supplies and WFP distributes for various armed forces and school kids
2006 (extended/ amended in 2011 and 2017)	Germany (Helmholtz Association)	African, Asian countries, global reach	Research on infectious diseases	The Indian Council of Medical Research and the German Helmholtz Association join forces for research on infectious diseases in Africa, South Asia and across the globe.
2009	Switzerland (SDC)	Bangladesh	Low-emission building materials	Based on previous bilateral co-operation of SDC with India, the CSO Development Alternatives (DA) worked with a Swiss consulting company on sharing and adapting these experiences in Bangladesh
2010	USAID	Africa	Ever Green Revolution to address global food security	Pilots in Kenya, Liberia and Malawi. India to provide training and US to have financial allocation
2014	Switzerland	From Cuba to India	LC3 Low carbon production cement	Scaling up an innovation from Cuba to India, SDC is promoting the development of an environmentally friendly type of cement, together with the CSO DA and research institutes from all three countries.

2015	United Kingdom	Africa and Asia	Various	Statement of Intent on Partnership for Cooperation in Third Countries
2015/16	France	Developing countries	International Solar Alliance	Promoting the use of solar energy is at the heart of this Indian initiative, which was supported by France.
2016	Norway (NOREC)	Nepal, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania	Asia-Africa Rural Private Sector Development	To exchange ideas on how to develop robust businesses in rural areas, in particular in the fields of renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism.
2016	USAID	Afghanistan	Common goals of development including women's economic empowerment	USD 1.5 million from USAID to SEWA for professional and leadership training of Afghan women.
2017	Japan	Africa	Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)	In 2010, the India-Japan Dialogue on Africa was initiated as a first step towards jointly strengthening the partnership with Africa. In 2015, both countries decided to go ahead with their proposed partnership. That same year, they came up with the "India and Japan Vision 2025" which was later reviewed and finalised as the AAGC initiative through the joint declaration issued by both countries in November 2016 during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan
2019	UAE	Ethiopia	Setting up of ICT Centre	India will partner with UAE to set up an ICT centre in Ethiopia
2020	Germany	Global	Regional Fund for Triangular Co-operation with Asia	The Regional Fund aims to support triangular co-operation with Asian partners to support partner countries around the globe in achieving the SDGs.

Source: Authors' own compilation, based on RIS Database on Development Cooperation (RIS, n.d.<sup>[44]</sup>), CSOs in Indian Development Cooperation: Towards an Enabling Environment (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>), <https://asiafoundation.org/publication/partners-in-asian-development-cooperation-the-role-of-the-ngos-and-the-private-sector/>; India as a Partner in Triangular Development Cooperation: Prospects for the UK-India Partnership for Global Development Paulo (Paulo, 2018<sup>[51]</sup>), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-as-a-partner-in-triangular-development-cooperation-prospects-for-the-india-uk-partnership-for-global-development/> and India's Triangular Cooperation with US, UK and Japan in Africa: A Comparative Analysis (Mittal, 2020<sup>[67]</sup>), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/indias-triangular-cooperation-with-the-us-uk-and-japan-in-africa-a-comparative-analysis-60576/>.

Thus, a distinctive characteristic of Indian triangular co-operation is its strategic orientation with key development partners, supported through high-level political agreements on the one hand. On the other hand, while support exists on the highest government level, implementation seems to be increasingly through non-governmental channels – offering opportunities and posing some challenges to this model of triangular co-operation.

Opportunities include leveraging and scaling-up Indian innovations to the benefit of other countries in Asia and Africa. Indian CSOs have been crucial partners in devising solutions to development problems, responding to the needs of citizens, ensuring that marginalised sections and those who lack voice and bargaining power are included in co-operation programmes and projects - a focus which is of great importance for many African, Asian and Latin American countries (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>).

Working with CSOs, research institutes and the private sector has led to direct contact and knowledge exchange among beneficiaries and providers of co-operation – leading to mutual and joint learning processes. Since Indian CSOs can bring in more relevant development experience their acceptability in a triangular setting is often higher, leading to timely completion and audit related requirements in the partner countries<sup>36</sup>. It is important to underline again the aspect of mutuality, which in the long run would also break up old patterns of knowledge production and project design in the North while development innovations and learning is happening on the ground in the South.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with a representative of Development Alternatives, 26 May 2020.

### ***Ideas for enhanced triangular partnerships***

Looking ahead, linking the development learning and innovations of CSOs and social enterprises with DAC members' resources and commitments to tackle development challenges seems a promising match. Considering the traditional partnerships that DAC members have with CSOs as implementing and advocacy partners, as mentioned in Chapter 2, 93% of all funding to CSOs is channelled to member country or international CSOs and only 7% to local CSOs in partner countries. Indian triangular co-operation projects are a good example of going beyond this trend. The OECD (2020<sup>[23]</sup>) study on DAC members and CSOs recommends expanding funding and dialogue to a wider swathe of civil society actors.

For experiences of Indian CSOs to be successfully and sustainably shared with other countries, project structures need to be created in the benefitting country or countries. Most CSOs would not have country offices around the globe and will ideally rely on local partners, the Indian embassies or offices of development co-operation agencies, such as DFID, GIZ or USAID. A challenge here, which is commonly voiced by staff in offices of agencies in partner countries, is that triangular co-operation initiatives are usually co-ordinated on top of other work and priorities<sup>37</sup>. Raising more awareness for the value added of triangular co-operation and allowing flexibility for additional initiatives would help to make good use of the modality.

What is more, building on the networks of Indian CSOs and DAC members, joint triangular co-operation programmes and projects could be incentivised, which aim at connecting, for instance, local co-operatives, farmers' networks and women's organisations. Alone, small community-level initiatives might not have the resources and networks to bring their ideas to scale, but by creating awareness and mechanisms to connect actors and ideas, they might grow. In this regard, triangular co-operation has large potential as a modality to facilitate interaction<sup>38</sup>. The rapidly increasing use of digital technologies during the COVID-19 crisis, opens up new opportunities to link civil society partners across different countries and regions (OECD, 2020<sup>[69]</sup>).

Challenges of involving Indian CSOs in triangular co-operation are mainly related to their traditional focus on domestic issues and the need to institutionalise efforts for sharing experiences abroad in partnership with the Indian government and development partners. Many Indian CSOs have been supported financially by members of the OECD DAC, but with India's growing GDP, achieving middle-income status, followed by its increasing role as global power and BRICS member, ODA to India has declined and with it support to Indian CSOs from abroad. While Indian investments in South-South co-operation are generally growing, little funding support has become available for CSOs, according to Bandyopadhyay (2017<sup>[31]</sup>).

Furthermore, the current legislative and regulatory framework is largely conceived for the domestic role that CSOs play and meant to regulate inflows of (foreign) resources, resulting in restriction to the operating space of civil society. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4.2, the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, the Income Tax Act and the Societies Registration Act pose some hurdles for CSOs to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation as they are largely of a regulatory and not so much of an enabling nature (Bandyopadhyay, 2017<sup>[31]</sup>). Moreover, in the past, visa issues for CSO representatives travelling abroad or project partners of CSOs coming to India for training and meetings, have posed challenges<sup>39</sup>. If India would like to expand its global role, and the role of Indian civil society organisations abroad, various policy and legal reforms towards a more enabling environment for CSO engagement could prove beneficial.

In the current scenario, efforts such as the Forum on Indian Development Co-operation aim to encourage CSOs to engage more in co-operation activities abroad and allude to the additional and complementary value of CSO engagement in South-South and triangular co-operation. This may also lead to them being included more systematically in the project identification, design and implementation – i.e. throughout the

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<sup>37</sup> Interviews with representatives from USAID (20 May 2019) and GIZ (18 June 2020)

<sup>38</sup> Interview with a representative of SEWA on 4 June 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Interviews with representatives of NOREC on 17 June 2020.

whole project cycle (FIDC, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>). In some cases, Indian CSOs are invited to join at a stage where broad project design is already completed. Indian CSOs might then be expected to deliver a local component of field activities, but not in planning, monitoring, evaluation, capacity development and policy advocacy. An alternative to this way of working with Indian CSOs, might be to employ individuals as consultants to support in specific project components<sup>40</sup>. CSOs around the world call for being more systematically involved in co-operation projects – sitting at the table from the beginning and not only being brought to the table later on, as was concluded at the 2019 international meeting on triangular co-operation in Lisbon (OECD, 2019<sup>[70]</sup>).

Often, the problem for CSOs to engage more systematically, is not being informed of new initiatives, as information is not always shared publicly across a wide range of development stakeholders. For instance, some DAC members issue a pre-request for proposals which alerts CSOs to a forthcoming call. Often this is only done nationally, thus excluding Southern/Indian CSOs, whereby they miss out on time for advance preparation of proposals. Furthermore, to put forward a project idea in some calls for proposals, a substantial contribution (10-20%) of own funds is required from applicants. Indian CSOs often do not have own resources to that extent easily available. Moreover, financial instalments are at times scheduled so that 10-15% of the total funds are paid after completion of the projects and acceptance of final reports and audited accounts, implying that Indian CSO may have to advance considerable expenditure from their funds – posing challenges and disincentives for them to apply through calls for new project proposals.<sup>41</sup>

Many Indian CSOs have good relations and networks with line ministries in their areas of work, e.g. the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, and are not used to working with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Development Partnership Administration. Thus, relations and mutual trust need to be built among the MEA and CSOs. Within the scope of FIDC, several proposals are being discussed to bring CSOs and diplomacy closer together, including a database with CSOs and their expertise which could enable the DPA to identify relevant partners for new projects (FIDC, 2015<sup>[21]</sup>). The FIDC already publishes short profiles of CSOs on its webpage, which may be a starting point for such a more systematic assessment of including CSOs based on their expertise in certain areas.<sup>42</sup>

This might be a good opportunity to think about Indian guidelines for including CSOs and other partners beyond governments in its development partnerships. An example of such an approach is the Indonesian “Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Guidelines for Indonesian South-South and Triangular cooperation”, which were elaborated by the Government of Indonesia in collaboration with the International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), GIZ, and UNU-IAS with UNESCAP providing substantial support to the process. The main focus is to provide practical guidance and support capacity building for localising the SDGs by making good use of the experiences of Indonesian CSOs and non-state partners.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, not all Indian CSOs have the capacities to engage in work outside of the country. Through joint work with government and external partners, they could benefit from learning more about project management of international co-operation projects. Here it is also pertinent to point out that project management, financial management and accounting practices differ among partner institutions in triangular co-operation, which may pose practical challenges and impediments for more co-operation. Furthermore, capacity building and a stronger focus on overarching critical thinking on development processes based on their every-day empirical experiences may empower Indian CSOs to engage in more triangular partnerships. Overall, current triangular partnerships pave the way for potentially enhanced future collaboration between CSOs and the Indian government, as they are backed by the government and rely on the expertise of CSOs to implement projects in partner countries.

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<sup>40</sup> Input received from PRIA, 26 October 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Input received from PRIA, 26 October 2020.

<sup>42</sup> See URL: <https://fidc.ris.org.in/voluntary-organisations>

<sup>43</sup> See URL: <https://ias.unu.edu/en/news/news/mssp-guidelines-indonesia.html>

## Conclusion and next steps for enhanced triangular partnerships with Indian CSOs

India is a pioneer of triangular co-operation, having engaged in this modality since the early days of its independence and, with interruptions from the 1970s-1990s, until recently when it gained a further momentum from 2014 onwards. Globally, triangular co-operation has emerged as an important mechanism to achieve the 2030 Agenda, to implement the BAPA +40 outcome document and to form strategic development partnerships. The dynamism of triangular co-operation lies in its pragmatism and practicality – having great scope for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement. The success of a triangular engagement depends upon the identification of an appropriate entry point for collaboration, where all the stakeholders have desirable gains based on respective strengths and complementary expertise. Currently, an Indian model of engaging in triangular partnerships is emerging with the following three key characteristics:

1. India and its partners aim to leverage domestic development innovations and the strengths of India's diverse landscape of development actors by scaling up bilateral co-operation and partnerships through triangular initiatives.
2. Most triangular initiatives are backed through agreements at the highest political level, manifesting mutually beneficial strategic partnerships, which break up the traditional donor-recipient patterns.
3. Implementation of triangular co-operation projects happens mainly through non-governmental channels, notably civil society organisations, private sector, research institutes and others.

Indian civil society is vibrant, dynamic and diverse. Domestically, CSOs have fulfilled various roles in collaboration with the Government as well as contributing to address poverty, inequality and exclusion to the benefit of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Giving the poor a voice and promoting community-led, inclusive development has been among the core achievements of CSOs in India. In bilateral development co-operation with India, CSOs have often been partners and received funding from DAC members. The existing partnerships, experiences and trust are the main explanation for CSOs as strong partners in triangular co-operation with traditional providers.

Most initiatives are in a rather nascent status and consolidation of efforts and partnerships will be crucial for the years to come. CSOs play a key role in triangular partnerships with India, while at the same time facing some challenges of engaging in South-South and triangular co-operation projects outside of India, which are mainly related to their traditional focus on domestic issues and the need to institutionalise efforts for sharing experiences abroad in partnership with the Indian government and development partners.

Indian flagship programmes such as Ayushman Bharat (National Health Protection Scheme), Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India), Aadhaar (Bio-metric) Enabled Service Delivery, etc. are some of the innovative development initiatives which contribute to an alternative development paradigm. They bring in Indian ability for frugal Indian innovations, delivering public services at a cost effective level which other developing countries can absorb. Indian CSOs may take forward these experiences for replication in other developing countries.

Overall, triangular co-operation has proven as an effective modality to support the engagement of Indian CSOs abroad. Institutionalising triangular co-operation with CSOs at various levels - political, institutional, operational, financial and in the field at the level of the programmes and projects - would provide a robust framework for substantive understanding, timely and effective delivery and contribute to the sustainability of the initiatives. The existing projects and partnerships have shown good results and built appetite for more triangular co-operation – it is timely to seize the momentum and use triangular co-operation to partner for better solutions, more knowledge and to foster innovations across the globe.

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## Annex A. List of interviews

**Table 8. List of interviews**

	<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Interview Date</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>
1	United States Agency for International Development (USAID), India and Washington D.C. offices	20 May 2019	Phone Interview
2	CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, CSO/trade union representative from Argentina	17 June 2019	Phone Interview
3	Oxfam India	30 July 2019	Phone interview
4	Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)	2 July 2019	Phone interview
5	UK Department for International Development (DFID)	7 April 2020	Phone interview
6	Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC)	20 May 2020	Skype interview
7	Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)	21 May 2020	Webex meeting
8	Oxfam India	22 May 2020	Webex meeting
9	Development Alternatives (DA)	26 May 2020	Webex meeting
10	Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)	3 June 2020	Webex meeting
11	Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)	4 June 2020	Webex meeting
12	Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC)	17 June 2020	Zoom meeting
13	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), India	18 June 2020	Skype interview
14	Chief Economist of the UK Department for International Development (DFID)	23 July 2020	Microsoft meeting Teams
15	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Beijing and Eschborn	12 August 2020	Microsoft meeting Teams

