

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HBS) e.V.

Evaluation of the Overall Program of the Cape Town Office

Evaluation period 2019 - 2023

Executive Summary
of Final Report
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0. Executive Summary

1. Introduction

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung consistently employs external evaluations to refine its international programs, fostering enhanced decision-making and accountability. For over three decades, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung has championed democracy, rights, and ecological justice in Southern Africa. The current evaluation assesses the Cape Town office's program, emphasizing its impact, relevance, and collaboration with regional partners.

2. Methodology

The Cape Town Program of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, from January 2019 to September 2023, underwent a comprehensive evaluation, characterized by its multi-faceted, gender-sensitive, and principle-oriented methodology. This approach ensured the inclusion of a wide array of stakeholders' perspectives, providing important insights into the program's impacts and areas needing improvement. The evaluation blended summative and formative components, utilizing various tools like document analysis, semi-structured interviews, contribution analysis and the Network Function Approach (NFA). This methodology was vital in systematically identifying the causal links between Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's actions and the observed changes, as well as tracing the indirect effects propelled through Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's network of partners.

The evaluation kicked off with a structured collaborative process, resulting in a comprehensive matrix, primarily focusing on assessing the program's effectiveness and impact. Utilizing MAXQDA software, the evaluation maintained high standards of data management and analysis. Flexible interview formats and anonymous surveys provided in-depth insights from a range of internal and external stakeholders. However, methodological limitations, including a tight timeline and the ability to visit only a sample of strategic partners, were noted. Despite these challenges, the report thoroughly addresses all 34 evaluation questions set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

3. Political framework conditions

Between 2019 and 2023, the Southern African region grappled with critical challenges that underscored the relevance of Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's thematic focuses. The civil society sector experienced heightened anxiety and uncertainty due to dwindling financial support, exemplified by the turbulent experiences with the Open Society Foundation (OSF) and the anticipated closure of Raith Foundation's programs by 2035. Additionally, there's concern that other major foundations like Ford might reallocate their resources, adding to the sector's precariousness.

The funding landscape for civil society organizations (CSO) became even more competitive, presenting a crucial choice between allocating substantial grants to a limited number of organizations for significant impact or distributing smaller amounts more broadly. This situation raises rivalry and discontent, further intensified by alleged racial disparities in the allocation of funds. Smaller organizations, grappling with complex funding prerequisites, are left in a precarious state, struggling to expand without initial financial backing and susceptible to mistakes in the absence of sufficient support. This predicament has especially adverse implications for justice-centered care services, which necessitate consistent and prolonged financial support.

The escalating impacts of climate change, notably through Zimbabwe's weather extremes and the flooding in Durban, underscored the critical necessity for heightened resilience and a transition towards equitable energy solutions. Political shifts and the emergence of grassroots movements

calling for social justice and democratic values marked significant changes in the political sphere, with notable activities in South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. The region witnessed a disturbing increase in gender-based violence, demanding robust advocacy and unwavering support for survivors, which in turn highlighted the strength and perseverance of women's movements and the LGBTQI+ community. There were also observable transformations in governance and democratic practices, influenced by global dynamics, calling for a dialogue between the Global South and North that is rooted in feminist and decolonial principles. Throughout these thematic shifts, the integral role of a united, resilient, and strategically driven civil society sector came to the forefront, underscoring the pivotal role that Heinrich Böll Stiftung plays in navigating these complexities.

4. Description of program.

The overall programme in Southern Africa is structured into four Components: A "Ecological Justice", B "Democracy and Social Justice", C "Human Rights and Gender Justice", and D "International Politics and African Perspectives", each further divided into two specific programs. Programs A1 and A2 focus on empowering communities affected by extractive industries, with an emphasis on dialogue, gender awareness, and legal strategies. Programs B1 and B2 address human rights and social justice, with B1 centering on community rights and advocacy, and B2 fostering collaborative activism and knowledge sharing. Program C1 tackles gender-based violence through data and advocacy, while C2 is dedicated to LGBTQI+ rights, particularly in traditional settings. Finally, program D1 aims to diversify regional and international discussions with African perspectives, and program D2 seeks to equip groups with the necessary knowledge for a fair and inclusive global financial system.

5. Evaluation results

5.1 Relevance and coherence

The high relevance of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's overall program and its four components is unquestionable and has been consistently confirmed in interviews with partner organizations and external observers. The program's objectives are systematically aligned with the needs and capacities of vulnerable, disadvantaged, and at-risk individuals, groups, or organizations. Leveraging Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's advanced network strategy and engagements with experienced partners, the program prioritizes initiatives in empowerment, capacity development, networking, and legal advisory support. These initiatives are particularly structured to confront the unique challenges faced by CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) and CBOs (Community-Based Organizations), traditional leaders, GBV (Gender Based Violence) victims, LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/Transgender, Queer, and Intersexual), and other marginalized and vulnerable groups.

Comparing GOPP (Gender-Oriented Project Planning) 2019-2021 with GOPP 2022-2024, there is a noticeable increase in the number of cross-program cooperation, which have become more differentiated. This suggests that program coherence has been strategically considered across offices and teams.

5.2 Effectiveness and impact

According to reports submitted to BMZ by Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, the program has overwhelmingly met its intended objectives, with minor adjustments made in response to new developments. Out of the 16 program goals set, 15 have either been fulfilled or are on track to be achieved, while only one goal has been partially realized.

Key accomplishments include substantial legal victories and impactful advocacy, exemplified by the Rooibos industry's unprecedented R12 million payout to the Khoi and San Community in 2022, the groundbreaking 2019 court decision in favor of same-sex unions within the Dutch Reformed Church, and the successful push by Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's partner Black Sash Trust for extended Social Relief of Distress (SRD) and Caregiver grants. However, these achievements are typically the culmination of extensive, often decade-long support processes involving numerous stakeholders, making the task of tracing these impact chains exceedingly intricate and extending well beyond the scope of the current evaluation timeframe.

One of the challenges is that the multi-layered and diverse nature of the Cape Town office's programs is not easily encapsulated within standard reporting formats. This is particularly true when it comes to accurately representing the plausible chains of outcomes and the interwoven effects through key partner networks.

The program's success can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung predominantly utilizes an 'indirect' strategy, working through a comprehensive network of partner organizations, many of which are part of larger network systems, with some acting as crucial central nodes. Secondly, at the "Direct Effects" stage, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung initiates a variety of impact chains, reaching different levels of target groups through these intermediaries, moving beyond the standard Input-Output-Outcome-Impact (IOOI) models. Essentially, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung excels in creating and sustaining collaborative spaces and networks, with its diverse partners at the core, resulting in far-reaching impacts.

Thanks to Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung's prolonged support, the activities it sponsors often lead to lasting change and impact, with iteration playing a crucial role. Activities like workshops, network gatherings, and policy monitoring are parts of a continuous loop of involvement and support. For instance, Earthlife Africa (ELA) champions ongoing intergenerational conversations, using recurring eco-mapping activities to engage local activists, leaders, and notably women elders. This ongoing practice not only unites communities but also helps save and revive native wisdom, significantly enhancing the sustainability and impact of their projects. ELA, led by black women and driven by feminist values, also ensures these practices support gender equality, particularly in their energy and climate initiatives.

The Cape Town office currently lacks a comprehensive regional strategy for 'Southern Africa', and its role seems to be shifting, as indicated by its sporadic reference as a "Regional Office" despite being officially designated for "South Africa, Namibia, and Zimbabwe." Clarifying South Africa's specific role within both the southern Africa region and the larger African context is crucial for HBS, as is defining the unique contributions that the Cape Town team and its partner networks can make to Namibia and Zimbabwe.

5.3 Cooperation with strategic project partners and sustainability

The interviewed program partners of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung surpass expectations, showcasing not just competence but exceptional performance. The careful alignment of objectives, facilitated by the Cape Town office's highly experienced and often internationally renowned key partner organizations, guarantees a nuanced, context-sensitive approach, pinpointing the unique needs and enhancing the capacities of each target group.

However, there is no strategic differentiation between the entire and diverse set of partner organizations, neither by the Cape Town office nor by HBS head office. References are

occasionally made to the quality of mostly 'long-standing' and sometimes 'strategic' partners in documents and discussions. Long-term support and the mutual trust developed through it, along with established habits, should not be the sole or primary criteria for strategic assessment and decisions.

5.4 Implementation of cross-cutting task of gender-democracy

Gender democracy and justice are recurrent themes that permeate all components of the program. The Cape Town office has essentially evolved the Foundation's mission of "Gender Democracy" from being a cross-cutting task into an even more ambitious understanding of "Just Transition" as a primary focus cross-cutting all four Components.

5.5 Setting up of the office and control of the program

The staff of the Cape Town office consistently demonstrate high professionalism and commitment, but they are evidently operating at their capacity limits. The demand for supplementary and overarching program support to amplify the impact orientation is evident. There's a tight strategic link between the roles of impact management and impact communication, and multi-level dialogues. This could be considered in filling the current vacancy for the Program Leadership "International Dialogues".

In international comparison, the allocated annual budget of an average of 1.5 million EUR is evaluated as critically constrained, given the extensive thematic scope and the highly complex landscape of networked partnerships and target groups spread across three program countries. This underlines the considerable efficiency of the Cape Town office, however.

6. Conclusions

The HBS Cape Town office has adeptly managed complex socio-political and environmental challenges in Southern Africa, exacerbated by the pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for societal and democratic transformations. Despite these challenges, there is a growing commitment to address gender inequalities, in line with HBS's global mission. The program's impact, however, is not clearly articulated, with ambiguously defined objectives and a broad setting of targets, which, while allowing flexibility, limits strategic management and learning.

Evaluation results confirm the program's relevance and effectiveness, especially in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, though there is a need for improved impact measurement and communication. The program's focus on South African entities also indicates a lack of a unified regional strategy. The exceptional quality of the program's partners is a crucial asset, emphasizing the need for a deep understanding of their role in long-term impact. There is also a significant transformation in the approach to gender democracy, now taking a more comprehensive stance.

7. Recommendations

Strategic Refinement for Gender-Driven Outcomes: Leverage the program's robust and comprehensive foundation in gender democracy as a springboard for advancing an overarching feminist program theory.

Enhanced Impact Orientation and Partner Integration: Scrutinize BMZ's current approaches to enhance impact orientation within program formulation and execution. Assess the efficacy of these strategies within the framework of country and regional strategies, development cooperation programs, and modules. Simultaneously, foster a peer exchange by engaging with partners that

possess advanced results and impact management approaches, such as MOSAIC. The goal is to collaboratively develop and implement unified, network-wide outcome dimensions and impact orientations.

Outcome-Centric Program Alignment: Expedite the creation of a clear and all-encompassing master strategy that strategically aligns all program components. Pivot the focus towards quantifiable outcomes and direct effects at the target group level, moving away from broad societal objectives for each component. Enhance program indicators to provide sharper clarity on varying types and levels of tangible outcomes, drawing upon first good practices from Component C to elevate the overall quality of the program.

Structural Evaluation and Theme Consolidation: Conduct a thorough evaluation of the program's bifurcated structure across its four components, identifying any strategic misalignments, redundancies, or areas of confusion. Simultaneously, initiate a consolidation process during the GOPP phase to strengthen the “post-colonial dialogue and knowledge exchange” theme across all components, ensuring a unified and impactful implementation.

Engagement Strategy and Rights-Based Approach: Reevaluate and potentially restructure Components A and B to establish a clear differentiation based on engagement with “rights holders” (vulnerable individuals and groups) and “duty bearers” (state and non-state entities). Explore both indirect and direct support strategies, learning from previous planning cycles for a holistic engagement approach.

Collective Impact and Theory of Change: Adopt a collective impact framework, piloting this approach in the Cape Town Office to enhance collaborative efforts and program impact. Concurrently, undertake a comprehensive reconstruction of the program's Theory of Change, ensuring a shared understanding of impact pathways and interdependencies across different program levels.

Outcome Mapping and Quantitative Impact Display: Engage in a retrospective outcome mapping exercise in collaboration with key partners like Natural Justice to better understand and communicate the long-term impact pathways of major successes. Ensure a balanced display of both quantitative and qualitative accomplishments, providing a fuller picture of the program's impact.

Regional Strategy and Cross-Border Collaboration: Reassess and refine the program's regional approach in Southern Africa, delineating South Africa's role and integrating the unique contexts of Namibia and Zimbabwe. Promote innovative thematic collaborations and strengthen regional partnerships to maximize impact across borders.

Partner Criteria and Collaborative Strengthening: Prioritize the establishment of comprehensive partner criteria and classifications, ensuring alignment with HBS's core values and strategic goals. Focus on enhancing multi-level collaborations and regional outreach, especially in relation to Parliamentary bodies, government entities, and in Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Internal Communication and Network Effectiveness: Establish diversified and responsive communication channels between the Cape Town and Berlin offices, clarifying expectations and roles within leadership. Implement the Network Functions Approach (NFA) internally to refine strategic priorities and enhance collaborative learning, with potential later extension to partners.