



Another world is possible

icco's story. Working together for development and justice (1964-2020)

Michiel van Diggelen

Another world is possible

**ICCO's story. Working together for
development and justice (1964-2020)**

Michiel van Diggelen



Colophon

'Another world is possible' is a publication of Cordaid
The Hague, September 2021

Text: Michiel van Diggelen

Editors: Jaap 't Gilde, Dieneke de Groot, Piet Posthuma, and Kees de Ruiter

Final English editing: Bryony Harris

Photography: ACT/Paul Jeffrey, Malawi

Design: Saskia Zwerver

Printing: Printman, Breda

ISBN/EAN: 978-90-9035142-1

'Another world is possible' is a revised and expanded edition of '*Van zending tot missie. ICCO in vogelvlucht*'. The 1st edition of this booklet was published in 2001, the 2nd edition in 2005.

From 1 January 2021, ICCO's work is continued by Cordaid.

P.O. Box 16440
2500 BK The Hague
www.cordaid.org
T 070-3136300
E info@cordaid.org



Table of contents

Foreword	8		
Introduction	10		
I. Pioneers and participants. 1964-1972	14		
Background	14		
Not one hour, not one day	17		
The committee	18		
The co-financing programme	19		
Overhead costs	21		
Brick and mortar	22		
Strength and enthusiasm	23		
Opposition and support	23		
II. Growth and autonomy. 1973-1981	28		
Background	28		
New criteria	29		
Support for co-financing	30		
New leadership	31		
Critical year	33		
Growth in practice	36		
Reverse Consortium	38		
Relationship with the government	39		
III. Radicalisation and criticism. 1981-1989	44		
Internal tensions	44		
ICCOnterfeitsel	46		
Reciprocity	46		
The CLAT affair	47		
Executive crisis	49		
Evaluation	50		
Justice and compassion	51		
Women	52		
Uncertainty and criticism	53		
IV. Efficiency and self-reflection. 1989-2000	58		
Development cooperation	58		
Mission and product	59		
		Impact study	59
		Professionalisation	61
		Evaluation	62
		Partners and civil society strengthening	63
		A new director	64
		Identity	65
		New policy	66
		Participants	67
		V. Collaboration and innovation. 2001-2010	72
		Wiping the slate clean	72
		Brand awareness and support	73
		Supporters and partners	74
		Future scenario 2010	77
		ProCoDe	78
		The show must go on	82
		Most evaluated sector	84
		Confidence	86
		VI. Focus and integration. 2011-2020	90
		Halving	90
		Baron von Münchhausen	91
		Regionalisation	92
		Economic programmes	94
		ICCO Investments	94
		ICCO Cooperative	95
		New agenda	96
		Dark times	97
		Unbundling	99
		Soft in the heart	100
		Successes	101
		New leadership	103
		Integration with Cordaid	104
		The legacy of ICCO	110
		History in years	114
		List of abbreviations	118
		List of sources, interviews, literature, and articles	120

Foreword

'Another world is possible'; under this banner social movements and organisations, including ICCO partner organisations, rallied for a different kind of globalisation in the first years of this new millennium. The resulting World Social Forum (2001) was wholeheartedly supported by ICCO. It formed the counterpoint to the World Economic Forum in Davos and fitted seamlessly with ICCO's thinking. Building a world in which there is space for everyone and in which everyone's rights are respected.

This booklet is a revised and expanded edition of *Van zending tot missie. ICCO in vogelvlucht*¹, the 1st edition of which appeared in 2001. The last two chapters, plus a final reflection on ICCO's legacy, are new. *Van zending tot missie* was a fitting title to describe ICCO in the last millennium. The new title does justice to its entire period of existence. That another world is possible has been the common thread throughout ICCO's existence. Stubborn and persistent, but also resilient and creative, the organisation worked on this for more than half a century (1964-2020), braving internal and external storms, until the very end.

*Deze wereld omgekeerd*² goes the song by Dutch pastor and poet Huub Oosterhuis. It is based on 1 Corinthians 1:18-22. Because we take life seriously, because we care about the suffering of others, because we do not look away and we see that this world needs to be turned around. For ICCO, that has always meant dissatisfaction with the status quo. And that also meant not being at ease with its own existence. Innovation has become a core concept within the organisation. Even if it was not always immediately clear what the desired organisational form for renewal should entail.

Over time, ICCO took important steps that still have an impact on the world of development cooperation. At such times, ICCO was a forerunner and influencer. This is particularly true of the development of ProCoDe (Programmatic approach, Co-responsibility and Decentralisation), described in chapter 5, which dramatically changed its own organisation and the way it cooperated with partners in the countries where ICCO worked. ICCO's innovative work on inclusive value chains has also been widely adopted in the sector.

ProCoDe stands in a long ICCO tradition and reached to the core of the organisation's DNA: the belief in the strength and autonomy of partner organisations, and the desire to share power and responsibilities between 'there' and 'here'. ProCoDe also meant throwing open the shutters widely. A different world would only be possible if all people and organisations of goodwill worked together.

It was not only civil society organisations, but also the business community which came into the picture. Again, ICCO was seen as one of the pioneers and forerunners, but also by some as naive and as a pioneer who had taken a wrong turn. ICCO was no longer standing up for the rights of the poor, was a common comment, ignoring the word justice. Which was however precisely the central word to this new branch on the tree of development cooperation. Nowadays, cooperation with corporations is no longer shunned by other organisations either, and there are increased examples where the interests of farmers and (farmer) cooperatives are represented in economic value chains.

In the development cooperation sector, the debate on shifting the power (more power to Southern partners) and localisation (locally led development) continues unabated in 2021. The debate is prevalent also at Cordaid with which ICCO merged on 1 January 2021. The experiences and insights gained by ICCO can be considered enriching in this regard. The various attempts, the successes, the frustrations, the tension between the ideal and the 'gravity of money' as a determining factor, are all topics which ICCO can talk about.

ICCO as an independent organisation has ceased to exist. But its legacy lives on. We thank all the people who have carried ICCO over the years, from board to staff, from donors to partner organisations. They have made ICCO and pushed it forward. This booklet is a tribute to them.

Finally, our thanks also go to Michiel van Diggelen who, after *Van zending tot missie*, was again willing to take on the writing of the text.

We wish you much reading pleasure.

Johan de Leeuw, Chairman of the Supervisory Board (2013-2020)
Sybren Attema, CEO (2019-2020)

1 From mission (i.e. missionary work) to purpose. ICCO in bird's eye view

2 This world turned upside down

Introduction

“Minister, just increase the contribution for our work, because we know better than you how to spend our own tax money.”

Albert van den Heuvel (1982), ICCO board chair 1973-1981

“Christian development organisations themselves do not ask for a premium for their identity, inspiration and good intentions either. They claim a share of the money available for development cooperation because they have the potential to do something useful with it.”

Just van Es (1996), staff member 1992-1995 and general director from 1995-1999

On Friday 30 December 1964, a meeting was held in the office of SOH (*Stichting Oecumenische Hulp*) on Cornelis Houtmanstraat in Utrecht. In ICCO circles this meeting is considered the beginning of the organisation. Eleven men, representatives of SOH, the ecumenical umbrella of world diaconates, the NZR (*Nederlandse Zendingsraad*), the umbrella of Protestant missionary bodies and the Convent of Christian Social Organisations, discussed the possibility of cooperation in response to the five million guilders made available by the Marijnen government on 14 December that year to finance private development activities.

State Secretary I.N.Th. Diepenhorst of Development Affairs hinted that he would prefer a single point of reference from the Protestant side. So, the representatives present had every reason to sit together. They had to make sure to stay in the picture and get on board. The meeting led to the official establishment of ICCO during 1965. What's in a name? At first, it was thought to be the Coordinating Committee on Mission, Diaconate and Christian Social Organisations on Development Aid, but that same year it became ICCO: Interchurch Coordination Committee on Development Aid. In 1970, development aid was replaced by development projects. In 1989, Committee was replaced by Organisation and Aid by Cooperation. So, from then on, it became ICCO, Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation. The change from aid to development cooperation reflects the changing views on the relation between the so-called 'rich North' and the 'poor South.'

No one could have guessed at the end of 1964, that government support for private development work would boom during the 1970s and 1980s. In its first decade, ICCO had a simple structure; it was an intermediary body of missionary and world diaconate work with the government. In 1971, the committee became a foundation. In the mid-1970s, it gained greater autonomy and grew into an independent co-financing organisation (MFO). Thereafter, ICCO developed into a professional development organisation, presenting itself as a company with a product, an annual turnover, and a mission. In the new century, it reinvented itself through a complete innovation with ProCoDe. In the 2010s, ICCO once again changed its course at a time when the Dutch government began funding it less and less. It chose a niche at the intersection of sustainable livelihood, rights and security for farmers, and small-scale agribusiness. On 1 January 2021, ICCO integrated with Cordaid.

The story that follows is an outline of over 50 years of ICCO. The organisation has countered challenges from all directions. The protestant MFO proved its right to exist in the extremely complicated arena of participants here in the Netherlands, partners overseas, the Dutch government and Dutch society. Who is ICCO, who does it belong to and for whom? Does it belong to the participants, the churches, the government, the partners, the staff, or the board? Or a little bit of all of them? Is ICCO a desk of the government or is it one of the civil society organisations that uses the government for their purposes? These are the questions the organisation continuously asked itself time and again. Added to this is now the question of what its legacy is.

The story breaks down into six periods that broadly coincide with the decades of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and the first and second decade of the 21st century. In all periods, ICCO faced the question of how it would operationalise its principles in a constantly changing political, social, and religious environment. This question preoccupied both the participants of the coordination committee-that proposed private funding to the Dutch government (ICCO's early years)-and the professional organisation ICCO of fifty years later.

'Another world is possible' is about these changes and continuity in ICCO's history and about the protagonists of that history. They tried to make concrete their motives and sought paths to a just society, worldwide.

Manq'a

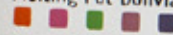


cafeterías y escuelas
cocina



5
1965 -

Melting Pot Bolivia



Pioneers and participants 1964-1972

One of ICCO's pioneering projects is Manq'a. It started in 2014 in El Alto in Bolivia and then expanded to Colombia, Central America and Africa. Manq'a trains vulnerable young people to become cooks and entrepreneurs and improves local food security.

Photo: Luis Fernandez (2015)

I. Pioneers and participants. 1964-1972

In the early 1960s, also called the first United Nations development decade, expectations were high. The development of the former colonies to match the level of the rich North seemed only a matter of time. The North only had to transfer some of its wealth and knowledge to the developing countries for a while. Once those countries got off to a good start, the rest would come naturally. With young, promising leaders like Kaunda in Zambia and Nyerere in Tanzania, the developing countries needed only an intermediate sprint to join the leading group from the North.

Background

Aid at that time was entirely multilateral (through the United Nations) or bilateral, with the economic interest of the lender at the back of many minds. Development aid was limited to the transfer of knowledge and capital. During the 1960s, the importance of private organisations in development work increased. Catholic and protestant missionary organisations had particularly good papers in that area. They had long had contacts overseas where the gospel was brought in dressed-up form: health care and education among them.

However, the mission organisations had to contend with a lack of money. Wonderful projects could sometimes not go ahead for that reason. One person who wanted to do something about this was Reformed missionary Jo Verkuyl. He returned to the Netherlands in 1963 after a 25-year stay in Indonesia to become general-secretary of the NZR. Immediately after his return, he tried to organise social support for private development projects. With him, the struggle for developing countries got soul, face and focus. It was not a matter of charity, but of justice. Verkuyl travelled to many Protestant Christian organisations in Dutch society to gain support for his ideals. Verkuyl could cast a spell, he possessed the gift of words and when he detected obstinacy, he did not hesitate to pronounce curses. Jo Verkuyl's authority was his transparent identity. Albert van den Heuvel: "Here was a missionary strongly rooted in the missionary tradition who analysed mercilessly and knew how to proclaim forgiveness and grace, but also hell and damnation, without any restraint."

Verkuyl built an umbrella of missionary, diaconal and Christian-social organisations in the development field. That umbrella was to form a think tank for Protestant development work and generate the necessary funds. Verkuyl

presumed a lot of money to be available, especially among Christian-social organisations, and a willingness among those clubs to act on behalf of the Third World. However, these clubs lacked knowledge of that world and Verkuyl dreamed of making money available in exchange for the knowledge to spend it well, which the missionary possessed. The umbrella would serve as a service body for the young churches overseas. A Reformed at heart, Verkuyl attached significant importance to building a civil society of organisations between the state and citizens. Such a civil society was lacking in developing countries. He saw the young churches in developing countries as the basis of such a civil society.

Meanwhile, an interesting development had occurred in West Germany that had not escaped Verkuyl's notice. Chancellor Adenauer himself raised the possibility of government funding for mission and development projects. This led to the creation of MFOs (*Mede-Financieringsorganisaties*) in West Germany; organisations that received money for projects overseas. Verkuyl had no objection to government support if the money was not dropped in the religious landscape of developing countries. He had learned in Indonesia to simply send money and have the recipients themselves bear part of the cost of a project. In the 1920s, something similar had happened in education, where general funds went to identity-based organisations.

The Netherlands was ripe for co-financing in 1963. It was waiting for pioneers. The initiative undoubtedly came from the mission organisations. It sought contact with Verkuyl through Father Gerard van Rijsbergen, councillor of the Dutch Province of the Congregation of the Mission and, from 1963, board member of the catholic CMC (*Centraal Missie Commissariaat*), to take joint action. The two men joined joint forces to launch the ship of co-financing in the Netherlands as well. This was not easy. A lot of lobbying had to be done, because government funding of mission organisations was not uncontroversial, neither within government circles, nor within the churches. People feared too much government influence and were afraid of the bad influence a lot of money could have in developing countries. In politics, the PvdA³ was reluctant to 'subsidise evangelisation', even though that was not the initiators' intention. The Christian parties on the other hand generously embraced the idea of co-financing. Only Joseph Luns, the KVP⁴ foreign ministry, was not in favour. He feared creating 'rice Christians', Christians who take the gospel for the sake of food and other benefits.

3 Partij van de Arbeid / Labour Party

4 Katholieke Volkspartij / Catholic People's Party

A good move was to send a letter to prime Minister Marijnen, signed by the CMC and the NZR, dated 25 September 1963. This brought the wishes of Van Rijsbergen and Verkuyl to the government's attention. The letter refuted objections to co-financing and reached out for funding conditions. However, the letter was not well received by SOH, which regretted that Rijsbergen and Verkuyl had not contacted them. It was not the Catholic and protestant missions that should act together but the protestant mission and SOH! Due action was taken, and SOH was finally able to jump on the train.

The letter asked for more money for development aid in general. Development aid was still in its infancy at that time; the budget was small. The letter expressed hope that money would be allocated to support development work of private organisations such as missionary organisations. The signatories explicitly mentioned that the money would not be used for evangelisation. Furthermore, applications for subsidies should be submitted by church bodies and foundations existing in the developing countries themselves; not from Dutch organisations. In that case, applications would have to be approved in advance by the national government concerned, which was to be avoided. Only 'capital goods' would qualify for subsidies. Finally, the establishment of a management office was proposed that would maintain contact with the government on behalf of the missionary organisations and monitor the spending of the subsidies granted.

The letter accelerated the process. Van Rijsbergen and Verkuyl sunk their teeth into the case. On 31 January 1964, the government set up a committee headed by Director-General of Foreign Affairs Drs J. Meijer to study the case. That was also what the writers of letters had aimed for. In June 1964, the committee's final report came out with a positive opinion, but no political decision was taken. In autumn 1964, during the 1965 budget debate, a Smallenbroek (ARP)⁵ motion was passed to include a separate budget item for private development work starting 1 January 1965. Finally, on 14 December 1964, a letter of amendment to the Foreign Affairs budget made available five million guilders for co-financing private non-commercial projects. According to state secretary Diepenhorst, the decision was based on the idea that missionary organisations, as well as non-church organisations, had far more experience in developing countries than the Dutch government, and enjoyed the trust of the people. The government thought that missionary organisations had opportunities to spend the money more effectively and directly.

At the meeting on 30 December 1964, it appeared that, despite the cooperation in the preliminary stage, the paths of Catholic and protestant missionary organisations still ran separately. Once the political lobbying was complete, Roman Catholics could bring in their projects through the various mission congregations, and Protestants and Old Catholics through ICCO.

ICCO's first (stencilled) annual report (for 1965) states that ICCO grew '(...) from a spontaneous need for consultation and coordination, alive among missionary, diaconal and social organisations in the Netherlands.' Consultation was indeed an objective, but 'access to available money' also played a key role. And there is a lot to be said for that spontaneity, too.

Not one hour, not one day

Reformed Jo Verkuyl and Reformed Jone Bos knew each other from Indonesia. Verkuyl stayed there from 1937-1962 as a pastor and a professor. In Indonesia, where he stayed between 1951 and 1962, Bos was impressed by the missionary, who was almost 25 years older. Bos was not a theologian but a businessperson, with a great fondness for missionary work. He worked first in the business sector, then as manager of a school complex in New Guinea. Bos met Verkuyl again at the 'Brood voor het Hart'⁶ action in 1963, holding office at the NZR on Prins Hendriklaan in Amsterdam. In July 1963, Bos was appointed deputy secretary of SOH.

Verkuyl was ICCO's architect, Bos the contractor. Together they would be the face of ICCO for the first 10 years. They both believed firmly in the cause of co-financing. Bos worked at SOH, so it was obvious that the first meeting of what would later become ICCO took place at SOH's office. Working for ICCO for the first year and a half (until 1 November 1966) was a part-time job. Bos believed in ICCO and handled things as few others could have done; he was committed, ambitious, skilful in meetings, cunning enough to push things through and patient enough to listen in when needed. In 1967, Bos would become active for a year for the *Kom over de brug*⁷ campaign. Then former ARP member of parliament Jacqueline Rutgers took over his position at ICCO. She remained heavily involved with ICCO, even after Bos' return. The superlatives uttered about Ms Rutgers are uncountable. She was a boarding-school teacher in the best sense of the word, shrewd and intelligent. Whenever Bos had to visit the Minister, officials

5 Anti-Revolutionaire Partij / Anti-Revolutionary Party

6 Bread for the Heart

7 Come over the bridge

would call in advance to tell him exactly who to expect. If Ms Rutgers went along, the official delegation was doubled in advance. She would play a vital role, especially also during the period of growth. Her notes are a tremendous source of knowledge for this period.

Bos and Verkuyl set the pace for the plans during 1965. Verkuyl used his natural authority to settle differences and disputes between the delegated participants. At the second meeting (February 1965), Verkuyl proposed the formation of a 'constituent club'. Consultations should become official as soon as possible. He quoted Abraham Kuyper in saying that the developing countries could wait not one hour, not one day longer. It was decided not to include non-Christian organisations in ICCO. In March, State Secretary Diepenhorst was informed that an official committee had been formed, of which NZR, SOH and the Convent of Christian Social Organisations formed the constituent members.

The committee

ICCO was thus neither a committee of individuals nor of churches. It was primarily a meeting place of organisations in the fields of mission, diaconal work, and Christian social work. ICCO served these organisations and submitted their overseas projects to the government for funding.

Its seats were divided among the ecumenical bodies for mission and world diaconate and among the Convention of Christian Organisations. Four seats were dedicated to the Netherlands Mission Council, SOH, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The churches occupied a permanent seat. From the beginning, the Mennonite Brotherhood also had one permanent SOH seat. The NCW (*Nederlands Christelijk Werkgeversverbond*)⁸, CBTB (*Christelijke Boeren- en Tuindersbond*)⁹ and het CNV (*Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond*)¹⁰, sat on behalf of the Convent. In 1965, two Christian women's unions also became members. Finally, people were also appointed in a personal capacity: Harrie van der Heide of the NVV (*Nederlandse Vakverbond*)¹¹, for example, was admitted to the committee as an individual.

8 Association of Dutch Christian Employers

9 Christian Farmers and Horticulture Union

10 Christian National Trade Union

11 Dutch Association of Trade Unions

What interest did the participating organisations have in joining ICCO? Firstly, ICCO provided an opportunity for consultation on development activities. Secondly, the participants qualified for project support for which they might never qualify individually. CNV, for instance, had its own action for trade union work overseas: 'Come Over'. ICCO was instrumental in funding this.

Thus, while costing them little, ICCO was of benefit to the participants. ICCO would not fundraise among the Protestant people. From the beginning, there was a tacit understanding that ICCO would not fish in the pond in which the churches were also fishing. So, the churches would not forfeit a penny of collection money to ICCO. ICCO was also explicitly not involved in influencing the opinion of church members regarding development issues. By agreement, this was left to the churches themselves. In 1967, the Church and Development Cooperation working group was set up for this purpose, which included the then unknown Jan Pronk as secretary and Jone Bos as a member. So, the participants gave ICCO little space. This was to price the be paid for its existence. ICCO was not allowed to do publicity itself. So ICCO's existence was partly due to the fact that the organisation didn't enter into direct competition with the church bodies for mission and world diaconate, a fact that forced ICCO to hide its light under the bushel.

The committee consisted of men who also met in a variety of other contexts. They were chosen by the participants out of their midst. There was an old-boys-network atmosphere. Rien Munters, who was an ICCO committee member, board member and treasurer from 1967-1989, discovered when he took office in 1967: "Those guys all knew each other. If a next meeting had to be arranged and a date was mentioned, say, 25 January, one member could say to the another, "You can't make it then, you'll be in Oegstgeest (*Zendingshuis van Nederlands Hervormde Kerk*)¹²." They knew each other's agendas."

The co-financing programme

The government made five million guilders available for co-financing for the year 1965. Co-financing was not an exclusive right of Catholic and Protestant mission organisations. The programme was open to all kinds of projects that did not necessarily, but in practice mostly, reach the Minister through ICCO or CMC. ICCO did not initially claim a monopoly on Protestant projects; during the 1960s and 1970s this would change. Screening and assessment of projects initially lay entirely with the government. The secretary of state created the Office for Co-financing of Private Development Projects for this purpose.

12 Mission Center of the Dutch Reformed Church

During the 1960s, ICCO and CMC gained a monopoly on government co-financing. During 1967, the programme filled up; the amount requested exceeded the available budget. This was caused by the substantial number of applications from the Roman Catholic side. The Office for Co-financing now had to make difficult considerations; one good project had to be weighed against another good project. For this, the Ministry was not sufficiently equipped. Jan Meijer, Director-General of International Cooperation, nicknamed Napoleon, wanted to keep his staff far away from this hornets' nest. He decided give the intermediary organisations the task to of selection, and he chose the two main project suppliers, ICCO and CMC, for this purpose, thus giving them more power and work. From now on, the two intermediary organisations themselves had to set priorities, for which fresh staff had to be recruited. Until this decision, most of the Protestants' projects were submitted through ICCO; on the Catholic side, CMC was the main, but by no means, the only project submitter.

A distribution key for the available funds was then also to be determined. The genesis of the distribution key is a story in itself. Historians of development cooperation in the Netherlands mistakenly believe that the distribution key was based on the composition of Zoetermeer's population (40% Roman Catholic-40% Protestant-20% general). Novib¹³, then characterised as a general organisation for international aid, over the years claimed a higher percentage of this distribution based on the argument of growing secularisation in Zoetermeer. In fact, however, the distribution key was formulated during a conversation in the 'the ministry' room of Barend Udink on 20 February 1968. Attending this meeting was the minister and his director-general Jan Meijer, and representatives of ICCO and CMC. Udink and Meijer proposed a 50/50 split between ICCO and CMC. Verkuyl thought this was incorrect. Dutch people with no affinity to any of the churches in the Netherlands also paid taxes, so in his view, there should be a third organisation for projects from other religious backgrounds, and he suggested Novib, which was thus included in the co-financing programme for the first time. Why did Verkuyl suggest Novib? Verkuyl always had an eye for the sensitive balance between religions in, for example, a country like Indonesia. He feared from the start that too much support for Christians would upset Christian-Muslim relations. He therefore felt Novib should focus on projects from other religious backgrounds. Initially, 5% was envisaged for Novib, but after much thought in the Ministry, it eventually became 20%. ICCO and CMC were not involved in determining this percentage.

So, as so often, it was not an ideological choice, but a pragmatic one. Jacqueline Rutgers summarised in a note: "The mutual distribution was derived from existing 1968 data (expected project input), supplemented by some guesswork and political sauce. Of the latter ingredient, Novib benefited the most.' The Minister thus placed three interlocutors, ICCO, Novib and CMC (which created Cebemo, *Centrale voor Bemiddeling bij Medefinanciering van Ontwikkelingsprogramma's*, specifically for this purpose in 1969).

Overhead costs

Initially, Bos did the work for ICCO in addition to his job as deputy secretary of SOH. However, ICCO increasingly seized Bos' time and SOH complained bitterly about this. The committee decided in the summer of 1966 to release Bos for ICCO. Who would pay for this? Initially, the committee was counting on government compensation for administrative costs, personnel, and accommodation-the so-called 'overhead cost'. For this, they thought of an increase on each project submitted of about half a per cent. However, the incumbent minister of development aid, Theo Bot (1965-1967), refused such a fee, because he wanted to see what the participants themselves were willing to pay for the project aid. When the minister flatly refused, Verkuyl changed course in front of the participants, aligning himself with the minister. He said: 'Actually, I do agree with Bot that the bodies united in ICCO should count it an honour to contribute.' Now, he had to get money from the participants. He was thus, no stranger to opportunism.

The committee members themselves, were ambivalent about government funding of apparatus costs. Some committee members questioned whether government reimbursement of overhead costs should be accepted. They feared the loss of influence. On the other hand, the distribution of costs among the participants was a hassle every year. Bos often had to beg and shuffle to scrape together the pennies and sought a structural solution to increase the organisation's leeway. He suggested channelling the government's subsidies through an ICCO account, so ICCO could collect interest that could benefit its overhead. To do so, ICCO had to become a separate foundation. With a few exceptions, the committee members were not in favour of this. A factor here is that the participants were apprehensive about an independent organisation and the loss of influence this would imply for them. The committee wanted to keep a grip on ICCO and through their contribution this was guaranteed.

However, every organisation tends towards autonomy, not because of ideological but practical reasons. A few years later, objections to an overly independent ICCO had disappeared. When Minister Udink proposed in 1970 that, with effect

13 In 2006, Novib joined Oxfam International and changed its name to Oxfam Novib

from 1 January 1971, project subsidies should be channelled through an ICCO account and ICCO should therefore become a foundation, this was no longer met with objections from the board. The foundation's starting capital was the whopping sum of 100 guilders. That same year, ICCO pleaded with the *Vaste Kamer Commissie voor Ontwikkelingshulp*¹⁴ for government funding of its administrative costs. Financially, ICCO was in dire straits at the time. 'A government contribution to these costs is inevitable if the programme is to continue to meet the demands made.' The *Nationale Adviestaad Ontwikkelingshulp*¹⁵ supported this plea, but it would take until the end of 1972 before the concession was a reality. With the forced choice of the foundation form, ICCO took a step towards greater independence from the participants. From now on, staff members were no longer employed by SOH, but by ICCO itself.

Brick and mortar

The government initially set the condition for granting money that applicants themselves must cover 25% of the costs of a project. In this way, it would be co-financing. Furthermore, it was explicitly stipulated that the grant only covered capital expenditure; brick and mortar, investments in land, buildings, and construction costs. The government stuck tight to these arrangements until the end of 1972, despite repeated requests from the intermediary organisations¹⁶ to stretch the criteria. By June 1965, 44 project applications had already been submitted: 33 by Catholic, seven by Protestant and four by general organisations. Twenty-three were in the field of education, six in that of health, six social care, six agriculture and five miscellaneous.

ICCO's first project approved by the Minister was the construction of four schools in Zambia. The SOH had supplied this project. Most projects in the period 1965-1972 came in through participants (49%), through Councils of Churches overseas (8%), directly from applicants (27%), through the Dutch overseas (4%) and miscellaneous (10%). All projects were discussed by the ICCO board. The Ministry decided whether a project could go ahead. Over time, the intermediary organisations had to submit the project package to the Ministry at set times. After submission, the long wait began. The Co-financing Office submitted the projects for screening to specialists, to the Dutch embassy in situ and to the Dutch Advisory

14 Parliamentary Standing Committee on Development Aid

15 National Development Aid Advisory Board

16 Intermediary organisations like ICCO are positioned in-between the Dutch government and the southern organisations they co-finance

Committee; before final approval, often a year had already passed. Nobody was happy with this long procedure. Therefore, the government increasingly put the assessment in the hands of the intermediary organisations themselves, which would eventually (by 1980) grow into independent MFOs as a result. This was not a deliberate policy, but the result of a growth process that began in the late 1960s.

Strength and enthusiasm

ICCO gave little ideological weight to its work in that initial period. Nor was this particularly necessary, as the Christian conviction of the not-so-many staff was still self-evident. ICCO was a church-related project agency, full stop. It was primarily about channelling money to projects overseas; ICCO's development policy had yet to be invented. That would only become urgent in the next decade. Questions about ICCO's identity were therefore non-existent currently at that time.

Asked about the background of its work, ICCO liked to refer to its relationships in developing countries. ICCO had unique contacts at grassroot level through the churches, its natural partners. These contacts were ICCO's *raison d'être*. Novib lacked such an overseas infrastructure, CMC/Cebemo worked less along the path of young churches and private organisations, and more through deployed Fathers and Sisters. Even back in the 1960s, ICCO's emphasis was on service provision for overseas partners, it was not about sending 'its own' people overseas: 'The full emphasis is on the contribution the project gives to the development of the recipient country, regardless of whether Dutch people help in this or not.' According to Verkuyl, the comparative advantage of intermediary organisations also lay in the direct involvement of individuals in the recipient country. Because their own contribution was expected, the projects were able to mobilise 'strength and enthusiasm' in the recipient country and thus contribute via the grassroot level to the development of the country.

Opposition and support

From the social-democratic side, co-financing was wrongly seen as disguised proselytising. Distrust remained, including on the part of officials; when ICCO put 10 packets of theodolites (a surveying instrument) on the inventory list for a project (a Technical School in Brazil) in 1972, the controlling official wondered what a technical school was supposed to do with 10 packets of theology. Wasn't that a bit much, even for a Christian school? Was ICCO secretly trying to proselytise?

Incidentally, the intermediary organisations were not lacking in support. Successive Christian Democrat ministers Bot (1965-1967), Udink (1967-1971) and Boertien (1971-1973) were supportive. In 1969, the final report of the evaluation of Dutch

development aid by Professor L.H. Janssen was published. One of the report's conclusions was that a broad expansion of the co-financing programme was 'justified'. The Lower House debated co-financing following the report. PvdA and VVD¹⁷ remained critical. The PvdA saw co-financing as subsidising the pillar system¹⁸, while the VVD saw no reason to expand the programme. ARP, KVP and D66¹⁹ wanted the programme to be expanded quickly. In general, the small Christian political parties and the CHU²⁰ supported co-financing. The expansion took place gradually in the first period. In the second period, this expansion would be accompanied by enormous acceleration.

17 Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie / People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (liberals)

18 The siloed division of denominational networks in Dutch society was called 'pillarisation'

19 Democraten 1966 / Democrats 1966

20 Christelijk-Historische Unie / Christian Historical Union



Growth and autonomy 1973-1981

A boy does a cartwheel in Karonga, a town in northern Malawi.
ICCO empowered people to create dignified and independent lives.
Photo: ACT/Paul Jeffrey (2009)

II. Growth and autonomy. 1973-1981

The size of ICCO's budget increased in the second decade from guilders²¹ in 1973 to over 75 million guilders in 1981. The organisation itself grew proportionately, as ICCO took over more tasks from the Ministry and autonomously started to identify projects. On 1 January 1973, ICCO employed nine people; on 1 January 1981, the number had risen to over seventy-five. Overhead costs rose from f 416,000 in 1973 to f 5.7 million in 1981. The top years were 1974-1976 when ICCO's budget doubled. In 1977 and 1978 the increase was also considerable. After that, growth flattened

Growth was not equally welcome to all ICCO stakeholders (participants and others) and was accompanied by fits and starts. What was the background to ICCO's growth, and to the co-financing programme in general? What did it mean for the ICCO organisation and what were the new policy developments during this period?

Background

At the end of the first development decade, it became clear that the results of development assistance were disappointing. The planned growth of developing countries had not been achieved and the gap between rich and poor countries had only widened. Overcoming the gap needed a long-term commitment on development assistance.

Thinking about development issues then focused heavily on changing power structures. Starting a little project here and there or giving bilateral or multilateral aid would not yield any results if the international power relations between North and South remained in place and the power structures in the developing countries themselves remained unchanged. However, politicians differed on the speed at which structural change should take place. Some thought in terms of revolution, others in terms of reform through political and economic policy measures.

The World Council of Churches, especially the CCPD, the Commission on Churches Participation in Development, the small department for development work, took the lead in the discussions. The World Council of Churches was then (and still is today) a forum of significance, where world problems such as hunger, poverty, armaments, racism, and human rights were debated and acted upon. The ideas gradually seeped into the views of politicians and churchmen.

In 1966, the World Conference on Church and Society broke new ground. Development aid was no longer about charity or compassion, but about raising political awareness and training to be politically active. At the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala in 1968, "development aid transformed from diaconate to political action," said Jan Pronk, later the minister for development cooperation, who attended as youth delegate. In later meetings, the Uppsala principles on development issues were further explored. Christian thinking on development gained momentum and became highly ideologised. It was all about social justice, self-reliance, and economic growth. "And in that order", Albert van den Heuvel, then still working at the World Council of Churches in Geneva, used to add explicitly. Economic growth was no longer the panacea for development deficits. Van den Heuvel: "One cannot cure a tumour with aspirin".

One of the representatives of the World Council of Churches' new thinking was Jan Pronk. He belonged to the Church and Development Cooperation Working Group of the Dutch Council of Churches, which translated the Uppsala decisions to the Dutch situation. The policies he would pursue from 1973 onwards as the first social democratic ministry for development cooperation was partly based on the World Council of Churches' ideas. He wanted his policy to reach the poorest of the poor; aid had to support self-determination, and self-sufficiency in developing countries and change the social order. He wanted to increase the budget for developing countries to a level higher than internationally agreed. The Netherlands was to play a leading role in development policy.

New criteria

The innovative ideas on development assistance could not be translated into policy within the old criteria of the co-financing programme. For a long time, the intermediary Boertien, under political pressure, met with the intermediary organisations. At the Vierhouten meetings in October and November 1972, the ministry came to an agreement with the three intermediary organisations on broadening the project criteria. The Ministry would no longer stick strictly to brick and mortar but would also subsidise courses and leadership training Boertien confirmed that co-financing would be exclusively channelled through the three existing intermediary organisations Cebemo, Novib and ICCO. The procedure would be shortened, consultations would be improved and a contribution to overhead costs was also promised. It seemed that modern times had arrived.

The Vierhouten conference had the additional effect of strengthening cooperation between the three intermediary organisations. The GOM (*Gemeenschappelijk Overleg Medefinanciering*) had been created in 1970 to discuss the distribution of

21 That exchange rate is EUR 1 = 2.20371 guilders (NLG). So, 1 guilder is worth about 45 euro cents

co-financing funds, to jointly inform the major political parties in parliament and to define a common attitude towards the government. The role of the GOM grew over time, but that was then. Vierhouten was a step forward, but no more than a confirmation of implemented policies. Under the ministry of Jan Pronk, the criteria would be further stretched in light of his objective to reach the poorest of the poor. However, an objective was formulated rather than achieved. How do you succeed as an intermediary organisation in reaching the truly poor and how do you prevent the money from confirming their dependency rather than lifting it? That would become the big question in the coming decades.

Support for co-financing

Initially, there was some uncertainty about Jan Pronk's attitude towards co-financing. He was the first social democrat in this position and the PvdA had long been highly critical of what was, after all, considered the toy of the Christian Democratic parties. But Pronk, partly under the influence of developments in the World Council of Churches, had become increasingly aware of the value of co-financing. Intermediary organisations were opening doors in developing countries that remained closed to others. Pronk: "Mission organisations showed that they were progressive institutions. Priests and Protestant development workers chose the poor and the disenfranchised. They maintained their contacts in countries where the Dutch government no longer had access." However, Pronk also liked to challenge and excite. He first wanted to know exactly what he was getting out of the intermediary organisations.

In a June 1973 conversation with GOM representatives, he said, "It is your shop, I look at it curiously and with interest, but it is your business." This provoked a clear statement on the part of the co-financing organisations. In November 1973, the three chairpersons jointly issued a statement: *Een vlucht naar voren*²² were justice and self-reliance, investing in people, reaching the poorest of the poor, authentic civil society strengthening, prioritising indigenous groups, developing local leadership, aligning with people's own initiatives. In short, a clear policy vision on the future of co-financing. This appealed to Pronk. The intermediary organisations would try to reach the poorest of the poor, use their money for social change and advocacy intermediary organisations showed what they were up to. Pronk now was able to recognise their value and potential.

A year after the declaration of the chairs, the old project programme ended. In late 1974, a new programme was launched in Zandvoort after long and intensive

contact with minister Pronk. The strict definition of projects was dropped. In its place came the question of whether the project brought the development policy objective closer. A project had to benefit the poorest of the poor and make them independent. Permission from the government of the recipient country was also far from being a condition for all projects. It would also be a bit strange to ask South African government Vorster's permission to support the ANC, for instance. Finally, the small allowance for overhead costs was increased.

In this way, the ideas of the intermediary organisations matched those of Jan Pronk. This was in their favour. Pronk promised an increase in the total programme from f 52.5 million in 1974 to f 100 million in 1976. A doubling! Would ICCO accept this gift? There would be a fierce battle over this in 1975. Not everyone was equally convinced of the need for growth.

New leadership

In early 1973, Jo Verkuyl stepped down as chairperson of ICCO's board. Albert van den Heuvel, a contemporary of Jone Bos, was his successor. He had worked as director of communications at the World Council of Churches in Geneva and was appointed secretary general of the NHK in 1972 to shape that church's renewal. Van den Heuvel had clearly defined views on development aid. He was ahead of his time. Even before coming to the Netherlands, he formulated in *Een Nieuw Zendingstijdperk* (A New Missionary Era) the programme he would implement after his appointment as ICCO's chairperson. One of Van den Heuvel's favourite sayings was that development aid should quickly change to development cooperation (anticipating later discussions) and that the focus had to be on fixing injustices, and not simply on sending money. Aid, he said, was more important for the giver than the recipient; it had to be about raising awareness in the Netherlands, not those few pennies for projects overseas. Van den Heuvel was the great animator of the GOM and one of the drafters of the chairman's statement.

Like his predecessor Verkuyl, Van den Heuvel possessed the gift of words. This came in handy at a time when ICCO was facing major changes. Especially after Zandvoort, it was important to convince the general board. The general board consisted of representatives of the same organisations as in the 1960s. However, the approval of the board was no longer as obvious as it was previously. There were differences of opinion between the Executive Board, management, and staff on the one hand and part of the general board on the other. No wonder too when you consider that the man next to Jone Bos, Kees van der Poort, did not hesitate to break with convention. Kees van der Poort studied economics and sociology in Rotterdam and worked for *Dienst Over Grenzen* (DOG) in Congo, including as

22 Explanation: Defending your position not by defending the status quo, but through new solutions

Head of the Economics Department at the Université Libre du Congo, before being appointed deputy general secretary at ICCO in 1972. At ICCO, he was given increasing responsibility for project policy, management, and procedures. Bos was responsible for board relations and external relations. But there were no watertight divisions between the work. In 1975, Van der Poort was appointed director of projects. He saw ICCO as an independent development organisation that needed to be separated from missions and diaconal organisations. Van der Poort saw more benefit in a direct relationship between the Dutch Council of Churches and ICCO: "ICCO is no longer the extended arm of the missions and world diaconates, nor is it any longer a service body at the service of the churches worldwide (...)" he wrote defiantly in 1975. Jone Bos thought Van der Poort's ideas went too far. Van der Poort also later distanced himself from this idea.

Incidentally, the gap between management and staff on the one hand and part of the board was much smaller than in organisations like VPRO, IKON or the Free University. As a professional organisation, ICCO was only in its infancy and there was no establishment yet. The board dedicated a lot of time for substantive discussions; there was a polite and friendly atmosphere. The members of the general board addressed each other formally and after the meetings they drank a cup of coffee or a drink together.

At issue was whether ICCO should grow and what direction ICCO would take in doing so. At a more fundamental level, there was the issue of what position ICCO occupied between government, participants, and overseas partners. ICCO had a monopoly on contacts with the Directorate-General for International Cooperation on behalf of the participants. In late November 1974, heated discussions about this came to a head with SOH and NZR. SOH and NZR disputed ICCO's monopoly on contacts with the government. Were ICCO's participants allowed to talk to the Ministry themselves, or not? ICCO's management wanted ICCO to be responsible for all contacts with the government, which was against the wishes of the world diaconates and NZR who wanted the contacts themselves, outside ICCO. Bos, however, considered such 'proliferation' dangerous, mentioning, among other things, that traditional, more orthodox protestant churches affiliated with ICCO, had quite a tendency to ask government funding for projects themselves. It would create enormous confusion if these churches were to ask for support for evangelisation projects, thereby endangering the underlying principles of co-financing. That would put ICCO politically in a difficult position, risking the accusation of proselytism. At the same time, the three intermediary organisations claimed the sole right to subsidise civil society organisations overseas. Pronk thought about giving the embassies powers to do so as well, and Bos vehemently opposed this.

On the other hand, ICCO itself gradually started establishing increasingly non-church contacts overseas. This created tensions with some participants. Bos now says: 'We started with churches, then it became churches and church organisations. Then it became churches, church organisations and church-related organisations or Christian organisations. Then it became general organisations, led by Christians. The capstone was supporting general organisations with purposes with which we expressed solidarity, an example of this is the ANC.' With this broadening of criteria, more overseas projects and activities came within the focus of ICCO's rapidly growing staff. Increasingly projects were submitted directly to ICCO by applicants (1973-1976: 57%), a diminishing percentage came in through participants (1973-1976: about 20%). The rest came through Councils of Churches, the World Council of Churches and a few through Dutch nationals present locally.

Critical year

In 1975, the discussion on growth reached a critical juncture. Should ICCO accept the opportunities offered or not? There was some hesitation among both the staff and the board. It seems like a luxury problem in retrospect, but by the mid-1970s ICCO faced a doubling of the budget, and this not only presented opportunities, but organisational tensions. The staff opted unanimously for expansion. The main argument was that refusing the money was out of the question, given the 'need in the world': 'We can get that money and why shouldn't we use it?'

But was ICCO capable of spending the money in a meaningful way? Overall, accepting such sums of money was a leap in the dark. There was great hesitation among some members of the general board. The relationship between mission, world diaconate and development aid was threatened by Pronk's ship of money. At ICCO, everything was suddenly possible. Moreover, there was growing resistance among ICCO staff to funding 'traditional mission projects'.

Equally important was the fear that ICCO staff would start 'freewheeling on government money'. Some board members feared, not without justification, that the influence of the participants would be de facto reduced and that the staff would start setting ICCO's course. The board used to discuss all projects; now that became completely impossible. A certain loss of function was looming for the board. However, that loss of function had already started earlier. In the late 1960s, a working group had already been formed from the board to prevent policymaking from falling too much into the hands of the staff. At the time, the number of staff could be counted on two hands. People were also wary of too much government influence, since ICCO had to follow Pronk's objectives in spending its budget.

The dominant reason for the growing resistance came from the assessment of the role of big money in developing countries, associated with the freeze on a freeze on money idea. In the 1970s, the Assembly of the All African Council of Churches called for a freeze on aid from the North. A moratorium was necessary to prevent African churches from becoming copies of Western churches through financial dependence. In the Netherlands, the moratorium idea received support from NZR general secretary Rein Jan van der Veen. He had discovered during his travels that big money could negatively affect relations between people and was therefore an opponent of the growing flow of money towards churches in developing countries. Van der Veen: "I had great hesitations about government support for mission and diaconate, but when the amounts threatened to double, those reservations became even stronger. Originally, the government was to co-finance mission projects, but the amounts Pronk allocated to us meant that ICCO would have to look for projects itself, because the demand from the churches would be exceeded. I had strong objections to that. That was contrary to ICCO's original intention and would also make ICCO a second Novib."

The difference in approach between the participants and the Executive Board did not prove unresolvable. The Executive Board did not want to let go of contact with the participants. Bos: "I always considered the rooting in our Protestant constituency to be tremendously essential. It gave us our identity. It was extra work, but you got a lot of trust in return."

Step by step, the Executive Board managed to take the chill out of the air. One discussion paper after another was launched and in June, the Executive Board called a special meeting on growth. As a result, the staff got a fiat from the general board for accepting the new possibilities.

So, what was the secret of the Executive Board that led to the acceptance of growth? It was a club of friends. In addition to Jone Bos, there was Albert van den Heuvel and the quiet, aged analytical sociologist Rien Munters, who himself had once been seconded by SOH and the NHK for a project in the Middle East. Munters: "Albert van den Heuvel was clever at devising smokescreens. We are not choosing the growth model, but the persistence model he would say. Van den Heuvel seemed to agree with everyone, he charmed first some and then others and then it actually seemed like there was one point of view." Van den Heuvel lifts a snip of the veil: "Governing is a combination of running the meetings neatly, but of course between meetings there is quite a phone bill. That kind of governance handiwork worked great at ICCO because those people all had great love for the work anyway. You should not make people feel that

they do not matter, you should try to convince them with arguments. I used to jokingly say to Van der Veen: 'Go ahead until I convince you.'" Van der Veen says of this now, "I have the impression that if you really had something to say that people listened. Albert was smart, but he did give you space to express your opinion." According to Van den Heuvel, another factor was that he and Jone Bos were on the same page, without Van den Heuvel interfering in the day-to-day work: "I like remote management, no, I don't want to do the work of an Executive Board. The Supervisory Board directs and inspires the Executive Board." Jone Bos was the facilitator, always deliberating on the pros and cons and ready to present them at the perfect moment. Munters: "Bos manipulated, he is a regulator. Tactically a real diplomat. Played on his intuition and his skills in kneading people."

That massage art led to further agreements on how to fill in the options in late August. Bos wrote an internal policy note in August 1975 that was accepted in full. In it, it was agreed, among other things, that participant involvement should be strengthened through a separate staff member. The Executive Board was expanded and the working group, whose main task was now in danger of being eroded by staff expansion, would be revived. ICCO could continue to grow, and the governance woes were over for the time being.

Why didn't the opponents of growth get it their way? Bos: "If a few people know what they want and the rest just make comments without clearly saying stop, then those few people go ahead." Philip Quarles van Ufford, who together with Rein Jan van der Veen represented NZR on the ICCO board and during the 1970s increasingly commented on ICCO's development, which he detested, although he did not vote 'against' at the decisive meeting in June 1975, says: "Rein Jan van der Veen had it all figured out much better than I did. I was obsessed with the fact that the money could all be so well spent and that there were so many useful causes. Moreover, we were extremely decent. There was an enormous hesitancy to move on to internal group formation. If you disagreed, you did not engage in political machinations, but continued to debate on substance." In the late 1970s, Quarles van Ufford would many times express his dissatisfaction with what he called the marginalisation of the board: "The general board is in danger of becoming a body that only has to sanction", and on the domination by the staff he remarked "It has become an independent club for development projects". Regarding the government's enormous influence on ICCO, he asked: "Now the Ministry and ICCO are on the same page, but in the long run, is one able to disagree with the Ministry?" Quarles van Ufford wanted to keep ICCO tied to its participants. His displeasure would only grow stronger over time.

Growth in practice

In the 1973-1975 annual report, Jone Bos, and Albert van den Heuvel wrote: "We feel like children going swimming in the sea. To their minds, they have gone through three ordinary swimming pools before they have even reached the first surf. It's the same for us." The work ahead was enormous. ICCO had to be transformed from a small organisation to a professional one in a few years. This came with growing pains. According to ICCO doctor F.C. van der Horst, ICCO's staff was quite overworked at this time. It was decided to have the organisation audited. For this, the later minister Ien Dales was recruited. According to Dales in her report '*Signalement 1976*', ICCO was in the transition phase from a pioneering to a settled organisation. Employees complained about the workload. According to Dales, the management paid too little attention to the 'maintenance' of staff and too much emphasis was placed on achieving production. According to the report, there was too little consultation on fundamental issues. Dales traced the problems to the "leapfrogging of available funds."

A big leap forward was made in 1976. ICCO had to put guilders worth of projects on the table on the two dates of 1 March and 31 December 1976 together. Quite a job! Bos: "Man, man how awful that was!" ICCO managed to submit everything in time for 1977. But what the general management was apprehensive about happened naturally because of the strong growth: ICCO was forced to look for new partners.. To fill the growing budget, projects had to be found. The traditional relationships, churches, and church organisations had insufficient 'absorption capacity' for the growing amount of money. Where a lot of funding did go through national Councils of Churches, bureaucracies arose, leading to imbalances within the church and the bureaucratic project management. Munters: "When the big growth came, you had to start managing projects. The staff member for Latin America, for instance, had to achieve a turnover of five million guilders." Staff had to travel on their own in search of projects to absorb ICCO's share of the growth. For several years, Cebemo took over the unspent share; ICCO simply could not manage to allocate all available funds.

In the Latin America department in 1976, the cupboard of projects was empty. Later general director Cees Oskam made a trip to Latin America that year and did partner acquisition in its most basic form. He phoned Protestant churches and organisations on the spot from his hotel room. He built a partner network from scratch. Oskam considered it his job in the Latin America department to spend the money in the best possible way. Because of the vast number of projects the Latin America department put away in a brief time, he was sometimes mockingly called the 'project farmer'. ICCO began to value production. In 1978, it was proposed to give staff in the departments that had achieved a lot of 'turnover' extra days off, provoking a storm of protest internally and some satirical letters.

In this way, ICCO was building a new partner network overseas separate from the old networks of churches and church organisations. At the same time, the relative share of former missionary staff in ICCO rapidly decreased. Both Cees Oskam and later deputy director of Policy and Evaluation Bram van Leeuwen, as well as Roel Aalbersberg, later secretary Information and Education, and Biem Lap, as newcomers to the Latin America and Asia departments respectively, still came into a bed made by former mission workers. They themselves did not come from the mission. Among other things, Oskam had previously worked as an agricultural engineer on overseas projects of the Dutch government, Bram van Leeuwen and Roel Aalbersberg came from university, Biem Lap from the Social Academy.

The Latin America department, originally set up by Kees van der Poort, was ICCO's fastest growing department. Broadening the criteria also allowed investments in people, as it was so nicely phrased. In this continent, it was not about schools and hospitals or knowledge transfer, but about supporting the struggle for "justice and liberation. Better reception structures existed in Latin America than in the other continents. The infrastructure for cash grants was well developed in the continent; a civil society already existed. ICCO had few natural partners in this continent, but thanks in part to the drive of Cees Oskam and his staff, it acquired an extensive network of contacts.

A term first mentioned in 1973 was 'community development'. That term covered a remarkably diverse connotation: from wells to trade union work or supporting a community centre in a poor neighbourhood. It is also notable that the number of *Kleine Medefinancieringsprojecten* (KMPs, Small Co-financing Projects) increased sharply. KMPs were approved through a lighter and quicker procedure than *Grote Medefinancieringsprojecten* (GMPs, Large Co-financing Projects) and did not need the approval of the central government in a country; only that of the government at local level.

ICCO constantly had to redefine how much money it could spend responsibly; it never accepted money indiscriminately. That policy decision was, however, the result of a long struggle for ICCO. The record of that struggle can be found in the first official policy document 'Development and Participation' written by Kees van der Poort, at that time acting general director alongside his position as director of projects, because Jone Bos was on study leave. He held this dual position for a long time. Van der Poort was instructed by the board, to substantiate what ICCO could spend responsibly. Van der Poort: "I then asked the heads of departments to check very critically with the staff, each for their own region, what was possible and feasible and how much staff would be needed for this. On this basis, I wrote

the concept note 'Development and Participation'." The results of the first meeting of the 'Reverse Consortium', a relatively new development in the history of co-financing, were incorporated into the final note.

Reverse Consortium

Within ICCO, the debate about the role of money in developing countries has always been topical. Does western money promote independence and opportunities for development, or does money create dependency and silence people? With the rapidly growing flow of money, this discussion became more urgent by the day in the 1970s.

The answer that advocates of cash aid always gave was that money offered development opportunities to people in situations of need and deprivation; provided it connected to grassroots-level activities of the people themselves. ICCO wanted to develop people overseas. People, created in the images of God' must have the opportunity to develop themselves, in other words, their civic space in society had to be increased. ICCO could not do this directly by itself. It sought—with or without the mediation of its participants—contact with overseas organisations from the beginning of its existence. Those organisations reached people at grassroots level. ICCO did not exist for its own sake, but for the sake of overseas organisations. The quality of relationships with overseas organisations determined the quality of development opportunities.

In the mid-1970s, people were looking for ways to strengthen those relationships. In this, 'power sharing' was a frequently used word. From now on, ICCO wanted to formulate its policies together with overseas organisations and share its budget. The terms 'donor' and 'recipient' would become outdated and be replaced by the more congenial concept of 'partners'. The terms used were new, but in fact the policy was in line with the course advocated by Verkuyl in the 1960s: it was about assisting overseas organisations, not ICCO or missionaries there.

Power sharing stemmed from ethical considerations—it was a reaction to colonial-era power relations and an attempt to break the patronage. Bos: "The balance of power in the world was flawed. We wanted to share power on the basis of the conviction that we have a common stewardship for this world and because it distressed us that countless projects overseas were being decided upon in Utrecht, which would be better judged in the countries themselves." Power-sharing also had an important function for ICCO's practical work. If the partners themselves were allowed to help decide how the money would be spent, it would automatically mean that ICCO would move closer to its objective of reaching the poorest of

the poor. The partners could better decide for themselves how the money could benefit the underprivileged as much as possible.

Consultation with partners was formalised during the 1970s. In June 1977, the first major meeting took place. This was followed by three regional meetings and the second major meeting in 1979. Representatives from overseas partners and ICCO board and staff consulted on the content of words like partnership, power-sharing, and participation. These meetings were called a 'Reverse Consortium'. In the past, there was always a consortium: a meeting of western donors with one overseas recipient who jointly aligned their policies. In effect, the donors were decisive. The 'Reverse Consortium' turned it around. Now the flow of ideas ran this way, or vice-versa. With the 'Reverse Consortia', recipients of money were given the opportunity to influence ICCO's policies.

The Reverse Consortia had several quite different results. Partners didn't react as expected. Already at the first meeting in June 1977, they were not keen on 'power-sharing' and certainly not on co-decisions concerning the allocation of funds. Van der Poort: "They foresaw—much better than we did—that they would end up in a hornet's nest if they were made jointly responsible and accountable for the distribution of ICCO's funds." In fact, the partners presented ICCO with a question that held a mirror up to the Dutch organisation: Who are you really and why did you convene us? The idea of transferring power seemed genuinely nice, but the partners did not wish to act as a solution to ICCO's own problems (how do we spend the money responsibly?). ICCO had to show its real face: where do you stand as an organisation politically and socially? It would spur self-examination. Partly under the influence of the Reverse Consortia, ICCO also started to focus more strongly on informing and raising awareness in Dutch society through the channels of its participants. To this end, a new Information and Education Department was created. According to Van der Poort, ICCO was ahead of its time with the Reverse Consortia. Bos still looks back on it with some pride: "It was a completely unknown phenomenon. We sat at the table as a donor with 20 recipients speaking out. It was ICCO's own drive, but it has had a lot of impact on general thinking about co-financing."

Relationship with the government

The Reverse Consortia formed an important and specific contribution of ICCO within the GOM. Cebemo would play the most significant role within GOM when it came to liaising with the government. In terms of the size of the co-financing programme, Cebemo very clearly set the agenda. Because there was a fixed allocation key, ICCO followed, albeit reluctantly.

The relationship with the government changed dramatically during the 1970s.

Minister Jan Pronk did not yet grant GOM members full autonomy. The new ministry of development cooperation, the anti-revolutionary politician Jan de Koning—a long-time member of ICCO's board—completed the independence process of the MFOs in 1980. In that year, the programme grant model came into force. The basis of this model was a mandate agreed beforehand between the government and the four²³ MFOs: what is allowed with public money and what is not? Based on this mandate, the MFOs themselves had to decide whether to approve or reject projects. This gave the MFOs carte blanche to implement their programme. However, they were henceforth required to carry out extensive reporting and evaluations. This would trigger conflicts within ICCO in the early 1980s.

According to cultural anthropologist Paul van Paaschen, as a result of Jan de Koning's policy the MFOs started to align their policies with those of the government. This reasoning is, however, far too simplistic. The redirection of the criteria was not imposed on the intermediary organisations by Jan Pronk or Jan de Koning but was done on the initiative of the MFOs themselves who discovered in practice that the existing criteria limited their work in developing countries. From the beginning, the MFOs used the state to achieve their goals. The state did not incorporate the MFOs, but these organisations conquered the state, as has been the case in other areas, for instance that of education.

²³ Novib, Cebemo, Hivos and ICCO



Radicalisation and criticism 1981-1989

No development without rights and freedoms. ICCO supported people affected by human rights violations. Family members of missing persons in Colombia demonstrate for justice, human rights and peace.

Photo: Project Counselling Service (2010)

III. Radicalisation and criticism. 1981-1989

The size of ICCO's budget increased in the third development decade from over 75 million guilders in 1981 to over 145 million guilders in 1989. On 1 March 1982, ICCO employed 74 people; on 31 December 1989, it had a total of 114 employees. So, the number of employees and the budget did not increase as sharply as in the 1970s, but they certainly did not slow down either. This was despite a changing political climate.

The 1980s were the years of the no-nonsense policy of the Lubbers cabinets. The government ministers Cees van Dijk (1981-1982) (in Van Agt II), Eegje Schoo (1982-1986) and Piet Bukman (1986-1989) on development cooperation did not bring substantive innovations after Pronk's revolution and its elaboration under De Koning. Development cooperation became a part of foreign policy. Foreign policy had to represent Dutch interests as much as possible.

How did ICCO respond to this? ICCO, which in 1980 moved from Utrecht to the former sister house of the *Zeister Broedergemeente* (Hernhutters) on the beautiful Zusterplein in Zeist, continued the lines from the 1970s and did not adapt to the new political climate. For ICCO, the 1980s were a time of ongoing radicalisation and ideologisation, and of confrontation with government and its participants. Bram van Leeuwen: 'From the mid-1970s, there was great certainty within development organisations about the course and direction of their policy. Thinking was strongly black and white. Society was divided into 'good-guys' and 'bad-guys'. The 'good-guys' were with the co-financing organisations (MFOs), the 'bad-guys' with the government and the business community. We left this path in the mid-1980s when it became clear that our approach was not as successful as we thought.' At the end of the period, there was a lot of outside criticism of the MFOs, which were forced to take another leap forward to face the criticism.

Internal tensions

Internally, the early 1980s for ICCO were a time of tension in the management, staff, and board, but also between these sections. These were turbulent years in all respects. The democratisation movement that paralysed universities in the 1960s and 1970s received a belated response within ICCO's staff. Why so late? When the uproar ensued at the universities, ICCO consisted of former missionary staff: people from overseas who had not closely followed social developments in the Netherlands. In the late 1970s, ICCO was flooded by university-educated staff,

who had experienced democratisation at universities. Politically, this generation belonged to the PvdA and even more left-wing political parties, but also to the EVP²⁴, a radical Christian splinter party that gained some electoral support in the early 1980s.

The 'General Staff', renewed in 1981, giving the staff the opportunity to meet in full. A Works Council was also set up and heated discussions within ICCO became normal. Decision making was a difficult process. ICCO staff were socially engaged, well-educated and vocal intellectuals who spoke at length about their views. Often the discussions took the guise of ideological disputes that were sometimes fought out in an argumentative tone.

At this time, the Works Council clearly took a hard line towards the management. A small example was the introduction of personal computers in the administration in the mid-1980s. This innovation would have cost one and a half jobs, which was reason enough for the Works Council to be totally against it. After many rounds of consultation, the introduction was postponed until 1988. Maria Verhoeven, employee from 1991 and later team leader of the Asia team, recalls from her first year at ICCO the hunched backs of handwriting employees. In 1992, employees were given their own personal computers.

The figureheads of the 1970s, Bos and Van den Heuvel, retired from ICCO in the early 1980s. Bos was succeeded in 1981 by Ole van Luyn, who came from outside the organisation. After a management crisis, his place was taken by acting director Cees Oskam in late 1984. It was only after 15 months that ICCO succeeded in appointing a new director: Gerard van der Horst. After his tragic accident in the mountains of Switzerland, Cees Oskam was asked to become general director again in 1988.

Albert van den Heuvel was succeeded as chair of the board in 1982 by economist Bob Goudzwaard, author of the *Christen Democratisch Appèl* (CDA) election manifesto *Niet bij brood alleen* (1976)²⁵ and highly committed to the cause of development cooperation. Goudzwaard had refused the development cooperation portfolio of the Dutch government offered to him in 1977 because he could not take on the government programme of the Van Agt/Wiegel cabinet (1977-1981). Goudzwaard, a student of Tinbergen, came from the anti-revolutionary blood type

24 Evangelische Volkspartij / Evangelical People's Party

25 (Man shall not live) By bread alone (Matthew 4:4)

of the CDA and had good contacts within the Christian Social movement. Coming from a Reformed milieu, he became an active member of the ecumenical movement. He would continue the line of Verkuyl and Van den Heuvel from 1982-1992.

ICCOnterfeitseis

Immediately after taking office in 1982, Goudzwaard wrote ICCOnterfeitseis (literal meaning: 'A Portrait of ICCO'), a memorandum positioning ICCO as an organisation, after consultation with the Executive Board. Goudzwaard placed ICCO in the field of tension between government, participants, and partners. Based on developments over the last ten years, he concluded that ICCO faced a choice between a participant model and a partner model. A participant model is one where the participants determine the policy which the staff implements. Goudzwaard immediately rejected this model, saying it would be going back in time. He also disliked a one-sided partner model. The partner model had the major objection that it disregarded the role of the participants: "It has something of sawing off the branch you are sitting on." He saw the solution in a convergence of the participant model and the partner model. He cherished the bond with the participants, but at the same time sought to deepen the bond with the partners. ICCO needed to prevent its staff from acting as an isolated vanguard, he said.

Reciprocity

Goudzwaard maintained this stance during the 10 years of his presidency. But it was not going to be easy. Rien Munters says: "The Bible says: Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves (Matth 10:16). Well, the shrewdness was with Van den Heuvel and the innocence with Bob Goudzwaard." Goudzwaard was amiable and inspiring as chairperson, but also business-like when he had to be. As an economist, Goudzwaard was strongly involved in the search for a just economic order. His thinking has been characterised as "moved realism", reformatory social criticism that culminates in radical, not to be confused with revolutionary-social views.

Goudzwaard liked to quote Bible texts. Regarding the relationship with partners, he preferred quoting a text from 2 Corinthians 8 verse 13 to 15. In that text, the apostle Paul says that, from the point of view of fairness, "at the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need". This reciprocity between partners should be the basis of all ICCO's projects, according to Goudzwaard. In the foreword to the 1982 annual report, he wrote that development cooperation was more than a goodwill gesture to poor countries. He saw in the development policy of the Dutch government an alibi for the continuation of international imbalances. According to him, "the current

development policy disregards the own voice and feelings of self-worth of the world's poor. It ignores the critical questions they ask of us, as co-responsible for the miserable position they are in. It makes us numb to the call for freedom: a liberation process arising from the poor in the Third World that forces us to choose with whom we really wish to stand in solidarity."

In line with the Reverse Consortium Goudzwaard opted for a radical conception of partnership. He was certainly not alone in this within and outside ICCO. In 1983, the four MFOs arrived at a joint policy statement. In it, they distanced themselves from government policy on development cooperation. The MFOs reserved the right to choose partners who openly opposed legitimate governments. Partners that sometimes bordered on communism. In 1999 Goudzwaard clarified this choice as follows: "Development aid in the 1980s served to ease consciences. In the Netherlands, minister Eegje Schoo demanded the MFOs not to do anything contrary to Dutch foreign policy. Well, that was not our intention. Number one for us was loyalty to the groups that were in danger of being trampled underfoot. We tried to look at world relations from the point of view of Southern partners. In doing so, we ran the risk of tensions with participants and with the government." Hasn't ICCO been too much of an extension of partners overseas? Goudzwaard: "I don't think so. We have not been blindly accepting of what the organisations in the South wanted."

ICCO became part of the countermovement in the 1980s, partly because of changing government policies on foreign policy. Still wanting to work complementary to multilateral and bilateral aid, ICCO increasingly rowed against the tide. Looking back on these years, Cees Oskam said: "We very clearly chose a contrarian approach. This has by no means always been successful. Nevertheless, I remain proud of this approach because we had the 'guts' to make bold choices."

The CLAT affair

A telling example of a bold choice that put fierce pressure not on the relationship with the government, but on that with a participant, is the so-called CLAT affair. ICCO's connection with CLAT, *Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores*, an umbrella organisation of Latin American trade unions, dates to June 1974 when Kees van der Poort made the first contact. CLAT was not a Christian organisation in name, but many Christians were involved. In the early 1970s, CLAT found support in the Netherlands from the (small) political parties left, especially the PPR (*Politieke Partij Radicaal*)²⁶, and from large parts of progressive church people in the

Netherlands. Influenced by increasing contacts in Latin America, initial enthusiasm for CLAT in the Dutch left waned. Subsequently, the newly merged CDA embraced CLAT.

Within the staff of the Latin America department, initial enthusiasm gradually waned during the 1970s. According to staff members, CLAT was in the camp of the opponents of the political liberation process and was organised far too centrally. During this period, the Latin America department employed quite a few political activists, declared opponents of the harmony model. These people had developed an aversion to compromise, partly because of their contacts with Latin American partners, who often defended human rights through fierce struggle: "There is no third way between capitalism and communism. You are either for the revolution or against it." CLAT was out of favour. Under intense pressure from the Latin America department staff, ICCO wished to phase out its support for CLAT in the early 1980s.

CLAT had a partner in the CNV in the Netherlands through the WVA (*Wereldverbond van de Arbeid*)²⁷. The CNV, one of ICCO's constituent participants, demanded ICCO's continued support for CLAT. In the meantime, however, ICCO had found other partners in Latin America. Cees Oskam, promoted to director of projects after the departure of Jone Bos, therefore saw no reason to comply with CNV's wish: "ICCO's policy cannot be a sum of the policies of its constituent participants." Staff, management, and large parts of the board supported this.

Henk Hofstede as CNV's representative on the ICCO board since 1974 felt far from happy with the developments. He stood alone in the board in his plea for CLAT. Hofstede: "The ICCO staff preferred to listen to Arie Groenevelt (chairman of the radical *Industriebond*²⁸ NVV) than to me. ICCO attracted more staff who were not on the harmony line and cared less and less about the participants. There were no clear selection criteria on hiring new staff that had to determine which partners were chosen. In doing so, many mistakes were made." Hofstede opted for trade unions that were not directly dependent on political parties: "I warned, from my knowledge and experience, against supporting crypto-political and radical trade unions that turned out to give disguised support to armed resistance." It stung him that, as a representative of a loyal participant, he was not asked for advice. He strongly protested the excommunication.

²⁷ Word Confederation Labour, nowadays known as International Trade Union

²⁸ Industry union of the NVV (Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions)

The ICCO board was in a quandary. CNV would reconsider its membership if ties with CLAT were ended. At the same time, the highly active CLAT Netherlands was trying to gain its own status with the Ministry. The board searched feverishly for a settlement. The importance the CNV gave to the matter became clear when the entire higher management came to a mediation attempt by ICCO's Executive Board. After this conversation, Cees Oskam, Henk Hofstede, and former director Jone Bos went on a trip to Paraguay, Nicaragua, and El Salvador in February 1982. The contradictions were not removed by this trip, the views were too far apart for that. Nevertheless, ICCO, CLAT and CNV came to a compromise. CLAT would no longer receive support for concrete projects at the central level but at the national level.

Looking back, Cees Oskam deemed it a pity that CNV and ICCO did not work together more in Latin America. Oskam: "We were diametrically opposed to each other at the time. CNV took the same rigid stance as ICCO. The church representatives stood behind the Latin America staff. And Bob Goudzwaard, although he could by no means be called a revolutionary, was also on 'our' side. He tried to dampen the conflict every time, but only partially succeeded." Yet in retrospect, Oskam had little admiration for his own position on the matter: "Surely I allowed myself to be somewhat naively carried away by left-wing intellectuals in Latin America who could speak convincingly and movingly about liberation and revolution."

Executive crisis

In 1981, Jone Bos left for the Ministry of Development Cooperation. As a result, a 'combative boss', (the qualification is from the daily newspaper *Trouw*), disappeared to The Hague, the city seat of the government. Bos had left his mark on the organisation for many years. He was the boss from the very beginning with the natural authority of the pioneer. Bos could don a suit and tie when that was considered the outfit of a capitalist by many staff members. The administrative staff called him You and Mr Bos.

Bos had led the organisation with heart and soul for many years. When he left, the board felt that the existing management structure was no longer entirely adequate. In 1975, there were two directors (Bos as general director and Van der Poort director of projects) to 20 staff. In 1981, there were almost 100 staff and still two directors. After Bos' departure, the board decided that the management would henceforth consist of three people. Ole van Luyn was recruited for the position of general manager. Van Luyn came from the International Bible Society. Besides Van Luyn, the board appointed two co-directors. The wide-ranging

position of Kees van der Poort (director of projects) was split into parts: the administration and management arm and the policy and evaluation arm. Cees Oskam, who had made a name for himself in the Latin America department, became director of projects and Kees van der Poort, who had replaced Bos for a long time during his absence, was given the newly created position of director of programmes and evaluation. In practice, the original Van der Poort position proved much more difficult to split than in theory. It would be the cause of a serious conflict within the management.

Van Luyn conceived his job as being representative and had a lot of trouble with the critical organisation. Mutual incongruities between the two other directors made ICCO's leadership wingless. Oskam was increasingly assigned the role of decision-maker by Van Luyn. The board wavered for an exceedingly long time.

Evaluation

The conflict was partly determined by a substantive difference of opinion on the role of evaluation. Since 1980, the Dutch government had required MFOs to provide *ex post* accountability in the form of programme evaluations. The debate on whether that evaluation should be external ran on. ICCO staff were not in favour of an evaluation team, which carried out an evaluation completely independently and separately from the responsible project staff. The staff felt nothing for what they compared to the 'inspection in the field' in the army. They saw an external evaluation team as control. Van Leeuwen recalls the employees' reactions: "Who are you? Do you understand how complicated the context of this country is? Can you say in such a brief time what is wrong? Come on!" Critical evaluation was seen as undermining solidarity with partners.

Oskam wanted to keep evaluation as close to the organisation as possible and drew it to himself as director of projects. This brought him into conflict with Kees van der Poort, director of programme policy and evaluation, who wanted to keep evaluation under his responsibility, and Philip Quarles van Ufford who was chairperson of the Programme Committee. Van der Poort and Quarles wanted to strengthen the independent evaluation arm within ICCO. Quarles: "The people who were spending the money obviously didn't feel like it. I thought there should be more balance within the ICCO organisation between the people who spent the money and the people who critically evaluated projects and programmes."

Most of the staff opted for Oskam. At a meeting, the members of the Works Council indicated by a show of hands who the board would allow to stay and who

would not. Kees van der Poort's portfolio was in danger of becoming increasingly diminished.

The conflict could not be resolved peacefully and remained unsettled for quite some time. ICCO risked becoming rudderless. Bob Goudzwaard remained hesitant for a long time about the right solution. The board finally chose, in a meeting led by Henk Hofstede, to dismiss Van Luyn and Van der Poort from their positions as directors. Both were offered other positions within the organisation, but Van der Poort refused. He was honourably dismissed and soon found a new job as a consultant within the World Council of Churches.

In 1999 Goudzwaard said of the crisis: "It is not a pretty page in history. It deeply affects human situations and afterwards you think: couldn't this have been done in a different way?" The whole course of events prompted Quarles van Ufford to resign as a board member at the end of 1984. He believed that all three board members should have been fired. He was also outraged at the marginalisation of evaluators working at ICCO. However, his view on the matter did not gain the support of the majority of the board.

Cees Oskam was appointed acting director. Oskam said of this in 1999: "Of course, I should have shown solidarity with my fellow directors and also relinquished my position, but I lacked the greatness for that." Oskam had built a good reputation within the organisation as director of projects, a man of "no bullshit but work" who did not mince his words. It would take 15 months for the board to find a suitable new general director.

Justice and compassion

Gerard van der Horst was, according to those who knew him, a charismatic and creative person. Someone who was of immense importance to ICCO, partly because of a good entrance into politics and The Hague civil service. He was full of ideas and put all kinds of things in motion. One of his first projects was to write a new policy document entitled 'Justice and Compassion'. He wrote this memorandum together with Bob Goudzwaard. Goudzwaard experienced the cooperation with Van der Horst as particularly fascinating. According to Goudzwaard, justice was the norm for international relations. Compassion indicates the warmth of commitment to the other. Van Leeuwen: "The paper was typical of the thinking in this period. Much emphasis is on commitment to the poverty issue (poverty is injustice!) and on solidarity with partners who stand up for the poor. The focus is on structural change (justice), but when circumstances make this impossible, ICCO should continue to support partners to address the need to the best of their ability (compassion)."

This note emphasised the principles of development work. Goudzwaard was very fond of this, as it reminded him of the language of the 'principles' of the party from which he emerged. Here the intention of ICCO's work is stated rather than the goal formulated. The note appealed strongly to the compassion of ICCO staff.

Under Van der Horst's reign, the organisation grew considerably. Project turnover rose from 112 million in 1985 to NLG 145 million Dutch guilders in 1988. The number of staff exceeded 125 during this period. According to the 1987 annual report, the continuing growth of the apparatus made it clear 'that the organisation has definitely outgrown its infancy'. The Dutch government made more money available for co-financing and contributions from the European Community increased significantly. Kees van der Poort wrote in 1999: "Within ICCO, Goudzwaard's 'economics of plenty' has certainly not been applied." He was increasingly sceptical of the growth of co-financing over time. Within ICCO, however, the freeze was no longer a topic of discussion in the 1980s.

In the spring of 1988, Van der Horst died in an accident. The 1987 annual report said, "In the two and a half years he was with us, he managed to convey to those around him something of what his personal inspirations were." Cees Oskam was asked by the board to take up the position of general manager. He accepted the position, which he would hold until 1994. Oskam had boundless energy: he was never tired, had expansive knowledge of ICCO and ran a tight ship. In 1999, he said, "I should perhaps have wielded the honey pot more and the vinegar bottle less." Oskam was the man of "better a wrong decision than no decision". He did not hide his views.

Women

Three themes were central to the projects of the 1980s: human rights, democratisation, and women. In fact, the human rights theme was already present in the 1970s. Democratisation, according to Oskam, was a prerequisite for development. However, ICCO understood democracy to mean much more than co-decision in politics. It was about the 'possibilities for development' of people and groups. It also included social justice: the distribution of a country's material wealth. It required ICCO's support for the 'struggles of ordinary men and women'.

The theme of women was new. Until 1980, there was no active policy at ICCO regarding the position and participation of women in development policy. There were also few women on the staff and board, while they were heavily over-represented in administrative and secretarial positions. In the year of the woman (1975), Rein Jan van der Veen wondered on the board whether this was inevitable.

Jone Bos explained that no female applicants turned up for staff positions. According to Jet Kraemer, this shortage was caused "by the fact that quite 'heavy people' are asked for, who must be willing and able to travel a lot. Women are often unable to do this because they have dual duties."

Ten years later, things had changed, after frequent struggles with the men in the organisation. After 1980, there was a growing focus on projects and programmes specifically aimed at the emancipation of women. This happened externally under the stimulating influence of minister Schoo and of the Women's Council of Dutch Development Agencies. Internally, Jet Kraemer and Ada van der Linde were the pioneers. Positive discrimination was applied in the appointment policy. Part-time work made higher positions more accessible to women. By 1989, the ratio of men to women was about fifty-fifty. But still no woman had been appointed to a management position and women still predominated numerically in administrative and secretarial positions, while they were heavily underrepresented among project staff. Only well into the 1990s would a woman be appointed as a board member and another as chairperson of the board. In the new century, men once again dominated the board.

In 1986, the increasing focus on women in non-governmental development work led to the appointment of Jet Kramer as emancipation secretary. Zwaantje van 't Veer says in her thesis on this issue (1988) that the creation of the position of emancipation secretary threatened to create an alibi for the rest of the staff. Emancipation work was assigned to Jet Kraemer and the rest of the organisation did not actively involve itself with it. That would only change in the 1990s. Then the position of emancipation secretary was abolished, and women's emancipation (gender) became an integrated part of ICCO policy.

Uncertainty and criticism

Uncertainty about the meaning and effects of work occurs eventually for all people working in development work. Putting intentions and ideas into practice remains difficult. But it usually takes a long time before this uncertainty is openly expressed. Jone Bos noted on the side-lines of a report on yet another conference on the poor in the mid-1970s: "It is quite an observation that we are all at a loss when it comes to really reaching the least privileged in this world." Albert van den Heuvel was speaking at his retirement as chairperson of the board of ICCO's mission impossible. Before his appointment in 1973, Van den Heuvel was still quite sure of the route to follow. At his farewell, he said, "Although this house (ICCO) means income for many and important dedication of the spare time of others, I am largely led by doubts, uncertainties, a fair share of frustration and frankly, even no

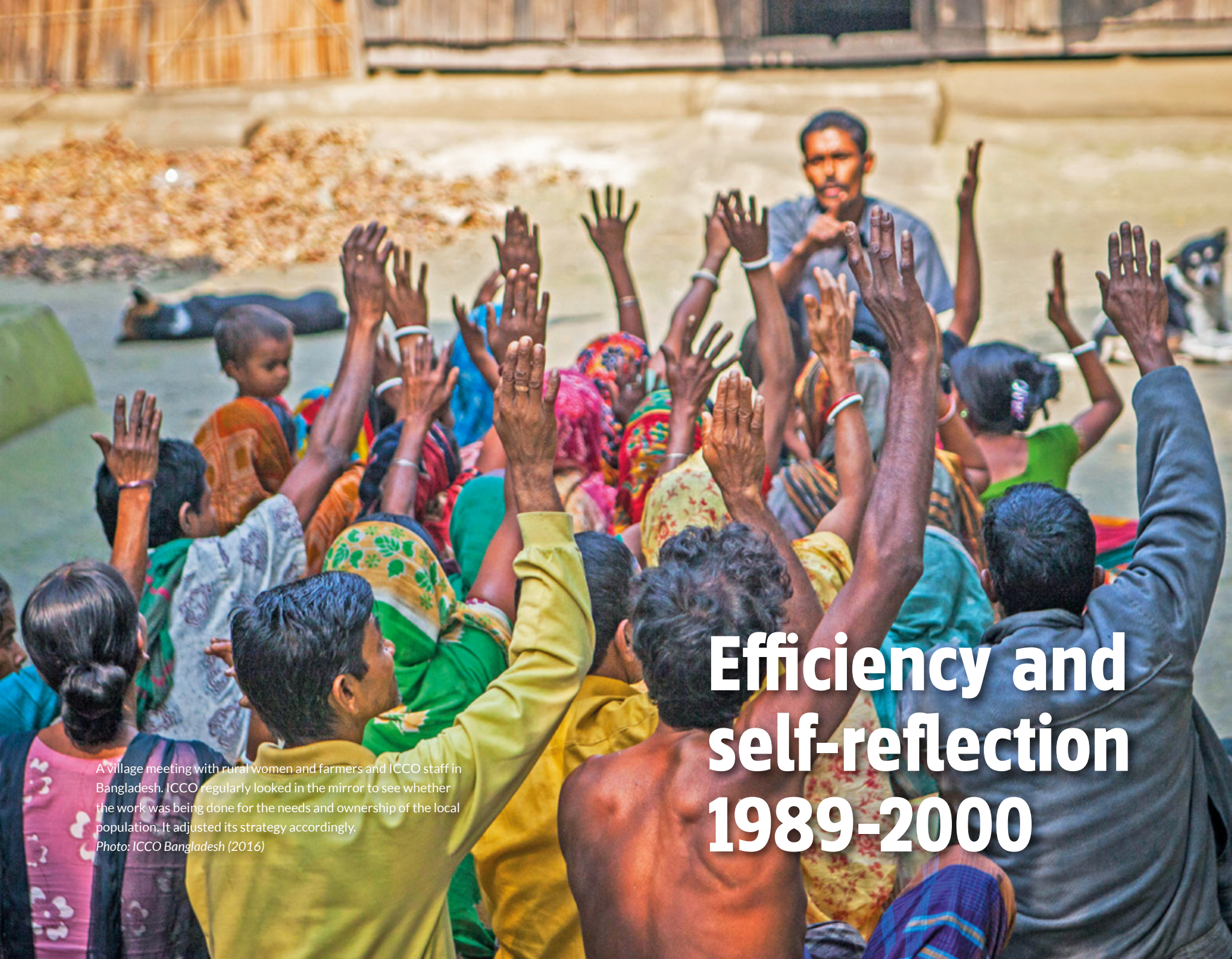
small bitterness.” Frustration, he explained in 1999, because it proved so difficult to change the relationship between rich and poor. Frustration also over the fact that projects often entailed dependency, that they often favoured a small minority and that they encouraged corruption. According to Van den Heuvel, ICCO had failed to operationalise the concepts of social justice, self-development, and self-reliance. At the time, in the early 1980s, Van den Heuvel was understood by few.

In retrospect, Bram van Leeuwen observes that it was only after the mid-1980s that great uncertainties crept in across the board about the meaning of all work done. Van Leeuwen: “In the first half of the 1980s, complacency prevailed. Who could blame us, we were good, weren’t we? Back then, we lacked the ability to look critically at our own programme. That had to be developed very gradually.” The uncertainty arose after the results of ten years of innovation and growth became visible: “A number of things went well, but there were also failures due to incompetence and overestimation of possibilities. How was it that this only became visible after ten years? It was because the effectiveness of the new programmes was much harder to determine than the earlier brick-and-mortar projects. You can check whether a school or a hospital has been built, but whether a community is now functioning better because of a programme is much harder to determine. We only grew to understand this gradually. Moreover, the emphasis in the 1960s and 1970s was on preparing funding decisions, not on implementing programmes. We can also observe in retrospect that we thought for too long that good intentions would automatically lead to good results.”

The uncertainty within the organisation was compounded by growing criticism from outside. Such criticism, for instance, again came from former board member Philip Quarles van Ufford. He took aim in a 1988 article, as well as in later publications, against what he called the ‘bureaucratisation of ICCO’. According to him, ICCO was governed by the systemic goals of the professional staff, no longer by the board and the participants. ICCO was no longer a source of strength of Dutch churches and Christianity. More important than its own identity was its image to the outside world. If it could be made clear to the outside world that everything was running smoothly, ICCO’s survival was guaranteed. Because externally, hardly anyone was able to check whether ICCO’s politics rested on sound foundations. Because external control was lacking, the MFOs became an end in themselves. The organisation had become a futuristic robot that determined its own course and direction. Thus, Quarles van Ufford said in 1999: “My criticism applied to institutional development, not to people. I believe there have always been excellent people working at ICCO. My criticism came from the pain I felt about a development I loathed. I was asking too much, but I loathed an ICCO,

like a merged Diaconese Hospital, that denies and lacks any relationship with its past and its identity. An organisation also that is on the government’s leash and unwilling to put itself under criticism.”

In retrospect, there is also a certain appreciation of his views. Goudzwaard says in 1999: “Quarles saw consequences of our policies at the beginning of the 1980s, which we ourselves had not yet realised sharply. I can imagine that some recognition of his criticism would have kept him within ICCO.” At the time, his ideas were not shared by the board and certainly not by the staff. On the contrary, the majority felt ICCO was extremely critical of government policies. Also, the insistence on more influence of the participants did not find much resonance. Goudzwaard: “The idea that the participants should call the shots and the staff should be exclusively Christian was more of a pipedream than a real possibility.” According to Goudzwaard, Quarles’ 1988 article was not a bombshell to ICCO: “It was almost seen as a rear-guard action.” However, the media had a different opinion. Quarles van Ufford’s criticism was picked up upon. The daily newspaper *Financieel Dagblad* published the article ‘Atom bomb under development aid’. In its 1988 annual report, ICCO reported on the mounting criticism. Its rebuttal was still strongly defensive. The flight forward would soon follow.



A village meeting with rural women and farmers and ICCO staff in Bangladesh. ICCO regularly looked in the mirror to see whether the work was being done for the needs and ownership of the local population. It adjusted its strategy accordingly.
Photo: ICCO Bangladesh (2016)

Efficiency and self-reflection 1989-2000

IV. Efficiency and self-reflection. 1989-2000

The fall of the Berlin Wall complicated the world. Differences of opinion disappeared and with it, gradually, so did discussion. Ideologies and grand narratives gave way to pragmatic reflections, with contradictions blurring. Who could ever have imagined that the former archenemies VVD (liberals) and PvdA (social democrats) would be in one cabinet? Who would ever have thought that employers and employees would seek solutions to economic issues together?

The 1990s were the years of cooperation and galvanisation, of efficiency and modesty, of more market and less government. The language of the 1990s was that of management. It was no longer about intention or solidarity, but about practical implementation. It was more than ever about achieving goals and results. In the non-profit sector, developments in business management were followed at some distance in time 'tree huggers have been fringed', as Quarles van Ufford put it. In the prevailing management language, the words professionalisation, quality and accountability for results take centre stage. What did all this mean for ICCO?

Development cooperation

Jan Pronk returned to the Ministry of Development Cooperation in 1989. He set out his ideas in the note 'A world of difference' (1990). Pronk tried to give development cooperation its own place again, but his efforts were curtailed by budget cuts. These cuts were the result of policies of Purple 1 (1994), the first government composed of liberals (blue) and social democrats (red), without Christian parties in office.

Pronk introduced the concept of 'sustainable poverty reduction' as the central objective of his policy. According to Pronk, poverty reduction meant empowering the poor themselves to use their productive capabilities. Sustainable development, the second key word, meant that the growth of overseas production should go hand in hand with a fairer distribution of productive and natural resources. Pronk was as positive towards co-financing organisations as he was in the 1970s and challenged them just as much. In his last budget (for 1998), he increased the co-financing share to 10 per cent of his budget.

In 1998 at the advent of 'Purple II', Pronk was succeeded by Herfkens. Eveline, from the World Bank, immediately wiped the floor with her predecessor's policy by severely limiting the number of aid-receiving countries. Countries that wanted

to qualify for aid had to meet the characteristics of 'good governance'. That is, those countries must be well governed and have good policies.

Mission and product

ICCO too did not escape the spirit of the 1990s. Professionalisation became the catchword. In 1996, ICCO had drawn up a mission statement: Working towards a world free of poverty and injustice. ICCO also provided a product called 'Financing activities that encourage and enable people, in their own way, to set up a decent living and working environment.' This includes an annual turnover that grew from f 147 million in 1989 to f 210 million (€ 95 million) in 2000.

The terms 'mission', 'product' and 'turnover' are considered metaphors within ICCO. "Metaphors are useful to change a certain state of affairs," says Just van Es, who succeeded Cees Oskam as general director in 1994, "but there's also a lot of bullshit attached to them, especially where our kind of organisations start adopting corporate terminology out of a sense of inferiority."

In ten years, ICCO gradually shifted from idealism and solidarity to pragmatism, without directly renouncing compassion. Goudzwaard says: "Principles were translated into practice through a new lens." Staff appointed in the 'eighties' and 'nineties' worked side-by-side in the organisation. People from the eighties contrary to government policy if necessary. Nineties opted for an effective organisation, they thought it was important for ICCO to provide insight into the projects' procedures, they thought public accountability to Dutch society was important and saw no harm in cooperation with the government and business. The contrast between eighties and nineties stoked a lot of discussion. Which was better, church-based or non-church-based development work, and was it about delivering quality? Or did that matter less if your heart was in the right place?

Impact study

Support for the MFOs united in the GOM was controversial in the 1990s. Criticism erupted in full force at the end of the 1980s. The MFOs, long operating in the lee, were now getting wind of the situation: how were they performing? Were they reaching the poor? Were they contributing to poverty reduction? Society demanded accounts of their activities.

1989 was an important year for the MFOs because it was in this year that the impact study was initiated. Cees Oskam claims he was the first to start talking about the need for such a study in the GOM context. According to him, the trigger was a meeting organised by the daily newspaper *NRC-Handelsblad* where press

people and scientists discussed the significance of co-financing. The meeting offended him and at the same time pushed him to face some facts. Oskam: “Boy, boy, did we have a bad time in that little room. Criticism was flying around our ears from all sides. I realised that we indeed did not have objective material with which to defend our right to exist. We simply did not have the measuring instruments to determine whether a project had been good or bad.”

The criticism brought a “shock” to what was called the gang of four: Oskam and the directors of Cebemo, Novib and Hivos (the MFO who had since joined the original trio). Oskam thought it was time for a study on the results. The powerlessness impotence had to be overcome. The study was comprehensive and paid for by the MFOs themselves. The steering committee of the impact study was initially supposed to meet under the leadership of Jan Pronk, but his appointment as minister hindered that. Subsequently, Paul de Waart, former official at DGIS, and at that time, a professor of international law, was prepared to wield the gavel. The objective of the impact study was: ‘To determine the effectiveness, efficiency and significance of the co-financing programmes of the four MFOs, as much as possible from the perspective of disadvantaged groups and individuals in developing countries.’ The study, consisting of field research, country studies and file research, was carried out by dozens of renowned researchers.

The investigation was completed after a year and a half. The main findings were published in a final report handed to minister Jan Pronk on 27 September 1991. The report ended with the following summary: “This investigation does not reveal outright failures or cases of corruption, nor entire successes. The picture is neither black nor white; grey tones prevail. There are clear shortcomings. Economic impacts are there but there is little visibility on costs and returns, and sustainability can be doubted. Fairly successful organisations are in the oldest area of NGOs, that of social welfare. (...) Quite an impact has also been made by those organisations which, under repressive regimes, focused on civil society strengthening. Precisely determining the impact of their activities in this field is often difficult, but NGOs can fulfil a socio-political function especially in organising and defending countervailing power to oppressive regimes

So, the report gave no cause for complacency to the MFOs, but it was not scathing either. They could work with it if they wanted to. The results certainly did not disappoint the MFOs. Cees Oskam: “After the study was finished, the MFOs reacted defensively. We only got a six, while we had counted on a seven or an eight!” Pronk wisely advised MFO to think a bit longer about a response and not to respond from a place of too grand expectations.

In retrospect, Oskam says the impact study was of eminent importance to the MFOs. “The results were not negative for us. We had shown that we were not afraid of criticism. We were able to silence the critics. Towards the government, it worked very well. We now had an objective analysis of our significance and that did not hurt us. We came up in a positive way in the House of Representatives in the 1990s. The findings of the impact study did force some modesty on our role overseas.”

Professionalisation

According to Cees Oskam, the outward effects were thus significant. At the same time, ICCO’s reorganisation and innovations in project implementation were boosted by the impact study. The adjustments are best represented by the term ‘professionalisation’, meaning an ‘increase in quality and expertise, of the organisation as well as of individual officers within the organisation’. Staff themselves were sent on refresher trainings as early as the late 1980s. Funding procedures were laid down and standardised much more than in the past.

The implementation of the renewal of the organisation was placed in the hands of the consultancy firm MEDE, which emerged from the trade union movement, in the early 1990s. MEDE wanted to forge the organisation into greater unity. The regional departments were said to be working too much on an island. MEDE proposed a division of the organisation into an A and a B department, in which all regions were represented. There was also a C department, that of Policy and Communications. All employees were reassigned to break open the stalled mutual communication and thus bring new fire into the organisation. After MEDE, Consultancy firm Twijnstra and Gudde produced a new reorganisation plan. On a few A-4 sheets, it mapped out a route that was more successful than MEDE’s complicated plans, on which opinions differed widely. Twijnstra and Gudde’s starting point was to hold employees accountable. The organisation was decentralised.

Wouter Tims, appointed in 1992 as Bob Goudzwaard’s successor, supported this reorganisation wholeheartedly. Tims had been appointed to the board on behalf of the NZR in the mid-1980s as Quarles van Ufford’s successor and was vice-chairman for several years when he took over Goudzwaard’s gavel. He still marvels that he, noteworthy a former director at the World Bank, was asked to be chairperson. Tims: “That showed courage. The World Bank was regarded by some within ICCO as a capitalist-imperialist instrument. My appointment signalled ICCO’s willingness to critically examine its own organisation.” Tims, trained as a macroeconomist, had gained a lot of experience in running an organisation

at the World Bank: working methods, steering, evaluation, record systems. So, he was the right man in the right place to guide the reorganisation from the board. As chairperson, Tims placed different emphases on ICCO's work than Goudzwaard: "Bob was passionate about identity and motivation. I had and have ample respect for that. *Gerechtigheid en Barmhartigheid* ('Justice and Compassion'), the memorandum Bob wrote together with Gerard van der Horst, was very well formulated. We also took that as the starting point for the note that appeared under my chair: 'Signs of Hope'. However, we went on to operationalise the principles."

Evaluation

Evaluation, which had caused so many problems in the organisation in the early 1980s, was revamped in the late 1980s. ICCO was looking for ways to improve its working methods and thus be able to monitor whether the set objectives were being achieved. In 1989, the Policy Development and Evaluation Department was redesigned, with experienced staff member Bram van Leeuwen as head. Evaluation was henceforth seen primarily as a learning process for ICCO and its partners.

The results of evaluations were seen as indispensable management information and therefore became a regular part of the project cycle and of a multi-year agreement with partners. Oskam: "Evaluation comes into the hands of the project officer. Together with the partner, he agrees on several measuring moments. These measurements are carried out by partners in cooperation with overseas agencies. Then, instead of two white people going to tell partners what is wrong, evaluation is part of the improvement process." Later, the concept of monitoring, the close monitoring of the project, would be given more emphasis.

Staff who were initially a little hesitant about this innovation gained more confidence in it during the 1990s. Maria Verhoeven, project officer in the Asia department, says: "In the past, ICCO was still sometimes embarrassed by evaluation. That used to be associated with distrust. In the 1980s, it was politically incorrect thinking if you asked a liberation movement to account for how it spent its money. Now that has changed. In the global South, the business-like approach is much more accepted than it used to be. Transparency benefits all parties. People at the grassroots level need effective help and we cannot justify any wasteful spending to Dutch society."

But not all staff were equally pleased with the changes. The ICCO cabaret, founded in 1989, featured in its programme *Schuivende Dozen* ('Moving Boxes') two gentlemen, "dressed in pale grey goat's wool outfit", who made no secret of their dissatisfaction with the changes: "It seems as if production is the only thing that matters nowadays. You used to be able to spend your time on meaningful things,

like improving the world, talking to your partners on the phone, catching up with colleagues. Nowadays, all you do is sit at your computer, filling in how much time you spent sitting behind it. Having a nice meeting for once, there is hardly any time for that anymore."

Partners and civil society strengthening

In the wake of professionalisation, on the one hand, the concept of 'partner' lost some of its romantic and mythical traits. Maria Verhoeven: "ICCO and overseas partners do want the same thing but have different roles. Bram van Leeuwen: "As a donor, you allocate funds. We must judge from our responsibility. Partners are essential to development processes. We have an interest in their existence, but of course they cannot take over our role." Oskam: "As soon as you wave around with the money, there is no longer equality. In day-to-day work, it is about implementation capacity and about a good business relationship." ICCO's project staff were instructed to lay down the project's procedure much more concretely. In addition, staff cost awareness was improved through in-service training.

On the other hand, the relationship with the partner was also strengthened and expanded. The partner, usually an overseas NGO or a Council of Churches, had the function of using the money for poverty alleviation in the broad sense of the word. ICCO's policy in the 1990s also focused on strengthening the overseas NGO itself. Terms that became part of this were 'capacity building' and 'institutional development'.

Poverty reduction and civil society strengthening went hand in hand, because an NGO that functions independently between government and population is an important stimulating factor for building a healthy society. When NGOs cooperate and play an effective role in civil society, a developing country becomes less dependent on aid from the North.

Business and efficiency also have drawbacks. The octogenarian Goudzwaard called effectiveness and accountability a limited paradigm. He feared that short-term results may seem successful but are far from clear in the longer term. Just van Es saw the danger of a false ideology: "You predict your results in advance and then you report on what you predicted. In doing so, you fulfil your accountability to society, and exercise due diligence in the procedures, but you limit reality." Oskam: "Business as usual can turn into finishing procedures. A partner can be sought who is able to speak the donor's language as a professional. Who fully meets the requirements of the procedures but has no basis in the overseas society." Results thinking also had the risk of only looking for opportunities to score projects.

A new director

In 1994, the board appointed a new general manager: Just van Es. Van Es was appointed to carry through the change process initiated internally. Cees Oskam who was struggling with his health took a step back to the position of general manager with an emphasis on external relations. When he decided to work part-time in early 1998 for health reasons, he was appointed consultant. Cees and Just worked very well together in this constellation. The ICCO cabaret sang about Oskam:

*'Who led ICCO through its tough years?
Got many wrinkles, but no grey hairs?
He is no longer at the helm.
Nor does he care anymore.
Now he hands out visions...and sometimes cigars!'*

In the same song, the cabaret sang about Just van Es:

*'Not a tie man, but still, something of a gentleman
Management seemed nice to him for once
He is happy to share power
His style is a bit like playing
So, he brings a different atmosphere here in the house. (...)
Let us do the man some Just-ice:
He makes sure there is peace again.'*

Pastor and philosopher Just van Es joined ICCO in 1992. He had worked in Indonesia and, after working as a pastor at the Heldring Foundation in the town Zetten and as an academic staff member at the Free University in Amsterdam, was looking for a position that involved overseas contacts. He started as coordinating secretary with the task of merging two Asia teams. Leadership began to fascinate him: "I wondered if you could get people to cooperate in another way than through conflict and endless ideological warfare. I was not afflicted with a clear ideology when it came to development cooperation, so I thought what is it all about? I found the opposition between quality and solidarity and between church and non-church fruitless."

Just was appointed director when Twijnstra and Gudde were working on their reorganisation plans. He supported the proposals to decentralise the organisation: "The teams are the heart of our work. We do not need good intentions; we need good projects. Employees must be given space to use their creativity. Their knowledge must be used and increased."

One of the central concepts of the new general manager was modesty. Bram van Leeuwen: "From his persona, Just cannot help but delegate and decentralise. He questions everything, is a good debater and pierces through preconceptions." Under Van Es' leadership, many new ideas emerged, although some complained that he did leave too much to the staff. Under his leadership, the old antagonisms, which were waning anyway, came into a new perspective. A different atmosphere also emerged in the Works Council. Maria Verhoeven: "It was not always 'no' to the management again. The Works Council became proactive instead of reactive. They negotiated instead of digging in their heels. Meetings were no longer ritual dances, but rather they looked at what was feasible."

Modesty, according to Van Es, was also needed regarding the results of ICCO's work. The value of an asset was easy to determine, according to him, but the results of co-financing are more difficult to determine: "Quality also means, first and foremost, that as an organisation you are modest about your own role." Nelleke Gerbrandy, staff member for the Horn of Africa, experienced the same. The result was only visible in the long term: "ICCO does not work alone. We are one of the actors contributing to development together with many others. Together you achieve more. In the 1970s and 1980s, the various human rights movements in Latin America contributed to the departure of dictatorships. ICCO is one of the organisations that financially enabled the human rights movements to stand up for justice."

Identity

In April 1995, Just van Es initiated an internal reflection process called 'Meaning and Coherence', partly prompted by society's demand for ICCO's *raison d'être*, and partly intended to achieve a new joint alignment after the reorganisation. Why would the government make so much money available to an organisation like ICCO? What distinguished ICCO from other organisations now?

The purpose of the reflection process was also to show that identity could be discussed normally without arguing or judging each other. Van Es: "You can say a lot about it without condemning each other. For me, it was an exercise in ecumenism. People's intentions are important, but you should not judge each other by them. It is not a sign of weakness if all staff members say the same thing."

The reflection resulted in the formulation of a mission statement, a formulation of the organisation's *raison d'être*. What does the organisation want to achieve and how does it want to do it and why does it want to do it? According to A. van Dalen who authored a thesis on ICCO's identity, ICCO's mission statement could, with some minor adjustments, "have been written just as well by the staff of Bilance²⁹, Novib or Hivos. Van Es denied this. According to him, ICCO's identity was not defined by stating creeds and emphasising its distinction from others. More important to him was the question of what ICCO's existence mattered to the poor. The entrance to the other is not found by a message or by a distinct identity but by embarrassment: "Those who are sure of their ideology and cannot let go of the thirst to control life, individual and social processes, those who are so attached to their paradigms, political or scientific, cannot understand the signs of the Kingdom."

A discussion about the identity of ICCO and Bilance arose in the daily newspaper *Trouw* in March 1996. In response to an article by journalist Johan van Workum, Van Es wrote: "Christian development organisations themselves do not ask for a premium for their identity, inspiration and good intentions either. They claim a share of the money available for development cooperation because they have the opportunity to do something useful with it."

New policies

In the 1990s, there were three main policy themes: human rights, gender, and environment. Every project was assessed on these three themes. The first two themes were also important in the 1980s; the environment theme was new. What was also new in the policy was that cooperation was sought with all kinds of organisations that were co-founders in the field of development cooperation. Van Es called this "opening the windows". Van Es: "We don't pretend to be the only ones who know how to do it. That is why we now engage with the business community, but also with the AIDS Fund, Agriterre etc."

The theme of aid and trade also came into focus during these years. ICCO funded timber producers who sold sustainably produced timber through European trade channels. This gave local people an income but also kept control over resources. It cut both ways because it also required a change in mentality in Europe.

²⁹ Bilance ensued in 1995 from a merger of the development organisations Vastenaktie and Cebemo. As the name Bilance did not become very well known, it was dropped after some time.

Van Es saw building ICCO's own identity as a second track of the new policy of the 1990s. ICCO should concentrate more on funding programmes in which people and organisations from different religious inspirations worked together. Overseas, every organisation has a religious component, and many problems arise because there is insufficient awareness of the meaning of religion in those countries. Here, too, Van Es wanted more cooperation within ecumenism, for example with the World Council of Churches' interfaith dialogue department, and not just the development arm.

Bram van Leeuwen emphasised partner development. When partners become stronger, they are better able to exert influence in their societies. Van Leeuwen: "So for ICCO the emphasis is not so much on what exactly partner organisations do, they primarily determine that themselves. ICCO considers it its core task to enable partners to achieve what they wish to achieve in the context of poverty reduction and democratisation. In doing so, ICCO pays increasing attention to partners' organisational development (capacity building) and institutional development. In doing so, ICCO will not limit itself to professional organisations, but will also continue to work in the periphery, because it is not only about scoring, but also about solidarity." ICCO staff member Nelleke Gerbrandy noted: "It is not only about solidarity but also about the fact that today's small organisations can be tomorrow's big ones. If we believe in potential, we want to give organisations a chance to develop. A donor who seeks strong organisations from the beginning fails in its own development task."

The relationship with partners would again feature extensively on the agenda in the new century.

Participants


In the 1990s, ICCO deliberately sought a closer connection with the Protestant family in the Netherlands. Bram van Leeuwen: "We need our participants, not only for political reasons but also for inspiration." Van Es saw a big task for the participants. With the merger of all missionary and world diaconal bodies of *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland* (GKN), *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* (NHK) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church into MDO (Service for Missionary and Diaconal Work and Ecumenical Relations), from 1995 called *Kerk in Actie*³⁰, Van Es saw opportunities to bury the old hatchet between ICCO and these bodies. Bickering must be ended for good. Van Es: "ICCO could very well be complementary to

³⁰ Churches in Action

Churches in Action.” That idea would be taken forward by his successors in the new century. Cooperation was seen as an opportunity to increase support in the Protestant Christian constituency. Incidentally, that did not mean that ICCO started recruiting donors or fishing for church funds. ICCO and *Kerk in Actie* concluded an unwritten agreement on this.

In September 1999, Just van Es and the recently appointed deputy director Hannie van Dijk left the organisation. The sudden departure was due to personal incompatibilities and a difference of opinion on how to run the organisation. Van Es was replaced by interim director Toine van der Sanden. Meanwhile, Wouter Tims had been succeeded as chairperson of the board by CDA politician Tineke Lodders-Elfferich in 1996. Under Lodders’ energetic leadership, a thorough board overhaul occurred. The number of board seats was reduced to eight in mid-1999. The distinction between general and Executive Board was abolished. The board was placed at some distance: it still functioned as a representation of the Protestant constituency, contributing ideas, and offering inspiration, but not interfering in the day-to-day running of the ICCO work organisation.

In 1999, Kees Biekart’s PhD thesis was published: *The politics of civil society strengthening*. Biekart examined the role of European private aid organisations in the processes of democratic change in Central America. According to Biekart, private aid organisations no longer had an advantage over government funds when it came to reaching the poor. However, he said private organisations like ICCO had played a key role in providing unconditional support to counter-power organisations. Their strength lay in building a critical civil society.

A man wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a blue shirt is holding a cluster of small, round pepper berries in his hands. The berries are in various stages of ripeness, with some being green and others turning red. The background is a lush green field of pepper plants.

ICCO invested in public-private partnerships. It brought knowledge and expertise of local organisations, governments, companies and knowledge institutes together, as, for example, in SpiceUp. This project developed geodata-based information services for pepper growers in Indonesia.

Photo: Raditya Narendra Putra (2021)

Collaboration and innovation 2001-2010

V. Collaboration and innovation. 2001-2010

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, ICCO's annual turnover grew to record levels: more than 130 million euros between 2007 and 2010. These were fruitful years for ICCO, but a new wind was blowing in The Hague; market thinking became leading in the development sector as well. Partly as a result, substantive and budgetary support would eventually greatly change in character.

ICCO and the other three big MFOs Oxfam Novib, Cordaid and Hivos lost their protected position. From now on, they had to compete for subsidies as individual organisations through business plans. The first business plan, which linked intended performance to required resources, covered the period 2003-2006. From 2007, the co-financing system (MFS) came into force, in which many organisations in the field of development cooperation could claim money from The Hague.

Increasing ideological divisions would not do the sector any good either. The catalyst for this was the attack on the World Trade Center in New York. The attack not only triggered some international conflicts, which seemed to be gone once and for all since the fall of the Wall, but also indirectly led to the growth of political parties in the Netherlands that did not want to spend a single penny on development cooperation. Finally, the 2008 credit crisis threw a spanner in the works. A banking and euro crisis caused a sharp decline in economic growth. The resulting government cutbacks also affected development cooperation spending in the years after 2010.

ICCO by no means rested on its laurels. Collaboration, and innovation were the keywords in this period. It tried to nestle deeper into its Protestant Christian constituency and took initiatives in the field of cooperation with the business community. Beyond this, ICCO developed a totally new way of working as well, summarised in the acronym ProCoDe (see further from page 78).

Wiping the slate clean

From its inception, ICCO had no direct relationships with a private and church constituency and relied largely on money from The Hague. There, successive ministries repeatedly made new demands.

During her term, minister Eveline Herfkens (1998-2002) wanted to wipe the slates clean. MFOs were relatively autonomous in determining the objectives of their work. In consultation with each other and with the minister, the organisations

united in the GOM were allowed to determine themselves the mutual distribution key and the destination of the funds. If only they could prove afterwards through evaluations that their work had been significant. That had now changed. The minister demanded precise business plans and determined herself whether those plans were honoured. Harry Derksen, director of policy and advisor to the board, said exaggeratingly: "The MFOs had to record in their plans years in advance which hare, where would cross the road, and at what time. Furthermore, Minister Herfkens allowed more development organisations to access sources of money from The Hague, limiting the pool for MFOs and causing fragmentation.

Agnes van Ardenne who succeeded Herfkens in 2002-first as state secretary, later as minister-continued with this. Van Ardenne fully committed to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, in particular fighting extreme poverty, among others by improving health care and education. Van Ardenne also demanded the MFOs to contribute their own money to increase the support base for development cooperation from their own recognisable profile, and to cooperate with the private sector. All elements that resonated with ICCO. She wanted the organisations to prove their right to exist in the constituency and not to depend solely on government money.

Brand awareness and support

During these years, ICCO was led by General Director Jack van Ham, who took up office on 1 January 2001. He had been hired to raise ICCO's public profile and establish external relations. As a Roman Catholic, unfamiliar with religious sensitivities in the Protestant world, he could act vigorously. "I was hired to make ICCO function, but don't bother me with all those church matters and Bible texts. We talk about the organisation and not about the problems in the church or the correct interpretation of the Bible." Before ICCO appointed him, he was director of Red Cross Netherlands.

Jack van Ham was ICCO's standard bearer, a flamboyant team player and networker who represented ICCO's interests everywhere, including in political spheres in The Hague. Rather a 'hands on' than an intellectual. Deputy director at that time Bram van Leeuwen says: "He revitalised the organisation, was a booster who got ICCO in tow after the difficult years of division and indecision at leadership levels." He led the management team, which in addition to international projects director Hans Brüning (who left in 2007) included two deputy directors, Harry Derksen and Bram van Leeuwen, as well as the Utrecht department heads later and regional managers. Harry and Bram had a long track record at ICCO.

ICCO tried to achieve the desired brand awareness by launching campaigns like Unlimited Involvement (2003) and Ik & Co (2005). Van Ham told a *Nederlands Dagblad* journalist: “We have been busy for too long without worrying about our support base in society; especially in Protestant circles.” By bringing positive stories, ICCO wanted to adjust the image of development cooperation among the Dutch as well. Unlimited Involvement featured the life stories of Abraham Mkrtychyan from Albania, Shupayi Mpunga from Zimbabwe and Epifania Lopez from Nicaragua. Well-known NCRV presenter Jacobine Geel became an ambassador for ICCO. She said, “The campaign offers a counterbalance to the pitifulness that development aid just doesn’t seem to get rid of”. By placing advertisements in Christian media, releasing leaflets and revamping the ICCO website, ICCO “hopes to regain support” wrote the journalist of the *Nederlands Dagblad*. With IK&Co, the organisation partnered with private initiatives that could receive grants and expert advice to carry out their projects. The campaign developed into a specialised department: Impulsis.

During this period, ICCO was also heavily involved in networks for international cooperation, both at home and abroad. Domestically, it was the branch organisation for development cooperation *Partos*, -co-initiated by Jack van Ham—which championed the joint interests of civil society organisations for international cooperation. Internationally, it was a long-standing member of Aprovev (Association of Protestant Development Agencies in Europe). ICCO also participated in several national and international ecumenical networks, such as the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and later, from 2010, the ACT Alliance, a global alliance, affiliated to the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches, in which 135 churches and church organisations in the field of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and lobbying participate.

Constituency and partners

ICCO worked very well in line with requirements from The Hague, invariably receiving an ample rating and the corresponding funding. Literally, it received this in the advice *Breed Uitgemeten* (September 2002) to the minister, in which the committee co-financing programme wide assessed the applications for subsidy (2003-2006). ICCO scored an average of 7-, which did not get in the way of the subsidy applied for. However, it did receive a package of homework, especially in the field of cooperation with its constituency and on improving relations with its partners.

That homework dovetailed with some goals ICCO had set itself before. Already in the 1990s, it had sought cooperation with other ecumenical organisations in the field of development cooperation. In the year 2000, ICCO merged with SOH

and DOG. SOH concentrated on emergency relief, refugee work, nutrition and food security, and DOG on poverty alleviation through short-term deployments of skilled personnel.

On the cooperation front, ICCO tried to kill two birds with one stone in November 2002: strengthen ties with partners in the countries where it works and strengthen its constituency in the Netherlands among Protestant Christian organisations and the so-called *Samen op Weg*³¹ churches. For the first time in 25 years an ICCO partner consultation was organised at the conference centre De Leeuwenhorst in the town of Noordwijkerhout. ICCO indicated that other times had come and reflected with partners on the way forward. On Saturday morning 30 November, this partner conference concluded with a public day at the Domkerk church in Utrecht. In the morning, there were speeches during a plenary session in a chilly church. And opportunities for partners and visitors to attend the information market, where Protestant Christian development organisations *Woord en Daad*, *Solidaridad*, *Tear and Edukans*, among others, presented themselves. *Kerk in Actie* was also represented here.

The result of these efforts was mixed. A survey showed that 85% of the evaluated visitors welcomed a joining of Protestant-Christian forces in the field of development cooperation. Afterwards, there was also some disappointment among the development organisations in attendance. Some of them felt that ICCO determined the agenda way too independently. *Kerk in Actie* was angry that ICCO had done nothing to publicise the proposed cooperation. Sensitivities like these would continue to play a role.

In the years that followed, the cooperation was accelerated. By 2002, an agreement had already been reached with Prisma, the umbrella organisation representing several Reformed and Evangelical development organisations. Cooperation with the *Samen op Weg* churches was also making progress. At the end of 2002, ICCO and the Service Organisation of the *Samen op Weg* churches concluded that there was sufficient common ground to further explore an intensive cooperation. On 3 September 2003, a covenant was signed setting out the cooperation and funding. Among other things, it was agreed that ICCO would move from the Broederplein in Zeist to the Service Centre of the *Samen op Weg* churches (from 2003 called Protestant Church in the Netherlands, PKN) on the Joseph Haydnlaan in Utrecht. Herewith ICCO literally nestled itself in the church constituency. Nothing seemed to stand in the way of closer cooperation.

31 Three churches set to merge into the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (2003)

By moving to the PKN Service Centre in the summer of 2004, an intensification of the cooperation with *Kerk in Actie* was obvious, although it would take some effort. Within the PKN, *Kerk in Actie* was responsible for missionary work, emergency aid and diaconate. In the field of emergency aid and world diaconate, *Kerk in Actie* and ICCO had a lot of overlap.

Rommie Nauta, who has worked at *Kerk in Actie* since 1998, recalls that the cooperation was initially somewhat MFO ill at ease. The staff were in separate offices in the same Service Centre. According to Rommie, the cooperation was judged positively on both sides, although the much smaller *Kerk in Actie* also feared that the big ICCO would swallow it completely. From the beginning, there was a certain tension because ICCO had to serve its master in The Hague, while for *Kerk in Actie* it was important that church people could identify themselves with its policies. Some groups within the PKN feared an erosion of the church identity of world diaconal work and the position of the missionary work. There was also the fear that money collected by local churches would disappear into a big pot and the government would (indirectly) sway the sceptre and not the churches.

All this (scepticism), however, could not prevent a deepening of the cooperation. Rommie Nauta: "We were optimistic that a movement towards each other would begin. Great to be part of a bigger picture, which could improve the work." Hans Brüning was very much involved in the collaboration during that initial period. As international programme director, he was responsible for the joint overseas departments and for the connection between ICCO and *Kerk in Actie*.

As of 1 January 2007, the work of *Kerk in Actie*'s overseas department was fully integrated with ICCO, although the staff remained in the service of its own organisation. According to PKN general director Haaije Feenstra, ICCO made a "bold countermove" of general interest into the church. From 2010, ICCO and *Kerk in Actie*'s fundraising also took place jointly. Ad Ooms, working as ICCO's fundraiser with institutional donors like the EU, was not so positive about this: "Unfortunately, there was no strategy and vision behind it (this moving into the church). The fundraisers were put together and had to learn by doing." An observation which was shared by an internal joint evaluation.

The choice for more cooperation also led to the formation of the ICCO Alliance in December 2005. Edukans, SharePeople, Prisma, *Kerk in Actie*, Oikocredit and ICCO signed a covenant to work together. This was done in the presence of minister Van Ardenne. It seemed like a win-win situation: ICCO could now demonstrate it

was nested in its own constituency, while the cooperation partners could access government money to fund their programmes.

Meanwhile, developments in the governance structure evolved further. Traditionally there used to be representatives of organisations from the broad constituency. By 1999, the number of board seats had already been reduced to eight. Board and management met regularly. Jack van Ham was in close contact with board chairs Tineke Lodders—with whom he always had a drink and a cigar—and, from 2006 onwards, with Doekle Terpstra. In 2008, the board was put at a distance. Entirely in accordance with the principles of the Tabaksblat Code, the board became a Supervisory Board. In the new set-up, members no longer were considered representatives of Protestant Christian organisations and churches but appointed in a personal capacity. Day-to-day management was in the hands of a board of directors consisting of Jack van Ham as chairperson (CEO) and Wim Hart as member (CFO). Proponents said the new set-up would strengthen the organisation's 'clout'. There was also opposition, as the influence of Protestant organisations and churches in the new Supervisory Board was far less than it had been in the old board, even though so much effort had been made to establish ICCO in the constituency and gain more support.

Future scenario 2010

Despite years of effort to strengthen civil society in low- and middle-income countries, and frequent use of the notions of partnership and ownership, there was still no real sharing of power. The board of directors was convinced that something really needed to be done, that ICCO had to renew itself. Partly stimulated by the demands of The Hague and competition from new organisations in its field, ICCO could not continue the path currently followed. In doing so, it wanted to join in with the idea exchange on international discussion platforms such as the World Social Forum. ICCO had actively supported the World Social Forum since its first meeting in Porto Alegre in 2001 onwards, both financially and by organising its own workshops at the Forum.

In 2004, the renewal gained momentum. Pierre Hupperts, a consultant who had gained considerable experience in change processes at Oxfam Novib and The Body Shop, helped ICCO to open its eyes. After he threw the cat among the pigeons at a meeting day of the Latin America department, Jack van Ham asked him if he also, could explain his views to the management team. On 28 April 2004 at conference centre *Kaap Doorn*, Pierre used terms like: 'Fossils' and 'Dinosaurs' in a PowerPoint to indicate that the MFOs could say farewell to their best days

if they did not drastically change course. ICCO, he said, was focusing too much on the ‘fleshpots of Egypt’ (read: the Ministry in The Hague), when there were so many other donors.

The provocative views matched perfectly with the leadership’s conviction that ICCO needed a complete overhaul. Pierre put the organisation on edge and, under the leadership of project leader Bram van Leeuwen, ICCO went to work. At the KNVB Sports Centre, the management team, board and staff discussed the future Van Leeuwen had formulated in the paper ‘Future Scenario ICCO 2010’. In the end, the ICCO family opted for a combination of two scenarios: decentralisation of the organisation and development into a network. This included transferring power and control to partner organisations over the years. The office in the Netherlands would become smaller. ICCO would henceforth also profile itself as a broker and networker, as an inspirer and lobbyist, in addition to its existing roles as financier, knowledge owner and service provider.

Van Leeuwen further elaborated the plans in a policy note entitled “ICCO in 2010?!” (4 January 2005), which also included a timeline. He presented his plans to staff as follows: “The question is whether the current forms of development cooperation are still sufficiently relevant and effective. And with that comes the question of whether ICCO itself is still relevant. Is ICCO able to meet the expectations it has raised in the Netherlands and in countries in the South?” 2005 was the year of decision-making, the year in which plans were fleshed out with all stakeholders. ICCO’s partners were fully involved in the process, first at the World Social Forum in January 2005 and then at meetings in the Philippines, Ecuador and Uganda. From September 2006, actual implementation of the plans commenced. The renewal was made financially possible by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs granting ICCO permission to use part of its MFS funds for this purpose. The renewal was given the name ProCoDe.

ProCoDe

ICCO wanted to transform from a Dutch development organisation into an international network organisation. Such a renewal requires comprehensive terminology. That term was the acronym coined in 2007, ProCoDe, which stands for: Programmatic Approach, Co-responsibility and Decentralisation.

The programme-based approach involves partners in each region working closely with each other and ICCO to set up a programme based on commonly identified issues. ICCO and partners in consultation think about financing and division of labour, and make use of each other’s services, rather than operating separately.

Co-responsibility means that partners in the countries where ICCO was working are made co-responsible for the programme: their influence and participation will grow. Doekle Terpstra said about this in the 2008 Verkuyl Lecture: “We should (...) not consider partner organisations as subcontractors of our political and economic agenda but give them room to develop themselves according to their insights. We should be prepared to listen much more to their ideas and try to jointly develop our insights further.” Finally, Decentralisation, refers to the desire to shift the organisation’s centre of gravity to programme countries, so that programmatic action and co-responsibility could be better shaped.

ICCO turned things around. The Utrecht office became smaller. The aim was to give partner organisations much more influence on policy and implementation, to implement context-determined policies and in any case not to let organisational costs rise. Policy was fed from authoritative councils: the regional councils for regional policy and the international advisory council for the strategic policy of the overall organisation.

Implementation was carried out by the regional offices and supervised by the regional councils. A much smaller office in Utrecht ultimately remained responsible to constituency and donors, and was given central tasks such as overall strategy, finance, IT, HR coordination, lobbying and advocacy in the Netherlands (and globally), but was no longer responsible for policy formulation and implementation in the southern regions. In 2010, there were seven regional offices. The plan was to expand this number to 10 in the following years. The regional councils did not include partners. Van Leeuwen later reflected: “We did not want a closed circuit (...). That’s why we didn’t want partner organisations on the council, because they had a vested interest in the prevailing policy.”

Decentralisation meant a lot for employment, especially in Utrecht. Between 2005 and 2010, the office shrunk from 250 to 85 people, while the regional offices recruited more and more staff to shape the new ICCO. The division of tasks and responsibilities between Utrecht and the regional offices was a tough job. It was also a matter of improvisation, recalls Latin America regional manager Conny Toornstra: “When I left for La Paz in 2010 with two suitcases to set up the regional office, the Portuguese-speaking Brazil was added to the team. After a few years, I also got Central America.” Many of the tasks had to be transferred from the relationship managers in Utrecht to new employees at the regional offices. Kees de Rooter, Southeast Asia regional manager says: “In those days, colleagues from Utrecht would travel to a regional office with documents under their arms, physically hand them over and return unemployed.” According to Conny, the

handover was often very emotional. “People sometimes had to cry a lot because of the forced severance of long-term relationships that had been formed during the dictatorships in e.g. Central America, Paraguay and Brazil.”

Understandably, the changes required a lot of skills from management and agility from staff. Jack van Ham noted: “I always stood in front of the group. Every month I held a roundtable meeting. People were surprised that the handover was really going to happen and sometimes angry, especially when they themselves became redundant. Occasionally hard nuts had to be cracked, but I did everything I could to get all people on board. I thought, if it doesn't go ahead, we won't all make it in the long run.” Generally, the staff supported the change in terms of content. Willemijn Lammers, working as programme manager for Sustainable Equitable Economic Development (DREO) at ICCO, among others—her own position was indirectly threatened by the regionalisation—says: “There was substantive support for the renewal. People were sometimes angry because it went so fast, but the direction ICCO chose was broadly supported internally.”

Friend and foe agree that ProCoDe has been a real paradigm shift, both in terms of content and organisation. The then board members were satisfied that they had given life to the innovation. The staff supported the substantive changes and ICCO thereby demonstrated that it was not a fossil, but able to adapt to the demands of the times. In retrospect, Jack van Ham is still proud of ProCoDe: “We were seen as an organisation that had a say in things. ICCO subsequently appeared in lists as an important influencer in international development cooperation.” Together with Willem Elbers, Bram van Leeuwen wrote ‘Opening up for influence’ in 2013. In it, he placed ProCoDe in the ICCO tradition of the ‘Reverse Consortium’ of the late 1970s. According to him, ProCoDe was also in line with the Protestant Christian tradition, where control was not placed with the synod or in Rome, but with the local congregation and the ordinary churchgoer. In the spirit of this, ProCoDe placed the control where it belonged, namely with the partners. Pepijn Trapman, long-time manager of the South and Central Asia regional office, says decentralisation allowed ICCO to penetrate the capillaries of southern society: “You are a player within the same playing field. It's like you investigate the heart of the different actors; you are really in conversation with partners. Sincere partner instead of donor.” Nijmegen scientist Lau Schulpen says: “Decentralisation was interesting. It was ahead of things. Today we call this shifting the power, which was visionary then, and perhaps still is now.”

So, the intentions behind ProCoDe were sincere and meaningful, but in practice it proved difficult to make the paradigm change completely. Kees de Ruiter puts co-responsibility into perspective: “Ultimately, the donor decides. You use money

from the State Department or from other donors; it is very complicated to reverse that.” The partners weren't all happy with the decentralisation, as the snoopers were getting close, and they were now expected to bear financial responsibility themselves.

There were doubts about the innovations within the Works Council at the time. Then Works Council chair Petra Hamers: “For us, the difference of opinion about ProCoDe was not in the consequences of the impending dismissal—for which there was a great social plan—but in the concern for the partners. Would they be sufficiently addressed in the new decentralised organisation? Were the established regional councils listened to enough?” Van Leeuwen responded with this: “ICCO made a huge change in a few years. The regional offices were obliged to implement the decisions of the regional councils unless there were good arguments to do otherwise, which had to be explained. We called this comply or explain. The council did not give non-binding advice. These had to be followed (comply) and if not: ICCO management and board had something to explain (explain).” According to Van Leeuwen, the Dutch staff had been replaced by a local staff in four years, and thanks to the regional councils and the international advisory council, ICCO would grow towards context-specific policies instead of policies dictated from the Netherlands. After 2010, this became a major challenge for directors and managers.

On the internal mixed feelings about ProCoDe, the ICCO cabaret aptly and full of self-mockery articulated:

*Here in the North, we write our plans
behind our desks, as best we can,
and make them yours down in the South:
it is for you to make them real
it's all part of our business deal
of which you know we are so proud.
Responsibility we share:
you add some things, for this we care,
because our plan's that you'll deliver.
We plant the seeds; you make them grow,
you're equal partner in our show,
these are the rules that you've been given!³²*

32 The lyrics of this cabaret song are freely translated into English

The show must go on

The renovation of ICCO was in full swing, but the shop remained open; ICCO simply had to do its work. In this decade, ICCO and later the ICCO Alliance, mainly focused on three main programmes, namely; sustainable equitable economic development (DREO), conflict transformation and democratisation (CT&D) and access to basic services (TTB), which used roughly the same share of the budget. The development of programmes and partnerships in the area of DREO particularly were spectacular in this decade.

DREO focused on improving the socio-economic position of small producers, entrepreneurs and workers. The programme supported farmers (and their organisations) financially and with legal and practical assistance, so that they received a good price for preferably sustainably produced products. Furthermore, it was about policy influencing to put sustainable equitable development worldwide on the agenda. ICCO supported international supply chains for three selected products: forest products, cotton and tropical fruits. For cotton, cooperation included Solidaridad and Cotton Connect, for forest products with IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative) and for fruit with Fairfood, Max Havelaar and Taste. For these products, a market with the right, 'fair' price was sought, and forms of sustainable production and distribution in the production chain.

During this time, companies were increasingly involved in ICCO's work, both in the Netherlands and in low- and middle-income countries. In doing so, ICCO listened carefully to the wishes of Minister Agnes van Ardenne, but was also able to contrast those wishes with its own experience in this field, more so than other MFOs. Africa expert Ton Dietz already noticed when evaluating work in Zimbabwe in the 1990s that ICCO focused on training entrepreneurship in this country. This, he said, was still disorganised, but it was progressive, compared to the other MFOs.

The new decade was the time of corporate social responsibility (CSR), for which the CDA economist Herman Wijffels made great efforts. In its 2003 annual report, ICCO reported, "Cooperation with companies is an important means for ICCO to create opportunities for economic advancement of poor groups in developing countries." In the 2004 annual report, the term "enterprising people" appeared for the first time. Even Jo Verkuyl was called an 'entrepreneurial person'. It was clear that a change was on the way. Companies were no longer seen as solely causing misery in the world but could also be an ally in the fight against poverty and injustice.

In the Netherlands, ICCO often fulfilled the role of broker, bringing companies and partners together. In 2003, for example, a cooperation was established between

ICCO and Albert Heijn. ICCO had relationships with partners in Ghana, that became important for Albert Heijn. Cooperation with other multinationals like Unilever also emerged, and later with supermarket Jumbo, Rabobank and many other companies.

Discussions about cooperation with companies were raging within ICCO during those years. Jack van Ham loved it all: "We linked the small entrepreneurs to Albert Heijn. I do not like being on the side-lines shouting, 'you have to do better' and then not run any further risks." Others did not see much good in what they called 'greenwashing companies'. In those years, the contrasts on these issues were much stronger than now. Could ICCO just work with any company? Did trade always benefit poor people? Didn't the big companies use ICCO and laugh behind closed doors because they could get government money for free through ICCO for risky projects?

How do you answer these questions? What is certain is that ICCO was partly a frontrunner on the topics of corporate social responsibility and sustainable entrepreneurship in those years, and took the first, difficult steps in this field, that others could build upon later. Willemijn Lammers: "We were able to establish contacts with those local development organisations, the contacts Albert Heijn did not have. In that fair trade corner, we were able to mean a lot, both socio-economically and ecologically. 'Human rights and business' was raised by us and is now on the agenda. A lot has happened in the world of corporates. Whether things are moving fast enough, you can question." Ton Dietz says ICCO has not shown enough self-awareness in this area. According to him, ICCO was exceptionally good at this cooperation with companies, in Europe and in low- and middle-income countries, but it did not sufficiently expand, or communicate, this after 2010 and was also not sufficiently rewarded for this.

One of the new initiatives in this area was the establishment of the Fair & Sustainable Holding (F&S) in 2008, which accommodated four companies to manage corporate and commercial aspects of the ICCO foundation's work. Willemijn Lammers: "In corporate life, more is possible, if you are a company yourself." F&S was also important in providing jobs for staff made redundant as a result of the decentralisation. In 2009, a consultancy branch (Fair & Sustainable Consulting) as well as the FairClimateFund was added. F&S wanted to participate (also by taking shares) in private initiatives and provide paid advice. New sources of money were tapped through F&S. The early years still involved a modest turnover between one and two million euros, on which a small loss was made in 2009 and 2010, but F&S would continue to exist and grow in the next decade.

The CT&D programme was also an important part of the mission in these years. Together with *Kerk in Actie*, ICCO supported civil society partners in this area. They assisted organisations to advocate for their rights so that they were able to participate in the process of political decision-making and in influencing public opinion in their country or region. ICCO often worked with partners who were strong in defending human rights in all facets. CT&D included improving the position of women and marginalised, mostly indigenous, groups, such as the dalits in India and indigenous peoples in Latin America. ICCO and *Kerk in Actie* also supported all kinds of initiatives to contain conflicts and prevent escalation. This sometimes required walking on eggshells. In the years after the attack on the Twin Towers (2001), it was often difficult for partners to oppose authoritarian exercises of power because they were very quickly called terrorists in their countries.

Regarding the last part of the objectives, access to basic services (TTB), Alliance members ICCO, *Kerk in Actie*, Prisma and Edukans closely collaborated. TTB was about increased access to basic services: food, water and sanitation, education and health. Food security, for example, included a programme in Haiti to increase agricultural production by supporting farmers' cooperatives. On the education theme, ICCO, *Kerk in Actie*, Edukans and Prisma collaborated programmatically (2007-2010), with Edukans doing the coordination. One of the successes was 'Ruta del Sol', a programme focusing on the right to education for the rural population of the Peruvian Andes. Machteld Ooijens, hired specifically to give education a face within ICCO, says: "In the field, there was the willingness between Peruvian and Dutch organisations to cooperate. That was exciting. I dare say that something good has come about here, that has benefited children in this area immensely."

Healthcare was coordinated by Prisma. Prisma, ICCO and *Kerk in Actie* administered the programme. In Cambodia, for example, a three-year health insurance programme was implemented, providing access to health care. A lot of money was also allocated to the fight against AIDS and its consequences on people and communities.

Most evaluated sector

The monitoring and evaluation of business plans received increased emphasis. ICCO had to constantly prove and make transparent and verifiable that its work was representative and added something. Annual reports widely reported the success or failure of programmes; the organisation was openly

accountable for its work. Development cooperation was the most evaluated sector in the Netherlands. Derksen: "All the MFOs, out of self-preservation, were boasting look here what we have achieved! They did everything to convince The Hague of their significance and 'impact'. The result fetishism totally got out of control. It was like driving a Volkswagen Beetle with the instruments of a Boeing 747."

In the run-up to MFS I (2007-2010), ICCO again submitted a business plan. In a huge cardboard box, the application was delivered in tenfold by car to The Hague. The application was very successful for the ICCO Alliance, as it received 525 million euros for four years, exactly the amount it had applied for.

In 2009, the whole circus of applications started again, this time for MFS II. In spring, minister Koenders set out the lines within which the private organisations were allowed to colour in the policy note 'Cooperation, Customisation, Added Value'. He continued the line initiated by Herfkens and allowed many new private organisations to compete for grants. Like his predecessors, he emphasised cooperation and alliance-building and wanted to involve the business community more strongly in development work. Koenders made it clear that Dutch embassies would be more involved in financing development programmes. And he announced that development cooperation would be cut because of the economic malaise. The minister received a lot of comments on his note, both from the left and the right. Most MFOs criticised it. ICCO was an outlier in this regard. It self-consciously expressed appreciation for most of the minister's intentions 'because it had already initiated the desired changes'.

In September 2009, it became concretely visible in the Netherlands that ICCO had changed. An international partner conference in the *Kontakt der Kontinenten* in Soesterberg was organised in the ProCoDe spirit. This conference was very different in format from the previous one of 2002. Partners were not consulted on plans already made, but went there on the spot, together with Alliance staff, to devise the plans. The conference also made it clear that co-responsibility can be very difficult in practice. Indeed, on day three, the conversation seemed to get stuck on a myriad of divergent opinions. Doubt struck. Was it really the right approach? Without speakers and without everything being cooked up in advance? The cacophony was only broken during a joint evening cooking session at *De Galgenwaard* stadium. The next day, the participants arrived at common principles that formed the basis of the application for MFS II and for the strategic policy plan.

Confidence

The 2009 annual report states that the change in direction from 2007 "is taking us in the right direction. People were confident that ICCO was well-equipped for the future and were generally very pleased with the results achieved over the past decade, backed by Minister Koenders who, on a visit to ICCO just before the fall of the last Balkenende government (February 2010), had expressed his amazement and appreciation for the far-reaching transformation ICCO had achieved in just a few years. Nothing seemed to stand in the way of proper remuneration for the great work.



Tomatoes in Kenya. ICCO specialised in strengthening climate-resilient, agricultural value chains, providing women and youth (in particular) with opportunities for good jobs, a fair income and food security.
Photo: Fans-Jan Fortunati (2005)

Focus and integration 2011-2020

VI. Focus and integration. 2011-2020

The second decade of the new century was a period of adjustment for ICCO in a rapidly changing global context. China, India and Brazil became major players on the world stage. Africa was not exclusively a continent of misery and poverty, but also of hope. In Europe, nationalist, conservative and populist forces became stronger. By the end of the decade, the economy recovered from the crises that plagued it.

In 2011, the Foreign Ministry's co-financing system (MFS II) grant was halved compared to the 2007-2010 period (MFS I). In 2015, the co-financing system ended and ICCO no longer received organisation-wide funding from The Hague at all. Since it mainly depended on it, this made ICCO vulnerable. How did the organisation react to the reduction in financial support from The Hague, what steps did it take to survive in the post MFS era and how did its rapprochement with Cordaid come about?

Halving

At 4pm on 1 November 2010, ICCO staff members sat tensely together in Room 2 of the Service Centre of the Protestant Church on the Joseph Haydnlaan. A wave of bewilderment and disbelief swept through the ranks when Marinus Verweij, just that day inaugurated as the new CEO, announced that the allocation under MFS II was around 70 million euros, while 106 million euros had been requested. This was the bleakest scenario. ICCO had counted on at least 80 million and hoped for 100. When, a few weeks later, the new state secretary Ben Knapen (CDA) announced an additional cut for the entire MFS II of 50 million euros, of which ICCO was charged a proportionate (large) sum, ICCO ultimately had to settle for 49% less funding in 2011 compared to the period 2011-2015. ICCO had become 'an old kid on the block'. The golden days of the NGO sector, and thus for ICCO, seemed a thing of the past.

The low allocation evoked fierce reactions everywhere. In *Vice Versa*, a journalistic platform, Nijmegen scientist Lau Schulpen did not have a good word to say about the Minister's approach. According to him, the government showed itself to be an "unreliable partner". Harry Derksen expressed his displeasure sometime later in the same magazine: "The big MFS organisations were told at the end of 2010 that they will have to take a cut of sometimes almost 50% to their funds in early 2011. We are not even given the opportunity to see how we can give some of the carefully built economic chains with small farmers and supermarket chains a final

push towards financial sustainability. (...) Too bad the accumulated knowledge and goodwill will be lost."

Derksen outlined a bleak future scenario for private organisations in the field of development cooperation: "The fishbowl will be even smaller, with even more fish and even less water." He expected further cuts and referred to the application of the principle of mutual competition by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Any NGO could compete for money from The Hague and competition would become even more cut-throat over the decade. According to Harry, the fish were all in a clump and would turn the water red. He hoped that ICCO (supported by the wise men of the international and regional councils) would be able to find a blue ocean again, in which ICCO might be less significant, but its southern partners even more.

The new Rutte government of VVD and CDA, which took office in the autumn of 2010, with tacit support from the PVV, was not in itself the cause of the development cooperation cuts—it was still implementing old policies—but it did mark the transition to a new era. That something had changed was shown, among other things, by a conflict with newly appointed foreign minister Uri Rosenthal (VVD). The latter castigated ICCO for once again pledging financial support to Electronic Intifada, a website that defended the Palestinian cause and, according to Rosenthal, notoriously went against government policy because it called for boycotts of products imported by the European Union from the illegal Israeli-occupied Palestinian Territories. Rosenthal threatened, in the conversation he had at the Ministry with ICCO's Verweij and Derksen and civil servant Bram van Ojik, that he would relegate ICCO to "posteriority" if it continued this support. However, ICCO invoked press freedom as a human right and the need to support organisations that take on the establishment and refused to stop the support. This infuriated the PVV and raised critical questions among some groups of believers within the PKN. Rosenthal did not follow through on his threat.

Baron von Münchhausen

After the announcement of the low allocation, dejection was high. ICCO was in shock in those first months. It had to pull itself out of the budgetary quagmire like Baron von Münchhausen by its own hairs, but also reinvent itself to ensure its survival. And all under the leadership of a new CEO.

Marinus Verweij—former tropical doctor and director of ZOA Refugee Care—was on the ICCO board for a long time and later the Supervisory Board. He succeeded Jack van Ham and was, in many ways, his counterpart. Verweij came from, and was well versed in, the Protestant-Christian world, more of a strategic practitioner than a theorist; not a figurehead, and according to himself, a connector.

The board took immediate action. Marinus Verweij and Wim Hart, together with Harry Derksen and international programme director Jan van Doggenaar, went 'out on the moors' to determine the strategy in connection with the necessary cuts. They decided to apply the chop-axe method, which would mean closing one or two regional offices. In the management team, some regional managers were amenable to this but, in the end, Verweij and Hart gave in to the protests of other regional managers and agreed to the cheese-cutting method: a little less everywhere. The result was that the planned growth in the number of regional offices was called off and certain programmes in certain countries were cut.

The cuts mainly affected the Utrecht office during these years. That is also where most of the redundancies took place. In the annual report, the Board of Directors euphemistically called the forced cutbacks and redundancies: downsize and reshape the organisation. It was a traumatic time for both those left behind and those who left. Layoffs in the previous decade, as a result of the introduction of ProCoDe, were still supported because they took place for the sake of substantive renewal and decentralisation of the organisation. The waves of layoffs after 2010 hit much harder and struck at the heart of the organisation's strategic strength. The Works Council disbanded itself for a short time because it felt the management was not listening to it enough. But open rebellion did not break out, as ICCO employees are generally amiable and loyal people. The cabaret sang to the music of Marco Borsato's *'Afscheid nemen bestaat niet'* in 2015:

*'Saying goodbye hurts a bit
Seeing a colleague leave
How to occupy all empty seats
Saying goodbye hurts a bit*

Regionalisation

With all the cutbacks in Utrecht, the centre of gravity of the organisation became even more regional during these years. That was where the future of ICCO's work lay. Regional offices began to grow, and country offices were also opened. Pepijn Trapman: "As regions, we worked very hard, for example on fundraising, because that had not really taken off before 2010. We did a lot of capacity development among fundraisers." Despite all these efforts, fundraising was a problem in these

years. This was evident in part from a fundraising scan conducted in 2012. It found that ICCO was not getting enough results from donors. According to the recommendations, ICCO should 'focus' on a few large institutional donors and not bombard all passing donors with proposals that ultimately yielded little or nothing. The latter proved a difficult task for the organisation.

Not everyone was (and is) equally happy with the way regionalisation took place after 2010. According to Bram van Leeuwen, the new management cut back too quickly on essential components such as the international advisory council. In the original set-up, this council was important as a source of inspiration. The regional councils in which co-responsibility was supposed to take practical shape were also not long-lived in every region. Van Leeuwen: "I think it is absolutely a low point that the Co of ProCoDe quietly bled to death after 2011." Harry Derksens' criticism echoes this. "The essence of ProCoDe was that partner organisations in the countries where we worked could set their own priorities." He feared that discontinuing the international and regional councils would put an end to setting a new course.

This is also where a criticism by scientist and consultant Fons van der Velden fits in. According to him, power was never actually transferred to local people. Decentralisation got stuck in good intentions: "There is nothing wrong with ProCoDe, but the crux of the problem is to translate intentions into consistent operational actions." His criticism focuses particularly on implementation through regional offices: "Why did ICCO start setting up independent units and not strengthen the partners there? You have added value as an international NGO, but why are you increasingly competing with autonomous local organisations?"

In a 2012 interview with Kees de Ruiters in *Vice Versa*, the issue raised by Van der Velden is also discussed. He denied that there was any competition: "We have explicitly communicated that where fundraising is concerned, we absolutely do not want to compete with local NGOs. We only submit proposals that local NGOs cannot bid for. The regional council also made this very clear. Because no matter how important fundraising is, the moment you start poaching it from local NGOs, you are doing the wrong thing. This is a very clear starting point for us."

Leena Lindqvist, manager of the West Africa regional office in Mali from 2016-2021, believes she is not competing with partners for donors in her region. Implementation of programmes is done jointly, which happened less before 2016. She says regionalisation is a golden opportunity: "I notice every day how important regional rooting is To win respect, you must be here. Moreover, the regional presence allows us to be in the middle of the necessary network, so everyone knows us here."

Economic programmes

ICCO had to not only downsize but also reshape in the years after 2011. Verweij: “ICCO was looking for its DNA and how it could be translated into a vision that would keep it afloat in the development cooperation market.” Focus was one of the key words of these years, concentration on the things ICCO was good at. Not only in fundraising, but also in that of programming.

Gradually a picture emerged of the path ICCO would take, although it would take a lot of effort to get the new direction off the ground. In November 2013, the future plans came together in a multi-year strategic plan. It was called ‘Strategy 2020: Towards a just and dignified world’. The focus would be on economic programmes. Key themes were justice and dignity, and livelihood security. It was not only about financial and technical support, but also about strengthening civil society organisations.

ICCO had two unique selling points (USPs) at this time: one emphasised economic aspects, from basic services to sustainable production chains (USP 1), the other on supporting people without power (human rights) to break down the chains of dependency and injustice in a programme-based approach (USP 2). ICCO staff member Piet Posthuma summed these up with: “USP 1 is about the poor in chains and USP 2 is about the poor out of chains.”

ICCO Investments

One of the concretisations of the renewal was ICCO Investments (2012), a wholly owned subsidiary of Fair & Sustainable Holding (F&S). ICCO Investments was an extension of the entrepreneurial activities of the previous decade, although the focus would now be on real investments rather than soft loans and grants. ICCO wanted to develop as an entrepreneur as well as a donor.

Mark Joenje was recruited to set up ICCO Investments. Mark had gained experience at Money Meets Ideas, Rabobank and at Ecofys and was determined to build a commercially successful fund that delivered returns for ICCO. He would invest his committed capital in social enterprises, i.e., those that were profitable but also socially and environmentally sustainable, which would later be called impact investment. ICCO kept its word: directors Verweij and Hart tapped 15 million euros from other parts to form the fund. Of the ICCO Alliance partners, *Kerk in Actie* participated. Finding suitable investable companies was difficult. The companies selected by the regional managers in which to invest were deemed unsuitable by Joenje. Moreover, the agreement was to invest in all regions, which made the operational costs of the fund extremely high. Nevertheless, a

start was made, and investments were made in companies in all regions where ICCO was active. With the track record built up, efforts were then made to attract investors from outside ICCO. That attraction of external money for this broad portfolio failed. When Joenje saw that this global fund had no future, he changed the strategy in consultation with the directors. He set up the Capital4Development Asia Fund in 2017, which included several companies in Asia from the ICCO portfolio, with a total value of around 10 million euros. He then looked for new investors in this fund. After a lot of effort, he eventually gathered enough investors who collectively put in \$30 million, just enough to give the fund a future.

Besides this fund, ICCO also invested in less profitable companies, using money from investors who considered social and sustainability aspects more important than profits, among other things. This was investment combined with handholding: the companies (max. investment €50,000) were helped to get their financial housekeeping in order and received assistance in many other areas. With these kinds of small companies, the risk is a lot higher than the companies Joenje was looking for in his fund. Therefore, in 2015, these companies were transferred to Truvalu, which came under the leadership of Jaap Jan Verboom.

ICCO Cooperative

Marinus Verweij and Wim Hart had great confidence in the economic programmes. Marinus Verweij was also committed to intensifying cooperation with Alliance members. In this, he was supported by Doekle Terpstra and by his successor as chairman of the Supervisory Board, Johan de Leeuw. They hoped it would put an end to Protestant fragmentation in development cooperation. An added benefit was that the intensified cooperation might give ICCO the opportunity to get the necessary funding as the government increasingly withdrew as a funder. In November 2012, the *Coöperatie ICCO U.A.* saw the light of day, to which the public name ICCO Cooperation was given. ICCO would become the implementing agency for all activities of the Alliance members Prisma, Edukans and *Kerk in Actie*. Not all Prisma members were keen on closer cooperation, hence the participating members now called themselves coPrisma. ICCO’s Supervisory Board saw the cooperation leading to greater efficiency and synergy. It was agreed to use the ProCoDe model as a guiding principle.

The cooperative seemed to be a golden opportunity, but from the outset there were also signs of fear of losing control over its own finances and programming. For instance, Haaije Feenstra, general director of the PKN, wanted the statutes to include that the PKN was always among the majority in votes. In doing so,

the PKN effectively claimed a veto. Was here already the first crack visible in the cooperation? The official records of the early decade, however, do not show any evidence of difficult cooperation. On the contrary. According to ICCO's annual reports and policy documents, the cooperation grew stronger every year; this (the cooperative) has made us a stronger organisation, rooted in the Christian Protestant tradition. Even in the PKN, nothing pointed to a possible split. A report to the synod (April 2014) praised the new possibilities of cooperation for the church's international diaconal work. The cooperative brought "(...) ICCO's development work closer again to the Protestant Church and to Protestant civil society." But it would soon turn out that it was all wishful thinking.

New agenda

Meanwhile, in 2012, the 'tolerated cabinet' Rutte I had been replaced by the 'trade-off cabinet' Rutte II. Former PvdA (Labour Party) chairwoman Liliene Ploumen became minister in the development cooperation post, a post merged with that of foreign trade promotion. Although Ploumen had experience in the world of co-financing, including as head of planning and strategy at Cordaid, she did not give co-financing organisations (MFOs) their old position back. The downward trend in co-financing of private organisations initiated by Koenders and continued by Knapen was prolonged by Ploumen.

Rutte II formulated a new agenda of aid, trade and investment. The agenda breathed the spirit of this decade: the Netherlands had to benefit too. For civil society organisations, the term co-financing organisations had been discontinued, there was less room in it: there was no follow-up to MFS II. Lump-sum funding was definitely a thing of the past. CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) had to fight and compete for every penny and every programme to be allocated. Minister Ploumen did not want to allocate money for programmes that could be carried out just as well, or better, by the Dutch government. Money for education and health care, for instance, could be better disbursed through embassies directly to organisations in low- and middle-income countries, in her view.

Unlike under her predecessor Koenders, these organisations were now allowed to apply themselves and no longer needed a Dutch NGO to do so. The minister also produced a brand-new plan: CSOs in the Netherlands could be eligible for a long-term, initially with a 10-year horizon 'Dialogue and Dissent' strategic partnership from 2016. The money was exclusively for programmes in the field of advocacy and influence and the proposals had to fit the minister's agenda. Lau Schulpen concluded after investigation that development organisations were

increasingly having to follow the Ministry's leash. Fons van der Velden called this 'hobbling behind the minister'. According to them, they were relegated to being subcontractors of the minister's plans.

ICCO submitted a strategic plan with the cooperative and some other organisations under the Civic Engagement Alliance. The proposal was rated with a C. That meant it was not eligible for subsidy. A C? How could that be? Verweij: "We were in agribusiness, farmers and SMEs. Agricultural programmes had integrated lobby & advocacy, a bit of lobbying on land rights for example. The most successful organisations in these strategic partnerships were therefore one-issue parties, action groups, specialised in one area. ICCO could not and did not want to become just a campaigning organisation." Lau Schulpen comments on this, "Organisations without experience that were able to write it down well got money. Thematic and specialist organisations were at an advantage: environmental, business, political pressure groups." In the end, Ploumen decided to class ICCO (and Cordaid) among the 25 chosen after all.

ICCO was awarded a "lean" strategic partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the years 2016-2020 and still had income from other funds. This meant it would have to make do with less than 20 million euros of Dutch government money in 2016 (cf 2015 still 55 million euros). Ploumen's change of course thus worked out even worse for ICCO's finances than MFS II did in 2011.

Dark time

ICCO protested the policy in April 2015 through a critical action under the slogan: 'ICCO invests in people, the Netherlands less and less'. ICCO blamed the minister for offering so little time and money for transition. Marc Broere, for *Vice Versa*, asked Verweij why ICCO only responded now, while the other organisations had climbed into the pen much earlier. Illustrative of Verweij, he perhaps modestly replied, "Perhaps in retrospect you can say: we should have raised the alarm much louder at the time." He then threw off all shyness: "I am beyond embarrassment. I'm just proud of ICCO and all we can do. I am going all in now."

ICCO went full steam ahead, presenting a new approach. In July 2015, the memorandum 'Future Proofing ICCO' was published. In order to survive with the smaller budget, ICCO had to cut its coat of arms and weigh up costs and benefits in all activities. The organisation would also slim down further. Commercial activities in F&S were to be fully self-sustaining from 1 January 2016. All programmes would focus on four themes, and anything not covered by them would be 'phased out' in 2016. Those themes were 'corporate responsibility', 'economic development',

'food and nutrition security' and 'emergency response'. Overarching elements in all these themes were a focus on gender and on marginalised groups. Besides the substantive plans, the organisation was also adjusted.

There were now doubts in the Works Council whether incumbent board members Verweij and Hart were the right people to make this proposed business approach a success. Dorine Schuurman, IT employee, and at the time a member and later chairman of the reconstituted Works Council in Utrecht, said: "We had a lot of trouble with the way Wim and Marinus carried out their tasks. They were not on top of things enough. Wim and Marinus are probably wise men, but for ICCO they were, in our opinion, the wrong people at the wrong time." But with the Supervisory Board, the Works Council found no audience. The latter remained fully behind the board. Dorine also struggled with ICCO's ever-expanding organisational structure, with all the private limited companies, horizontal and vertical links and relationships within the cooperative. She cited an FNV member, who spoke of an octopus that was difficult to manage: "You had to think very carefully about who you were actually working for, which arm of the octopus you were contributing to."

From a policy point of view, Machteld Ooijens said, despite proposals from the policy department she headed, there was a lack of focus on programmes, themes and the future roles of the global organisation: "Too few substantive choices were made."

Although those final years of MFS II (2014-2015) were a difficult period because the internal organisation demanded a lot of attention, the enthusiasm of the staff remained intact. Machteld Ooijens says: "Despite the setbacks, the employees kept working full on, until their last working day. That was only possible because they believed in the work that they, and especially the partners were doing, elsewhere in the world."

Johan de Leeuw saw things more optimistically. He wrote in the 50th anniversary booklet 'Journey for Justice' (2015) that ICCO had gone through a dark time but concluded his introduction full of good cheer with: "Our history, our past performances, our golden wedding anniversary with the Dutch state – they all seem to be less significant. Receiving less government money is hard to deal with... but despite this situation, I am confident that we will find and construct a solid base for ICCO's future."

Cabaret 'Sarah' sang in the anniversary performance 50 years of ICCO about this quest, in the transition time from the 'meat pots' of The Hague to a free existence in an uncertain future:

*'We must raise funds, seek, grab,
grab, win and go for gold!
Who has the Philosopher's Stone,
Surely the Philosopher's Stone must exist!?'*

Unbundling

Cooperation within the ICCO cooperative came to a low ebb after 2015 and was replaced in November 2016 by PerspActive, a partnership in which some former cooperative members worked together to provide prospects for education and employment, including in the agricultural sector, to young people in southern countries.

ICCO's role also changed dramatically as a result of these developments. It was no longer the executive organisation on behalf of PerspActive's members, but it participated in it as a standalone organisation. With that, ICCO was back to square one: an independent organisation that sought ad hoc cooperation on certain themes and programmes within the Protestant Christian field and was itself looking for donors and for partners who could assist it in implementing programmes.

The expected cooperation in the ICCO Alliance (2005) and the ICCO cooperative (2012) was never really rooted and the last cooperation in PerspActive was also very short-lived. Consultations cost a lot of energy and yielded little. The waning cooperation coincided, not coincidentally, with the government's withdrawal as lender. The organisations involved no longer needed ICCO because ICCO no longer had any money to offer. Internally, it became clear in 2014 and 2015 that divergent forces dominated.

Machteld Ooijens saw the changes gradually creeping in: "The original will to cooperate, and change was suffocating. Collaboration became positioning behaviour. All organisations set their own picket lines." In retrospect, Verweij observes an increasing brand conflict: "In the regions, ICCO was a strong brand, but the other cooperative members also had their programmes there and wanted to 'score' there too." Conny Toornstra, regional manager in Latin America says: "*Kerk in Actie* suddenly wanted its own logos on projects. That

didn't happen before." Furthermore, the parties involved in the cooperation were (organisationally) completely different. ICCO was independent, *Kerk in Actie* was church-affiliated and Prisma was an umbrella representing several organisations, each with its own wishes and different degrees of decentralisation. The fact that ICCO was much less church-oriented than Prisma and *Kerk in Actie* also played a diverging role. Prisma included organisations from the Reformed and Evangelical churches. ICCO and *Kerk in Actie* were more on the same church line, but ICCO was not a church organisation. It became increasingly clear that *Kerk in Actie*, which had to answer within the PKN, had quite different priorities from ICCO. Rommie Nauta says: "Initially, too little thought was given to a joint positioning, and we paid the bill for that later." According to her, ICCO itself entered a survival mode after 2015, in which choices were made that did not properly include the church part. According to Pepijn Trapman, *Kerk in Actie* looked more to church partners and faith communities than before and little or nothing was done at board level to glue the growing contradictions. "Our administrators got over it. They did not realise how things were. They didn't intervene in time." Kees de Ruiter sees it as follows: "We tried to make that connection with *Kerk in Actie*. But they concentrated more on programmes they could justify to the church constituency and the economic programmes did not fit that profile. There was too little overlap between what *Kerk in Actie* wanted and what we felt was still justified." Leena Lindqvist, regional manager in West Africa, says it was also sometimes about practicalities. "*Kerk in Actie* wanted a maximum project of 100,000 euros, while for this region a million euros became the minimum."

All interviewees find the separation, especially between ICCO and *Kerk in Actie*, regrettable. It is an open wound in ICCO's history. Verweij: "It gives a helpless feeling." For ICCO, *Kerk in Actie* was the natural partner, a constituency relationship it sought. For *Kerk in Actie*, ICCO was for some time a focal point for professionalisation, funding and broadening its work. When MFS II ended, it was evident that cooperation had been too opportunistic without firm policy commitments. When ICCO started emphasising large (economic) programmes and the church moved up in its strategy, the roads parted. The unbundling would continue after 2016, the international programme division of ICCO and *Kerk in Actie* split into two separate departments during 2019. Protestants failed to join forces permanently.

Soft-hearted

When Kees de Ruiter, after a long-term stay as regional manager in Asia, returned to Utrecht in 2017, where he had been appointed head of the Strategy & Programme Support department, ICCO was in worse shape than he thought. In retrospect, it turned out that the years 2017 and 2018 ended with net losses of almost five million

and eight million euros, respectively. Finding funds was more difficult than hoped. ICCO USA, for example, which had been created for fundraising in the United States through the enthusiastic efforts of Marinus Verweij and others, proved unsuccessful. The pots of money could not be found there either. While the regional offices managed to break even financially, they also had to make some margin to maintain the Utrecht office. Not all regions managed to do that.

The two legs that had emerged from ICCO, C4D Partners and Truvalu operated increasingly separately from ICCO. Mark Joenje made C4D Partners independent of ICCO and from there managed the C4D Asia Fund, in which ICCO is the main investor. Former ICCO employee Jaap Jan Verboom took over Truvalu's shares and became independent. Settling these processes and writing off shares that were impaired or written off required taking a lot of losses.

To be eligible to run programmes, ICCO still had to bring in its own money, known as matching money. It had that money before, but now it did not. This became a vicious circle. Verweij and Hart had already given permission for several years to charge the unsuccessful matching money invested to the continuity reserve. Pepijn Trapman says with conviction, "That lack of matching money crippled us. If we had been able to cough up that 25% ourselves, we would still exist as ICCO." On top of that, there appeared to be practical difficulties. AllSolutions, the financial administration programme used by the PKN, which had come along in the cooperation with *Kerk in Actie*, led to major problems in financial accounting, with the ultimate result that ICCO fell behind in annual financial reporting.

In retrospect, Marinus Verweij explains the financial setbacks in 2017 and 2018 as follows: "Ultimately, ICCO was insufficiently able to meet the business requirements in the post-MFS era. Entrepreneurship has to be learned. We were given too little time to do so. We waged an uphill battle, virtually ran out of grants, lacked our own resources and failed to attract sufficient funds. We lacked our own money to launch programmes and we were also too soft-hearted." Too soft-hearted is a great depiction of the problems ICCO faced. Kees de Ruiter aptly captures this: "The people who are good at spending money are not necessarily the people who are good at bringing it in."

Successes

Despite the looming thunderclouds, there were plenty of successes in the years after 2016. The new situation without organisation-wide funding demanded bringing in new funds and creating innovative successful programmes, substantively and financially. This often succeeded very well.

Leena Lindqvist, regional manager in West Africa from 2016, came into a somewhat well-spread position, by her own admission. Her predecessor, Bert Bosch, had already deployed a change strategy in this region, enabling the turnaround described in Future Proofing ICCO. She describes the secret of her success: “We achieve high-quality results and only submit a programme to a donor if there is a high probability that we will get the money and we no longer write programmes under 1 million euros.” Leena and her people managed to increase sales fivefold in five years. “We can’t change the whole world. But we help people earn an income and find jobs. We are independent so we can make our programme appropriate for the region. We can apply it here in our own way, as long as we respect the global ICCO strategy.”

Hélène van der Roest was specially appointed in 2017 to make that shift in East and Southern Africa as well. She had years of experience in this region including as an independent entrepreneur. In terms of funds, this region is less well-endowed than West Africa. She appointed programme specialists with whom she gained expertise, which could be used to write new programmes during implementation with the experience gained. Hélène says it is not easy as a regional office to achieve the necessary margins. Donors take little account of the special circumstances and the high costs to be incurred.

ICCO’s post-2018 programmes focused around three themes: food security for small farmers and households; sustainable value chains and economic strengthening of agricultural SMEs, and emergency relief and disaster prevention. In West Africa, ICCO made a difference by improving value chains so that farmers grew more better-quality products and gained access to markets. The Jege (fish) ni Jaba (onions) programme from 2014 to 2019 measurably improved food quality in Mali. Thousands of households gained food security. The programme has since been extended: Jege ni Jaba II (2020-2025).

The Agri-Business Skilling for Youth in a Refugee Context (ABSUR) programme is running from 2018 in partnership with ZOA and War Child in refugee camps in northern Uganda. The aim of the programme is to provide psychosocial support and training to 5,000 young refugees so that they find well-paid jobs or start businesses in agribusiness. They work together with local communities. The programme is supported of the Dutch embassy. Van der Roest: “People who flee are enterprising people, they dare to take risks, take out loans and pay them back. They are not pathetic people who cannot do anything, but people who can become self-sufficient with some help. Hopefully one day they will also take this knowledge and skill back to their homeland.”

ICCO also developed itself as an expert in starting up and participating in public-private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships frequently use new digital technologies to increase the productivity and climate resilience of small-scale agriculture. A good example is the SpiceUp project in Indonesia. It is funded by the Netherlands Space Office. Partners include Verstegen Spices and Sauces and the agricultural institute in Bogor. Pepper growers and companies use the SpiceUp app in which geodata on weather forecasts, market prices and practical experiences, among others, are collected and shared.

Another innovative programme is Manq’a. Manq’a was born in Bolivia in 2014 with support from NPL and expanded to Colombia, Guatemala (2020) and Honduras. The model is also being reproduced in Africa. Manq’a works to strengthen the food security and economic opportunities of vulnerable youth from Latin America by training chefs and gastronomic entrepreneurs. More than 5,500 youth have been trained as chefs, 2,634 jobs created and the food security of 6,600 households improved.

The success of the programmes is due to careful preparation and implementation, using innovative ideas and techniques. The aim of the programmes is ultimately to provide people with opportunities for a dignified life. Van der Roest: “Dignity is not about holding up your hand but using your own talents and skills so that you can make your own choices and become self-reliant. That is what we try to contribute to.”

New leadership

The programmatic revamp and corporate approach eventually came too late. ICCO ran into deep financial problems in 2017 and 2018. Wim Hart and Marinus Verweij left in January 2019 and autumn that year, respectively. Economist Jolande Wakkerman became the new finance director and Sybren Attema the new CEO. Attema was seasoned in business and had co-led a merger process. He started as a dairy farmer in the Frisian village of Abbega, owned a real estate agency and was in the leadership of FrieslandCampina. He was given three assignments by the Supervisory Board: restore cooperation with the PKN, continue looking for a cooperation partner in this sector and put finances in order.

In autumn 2019, Attema and Wakkerman were mainly busy stabilising ICCO’s financial condition. They trimmed or terminated loss-making programmes and shares in companies to prevent ICCO from going further into the red. They also tried to sort out the administrative and financial chaos. They knew how to make

choices and decisions better than their predecessors, including no longer providing reserves for matching funds and further tightening their belts. They hammered on achieving a profit margin with every new tender; ICCO could no longer afford to suffer losses, for instance through injudicious action in areas where it had no real expertise, it no longer had that luxury. Remediation and financial accountability cost them a lot of energy, which Attema would have preferred to spend on improving contacts with the farmers and companies that were ICCO's partners, but he stupidly lacked the time for that. "I would have liked to pass on my knowledge as an entrepreneur and of the agricultural sector," he says with some regret. Besides the time-consuming clean-up of finances, he managed to strengthen ties with the PKN and entered a partnership with Cordaid, popularly called a merger but technically a takeover.

Integration with Cordaid

Collaboration was in ICCO's DNA. Throughout its history, it sought to do so, both at organisational and programme level. 'Alone you go faster, but together you go further' was a Verweij adage. ICCO realised that it could not solve complex and structural development issues on its own, so the search for a partner continued into the new millennium.

At the end of 2016, Kees Zevenbergen was appointed Cordaid's new CEO. Verweij called him with a request to have a chat about a possible cooperation. It was clear to the ICCO directors that they had to look for a new partner, now that cooperation within the ICCO Cooperative had foundered.

Cordaid (formerly Cebemo) and ICCO had worked together a lot in the past. ICCO founder Jo Verkuyl and the second Cebemo director Father Gerard van Rijsbergen pleaded with the government to subsidise private organisations for development cooperation as early as the early 1960s. Both organisations shared the same values and Christian inspiration, so it was somewhat obvious to look in Cordaid's direction. As for cooperation between Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian organisations, there were predecessors. The CDA came into being in 1980, IKV and Pax Christi merged in 2006 and NCRV and KRO formed one broadcaster together in 2014.

The rapprochement with Cordaid went through several phases. In 2017, the 'Orange Coalition' of Cordaid, Hivos and ICCO first came into the picture. Ultimately, this did not go ahead; it was too complicated with the three of them and, moreover, ICCO attached great importance to shared Christian values. Cordaid continued with Hivos, but when that track came to a dead end in the

course of 2019, Verweij called Zevenbergen again: "Shall we take a look together to see if a cooperation project is promising?"

Meanwhile, Attema had been appointed as the new CEO who, like Verweij, believed that without private fundraising, things would become very difficult for ICCO. Attema: "The competition for donor money and the requirements set by donors are so strict that you must have a huge body of expertise and knowledge to be able to meet them."

In the first conversation between Attema and Zevenbergen, they felt mutual trust. Zevenbergen in *Vice Versa*: "It's ultimately very basic, but it's just about two people coming together and understanding each other. Do we think the same things are important? Is there a good foundation for further conversations? (...)." The answer to those questions was a resounding yes. Among other things, Zevenbergen and Attema found each other in their shared Christian values. The trust was made concrete by agreeing on who would become the leader, what the name would be and where the office would be located. So, Zevenbergen became the CEO, the name became Cordaid and The Hague the seat.

Then began the complicated process of amalgamation. In terms of programming, ICCO and Cordaid complemented each other well. ICCO is mainly focused on empowering small and medium-sized farmers in making their agriculture more sustainable, to create jobs and increase food security. Cordaid focuses on humanitarian aid, working on resilience of vulnerable communities and strengthening healthcare and education in fragile countries. Through integration, the new organisation serves the entire spectrum of relief and development cooperation. ICCO's programmes went with it, except for Latin American countries and some countries in Southeast Asia and Africa that no longer classified as fragile states (Indonesia, Vietnam and South Africa).

Operationally, there were differences: Cordaid was more centrally organised than ICCO. H el ene van der Roest says: "The mandates for the region are now smaller. My autonomy from the office in the Netherlands has been reduced." Johan de Leeuw: "Cordaid still has to start the movement towards decentralisation. The trick is to learn from each other in such a way that this development will only get stronger. The ICCO people are motivated to be helpful in this."

With effect from 1 January 2021, ICCO became part of Cordaid. Attema: "I am proud that ICCO's work continues in most of the countries in which we are active. That people in those countries will continue to implement their programmes and

projects." ICCO's legacy seems assured within Cordaid. But ICCO is losing its independence after 55 years, and that hurts.

The cabaret ushered in the new era in late 2020 with a variation on the lyrics and music of the well-known song by Frans Halsema and Jenny Arean:

*No need to flee any more, 't is a new beginning,
there's no need to flee, because I'm moving in with Cordaid,
I'm going to The Hague.
Unavoidable, these are strange times
development times, spreading our bed together, professing faith,
I'm at it again...
flee no more.*

*Heated fare of encyclicals with a dash of Protestants?
Or after all a marriage that knows love and knows how to love?
I will flee no more, no, I remain faithful to you,
when I was searching, I could still be with you
I will come to you
I'm coming to you*



Farmer in a field of cabbage crops in the silted coastal areas of Bangladesh. ICCO, together with private sector partners, introduced here salt resistant agriculture.

Photo: ICCO Bangladesh (2016)

ICCO's legacy

ICCO's legacy

From 2019 *Vice Versa* organised several meetings around the theme of shifting the power. Since Minister Kaag of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation advocated in her policy note 'Investing in Perspective' (2018) to give southern organisations even clearer 'ownership', that topic has been in the spotlight again.

The topic was not new to ICCO. Nijmegen scholar Lau Schulpén says in this booklet that ICCO put the theme on the agenda back in 2004 when it started ProCoDe. ICCO was thus way ahead of its time. In fact, it started with Verkuyl's vision: "It's not about here, it's about there". According to him, development money should not be dropped like a boulder in developing countries but should link up with 'indigenous initiatives' and part of the costs should be borne by the recipients. In more contemporary terms, the money should connect with grassroot-level activities and partners should share responsibility.

Verkuyl's idea was developed during the 1970s in a 'Reverse Consortium' that was very progressive for its time. ICCO was serious about power-sharing. The terms 'donor' and 'recipient' would become a thing of the past and be replaced by 'partners'. Verkuyl's successor Bos put it this way: "We wanted to share power on the basis of the conviction that we have a common stewardship for this world and because it distressed us that in Utrecht decisions were made on countless projects overseas, which would be better judged there." The 'Reverse Consortia' were held in 1977 and in 1979. From now on, the flow of ideas would not only run from the Netherlands to low- and middle-income countries, but *vice versa*. This way of thinking was then a completely unknown phenomenon, it was extremely innovative that ICCO wanted to seriously include the partners' perspective in its own policy decisions.

A direct line runs from the 'Reverse Consortium' to ProCoDe. In doing so, ICCO gave new content and responsibility to the concept of partner, decentralised the organisation and arrived at a programme-based approach. ICCO was and is about creating and supporting counter-power and listening to people's wishes and needs, helping them to stand up for their rights and to claim autonomy. This requires an accommodating, alert and supportive attitude, not a condescending or demanding one, although people are expected to use that autonomy to carry responsibilities as well.

Due to a variety of circumstances (internal and external) ProCoDe may not have gone far enough. Did its unconventional nature put ICCO too far ahead of the troops, without clear allies? Did ICCO not dare to take the step towards full transfer of policy development to partners? Did post-2010 budget cuts throw a spanner in the works in this regard? Was it not too difficult a task, with the continuous shifting attention of donors and being tied to short-term projects? Were partner organisations not yet ready for this change in responsibilities?

In any case, ICCO has made it clear that the best way to develop southern leadership and make local organisations leaders in its work must always be sought. Shifting the power to the organisations in the countries where ICCO worked was number one on ICCO's agenda from the 1970s. It is ICCO's legacy for everyone thinking about the renewal of development cooperation.

ICCO has had a fascinating and turbulent history. Starting as a Dutch desk through which government money was made available to organisations working on development aid, it had evolved into an organisation that, together with partners, companies and knowledge institutes, designs and implements development programmes and seeks money for them. Money-seeking programmes became programmes seeking money. The ICCO cabaret sang in 2015:

*We must raise funds, seek, grab,
grab, win and go for gold!*

Looking back over fifty-five years of ICCO, one sees other things coming back as well. The theme of 'aid and trade', put on the agenda by ministries in the new century, had already been shaped by ICCO in the 1990s, as Ton Dietz points out in this booklet. Not aid to promote trade but using money in such a way that people can set up their own businesses and give them control, autonomy and self-esteem, culminating in making trade chains more sustainable and 'just and inclusive', a theme close to ICCO's heart. Cooperation with the international business community, from the rights perspective was also on ICCO's agenda very early on.

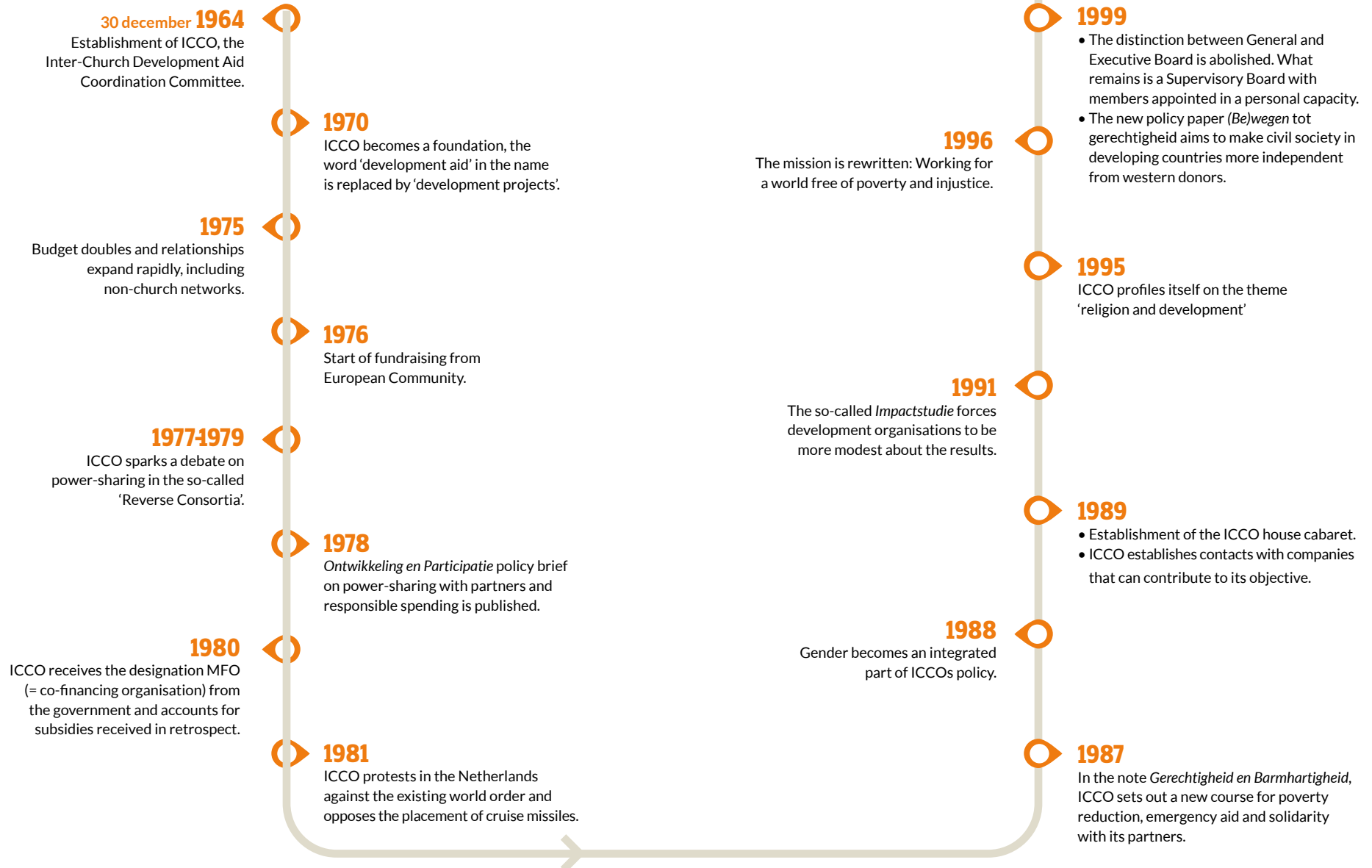
The gradual transition from organisation-wide funding to tenders and increasing competition among development organisations for dwindling funds troubled ICCO. ICCO tried very hard to survive in the post-MFS era by designing and implementing new programmes and seeking donors. It empowered people with

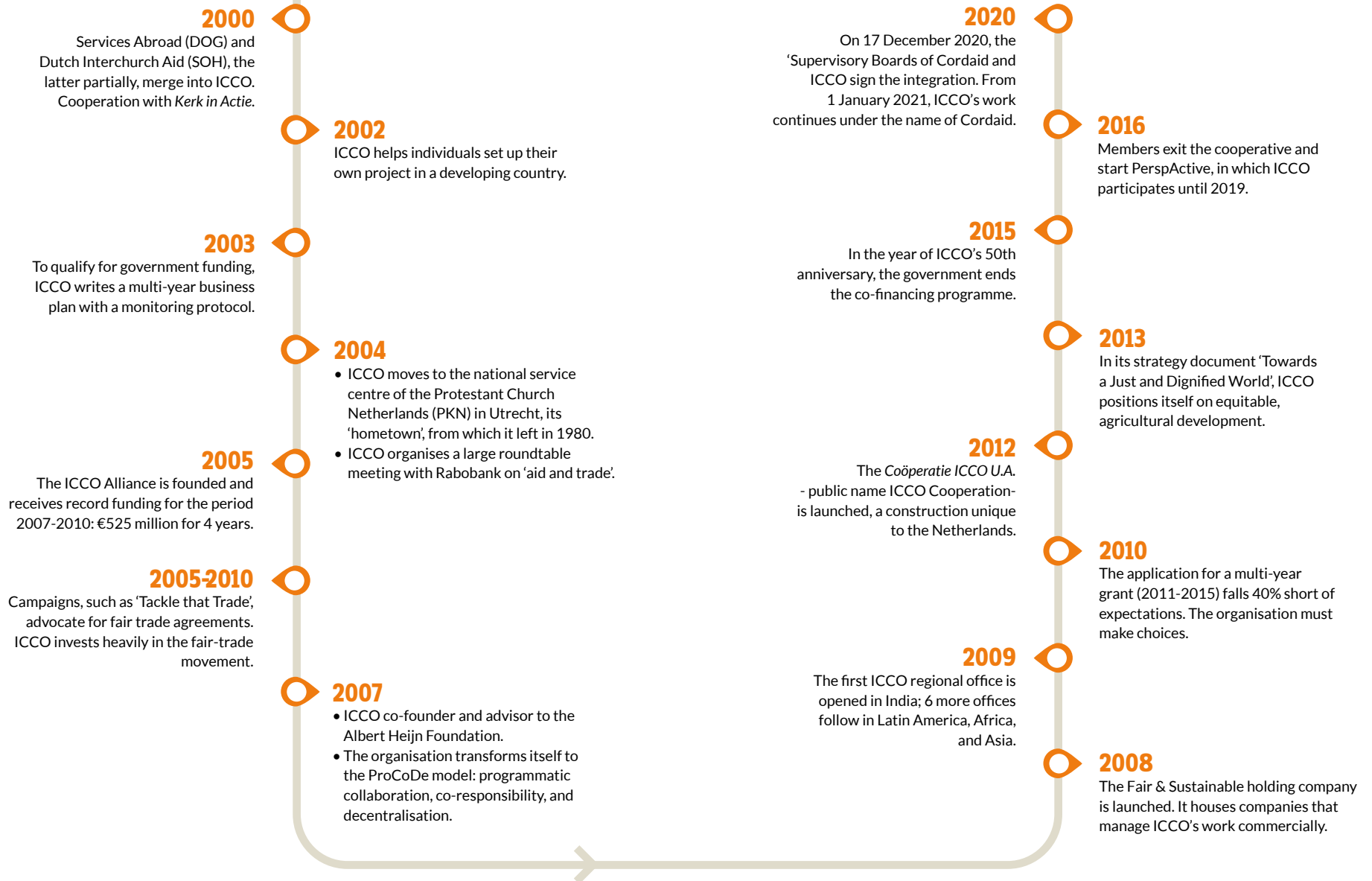
its economic and other programmes, gave them co-responsibility for their own welfare and for their social and political well-being.

And the rest is history. As of 1 January 2021, ICCO and Cordaid have been operating in a new organisation. Kees Zevenbergen, the CEO of the renewed Cordaid, advocates restoring long-term contacts between government and development organisations: "Not a different framework with new requirements and priorities every few years, but long-term continuity. A kind of co-financing framework 2.0, which gives plenty of room for real southern leadership and ownership."

ICCO's legacy could play an important role in providing that space for southern leadership and ownership. It has been its *raison d'être*, and employees take this with them as their baggage to Cordaid.

History in years





List of abbreviations

- **CBTB**, Christelijke Boeren- en Tuindersbond / Christian Farmers and Horticulture Union
- **Cebemo**, Centrale voor Bemiddeling bij Medefinanciering van Ontwikkelingsprogramma's / Catholic organisation for development organisation
- **CLAT**, Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores / Latin American Central Workers' Union
- **CMC**, Centraal Missie Commissariaat / Central Mission Commissariat
- **CNV**, Christelijk Nationaal Vakverbond / Christian National Trade Union
- **CSO**, Civil society organisations
- **CT&D**, Conflicttransformatie en Democratisering / Conflict Transformation and Democratisation
- **DOG**, Dienst over Grenzen / Services Abroad
- **DREO**, Duurzame Rechtvaardige Ontwikkeling / Sustainable Equitable Economic Development
- **F&S**, Fair & Sustainable Holding
- **GKN**, Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland / The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands
- **GOM**, Gemeenschappelijk Overleg Medefinanciering / Joint Consultation on Co-financing
- **GPM**, Grote Medefinancieringsprojecten / Large Co-financing Projects
- **ICCO**, Interkerkelijke Organisatie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking / Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation
- **KMP**, Kleine Medefinancieringsprojecten / Small Co-financing Projects
- **MFO**, Medefinancieringsorganisatie / Co-financing organisation
- **MFS**, Medefinancieringsstelsel / Co-financing system (for development cooperation of the Dutch government)
- **NHK**, Nederlands Hervormde Kerk / the Dutch Reformed Church
- **NCW**, Nederlands Christelijk Werkgeversverbond / Association of Dutch Christian Employers
- **Novib** (nowadays Oxfam Novib), Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Betrekkingen / Dutch Organisation for International Affairs
- **NVV**, Nederlands Verbond van Vakverenigingen / Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions
- **NZR**, Nederlandse Zendingsraad / Netherlands Missionary Council
- **PKN**, Protestantse Kerk in Nederland / Protestant Church in the Netherlands

- **ProCoDe**, Programmatic approach, Co-responsibility and Decentralisation
- **SOH**, Stichting Oecumenische Hulp / Dutch Interchurch Aid
- **TTB**, Toegang Tot Basisvoorzieningen / Access to basic services
- **ZOA**, Zuid Oost Azië / South East Asia, the original meaning of ZOA

List of sources, interviews, literature and articles

ICCO Sources

- Various boxes of SOH and ICCO board minutes and meeting documents 1963-1999
- ICCO Historical 1967-1970
- ICCO Growth Policy Plans 1975-1984
- Box ICCO General. Publications and Speeches 1966-
- Box ICCO 25 years
- Policy document 'Participation and Development' (1978)
- Box Latin America CLAT 1981-1983/1986
- Box GOM impact study
- ICCO annual reports 1965-2018
- Contacts between North and South. Introductions made at the mini symposium to mark the retirement of Biem Lap.
- Just van Es, HKI lecture on the ICCO Board Conference.
- C.I. Dales, *Signalement* 1976. Driebergen, May 1976
- *Het premiestelsel* 20.12.1978. Satirical piece (written by Jan Zwaan).
- Ph. Quarles van Ufford, A note on developments within ICCO, as a board member delegated by the Netherlands Missionary Council. August 1977
- Bob Goudzwaard, ICCO-terfeitsel (1982)
- Policy note: *Gerechtigheid en Barmhartigheid* (1987)
- Jet Kraemer, *Emancipatie van vrouwen: een voorwaarde voor ontwikkeling*. ICCO. 1989
- Texts ICCO cabaret *Armoede troef* (1989-1995)
- Q.J. Munters, *Macht en Ontwikkeling*. ICCO, 1990
- Policy document: *Tekenen van Hoop* (1993)
- Policy note: *(Be)wegen naar Gerechtigheid* (2003)
- Policy note: 'Strategy 2020: Towards a just and dignified world' (2013)
- 'Opening up for influence, a report of ICCO's transformational journey with ProCoDe'. Willem Elbers & Bram van Leeuwen, ICCO Cooperation, 2013
- *Rapportage over de samenwerking en de voortgang van de ProCoDe-aanpak van de ICCO. Generale Synode PKN* (April 2014)
- 'Journey for justice. 50 Years ICCO Cooperation 1965-2015' (2015)
- Policy note: 'Future Proofing ICCO' (2015)
- Texts Cabaret 'Sara' (2015) and 'Fleeing is no longer possible' (2020)

Interviews

- Nelleke Gerbrandy. ICCO Latin America staff member. Zeist, 14 December 1998
- Jone Bos. General director ICCO from 1964-1981. Amersfoort, 28 January 1999
- Rien Munters. ICCO board member and treasurer 1967-1989. Wageningen, 15 February 1999
- Rein Jan van der Veen. Board member ICCO 1973-1984. Bennekom, 26 February 1999
- Albert van den Heuvel. Chair of the board of ICCO 1973-1981. Amsterdam, 15 March 1999
- Philip Quarles van Ufford. ICCO Board member 1970-1984. Amsterdam, 18 March 1999
- Jan Pronk. Minister of Development Cooperation 1973-1977 and 1991-1998. The Hague, 9 April 1999
- Bob Goudzwaard. Chair of ICCO board from 1981-1992. Driebergen, 6 May 1999
- Maria Verhoeven. Head of Team Asia ICCO 1998-2004. Utrecht, 28 May 1999.
- Henk Hofstede, ICCO Board member on behalf of CNV from 1974-1986. Bunnik, 4 June 1999
- Cees Oskam. ICCO staff member 1975-1981. Director of projects 1981-1984. Waarnemend-directeur 1984-1985. General director 1988-1994. Director 1994-1998. Consultant 1998-1999. Zeist, 9 June 1999
- Tineke Lodders. Board chair 1996-2006. Zeist, 11 June 1999.
- Bram van Leeuwen. ICCO staff member 1976-1989. Head of Policy and Evaluation 1989-1996, deputy director 1996-1999. Zeist, 14 June 1999
- Just van Es. Staff member 1992-1995 and ICCO general director from 1995-1999. Zetten, 22 June 1999
- Wouter Tims. ICCO board chair 1992-1995. Amersfoort, 2 September 1999
- Jack van Ham. ICCO general director 2001-2010. Zeist, 12 April 2001.
- Hans Brüning, Director of projects ICCO 2001-2007. Zeist, 18 April 2001.
- Kees van der Poort. Acting general director 1972-1981, director projects 1975-1981, director programmes and evaluation 1981-1984.
- Jaap 't Gilde. Communication advisor ICCO 2007-2020. February 2021
- Piet Posthuma. Specialist strengthening civil society and ecumenical relations ICCO 1988-2020. February 9, 2021
- Dieneke de Groot. Advisor PMEL ICCO (1991-2020). 11 February 2021
- Jack van Ham. CEO ICCO 2001-2010. 2 March 2021

- Rommie Nauta. Fellow and Programme Manager *Kerk in Actie* (1998-present). 4 March 2021
- Harry Derksen. Fellow ICCO 1988-2004; Director Policy ICCO 2004-2011; Advisor Board and Manager ICCO Investments 2011-2013. 9 March 2021
- Bram van Leeuwen. Fellow ICCO 1976-1989. Head of Policy and Evaluation 1989-1996; deputy director 1996-2004; project manager ProCoDe 2004-2011. 9 March 2021
- Pierre Hupperts. Consultant and strategist. 15 March 2021
- Conny Toornstra. Regional manager Latin America 2010-2020. 22 March 2021
- Kees de Ruitter worked in various positions at ICCO 1995-2005. Southeast Asia regional manager (2009-2019), and ICCO programme director (2019-2020). 22 March 2021
- Pepijn Trapman. Regional manager South and Central Asia (2008-2020). 22 March 2021
- Willemijn Lammers. Manager Sustainable and Equitable Economic Development Department (DREO) 2007-2010; Advisor Executive Board ICCO 2010-2013. 29 March 2021
- Machteld Ooijens. Programme Specialist Basic Education ICCO 2005-2009; Manager Policy Department ICCO 2009-2014; Strategic Advisor 2014-2015. 6 April 2021
- Marinus Verweij. CEO ICCO 2010-2019. 8 April 2021
- Johan de Leeuw. Chairman Supervisory Board ICCO 2012-2020. 12 April 2021
- Lau Schulpen. Scientific associate Radboud University Nijmegen. 13 April 2021
- Ton Dietz. Director Africa Study Centre Leiden and scholar. 13 April 2021
- Sybren Attema. CEO ICCO 2019-2020. 19 April 2021
- Fons van der Velden. Head of South Asia/Africa ICCO 1987-1993; Scientist and consultant. 7 May 2021
- Mark Joenje. ICCO Investments and C4D Partners; C4D Asia Fund 2012-2020. 21 May 2021
- Petra Hamers. ICCO programme manager. 1995-2008. Chairman Works Council. 9 June 2021
- Ad Ooms. ICCO fundraising officer 2000-2018. Chairman Works Council. 11 June 2021
- Dorine Schuurmans. IT officer ICCO 2014-2020. Chairman Works Council. 14 June 2021
- Leena Lindquist. Regional manager ICCO West Africa 2016-2020. 28 June 2021
- Hélène van der Roest. Regional manager ICCO Central, Eastern and Southern Africa 2017-2020. 1 July 2021

Literature

- Kees Biekart, 'The Politics of Civil Society Strengthening. European Private Aid Agencies and Democratic Transitions in Central America'. Amsterdam, 1999
- Margriet Brandsma & Pieter Klein, Jan Pronk. *Rebel met een missie*. Utrecht, 1996
- Govert J. Buijs (red), *Als de olifanten vechten... Denken over ontwikkelingssamenwerking vanuit christelijk perspectief*. Uitgeverij Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 2001
- Jan van Butselaar en Bob Goudzwaard (redactie), *Gerechtigheid en barmhartigheid. Mogelijkheden en grenzen van ontwikkelingssamenwerking*. Kampen, 1989
- Jan J. Capelleveen, *Als het te laat is om te bidden. Geschiedenis van de Stichting Oecumenische Hulp*. Uitgave SOH, 1999
- A.van Dalen, *De identiteit van christelijke niet-gouvernementele organisaties voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking (NDGO's). Algemeen theoretisch model met toepassing op ICCO*. Afstudeerscriptie Theologische Faculteit Utrecht, Juni 1996
- B. Goudzwaard, *Schaduwen van het groei-geloof*. Kampen, 1974
- A.H. van den Heuvel, *Een nieuw zendingstijdperk*. Kampen, 1972
- Annelies van Heijst, *Gedreven helpers*. Hilversum, uitgeverij Verloren 2014
- Kristoffel Lieten & Fons van der Velden (redactie), *Grenzen aan de hulp. Beleid en effecten van ontwikkelingssamenwerking*. Amsterdam, 1997
- Saskia Liebergen, *Een onderzoek naar ontwikkelingssamenwerking als professie. De casus ICCO*. Scriptie UU 2011
- Herman Noordergraaf/Sander Griffioen (redactie), *Bewogen realisme. Economie, cultuur, oecumene. Bij het afscheid van Bob Goudzwaard*. Kampen, 1999
- Paul van Paaschen, *De MFO's in het spoor van de overheid. Doctoraalscriptie Culturele Antropologie*, 1988
- Minister Ploumen. *Wat de wereld verdient. Beleidsnota* (2013)
- Kees van der Poort, *Moratorium-discussie achterhaald?*, in: *Wereld en Zending*, 1989. pp.146-152
- Kees van der Poort, *Lobby's en heilige koeien: medefinanciering in breder perspectief*, in: *Internationale Spectator*, 1986. pp. 740-743
- Kees van der Poort, 'The development market. A study on Government- funding of church-related development cooperation'. Genève, 1987
- G. Puchinger, *Zending en Ontwikkeling. Gesprekken over zending en ontwikkeling*. Delft, 1972
- Ph. Quarles van Ufford, 'The myth of a Rational Development Policy': Evaluation versus Policymaking in Dutch Private Donor Agencies. In P. Quarles van Ufford e.a., 'The hidden crisis in Development: Development Bureaucracies'. pp. 75-99 Amsterdam, 1988
- P. Quarles van Ufford, *Ontwikkelingssamenwerking als een probleem van organisatie*, in: *Van den Berg/Quarles van Ufford (red.)*, *De toekomst van de Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking*. Amsterdam, 1994 pp. 131-149

- R.J. van der Veen, *Vijftig jaar Nederlandse Zendingsraad-en nu verder*, in: *Wereld en Zending*, 1979, pp. 21-41
- Zwaantje van 't Veer, *Vrouwen en ontwikkelingsbeleid in een medefinancieringsorganisatie. Een onderzoek naar de plaats van integratie- en de autonomiebenadering in het vrouwen en ontwikkelingsbeleid van ICCO*. Doctoraalscriptie CA/SWNS Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, August 1988
- J. Verkuyl, *Onderweg naar één wereldsamenleving. De samenhang tussen wereldzending, werelddiaconaat en ontwikkelingssamenwerking*. Kampen, 1971
- WRR, *Minder pretentie, meer ambitie. Ontwikkelingshulp die verschil maakt*. 2010

Articles

- Hasse de Boer, Kees de Ruiter (ICCO): *Het is koloniaal om Nederlandse programma-verantwoordelijken naar Indonesië te laten komen*. *Vice Versa* 14-09-2012
- Marc Broere, *Vrijdagniddagborrel: Het vervoltraject van de strategische partnerschappen*. *Vice Versa*, 13-02-2015
- Marc Broere, *We hadden toen veel harder aan de bel moeten trekken*. *Vice Versa* 13-04-2015
- Marusja Aangeenbrug & Marc Broere, *Dubbelinterview Jack van Ham en René Grotenhuis*. *Vice Versa* 12-04-2010
- Lidwien Dobber, *Ontwikkelingsorganisaties aan leiband ministerie*. *Trouw*, 25-04-2016
- Ralf Bodelier, *Het succes van ontwikkelingshulp*. *De Groene*, 03-05-2017
- Eva Huson, *De geldkraan wordt steeds verder dichtgedraaid*. *Vakblad Fondsenwerving* 01-06-2015
- Dirk Jan Koch, *En wat als Rutger Bregman los zou gaan op internationale samenwerking*. *Vice Versa* 30-01-2020
- Han Koch, *We zullen meekijken of Albert Heijn zijn beloftes waarmaakt*. *Algemeen Dagblad* 11-09-2007
- Hans Nauta, *Crowdfunding als alternatief voor ontwikkelingshulp*. *Trouw* 12-05-2017
- Hans Nauta, *Zuivelman Sybren Attema stapt over naar het ontwikkelingswerk: Een simpel advies kan veel werk opleveren*. *Trouw*, 17-06-2019
- *Nederlands Dagblad*, *ICCO wil terug naar zijn wortels*. *Nederlands Dagblad* 03-10-2003
- *Reformatorisch Dagblad*, *Relatie PKN en omstrede ICCO roept vragen op*. *Reformatorisch Dagblad* 04-02-2011
- Krista Russchen, *Identiteit overstijgt de waan van de dag*. *Vice Versa* 28-10-2011
- *ICCO: Bezuiniging van 90 procent te rigoueus*. *Reformatorisch Dagblad* 22-04-2015
- Lau Schulpen, *Oxfam Novib en ICCO grote verliezers van bezuinigingen*. *Vice Versa* 03-12-2010

Another world is possible

ICCO's story. Working together for development and justice (1964-2020)

Another World is Possible tells the story of ICCO, the Interchurch Organisation for Development Cooperation (1964-2020). A story about change and continuity. About a fascinating and sometimes turbulent history. Driven by its Christian tradition, ICCO sought a just society worldwide. Together with its allies at home and abroad, it gave form and substance to this and offered vulnerable people strength and perspective for a better existence.

From 1 January 2021, ICCO's work is continued by Cordaid

