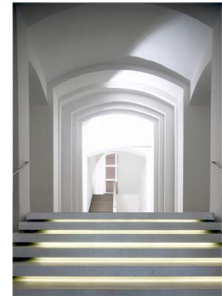


Berlin Civil Society Center

Vision Works

the global Chairs and CEOs meeting

19 April 2011



Key Findings

On 14-15 April 2011, the Berlin Civil Society Center convened the fourth annual *Vision Works – the global Chairs and CEOs meeting*. Over two days 27 global leaders from 17 of the world's preeminent civil society organisations (CSOs) came together to jointly discuss how to re-position their organisations in order to successfully address “*The Changing Face of Poverty*”. Starting from the most recent events in the Arab region the meeting looked at poverty as a driver of political change, reviewed the human rights agenda of poverty alleviation and explored how to reconcile the fight against poverty with climate and environmental protection.

Participants welcomed the shift away from a simplistic “one dollar a day” definition of poverty towards a rights based analysis. All organisations present apply rights based approaches, though in a range of different forms, depending on the organisations’ mission and specific angle.

As the pressure on resources such as water, energy and arable land increases exercising one’s rights may prevent others from exercising theirs. Therefore concepts of justice, equity and sustainability need to supplement rights based approaches.

The fact that today the largest number of poor people live in newly industrialised countries like India and China rather than in the least developed ones requires a different perspective: the poverty (or wealth) of a country does not necessarily indicate the level of poverty among its citizens.

The global shift of power between regions and countries changes the dominant way of supporting the poor: new perspectives and approaches are on the rise. CSOs need to carefully examine these changes and embrace those that are in line with their own mission.

As national Governments are losing their position as exclusive providers of social services civic actors gain importance and the capacity to innovate and to lead change. In order to adapt to these developments CSOs need to become more flexible in partnering with less structured and more ad hoc initiatives.

With the growing complexity of challenges and in the absence of uncontested leadership, collaboration in broader alliances and “coalitions of competence” is gaining importance. In order to contribute effectively CSOs need to overcome their reluctance to partner with actors that are not 100% aligned with their own mission and values.

In order to maintain trust and confidence among donors, recipients and the public in general efforts of poverty alleviation require increased transparency and accountability. CSOs should take the lead by implementing concepts of mutual accountability.

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