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Abstract:

Throughout the years, the development assistance sector was dominated by various development approaches. The human rights based approach to development (HRBA) currently dominates the development sphere, and it is used by all major development agencies and international non-governmental organizations. In theory, the HRBA holds the potential to go beyond the shortcomings of the prior approaches that dominated the development sphere (charity and welfare, basic needs/service driven approach, empowerment/participatory approach). Action Aid International is among the major development orientated non-governmental organizations that committed to the human rights approach, and with the latest strategy the organization consolidated all aspects of its operating under the umbrella of human rights. On the one hand, the changes of the development approaches that Action Aid made reflect the changes of the development fads on a broader scale, but on the other, Action Aid in several instances pioneered development methodologies that were adopted by other non-governmental organizations. Hence, throughout this paper I examine the role of Action Aid in shaping and reaffirming theories and practices of development. Particular focus is put on the analysis of the ways Action Aid conceives and practices the human rights based approach to development. Analyzing the impacts of the human rights based approach on the organizational structure of Action Aid is central issue of this master thesis. Additionally, the paper compares the human rights approach to the previous major development approaches, particularly to the participatory/empowerment approach to development.

Über die Jahre wurde der Entwicklunghilfesektor von unterschiedlichen Ansätzen geprägt. Derzeit dominiert der Menschenrechtsansatz (Human Rights Based Approach) auf dem Gebiet der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und wird von allen wichtigen Entwicklungsagenturen und internationalen Nichtregierungsorganisationen angewandt. Theoretisch besitzt der Menschenrechtsansatz das Potenzial, die Mängel der älteren Ansätze, die im Entwicklungssektor vorherrschten (Wohltätigkeit und Wohlfahrt, Grundbedürfnisse/Dienstleistung, Ermächtigung/Partizipation) zu überwinden. Action Aid International gehört zu wichtigen auf Entwicklung spezialisierten Nichtregierungsorganisationen, die sich dem Menschenrechtsansatz verschrieben haben, und mit ihrer neuesten Strategie hat die Organisation alle Aspekte ihrer Tätigkeit unter das Motto der Menschenrechte gestellt. Einerseits spiegeln die Veränderungen der Ansätze in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, die Action Aid vornahm, die größeren Trends auf diesem Gebiet, aber andererseits hat Action Aid in einigen Fällen auch die Methoden vorgegeben, die dann von anderen Nichtregierungsorganisationen übernommen wurden. Ich untersuche daher in meiner Arbeit die Rolle, die Action Aid bei der Formulierung und Absicherung von Theorien und Praktiken der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit spielte. Besonderer Nachdruck wird dabei auf die Analyse gelegt, wie Action Aid den Menschenrechtsansatz in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit auffasst und praktiziert. Die Untersuchung der Auswirkungen des Menschenrechtsansatzes auf die Organisationsstruktur von Action Aid ist ein weiteres zentrales Anliegen der Masterarbeit. Außerdem wird der Menschenrechtsansatz mit wichtigen, älteren Ansätzen, vor allem mit dem Partizipations-/Ermächtigungsansatz in der Entwicklungsforschung verglichen.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Development in a Broader Theoretical Framework

Throughout this paper I attempt to examine the work of Action Aid, positioned in a broader theoretical framework of development. The development enterprise is indeed a complex field, composed of often contested views and changes of development discourses. Therefore, it is unfeasible for one to speak of a singular conception of development. In contrary, examining the development field means being confronted with plural conceptions of development history, and the work of the organizations, institutions and individuals involved into contemporary development cannot be conceived without proper historical contextualization (Kothari. 2005a:1).

This part of the introduction chapter aims at briefly explaining the dominant narratives and trends in development studies historically. The main focus is on the development discourses which challenge the orthodox development chronologies and the “modernist narrative that posits a singular, unilinear trajectory” of development (ibid). Thus, much of the literature used throughout this paper stems from post-colonial, post-modernist and feminist perspectives.

The historical track of development research and teaching is usually composed of clearly defined periods, characterized by hegemonic discourses of development. These grand development narratives typically encompass the modernization and growth theories, theories of “underdevelopment”, and move on to neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus (Hettne 1995; Kothari 2005a; Preston 1996). On the other hand, some of the post-colonial and gender narratives challenge the orthodox notions of development and give new insights into the ways how the present is composed of traces from the past. Furthermore, through questioning major discourses about

power relations, they provide useful ways of examining what creates development and “The Third World” (Kothari 2005a:2).

Having an insight into the discourse changes into the field of development studies is very useful due to two major reasons. Firstly, it provides a better understanding of the present trajectory of development, and secondly, it explains not only the changes into the development theories, but also in the development practices. The work of the development institutions and organizations is mainly grounded in the prevailing development discourses.

Prior to the 1980s, the main development narratives came from the economic growth and modernization theories and moved on to the neoliberal theories of development. The so called “alternative” approaches to development, such as post-colonialism and development, gender and development, environmental and sustainable development, and participatory development and empowerment, emerged in the 1980s and gained higher prominence during the 1990s. Furthermore, these approaches were accompanied by the emergence of the “post-development” approaches, which aim at deconstructing the post war narratives. Furthermore, some of the “post-development” streams also support the idea of a total abandoning of the development project (Kothari 2005b: 48). The common denominator of these “critical” approaches to development is the assessment of the ways development creates and perpetuates unequal relations between the First and Third World Countries.

Many of the “alternative” approaches to development are connected to the colonial legacy of development studies. The postcolonial critique focuses on the forces of coercive domination that functions in the contemporary world: the politics of anticolonialism, neocolonialism, race, gender, ethnicity and class, are the main features of the postcolonial ground (Young 2001:11). The postcolonial critique examines the myriad interconnected forms of dominance and oppression while

tracing the ways the past and the present are imbricated. Furthermore, “the postcolonial critique - theoretically and historically fundamentally hybrid, the product of the clash of cultures that brought it into being, it is interdisciplinary and transcultural in its theory and has been in its effects” (Bhabha 1994 cited in Young 2001:11).

When it comes to the connection between post-colonialism and development, the major theme is the production of knowledge in a realm of unequal power relations. “The postcolonial literature has unleashed a ferocious debate which speaks directly to the writings of development history and the practice of development” (Mohan 2001a:154). Mohan (2001a) argues that one of the major areas where postcolonialism elucidates the practice of development is the area of Eurocentrism and the politics of representation. This area is intertwined with the critique towards the dominant Western knowledge production over the Third World countries. Undoubtedly, here Edward Said’s “Orientalism” (1979) has been the most influential work. Succinctly, Said argues that the West constructed the Orient as the “other” and entirely shaped its representation. His work later has been criticized for that he “homogenizes and essentializes” both the West and non-West and treats them as undifferentiated and unchanging (Young 1990 cited in Mohan 2001a:155).

The link between the postcolonial and the development studies is also evident in the recovering of the political agency (Mohan 2001a:155). Authors like Bhabha, Fanon and Gramsci explored the issue of identity and examined questions of hybridity, which “is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, it’s shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal” (Bhabha 1995:34 cited in Mohan 2001a:155).

This period also witnessed the attempt to recover the voice of the marginalized, mostly through the work of the Subaltern Studies (SS) Group. The endeavor of the SS historians (Guha, Chakrabarty, Prakash) was to shift the attention from the elite groups to the perspectives of the

marginalized, and to raise the question of *representation*. “Representation here can be conceived as ‘speaking of’ – constructing accounts and writing texts – or as ‘speaking for’ – advocating and meditating” (Bhabha 1995 cited in Mohan 2001a:155).

The colonial legacy into the contemporary development studies is also apparent through the participatory and the gender approaches to development. Most of the institutions, agencies and organizations that adopted participatory approaches to development in the 1980s and in the early 1990s were inspired by the work of Amartya Sen and Robert Chambers. Namely, Sen’s work initiated the understanding of development in terms of capabilities, and various development NGOs grounded their working into the Sen’s theories. Furthermore, in the early 1980s, the work of Robert Chambers marked the period of the proliferation of participatory methodologies. Among the participatory methodologies, the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) had central place and was widely used by many NGOs and other development institutions. This period mirrors a shift not only in the development discourses, but also in the development practices. The rationale behind the participatory methodologies was that they are an antipode of the orthodox practices of development. The participatory methodologies attempted to challenge the dominant Western notions of development as well as to incorporate the “local” knowledge into the shaping of development policies and practices. Later on, these approaches were accused of creating isolated development projects, without attempting to challenge wider political and social imbalances. The various implications related to the participatory development will be more thoroughly examined throughout the second chapter.

Another very important stream of the “alternative” approaches to development is the rise of “gender and development”. The attempts gender sensitive analysis to be included into the development interventions started from the margins, and nowadays all development agencies and

organizations try to mainstream gender approaches into their working. This endeavor was initially known as “Women in Development” (WID), and later was changed into “Gender and Development”. The “gendering” of development practices was also one of the core issues during the 1990s when the participatory/empowerment approaches reached their peak, and it is still a focal aspect of the most recent stream in the development enterprise – the human rights based approaches to development.

The human rights based approaches to development proliferated widely throughout the 1990s, and became a set of objectives of official agencies. The beginning of this proliferation was most notably marked with the UN social development conference in 1995. Various agencies, NGOs and institutions adopted the human rights based approach but there were various interpretations what this adoption means in practice. Hickey and Mitlin (2009:8) argue that the human rights based approach to development is usually constituted of the following components:

- Pressure for formal rights as laid down within some legal systems, stipulations, rules or regulations;
- The implementation of such rights through legal campaigns and stronger links with the legal profession;
- A more complete system of interconnected rights, rather than single rights;
- Adherence to international rights and a hierarchy of rights at local, national, or international scales;
- A perception of rights as a development goal to be achieved independently of other goals;
- The explicit acknowledgment that engaging with rights requires an overly political approach.

Despite the legal processes connected to the rights based approach to development, there are various non-legal processes related to the adoption of human rights based approaches. Among them, central place has the understanding that rights based approaches need to be participatory in character, and that the citizens ought not to be conceived as passive beneficiaries, but rather as active participants (ibid). The NGOs that adhered to the rights approach still ground their development operations on participatory methodologies, but the human rights approach makes the development thinking more consistent. Furthermore, this approach is correlated to the shift from service provision towards advocacy (ibid).

Last but not least, I will draw the attention here to the debate stemming from the post-development debate. Arturo Escobar (1995: xii) argues that:

Post-development arose from a poststructuralist and postcolonial critique, that is, an analysis of development as a set of discourses and practices that had profound impact on how Asia, Africa, and Latin America came to be seen as “underdeveloped” and treated as such. In this context, post-development was meant to designate at least three interrelated things: first, the need to decenter development, that is, to displace it from its centrality in representations and discussions about conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America [...] Secondly, in displacing development’s centrality from the discursive imaginary, post-development suggested that it was indeed possible to think about the *end of development*.

Although Arturo Escobar wrote the “Encountering Development –The Making and Unmaking of the Third World” in 1995 when he proposed the idea of “post-development era”, in the preface of the 2012 edition, he underlined that development still continues to play an important role in strategies of cultural and social domination, “even if academics might have a more nuanced view today of how these strategies operate, including how people appropriate development for their own ends” (Escobar 1995: xii). Furthermore, he argues that many political and social changes contributed the development enterprise to take a different path in the last two decades. One of the most

significant aspects of the transformation of development is the categories and uses of knowledge – “what and whose knowledge counts in development and for what purposes-have been subjected to increasing pressure from many sides” (ibid). Indeed, much of the design of the development practices has been based on particular notions of knowledge creation. For instance, this is particularly evident in the participatory methodologies that center on the incorporation of “local knowledge”.

Escobar suggests moving away from the notion of “universe” to the notion of “pluriverse” – where multiple ontologies are intertwined. The contemporary development landscape is very complex, composed of myriad actors and actions. New actors, new rising powers, and new development approaches are all contributing towards the reshaping of the development sphere. This master thesis focuses on a small part of this overly complex development picture – the work of one big international development NGO, positioned in a wider sphere of development discourse and actions. Hence, the research question of this work and its implications will be outlined in more details throughout the following chapter.

1.2 Research Question

This master thesis examines the work of Action Aid International and its role in shaping theories and practices of development. Through the analysis of the various approaches the organization adopted since its establishment in 1972 until present, I position the work of Action Aid in a broader framework of development.

Action Aid is a global federation, currently working in more than 40 countries, with more than 25 million people. The organization was founded in 1972 as a UK charity organization by Cecil-Jackson Cole, and initially was helping children in India and Kenya. In 2003 the organization moved the head office to South Africa, and adopted the name “Action Aid International”. The core mission of the federation is working “with the poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice” (Action Aid 2012:9).

Since its foundation until nowadays, Action Aid has worked with several different approaches to development – starting with charity and welfare approaches, and currently working with the human rights based approach to development (HRBA) which is mirrored in all aspects of the organization’s operating. Each of these approaches did not only represent different ways of conducting development practices, but it also reflects different ways of understanding development at large. On the one hand, Action Aid’s approaches to development “follow” the main hegemonic discourses in the development realm, and on the other, the organization with its programs and policies crafts the development discourses on a broader scale. For instance, the famous approach of Action Aid called REFLECT (which is a fusion of the PRA methodologies and the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire) exemplifies in a good manner how some of the programs of the organization went beyond its frames of operating. Namely, the REFLECT approach was adopted by numerous NGOs worldwide and it is in many instances taken as an example of the transformative possibilities of the participatory methodologies. Furthermore, Action Aid is one of the major

development organizations that adopted human rights based approach to development, and with the adoption of the new strategy *People's Action in Practice 2012-2017* is a leading organization that attempts to make thorough coherence of all aspects of its work through the implementation of this approach.

Throughout this master thesis, I focus on Action Aid's approaches to development that challenge the orthodox development understandings and chronologies – the participatory approaches to development and the human rights based approaches to development. Particular accent is put on the transition from the first to the latter approach to development. In the course of the analysis of Action Aid's operating, as well through the examination of the participatory and the human rights approaches to development at large, my aim is to tackle the following issues:

- In what way Action Aid conceives participatory and human rights based approaches to development, as well how these approaches are implemented into practices;
- What are Action Aid's main causes behind the transition from participatory to the human rights based approaches;
- Analysis of the question whether the new human rights approach brings novel ways of perceiving and conducting development, or if it just another name for the same development practices;
- In what ways Action Aid tackles the nexus between gender issues and power;
- In what ways the shift towards the human rights approach changed Action Aid's policies, strategies and institutional structure;
- To what extend Action Aid uses participatory and human rights approaches within the frames of the organization.

These issues will be accompanied by a theoretical background of the tenet features of the participatory development, its shortcomings, the possibilities for transformation provided by the participatory development, as well as of the emergence and the proliferation of the human rights approaches.

Examining the role of Action Aid is by no means an easy task. The operating of Action Aid could be analyzed through various perspectives. The federation is one of the biggest development organizations and its work tackles millions of people on daily basis. The various approaches Action Aid adopted throughout the years have been reflected into the work of the organization on different levels: changes into the organizational structure, changes into the policies and strategies of the organization as well as creating different projects in accordance to the new approaches being adopted etc. The focal aspect of this thesis is how the different approaches to development are reflected and incorporated on an institutional level. Thus, the focus stays on the examination of Action Aid as a global development institution, and how this institution has developed over the course of time. Detailed analysis of the numerous separate projects made by the organization is beyond the scope of this paper.

In addition, my interest in this topic stems from my personal motivation and educational background. As a student of Global Studies, I am very much interested in studies related to development and colonial legacies. Furthermore, I was personally interested and curious to obtain a closer insight into the operating of some of the major development NGOs, and to see how the people working in this organization perceive their own position and the position of their organization. The work of Action Aid in particular, as well as the field of development in general could be examined from myriad perspectives and points of view. Thus, this thesis is a modest attempt at getting deeper insight into one aspect of the complex picture created by the development

organizations. Hence, the paper opens lot of issues that could be analyzed further, like for instance: making comparison between Action Aid and other development organizations; examining the programs of Action Aid in different countries; comparing Action Aid's campaigns and movements in different countries and different levels etc.

1.3 Research Methodology

In order to answer the postulated research questions, I will use a combination of the following research methodologies: discourse and policy analysis and a qualitative interview with a staff member from Action Aid who currently works as a policy and research coordinator.

For the theoretical framework of this work, I will use discourse analysis related to the questions of concern. On the one hand, I will attempt to briefly outline the discourse of development as a socio/political "project" at large, and on the other, I will specifically focus on the discourse about the participatory and the human rights based approaches – their emergence, proliferation, meaning and shortcomings.

In the second part of the paper (which particularly centers on Action Aid's working), I will examine the organization's policy papers, recourse guides and strategies, and I will also use the qualitative interview that I made with one of the Action Aid's staff members. I am using 'in depth semi-structured interview'. Thus, the interview as a whole is a joint production, co-production between the researcher and the interviewee (Wengraf 2001). I deliberately chose a 'semi-structured' interview technique because my intention was not only to research about matters and facts related to the work of Action Aid, but I also wanted to delve deeper into the interviewee's personal motivations and experiences related to the work in the development enterprise in general and at

Action Aid in particular. Much of the development work depends on the role and the position of the development practitioners. On a practical level, it is influenced by the development facilitators, and on a policy level, by all the people involved into the process (see also Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998). Furthermore, Action Aid in many instances underlines that the beliefs and visions of the staff members are very much present into the organization's policies and programs (Action Aid 2012). That is particularly visible when the organization attempts through participatory workshops to include as much staff members as possible into the creation of new policies. Therefore, with the qualitative interview I attempt to go beyond Action Aid's materials, and tackle the personal sphere of the interviewee. The identity of the interviewee will be kept anonymous.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The *Second Chapter* examines the participatory and the human rights based approaches to development. The first part of the chapter deals with the participatory development, and the following issues are being tackled: historical overview and main features of the participatory development methodologies, shortcomings and limitations of the participatory methodologies, and the possibilities for transformation offered by these methodologies. Throughout this part, the focus will be on matters related to the power/knowledge nexus, gender issues, as well as on the ways the participatory methodologies address the notion of the "local communities". The *Second Chapter* proceeds with an examination of the emergence and the core aspects of the human rights based approaches to development. The field of human rights is very broad and complex, and could be tackled from various perspectives. Thorough examination of the legal aspects of the human rights sphere, as well as of the dichotomy between the universalism and the relativism of human rights is beyond the scope of this paper. The focus is on matters specifically related to the connection between human rights and development.

The *Third Chapter* is dedicated to the examination of Action Aid. The chapter begins with an outline of the various development approaches used by the organization, and as in the *Second Chapter*, the focus will be on the ways Action Aid conceives and implements the participatory and the human rights based approaches to development. Through the examination of the organization's policies and papers, the purpose of this chapter is to explicate how Action Aid's human rights based approach to development differs from the organization's previous approaches, and in what ways this approach is translated into practice. Furthermore, the semi-structured qualitative interview with the Action Aid's staff member will be outlined here. The interview findings will be presented throughout this Chapter, and will be also summarized in a table at the end of the Second Chapter.

The *Fourth Chapter* is reserved for the concluding remarks of this master thesis.

Chapter Two: Participation and Human Rights Based Approaches to Development

2.1 Participatory Development – From Margins to Mainstream

The participatory approaches gained a mainstream status in the development theories and practices in the middle of the 1980s, although the terms “participation” and “participatory” appeared for the first time in the 1950s (Hickey and Mohan 2004a; Sachs 1995). Some of the initial developmental programs that incorporated participatory approaches were the New Deal in India and community-development programs in Latin America (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998: 3).

The emergence and the proliferation of the participatory development could be positioned in four general categories. The 1970s were marked as a period when the need for alternative approaches to development has increased (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:4). More specifically, this need emerged from the growing dissatisfaction with the dominant forms of imposed and “export” oriented approaches (ibid). Therefore, there was a growing consensus for an increased incorporation of the local people’s perspectives. The peak of participatory proliferation happened in the mid 1980s, when various NGOs and grassroots activists opposed the outside-driven development approaches and adopted participatory approaches to development. The center was on incorporating the local knowledge and practices and balancing the outsider’s knowledge. Furthermore, during this period the first feminist critiques of mainstream participation occurred (ibid). During the 1990s, the participatory methodologies reached their highest peak. Participation became a synonym for “good” and “sustainable”, and also various funding bodies began demanding that participation processes should be a condition for funding (ibid). During this period myriad of handbooks, guides and courses dedicated to participation occurred, although there was a little agreement about what constitutes quality work. Hence, the next period of the participation history is characterized by increased criticism about the participation paradigm. Guijt and Kaul Shah (1998:5) explain further that there are two major paradoxes of participation. Namely, the first paradox is the standardization of approaches, which is contrary to the aim of participatory development to move away from the

rigid planning techniques, and the second one is the technical use of the participatory methods, instead of focusing on the “empowering” aspect of participation.

The participatory approaches to development were created as an antidote to the “normal” approaches in development that were perceived as overly “top down” and biased (Mohan 2001a). The core argument behind the wide proliferation of participation and participatory methodologies was that the “normal” developmental approaches excluded the most important feature of the development design – the people themselves (Sachs 1995).

Although the participatory approaches emerged at the margins of development, soon these approaches entered the major developmental organizations and institutions, including the World Bank, which saw participation “as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and recourses that affect their lives” (Cooke and Kothari 2001:5).

Mohan (2001a:2) argues further that although it is not possible a sole definition to participation to be outlined, it is very important to take into consideration various definitions and understandings of participatory development while examining it, because different ideologies and perceptions are in fact reflected into the developmental practices. These different views vary from *instrumental* view of development whereby participation enlarges the efficiency and the cost-effectiveness of ‘formal’ development projects (Mayo and Graig 1995 in Mohan 2001a:2), to *transformative* approaches to development (Esteva and Prakash 1998 in Mohan 2001a:2).

Despite the fact that different organizations and institutions define participatory development in slightly different ways, the common denominator of all these views is that the aim of the participatory development is to raise the involvement of socially and economically marginalized

people in the process of decision making. Furthermore, the core features of the participatory approaches are: empowerment, sustainability and relevance (Cooke and Kothari 2001:5).

The boom of the participatory development is intertwined with the wide spread of the various participatory methodologies. Robert Chambers (2010:19) argues that the participatory methodologies could be defined as a combination of different approaches and methods through which people are facilitated to do things themselves, for instance appraisal, monitoring, research, planning, action, evaluation etc. These approaches are combination of various methods and were labeled under different names: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Appreciative Inquiry, Reflect and Community Led Total Sanitation (ibid). Furthermore, these participatory methodologies share many values with other traditions and methodologies that have participatory aspect, like action research, participatory or participative action research and systemic action research (ibid: 21).

Among the various participatory methodologies, the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) became the most widely used participatory methodology, and was adopted by a wide range of developmental organizations and institutions.

The essence of PRA is change and reversals – of role, behavior, relationship and learning. Outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn. Outsiders do not transfer technology; they share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring, and evaluation. Outsiders do not impose their reality; they encourage and enable local people to express their own (Chambers 1997 cited in Mohan 2001a:6).

Chambers (1994:953) further explains that PRA evolved and resonates with several similar participatory traditions, particularly with activist participatory research, agro-system analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems and rapid rural appraisal. While some of these methodologies like the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) were intended for learning by outsiders, the

PRA “is intended to enable local people to conduct their own analysis and often to plan and take action. In this sense, PRA often implies radical personal and institutional change, and it would debase the term to use it for anything else than this” (ibid: 958). Furthermore, the core features that were attributed to PRA are: reliance on the local people capabilities, experimental training, facilitating, participating, sustainable local action and institutions and empowerment of local people (ibid).

The empowerment of local people is the main tenet of the participatory rural appraisal (PRA). Numerous PRA activist and practitioners argue that the process of *empowerment* is the core feature of their work, and they differentiate PRA from earlier methodologies with the argument that “instead of imposing and extracting, PRA seeks to empower” (Chambers, 1992 cited in Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:24).

Although the term “empowerment” has a core position into the participatory development discourses, there is no precise agreement about the meaning of the term. Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:26) argue that empowerment is “about people gaining the ability to undertake activities, to set their own agendas and change events”. Furthermore, empowerment is also the self-perception of the people, as well about their capability to influence the world (ibid). The process of empowerment should not be seen solely in the frames of participation. In contrary, “it implies enabling people to understand the reality of their situation, reflect on the factors shaping the situation and, most critically, take steps to affect changes to improve it” (Gajanayke 1993 cited in Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:26). Thus, “empowerment” also means engaging with decision making processes and alteration of the existing power structures.

One of the biggest paradoxes in the participatory approaches is that since “empowerment” became a buzz word in development discourses, its “radical, challenging and transformatory edge

has been lost” (Cleaver 1999: 559). Furthermore, Cleaver claims further that radical empowerment discourse is connected to both individual and class struggles, accompanied by transformations of structure and political constellations. Paradoxically, “the concept of action has become individualized, empowerment depolitized” (ibid). One of the underlying reasons for the depolitizing outcomes of the participatory approaches is the dichotomy between “efficiency outcome (participation as a tool for achieving better project outcomes) and equity and empowerment argument (participation as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of disadvantaged and marginalized groups” (ibid: 598). This is particularly important because the developmental projects always have the efficiency aspect as an imperative, which is entwined with the practical and technical aspect of the project, but is nevertheless covered with the empowerment discourse (ibid).

The critique of the overly “technical” approach of the participatory methodologies, together with the critique towards their conceptual and political shortcomings will be examined in the following subchapter.

2.1.1 Limitations of the participatory development approaches

The critique towards the participatory development could be broadly positioned into two categories: critique towards the technical limitations of the approach, and the urge for reexamination of the participatory methodologies (for instance PRA), and on the other hand, the critique towards the theoretical, conceptual and political shortcomings of the participatory development (Cooke and Kothari 2001: 5). Although these broad categories of critique focus on different aspects of the participatory development, most of them are centered on the core feature of the participatory methodologies - “empowerment”. The oversimplification of the power relations, and the (mis)interpretation of how and where power is articulated in participation, requires reexamination of the concept of empowerment (ibid: 14). Participatory development (seen both as a theoretical discourse and as a practical methodology) is mainly criticized for the following aspects: the nexus between power and “local” knowledge production; the overly localized approach of the participatory methodologies that tends to depoliticize what should be an explicitly political process; the inability “gender” issues to be adequately addressed with the participatory methodologies, as well as the inability of these approaches to challenge the “big system”, beyond the frames of the communities.

The aspects that will be addressed in more details in this work are: the connection between power and local knowledge creation; the nexus between participatory development, gender and power relations, as well as the “depoliticizing” aspect of the participatory methodologies.

Knowledge, Power and Participatory Development. One of the core principles of the participatory development is the incorporation of “local knowledge” into program planning (Mosse 2001). This is especially true when the participatory methodologies like PRA and PLA are being used. The main argument that supports the integration of PRA methodologies is that these participatory approaches empower the poor and marginalized people. Since the process of empowerment is the main tenet of participatory development, the ways power relations are perceived in the field of participatory

development is of a crucial importance. Kothari (2001:140) argues that the exclusive focus on the local level has created basic notions about that “the sites of social power and control are to be found solely at the macro-central levels. These dichotomies further strengthen the assumption that people who wield power are located at institutional centers, while those who are subjugated and subjected to power are to be found at the local or the regional level”. In order to shift the attention from the bipolar view of power (for instance state versus citizens), Kothari uses Foucault’s analyses of power in order to explain that power relations circulate and are inscribed in every aspect of the social reality.

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there...Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization (Foucault 1980 cited in Cooke and Kothari 2001:141).

Furthermore, Foucault’s concepts of “positive” and “bio-power” could be correlated with the development discourses and practices, as well as with social control in general (Kothari 2001). One of the central arguments of Foucault’s analysis on power is that power does not solely mean negative or repressive form, but on the contrary - power could be positive in a sense that it could be productive rather than restrictive, and that is omnipresent rather than localized (DuBois 1991:422).

To understand power, therefore, it is necessary to analyze in its most diverse and specific manifestations rather than focusing on its most centralized forms such as concentration in the hands of a coercive elite or a ruling class. This focus on underside of everyday aspect of power relations Foucault calls a *microphysics* rather than a *macrophysics* of power (McNey 1994:3 in Kothari 2001:143).

This notion of power that transcends the dichotomies of micro/macro, central/local, powerful/powerless is very useful for the understanding that the participatory methodologies should also uncover the power nexuses in everyday situations and social contexts. This is particularly

important when it comes to the ways the local communities are addressed with the participatory projects. As it will be outlined in more details in the following part, one of the core weaknesses of the participatory methodologies is the so called “homogenization” of the local communities. Instead of focusing solely on the power dichotomy between the communities and the institutional centers, unfolding the internal community connections provides entirely new understanding of the social dynamics on a local level, and how these dynamics should be addressed with the participatory methodologies.

Foucault also differentiates between *sovereign* power and *bio* power. He associates the *sovereign* power with the reign of the king or monarch, or with the judiciary and the rule of the law, “operates by ‘deduction’, by taking away and appropriation, by ‘seizure’ of things, time bodies and ultimately life itself” (Foucault 1981:136 cited in Brigg 2002:423). This type of *sovereign* power was exercised in the period of colonization through the wide “range of abuses associated with the position of power and superiority European colonialist felt they had” (ibid). On the other hand, Foucault shows that the *biopower* functions in a profoundly different way. “Through a multitude of procedures and mechanisms, it fosters, organizes, incites and optimizes life; by drawing upon mutually supporting procedures of power and knowledge, it simultaneously redefines and administers life in order to manage it in a calculated way” (Foucault cited in Brigg 2002: 423). Some authors, notably those coming from the post-colonial and the post-development stream, draw close correlations between Foucault’s bio-power and development, and claim that the development through its myriad programs and actions controls the political and social realms in the Third World (DuBois 1991). Furthermore, unfolding the connection between power, knowledge and development is essential not only for understanding how the development practices are conducted, but also for the creation of development discourses. Some authors are particularly concerned with the ways the development

landscape generates knowledge discrepancies between the West and the Third World. Arturo Escobar for instance, refers to Foucault and argues that the creation of discourses always go beyond the expression of thoughts into the realm of practices, conditions, rules etc. Thus, the author calls for a shift from the conventional Western knowledge production towards new types of knowledge, as well that “this transformation demands not only a change in ideas and statements but the formation of nuclei around which new forms of power and knowledge might converge” (Escobar 1995:216).

The overly “localized” approach of the participatory development – As it was already noted, one of the core supporting arguments for the proliferation of the participatory methodologies is the claim that these developmental methodologies are putting back the local people into the development picture. The argument is further supported with the claims that the incorporation of the local communities means inclusion of the knowledge and the experience of the local people into the shaping of the development policies and practices. Although the participatory development challenged the top-down development practices that were mostly based on external, “experts” knowledge, the overly “localized” focus on the local communities is the second biggest reason why there is a growing criticism towards the participatory methodologies (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998; Mohan and Stokke 2000).

Guijt and Kaul Shah (1998:7) argue that the participatory methodologies (PRA in particular) tend to oversimplify the immense diversity inside the communities, which leads to creation of homogenous groups. “The ideal of a culturally and politically homogenous, participatory local social system gained acceptability and currency” (Bryson and Mowbray 1981 cited in Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:7). Furthermore, the authors claim that various inequalities, oppressive social hierarchies and discrimination are often overlooked, and a harmonious ideal about the local communities is pushed

further. The exclusive focus on the local communities is closely intertwined with the concept of empowerment. These main tenets of the participatory development are centered upon the belief that “the ‘poor’ are set against an unspecified elite whose only defining feature is their ‘non-poorness’, with the former group operating through affective ties of kinship, ethnic group etc and the latter utilizing the ‘modern’ methods of state channels” (Mohan and Stoke 2000: 253).

Another problem concerning the too localized focus of the participatory development methodologies is the issue of the boundaries of the communities (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998). The mobility and the migration (long-term period) has changed the boundaries of the communities and produced “part-time insiders”. Last but not least, the participatory methodologies are criticized for underestimating the role of the state (Mohan and Stoke 2000: 254). Narrowing down the focus of the development participatory methodologies to the local communities “ignores the ways in which the state has used ‘the local’ politically through material and discursive practices that disempower” (ibid). Therefore, it is of a crucial importance, the political use of the ‘the local’ by different actors to be taken into consideration.

2.1.2 Participatory Development and Gender

This section of the paper deals with unfolding the complex links between participatory development, power relations and gender. The section begins with a brief explanation how the term “gender” reached a mainstream position into the development sphere. It continues further with an explanation of the parallel between feminist and development methodologies, and it also explains the transition from “Women in Development” to “Gender in Development”. Afterwards it outlines the connection between postcolonial and the feminist critiques to development and it also deals with

the issue of power relations and knowledge production about the Third World women, which is later reflected into the development discourses and practices.

“Gender” became a buzzword in the development discourses and practices and a part of the policy agendas of almost all development aid agencies and organizations (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead 2007:5). Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead (2007:5) argue further that the proliferation of gender issues into the development framework is closely connected to oversimplification and sloganization of the gender issues. These simplified generalizations are created on the basis of the lessons learned from particular places and usually include claims like “women are the poorest of the poor”, “educating women leads to economic development” etc. (ibid). “Women appear in these slogans, fables and myths both as abject victims, passive subjects of development’s rescue and splendid heroines, whose unsung virtues and contributions to development need to be heeded” (ibid:4).

Close epistemological, ethical and political parallels could be drawn between feminist and development research methodologies, in particular between feminist and participatory methodologies (Cornwall 2000:6). The participatory methodologies are ultimately concerned with issues of power and change, and the same goes true for the feminist research methodologies. For both participation and gender it could be argued that “what began as a political issue is translated into a technical problem which the development enterprise can accommodate with barely a falter in its side” (Whitte 1996 cited in Cornwall 2000:6).

The transition of the participatory development from the margins to the mainstream was accompanied by the promises that this new type of development practice could bring novel spaces for addressing issues of gendered power, agency and representation (Cornwall 2000). The technical participatory methodologies like PRA indeed provide new spaces for dialogue, but that does not

necessarily mean that a participatory process is constituted (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998). In order participatory development to bring genuine spaces for transformation, the PRA tools and approaches should systematically address the sensitive gender issues of difference in the communities. Guijt and Kaul Shah (1998:1) point out that “the language and practice of participation often obscures women’s worlds, needs and contributions to development, making equitable participatory development an elusive goal”. Furthermore, lines of similarities could be drawn between how the issue of “difference” was inscribed in both the feminist and the participatory development discourses. The participatory approaches emerged as an antidote to the top-down development framework. The main supporting argument for the proliferation of the participatory approaches to development was the inclusion of the “local”, as well as the attempt the development policies to be created accordingly to the different points of view and experiences of the local communities. In a similar vein, the critique of Women in Development’s (WID) essentialist focus on women that often involved reinforcing of hegemonic notions on gender, initiated the transition from the “Women in Development” (WID) to the “Gender in Development” (GID) approach (Cornwall 2000:6). The shift to GID was an attempt for an increased incorporation of gender analysis in development, as well as for an ultimate empowerment of women. Cecile Jackson and Ruth Pearson argue that the change from WID to GID, is not only another way of naming the same approach. In contrary, it

reflects the fact that at all levels of the development “business” there is an acceptance that it is not women *per se* who are to be problematised, but gender relations in which women are subordinated which must be problematised, and that this analysis does not only justifies the concentration of resources on women’s development activities and access to resources, but it also points to the centrality of gender analysis in the development policies at all levels (Jackson and Pearson 1998:5).

During the 1990s, the development policies and practices were intertwined with gender on all levels. Gender has become not only a desirable quality, but a goal inscribed in development policies and practices (Jackson and Pearson 1998). Thus, unfolding the relationship between gender matters and participatory development is of a crucial importance. Andrea Cornwall (1998: 47) argues that among the wide range of participatory approaches only a few systematically address the issue of gender differences. Furthermore, Cornwall claims that another related shortcoming is that the gender issues in the participatory development are approached through operational framework that treats “men” and “women” as they are constituted groups characterized by the virtue of their sex only. “Women are often represented as if their relationship with men is consisted of competing claims and conflicting interests, in which they are inevitably the weaker party. ‘Men’ become powerful, shadowy figures who need somehow to be countered. In the process, the concerns and the projections of a particular variant of Western feminism come to be translated into development practice” (Cornwall 2000: 9). Unfolding the ways in which the representation of women (especially the Third World Women) is reflected into the development projects is of a crucial importance for understanding the nexus between the feminist discourses and practices. The development practices follow certain stream of representation and knowledge creation about the third world women. In a similar vein, Mohanti claims that addressing Third World Women as a singular and monolithic category has a colonizing dimension. Furthermore, she argues that the image of the Third World Women “carries with it the authorizing signature of Western humanist discourse” (Mohanti 1983:335). Reflecting upon the existing categories in the dominant western feminist scholarship, and uncovering the causes behind the monolithic and homogenized creation and usage of the term “Third World Women”, in fact means examining power relations. The feminist scholarly practices are firmly embedded into the preexisting power constellations. Equal discursive practices are not possible in a constellation of an unequal distribution of power. Hence, the Western feminist scholarship about

the third world women must be examined in terms of the specific postulation of power and struggle (ibid).

Mohanti's view on the nexus of power relations is aligned to Foucault's perspective on power and knowledge creation. "The relations of power I am referring to are not reducible to binary opposition of oppressor/oppressed relations. I want to suggest that it is possible to retain the idea of multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures" (Mohanti 1991:13). Similarly, Foucault shows how the representations of social realities are shaped accordingly to the myriad relations and dynamics of discourse and power. Foucault's opus[...] "has been instrumental in unveiling the mechanisms by which a certain order of discourse produces permissible modes of being and thinking while disqualifying and even making others impossible" (Escobar 1995: 5).

On the one hand, the feminist discourse related to the Third World is consisted of myriad forms of power domination and resistance, but on the other, this particular discourse also creates new power of domination. Escobar (1991:5) for instance, claims that this discursive power produces new "colonization of reality". In a similar manner, Mohanti argues that the main problem of the western scholarship is the creation of homogenizing groups and categories of men and women as "already constituted sexual-political subjects *prior* to their entry into the arena of social relations" (Mohanti 1984:340). Furthermore, she draws attention to the issue that this colonial dimension of the western feminist scholarship is closely connected to the relationship "between 'Woman' – cultural and ideological composite 'Other' constructed through diverse representational discourses (scientific, literary, juridical, linguistic etc) and 'women'- real, material subjects of their collective histories" (ibid). Moreover, she accentuates that "the correlation between women as historical

subjects and the re-presentation of Woman produced by hegemonic discourses [...] is an arbitrary relation set up by particular cultures” (ibid).

The above mentioned critiques of the ways knowledge about Third World Women is produced (Mohanti, Escobar etc) is aligned to the ways “post-colonialism” produces knowledge about the development realm. “Post-colonialism does not mean an epochal shift from colonialism to after-colonialism, post-colonialism refers to the ways of criticizing the material and discursive legacies of colonialism” (Radcliffe 1999 cited in McEwan 2001:94). The post-colonial critique focuses on the forces of coercive domination that function in the contemporary world: the politics of anti-colonialism, neocolonialism, race, gender, ethnicity and class, are the main features of the postcolonial ground (Young 2001: 11). The postcolonial critique examines the myriad interconnected forms of dominance and oppression while tracing the linkages between the past and the present. Young (ibid) argues that the postcolonial critique is in fact a form of activist writing that goes back to the political commitment of the anti-colonial liberation movements and draws its inspiration from them, while recognizing that they function under circumstances diverse from the present. Depicting the main features of post-colonialism is useful also for understanding the ways feminism criticizes development. Namely, Mc Ewan also claims that “[...]post-colonialism, like feminism, is a powerful critique of development and an increasingly important change to the dominant ways of apprehending North-South relations” (Mc Ewan 2001:3). Furthermore, both post-colonialism and feminism identify postulations based on Eurocentric conceptions of gender difference. Many of these dominant assumptions of gender difference do not necessarily correspond with the ways in which some African, Asian and Latin American perceive and live the gender differences. Andrea Cornwall argues further that “the constructs ‘men’ and ‘women’ have tended to be used in much gender and development work to describe mutually exclusive groups which are

assumed to have distinct interests and concerns yet, in practice gender analysis often tells us very little about gender as it is locally constructed” (Cornwall 1998: 50).

Another significant aspect when it comes to gender in participatory development is paying closer attention to the differences within the differences. When “women” are taken as a general, homogenous group, the cross-cutting differences are overlooked. In the participatory development projects women ought to be examined in accordance to specific cultural, political and economic contexts (Cornwall 1998:51). Furthermore, another way of challenging the over-simplistic assumptions about gender issues is possible if the practitioners of the participatory projects are always incorporating the ways in which the local people are experiencing gender and other differences (ibid). That is possible by reflecting on the differences that have effects locally, as well as on the ways how these differences intersect to create inequalities.

Exploring cultural models of difference and the ways in which these are used to create inequalities can make space for sensitization about prejudices and discrimination as an integral part of the participatory process. Challenging biases about gender in the initial stages of PRA by coming in with an explicit ‘gender perspective’ may be less effective than a gradual process of uncovering biases and addressing them, moving towards a realization that prejudices against women cannot be separated from other prejudices (ibid: 56).

Incorporating gender-awareness into the participatory projects is very important for challenging the over-simplification and the generalizations of the communities. “Despite the stated intentions of social inclusion, it has become clear that many participatory development initiatives do not deal well with the complexity of community differences, including age, economic, religious, caste, ethnic, and in particular, gender” (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:1). The inadequate understanding of the myriad differences inside the communities results into “mythical” notion of community cohesion, as well as into falling into the trap of community average (Mohanti 1991 in Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:7).

Therefore, gender awareness should be incorporated into practice, instead of practicing two different principles and methods (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998:7). The term “participation” is a loose term itself that although describes a process of wider inclusion and incorporation, does not automatically include those who are left out of the process. The challenge of inclusion is not only about increasing the number of female participants. On the contrary, a simple increase of the number of people taking active role into the participatory process in some instances could foster inequalities and/or maintain the status quo. “Working with differences requires skills that have been underemphasized in much recent participatory development work: advocacy, conflict resolution, assertiveness training” (Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998 cited in Cornwall 2000:27). Therefore, good incorporation of gender awareness into participatory initiatives is closely intertwined with the role of the project facilitators. They always have to be aware of the local politics and the local experiences, and to link these experiences with their personal and institutional position and perception. Furthermore, “rather presume that gender difference makes a difference in all settings, the next step would be to investigate the contexts in which ways of thinking about gender emerge” (Cornwall 1998:55). In various contexts (for instance in the mosque, or on the farm) the notions of gender may significantly vary. Thus, being aware of the various dynamics inside the communities is vital for conducting gender aware participatory methodologies.

2.1.3 Participatory Development and Possibilities for Transformation

Among the aspects of the participatory methodologies that gained sharp critique is also the assumption that these approaches depoliticize, instead of aiming at altering broader political and social constellations. More transformative approach to development is possible only if the process of participation is intertwined with thorough understanding of power structures and political systems (Hickey and Mohan 2004b: 5). Hickey and Mohan (ibid) argue further that the participatory approaches are more likely to create transformation where: they are followed by a broader political project; where they particularly target at securing citizenship rights and participation for marginal groups and when they attempt at engaging to development as an underlying process of social change instead of having the form of discrete technocratic interventions.

The attempt of the participatory development to go beyond the local into the realm of the governance and wider political decision making is closely intertwined with conceptualizing citizenship as a right to participation. “To be meaningful, arguments for participation in a conception of rights which, in a development context, strengthens the status of citizens from that of beneficiaries of development to its rightful and legitimate claimants” (Cornwall 2000 cited in Gaventa 2002:2). Connecting participation to political spheres certainly creates possibilities for reexamining the ways in which participation has been conceived and practiced. Unlike during the period when participation was operating exclusively in the frames of the local, the connection between participatory development and citizenship initiated the creation of the concept “participatory citizenship” that ties participation in the political, community and social spheres (Hickey and Mohan 2004a:25). “Participatory citizenship” as a concept on the one hand has broadened the scope of participatory development, but on the other, the term is still vague and imprecise, particularly when it comes to understanding the meaning of the term “citizenship” itself. On the one hand, if conceptualized in traditional liberal terms, citizenship means “individual legal

equality accompanied by a set of rights and responsibilities and bestowed by a state on its citizens” (Hickey and Mohan 2004b: 29) and on the other, more recent notions of citizenship aim to connect the gap between the state and the citizens by “recasting citizenship as practiced rather than as given” (ibid). These notions on citizenship underline the importance of an inclusive citizenship where the citizens are perceived more as active shapers than as users and choosers of interventions and services (see also Cornwall and Gaventa 2001).

Intertwining citizenship with participation also means that participation is understood as a *right*. Conceptualizing participation as a right means:

[...]right of participation in decision – making in social, economic, cultural and political life should be included in the nexus of basic human rights. Citizenship as participation can be seen as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as right enables people to act as agents (Lister 1998: 228 cited in Cornwall and Gaventa 2001:13).

Cornwall and Gaventa (2001:13) argue further that by seeing themselves as actors instead of as simple beneficiaries, the user groups could assert their citizenship in a third sense through seeing bigger accountability from service providers, like for instance, greater accountability through increased dialogue and consultation.

The broadening of the concepts “rights” and “citizenship” opens up spaces for an extended and deeper understanding of the role and the possibilities of participatory development, and at the same time, there is acknowledgment that entailing all citizens to the same rights does not always mean advancing equitable outcomes (Ferguson 1999 in Gaventa 2002:5). “Paradoxically, rather than addressing inequalities, universalism can work to marginalize the already marginal and exacerbate social exclusion” (Ellison 1999:58-9 cited in Gaventa 2002: 8). Universal application of citizenship rights is not possible because the concept of citizenship that abstracts rights from the political and

historical contexts in which citizens find themselves leads to different outcomes. Furthermore, the position of the citizens is closely intertwined with the perception of identities, power and material resources. “How people find themselves as citizens, and how they are recognized by others, is likely to have a significant impact on how they act to claim their citizenship rights in the first place” (Gaventa 2002:9). Hence, the perception what a “citizenship right” is must be examined in accordance to particular historical, economical and political constellations. For instance, the philosophical notions of citizenship could be compared and contrasted to the colonial and postcolonial experiences. “Realization of citizenship in these contexts came only after centuries of struggles by the excluded to claim and extend their rights, both to new populations, and to new arenas, from the political, to the economic and social” (ibid).

The “rights to citizenship” is one of the main aspects inscribed into the human rights based approaches to development. The other aspects will be outlined in more details in the following chapter which deals with the emergence and the proliferation of the HRBA.

2.2 Human Rights Based Approaches to Development

The human rights based approaches to development (HRBA) entered the development realm in the beginning of the 1990s, and particularly intensified in the beginning of the 2000s. Some believe that incorporating human rights based approaches into development practices opens space for “re-politicizing” possibilities of development work, whereas for others, the label “human rights based approach” is just another fashionable name that attracts attention, but in fact does not bring anything new (Cornwal and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1415).

Before the rights based approaches to development, the idea of “right to development” was dominant into the development discourses (Uvin 2007:597). The UN Declaration on the Rights to Development from 1986 marked the attempt of the Third World countries within the UN to pass reforms that would result in a New International Economic Order (NIEO).

The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized (UN 1986, Article I).

However, the notion of the “indivisible, interdependent and non-hierarchical nature of rights” has become the mantra since the 1993 Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Uvin 2007:597). During the 1990s, the perception of human rights and development experienced a change due to three main reasons: the end of the Cold War, the failure of the structural adjustment programs, and lastly, the need development to be conceived in a more holistic sense, beyond economic growth (ibid).

Asserting that all people have a right to development, and that development is grasped through the realization of all human rights categories is operationally futile (Uvin 2007: 599). Throughout the 1990s, many multilateral aid agencies published various documents and guidelines on the incorporation on human rights in their work. This marked the beginning of the “changed vision” about the connection between human rights and development. Instead of “rights to development”, the discourse shifted towards “rights based approaches to development” (ibid).

Although various organizations claim to be applying a rights based *approach* to development, in fact the majority are incorporating a human rights *perspective* in their work (Ljugman 2004: 5).

However, adopting a human rights perspective is the first major step that leads towards entirely implementing a human rights based approach to development.

Despite the fact that various organizations and institutions have adopted human rights based perspectives/approaches to their work, there is no talk of a “singular rights-based approach” to development (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:15). On the contrary, there are plural rights based approaches with different starting points, different practices and various implications. Therefore, when examining the relationship between human rights and development, it is very important the following question to be taken into consideration:

Why is there an increased discourse about the human rights based approaches to development in the last years; what are the historical roots for integration of the human rights into the development sphere; what are the various justifications for the value of rights in development, and what benefits and shortcomings do the human rights based approaches bring to the development politics and practices? (ibid)

The various justifications for the human rights based approaches to development could be generally divided into three main categories: normative, pragmatic and ethical. The normative justification is that incorporating human rights to development means putting values and politics at the core of the development discourse. “By stipulating an internationally agreed set of norms, backed by international law, a stronger basis is provided for citizens to make claims on their states and for holding states to account for their duties to enhance the access of their citizens to the realization of their rights” (ibid). Furthermore, Ljugman (2004:10) argues that the normative framework encompasses international instruments and authoritative interpretations that could be summarized in six major principles:

- Universalism and inalienability
- Equality and non-discrimination

- Indivisibility and interdependence of human rights
- Participation and inclusion
- Accountability, and
- The rule of law.

These principles of the human rights based approaches to development are related to the argument that intertwining development with human rights leads to re-politization of development. “Rights-based development, it seems, provides an operational commitment to a qualitatively different form of participation, in which citizens exercise their rights to participate in challenging and changing the institutions that govern their lives” (Holland, Blocklesby and Abugre 2004:255). In a similar vein, the use of rights based approaches to development is justified with more pragmatic arguments, usually related to the accountability on the part of the recipient states (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1417). Holland, Blocklesby and Abugre (2004:253) claim that the incorporation of human rights based approaches to development politicizes the development sphere and increases the institutional accountability and transparency. Furthermore, the authors argue that rights based development provides qualitatively different form of participation, where citizens have the opportunity to participate directly in the institutions that govern their lives (ibid: 256).

I In the “United Nations Conceptual Framework: Human Rights and Poverty Reduction” (2004:16) it is stated that “rights and obligation demand accountability: unless supported by a system of accountability, they can become no more than a window dressing”. Furthermore, the Conceptual Framework emphasizes the role and the accountability of the duty bearers. Accordingly, “the human rights approach to poverty reduction emphasizes the obligations and requires that all duty bearers including States and intergovernmental organizations, be held to account for their conduct in relation to international human rights” (ibid).

Putting the accountability as a central benefit of the human rights based approach to development is closely related to the varying mechanisms of accountability that differ from one jurisdiction to another (ibid). Hence, as it is outlined further in the “UN Conceptual Framework for Human Rights and Poverty Reduction” (2004:16) there are three main questions regarding the connection between accountability, human rights based approaches to development and the different juridical systems. The questions are the following: “In the relation to a particular duty bearer, are there accessible, transparent and effective mechanisms of accountability? Are there accessible, transparent and effective mechanisms of accountability within that jurisdiction? And thirdly, are the mechanisms of accountability accessible to the poor?” Cornwall and Nyami-Musembi (2004:1417) extend the accountability argument beyond the role and the duties of the states. Namely, they claim that monitoring and accountability procedures should not include the states only, but also global actors, such as the donor community, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs and TNCs. Furthermore, they argue that: “The very move from charity to claims brings about a focus on mechanisms of accountability. If claims exist, methods for holding those who violate claims accountable must exist as well. If not, the claims lose their meaning” (Cornwall and Nyami-Musembi 2004:1418).

Incorporating human rights into poverty reduction strategies and into the development realm opens the question of how “poverty” is defined and conceived. According to the “UN Conceptual Framework: Human Rights and Poverty Reduction” (2004:8) the “capability” approach to development is the most suitable approach for the inclusion of human rights into the poverty reduction strategies. Moreover, the “capability” approach is a specific conception of what constitutes human well-being (ibid). This approach reflects the Amartya Sen’s definition of poverty, where the defining characteristic of a poor person is that the person has very restricted opportunities to pursue

the well-being. Poverty could be perceived as “the failure of basic capabilities to reach certain minimally acceptable levels” (Sen 1992:109). Furthermore, the capability approach defines poverty as “the inadequate realization of certain basic freedoms such as the freedom to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy etc. Freedom here is conceived in a broader sense, to encompass both positive and negative freedoms” (ibid).

Narrowing down the definition of poverty is useful for setting the normative framework that has its basis in international covenants and conventions. One of the strongest arguments supporting the human rights based approach to development is since “referents in a set of internationally agreed legal documents than talking of rights provides a different, and potentially more powerful approach to development” (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1418). On the other hand, the critique that the human rights based approach to development is just a new name for the same practices remains. Peter Uvin in “On High Moral Ground: The Incorporation of Human Rights by the Development Enterprise” (2004:1) depicts several issues connected to the implementation of the human rights based approach to development. Namely, he argues that the work is too rhetorical and further legitimizes historical inequalities, as well as that the many faces of power reveal themselves - as they always do - when the powerful and the rich voluntarily set out to collaborate and redefine the conditions of misery and exploitation for the rest of the world, and fund the resulting solutions. Furthermore, he accentuates the importance of the rhetorical incorporation of the “human rights approach” into the development discourse by almost all institutions, multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations (ibid). This is particularly important, given that the human rights approaches are becoming “a must” feature of development projects and programs. Changes into the discourse on a long run could create changes in the practices as well. For instance, they slowly redesign the borders of acceptable action, and reshape the way interests and preferences are

identified (ibid). Thus, Uvin claims that [...] "the kind of rhetorical incorporation discussed in this section, while it may change few of the immediate actions undertaken, may make a real difference in the longer run. How much of a change this will amount to is a matter of time" (ibid: 3). Furthermore, throughout the UNDP's "Human Development Report" (2001:112) it is outlined that there are several practical implications which ought to be taken into account in order the human rights based approaches to move beyond the rhetoric postulations. Namely, the suggestions are the following:

- Launch independent national assessments of human rights;
- Align national laws with international human rights standards and commitments;
- Promote human rights laws
- Strengthen a network of human rights organizations; and
- Promote a rights-enabling economic environment.

The connection between human rights and development reflects the broader extend to which human rights are implemented in particular states. The first four of the propositions above guarantee that that nation states refer to human rights in their constitutions (Uvin 2002:9). "These are all potentially useful activities, but they do not reflect any mainstreaming of human rights into development practice. They are simply small add-ons" (ibid). The last implication opens up a space for going a step further.

The adoption of the human rights based approach to development is accompanied by several major challenges. Ljugman (2004: 16) argues that the main obstacles are related to the inadequacy of the state legal apparatuses and to the discrepancies between law and practice. For instance, although the majority of States have ratified human rights treaties, they have not in fact codified these treaties into their domestic legal framework; even when there is a formal consistency between domestic and international law, the policies and practices in a particular country might

contradict the human rights principles; citizens might not be aware of their rights as well as of their responsibilities as citizens. The author argues further that one way these challenges to be addressed is by undertaking advocacy and preparation for providing technical assistance in order to ensure that a state's formal laws are aligned with the human rights regime. The second set of challenges is connected to the position of the development workers (ibid). Problems might occur when the development community does not have proper knowledge of the human rights regime, as well as when there is a little experience concerning the incorporation of human rights in practice. The author continues further with the third set of limitations, related to the limitations of the international human rights framework. "The compliance with international law primarily relies on a state's own legal system, courts and other official bodies" (ibid). The implementation of the human rights based approaches significantly differs from a country to country.

Despite the above mentioned difficulties connected to the implementation of the human rights based approaches to development work, another problem related to the mainstreaming of the HRBA is the variety of interpretations of these approaches. Different agencies and organizations define the HRBA approaches in a slightly different way. Thus, any generalization could oversee these distinctions between various agencies. "A point of caution is necessary here: it would be problematic to draw any hard and fast conclusion about the normative influence of rights and what agencies do even when they have the most assertive declarations of support for rights" (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 1415). Therefore, analyzing how different bodies perceive and implement human rights based approaches in their work is very important for positioning these approaches in a broader picture of international development where the work of various agencies is intertwined. Before thoroughly examining how Action Aid made a transition towards HRBA and

how the organization incorporates these approaches into its work, the following paragraph outlines briefly in what way several different agencies work with human rights based approaches.

UNDP and UNICEF are leaders from the multilateral agencies in implementation of human rights based approaches. The UN reforms since 1997 underlined the importance of human rights as core drivers of the UN agencies. The rationale behind these changes is that adopting a human rights approaches will ultimately lead to “genuine self-monitoring” (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1425). UNICEF implements the HRBA on a very practical level. Furthermore, UNICEF’s work is based on the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the UN Convention on Children’s Rights. The implementation of the rights based approaches into the Community Capacity Development is done through five main steps (see also Urban Johnson, *A Human Rights Approach to Development Programming*, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, 2003). The first step of programming is causality analyses, which mainly involves identification of basic causes like discrimination, exploitation etc. The second step is called pattern-analysis, and means unfolding the complex relationships between claim-holders and duty bearers; the third step of the human rights programming process is called capacity analysis – a process of analysis why the right is being violated or is at risk of violation. The underlying assumption behind this step of the process is that rights are violated because claim holders lack the capacity to claim the right, whereas the duty bearers lack the capacity to meet their duties (UNICEF 2003:54). Identification of Candidate Action is the fourth step which involves equipping both rights-holders and duty bearers in relation to a specific issue, and finally, program design encompasses aggregating of priority actions and activities (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004:1425).

Unlike UNICEF, UNDP has not canalized the human rights based approach into a practical programming, although as Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi (2004:1426) argue, UNDP “can fairly be

described as a notable intellectual leader within the UN in elaborating the meaning of a rights-based approach". UNDP's focal contribution to the mainstreaming of the HRBA is the Human Development Report 2000 on Human Rights and Human Development. UNDP conceptualizes the rights-based approach in their work in the following manner:

The central goal of development has been and will be promotion of human well-being. Given that human rights define and defend human well being, a rights-based approach to development provides both the conceptual and practical framework for the realization of human rights through the development process (ibid).

Other UN aid agencies (UNAIDS, UNDAF, UN Division of advancement of women), bilateral agencies from Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, Norway and international non-governmental organizations like Action Aid, Oxfam, CARE, Save the Children etc., have also adopted human rights based approaches to their work. Since there is no sole definition of human rights based approaches to development, different organization adopted human rights approaches in a slightly different manner. Marks (2003:2) makes a distinction between seven human rights based approaches - holistic approach, the rights (or human rights) based approach, the social justice approach, the capabilities approach, the right to development approach, the responsibilities approach, and the human rights education approach. Thus, when working with human rights based approaches, it is important for the organizations to define their own understanding of these approaches.

The following chapter examines the ways Action Aid understands human rights based approaches to development, and it also explains how and why the organization shifted from previous approaches to development to human rights based approaches.

Chapter Three: The Role of Action Aid International in the Creation of Theories and Practices of Development

3.1 Action Aid (International) – From a charity organization to a global federation

Action Aid is a global federation working in more than 40 countries, with more than 25 million people. The organization was founded in 1972 as a UK charity organization by Cecil-Jackson Cole, and initially was helping children in India and Kenya. In 2003, the organization moved the head office to South Africa and adopted the name “Action Aid International”. The core mission of the federation is working “with the poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice” (Action Aid 2012:9). Action Aid adopted human rights based approach to development (HRBA) in 1998, and since then is committed to “transforming power relations in every community and country” (ibid: 10). The human rights based approach to development is reflected in all aspects of the organization’s operating. Action Aid also adopted new Strategy for 2012-2017 – “People’s Action to End Poverty”, and developed new recourse book that aims to systematize the work of the organization, as well as to provide unity across the federation. Since its formation, Action Aid has had several different approaches to development – charity and welfare, basic needs/service-driven approach, supporting the empowerment of communities, and finally, working with human rights. Each of these approaches reflects different ways of conceiving development that leads to different development practices (projects, programs, policies etc). The change of approaches that Action Aid adopted throughout the years reflects changes into the development enterprise on a bigger scale. On the one hand, the development path of the organization itself gives a good overview of the

“mainstream” development theories and practices at large, but on the other, Action Aid, as one of the biggest development organizations, created programs and policies that in a way initiated new development streams. For instance, one of the most influential approaches of Action Aid is the Reflect approach, which emerged as a pilot program in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador between 1993 and 1995, and started like a blending of the political philosophy of Paulo Freire and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies. REFLECT grew fast and according to the Global Reflect Survey in 2000, the approach was being used by over 350 organizations in 60 countries (Reflect Action 2009, Action Aid, Retrieved September, 20, 2012, from <http://www.reflect-action.org>). The impact of the REFLECT approach has been reviewed by many scholars, particularly when it comes to the potential of the participatory methodologies for deeper social and political transformations. This approach is an example which shows that Action Aid’s programs do not solely have practical impact, but they also significantly contribute to development of discourses on a broader scale.

This part of the paper examines how and why Action Aid changed its approaches to development throughout the years. As in the previous chapter, the accent will be on the transition from participatory to human rights based approaches to development. Throughout this chapter I take Action Aid as a case study organization, and I attempt to unfold the reasons behind the changes the organization made – both in its approaches to development and in the organizational structure. This chapter is organized as follows:

Firstly, I will give an overview of the several different approaches the organization adopted since its foundation. Particular focus is put on the participatory methodologies as well on the transition from the participatory/empowerment to the human rights based approach to development. Secondly, I will examine how the organization conceives the human rights approach,

and in what ways the approach is implemented into the organization's operating. This will be accompanied by the overview and the analysis of the changes Action Aid made on an organizational level inspired by the adoption of the new approach to development. Furthermore, throughout this part of the paper, the qualitative interview with the Action Aid's staff member will be presented and examined. With the qualitative interview I attempt to uncover some of the issues related to the participatory and the human rights approach seen from the perspective of one of the Action Aid's staff member. The organization itself claims that the role of the staff members is very important for the creation of the organization's policies. The personal values, beliefs and understandings of the staff members are in many instances reflected into the organization's operating. Thus, the qualitative interview provides a different insight into Action Aid's work that goes beyond the facts and opinions presented into the organization's papers and policies. The interview findings will be presented throughout the text, and will be also summarized in a table at the end of the third chapter.

3.2 Action Aid's approaches to development

Since the establishment of the organization, Action Aid adopted several different approaches to development, starting with the charity and welfare approach and currently working with the human rights based approach to development (HRBA). Each of these approaches is premised on different understandings how development practices should be conducted. This includes various definitions of the development process itself, including definitions of poverty, inequality, empowerment etc. (see also Action Aid 2012, People's Action in Practice, HRBA).

In the 1970s, Action Aid worked with charity and welfare approaches to development. During this period, the organization provided school uniforms and equipment to sponsored

children, without attempting to tackle wider social and political constellations. “[...] we became increasingly aware that our focus on individual children was random and unjust. We helped children lucky enough to be sponsored. Those who were not, despite their greater need in some cases, received no support” (Action Aid 2012: 13). Throughout the 1980s, the organization went beyond the individual support of children and reshaped the charity and welfare approach to development into basic needs/service-driven approach. Similarly as the previous approach, the basic needs/service driven approach did not tackle power and gender issues, and the people in the communities were perceived as passive beneficiaries. Furthermore, the roles of the state and the civil society were bypassed, and Action Aid took on the role of the government, without making any attempt to change the relationship between the government and the local communities, which became a core feature of the later approaches. In addition, important thing to note is how Action Aid perceived its role into the development process. The organization conceived its own role as a driving force for creating changes (ibid: 17).

Throughout the 1990s, the main focus of Action Aid’s work was supporting the empowerment of communities, whereas in the end of the 1990s this approach was gradually replaced by human rights based approach to development which is nowadays incorporated in all aspects of the Action Aid’s working. The tenet feature of the empowerment approach was that the organization should support the people in the communities to help themselves in situations when the governments are not able to support them. Unlike in the previous approaches, during the period when the empowerment approaches were dominant, the role of the individual was strong, and the community groups were seen as main drivers of change. As it was narrated above, the main critical arguments directed towards the empowerment approach were related to the creation of “separate project islands”, without challenging the broader political system. In a similar manner, Action Aid

takes critical stance towards its own use of the empowerment/participation methodologies and claims that “without strong grassroots organizations and movements putting pressure on the state, we could not achieve and sustain the systems changes we wanted – such as strong education and health services for all” (ibid:14). Furthermore, in its own documents, Action Aid firmly states that the usage of empowerment approaches led trapping the women in a marginalized position because they were organized to serve the needs of the others. The transition from the empowerment approaches to the human rights based approach to development, did not in fact mean putting aside the participatory methodologies. In contrary, participatory methodologies are still being used, but instead focusing solely on the local level, the human rights based approach aims to build local organizations of “rights-holders” and to connect these organizations into networks, alliances and movements on national and international level (ibid: 15).

Since the participatory and the human rights based approaches to development have central place in this work, the following subchapters examine the ways Action Aid used the participatory/empowerment approach, and how the organization made the transition from this approach to the HRBA.

3.2.1 REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques)

The best illustration of the ways Action Aid incorporated the empowerment approach is through the REFLECT program - the most proliferated approach of Action Aid, which emerged in the 1990s through pilot projects in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador. The organization defines REFLECT as an innovative approach to adult learning and social change which merges the theories of Paulo Freire with participatory methodologies (mainly tools developed by the practitioners of the

participatory rural appraisal – PRA). The REFLECT approach is nowadays used by more than 500 organizations worldwide. The organizations working with Reflect won the UNESCO literacy price in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2010 (Reflect Action 2009, Action Aid, Retrieved September, 20, 2012 from <http://www.reflect-action.org>).

REFLECT is based on the methodology and the philosophy of the late Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who wrote the seminal educational book “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” - published for the first time in 1968 and translated into English in 1970. Freire spent twenty-five years of his life in exile in Chile and in the United State, and in the course of his life track and educational background in philosophy and education, he developed a theory for the education of illiterates, in particular adults. Paulo Freire developed his educational philosophy and methodology as a critique against the educational system which treats the students as passive recipients, as objects of the learning process, instead of active subjects (Freire 1972). Furthermore, he argued that most non-literate people were unable to assert themselves, as well as that as a consequence of their oppression they were plunged into a “culture of silence”. “In the culture of silence, to exist is only to live. The body carries out orders from above. Thinking is difficult. Speaking is forbidden” (Freire 1985: 60). Furthermore, Freire talked about “conscientization” - which is a process of learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and taking action against the oppressive features of reality (ibid). This process involves perceiving the reality not as something which constraints, but rather as something that could be shaped and transformed. In Freire’s “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”, the notion of dialogue as a process of learning and knowing that involves sharing of experiences, has a focal place. He argues that:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice, we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of a dialogue as a mere technique. Dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that I attempt to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of

the other. On the contrary, dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in that sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should be never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue present itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing (Freire 1972 in Donaldo Macedo, Introduction to the Pedagogy of the Oppressed n.d. Retrieved 25 September, 2012, from <http://www.pedagogyoftheoppressed.com/intro/>)

Despite Paulo Freire's methodology, the REFLECT approach is also constituted of the participatory methodologies, in particular the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies. As it was narrated throughout the second chapter, PRA originated as an antidote to the development models of "westernization" which include simple technological solutions enforced by external professionals. Archer and Cottingham (1996) throughout the Reflect Mother Manual claim that PRA is more than just a set of techniques. On the contrary, PRA is in itself an approach and much of the success of the implementation of this approach depends on the facilitators themselves and their ability to facilitate the process in a proper way. "If those who practice the techniques do not have a real respect for and a real commitment to the priorities of the poor, then it is often still extractive" (ibid: 12).

Acher and Newman (2003:2) explain that the REFLECT framework is based on several core elements and most of them are related to the issue of power and the awareness that Reflect is in fact an explicitly political process. "REFLECT is premised on the recognition that achieving social change and greater social justice is a fundamentally political process. REFLECT is not a neutral approach that seeks to promote a neutral vision of development based only on improving people's immediate material conditions or providing short-term responses to their basic needs" (ibid). This firm position of Action Aid that the organization takes sides with the marginalized people in order

to challenge injustice is intertwined with Action Aid's core principle of raising power awareness. Namely, Archer and Newman (ibid) note further that all participatory tools, unless linked to awareness of power relations, could be used or manipulated in exploitative ways. Hence, the authors explain that Reflect is a process "in which the multiple dimensions of power and stratifications are always focus of reflection, and actions are oriented towards changing inequitable power relations whatever their basis" (ibid). The REFLECT approach is one of the best instances about the ways Action Aid contributes to the creation of development discourses on a larger scale. This approach is often taken as one of the best examples that the participatory methodologies possess the potential for deeper transformations. For instance, Hickey and Mohan (2004a:164) claim that "the results of REFLECT in many cases to date have been impressive, with a genuine transformation taking place with regards to gender relations, community-state relations, and between age groups within communities". Moreover, the authors continue further with the argument that Reflect contributes to citizenship formation and strengthening political capabilities through the practice of participatory methodologies that go beyond the local level. In addition, the Reflect approach did not stay in the frames of Action Aid's operating, but was widely used by different NGOs.

3.3 Action Aid's Human Rights Based Approach to Development

Action Aid committed to human rights based approach to development in 1998 with the adoption of the strategy "Fighting Poverty Together", and strengthened the HRBA with the adoption of the 2005 strategy "Rights to End Poverty". The new strategy for the period 2012-2017, called "People's Action to End Poverty", consolidated all the aspects of Action Aid's working under the umbrella of human rights. Furthermore, the latest strategy together with the "Human Rights Based Approach

Manual”, are the most comprehensive policy documents that explain thoroughly how the organization adopted its “own” human rights based approach to development. Examining Action Aid’s shift to HRBA does not provide an insight solely into the ways the organization understood and practiced ‘development’, but it also reflects the changes into the development paradigm at large.

Adopting the human rights approach is aligned to the understanding of development as freedom. This development paradigm is intertwined with the work of the economist Amartya Sen, who defines development as “the expansion of capabilities of substantive human freedoms, ‘capacity to lead the kind of life he or she reason to value’ (Sen 1999:87 in Uvin 2007:601). Conceived in this way, development is redefined in terms that include human rights as unalienable part of it. Namely, “all worldwide processes of social change are simultaneously rights-based and economically grounded, and should be conceived in such terms” (Uvin 2007:601). Uvin argues further that human-rights based approaches support a redefinition of the nature of the problems, and that brings the focus on the “root causes” for inequality. Thus, the human rights based approach increases the spotlight on the state’s policies and discrimination, as well as on accountability. In fact, “at the heart of any rights-based approach to development are concerns with mechanisms of accountability, for this is precisely what distinguishes charity from claims” (ibid). Moreover, adopting human rights based approach to development means being concerned not only with the outcome of the development practices, but also with the means by which development is conducted. According to the HRBA, “any process of change that is being promoted through development assistance ought to be participatory, accountable and transparent, with equity in decision making and sharing of the fruits or outcome of the process” (Sengupta 2000 in Uvin 2007:603).

The “accountability” as a value added to the human rights based approach is not limited only to the nation states, but it is extended to the international responsibilities of the rich countries

(Nelson and Dorsey 2003:2014). The international human rights treaties assert that the international community is responsible for the accomplishment of human rights in national contexts, for instance, countries share development responsibilities in overly indebted countries (ibid). In addition, the proliferation of the human rights based approaches challenges the market – dominated view to development. “Debates about the merits of market-driven and statist strategies will and should continue, but a human rights based approach requires that debates begin from the absolute *obligation* (emphasis added) to protect and fulfill every individual’s right” (ibid). Hence, as Uvin (2002) claims, the development agencies need to adopt the human rights to development rhetoric only if they are ready to put their programs in a compliance with these obligations. Furthermore, he argues that if the human rights discourse means empowerment of marginalized groups and challenging injustices and oppression, then this new development paradigm has to go beyond the legal norms directly into the political realm (Uvin 2007:604). That would include the “creation of ideational and normative pressure through the spread of convergent shared expectations and discourse; the mobilization of grassroots and citizen power in favor of certain rights; the certainty that international aid actors will speak out loudly against violations and will extend support to local actors opposing these violations” (ibid). Moreover, these non-legalistic means ought to be accompanied by the aspect of coherence – the NGOs or other international organizations should implement human rights approaches in all aspects of their actions.

Different NGOs have slightly different perception on the matter what the adoption of human rights based approaches means in practice. Thus, different NGOs incorporate human rights to a different degree into their work.

In the new human rights recourse book “People’s Action in Practice 2012”, Action Aid accentuates that the organization adopted distinctive human rights approach, which stems from the

values and the strategy of the organization and it is based on the legal human rights framework, but goes beyond a legal or technical approach of HRBA. “We support people to analyze and confront power imbalances and we take sides with people living in poverty. That sets our HRBA apart from the approach that many other agencies take, using right-based language to challenge abuses of power at local, national or international level” (Action Aid 2012: 18).

Action Aid starts its HRBA from the legal ground and attempts to go a step beyond in order to tackle political and social constellations. “By using a HRBA, we support people living in poverty to understand that many of their most fundamental needs are actually enshrined in specific human rights frameworks” (ibid). The organization starts from this – making the people aware of their human rights, organize and claim their rights and hold duty bearers to account (ibid). Thus, the most crucial element of the Action Aid’s HRBA is the active agency. People living in poverty are in the center of Action Aid’s work, and the organization makes clear statements that their work is political – they don’t act like neutral actors, but on the contrary, they take sides and try to change certain political settings. This role of Action Aid as a political actor will be more thoroughly examined in the second part of this chapter.

Despite making alliances with the people living in poverty, the organization outlines three other main pillars: putting women’s rights in the center of their work; changing practices and not only policies, and thinking globally and acting locally.

Action Aid makes clear statements that the poverty of women ought to be addressed in a specific manner and that the causes to poverty of women are different from poverty in general. “If we fail to specifically address women’s human rights, our efforts to eradicate poverty of women, but also of men and the wider community, will be ineffective, at best – and harmful at worst” (Action Aid 2012: 19). Furthermore, they claim that shifting to human rights based approaches is

meaningless if the organization alters its policies without managing to change the root causes behind the existent imbalances. “Until women and men, girls and boys change their attitudes and behaviors to longer tolerate or perpetuate violence, a life free of violence will not be possible” (ibid). Lastly, with the new strategy, Action Aid commits itself to connect all parts of its work – from a local to a global level. The firm acknowledgment that the different bids of their work on a local level ought to be interlinked with international and/or global activities is one of biggest values added to this strategy when compared to the previous strategies of the organization.

The part that follows examines how the above mentioned pillars are reflected into Action Aid’s work - in its core principles, envisioned activities and in the new “Theory of Change” documents.

As it was previously noted, all parts of Action Aid’s work are centered on the alliance with the people living in poverty. Therefore, it is important to understand how in fact Action Aid conceives “poverty” at first place. They base the activities on their particular understanding on human rights inspired by the definition on poverty provided by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2011:

In the recent past, poverty was often defined as insufficient income to buy a minimum basket of goods and services. Today, the term is usually understood more broadly as lack of basic capabilities to live in dignity. This definition recognizes poverty’s broader features, such as hunger, poor education, discrimination, vulnerability and social exclusion, in the light of the international Bill of Rights, poverty may be defined as a human condition sustained by chronic deprivation of the resources, capability choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, economic and cultural and social rights (UN Committee on Economic and Cultural Rights 2011 cited in Action Aid 2012:22).

Based on this definition, Action Aid beliefs that “the indignity of poverty is a violation of human rights, arising from unequal power relations from the household to a global level” (Action Aid, 2012:21). In this manner, Action Aid boldly claims that the wealthiest nation states control the decision making at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and bring policies that undermine people’s rights. They continue with similar claims about the nation states and how sometimes they bring policies and foster discrimination and marginalization. They also underline that the market economy privileges those with more resources and power. Therefore, the organization takes “political” position and puts active agency in the center of its work. “Action Aid’s HRBA is political. It is political with small “p”, not party political. Driven by our values and our mission, we go to the heart of complex political issues to do with the exercise of power. In this, we are not a neutral actor. We take sides with people living in poverty” (ibid: 28). The interviewed staff member from Action Aid also underlined the importance of the organization’s firm position that Action Aid is definitely not a neutral actor. Furthermore, she depicted the political stance of the Action Aid’s members (accompanied by their passion and interest) as the biggest factor of motivation that made her stay and work for the organization. “The Action Aid staff members and partners are very interested, passionate and political[...]If I compare Action Aid with other organizations, I would say the other organizations work more cozily with governments or with companies. On the other hand, Action Aid is not afraid to take a position that others might be afraid to” (Interview 2012, Annex I).

Action Aid depicted eight core principles that serve as guidelines for the fulfillment of the minimum criteria for successful implementation of the human rights based approach:

- 1) Putting the active agency of people living in poverty first – and building their awareness;
- 2) Analyzing and confronting unequal and unjust power
- 3) Advancing human rights

- 4) Building partnerships
- 5) Being accountable and transparent
- 6) Monitoring, evaluating and evidencing our impact, and promoting learning
- 7) Linking work across levels to ensure we address structural change
- 8) Being solutions oriented and promoting credible and sustainable alternatives.

Looking at these principles indicates what is considered to be minimum criteria for working with human rights based approaches, and through them Action Aid implies what distinguishes the HRBA from the previous approaches to development. The accent is clearly on agency and challenging power relations, accompanied by the accountability and the transparency of the organization. Creating a favorable policy environment and active agency are the strongest values added to the Action Aid's human rights based approach to development. Thus, the organization puts a lot of effort into policy advocating campaigns, both on international and national level. For instance, on an international level, the organization has launched policy campaigns that targeted the WTO - the General Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property – TRIPS and the Agreement on Agriculture. (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 1430).

The new policy strategy for 2012-2017 is still very much focused on the creation of policy advocating campaigns, but the novelty about this strategy when compared to the previous ones is the attempt to interlink Action Aid's work on all levels. This endeavor to interlink the organization's work in a more thorough way is based on Action Aid's "Theory of Change". The HRBA recourse book "People's Action in Practice 2012" and the new strategy are in fact an amplification of this theory of change, which is briefly summarized in the following:

We believe that an end to poverty and injustice can be achieved through purposeful individual and collective action, led by the active agency of people living in poverty and supported by solidarity, credible rights-based alternatives and campaigns that address the structural causes and consequences of poverty (Action Aid 2012:21).

During the qualitative interview, the Action Aid staff member illustrated how the documents she has worked on called “Critical Theories of Change”, contributed immensely towards a deeper cohesion of Action Aid’s work. She pointed out the fact that the organization used to have many glossy documents that often contained examples like the following: “this woman got rights for her land and now she is able to support her children etc.” (Interview 2012, Annex I). Despite the fact that these documents provide a significant insight into the organization’s work, the interviewed staff member underlined that sometimes crucial questions are being omitted, like the following: “How this woman got the land? Is it something she wanted from the beginning or is it something that emerged from a longer process? How does she feel about having a land? What is she going to do with it? How the power she has got is manifested in the community, in her family etc.” (ibid). In a similar manner, she shared an example about the Benet community in Uganda who had their land taken away because the government wanted to build a national park. Action Aid helped the Benet community to take the government to court and won the case. “That was an amazing success! The analysis at the beginning was saying that the Benets demanded their right to the land, but what we did not do was to inform ourselves who the Benet community actually was, what is the land for; who of the Benets wanted the land; what their relationship with the government is etc.” (ibid). The Action Aid staff member explained further that what the organization did not manage to see before is that different members of the community wanted the land for different purposes, and “that was something hard to see in the beginning because the most powerful Benets were pushing the proposal the most”. Some people wanted to use the land for farming, whereas other wanted to use it as a forest etc. Therefore, the

Action Aid's staff member argued that the "Critical Theories of Change" showed that examining how changes happen requires doing very thorough analysis in the beginning, as well as lot of follow up work – seeing how the land is used, ensuring that women have land right, ensuring that the government and other parties of interest did not come and take the land etc.

With this example about the Benet community, the Action Aid's staff member tackled two very important issues for our topic – how the "community" as a whole is perceived, and in what ways the organization addresses gender issues. In the *Second Chapter* it was outlined that the projects based on participatory methodologies are often criticized for not taking into account the myriad varieties inside the communities. Instead, the communities are often addressed as homogenous groups. The staff member from Action Aid pointed out exactly on this matter – that without doing a thorough analysis about the "differences within" and not only about the "differences between", the so called "myth of community" will be maintained (see also Cornwall 1998; Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998). The story about the Benet people and their power relations within the community itself, also illustrates that doing development work with particular communities requires understanding of power in a Foucaultian sense – as something omnipresent, and in persistent circulation. If power is conceived as a binary contrast between those who have it and those who do not have it (for instance government vs. citizens), then the complex subtle power relations inside the communities cannot be understood and/or challenged.

The example of the Benet people is also connected to the Action Aid's position on gender. The organization claims that the dynamics between men and women are the most challenging dynamics of power, and that the organization needs to address them systematically (Action Aid 2012:35). The organization continues with the argumentation that women's rights have central place in the organization's work which requires conducting programs that specifically target women. "When we analyze a problem, we must ensure that we analyze how the problem affects women

differently from men. When we develop solutions we must ask ourselves whether they will expand or limit women's access to services, recourses and power"(ibid). In the HRBA recourse book "People's Action in Practice" (2012:34), it is stated that Action Aid pledges to improve its gender approach through four building blocks: recognizing that achieving women's rights requires organization and struggle; thinking about power and rights in new ways (including women's rights); recognizing the value of stand-alone and mainstreamed programs on women's rights; being aware of the unintended effects of programs on women and modeling women's power in their organization. Among these building blocks the organization puts lot of emphasis on reflection and analysis about the results from their actions. Namely, Action Aid recognizes that not all projects bring the intended results. For instance, if the organization sets up a livelihoods project with the idea of improving women's status by involving them in farming activities, there is a danger that women's work might be increased unintentionally and thus make men escape their responsibility to provide for their families (ibid). Avoiding such unintended situations requires the project action always to be accompanied by a deeper reflection and analysis. Furthermore, as with the other aspects, the organization pledges that their own structural constellation ought to reflect what they are trying to achieve – "strong women leadership and a positive environment for women" (ibid: 35). Throughout the following chapters I will present in more details how the organization attempts to be a role model also for other aspects of its operating.

On a very practical level, Action Aid pledges to ensure change through working on empowerment, campaigning and solidarity. These three themes are part of the Action Aid's "Theory of Change", and through them the organization tries to explain in which ways the new approach differs from the previous ones. Therefore, the following sub-chapter explains in more details these three cornerstones of the Action Aid's "Theory of Change" .

3.4 Empowerment, Solidarity and Campaigning

As it was explained before, prior to the adoption of the human rights based approach to development, Action Aid worked with sustainability and empowerment. The most widely recognized program that Action Aid developed during this period was Reflect – the approach that merges participatory methodologies and the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire. Even after the shift from the empowerment to the human rights approach to development, the organization stayed devoted to the empowerment/participatory methodologies, which are part of every area of their work. The organization pledges to empower people through: building awareness and critical consciousness, enabling people to become rights activists; organizing and mobilizing; monitoring public policy and budgets; harnessing the power of communications and responding to needs through rights-based approaches to service delivery (Action Aid 2012: 54).

Since the adoption of the HRBA, the notion of “empowerment” has one major difference when compared to the previous approaches - the attempt for a higher harmonization and coherence of the methodologies that Action Aid is using. Since the organization has a long history of using different participatory methodologies (Reflect, Stepping stones, STAR, Participatory vulnerability analysis, Economic literacy and budget analysis), with the new strategy the organization committed itself towards rebranding all these approaches under a common name – “Reflect!on-Act!on”. The center is again on the process of “conscientisation” derived from the Reflect approach (“a process of enabling people to perceive the social, political and economic contradictions in their lives and to take action against them”, Action Aid 2012: 55) accompanied by the process of “action”.

“Reflect!on-Act!on” becomes the bedrock for building people’s agency starting with their own conscientisation[...]conscientisation is deeply tied to action. Because people living in poverty often have a low sense of self-worth and personal (or even collective) power, the

experience of acting to change their situation gives them another experience of themselves- as agents capable of bringing about a change (ibid).

The “Reflection-Action” process is deliberately connected to strengthening organizations and movements, as well to monitoring public policy and budgets. With the HRBA approach it is evident that the organization attempts to strengthen its reach beyond the local communities. Action Aid tries to transcend the shortcomings of the overly localized approaches, and to make robust linkages between the local, national and global level. Furthermore, the new strategy clearly shows that Action Aid is increasingly concerned with seeking solutions and alternatives. Thus, the second keystone of the “Theory of change” is campaigning. “Campaigning and influencing are embedded in our rights-based approach. Some of the fundamental causes of poverty lie beyond the immediate location of borders where the effects are felt, and can be addressed by effective campaigns mobilizing people to shift national or international policies or practices” (ibid:72).

Action Aid intertwines the creation of successful campaigns with the empowerment process. The process of empowerment itself leads to inspiring and supporting people living in poverty to advocate for their rights, as part of campaigns, as well as monitoring policies and budgets (ibid:78). The organization attempts to strengthen the campaigning capacity through: campaigning tools and methods, advocating and lobbying, public engagement, recruitment, mobilization; communication; building alliances, and through connecting the campaigning processes on different level - local, national and international.

Action Aid has a successful history with rights based advocacy on a local level. Nelson and Dorsey (2009) take Action Aid India (AAI) as a good example of a local rights based advocacy. Under the slogan “Rights First!”, AAI committed itself to challenging government policy, and in 2001 the Indian Supreme Court ordered measures to be taken in order to strengthen food security

(ibid). The advocacy campaigns continue on a national level, but with the newest policy strategy Action Aid tries to make stronger connections between the national and the international levels. Moreover, the organization underlines the importance of incorporating gender awareness into the advocacy campaigns, with the special accent on gender inclusion in the pre-analysis. “Sometimes the campaign story is ‘about women’ without bringing the underlying differences between women and men into the heart of the campaign. Likewise, adding in a gender perspective after doing the main analysis leads to including phrases like ‘especially women and girls’ and it remains an add-on to the campaign’s aim and approaches” (Action Aid 2012: 83). Therefore, the organization accentuates the importance of incorporation of a gender perspective already in the background analysis.

The third and last pillar of Action Aid’s theory of change is “solidarity”. Through the component of solidarity Action Aid pledges to connect with citizens, partners and organizations, and in that way to increase the support (including money) the organization is getting from external bodies. According to Action Aid (ibid: 97), “solidarity” is a fundamental component of the organization’s operating and it is also another way of fostering its collaboration with various partners from outside. The solidarity element is intertwined with one of the main fund raising activities – child sponsorship. Namely, the organization started to work initially as a charity organization for sponsoring children.

Through the three chief components of the “Theory of Change”, Action Aid makes cross-sectoral connections on various levels which are monitored by the Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS). The ALPS program was established in 2000 and its aim is to instill human rights principles into the system of monitoring and assessing the work of all programs (Nelson and Dorsey 2003:114). ALPS is mainly about procedures, but it is also about essential change of attitudes (Scott-Villiers 2002:425). ALPS replaced the old accountability system and “it includes advice on behaviors and attitudes to emphasize that the way in which the staff members relate to

each other and to others is more important than the documents that are produced” (ibid). The key principles and standards of the ALPS are accountability, women’s rights, power, transparency and evidence (Action Aid 2011). This new accountability system reflects the organization’s changes both in its understanding of development and in the organizational structure. ALPS was created as a result of reflection and self criticism about the overly bureaucratic structure Action Aid had before. Thus, ALPS echoes the overall principles of the organization, without having centrally dictated rule (Scott-Villiers 2002:427). Furthermore, from a human rights perspective, “ALPS’s distinctive feature is the intensive involvement of community, local partner organizations and poor people themselves in the assessment of Action Aid’s work” (Guijt 2004 in Nelson and Dorsey 2003:114).

As it was presented throughout this chapter, the involvement of various actors into the assessment of Action Aid’s work on different levels is claimed to be the strongest asset of the new strategy. It is interesting how the organization changed its policies and structure gradually and reached the level of decentralized global federation with a distinctive approach to development. Furthermore, it is remarkable to observe how the Action Aid’s staff members through the new strategy attempt to improve all the aspects of the organization’s working that were criticized before. For instance, Hickey and Mitlin in “Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Exploring the Potentials and Pitfalls (2009) give recommendations to Action Aid for several different aspects – the political stance of the organization; mobilizing and organizing, and about the dichotomy between service delivery and rights. Namely, they noted that in many instances the personnel of Action Aid are not certain how to facilitate the empowerment process and how to help the people living in poverty to free themselves from the feeling of “beneficiaries” (ibid:180). Thus, the authors suggest Action Aid to foster the areas such as campaigning and advocacy (ibid). Furthermore, the authors underline that development organizations which adopted rights based approach tend to conceive any type of “service delivery” as inappropriate, although in many situations the basic service delivery

is necessary. In the latest human rights recourse book, Action Aid clearly stresses that the organization “should not engage in delivering basic services (either directly or through partner organizations) where we are not also contributing to empowerment and a more sustainable process of change”, but the text continues further with the claim that “we may respond to basic needs in the short term in ways that strategically strengthen the connections between people as citizens/rights holders and their governments as duty bearers”. Service delivery conceived in this way does not see people as beneficiaries of our charitable work, but is rather a vehicle for empowering people as rights activists” (Action Aid 2012: 73). Last but not least, Hickey and Mitlin (2009:182) argue further that the human rights discourse provides a useful potential for reconsideration of politics and power in the development work. However, it is very important to note that this is possible only if the “rights-based approaches are grounded on a careful analysis of power in all its forms” (ibid). Indeed, in certain situations complete implementation of human rights approaches is not feasible. For example, when asked whether the human rights approach brings about entirely new perspectives and ways of operating, or if it is another name for the same processes, the Action Aid’s staff member answered that it depends very much on the context. She explained that in some countries the human rights based approach brought lot of positive changes, whereas in others like Ethiopia or Myanmar being political is much more challenging because of the political contexts. She also underlined that although the human rights approach is so far not always and everywhere consistent, it provides a clearer picture how the processes of change happen (Interview 2012, Annex I).

3.5 Organizational changes aligned to the adoption of the human rights based approach

The organizational changes made by Action Aid are closely aligned to the human rights approach and particularly to the new strategy “People Action in Practice” for the period 2012-2017. Unlike the previous strategies, Action Aid decided to use participatory methodologies in order to draft the new strategy and involved as many of the 2700 staff members as possible. After the adoption of the human rights approach in the late 1990s and the transfer of the headquarter to Johannesburg, Action Aid started using federal structure and international assembly that signaled the organization’s attempt to move the governance power more towards the South. With the new approach and the new strategy Action Aid tries to fully involve the new governance structure, as well as to reach out to partner organizations, supporters and the communities where the organization works (Archer 2011:1). It is interesting that for the purpose of creating the new strategy, Action Aid used participatory methodologies in order to create a strategy that reflects the values and the opinions of the Action Aid’s staff members and partners. The key event in the creation process of “People Action in Practice 2012-2017” was the international conference held in January 2011 in Johannesburg, convening 120 people from 45 countries. In many respects, Action Aid attempted to use the same principles used in a human rights based approach on a community level and to apply them to their internal process. That includes using participatory methodologies, creating open spaces, promoting ongoing critical analysis of power etc (ibid). “The process of building the new strategy was considered as important as the product – as implementing the strategy will depend on wide ownership and understanding across the federation” (ibid). Furthermore, another important aspect is the position of the development workers in the development processes. The participatory methodologies as methods of knowledge accumulation aim to unravel the sorts of power that are produced on a micro level, but it is important to emphasize that the practitioners of development

are also conduits of power (Kothari 2001: 142). Hence, the process of unfolding power relations inevitably requires looking at the position of the development organizations themselves. “Action Aid is the connector. Action Aid is able to put people in contact with each other and to act as a facilitator. In fact, Action Aid provides an opportunity for people to come together, to discuss, to act, and through the knowledge that Action Aid and its partners have, to help them reflect and build their own power” (Interview 2012, Annex I). Action Aid clearly states that the organization tries as much as possible to be the facilitator of the development actions and not to conceive itself as a driving force for change (see also Action Aid 2012). But taking into account that much of the development work depends on the facilitators, the way they understand power relations, gender issues, knowledge creation etc. is very important. With the new strategy, Action Aid tried to incorporate as many as possible different opinions into the drafting process, and after the participatory workshops, the organization outlined the main issues that ought to be included into the strategy. The participants into the strategy drafting reached an agreement that: women’s rights are a central priority together with the human rights approach (HRBA) and transforming power; that children are a knotty issue; the organization needs to focus on solidarity; the organization needs to respond to disaster and conflict; as well as that Action Aid needs to be grass-rooted, and that long term engagement with communities is essential. This priority topics initiated a need for more clarity about the following issues: what does it mean to adopt more feminist principles; how to expand the focus on the duty bearers beyond the nation states; how to improve the partnership practices; how to balance between the responses to basic needs with the human rights based approaches to development; how to measure what a successful campaign is etc (Archer 2011). Action Aid considers this participatory way of drafting strategies to be fundamental for building ownership. Throughout the qualitative interview, the staff member from Action Aid stressed that the involvement of many people into the creation of Action Aid’s policies and documents is what in fact

makes the organization what it is. The “flatish” structure of the organization gives the opportunity to many of the staff members to push their ideas forward, and sometimes that also means bringing personal views to the organization (Interview 2012, Annex I).

Working with human rights approach in a big development organization brings the challenge to ensure that the human rights based approach is coherently implemented in all segments of the organization’s operating, including in fundraising and communications with supporters (Archer 2011:22). This is also connected to the urge for understanding of human rights approach on all levels. “Action Aid’s practice is inevitably uneven and this will be true for any organization. Even after 12 years of using human rights as the foundation for our approach we need sustained investment in capacity building for staff and partners” (ibid).

The participatory drafting of the strategy for 2012-2017 resulted in five strategic objectives and 10 key change promises:

Objective 1: Promoting sustainable agriculture and control over natural resources

Promise 1: securing women’s land rights

Promise 2: promoting sustainable agriculture

Objective 2: advancing people’s influence and holding governments and corporate accountable

Promise 3: holding governments to account on public services

Promise 4: achieving redistributive resourcing of development

Objective 3: improving quality public education and promoting youth mobilization

Promise 5: transforming education for girls and boys

Promise 6: harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice

Objective 4: building people’s resilience and responding to disaster

Promise 7: building people’s resilience to conflict and disasters

Promise 8: responding to disasters through rights

Objective 5: ensuring women control their bodies and have access to economic alternatives

Promise 9: increasing women’s and girls’ control over their bodies

Promise 10: generating women-centered economic alternatives.

These five strategic objectives are accompanied by the People's Action Monitoring Framework (Action Aid 2012).

As it is outlined above, Action Aid incorporates the human rights approach in all aspects, and that is also visible in the five core objectives for the period 2012-2017. The organization deploys the human rights approach mainly as an underlying justification for interventions aimed at fostering institutions to develop advocacy skills, and in this way attempts to increase the capacity of the rights holders (see also Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004).

Table I – Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview with a staff member from Action Aid

Positions and working experience at Action Aid	Working at Action Aid since 2003; having various positions; the latest position is Research and Policy Coordinator.
Personal motivation for working at the organization/experience from Action Aid that left particular impact on her	Her motivation for working into the field of International Development is related to the challenge of affecting change. While working in Namibia she realized that change was not always indented. She was inspired to contribute to the creation

	of more meaningful and positive change. • Furthermore, her motivation for staying in Action Aid is mostly connected to the people (passionate, interested and political). • Working with the Benet community in Uganda fascinated her because it showed her the capacity for change and the importance of doing very thorough analysis before the projects. Coherent and detailed analysis proved to be very useful for understanding the myriad diversities inside the communities.
Core Strengths of the Organization	• Taking critical stance towards its own work; • Not being afraid to take a position that the others might be afraid to; • The Action Aid staff members try to do the right things for a long term; creating change not only inside, but also outside; • Strong values and ethical codes in all aspects of the organization's work – fundraising, communicating etc.

Action Aid as a political organization	• Action Aid is a political organization – takes sides with the people who live in poverty against the people who have power.
The usage of participatory approaches	• Action Aid has a long history with participatory methodologies. Reflect – the most widespread approach, accompanied with numerous other tools and methodologies. • The role of the facilitators is of a great importance for success of the participatory projects. • The new human rights based approach to development attempts to harmonize the various methodologies under a common umbrella.
Added value to the documents “Critical Theories of Change”	• The “Critical Theories of Change” contributed towards a better understanding how the processes of creating change happen. They also help the “differences within the differences” to be seen and analyzed. Furthermore,

	they add towards the understanding that the power relations are omnipresent and complex. Instead of having broad examples like “this woman got her rights for a land use etc”, these documents help towards being aware about questions like the following: “how the woman got the land; is it something she wanted since the beginning; how does she feel about it and how she is going to use it; how this affects the power relations within the community she is coming from etc.
Core advantages of the Action Aid’s HRBA	• The added value after the shift from the empowerment to the HRBA is the creation of internal linkages between the different bids of Action Aid’s work; • Linking local with international and global level. • Drawing a bigger difference between a duty bearers and rights holders.
Understanding of term “empowerment”	• Difficult to separate the personal from the organizational understanding of the

	term “empowerment”. • Empowerment – people and their rights are in the center of the work; people who live in poverty are disempowered and someone else is responsible for that; Thus, empowerment is a process by which the constraints are removed and power is built through capacity building, trainings and working with people one-to-one.
HBRA- a new direction of the organization, or a different name for minor changes?	• Depends on the place – In some places like in India, Brazil and Kenya the HRBA brought lots of changes, whereas in other like in Ethiopia strong engagement to HRBA is not possible because of the political context.
Action Aid’s position in the processes of “empowerment”	• Action Aid has the role of a “connector”. The organization acts like a facilitator, and provides opportunity people to come together, to debate, to discuss, and to help them reflect and build their own power.
Whether the opinions and personal beliefs of	• Action Aid has quite “flatish” structure,

the Action Aid's personnel are reflected into the organizations policies and practices	and many of the staff members are contributing towards the creation of the organization's policies and documents.
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Chapter Four: Conclusion

Throughout the paper I examined the various approaches to development adopted by Action Aid, with a particular focus on the participatory and the human rights based approaches, and on the transition from the first to the latter. Furthermore, I positioned the participatory and the human rights based approaches in a broader framework of development discourses that challenge the orthodox development chronologies and narratives.

The participatory approaches to development emerged in the 1990s, and quickly swept throughout the development enterprise. Although emerged from the margins of the development field, they soon became a mainstream feature of some of the UN agencies, the development donors, as well of the numerous development agencies and non-governmental organizations. Even though different agencies and organizations define the participatory approaches in a slightly different way, the common denominator of the different views is the attempt to raise the involvement of socially and economically marginalized people in decision making processes. In addition, the focal feature of the participatory approaches is the process of empowerment, which recognizes people (both as individuals and as communities) as the main drivers of change. Prior to the increased transition towards the human rights based approaches to development, the participatory/empowerment approaches attracted criticism for being overly local, as well as for not having the capacity to alter wider political and social constellations.

The human rights based approach (HRBA) to development is the most recent major “paradigm” in the development sphere, and in the 1990s was adopted by numerous UN agencies, bilateral agencies, as well as by the biggest development non-governmental organizations like Action Aid, Oxfam, CARE etc. The transition to the HRBA to development was accompanied by both

excitement and criticism. On the one hand, the HRBA was perceived as a new development stream that holds the potential for fostering the accountability of the state and the donors, but on the other, it attracted skepticism that this new approach is just another fashionable stream into the development enterprise (Kindornay et.al 2012: 474).

Action Aid is one of the leading development organizations that adopted the human rights based approach, and with its latest strategy – “People’s Action to End Poverty 2012-2017” - the organization consolidated all aspects of its working under the umbrella of human rights. Since the establishment of Action Aid, the organization adopted several different approaches to development – charity and welfare, basic needs/service driven approach, empowerment/participatory and human rights based approach to development. Throughout the thesis, I examined the ways Action Aid creates and reaffirms theories of development, with a particular focus on the transition from the empowerment/participatory to the human rights based approach to development. As it was narrated above, the transition towards the human rights based approach to development was not a clear cut, but rather a gradual process. This shift did not mean leaving the participatory methodologies aside. In contrary, as it was outlined throughout the previous chapter, the organization still uses the participatory/empowerment methodologies, but the added value of the HRBA is putting active agency and accountability in the center of Action Aid’s operating. Unlike when working with the previous approaches, the adoption of the HBRA meant increasing the focus on “agency”. The focus on agency is aligned to the notion that the role of the NGOs should not be based on a service delivery, but rather on fostering local accountability mechanisms (see also Kindornay et. al. 2012: 492). Furthermore, Action Aid’s focus on accountability is visible also through the organization’s attempt to make its own work more accountable. The shift towards the human rights based approach to development also meant creating a stronger coherence of all aspects of the

organization's operating. Taking into consideration that the HRBA merges the various methodologies previously used, it seems that the Action Aid's staff is the first to benefit from the adoption of the new approach.

Another crucial aspect of Action Aid's work under the umbrella of human rights is "campaigning". During the period when the participatory/empowerment approaches dominated the work of the development organizations and agencies, the main focus was on the local communities. The human rights based approach to development on the other hand fosters the position that Action Aid attempts not to be a neutral actor, but a political one. Via organizing campaigns the organization "targets to bring a political change" (Action Aid 2012:77). This is one of the core novelties brought by the human rights based approach to development.

With the adoption of the human rights approach the organization also attempts to interlink its work on all levels – local, national and international. Taking into account that Action Aid based all levels of its work on human rights, there is a possibility for an increased challenging of the human rights universality. Starting from the premise that the development initiatives should come from "bellow" without being in any way imposed from outside, it is likely that "context-specific" human rights discourses will start to dominate the international NGOs (see also Kindornay et. al 2012). This goes particularly true for Action Aid given the fact that the organization attempts to use human rights beyond their institutional/legal meanings. I believe that finding the balance between "context-specific" meanings of human rights and using a common human rights approach on an international level is one of the major future challenges of the organization. Furthermore, given that Action Aid's role is strengthening the capacity of the rights holders, creating strong leadership and making solid connections with other organizations on local, national and international are some of the challenges the organization might face in future.

1As it was presented above, various fads dominated the development sphere, and the human rights based approach (HRBA) is the most recent development stream that was adopted by all major development actors. Although it emerged in the 1990s, the outcomes of this approach are still not unambiguous. Different organizations define it and implement it in a different way. The analysis of Action Aid's work represents only one part of the complex international development realm, and could be broaden in various directions – in the context of the actual field projects, examining the relationship between the international development non-governmental organizations and the development donors, as well through making a comparison of the diverse ways the international development NGOs perceive and implement the human rights based approach to development.

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Annex I – A Transcript of the Semi Structured Qualitative Interview with one of the Action Aid’s staff members

Researcher: Could you briefly explain to me how did you start working at Action Aid?

Action Aid Staff member: I initially started working at Action Aid while teaching EFL, and I was doing a few days a week within the Community Fundraising Department, but my interest was in HIV and education, so I moved across to that department and worked for the Global Campaign for Education which was based within the Action Aid building. That was 2003, so I have been with Action Aid for a quite long time and done variety of jobs – starting from the Global Campaign for Education, then working at the Action Aid Education Department, and then I worked for Action Aid India for a year as an intern. I also worked in a unit called Knowledge Initiative, which was set up as an internal think tank that suppose to support the organization to explore new issues and scenarios we might be working on in the future. When the Initiative came to an end we had an organizational restructuring, and the unit I was working at thought that we need a new strategy and new scenarios. Thus, we set up some recommendations and a new strategy, and the new structure has reflected that restructuring. My position within the new structure is Research and Policy Coordinator and that has three main roles: the first is related to the international course of Action Aid, and by “international” I don’t only mean those that are commissioned by the International Secretariat, but I mean those that are commissioned anywhere and have international target or above national target. That means looking at qualitative research, filling the gaps around, as well research connected to multi-campaigning and research alternatives. And that’s where I am now.

Researcher: After working at several different positions within Action Aid, could you please reflect on your biggest motivation(s) to work at this organization?

Action Aid Staff member: Do you mean something specific about Action Aid, or do

you mean something specific about International Development in general?

Researcher: About the both.

Action Aid Staff Member: My motivation was connected to the challenge of affecting change. I spent some time in Namibia before I started my masters and between those I was teaching English in Italy. When I was in Namibia I became frustrated by “change” and the theories of change, and how whatever the intervention was, there was always a set of positive and negative consequences that sometimes were not intended, and change itself was not always something intended. Therefore, the thing that actually motivated me the most to come back was the reflection how to create change in a more meaningful and positive way. When it comes to Action Aid specifically, I started working there because it looked interesting and good. I have tried number of places, but I really liked that Action Aid worked on HIV which is something I am particularly interested in. My motivation for staying, rather for going to Action Aid at first place is related mainly to the people. The Action Aid staff members and partners are very interested, passionate and political. Although the work Action Aid does is by no mean perfect, I really like that we are very critical about our own work (you have also picked that up in your writing). If I compare Action Aid with other organizations, I would say the other organizations work more cozily with governments, or with companies. On the other hand, Action Aid is not afraid to take a position that others might be afraid to.

Researcher: Do you think this position of Action Aid to do things that other organizations would be afraid of is the core strength of your organization when it comes to making changes?

Action Aid staff member: Firstly, how the system works is worth a talk. I will give an interesting example that is not directly connected to change so much (although it could be). The example is about how and from whom we are taking money. We always have strong criteria from whom we can take money from. For example, a few years ago one company wanted to give some money to Action Aid Ghana, and there was a research that showed that one of the subsidiaries of that company used

child labor in the factories. So, we as an organization were not allowed to take money from them. I think they wanted to give around a million pounds. That million could make huge change, and Ghana in a way got angry at the organization for making that decision, but Action Aid has principles that need to be followed. What I really like about Action Aid as an organization is that people try to do the right thing for a long term, not only for a short term. That means creating change not only within our programs but also creating change outside. For instance, trying to influence the way governments are giving their money, or to change the way corporations are giving their money. And I also like the fact that our ethic is reflected into all aspects – the way we fundraise, the way we communicate etc.

Researcher: Do you consider Action Aid to be a political organization?

Action Aid staff member: Yes, I would say it is, and that actually what appeals me the most about Action Aid. Action Aid is taking a position with the people who live in poverty against the people who have power.

Researcher: Could you maybe recall a certain experience from your work at Action Aid that was particularly important for you?

Action Aid staff member: There are so many examples I could give, but the example I am going to give now is related to the documents we worked at, called Critical Theories of Change. The reason behind Critical Theories of Change is that we've got many case studies about our work that were quite glossy documents that often contain examples like the following: "this woman got rights for their land and now they are able to support their children etc". There is no doubt that all these materials are useful, but what we didn't have is a process which allowed us to see how in fact these changes happened. How this woman got the land? Is it something she wanted from the beginning or is it something that emerged from a longer process? How does she feel about having a land? What is she going to do with it? How the power she has got is manifested in the community, in her family

etc? The Critical Theories of Change were intended to look at some of these questions, and the one really interested to a program that I was managing. The program involved the people from the Benet community in Uganda, who had their land taken away because the government wanted to build a national park. Action Aid Uganda helped the Benet people to take the government to court, and they won! That was an amazing success! The analysis at the beginning was saying that the Benets want their right to land, but what we didn't do is looking who are actually the Benet community, what is the land for; who of the Benet wanted the land; what is the relationship with the government etc. Therefore, what we didn't see is actually that each person in the community wanted the land for something slightly different, and that was something hard to see at the beginning because the most powerful Benets were pushing the proposals the most. Some wanted to use the land for farming in a more conventional sense, some wanted to use the forest, whereas others wanted to use the land for a construction. There were lots of different reasons why people wanted to use the land, and that's why we realized we need to do a lot of follow up work like seeing how the land is used, ensuring that women have land rights, ensuring that the government and other parties of interest didn't come and take the land etc. I think this really hit me, because it showed me the capacity of change, and also showed me that doing a very, very thorough analysis at the beginning is very important. That was an experience that I found it very fascinating.

Researcher: Thank you for this interesting example. When you are making analysis and shaping policies, do you always try to use participatory methodologies?

Action Aid Staff member: There are a few documents I need to show you. One is a PhD dissertation from a person who looked at similar issues like you, but from a different angle, and the other is our latest HRBA manual called *People to Action in Practice* which is draft at the moment. In the manual, the multiple methodologies that Action Aid is using are outlined. Action Aid is very well known because of REFLECT. And we also use a huge amount of other methodologies, and

approaches and tools etc. I have to say it's not always implementation of these tools and methodologies. A tool is good as the person that is leading it. Sometimes there are fantastic facilitators that are leading fantastic processes, whereas others are less good because the facilitation process is not that great. What we try to do now is to harmonize our methodologies more. For instance, it might happen that in one community different PRA tools are used for different programs (REFLECT or STEP). We are not necessarily consistent in the methodologies we are using. That's why we are trying to harmonize the methodologies we are using and that will also help to avoid huge amount of overlapping analyses.

Researcher: Since Action Aid made a transition from participatory methodologies towards Human Rights Based Approaches to Development, according to your opinion, what is the biggest asset of the HRBA in comparison to the previous approaches?

Action Aid staff member: In the past, we used similar tools and methodologies, but we didn't necessarily worked with them in the same way. What we felt as an added value as a federation (with a headquarter in Johannesburg and with offices across the globe) after the shift from empowerment approaches to human rights based approaches is that we managed to make internal linkages between our bits of work. Rather than trying to change the world with changing one village at a time, we are able to make linkages between the analysis that happened, and the work on a community level with policies and practices that might prevent the transformation of those communities because of barriers and blockages on national or international levels. So, the main thing about rights and Action Aid is that links empowerment with solidarity and campaigning, so we have three main areas within which the methodologies are set. The empowerment is mainly on a local level, but it could also be on a national or international level; the solidarity builds the linkages between communities on a local level, but also with actors beyond the local, whereas the campaigning is the "sticky" stuff that glues

together all the different pieces of work, and that allows to give a big push and to achieve changes that otherwise would not be achieved.

Researcher: Since Action Aid uses participatory methodologies in both the empowerment approaches and the HRBA, what is the biggest difference between the human rights based approach when compared to the previous approaches used by your organization?

AA staff member: It gets kind of confusing because we are using so many different words, methodologies and approaches. When I talk about methodologies I mostly mean the tools that we use, whereas by “approaches” I mean “empowerment” approach or HRBA etc. But even I am conflating in my head to a certain degree because we use them interchangeable quite often. The shift to human rights based approaches is a shift in a way towards drawing a bigger difference between a duty bearers and rights holders. That means looking at who has the power and how that power is used, but also looking at the role of the state.

Researcher: Does that mean that the human rights based approaches give entirely new direction and vision to your organization, or that the name is new, but the approach itself does not differ significantly from the empowerment approach?

Action Aid staff member: Depends where you are. In some countries the HRBA brought lot of changes. In fact, the changes initially started in Brazil, India, and Kenya. The people working there said “the empowerment approach is not really working, we don’t really see the changes happen, we got to engage more at national level, we got to do advocacy etc”. Therefore, if you go to these countries you are going to see very good rights based work. In some countries like for example maybe Ethiopia, that may not be the case because they are concerned about the political situation and how it affects people because there are many risks about being political. We had about a few years ago staff members who got arrested there. In some countries we certainly need to be more cautious. Of course you cannot really work on rights in conflict, or when there is a repressive

government, and although maybe you cannot go on streets and do active mobilization, you can still find ways of challenging power. Action Aid changed the way it works over the years, and now with the implementation of the new strategy it's going to be hopefully even clearer how change is happening especially because some of the things which come with the process of HRBA (like accountability, transparency, monitoring) are now being consolidated. Thus, I think in the next couple of years there will be even stronger changes in practice. But, it's not always consistent. You wouldn't go anywhere and say: "Yes, this is amazing!" For instance, Action Aid Myanmar has not been able to talk about human rights at all, because it was not possible within the context. However, they still tried to work with right based approaches, and the rationale behind that is that when political change happens, people are empowered and more aware of rights and responsibilities.

Researcher: How do you personally understand the term "empowerment"?

Action Aid staff member: It is quite difficult for me to separate how I understand empowerment from how Action Aid understands empowerment, because I've working on it for so long. I am also working on this new manual, so it is hard to distinguish what is personal and what is organizational. But, I would say empowerment for me is that people and their rights are in the center of the work, and that people who are living in poverty tend to be disempowered, impoverished and someone else is responsible for making them poor. Hence, empowerment is a process by which the constraints are removed and power within is build through capacity building, trainings and working with people one-to-one. While doing so you also build the power between people, as well as the power to change.

Researcher: In this process of empowerment, where would you position Action Aid?

Action Aid staff member: In this process Action Aid is the connector. Action Aid is able to put people in contact with each other and to act as a facilitator. Action Aid in fact provides opportunity

people to come together, to debate, to discuss, to act, and through the knowledge that Action Aid and its partners have to help them reflect and build their own power.

Researcher: Do you believe that the personal beliefs and opinions of the Action Aid's staff members are reflected into the organization's policies and practices?

Action Aid staff member: Yes! We've got quite "flatish" structure. Action Aid is a type of organization where when somebody has a good idea the person can push the idea further. For example, if we do a gross policy, or if we do policy about private sector engagement there is a lot of freedom people to reflect and have discussion internally about what those policies say. Sometimes I would say that the discussions that are happening (because everybody is putting their personal view forward) take longer time than in for example in organizations with a hierarchical structure when someone says: "this is the way we are going to think". Indeed, I have noticed that when documents are created lots of people have different ideas; lots of people have many things to say and that makes people bring their personal views to the organization. That in a way shapes what the organization is.



Europass Curriculum Vitae

Personal information

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Work experience

• Dates Occupation or position Name and address of the employer	01/2013-4/2013 <i>Intern</i> United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) - Stockholm Convention Unit of the Environmental Management Branch of the Programme Development and Technical Cooperation Division, Wagramer Straße 5 1220 Vienna, Austria
• Dates Occupation or position Name and address of the employer	10/2012-11/2012 <i>Intern</i> Institute for Cultural Diplomacy, Kurfurstendam 207-208 Berlin
• Dates Occupation or position held Name of the employer	12/2009 - 10/2010 <i>Member of the supervising board</i> Youth Federation Skopje – Federation consisted of the biggest international youth organizations in Macedonia
• Dates Occupation or position held Main activities and responsibilities	11/2009 - 10/2010 <i>Youth Trainer</i> Youth Trainer, part of the program Pro Train, organized by AEGEE Academy. The program supports competent and motivated AEGEE members to acquire training skills. AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe / European Students' Forum) is a student organisation that promotes co-operation, communication and integration amongst young people in Europe. The organization counts 13.000 members, active in more than 200 university cities in 40 European countries, making it the biggest interdisciplinary student association in Europe.
Name of the employer	AEGEE Academy, Rue Nestor de Tiere 15, 1030 Brussels (Belgium)
• Dates Occupation or position held Main activities and responsibilities	11/2009 - 08/2010 <i>President of AEGEE Skopje</i> Representing the organization; leading the supervising board of the organization; writing and implementing projects; working as a youth trainer. AEGEE – Skopje is local antenna of the AEGEE network, formed in 1993. AEGEE is a non-governmental, politically independent, secular and non-profit organisation, and its open to students and young people from all faculties and disciplines.
Name and address of employer	AEGEE Skopje

Ul. Krste Misirkov b.b. Law Faculty 1000 Skopje, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)

• Dates	10/2009 - 10/2010
Occupation or position held	<i>External Relations Responsible of the project YOUrope needs YOU!</i>
Main activities and responsibilities	Communicating with external bodies, mainly with the institutions of the European Union. YOUrope needs YOU! is a project dedicated to empower high school students by creating interactive workshops. The aim of the projects is to increase their knowledge about Europe, European values, European matters, to motivate them to take action to do something for their schools, their societies and keep them informed about all possibilities which Europe can offer them. The project was under the patronage of the Ex-President of the European Parliament, Mr. Jerzy Buzek and won the European Charlemagne Award in 2008.
Name and address of employer	AEGEE Europe Rue Nestor de Tiers 15, 1030 Brussels (Belgium)
Type of business or sector	Non Governmental Organization
• Dates	09/2007 - 09/2010
Occupation or position held	<i>Editor in Chief of the Magazine "Europe - No Borders, No Limits"</i>
Name and address of employer	AEGEE Skopje Ul. Krste Misirkov b.b. Law Faculty 1000 Skopje, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
• Dates	04/2008 - 04/2009
Occupation or position held	<i>Organizer of Spring Day in Europe-Skopje</i>
Main activities and responsibilities	Organizing the coordinating the event "Spring Day of Europe", which is a manifestation organized by various NGOs in Macedonia. The event is consisted of art performances, music, exhibitions, workshops and debates.
• Dates	10/2008 - 10/2009
Occupation or position held	<i>Public Relations Responsible and Vice President of AEGEE Skopje</i>
Main activities and responsibilities	Responsible for the public relations of the organization - communicating with the media, writing press releases and newsletters and making PR workshops.
Name and address of employer	AEGEE Skopje Ul. Krste Misirkov b.b. Law Faculty, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
Type of business or sector	Non Governmental Sector
• Dates	06/2007 - 11/2008
Occupation or position held	<i>External Relations Responsible of AEGEE Skopje</i>
Main activities and responsibilities	Coordinating the activities of AEGEE Skopje on an international level; communicating with the other antennas of the organization and with external partner organizations.
Name and address of employer	AEGEE Skopje Ul. Krste Misirkov b.b. Law Faculty, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
Type of business or sector	Non Governmental Sector

Education and training

• Dates	10/2011 - 10/2012
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Master of Arts in Global Studies, second year (to be awarded)</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Multiperspectivity in debates about globalization processes; intercultural communication; project development; international regimes ;economic integration; governance; migration and foreign policy; transcultural comparison; project management; international organizations; international development;; imperialism and colonialism
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	University of Vienna Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring 1, 1010 Vienna (Austria)

• Dates	10/2010 - 10/2011
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Master of Arts in Global Studies, first year</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Multiperspectivity in debates about globalization processes; intercultural communication; project development; international regimes; economic integration, governance; migration and foreign policy; transcultural comparison; project management; international organizations; international development; imperialism and colonialism
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	University of Leipzig Emil-Fuchs-Strasse 1, 04105 Leipzig (Germany)
• Dates	10/2009 - 06/2010
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Specialization in Media and Communications</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of media studies and communication; media and globalization; intersection between media, economics, and politics
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	St. "Cyril and Methodius" University Skopje , Law Faculty "Iustinianus Primus" Krste Misirkov bb, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
• Dates	10/2006 - 06/2009
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Bachelor of Arts in Journalism</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Multi-disciplinary approach of journalism and communications; mass media; public relations; media management; political science and human rights; micro and macro economics
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	St. "Cyril and Metodius" University Skopje Krste Misirkov bb, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
• Dates	24/05/2011 - 29/05/2011
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Youth Exchange</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	youth leadership; awareness raising for social matters and youth; social inclusion; team building
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	Centro Intercultural Ideas de Colores (Non Governmental Organization) Las Palmas, Canary Islands (Spain)
• Dates	09/2007 - 09/2008
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Specialization in Journalism</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Training for specialization in journalism; equipment of practical skills required for professional journalists; specialization in journalistic interviews
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	Tea Moderna (Media house) 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)
• Dates	04/2007
Title of qualification awarded	<i>Training Seminar</i>
Principal subjects / occupational skills covered	Training Course for Project Management, Development, Project Construction & Decision Making Peer Education
Name and type of organisation providing education and training	ELSA Macedonia (Non-Governmental Organization) Faculty of Law "Iustinianus Primus" Blvd. "Krste Misirkov" nn, 1000 Skopje, 1000 Skopje (Macedonia)

Personal skills and competences

Mother tongue(s) **Macedonian**

Other language(s)

Self-assessment
European level ()*

English

Understanding				Speaking				Writing	
Listening		Reading		Spoken interaction		Spoken production			
C2	Proficient user	C2	Proficient user	C2	Proficient user	C2	Proficient user	C2	Proficient user

Serbo/Croatian	C1	Proficient user	C1	Proficient user	B2	Independent user	B2	Independent user	B1	Independent user
German	B1	Independent user	B2	Independent user	B1	Independent user	B1	Independent user	B1	Independent user

(*) [*Common European Framework of Reference \(CEF\) level*](#)

Social skills and competences Team spirit - acquired through working in different teams in several different NGOs

Good ability to adapt in multicultural environments gained through working experience in international NGOs, as well as through studying abroad.

Good communication skills - gained through working as an external and internal public relations responsible.

Organisational skills and competences Leadership - gained through being a president of a non-governmental organization

Experience in project, team and event management.

Computer skills and competences Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), Internet, Prezi

Other skills and competences Strong analytical and research skills; presentation skills; ability to work both independently and in teams

Additional information Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Holder 2010-2012