

IFP CAPACITY-BUILDING CLUSTER

COUNTRY CASE STUDY: GREECE

TEN YEARS OF GREEK DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND PEACEBUILDING:

Challenges and recommendations

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Cover picture: From the World Food Programme's School Kitchen Construction and School Feeding Programme that Hellenic Aid funded during 2005-2007 for schools in North Sri Lanka (76 schools in Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi). This was part of the WFP's Rehabilitation and Reconstruction programmes in the tsunami-affected communities of Southeast Sri Lanka that Hellenic Aid funded with €1 million.

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TEN YEARS OF GREEK
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
AND PEACEBUILDING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greece has been a recipient of international and European aid and assistance throughout the twentieth century. It is only in the past decade that it has been transformed into a donor country. In recent years, Greece has been very active in emergency humanitarian assistance and it has gradually developed official development assistance (ODA) policies. Its current priority is to substantially increase the volume of its aid and further develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to its ODA. In effect, Greece has a long road to cover to meet the EU commitment of 0.51 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010.

Greece's ODA programmes have been formulated through a top-down approach. Greek state authorities, and particularly government officials and staff at the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), have formulated these policies and priorities as a result of Greece's international activity in the context of regional and international organisations, which have largely influenced the country's approach to development and human security. These have created pull factors by making funding available for the implementation of projects and research on peacebuilding, human security, the effects of climate change and the impact of these on more vulnerable groups. As a result, there has been a growing space for action by Greek civil society on such issues, and a wider scope to tap into the resources of the international epistemic communities in this field and raise public awareness of these issues.

The rather recent change by Greece from recipient to donor has not yet translated, however, into a shift in mentalities on the part of public opinion and civil society. Public opinion has not been a factor in pushing for greater activity and responsibility on the part of Greek authorities on these issues so far. In effect, pressure from below is in its infant stages. Civil society and the academic community have only become involved in these areas in the past decade, but a budding NGO community has developed in this field.

There is undoubtedly a need for further capacity-building both within the Greek ODA system and among the civil society sector. As regards the public authorities, there is a strong need for capacity-building in planning, managing and assessing ODA – particularly as the volume of aid increases. This requires tapping into relevant ODA knowledge and experience, and drawing from expertise and best practice from other Member States or from the EU itself, in order to upgrade and improve the planning of ODA spending; the follow-up of relevant projects; and impact assessment in the recipient societies, in order to further improve the next stages of ODA planning. As regards the NGO community interested in development cooperation, poverty reduction and humanitarian assistance, these actors need to improve their project management skills and be more proactive in suggesting priority areas for ODA. This will enable them to participate more substantially in the policy process, contribute to making ODA more transparent and better suited to the needs on the ground, and implement ODA programmes more efficiently.

The support of EU-level governance and the media in increasing public commitment and raising public awareness is crucial, as is the need for greater public scrutiny and accountability on aid spending. This is particularly relevant given the need for Greece to at least triple its funding allocated to ODA if it is to reach its declared targets. In this period of economic downturn, governments need to be encouraged not to shy away from their international commitments to fighting poverty and promoting human development, peace and security.

Keywords: Greece, humanitarian assistance, human security, development cooperation

ACRONYMS

CGAER	Council of General Affairs and External Relations
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Commission
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
EDF	European Development Fund
ELIAMEP	Hellenic Foundation of European and Foreign Policy
EOSDOS	Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Coordination of International Economic Relations
ESOAB	Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans
GNI	Gross National Income
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HSN	Human Security Network
IFP	Initiative for Peacebuilding
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	(Hellenic) Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SSR	Security Sector Reform
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Agency
YDAS	International Development Cooperation Department (Hellenic Aid)

INTRODUCTION

ODA provided by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Member States totaled over €70.36 billion in 2007.¹ Development cooperation and humanitarian assistance projects make up a significant portion of the EU and its Member State's "external action". The EU and its Member States have declared that the principles that guide their external policies and common actions include supporting sustainable development in "third countries" (i.e. outside of the EU); promoting peace and security beyond their borders and their immediate neighbourhood; and promoting the respect of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. The influence and impact that ODA programmes can have in promoting inter-state and intra-state peace, addressing sources of social conflict and tension, supporting economic growth together with environmental concerns, and empowering more vulnerable population groups, is quite significant. In this context, it is useful to raise awareness about and support more effective and comprehensive approaches to peacebuilding within and through national and European assistance programmes.

The Initiative for Peacebuilding (IfP) has conducted research on existing peacebuilding priorities and practices among the EU Member States in order to provide insight into the current approaches to ODA. This report is prepared in the context of IfP's capacity-building cluster, which examines existing policies and practices in the field of ODA in a number of EU Member States.

This report focuses on Greece's peacebuilding policies, practices, and stated priorities and objectives. Through a critical examination of Greece's ODA, the report aims at identifying current opportunities, strengths and challenges, and the degree to which it integrates peacebuilding priorities. It discusses the level of civil society participation in the ODA process and general awareness amongst government, state officials and civil society on peacebuilding and on the extent to which human security concepts, gender considerations and environmental concerns are integrated in these national policies. It also outlines the factors that have influenced the way in which ODA has been approached so far. Moreover, this report presents a set of recommendations and suggestions addressed to the Greek government, state officials and civil society actors, and to relevant EU policy-makers.

The report has the following structure: it includes a section on research methods used and resources that were consulted; an overview of the context within which Greece's ODA strategy developed and the main actors involved in its planning; the strategic and geographic priorities; the place that peacebuilding holds within the country's development policies; and a section on the role of civil society in this process. A set of recommendations are put forward in the concluding section.

1 'Debt Relief is down: Other ODA rises slightly', Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD-DAC), 4th April 2008, at http://www.oecd.org/document/8/0,3343,en_2649_34447_40381960_1_1_1_1,00.html.

METHODOLOGY

This report is mainly based on the analysis of primary sources, interviews and informal discussions with relevant officials and actors.

Research for this report was undertaken between April and September 2008. The information collected includes annual reports, information booklets and data made available from the relevant websites of the MFA and the OECD.² There is very limited research in Greece on Greek ODA policy, as this remains a rather new policy area; relevant publications that exist in Greek and English have been reviewed in this report.

A series of formal and informal discussions also provided useful insight in the preparation of this report. The interviews and discussions conducted were based on a common methodology prepared by the IfP team for the purposes of this research.

During the drafting of this report, the author met with the Secretary General of the MFA Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, as well as high-ranking officials for the International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation Department's (YDAS)³ Directorate on Emergency Humanitarian and Food Aid and their Directorate on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Development Education. These interviewees were selected because of their role in the strategic direction, formulation and implementation of Greek ODA and their institutional knowledge of the way this policy has developed.⁴ In addition, two NGO representatives were asked to present their opinions on Greece's external assistance and peacebuilding policies, the process through which ODA is formulated, funded and implemented, and their expectations of the role civil society ought to fulfill in this field.⁵

Another source of extremely valuable firsthand information was the joint project by the MFA and the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) on climate change and its impact on human security. It offered an opportunity to observe and obtain insight into the manner in which Greek ODA policy is formulated and the extent of civil society's participation in the policy process. Drawing from the participant observation approach to fieldwork, this project was useful in understanding Greece's official approach to development assistance and peacebuilding, mapping the main players in this field and assessing the role of the non-governmental sector. This was particularly helpful because there is extremely limited research and analysis on the subject.

2 The Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs website is www.mfa.gr and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) website is www.oecd.org.

3 The initials YDAS stand for the International Development Cooperation Department (Hellenic Aid) in Greek: Υπηρεσία Διεθνούς Αναπτυξιακής Συνεργασίας [ΥΔΑΣ].

4 The discussions with the two high-ranking officials from the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs were held on 28th August 2008 in Athens, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and are referred to as Interviewees A and B, given that a significant part of the discussion was off-the-record. The Secretary General for International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation of the MFA, Mr. Theodore Skylakakis was interviewed on 2nd September 2008 in Athens at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

5 Two NGO representatives were interviewed on 17th September 2008 in Athens. These are referred to by their initials SK and DK. The first heads an NGO active in development cooperation and has been active in the field for over a decade, the second has been active in a number of development NGOs and in other civil society organisations in Greece in the last five years.

BACKGROUND TO GREECE'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

Greece is a relative newcomer to development cooperation. In the latter part of the twentieth century, Greece was a recipient of international development and humanitarian assistance. This has changed in the past few decades and Greece is at present a net contributor of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance internationally.

In the past decade, Greece has organised and enhanced its *institutional structures*, its *financial resources* and its *strategic priorities* in this field in a rather extensive manner:

- As regards the *institutional* dimension, first, the MFA reorganised YDAS in order to better respond to the requirements and responsibilities of Greece's participation in international fora and organisations. YDAS's internal organisation has been restructured in order to create dedicated services for emergency humanitarian assistance, reconstruction, development cooperation and collaboration with NGOs, while its human resources have also been expanded through the inclusion of experts on development cooperation.⁶ Second, the National Advisory Committee on NGO Issues has been established.⁷ Third, members of staff of Greek embassies in developing countries have been appointed as Development Officers.⁸
- As regards *funds* dedicated to development cooperation and assistance, Greece has ranked among the countries with the largest increase in funds in real terms (for example, in 2004 the increase was estimated at about 13.1 percent). Nevertheless, Greece needs to at least triple its net ODA volume by 2010 to reach the OECD's Development Assistance Commission (DAC) target of €0.92 billion, and it still falls short of a comprehensive ODA growth implementation plan focusing both on raising these resources and on allocating them.
- In terms of Greece's *strategic priorities* in this field, there has been a substantial shift and upgrade in focus in the past five years. First, in *geographic terms*, what the MFA has defined as development diplomacy⁹ has been expanded beyond Greece's immediate neighbourhood. Initially concentrated in the Balkans, the Black Sea region, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, Greece has now expanded its presence in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean and in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Second, in terms of

6 It is worth mentioning here that one of the OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) recommendations put forward in the 2000–2002 Peer Review was to build up a group of development cooperation specialists to manage and implement the aid programme. In response, the MFA's 2006 Annual Report notes that expert staff engaged with YDAS and these experts were either recruited among the graduates of the National School of Public Administration of Greece, from experienced personnel from the Ministry of Economics and Finance, or from experienced personnel for the Permanent Delegation of Greece to the EU. Moreover, it notes that emphasis has also been placed on training through international organisations or other countries with extensive experience in this field. See: 'Greece (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main Findings and Recommendations – Review of the development co-operation policies and programmes of Greece', Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD-DAC), accessed 15th September 2008, at http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3343,en_2649_34603_37754997_1_1_1_1,00.html; Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). *Annual Report of the Greek Bilateral and Multilateral Official Development Cooperation and Assistance, Year 2006*. Athens: Hellenic Republic, p.65.

7 Article 17 of Law No.2731/1999 established a National Advisory Committee on NGO Issues at the MFA. The committee meets twice a year and is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It includes representatives of other relevant Ministries, agencies involved in the implementation of bilateral or international ODA projects, NGOs enlisted in the YDAS's NGO registry and other distinguished personalities (from Greece and abroad) with experience in development cooperation.

8 Diplomats or experts working at the MFA have been designated as Development Officers and have been dispatched to Greek embassies in developing countries. They are responsible for monitoring or coordinating bilateral or multilateral development assistance projects in these countries or for the distribution of emergency aid.

9 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (December 2005). Op. cit. p.3.

thematic issues, Greece has prioritised the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduction, humanitarian assistance and addressing the impact of climate change on human security.

A concurrence of conditions over the past decade has been conducive to the recent enhancement of Greece's overseas development policy.

The first has to do with Greece's EU membership. Greece's development cooperation policy has been developed and formulated largely in the framework of its participation in the EU and in particular through its participation in the relevant decision-making bodies (e.g. the Council of General Affairs and External Relations, or CGAER). Greece did not have a formal and structured development cooperation policy prior to its EU accession and though it was contributing annually to the European Development Fund (EDF) in the context of the Lomé and Cotonou Agreements, it was not until the end of the 1990s that Greece officially developed its ODA. Greece committed to the EU target of allocating 0.51 percent of its GNI to ODA by 2010.

In terms of its approach to development cooperation, this too has been influenced by the country's participation in the EU and in international fora. The discourse and terminology used by the country's policy-makers in the field of development cooperation is fully aligned with the UN and OECD's approach to human development. Greece's more active involvement in these regional and international fora led to a transfer of ideas and concepts about security, (human) development and factors conducive to peace in the developing world, which trickled into the policy formulation process with relative ease.

A third factor that influenced Greece's ODA has to do with developments in its immediate neighbourhood after the fall of the Eastern Bloc and the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia. The socio-economic pressures resulting from the post-communist transition, along with the political volatility and war that spread out across the Balkans, made Greece – then the only EU and NATO member state in Southeast Europe – take on a different role in the region. Greece presented its political stability and growing economic prosperity as factors that could be conducive to the region's overall security and development. The geo-political changes that occurred after 1989 encouraged Greece to take on a proactive role, initially serving as a regional donor of aid and assistance, and later becoming an international donor.

In addition, Greece's economic growth was conducive to the government's political decision to assume certain responsibilities in the field of development cooperation. Throughout the 1990s Greece registered very positive growth rates and Greek businesses in the retail, construction, food, manufacturing, energy and banking sectors became more outward-looking and expanded their activities and presence abroad, particularly in East and Southeast Europe. The country's growing prosperity and its economic presence outside its borders encouraged the government's tendency towards more active cooperation on development policy.

In this light, Greece developed its ODA policies in the mid-1990s. Although an EU member since 1981, it was a very late comer to the DAC, which it joined in December 1999.¹⁰ Since joining the DAC, Greece has had to cover 'substantial ground' to meet the targets that it has set for itself in relation to the OECD-DAC and the EU.¹¹ Political commitment to bolstering Greece's international role generally, and consequently its efforts in the field of development assistance, was further enhanced by Greece's election as a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council for 2005–2006, its Chairmanship of the Ministerial Council meeting of the OECD in 2006 and its Chairmanship of the Human Security Network (HSN)¹² in 2007–2008.

10 S. Pandelis and A. Houliaras (Eds.) (2002). *Civil Society Diplomacy. NGOs and International Development Cooperation [Η Διπλωματία της Κοινωνίας των Πολιτών. Οι Μη Κυβερνητικές Οργανώσεις και η Διεθνής Αναπτυξιακή Συνεργασία]*. Athens: Papazisi Editions, p.164.

11 'Greece (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main findings and recommendations - Review of the development co-operation policies and programmes of Greece'. Op. cit.

12 Greece has been a member of the HSN since its foundation in 1999. HSN is an informal world consultation forum for governments, international organisations, the academic community and civil society representatives. It adopts a human-centred approach to security and aims at raising awareness for more effective support and protection of vulnerable population groups against modern threats to human security. Members of the HSN include: Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia and Thailand; South Africa has observer status. See 'The Greek Chairmanship's Goals', Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed 15th September 2008, at http://www.mfa.gr/www.mfa.gr/Articles/en-US/05052008_ALK1628.htm.

Thus, Greece strengthened its policy framework with a second medium-term development cooperation programme (2002–2006) aligned to the MDGs and made noteworthy efforts in developing its capacity to provide humanitarian assistance in emergency situations.¹³ The extent of the response on the part of the Greek authorities to the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the 2006 war in Lebanon and the 2008 crisis in Myanmar, are indicative of the priority that has been accorded to Greece's humanitarian assistance profile.

In May 2007, Greece assumed the Chairmanship of the HSN. Within the framework of its Chairmanship, Greece's stated priority is to focus on the relationship between climate change and human security at an international level. In this context, an action plan was set up involving a series of meetings and events with the participation of representatives from the political world, academic community and civil society. The declared aim during the Chairmanship was to raise awareness of 'the impact of climate change and global warming on human security, with regard to vulnerable groups, particularly women, children and persons fleeing their homes due to climate change'.¹⁴

The proposal to concentrate on climate change was put forward by the Secretary General's office of the MFA, who saw an opportunity to use this Chairmanship as a spring-board to raise public awareness on the security dimensions of environmental degradation both within Greece and throughout the HSN.¹⁵ During the Chairmanship, Greek authorities decided to channel attention to addressing climate change in two directions. First, they decided to address climate change within the framework of international development cooperation and mainly with regard to the LDCs. By taking a distinctive "soft" approach to security and linking it with development, through its Chairmanship of the HSN, Greece argued in favour of adding environmental insecurity to the definition of a "fragile state".¹⁶ The MFA supported the position that this comprehensive approach should be reflected in a restructuring of European development assistance for addressing the impact of climate change on fragile regions. Second, HSN developed a European Mechanism for addressing natural disasters. In effect, Greece underlined that the destruction caused by the forest fires in southern Europe (particularly in the summer of 2007) highlighted the need for a closer, institutionalised and strengthened European policy on addressing natural disasters that would be able to support the competent authorities' efforts.

These positive developments are not without their challenges or shortcomings. By all accounts, Greece's ODA levels are modest. Moreover, given that its starting point was close to zero, meeting the EU target of 0.51 percent of GNI by 2010 constitutes a significant challenge. Between 1999 and 2004, Greek bilateral aid reached 0.16 percent of GNI, and in 2006, the combined bilateral and multilateral ODA/GNI ratio was steady at 0.17 percent.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is still below the DAC average of 0.26 percent.¹⁸ At present, it is even more challenging for the government to make the case domestically for increased expenditure on ODA, given that the years after the 2004 Olympic Games have been characterised by a disconcerting slow-down of the economy and a large fiscal deficit. In addition, pursuing development assistance policies in its neighbourhood has been a case easy to make to the Greek public, given that these are combined with concerns for wider regional stability during economic transition, the need to address migration flows and illegal trafficking, and so on. As these regions become less eligible for ODA and the need for policies in other regions further afar increases, it may be an additional challenge for the government to maintain or reinforce levels of public support for Greece's ODA activities against a background of economic recession. The 2006 DAC Peer Review effectively notes that a major challenge for the country will be to raise the additional spending that is necessary to meet the EU target (which requires tripling current levels), while at the same time striking a balance between visibility and results in its aid programme and the longer-term perspective, which requires promoting ownership and building capacity.¹⁹

13 'Greece (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main findings and recommendations - Review of the development co-operation policies and programmes of Greece'. Op. cit.

14 See: 'Greece assumes the Chairmanship of the Human Security Network Priorities and Objectives', Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed 1st September 2008, at http://www.mfa.gr/www.mfa.gr/Articles/en-US/ts18052007_KL2115.htm.

15 Interview with Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, 2nd September 2008 and with Interviewee B on 28th August 2008.

16 See: 'Greece assumes the Chairmanship of the Human Security Network Priorities and Objectives'. Op. cit.

17 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. p.180.

18 'Greece (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main findings and recommendations - Review of the development co-operation policies and programmes of Greece'. Op. cit.

19 Ibid; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2006). *Greece: Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review*, pp.12-14. Available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/3/10/38023102.pdf>.

GREECE'S ODA

Official data on Greece's ODA is publicly available from the YDAS section of the MFA's website.²⁰ Data on Greece's development policy is also available on the OECD-DAC website.²¹

Greece has been raising its contributions to multilateral and bilateral ODA annually in order to meet the EU and DAC requirements. In 2006, this amounted to €322.25 million, which translates overall into a 5.3 percent rise in real terms.²²

TABLE 1: GREEK ODA, 2004–2005

ODA	In Million Euro	In % of GNI
Multilateral ODA	122.20	0.08%
Bilateral ODA	230.91	0.15%

Source: Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (December 2005). *Annual report of the Greek bilateral and multilateral Official Development Cooperation and Assistance, years 2004-2005*. Athens: Hellenic Republic, p.29.

Multilateral ODA is disbursed through annual subscriptions or programmes undertaken by various UN organisations,²³ through the EU Development Budget and the EDF, through the World Bank and its subsidiary bodies and through other organisations. In effect, in 2006 Greece's multilateral ODA subscriptions to international organisations amounted to €178.42 million (or 0.10 percent of GNI), while its subscriptions through the EU amounted to €124.59 million.²⁴ Of these, disbursements amounting to €95.04 million went through the European Commission's Development Budget,²⁵ €2.18 million through the EU's External Activities Guarantee Fund, €33.38 million to the EDF.²⁶ Greece has also been contributing to the World Bank's debt relief initiative for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) since 1996 and has spent around €11.40 million in emergency assistance, in addition to aid sent using military aircrafts or Air Force and Navy ships.

20 See: <http://www.hellenicaid.gr/>.

21 'Greece (2006), DAC Peer Review: Main findings and recommendations - Review of the development co-operation policies and programmes of Greece'. Op. cit.

22 'Debt Relief is down: Other ODA rises slightly'. Op. cit.

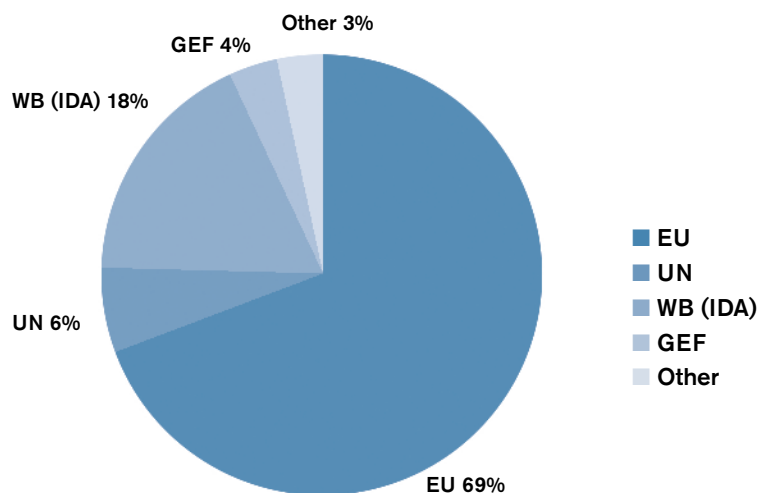
23 In addition to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Environmental Programme etc., Greece is also contributing to the UN's Industrial Development Organisation, the UN Development Plan, and the Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme, among other initiatives.

24 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. pp.131-132.

25 Principally concentrating on pre-accession strategy for Turkey; food aid, humanitarian aid, democracy and human rights initiatives in Asia, Latin America, African-Caribbean and Pacific countries, the Western Balkans and Central/Eastern Europe.

26 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. p.132.

GRAPH 1. BREAKDOWN OF GREECE'S MULTILATERAL ODA (2006)



Source: Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). *Annual report of the Greek bilateral and Multilateral Official Development Cooperation and Assistance, Year 2006*. Athens: Hellenic Republic, p.132.

As far as the geographic distribution of Greece's ODA, its priority areas have been Southeast Europe, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and increasingly it has concentrated on improving living conditions in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷ Thus, the priority countries for 2004 were Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, FYROM, Georgia, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Syria and Turkey; while in 2005, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Moldova, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Sudan joined the list (Bulgaria and Romania were no longer included, given their EU accession). These regions are singled out either because Greece has long-standing ties and a long history of interaction with them, because it has vested interests in these countries, or because it considers that it has specialised expertise and understanding of conditions on the ground that it can contribute to.

Greece's declared development diplomacy is constructed on the basis of the UN Millennium Declaration and the eight MDGs, the European development priorities and its own national foreign policy priorities. In thematic terms, the recurring and overarching emphasis in all relevant documents published by YDAS is on reduction of poverty and achievement of the MDGs.

In addition, Greece has initiated the Greek Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans (ESOAB). So far, only 10 percent of the originally scheduled funds (amounting to €550 million) have been committed and less than 2.4 percent distributed. The expectations that were raised by this ambitious development and reconstruction initiative have evidently not been met and the embarrassingly low levels of political and financial commitment suggest that it is very unlikely that the plan will take on a meaningful role in Greece's ODA in the near future.

In terms of actors involved in the formulation and implementation of the country's ODA, the core body responsible for setting the priorities and allocation of funds is the MFA. Its YDAS²⁸ is responsible for managing the state resources allocated to development cooperation, allocating and coordinating technical and humanitarian assistance and collaboration with NGOs, monitoring development projects, as well as reporting and processing all relevant data on activities undertaken in this field to the Hellenic Parliament, to the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Coordination of International Economic Relations, and finally to the OECD's DAC for Peer Review of

²⁷ Ibid. p.32.

²⁸ YDAS is composed of six Directorates: YDAS 1 for Emergency Humanitarian Aid, YDAS 2 for Restructuring, Rehabilitation and Development, YDAS 3 for Geographical Policy and Strategic Planning, YDAS 4 for NGOs, Development Education and Evaluation, YDAS 5 for Technical Services, YDAS 6 for Administrative and Economic Services, as well as an Independent Evaluation Office, a Press and Information Office and a Library. YDAS 5 and the Independent Evaluation Office are inactive.

the country's ODA. The Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Coordination of International Economic Relations (EOSDOS) is responsible for all international economic relations of Greece and, therefore, for planning national policy and strategy of development cooperation and assistance. It is the high-level decision-making body chaired by the MFA and attended by the Ministers of Economy and Finance, Development, Merchant Marine, Transportation and Communications (according to the issues discussed). The annual report that it submits to the Parliament is drawn up by YDAS. The Hellenic Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee is the main body that examines the volume and allocation of development aid during discussions on the approval of the annual State Budget, but it is far from being an actor that substantially contributes to the debate or shapes the country's ODA scope and priorities. As the volume of public spending dedicated to aid and development increases, however, the level of involvement and scrutiny on behalf of the Members of Parliament will have to follow suit. Thus, increasing parliamentarians' awareness and understanding of development cooperation and the need for an integrated approach to peacebuilding is crucial.

ODA PRIORITIES

Greece's current strategic priorities for its ODA can be summarised as follows:

- **To diversify its geographic focus:** Until recently, Greece's activities concentrated on the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa. Its aim in the years ahead is to diversify and broaden its activities in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, in order to spread its efforts towards both middle-income developing countries and also those more in need, and mainly the LDCs.²⁹
- **To seek synergies and further consolidate collaborations with INGOs and specialised development agencies:** Greece prefers to direct funds to projects coordinated by, or co-finance initiatives set up by, international organisations or specialised agencies (such as UNDP, the World Bank, USAID, WHO, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation etc.), in order to maximise the efficiency of aid distributed and concentrate resources, rather than overlap or duplicate efforts, given that these actors have the appropriate and necessary institutional presence, capacity and expertise in the field.³⁰
- **To develop its capacity in humanitarian assistance:** The MFA has placed an over-riding emphasis on developing and strengthening its current mechanisms, to be able to rapidly collect and distribute humanitarian aid in response to crisis situations created by environmental disasters, wars and conflict. Greek officials consider that Greece's international profile (as a small- to medium-sized country without a colonial history) is conducive to this sort of activity which does not have a political agenda. Moreover, there exists widespread support within the Greek public for humanitarian assistance, and this can contribute significantly to rapidly mobilising the necessary resources.³¹
- **To encourage co-financing:** From 2008, the Greek MFA has underlined the need to attract funds from the private sector in bilateral ODA programmes. It has therefore decreased its contribution to projects from 75 to 50 percent, expecting that the remaining share be raised from other sources (preferably the private sector). This is intended to increase local ownership and cooperation between interested stakeholders and partners, as well as improve efficiency.³² The challenge here for the civil society community, which is still in its early stages of development, will be to find alternative sources of funding in order to be able to implement its projects. This will not be without its difficulties, given that the NGO community has rather limited experience with fundraising, and in the current economic downturn it is likely that it will be an additional challenge to engage companies and business to financially support development projects in countries or regions far outside their business scope.

²⁹ Interview with Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, 2nd September 2008.

³⁰ Interview Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, 2nd September 2008 and with Interviewee A on 28th August 2008.

³¹ Interviewee B on 28th August 2008.

³² Interviewee A on 28th August 2008.

PEACEBUILDING WITHIN ODA

As stated above, Greece's declared ODA priorities are poverty reduction and meeting the MDGs. An examination of YDAS's official documentation suggests that both priorities are approached from a perspective influenced by peacebuilding and human security considerations. (Early) conflict prevention is underlined as an important component in combating poverty and meeting the MDGs, and as an ethical responsibility of the international community.³³ For this, emphasis is placed on supporting the rule of law, which requires competent legal and judicial systems and mechanisms that will promote justice and national reconciliation.³⁴ Although there is no specific reference to the concept of transitional justice, as such, references to the need of addressing impunity issues and of the role of justice in national reconciliation are underlined.

Peacebuilding is essentially approached through initiatives aimed at promoting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) activities, recognised as a cornerstone of peacebuilding and promoting development outside the EU. In addition, security sector reform (SSR) is also considered a necessary requirement, the MFA having funded a number of training seminars and workshops concentrating on SSR in the Balkans and the Middle East.³⁵ However, close examination reveals that there were only a handful of projects funded between 2004 and 2005 involving DDR and SSR. In Eritrea, for instance, although there was reference made to the need to rapidly demobilise soldiers as part of a comprehensive strategy to achieve peace and reduce poverty, none of the Greek ODA was directed to such initiatives.³⁶ This suggests that, while DDR and SSR are accepted priorities, they have still not been operationalised and essentially they have not yet translated into support for specific activities in these fields.

The concept of human security is widely used within Greek ODA-related documents and in the approach of the MFA's staff. Extensive references to different dimensions of security and the need to approach security holistically were made in the course of the interviews,³⁷ and the importance of the feeling of security for civilians to be able to 'substantially progress in all sectors of human activity' are underlined in the Ministry's Annual Report.³⁸ More specifically, human security is identified as a priority sector for ODA granted to Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Georgia, Jordan, Moldova, and Serbia and Montenegro in 2005.³⁹ Thus, the concept of human security and the expansion of the notion of security seem to be well received by Greek policy-makers, who appear keen to examine what factors may be conducive to security and how they can contribute.

Gender considerations cut across most ODA activities. Gender is considered primarily in a three-fold manner. First, gender concerns are stated to be part of the ODA's poverty reduction objectives. Second, gender and security tends to be associated with activities combating illegal trafficking of women and other forms of exploitation. Third, gender equality is principally pursued through health and education-related projects. In effect, special attention is paid to training women and young girls on nutrition and healthcare in the context of funds disbursed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger,⁴⁰ as well as access to primary and secondary education and literacy.⁴¹ Maternal health is a core concern both in activities relating to health facilities and services, but also access to education and information. Gender considerations are also highlighted in projects funded under the goal of combating malaria, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted and infectious diseases.

33 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. p.75.

34 Ibid. p.75.

35 For instance the MFA has financially supported training seminars on SSR in Albania, and workshops on comparing SSR experiences in SEE and drawing relevant conclusions for the Middle East. See: ELIAMEP's website on SSR in Albania and Halki International Seminars 2006 at www.eliamep.gr.

36 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. pp.208-210.

37 Interview Mr. Theodore Skylakakis, 2nd September 2008 and with Interviewees A and B on 28th August 2008.

38 Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). Op. cit. p.75.

39 Funding directed towards activities in countries where human trade originates, medical and psycho-social support, humanitarian repatriation, street work for safe repatriation of victims and information campaigns, are priority sectors according to the *Annual Report*. See: Ibid. p.237, 241, 245, 249, 256, 259, 263 and 267.

40 Mainly in Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Jordan, Romania and Turkey.

41 Activities concentrating on achieving universal primary education have been funded in Albania, Armenia, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, Ethiopia, FYROM, Georgia, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Moldova, Montenegro, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Palestinian territories, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

One of the DAC recommendations to the Greek authorities was to operationalise gender equality policies, particularly with reference to environmental challenges and in the context of the Hellenic Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans.⁴² In effect, more targeted efforts and attention to projects that will concretely promote gender equality, or eliminate gender disparity, need to be considered by Greek policy-makers in order to translate these commitments into tangible efforts on the ground.

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

Greek civil society has only become interested and involved in development cooperation, technical assistance, poverty alleviation and humanitarian assistance in the past decade. The fact that Greece was a recipient of international assistance rather than a donor meant that there was no appropriate “space” for the NGO community to develop in this sphere. In addition, there was a general lack of awareness on development issues and the wider North-South dialogue, as these were rather detached from Greece’s reality, either during the Cold War period or in the immediate post-Cold War environment. Furthermore, Greek civil society can be characterised as relatively under-developed until the 1990s, lacking development education and a tradition of volunteerism and civic activism.⁴³ These factors account for the restricted participation of civil society in development cooperation, both in contributing to the definition of the priorities and the strategic approach to development, and in the implementation of ODA.

From the mid-1990s onwards, however, the civil society community gradually started to become organised, primarily in response to developments in the Balkans and the Middle East, and the humanitarian disasters provoked by the earthquakes in Greece and Turkey in 1999, which triggered significant action among Greek citizens. With the increased availability of funding from the EU and MFA, national NGOs and Greek branches of INGOs have been set up that concentrate on development issues and humanitarian assistance in Southeast Asia or sub-Saharan Africa.⁴⁴

In the last decade or so, it can be argued that the gap that existed in Greek civil society has been addressed. Today, there is a sizeable NGO community active in development cooperation projects and in technical or humanitarian assistance programmes.⁴⁵ The most important challenge now regards the quality of the work, the ability to set up projects, secure funding, and implement projects effectively and have an impact at the local level. MFA officials underlined that many NGOs appear to lack the capacity to fully meet the terms of reference, to implement the projects that have been approved, and to meet deadlines and reporting obligations.⁴⁶ With the exception of a few organisations, it was noted that the majority of NGOs are unprepared, lack sufficient training and are under-resourced in these particular areas. This rendered MFA collaboration with the NGO community rather problematic, because although they are necessary partners for ODA projects, they have still not acquired the necessary experience, expertise or “development culture” mentality to be able to engage in a constructive dialogue on the future priorities of Greek ODA, to report on which projects have had impact and which approaches need to be reconsidered in order to take Greek development policy forward. In short, one of the major challenges involves building capacity in the development assistance section of Greek civil society.

As noted above, much of the resources (financial and other) that have so far been accorded to building up, setting up and organising this sector, has come from the MFA. Since 1999, in fact, the MFA’s National Advisory Committee on NGO Issues has brought together representatives of ministries, implementing agencies, NGOs (enlisted in the Special Registry of YDAS) and other agencies involved in international and development cooperation projects, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the MFA has been quite open to involving the NGO community in initiatives it has undertaken in this field. A recent example is the involvement of representatives of civil society that the MFA encouraged throughout the course of the Greek Chairmanship of the HSN (May 2007–May 2008). The Ministry worked closely with NGOs and think tanks from

42 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2006). *Op. cit.* Annex A.

43 S. Pandelis and A. Houliaras (Eds.) (2002). *Op. cit.* pp.172-173.

44 Such as ActionAid Hellas, Doctors Without Borders – Hellas, Greek Red Cross, Doctors of the World etc.

45 In 2002, over 180 NGOs were registered with the MFA’s Special NGO Register, and about 45 of these had received funding for development projects in developing or transition countries. See: S. Pandelis and A. Houliaras (Eds.) (2002). *Op. cit.* p.172.

46 Interviews with Interviewees A and B on 28th August 2008.

Greece and abroad in the implementation of its stated goals to focus on the impact of climate change on the human security of vulnerable population groups (children, women and persons fleeing their homes due to climate change) during this Chairmanship. More specifically, it collaborated with ELIAMEP to conduct a state of the art study on the impact of climate change on the human security of vulnerable groups in the developing world. Three in-depth policy papers were commissioned under the coordination of ELIAMEP: a paper on children was drawn up in collaboration with UNICEF; a paper on gender, climate change and human security was authored in collaboration with the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO); and a paper on persons fleeing their homes, was prepared in collaboration with the United Nations University. In addition, a policy paper on development cooperation and the impact of climate change on human security was drafted in association with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). These reports were presented and discussed in the course of a high-profile conference in Athens in June 2008. The conference was co-organised by the MFA and ELIAMEP, and attracted coverage from the media. This project constituted an unprecedented (in Greece) and rather successful effort to:

- Conduct a public debate and sensitise public opinion on climate change, human security and development;
- Promote collaboration between state authorities, civil society and international organisations, in an effort to bring together international research on the aforementioned issues; and
- Stress the interconnections between safety, development and the impact on more vulnerable groups (especially women, children and people displaced or forced to migrate because of climate change).

Since 2003, YDAS has taken a number of initiatives aimed at informing the public on development cooperation. Information packages, handbooks and albums with pictures on Greece's contribution to the MDGs or in humanitarian assistance have been published annually. In addition to conferences and dedicated workshops, concerts and participation in world wide events such as 'Walk the World' have also provided opportunities to distribute information on these issues to the wider public. Similarly, internships at YDAS for two to six month periods are offered to graduates of Greek universities.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, there still remains much ground to cover in terms of enhancing volunteerism and raising public awareness on issues of development cooperation. Some encouraging signs are noted and, as an illustration of the public sensitivity to humanitarian crises, there is frequent reference to the €20.36 million that was donated during a telemarathon in support of the Asia tsunami victims, which was the largest amount to be raised internationally in proportion to a country's population.⁴⁸

On the NGO side, there appears to be a consensus that in the first phases of developing Greece's ODA, and particularly in the period 1998–2004, even though the civil society community was in a burgeoning stage, there was a noteworthy margin within which the NGO community could participate in shaping policy and the direction of government planning. NGO representatives who were consulted during the research phase of this report considered that this was not the case at present.⁴⁹ The guidelines of foreign aid policy are currently defined almost exclusively by the government officials who have a pre-defined agenda and who are less inclusive in terms of involving the NGO community in the policy formulation phases.

In trying to understand the reasons for this shift from seemingly more to less participation of civil society in ODA planning, a simple factor could be the change in government that occurred in 2004. The Socialist PASOK party that lost the elections in 2004, had set up Greece's development policy in the period 1998–2004 and had indeed strongly encouraged and pulled civil society representatives into the process. The New Democracy government that has been in place since 2004 had a more distant relationship with much of the development NGO community, and this may have translated into a more distant or formal collaboration in ODA planning. Perhaps more importantly, however, the expertise that has been acquired by these civil society actors over the past decade has brought the Greek NGO community to a more mature phase, in which it feels more confident about being able to contribute to the ODA planning and to the policy debates on approaches to development cooperation

⁴⁷ Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hellenic International Development Cooperation Department (YDAS) (October 2007). *Op. cit.* p.29.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p.31.

⁴⁹ Interviews with SK and DK on 17th September 2008.

and peacebuilding. This could be translating into increased demands for more meaningful participation in the process on the part of Greek civil society. In this case, it may not only be a matter of whether there is more or less participation, but rather of the scope and *substance* of their participation.

Finally, another important challenge raised by NGOs in this sector is the need for civil society actors who want to be increasingly involved in ODA to improve their communication plans and be more transparent in their actions and the implementation of their projects. This will be necessary in order to make public opinion more sensitive towards the need for foreign assistance and to be able to increase pressure towards the government to increase their financial and political commitments to aid and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A few closing comments regarding the wider issue of ODA may be relevant here. ODA distributed by the EU and its Member States – either through their own projects or through international organisations such as the IMF or the World Bank – accounts for 56 percent of global ODA.⁵⁰ This is a very significant amount not just in financial terms, but more importantly, in terms of the impact it has on the recipient countries.

ODA affects or has the potential to affect domestic reforms across all sectors of the state, society, the economy and the wider political system of developing countries. Its policies range from education to health, SSR to judicial and legislative processes, to natural resource management, and may trickle down to the micro-economic level and even as far as family planning. This influence – actual or potential – must be exercised through transparent and accountable mechanisms and procedures. Accountability and justification for the way ODA is disbursed, its priorities and its objectives, is not just important for international organisations.⁵¹ It is equally important for national governments to be transparent and accountable to their citizens of the manner in which their ODA is allocated and spent. This requires more transparency in the design and tendering phases of ODA funds, but equally in the implementation of ODA projects and in the assessment of their impact and results. Transparency and accountability dimensions are not just about conducting due diligence. It has to do with core good governance principles. Accountability and transparency allow public oversight, and they encourage participation and greater public awareness. For their part, given the right and access to such information, European citizens need to be aware of the manners in which public funds are spent and of the priorities set by their government in overseas development policies and poverty reduction strategies. This constitutes part of what being an active citizen entails in an increasingly interconnected world.

Thus, the following recommendations are put forward.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EU POLICY-MAKERS

- Continue emphasising the need for Greek authorities to further operationalise their approach to peacebuilding.
 - Human security, gender equality, SSR and addressing the impact of climate change in developing countries, are all declared priorities on the part of the Greek authorities; they should now be encouraged to develop more tangible and concrete priorities in each of these spheres and fund projects specifically targeted at gender empowerment, DDR etc.
- Encourage the Greek authorities to maintain their high level of involvement in emergency humanitarian assistance, which appears to be a strength that Greece has and is keen to further develop.
 - At the same time, however, it is also necessary to encourage the Greek authorities to further expand their other ODA activities that fall outside the scope of humanitarian assistance, as these are necessary for peacebuilding.

50 'International Development: Tackling Poverty', Council of the European Union, accessed 26th September 2008, at http://www.consilium.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=1245&lang=EN.

51 C. Rodrigues (April 2006). *Promoting public accountability in Overseas Development Assistance: Harnessing the right to information*. Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, accessed 20th September 2008. Available at http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/ai/rti/articles/cald_conf_paper_rti_oda_may06.pdf.

- Encourage Greece to fulfill its OECD-DAC commitments by 2010.
 - This urgently requires a detailed plan on the part of the Greek authorities explaining how these additional financial resources will be raised and channeled into bilateral and multilateral aid programmes.
 - It also requires the activation of the evaluation service, in order to be able to assess proposals and then examine the impact of funded projects, and subsequently feed into improving the policy process.
- Continue supporting the development of the NGO sector in both Greece and the target countries.
 - EU funding has been crucial to the development of the civil society community in Greece. It has been necessary in terms of making financial resources available for NGOs, but also in terms of bringing in know-how, technical knowledge and expertise. It has permitted networks and collaborations between NGOs in the EU and the partner countries. This level of commitment on the part of the EU continues to remain necessary for these civil society organisations (CSOs) to be able to consolidate their activities further.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE GREEK AUTHORITIES

- Proactively publish biannual budget expenditure reports about ODA on the websites of the relevant ministries (and particularly the MFA and the Ministry of Economics and Finance).
 - This should include information about what sort of development projects are being financed, where, which partners are involved (CSOs, local partners, international organisations and the private sector) and what the expected outcomes are.
- Disseminate as widely as possible information about grants and calls for tenders and ODA initiatives.
 - This requires the further development of the website of YDAS, which should include all relevant documents, forms, application guidelines and information packages about tenders and grant availability.
 - Reports on ongoing projects or projects completed should also be made available online. Such public reports should be considered a requirement of the tender process.
 - Information about grants and calls for tender should also be published in national and regional newspapers and media organisations.
- Improve capacity both in the policy planning units of the MFA and in the field offices.
 - Personnel with actual expertise in development cooperation are needed (either experts with field experience need to be recruited or current staff must be trained on development, aid coordination, approaches to peacebuilding and crisis prevention mechanisms) both in the headquarters of YDAS, but also in the Greek embassies in developing countries or countries that may be considered fragile or vulnerable to crises or conflict.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the ODA communication strategy and initiatives aimed at raising public awareness on the EU and Greece's ODA strategies.
 - The Greek public must be made more aware of Greece's development policies and of the shift that has occurred from its being a recipient to being a donor of ODA.
 - The media is key in triggering public interest in these issues, so in addition to just using the media as an outlet for specific information (publication of calls and press releases), it could be an active partner in terms of raising public awareness, interest and involvement.
- The private sector should also be more actively engaged in Greece's ODA priorities.
 - Additional funds or co-financing can be sought from the private sector, particularly from some sectors of the economy that have international activities.
- Widen all phases of the ODA process (planning, funding, implementation and impact assessment) in order to bring in expertise and increase participation of relevant stakeholders.
 - The relevant units of the MFA should hold annual consultation meetings with academics (from the fields of development theory, peace studies, sociology, economics and security studies), NGOs and other interested parties (such as churches etc.) in the planning and formulation phases of the ODA budget, in order to obtain insight into different approaches to development, on how to address in-the-field constraints, and on how to improve monitoring and impact assessment (criteria, deliverables etc.).

- In addition to drawing from EU or international expertise on these issues, and in order to further build local capacity, training seminars for government officials – and particularly for YDAS staff – and NGOs would be useful.
- The Greek Parliament needs to take a more proactive role in defining the country's ODA.
 - More specifically, the Members of Parliament involved in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee should become more involved in the policy formulation phases and in the allocation of resources by clarifying which geographic areas, sectors and issues should be prioritised and by widening the public debate on ODA strategies and priorities.
- Urgently implement an interactive monitoring and evaluation system that will be able to assess the quality of proposals submitted and whether interim and long-term objectives are being met during the implementation phases, as well as an impact assessment system for when projects are completed.
 - In response to OECD-DAC recommendations, an independent Evaluation Office in YDAS has been planned since 2002, but it has still not been set up effectively. This is a necessary requirement not only for accountability reasons, but also to feed back into the policy formulation process.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS

- Greek NGOs interested in the field of ODA must seek ways to improve their skills in fundraising from diverse sources (private, public, EU and international).
 - This diversification is necessary, among other reasons, in order to avoid falling into relationships of dependence from particular donors.
- NGOs must also improve their skills in effectively drawing up and implementing projects overseas and, just as importantly, then being able to show and publicise the results and impact of projects.
 - This is essential in order to increase NGOs "capital" and confidence in the work they are able to accomplish, and thus attract further funding for future projects.
- NGOs should seek to further develop collaborations with NGOs from other countries, local NGOs, specialised agencies in development cooperation etc.
 - This will permit them to maximise synergies and bring together resources and expertise from different sectors; to learn and expand their own expertise through this interaction with other specialised actors in this field; and eventually, to also be able to pass on their expertise and know-how to other NGOs.
- NGOs must be more active in lobbying and pressuring the Greek government to increase their financial commitments to ODA and in suggesting and sensitivising policy-makers of pressing issues, new priorities and growing challenges faced in countries and regions requiring development assistance.
 - In this context, NGOs could use the insight that they have from their experience in the field (including early warning signs) to suggest areas or issues that should be prioritised, in order to avoid escalation of conflict etc.
- NGOs must become more involved in raising public awareness on ODA and peacebuilding priorities.
 - In addition to their own campaigns aimed at raising public awareness on poverty, development, environmental or humanitarian issues that need to be addressed, NGOs need to reach out more to the media and the press in order to sensitise them. The multiplier effect that journalists and media representatives can have is not trivial, rather it is necessary for a wider and more informed awareness among the Greek public of the country's obligations and responsibilities overseas.
- Greek NGOs should tap into the knowledge and expertise that exists across the EU in ODA and peacebuilding.
 - Training seminars for civil society representatives and government officials on development cooperation strategies or approaches to peacebuilding would be useful for the Greek NGO community. Funds are available and networks of experts in these areas (such as the Initiative for Peacebuilding) have been set up across the EU that can be used as resources.

- Greek NGOs should contribute to operationalising the concepts of human security and transitional justice, and to translate gender equality and human rights into tangible projects.
- In order to meaningfully contribute to gender equality in particular, NGOs that have information about the needs and priorities in the field should be creative in setting up projects that specifically target these gaps and needs. Similarly, the local understanding and knowledge that many NGOs have is invaluable in proposing projects aimed at addressing environmental concerns or the impact of climate change.

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