

POSITION PAPER

ORGANISATIONAL ANCHORING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

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WHAT IS ORGANISATIONAL ANCHORING?

Organizational anchoring is about ensuring that initiatives, projects, activities, etc. become an integral part of an organization's existing engagement. Therefore, organizational anchoring is very much about considering what activities your organization has and why, and whether these are aligned with the purpose of your organization? This also applies to your international engagement. What international activities do you have? What value do they add to our organization? And how do these help to develop and strengthen your organization? This position paper focuses on why anchoring is important for international engagement and how anchoring can be understood in an organization.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

DUF's member organizations are structured in various ways, and each organization has its own organizational structures and concepts. Some member organizations have an international committee that manages their international engagement. Others have it rooted in their local chapters and member boards, Finally, some use international consultants and their secretariat to ensure proper anchoring. No matter how you do it, the impor-

tant thing is to ensure that your international engagement is anchored in such a way that it supports your national engagement and adds value to your organization. Hence, it is important to examine how your international engagement is organized within your organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL ANCHORING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

In DUF, we greatly emphasize the anchoring of international engagements because we know from prior project groups that project anchoring and support increase the likelihood that the project succeeds and creates value for both the Danish organization and the partner organization.

The international engagement of an organization varies, and the type of activities and actions differ. Permanent activities such as study tours, delegations to international general assemblies and volunteer roles are often an integral and natural part of the organization's international work and image. At the same time, it is relevant to know why young volunteers are sent out and what the organization gets out of it. What value do young people take home and how does this link with existing national

»» CONCEPT CLARIFICATION:

- **Public support** - This is about the broad public support for and commitment to Denmark's international development cooperation. Here, the focus is often on communication and information.
- **Organizational anchoring** - is about ensuring that the international engagement becomes an integral part of the organization and that the activities an organization undertakes are well-considered and add value to the organization.
- **Project anchoring** - Ensuring that the specific project is anchored in the organization. Often, this means that the project is sustainably driven as it becomes a priority for the organization to have the project. This makes the project viable and allows it to continue in the organization regardless of which volunteers are involved in the project.

» EXAMPLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL ANCHORING:

Ung Mosaik, an umbrella organization for local Danish Pentecostal children and youth organizations, has developed a strategic framework that defines their international engagement, an action plan with six selected priorities and an annual cycle of work, which is supported by an international volunteer consultant. The six priorities:

- 1. Local chapter visits** (knowledge of international opportunities)
- 2. National working groups** (ownership and member engagement)
- 3. Study trips** (motivating members to participate in international activities)
- 4. Volunteer offer** (young people who commit themselves for five to six months with a local partner)
- 5. Camps and conferences** (making the international engagement visible)
- 6. Fundraising** (securing financial resources to support international engagement)

activities? For some organizations, international projects can be difficult to link to their other activities and make an integral part of the organization’s purpose. In DUF, we have seen this happen when the international work is not properly merged with the other activities of the organization, or when it is difficult to prioritize and support the organizational anchoring of the international engagement.

HOW TO ENSURE GOOD ORGANISATIONAL ANCHORING:

With the right tools and initiatives, you can have your international engagement support your national activities and strengthen your organization. You need to be aware of how your international engagement fits into your organization and of what value it brings to your organization’s purpose and work. Hence, it is relevant from the start of an international activity or project, to think about the long-term organizational anchoring of your international engagement.

Good organizational anchoring helps to secure support for a project and that learnings and knowledge from a project are used elsewhere in the organization. As an organization, it is useful to organize yourself so that you can easily anchor your international engagement. In this context, it is relevant to reflect on your own organization’s development potential and how your international engagement can support possible development processes and add value to your organization’s work.

GOOD SUPPORT ENSURE GOOD ANCHORING

Experience gained from DUF’s member organizations shows that good support for international engagement helps ensure good anchoring. This is illustrated with the tree below:



The roots of the tree (the secretariat and/or board of the organization) feed the trunk, (the international committee, local board, international coordinator, etc.) and the branches and leaves (the project activities in which the volunteers are engaged and which constitute the project’s objectives).

As the tree illustrates, to be successful with your international activities, good backing and support are needed in the organization. In a voluntary organization, it is often the board that decides, based on the articles of association, which activities and projects the organization will engage in. In this respect, it is relevant to find out how your international work is supported financially, managerially and organizationally.

Good anchoring of international activities helps ensure their sustainability. Good anchoring nourishes a project and allows it to grow.

Good examples of support from the organization:

- *International projects in DUF's international pool strive for good relations with their board and the rest of their organization:* This results in a clear direction for the international work and promotes synergy between the national and international work. The international work has value for a wide range of volunteers in the organization.
- *The organization has a good overview of which volunteers participate in international general assemblies and study tours, and why:* The focus is on applying the new knowledge in the organization and new competencies are put into play in other parts of the organization's work.
- *International engagement is a strategic priority for the organization, helping to retain and recruit volunteers to the organization.*
- *The organization ensures that projects do not rely on individuals and that they are strategically embedded in the organization's purpose and work.* This will reduce a vulnerability in the projects and help to lift the projects, independent of the time/resources of individuals.

HOW TO WORK WITH ANCHORING?

In order to work on anchoring the international engagement, it is relevant to know where the idea came from. In DUF, we see that the idea can come from several places. Via a focus group, we identified two specific groups from which a project idea can evolve:

1. The board, the organization's highest authority, decides that the organization should engage in international activities.
2. Volunteers or members of the organization get a good idea for a project with a partner in another country.

Whether the idea comes from above or from below, there are some questions you can ask yourself to help anchor the project.

If the idea comes from above, you might ask yourself:

- Are the members and volunteers of your organization interested in the project?
- Is it clear how a new partnership creates meaning in your organization and for the volunteers?

If the idea comes from below, you might ask:

- How can the project idea be supported by the rest of the organization?
- Do the project idea and a new international partnership fit into the organization's other activities?
- Is there managerial and administrative support for the project?

