

# EXAMINATION OF POWER PARTNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON BOTH ENDS

This is a short overview of the process, the survey and the outcomes



[READ THE FULL ANALYSIS HERE](#)

Both ENDS supports movements that are transforming power relations so that people everywhere can influence and share in the benefits of political and economic processes. To effectively create a sustainable, fair and inclusive world, we realise that it's crucial to analyse power – to examine who holds what kind of power and how they use it – and to work to recalibrate power as needed. We recognise that power – including its positive forms, such as the 'power with' and 'power to' bring about social change – is a crucial factor in the world around us, as well as in our own relationships, especially with partners.

## TIMELINE



Throughout the whole process translation was provided into the relevant languages.

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|-----------------|--|
| January 2023:   | Both ENDS informed partners about the start of the process and identification of partners interested to participate. |
| May 2023:       | From the positive reactions randomly selecting six partners to be a part of the Global Examination of Power.         |
| July 2023:      | The Global Survey is developed collaboratively.  |
| August 2023:    | Partners meet to discuss power and how power is seen in the partnership with Both ENDS (see page 5).                 |
| September 2023: | The survey was sent out in 5 languages to 150 partners and 82 completed surveys are received.                        |
| November 2023:  | Analysis of the Survey responses and Global Partners discuss Survey Results.   |
| December 2023:  | Stewardship team Both ENDS discusses survey results.   |
| February 2024:  | Joint Discussion between Partners and Both ENDS teams.   |
| March 2024:     | Results shared during the Both ENDS partner strategy meeting.  |
| September 2024: | Final report presented to Both ENDS and the partners.  |



## COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

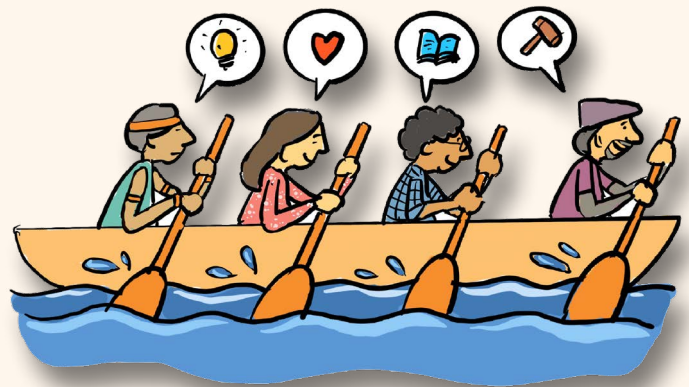
The survey also aimed at capturing partners' perceptions of equitable and inequitable partnership. Notions of power, equity, and trust mean different things to different people. The partners shared which components of equitable partnership would work with Both ENDS.

**Both ENDS** is committed to working with partners in relationships based on equality and trust, where we recognise each other's expertise, actively learn together and cooperate toward shared goals. Thankfully, there are signs of progress: the topic of 'shifting power' has risen higher on the agenda of the development cooperation and global philanthropy sectors. Appreciation of the need to move away from top-down decision-making, where resources and decision-making power lie in the hands of donors from the Global North, is slowly gaining traction.

**Both ENDS** has always strived to be an equitable partner, but our discussions about power prompted us to examine our own assumptions, particularly the assumption that channelling an increasing amount of funding to partners does not affect our relationships with them. It is within this context that we embarked on an 'Examination of Power' process in 2023. The main purpose of the process was to better understand how Both ENDS holds power and how partners experience equity and power in their relationship with Both ENDS, as well as to learn how we can better share power towards fair and equitable partnerships.

The process was led by a team of independent consultants and a randomly selected, diverse group of six willing partners from the Global South who co-designed the process and participated in multiple meetings to share their perspectives on power as it relates to Both ENDS and their relationship. Additional input came from a detailed anonymous survey, which was made available in 5 languages and completed by 82 partners. The results of the survey were analysed by the consultants and the six partners. The partners were subsequently joined by a team of four Both ENDS staff members to discuss the overall findings and recommendations.

1. Partners suggested that the partnership could have more openness for expressing ideas and decision making and better listening to each other. This way, Both ENDS can stand in solidarity with their partners and develop a common movement with respect for each other's knowledge and capacities.



2. Many responses in the survey touch on the need to expand joint advocacy activities with international development partners, media, private sector, other donors, and funders. Respondents also reported a need for more opportunities to network with regional partners toward strengthening advocacy efforts.
3. Respondents named an opportunity for more transparency around finances and making partners aware of why financial requirements are needed.

## OUTCOMES FROM THE SURVEY

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**80%** felt supported by Both ENDS. Respondents also stated that they could communicate directly, clearly, and openly.

**60%** felt that their partnership with Both ENDS is equitable and that Both ENDS uses its position well to give partners access to resources and donors.

**70%** stated that their contact person at Both ENDS shows understanding and flexibility.

**77%** mentioned that the partnership helped them grow their international network, 68% felt that it helped them gain direct financial resources, and 63% felt an increase in the impact of their advocacy.

**31%** would feel more equitable and empowering if Both ENDS helped organising more capacity building activities.



**29%** wanted Both ENDS to recommend them to other donors and foundations and desired coordinated movement building and coalition building with other partners in their country or region.

**28%** suggested that Both ENDS organize regular exchanges with global partners working on similar topics.



**A majority of partners describe Both ENDS as an international mission-aligned advocacy partner, many do not see Both ENDS only as a funder/donor.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

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Partners suggested recommendations for improvement on communication, movement building and collaboration, feedback mechanisms, sustainability support, reporting processes and transparency. The Examination of Power

process additionally supported partners to reflect internally. These recommendations and the results of the research have been discussed with partners and Both ENDS staff, leading towards the following conclusions:

- A. Sharing knowledge is essential for balancing power between Both ENDS global partners and Both ENDS staff.
- B. Streamline the relationship between Both ENDS staff and global partners on an institutional level and do not rely solely on individual or personal connections.

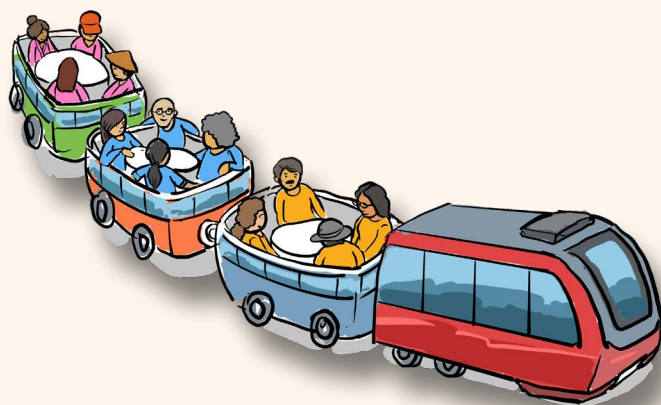


- C. Strengthen international linkages and learning to strengthening advocacy efforts among Both ENDS' community of partners.
- D. Improve transparency so partners have clarity on decision making, funding, etc. to partners about Both ENDS' organisational dynamics as a re-granter.
- E. Continue to respect the independence, ownership, autonomy, and institutionally driven work of Both ENDS partner organisations.
- F. Integrate findings of this Examination of Power process in the institutional development of Both ENDS and not just the strategy for the next few years.
- G. Improve communication by sharing the work of partners and with partners.
- H. Demonstrate flexibility based on the needs and priorities of partners.
- I. Consider sharing this report widely across the Both ENDS ecosystem (partners and donors).

- J. Focus on long-term partnerships, as well as jointly planning exit strategies from Both ENDS' financial support.
- K. Both ENDS has the power to influence other donors and peers to act differently and to act better and they should continue doing this role.
- L. There is a need for international advocacy.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

After facilitating and witnessing Both ENDS' Examination of Power process, the consulting team formulated four additional recommendations to complement those brought forward by the Both ENDS Staff and Global Partners Stewardship Team. Four additional recommendations from the consulting team:



1. Power does not operate in silos. It may be helpful to intentionally create space for participants in these respective processes to regularly come together and share learnings.



2. Power is Contextual: We must recognise that it takes time for people to be honest about power and to extract themselves from their historical positions of power.

3. **Movement-Building Lens:** This may prove useful to Both ENDS to better support its partners in growing and sustaining over time whilst integrating both needs for linkage and joint advocacy.

4. **Process design matters** when we try to discuss and transform power. Pay careful attention to the diversity of perspectives within the team's leading any such processes around power.



4. **Power to Influence agenda** – Both ENDS has a strong political agenda and have the power to influence agenda. They try to build a positive relationship and try to listen and be driven by what the partners need.



5. **Power to influence institutions** – Both ENDS has the power to influence global organisations they support to follow the principles and norms set out by them.

## BOTH ENDS AS HOLDER OF POWER

1. **Power to connect** – Both ENDS has the power to connect its Partner Organisations to the international network and open new opportunities for the partners.
2. **Power to Fund** – Both ENDS has financial resources to support and influence different thematic areas.
3. **Power to Administer and Question** – being a donor, Both ENDS administers contracts with Grantee Partners that Grantee Partners have to adhere to.

## NEXT STEPS

- Share the findings with the partners.
- **Include** relevant recommendations in our new 5 year institutional strategy.
- **Take up** recommendations in Both ENDS future work.
- **Continue** our open communication with partners.
- **Share** our experiences with other organisations and donors.

Both ENDS was able to conduct this self-examination thanks to the invaluable help of our partners and with support from the Dutch Postcode Lottery



## PLEASE SHARE!

Would you like to talk further with us about the research, our partnership, the recommendations or the follow-up? **Please contact your Both ENDS Staff member.** We would enjoy more talks about this topic and invite you to share.