

**African Union of the Blind  
(AFUB)**

**A review of its co-operation with  
Norwegian Association of the  
Blind and Partially Sighted  
(NABP)**

**June 2009**

Consultants:

Ole Kurt Ugland,  
Kristiansand, Norway  
Telephone: +47 38029116  
Mobile: +47 93847655  
E-mail: okugland@online.no  
Org. nr. 969 577 720

Basil Kandyomunda  
Kampala, Uganda  
Telephone: +256 712 588017  
E-mail: devopteam@utlonline.co.ug

Print: Edgar Høgføldt AS, 2009.

## **Preamble**

The report is the result of an external review of the operations of African Blind Union – hereafter referred to as AFUB – as per 2009. The review team consisted of Mr. Ole Kurt Ugland, a senior consultant of Kristiansand, Norway, (team leader) and Mr. Basil Kandyomunda, a senior consultant of Kampala, Uganda.

The main purposes of the evaluation were to assess whether the project has achieved its objectives or not, and how future funding may be secured when NABP ends its general support to AFUB’s administrative costs in 2009. The TOR for the evaluation is enclosed as appendix 1.

The team has based its report and recommendations on inputs and comments from a number of persons connected to AFUB in Africa and Norway. A number of recommendations are given in chapter 10 of the report.

Numerous contributors have given valuable information to the team. We have benefited greatly from the many discussions with these persons and our thinking, analysis and conclusions have been shaped through these interviews.

A number of abbreviations have been used. Some are familiar to everyone while others may need an explanation in order to recognise the organisation behind it. We have therefore included a list of all abbreviations in appendix 2.

Some of our interviewees may find that their information is not adequately reflected in the report. We apologise for that, but have had to make a ”holistic” assessment of all impressions, statements and responses that the team received during its discussions in Norway, Morocco, Malawi, Uganda and Kenya.

We appreciate greatly the support and facilitation given to us by all people we have met. We are of the opinion that the evaluation would not have been so extensive without that co-operation and encouragement. A list of people met is enclosed as annex 3.



## Contents

<b>PREAMBLE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.1 Evaluation methodology.....	7
1.2 Report navigation .....	8
<b>2 BLINDNESS IN AFRICA AND RESOURCES FOR PREVENTION.</b> .....	<b>10</b>
2.1 Prevalence of blindness .....	10
2.2 National and pan-African programs for prevention of blindness	11
2.3 Human development in member countries .....	11
<b>3 AFUB: A BRIEF REVIEW OF PREVIOUS REPORTS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1 AFUB in the 1999-review .....	14
3.2 The 2008 "Internal review" .....	15
<b>4 AFUB: OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE</b> .....	<b>17</b>
4.1 Objectives.....	17
4.2 Organisational structure – GA and the board. ....	18
4.3 Organisational structure – the Secretariat.....	21
4.4 Mini-secretariats.....	22
4.5 Comments on objectives and structure.....	22
4.6 Strategies and strategic plans .....	24
<b>5 AFUB: FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES. A SUMMARIZED VIEW OF ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>26</b>
5.1 AFUB's consolidated financial income.....	26
5.2 Activity analysis.....	27
5.3 HIV and AIDS Awareness and Training Project .....	29
5.4 Existing and potential projects for 2009-2011 .....	32
5.5 Contribution to AFUB overheads from projects .....	33
<b>6 AFUB AND ITS MEMBERS: COMMITMENTS AND ACTIVITIES</b> .....	<b>35</b>
6.1 WBU membership.....	36
6.2 Membership fee to AFUB .....	36
6.3 Membership profiles.....	36
6.4 Value addition from membership.....	37
<b>7 AFUB AND NABP</b> .....	<b>40</b>
7.1 NABP's support to AFUB.....	40
7.2 Activities under the NABP's support .....	42
<b>8 CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER PARTNERS</b> .....	<b>44</b>
<b>9 SUSTAINABILITY</b> .....	<b>46</b>
9.1 Alternative sustainability levels .....	47
<b>10. RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBLE LESSONS LEARNT.</b> .....	<b>49</b>

## **0 Executive summary**

The main purpose of the evaluation was to establish whether AFUB has met its objectives. It was carried out at a time (May 2009) when AFUB's main challenge was to find new co-operating partners to pay for its administrative expenses after NABP's support ends in 2009. Therefore, a major part of the evaluation deals with AFUB's future financial arrangements.

AFUB was established in 1987 and has during the following 22 years increased its membership base of national organisations of the blind to cover 50 of the 54 countries in Africa. About half of AFUB's national member organisations are established in countries with a low human development - as defined by UNDP. It is necessary to bear that in mind when assessing the results and the future of AFUB.

There is a membership fee of US\$ 100 per year. However, only 29 of the 50 members have paid the fee. Those who have not paid refer to a clause in the constitution where – for the poorer members - the fee may be replaced by a statement of loyalty. Non-payers, however, include national members that are relatively strong organisations, and members from where board members come.

The board has not enforced collection of unpaid fees. On the contrary, the 2009 board meeting decided to write off all arrears up to 2008 as a kind of amnesty for the defaulting countries. However, the same meeting seem not to have discussed means of motivating the perennial defaulting organisations to pay. The decision was referred to as highly questionable in relation to AFUB's future development.

The General Assembly meets every 4 years. It elects the board consisting of the President, the Vice-President and the General Secretary. Six Regional Representatives (RRs) and the Chairperson of the Women's Committee are elected separately. In addition, the Immediate Past President, the Honorary Treasurer and the Executive Director meet, but without voting rights.

Both the GA and the board meetings have tended to become meetings far beyond their natural sizes. Up to 25 persons have attended the board meetings. In order to carry out the obligations as board members, a travelling and a communication allowance has been paid, but there have been problems with documentation of how these allowances have been utilised. The full board meets once a year while “table officers” meet once more each year.

6 committees have been established to give advise to both the board and the Secretariat. These committees meet in connection with the board meetings.

The Secretariat is located in Nairobi. It has a project staff of 4 members and an administrative unit of 3 people.

In order to reach AFUB's goals, long-term (4 years) strategic plans are prepared. A review carried out in 1999 pointed to the fact that most plans were too optimistic, and were poorly rooted among its members. The 2009-2012 strategic plan was also developed with too much optimism on the income side of the proposed activities. Neither the GA, nor the Board or the Secretariat have shown sufficient respect for the unrealistic parts of the plan, and the strategic plan 2009-2012 is already by now without realism.

AFUB Secretariat has since 2006 implemented projects with a cash flow of between US\$ 500. – 700.000. The project income has covered all costs of the project staff and has contributed about US\$ 20.000 towards AFUB's overhead costs.

NABP and AFUB have had a nearly symbiotic relationship since 1987. This relationship was from NABP's side during the first 15 years basically governed from a blindness-political side that did put questions related to the operational results on hold.

The present agreement between AFUB and NABP terminates a 20-years cooperation with NORAD funding. According to NABP, NORAD cannot continue to support a project beyond the 20-year limit. The main question, however, in the AFUB-NABP relationship is how the phasing-out strategies have been communicated by NABP, and how these signals or statements have been understood by AFUB. Chapter 7 of the report gives a summary of both. Even if some NABP statements may give room for different interpretations, verbal and written statements from NABP have been sufficient clear on the fact that NABP cannot fund AFUB in the present form beyond 2009. AFUB's board seems to have interpreted those statements more flexible and has not given the issue sufficient priority. As per June 2009, AFUB is without funding contracts for 2010.

So far AFUB has to a large extent relied on international NGO-partners. The team has talked with representatives from VSO, Sight Savers, and DAB, and all of them voiced a positive impression of AFUB's work. AFUB's severest challenge is now to develop a close partnership with the pan-African and global organisations. African Union, with its many social programmes for

disabled, is a prime partner for AFUB. In terms of providing technical competence to the blindness prevention programme WHO is a more than relevant partner, and the various regional development programmes in Africa have all sub-programmes for social inclusion of disabled people. The review team is of the opinion that AFUB has not related to these partners in a satisfactory way and AFUB should have been far more visible as an implementing partner for pan-African organisations. AFUB's strongest asset in its negotiations with these organisations is its network of 50 national member organisations.

The potential co-operation with AU's various bodies makes it necessary to discuss whether AFUB's secretariat should be moved to Addis Ababa. AFUB may be in a better position there to influence AU's policies on social inclusion and human rights for blind people, and act as the main advocate for blind peoples' rights in AU programmes.

If AFUB's members want, or need, a secretariat for Africa's blind, someone will have to pay for the secretarial expenses. Fundraising will therefore in the future be a major activity in order to make AFUB sustainable. The report discusses three areas of future funding. If necessary funding is not found, alternative structures need to be discussed. These include both a General Secretary structure, and establishing mini-secretariats based along regional and linguistic lines.

Chapter 10 contains 25 recommendations for further discussion. Reference is made to pages 49-54.

## **1 Introduction**

AFUB was established in 1987 and has during the following 22 years increased its membership base of national organisations of the blind to cover 50 of the 54 countries in Africa<sup>1</sup>.

The review was carried out at a time when AFUB's main challenge is to find new co-operating partners to pay for its administrative expenses after NABP's support ends in 2009. Therefore, a major part of the evaluation deals with AFUB's future financial arrangements.

The TOR requests analyses to be made of the relation between AFUB and its members. However, the budget for the review has only been sufficient for interviews with a few of AFUB's member organisations. Although this is a weakness the team does not believe it has influenced its conclusions and recommendations in a biased direction.

### **1.1 Evaluation methodology**

For the evaluation a number of approaches were used. The evaluation team met during its visit to Kenya 6<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009 both staff at AFUB's headquarters as well as key persons from AFUB's co-operating partners. The list of people met includes key persons from VSO, Sight Savers International and KUB. (See appendix 3).

Prior to the meetings in Nairobi, team members met with the president of AFUB, a representative for the Women's committee in Morocco, members of the Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB) and members of the Uganda National Union of the Blind (UNAB). Members of the team had, both prior to the meetings in Nairobi and after returning from Africa, meetings with staff members of NABP in Oslo.

A starting point for the evaluation has been the comments and recommendations made in the 1999-evaluation and in the 2008 internal review of AFUB. The team has studied documents of policy guidelines, minutes of GA, board and committee meetings, project plans, reports and relevant correspondence between AFUB and its partners.

---

<sup>1</sup> The team refers to AU's list of 53 member countries, and added Morocco (not an AU member) to reach the total of 54 countries.

## **1.2 Report navigation**

The structure of the report follows the terms of reference for the evaluation, although with some small changes in sequence. The chapters respond to the TOR in the following manner:

### **Chapter 2: Blindness in Africa and resources for prevention**

The chapter gives a brief review of prevalence of blindness in African countries. It also gives a summary of the inadequate resources there are to fight poverty in general and blindness in particular.

### **Chapter 3: AFUB: A brief review of previous reports.**

Two important reports are commented on. The evaluation gives a quick review of the 1999-evaluation of AFUB, what was recommended, and what challenges AFUB faced. It also refers to and comments on the internal review that was carried out by AFUB in 2008.

### **Chapter 4: AFUB: Objectives and structure.**

This chapter comments and assesses the overall goals and objectives of AFUB. It describes the organisational structure, the GA, the Board, the Committees, Regional structure and the Secretariat. It also comments on the process and follow-up of strategic policy documents.

### **Chapter 5: AFUB: Financial and human resources. A summary of activities.**

This chapter gives first an overview of AFUB's consolidated income and resources. It provides a summary of activities, assesses potential projects and their contribution to AFUB's overheads.

### **Chapter 6: AFUB and its members.**

Several aspects are commented on including capacity building in member organisations. The chapter provides a list of paying members and an assessment of organisational strength.

### **Chapter 7: AFUB and NABP**

This chapter describes NABP's relations to AFUB and the process around NABP's decision to terminate its funding of AFUB's administrative structure including GA and board meetings. It comments on how the decision to "reschedule" its general support to AFUB's budget has been presented and how AFUB's various representatives have understood and acted on NABP's decision.

Chapter 8: Co-operation with other partners.

AFUB co-operate with several international NGOs in its work. The chapter assesses the modality and contents of these partnerships and the necessity to establish lasting relations with AU and other pan-African organisations.

Chapter 9: Sustainability

AFUB has a sustainability challenge both in terms of financial support and in terms of activities that are necessary and beneficial to its member organisations. The chapter discusses some alternatives of both funding and alternative models of organising AFUB if financial support should not be sufficient to maintain the present Secretariat.

Chapter 10: Findings, summary and recommendations.

A total of 25 recommendations are listed in chapter 10.

## 2 Blindness in Africa and resources for prevention.

AFUB works with a complex membership base. About half of AFUB's national member organisations are established in countries with a low human development - as defined by UNDP - with scarce financial and human resources and with poor infrastructure. Nature adds its own problems to the list of difficulties AFUB's members face. Deserts cover large areas both in the north and south. Drought, lack of clean water and poor sanitation facilities increases eye diseases. It is important and necessary to take this into consideration when input, efficiency and results of AFUB and its members are compared and commented on.

### 2.1 Prevalence of blindness

WHO conducted in 2002 a study of global blindness? The best estimate indicates that there are 37 million blind people in the world with another 124 million with low vision<sup>2</sup>. Africa has considerably higher prevalence of blindness and low vision than the rest of the world. The following table shows some basic figures as they are referred to in the 2002 WHO-study<sup>3</sup>:

**Table 1. Blindness prevalence globally and in Africa.**

Area	Blindness		Low vision	
	Number of people (in million)	Prevalence	Number of people (in million)	Prevalence
<b>Africa</b> <sup>3</sup>	7,3	1%	21.3	3%
<b>World</b>	37.0	0.57%	124.0	2%

A look at the age distribution of blind people gives even a more different picture for Africa.

**Table 2. Blindness prevalence in age groups**

Area	Age groups			
	Age < 15	Age 15-49	Age >59	Total prevalence
<b>Africa</b> <sup>3</sup>	0,12%	0,2%	9.0%	1.0%
<b>World</b>				0.57%

<sup>2</sup> These figures are lower than previous estimates of 45 million blind and 135 million with low vision.

<sup>3</sup> Ref. WHO-publication: "Global Data on Visual Impairment in the year 2002." WHO sampled 2 regions consisting of a total of 19 countries

Of the world's 37 million blind people, 82% are more than 50 years of age. Even if blindness predominantly is an old-age related problem, there are about 400.000 blind youths (less than 15 years old), and more than 700.000 blind people in working age in Africa. Preventing blindness – and supporting every program to cure it – are therefore important activities for the benefit of people of all ages over the whole continent.

## **2.2 National and pan-African programs for prevention of blindness**

African prevalence of blindness is nearly twice the global level. WHO and the African Union with its many sub-organisations have a strong focus on how to prevent blindness. The African Decade of Disabled Persons was recently extended for another decade (2009 – 2019). AFUB has an observer status in one of the AU sub-committees, and AFUB is mentioned in several of AU's documents.

It is beyond the objective of this review to list all private and public entities that are potential co-operating partners to AFUB, but we believe the list is quite extensive. It does not mean that there is “easy money” in this list, but for AFUB as a pan-African organisation with 50 national member organisations the network is of great value both professionally and for its potential funding.

## **2.3 Human development in member countries**

African Union lists 53 countries<sup>4</sup> as member states. 49 of these (+ Morocco) have national organisations of the blind that are member of AFUB, and 4 countries have 2 organisations.

Many of these countries are among the poorest countries in the world, and have consequently less human and financial resources to put up in its fight to reduce blindness. The UNDP Human Development Report for 2007/2008 provides detailed information of 51 African countries<sup>5</sup>. The following table is a good illustration of the state of human development in the AFUB member countries: (All figures are taken from the UNDP Human Development Index 2007/2008).

---

<sup>4</sup> The total number of countries in Africa is disputed. The actual number is 54 if Morocco is included, but Morocco decided to withdraw from AU after AU accepted Western Sahara as a member country.

<sup>5</sup> Somalia and Liberia are not included in the UNDP list.

HDI rank	Country	Population 2005 (mill)	GDP 2005 PPP in US\$	Life expectancy at birth	Adult literacy (% of pop.)
<b>High development countries</b>					
50	Seychellene	0,1	16.106	72	92
56	Libya	5.9	10.325	73	84
65	Mauritius	1.2	12.715	72	84
<b>Medium development countries</b>					
91	Tunisia	10.1	8.371	73	74
102	Cape Verde	0.5	5.803	71	81
104	Algeria	32.9	7.062	71	70
112	Egypt	72.8	4.337	71	71
119	Gabon	1,3	6.954	56	84
121	South Africa	47.9	11.110	51	82
123	Sao Tomé and Princ.	0.2	2.178	65	85
124	Botswana	1.8	12.378	48	81
125	Namibia	2.0	7.586	51	85
126	Morocco	30.5	4.555	70	52
127	Equatorial Guinea	0.5	7.874	50	87
134	Comoros	0.8	1.993	64	--
135	Ghana	22.5	2.480	59	57
137	Mauritania	3.0	2.234	63	51
138	Lesotho	2.0	3.335	42	82
139	Congo	3.6	1.262	54	85
141	Swaziland	1.1	4.824	41	80
143	Madagascar	18.6	923	58	71
144	Cameron	17.8	2.299	50	68
147	Sudan	36.9	2.083	57	61
148	Kenya	35.6	1.240	52	74
149	Djibouti	0.8	2.178	54	--
151	Zimbabwe	13.1	2.038	41	89
152	Togo	6.2	1.506	58	53
154	Uganda	28.9	1.454	50	67
155	Gambia	1.6	1.921	58	--
<b>Low human development</b>					
156	Senegal	11.8	1.792	62	39
157	Eritrea	4.5	1.109	56	--
158	Nigeria	141.4	1.128	46	69
159	Tanzania	38.5	744	51	69
160	Guinea	9.0	2.316	55	29
161	Rwanda	9.2	1.206	45	65
162	Angola	16.1	2.335	41	67
163	Benin	8.5	1.141	55	34
164	Malawi	13.2	667	46	64
165	Zambia	11.5	1.023	40	68
166	Côte d'Ivoire	18.6	1.648	47	49
167	Burundi	7.9	699	48	59

*The African Union of the Blind (AFUB)*

---

168	Congo DRC	58.7	714	46	67
169	Ethiopia	79.0	1.055	52	36
170	Chad	10.1	1.427	50	25
171	Central African Rep.	4.2	1.224	44	48
172	Mozambique	20.5	1.242	42	38
173	Mali	11.6	1.033	53	24
174	Niger	13.3	781	55	28
175	Guinea Bissau	1.6	827	46	--
176	Burkina Faso	13.9	1.213	51	24
177	Sierra Leone	5.6	806	41	34

Of the 51 African countries in the list only 3 are among countries with a high HDI, while 26 are in the medium bracket. The rest – 22 countries – are classified as countries with “Low human development”. It is worth to note that the list of “low” HD-countries holds only African names.

### 3 AFUB: A brief review of previous reports

Several studies and assessments of AFUB's work have been carried out during its 22 years of existence. A major evaluation was carried out for NABP in 1999. Then, in 2008 a team consisting some of AFUB's board members, staff and representatives of international partners prepared an internal evaluation report. The main conclusions of the two reports are:

#### 3.1 AFUB in the 1999-review

The 1999-review summed up its main findings in the following way:

- *“Even after 12 years of operation AFUB has still a long way to go in being institutionalised with a secretariat with sufficient capacity to undertake core activities. To date AFUB has been guided by a too ambitious Action Plan and spread the limited resources thinly among numerous activities. The activities have accordingly generated limited impact and outreach.”*

And further:

*“Continued support to AFUB is justified if it can create public awareness and through this facilitate the mobilisation of technical and financial resources to members. This means mobilising the international community ... .. and influencing national Governments and general public on the specific challenges facing the blind in Africa.*

The main recommendations of the review focused on the following activities:

- *Consolidate and develop a more focused program of action*
  - \*Develop plans within the logical framework system with clearly defined outputs*
- *Member organisation monitoring*
  - \*Create a membership “contract” stating AFUB’s obligations towards the members.*
  - \*Create a tool for follow up of individual members*
- *Program monitoring*
  - \*AFUB needs to develop capacity and procedures for project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation.*
- *Budget and finance for AFUB*

*\*AFUB need an activity based budgeting and accounting system.*

- *AFUB capacity building*

*\* AFUB need capacity building in human rights, program coordination and accountancy/administration.*

*\* AFUB board should maintain its role as a decision-making and advisory body – not be involved in execution.*

It took, unfortunately, a few years before AFUB started to react to the recommendations of the evaluation team. In 2005 a new management team was established and administrative routines are now in better shape than in 1999. The 1999-comments with regards to board activities, monitoring and result orientation, and communication between AFUB and its members are, however, still open for improvements.

### **3.2 The 2008 "Internal review"**

An internal review of AFUB's NABP-funded activities was carried out in the summer of 2008. The team included members from NABP, DAB and AFUB.

The purpose of the review was to:

- a) Establish the extent to which AFUB has lived up to its mission
- b) Review the roles and reporting mechanisms
- c) Analyse the relevance and impacts of the allowances to board members
- d) Examine the AFUB-NABP partnership (including its support to AFUB)
- e) Document best practices of AFUB/NABP funded interventions
- f) Draw conclusions and recommend measures to guide the future partnership.

The review team stated that AFUB has made a number of achievements. The main results have been to facilitate and establish 54 member organisations in 50 African countries. Further, AFUB has initiated and implemented programmes in sports, education, organisational capacity building, and HIV/AIDS, women and youth empowerment. Communication between and among members has improved, and especially the women and youth programmes were noted to be developing well. The financial system has been greatly improved since 2005.

The team also noted several shortcomings. Communication and areas of responsibilities between the board and the secretariat was at times unclear and less fruitful than expected. Information from the secretariat to the board and the members remained undistributed, and *“feedback from the Board of Officers was observed to be inadequate while the membership hardly communicates back, not even by way of acknowledging receipt of the shared information”*. The issues of whether communication and travel allowances – around US\$ 45.000 per year – produced any significant result were mainly negative in their conclusions.

The report stated that NABP’s support *“cannot be over-emphasised; yet it is also crucial for the two parties to think of new ways and means to further work together”*. The report concludes also that: *NABP and AFUB need to conduct a series of sessions between 2008 and 2009 to figure out the nature of new partnership when the current contract expires”*. The report proposes a specific way of covering the overheads of the Secretariat: *“it is recommended that AFUB considers basket funding to deal with the problem of overheads”*.

The team also pointed to the fact that AFUB’s activity and narrative reports fall short of being informative with regard to project results and outcome. The language divide (English, French, Portuguese and Arabic) is also a challenge for AFUB. The question of establishing mini-secretariats was discussed as a means to strengthen the regional representatives. The financial benefits of being an officer may also have led to long sitting periods with little new “blood” coming into the various institutional bodies of AFUB and its members.

The main findings were as follows:

- *AFUB needs NABP support now more than ever before.*
- *While NABP seems to favour a shift in their support from general overheads to programme expenses, there is a need for AFUB to find new funding partners to cover general overheads.*
- *Gender mainstreaming is still of concern.*
- *Information activities must be strengthened. Mini regional secretariats could be a solution.*
- *Working relations between board and staff is weak*

These comments and observations represented valuable inputs for the 2009-evaluation team.

## **4 AFUB: Objectives and structure**

AFUB has since the start in 1987 been through more than the usual ups-and-downs of any organisation. The present evaluation, however, deals only with the past 5-6 years, and most comments and recommendations are based on what the organisation has achieved since the new management took over in 2005, and what challenges it now has.

Previous reports comment on both personal and organisational conflicts in AFUB. Some of these may be difficult to solve. Four official national languages<sup>6</sup> are spoken among its 50 members, and inter-African infrastructure is both expensive and inconvenient (several delegates to the GA held in Casablanca in November 2008 were flown via Paris). The level of education and access to Internet services vary considerably among AFUB's members.

The Secretariat is located in Nairobi while members of the Board and the committees are scattered throughout the whole continent. For that reason the full board has so far only met once a year, while "table officers" have met once more not necessarily in Nairobi. Regional representatives have been elected to bridge the communication gaps, but the internal 2008-review raises several questions as to the added value of having Regional Representatives.

The following gives a brief view of AFUB's objectives and structure.

### **4.1 Objectives**

AFUB's objectives (the constitution calls it "Purposes and functions) are described in Article II of the revised constitution of October 2000. The 4 "Purposes" and 8 "Functions" describes an organisation that shall actively support programmes to prevent blindness, promote social integration and the general well-being of blind and visually impaired people, and create a forum for exchange of knowledge in the field of blindness between member countries.

One of the main functions of AFUB shall be to develop and strengthen national associations of the blind. As per end 2008 AFUB had 54 members from 50 African countries in its membership list.

---

<sup>6</sup> English, French, Portuguese and Arabic.

The board adopted a set of by-laws in October 2001. The purpose of the by-laws was to explain, facilitate and fill the gaps that the 2001 constitution might have left open.

Of interest for the present evaluation is the section on membership fees. In addition to describing 5 different membership categories, the by-laws say the following of national members: *“The annual membership fee shall currently be the equivalent of US\$ 100 for each national member that is able to pay; however, all are expected to annually send their declaration of loyalty expressing their commitment to AFUB’s Constitution and activities”*. Although there seems to be a common feeling that every one of the 50 members can afford to pay US\$ 100, still nearly half of them stick to the alternative to only express their loyalty to AFUB without paying any fee. The alternative to not pay the fee is clearly stated in the by-laws, but that is on the condition that the member is **not able to pay**. We refer to para 6.2 page 36 where further comments to the established practice are made.

## **4.2 Organisational structure – GA and the board.**

50 member countries are represented at the General Assembly.

It meets every 4 years. The GA elects a President, a Vice-President and the General Secretary. Six Regional Representatives (RRs) and the Chairperson of the Women’s Committee are elected separately. The structure is:

### **General Assembly**

50 member organisations send their representatives to the AFUB-GA

### **AFUB Board**

President, Vice-President and General Secretary  
Chairperson Women’s Committee  
6 Regional Representatives  
Immediate Past President  
Honorary Treasurer

### **Secretariat**

Executive Director

### **Project staff**

4 persons

### **Administrative staff**

3 persons

For the period 2005-2008 nearly 40% of AFUB's expenses were used to cover board and GA expenses. The top-heavy (although democratically elected) bodies of AFUB seem to be more political than necessary and quite expensive compared to the outcome of their activities.

#### **4.2.1 General Assembly**

Organising the GA has been a major activity for AFUB even if it takes place only once every 4 years. Each member is – according to the constitution – allowed to send 2 representatives. Since funds seem to have been readily available, every member has filled the quota, and the GA has in effect tended to be a mass meeting. For the 2008-GA AFUB paid for a total of 125 air tickets to Casablanca – some even going via Paris. The travelling costs exceeded the allocation in the 2008-budget and were finally covered by reducing the budget for competence building program.

If a general funding is not available for future GAs, national members must find their own ways of funding travel costs. There are several problems related to this as the small nations – or weaker organisations - may have the same access to potential external funding as the larger and richer nations. Networking and capacity building are core elements of the GA, and every member benefits from having its representative there.

But the GA is also vested with a long list of responsibilities. It shall elect the Board of Officers, shall *“consider the financial report for the last four year period submitted by the Honorary Treasurer, and adopt a plan of action for the next four years”*. As such it is important that all members have a realistic possibility to participate.

#### **4.2.2 General Secretary**

The General Secretary seems to have been entrusted with fewer tasks than normal. The responsibilities of the GS are described in the by-laws but the Secretariat carries out most of the practical responsibilities and functions that the GS should do. As long as there is a Secretariat the function as GS does not deviate very much from the other board members responsibilities.

#### **4.2.3 The Board**

The Board consists – according to the revised constitution of October 2000 - of 10 members. The Immediate Past President is also meeting although the constitution does not include him/her. The Honorary Treasurer and the Ex-

ecutive Director also meet but are without voting rights. The full board meets once a year, while “table officers” (the 3 members elected by the GA) have had one more meeting during the year.

Board meetings tend to be more crowded than the mentioned 10-12 members. In the 2007-meeting in Dar-es-Salaam 24 people were present (with further 2 apologies), in 2008: 20 people were present with 2 absent, and in the Cairo meeting in 2009 15 people were present (with all donor representatives being absent). The tendency this practise may have to convert difficult board deliberations into lofty policy statements is clearly present also in AFUB.

Board members have been remunerated by a travel allowance and a communication allowance under the budget of the Secretariat. Minutes from board meetings show that the allowances have not functioned as anticipated. By 2006 an amount of US\$ 13.000 had not been accounted for. Four resolutions were adopted to rectify the situation, and in order to underline the severity of this misuse of funds, NABP deducted a similar amount from its 2006 budget for AFUB.

#### **4.2.4 Standing committees**

The board has established several standing committees. Most of these committees do not have a budget, and meetings are held once a year at the same time as the board meeting. Committee members are mostly also members of the board.

The following committees are established:

##### **Women’s Committee**

Minutes from the 2008-meeting give an impression of an active committee with focus on finance and the necessity to produce a proper and relevant newsletter. It states that it has been difficult to receive articles from the readers of its magazine.

##### **Youth Committee**

Recently established but works well in those areas where it has been established.

##### **Finance and Fundraising Committee**

The committee consists of 9 members. It deals mostly with budgets and actual expense control. In terms of fundraising, activities are (virtually) non-existent.

NABP did already in 2006 give notice to the committee that NABP would not be able to increase its support to fund any additional activities of AFUB. No visible action was taken.

The meeting in March 2009 discussed the financial situation in light of NABP's "input letter" to the Board. The committee listed four potential sources for funding of AFUB's administrative costs, and left it to the ED to make contact with these organisations. No follow-up meeting was scheduled.

#### **Education, rehabilitation and human rights committee**

The committee was formed at the March 2009 board meeting, and had its first meeting then. A list of 8 duties was agreed upon. The committee has not had much time to follow up this list.

#### **Solidarity Trust Fund Committee**

The committee seems to have been active in terms of project funds. The minutes from the 2008-meeting in Pretoria deal with a number of projects and comments are made in both positive and negative ways.

At the last committee meeting, the balance available for funding new projects was over US\$ 50.000.

#### **4.2.5 Regional representatives**

The 6 regional representatives have been elected to improve the link between the board/secretariat and the members in the region. (All RRs are Board members). A vice-RR was also appointed for each region.

The internal review discussed the practice and results of the RR-level and concluded that it has not turned out as expected. The RRs are regular members of the board but do not attend the Table Officers' meetings. Up to 2008 RRs received an allowance to cover travel and communication. The arrangement has now been cancelled.

#### **4.3 Organisational structure – the Secretariat**

AFUB is an advocate and lobbyist for human rights and social inclusion for blind people in Africa. It was founded by "Resolution CM/Res.944" of the OAS and has an observer status in AU. The Secretariat is the executing part of AFUB.

At the moment there are 7 staff at the Secretariat; 3 administrative staff including the ED and 4 project staff including the accountant.

#### **4.3.1 Project Staff**

4 of AFUB's staff are classified as "Project Co-ordinators". This number includes the co-ordinators for Gender, Youth Development, the HIV/AIDS project, and the accountant. The projects they administer cover salaries, travel expenses and other direct project costs. The AFUB budget does not provide any funding for project staff.

#### **4.3.2 Secretariat staff**

Only three persons are paid for under the NABP funding: the Executive Director, the bilingual secretary and the driver. It should be noted that travelling expenses and other direct costs that the secretariat staff incur in connection with project work are covered under the projects budget.

#### **4.3.3 Others**

The ICEVI-project is implemented through AFUB, but the coordinator is not an AFUB-staff. The project contributes up to US\$ 10.000 per annum for administrative costs incurred by AFUB.

### **4.4 Mini-secretariats**

The 2008 internal review brought up the question of establishing mini-secretariats. The rationale for this was that such resource centres "*were better placed to tap into resources at their levels*" and could better respond to the demands from the regions. The issue does not seem to have been followed up in any of the 2008/2009 board meetings.

With the funding challenges in mind, establishing mini-secretariats may not have the highest priority. We refer to our comments in connection with recommendation 9 in chapter 10.

### **4.5 Comments on objectives and structure**

Para 4.1 – 4.4 is a description of the constitutional functions and structures of AFUB. There is no doubt that AFUB has demonstrated a strong initiative when it comes to bringing all national organisations of the blind under one wing. The political activities, however, – the objectives to "influence social and human rights policies" in the numerous pan-African organisations have

been weaker, and too little has been done in terms of advocacy and lobbying in these political structures.

The fact that NABP-funds have been available “in blanco” for two representatives from each member to the GA-meetings may have led to a lower degree of involvement than expected of some of the delegates. We believe AFUB may have difficulties to fund the large number of delegates to the next GA. It is a task for the President to prepare the national member organisations for that.

Since few delegates come from the administrative side of the member organisations, decisions and information from the GA may never have trickled down through the organisation, and implementation of decisions were delayed - or did never happen.

The GS-position is unnecessary as long as AFUB has a secretariat. If the secretariat is shut down because of insufficient funding, the GS must take over the constitutional activities of AFUB that the ED today fills.

The division of responsibilities between the board and the secretariat is unclear and represents a reciprocal reason for misconceptions and conflicts. One reason may be that the board has only had two meetings a year and the form these meetings have had may not have had the sharpest focus on difficult issues. Funding of the board’s activities will in the future not be as easy as in the past, but if the board shall have any realistic opportunity to fulfil its mission as a policy maker it must have the necessary resources to do so. Although it is unfair to include all board members in one category, board members tend to distance themselves too much from the implementation of board’s decisions and from the daily operations of AFUB.

The Immediate Past President meets in board meetings. We cannot see the rationale for that and suggest to terminate this practice.

The RR-level has not functioned as neither planned nor intended. A major criterion for selecting an RR must be that he or she has the full backing from his/her own national organisation, and are able to make use of the technical resources of the national organisation. At the moment there is no funding from the Secretariat for the RR, and it may be a long time until funds are available. The RR system should therefore be ended and AFUB should instead challenge the strong organisations – the “lighthouses” in the regions to take a responsibility to help the weaker members without being remunerated for that work.

For comments to the issue of mini-secretariats reference is made to chapter 10, recommendation 9.

#### **4.6 Strategies and strategic plans**

In order to reach AFUB's goals, long-term (4 years) strategic plans are prepared. The 1999-review pointed to the fact that most plans were too optimistic, and were poorly rooted among its members. The 2008 internal review had at the time of writing the proposed 2009-2012 strategic plan at hand, but did not comment on the realism of it.

There is no sign that even sketches of a baseline study were prepared for the plan. At the time of preparing the plan NABP had already indicated that it would terminate (the word "reschedule" was also used and this may have led people to think that some funding for administration would continue) the funding of the AFUB secretariat, and up to \$200.000 worth of annual revenues could be lost for AFUB. In spite of this AFUB prepared a plan to spend \$4.9 mill over the next 4 years, of which \$ 1.4 was at hand – including continued support from NABP.

The 2009-2012 strategic plan is a "vision" - with few elements of realism. It is dated "March 2008", and is utterly unrealistic in relation to available and committed financial resources. An E-mail from NABP the day after it was sent to the Board and partners (21<sup>st</sup> February 2008) questions the income side of the plan, as NABP would "*not be able to fund NABP in the same way as it had done in the past*". By the time the plan was circulated, it was clear that it was built on incorrect income assessments.

The main problem, however, is that the plan has been passed in the GA-meeting, in a Board meeting, and in the finance committee without concern of its practicality. It ought to have been labelled "Unrealistic", or sent back to the Secretariat for a realistic revision. Strong warning voices from donors were not listened to. One year later the plan is still formally alive, but nothing has happened to its implementation. The relaxed attitude the GA and board have shown gives an uncomfortable feeling of how uncommitted the governing bodies follow up its decisions. As the gap between vision and reality is so gross, a few comments are necessary:

- 1) AFUB's institutional capacity building plans for the period 2009-2012 require a total of US\$ 2.3 million. This includes a new office building of US\$ 0.8 million, and support to the decentralised AFUB

work (incl. allowances and expenses for board and GA-meetings) of US\$ 0.9 million. A further 0.5 million is planned for national and international advocacy activity, and US\$ 0.6 million for a research and ITC.

- 2) Support to strengthen member organisations add up to US\$ 1.3 million, and support to access education, Braille and low vision services another US\$ 0.3 million.
- 3) Available funds are stated to be US\$ 1.13 million. It is not clear how this amount is calculated, but we assume that it includes US\$ 0.4 million in project agreements and around US\$ 0.7 million from NABP over the 4-year period. US\$ 3.8 million must come from other sources without the strategic plan mentioning from what potential sources this may come.

The board must have discussed the strategic plan in its 2008 meeting in Pretoria, and the only reference and comments to the plan among its 19 decisions are found in decision number 13 where the board recommend that the secretariat develop a short version of it. No comments were made to the plan as such. The GA-meeting in November 2008 adopted the plan without any changes. The short board meeting in Casablanca (November 2008) did not discuss the plan. The Cairo meeting (March 2009) also adopted the plan but did not discuss funding of it.

The strategic plan for 2009-2012 has been on the table for more than a year. Under the present, uncertain financial situation, the GA, the board and the Secretariat should by now have made clear decisions to revise the plan to a realistic level.

## 5 AFUB: Financial and human resources. A summarized view of activities

AFUB has several cooperating partners. The agreement with NABP provides the financial resources to cover AFUB's administrative overheads and a limited number of training activities. An assessment of AFUB's total funding is outside the scope of this evaluation, but it is important to get a picture of AFUB's consolidated financial status in order to assess what alternatives there are to cover its overheads.

AFUB has been wise to create a reserve fund. As per today the balance is about US\$ 55.000, but the by-laws for it says that it cannot be used until it reaches US\$ 100.000. The fund was created by donations given by individuals. It is now increased annually with the membership fees and with any donations AFUB receives.

AFUB does not pay any rent for its office space as the building was built for KUB with financial support from NABP and with a clause that AFUB should have free office space for 30 years.

### 5.1 AFUB's consolidated financial income

AFUB's partners have since 2005 financed the following projects: (All figures in 1000 US\$)

**Fig 3. AFUB's total income 2005-2009 and projected 2009-2010**

	<b>Programme</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009 P</b>	<b>2010 P</b>
1	Admin.	NABP	198	216	281	160	0
	Projects	NABP					?
2	Women	SRF		42	41	43	40
3	Women	DAB	29	29	15		
4	KDDP			75	91	75	90
5	AVIYEP			85	93		
6	HIV/AIDS		113	106		180	187
7	Human rights		75	77			
8	Civil educ.	Kenya	87	87			
9	Voter educ.	Kenya			35		
10	Response	Kenya			24		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>502</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>317</b>

## **5.2 Activity analysis**

Since inception AFUB has undertaken and accomplished a number of activities to establish and strengthen member organisations. The following summarized list of activities during the past 5 years shows an organisation that has tried to play a key role in strengthening national organisations and initiate activities that benefit the blind population of Africa.

2004:

General leadership: 6 seminars: Egypt, Kenya, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, Burundi and Cape Verde. Training materials were distributed to more than 10 organisations.

Special activities: Revival of Kenya Union of the blind. Organising the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly with sub-committee meetings

Youth: WBU-sponsored seminar in Cameroon: "Establishing youth committees in the regions".

Women: Training seminar in Sierra Leone

Newsletter: One issue

Challenges: To ensure a timely flow of information from members.

To boost the organisations resource base is still an uphill challenge

2005:

General: AFUB increased its contact relations with AU, ADDP and UN organisations. AFUB distributed Brailers and equipment to 14 member organisations

Task Force/Committees: 5 committees were formed in 2005 including Africa Blind Women Trust Fund

Newsletters and brochures: New brochures were printed on "Disability and Human Rights" and "Africa Blind Women Trust Fund".

2006:

General: New projects were listed for implementation in 2007

Preparation for AFUB's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007.

Leadership training: In Mauritania, Mozambique and Chad

Women: Two training workshops for Women's Committee

Seminars in leadership, advocacy and lobbying in Egypt, Eritrea, Ghana, Malawi and Swaziland

HIV/AIDS: Training seminars in Cameroon, Kenya and Malawi

Disability and human rights: Workshops in Kenya and Cameroon

Civil Education: Kenya

Democracy and development: AFUB/SANCB implemented a 10 week training for 11 young visually impaired youth from Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Publications: AFUB News

Women's voices  
Advocacy training material  
Material for Civil Education in Kenya  
HIV/AIDS training material

Income generating projects: New projects in Congo and Mauritania  
Competence building: Assessment of AFUB needs in terms of managerial and financial systems  
Challenges: Responses from members remain an ever-unproductive challenge  
Adequate supply of education material and equipment for blind  
Translation of documents is very time-consuming.  
Still 3 countries have not yet formed national organisations.

2007:

General:

HIV/AIDS: Training in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya; Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania.

Leadership training: Botswana, Congo (DRC), Liberia and Tunisia

Women: Training in "African Decade and Disabled Persons" in Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and South Africa.

2008:

General: Preparation for and implementing the 6<sup>th</sup> GA

HIV/AIDS: Second phase of the project commenced in Ethiopia, Lesotho, Zambia and South Africa.

Youth: 13 visually impaired youth from Rwanda, Liberia, Uganda and Kenya were trained for 10 weeks under the auspices of UNAB

Leadership training in Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone

Education: slates, braille and paper was sent for blind children in Rwanda

Publications: 1200 copies (4 publications) were distributed to national member organisations.

The recommendations of the 2008-report may be summarized in the following way:

- a) Efforts should be made to train national organisations in reporting.
- b) AFUB must find a model that enhances sustainability
- c) Communication with and between national organisations must be improved.

In the more recent past AFUB has initiated specific programmes aiming at strengthening youth and women as well as overall structures of national organisations in specific areas such as leadership, HIV/AIDS, human rights,

and other areas. In principle, these are activities that are being contested by some member organisations as to whether they are within the mandate of AFUB and whether it has capacity to effectively implement such activities. Some members strongly voiced that these should be the mandates of the national members.

### **5.3 HIV and AIDS Awareness and Training Project**

Since 2005 AFUB with support from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) have undertaken an HIV AIDS Awareness and Training Project for the blind and partially sighted persons in Africa. The project was funded by CIDA, and it targeted 6 countries namely; Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania. The overall goal is to reduce the incidence of HIV AIDS among blind and partially sighted persons in Africa through promoting their inclusion and participation in HIV awareness and control programs in their communities.

The project was designed to achieve the following five specific objectives:

- a) Facilitate access by blind and partially sighted persons to mainstream HIV AIDS awareness and control programs.
- b) Establish National Lobby Committees to raise awareness about the reality of HIV AIDS among visually impaired persons and to advocate for mainstream HIV AIDS service providers to adapt their programs so as to enable visually impaired people to access these services and programs.
- c) Provide HIV AIDS awareness and peer education training to 120 blind and partially sighted persons in six countries. Each of the 120 Peer Educators to further train 500 visually impaired persons at the grassroots level.
- d) Establish a “best practice” model that can be exported to other countries in Africa.
- e) Ensure that blind and partially sighted women participate equally as Advocates, Trainers/Peer Educators/Counsellors and beneficiaries and that training and resource materials reflect the specific issues faced by and the needs of blind and partially sighted women.

The first phase of the project (2005 – 2007) covered 6 countries and Tanzania and accomplished a number of activities especially trainer of trainer workshops, establishing national lobby committees, training individual blind men and women on the causes, prevention and management of HIV AIDS related conditions in the target countries, developing a comprehensive blind-friendly training model and resource materials for conducting training and

advocacy about HIV AIDS, and training and deploying peer educators in the 6 countries.

The second phase of the project started in 2008 and is targeting 12 extra countries, namely; Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Namibia, South Africa, Togo and Zambia. The project is planning to train 300 peer educators (25 per country) and it is expected that these would transfer skills gained to visually impaired persons at the grass-roots in each of these countries.

Whilst this is a worthwhile intervention, the aim should not be about what AFUB is able to offer in terms of training blind people on how to prevent themselves from HIV/AIDS but rather enabling member organizations to connect with and to challenge the country HIV/AIDS programs to include and reach out to the blind people. Focus should be on how much AFUB is able to work with the member organizations to engage with the national HIV/AIDS programs and other international players such as UNAIDS to develop programs that are responsive to the unique needs of blind people in Africa.

Mainstreaming of blindness into existing HIV/AIDS programmes is also a major focus of the AFUB HIV/AIDS project. Formation of the National Lobby Committees, and production of the Manual on how to mainstream blindness issues into existing HIV/AIDS programmes is a clear indication that the project's objective is not only about training Peer Educators but also mainstreaming needs of blind people in ongoing HIV/AIDS programmes in all African governments.

### **5.3.1 Women Empowerment Projects**

Since 2005 AFUB has with support from the Danish Association of the Blind (DAB) and the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF) worked with national Women's Committees to implement a capacity building program for blind and partially sighted women in 13 African countries, and to provide women leaders with skills in such areas as: leadership, organizational development, advocacy, entrepreneurship, networking and knowledge on the activities of the African Decade of Disabled Persons. Through this project, the blind and visually impaired women and girls have been accessed to training/skills development opportunities, awareness on HIV AIDS and reproductive health services, information on community development programs, credit facilities, education and employment. Overall, the project is enabling blind women participate more in the affairs of the national organizations of the blind.

At the national level blind women and girls are also members of the disabled women networks that are also aimed at promoting such awareness and skills. In some cases, there is duplication. According to some blind women leaders interviewed, more resources should be channelled towards supporting blind women to start model projects especially income generating projects which can serve as signature projects for other blind women to emulate but also to be used for demonstrating the potentials of blind women to the policy makers and other resource networks.

### **5.3.2 Youth Empowerment Projects**

Two projects, namely the Knowledge on Democracy and Development Project (KDDP) funded by the Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired (SRF) - 2005-2009; and, the African Visually Impaired Youth Empowerment Project (AVIYEP) funded by Sight Savers International - 2007-2010 have been undertaken since 2005 by AFUB. Both projects<sup>7</sup> have targeted the blind and partially sighted youth. The projects aim to build the capacity of visually impaired youth to actively participate in the activities of their parent organizations and in wider society as well as empowering them to advocate for their own rights. The project is carried out through phased workshops

#### **Box xx: Meet Florence, the young lawyer from Uganda**

Florence Ndagire is a graduate lawyer from Makerere University. What makes Florence unique is that she is one of the few blind students that have successfully completed the law course, which is considered one of the toughest courses at Makerere University.

Florence, is a member of NAB and is also a beneficiary of the Youth Training project being hosted and implemented by UNAB.

According to Florence, the training was an eye opener and empowered the youth in many ways. For example, the training helped build her confidence to become more articulate and an animator for other young people. It is against this background that she was identified and offered a job by the British Council (albeit as a volunteer). Her job has taken her practically to all parts of Uganda giving career talks to young people in secondary schools.

For Florence, the sky is the limit, the course and experience has exposed her and she has recently been offered a job in Somaliland and she is willing to take up the challenge. She attributes all this to the youth training.

Florence, has learnt to take advantage of her condition. She says she cannot be intimidated. First because she does not see most of the things that would normally have made her frightened. Secondly she has competed with sighted people throughout her life and came out among the top.

---

<sup>7</sup> The two are basically the same project but only named differently for purposes of the funders.

and apprenticeships. These training sessions are conducted in three phases of workshop fashion.

The KDDP project has so far benefited young blind and visually impaired people from 12 countries, namely: Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Liberia, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and Gambia

The youth leadership training has created a demand among the blind youth to participate in the activities and management of the national organizations of the blind. An interview with one of the trained youth (now a graduate lawyer) revealed that the training in leadership is enabling young people to take more interest in governance issues related to their own mother organizations, as well issues of democracy and participation at different levels of governance in their communities. It was revealed that they have sent a memorandum to the leadership of AFUB seeking representation on the Board.

One key observation from this project - like many others - is that it is mostly the Anglophone countries that are benefiting since the training is being conducted in English. This has alienated the Francophone youths.

The long list of activities shows that AFUB has been an active partner for capacity building in member organisations and for individual leadership training. As the strength of its members increases, AFUB's capacity building activities may be less important. On the other hand it will take a long time until AFUB's member organisations are strong enough to develop its own capacities without the assistance of external resources. AFUB should for that reason have a role to play in years to come.

#### **5.4 Existing and potential projects for 2009-2011**

During the past 4 years AFUB has implemented projects with an annual total value of between US\$ 300 – 500.000. The next chapter shows how much of AFUB's total cost these projects are able to cover.

The list of projects that AFUB has been - and is as per today - engaged in are as follows (excluding AFUB/NABP-activities and the ICEVI project): All figures in 1000 US\$)

**Table 4. Existing and potential projects 2006 – 2010.**

Project number	Name	Partner	Project cost as per agreement with AFUB				
			2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
03	Women	SRF/SHIA		42	41	43	40
	Women	DAB	29	29	15		
04	KDDP			75	91	75	90
12	AVIYEP			85	93		
	HIV/AIDS Training		113	106		180	187
	Disability and HR		75	77			
	Civil education Kenya. 3 projects		87	87	59		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>304</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>317</b>

No agreement goes beyond 2010, but AFUB is presently negotiating projects with a start-up in 2010.

### 5.5 Contribution to AFUB overheads from projects

The list of projects in table 4 shows that a project volume of between US\$ 300. – 500.000 are implemented each year. This volume covers the salary of 3 project staff and the accountant, travelling costs of moderators (mostly people from the secretariat and the board) and all implementing expenses for the projects. In addition, these projects include a contribution of about 6-8% of the total project value to AFUB's general administration costs.

**Table 5. Projects' contribution towards AFUB's overheads.**  
(All figures in 1000 US\$)

Project number	Name	Partner	Project cost and contribution towards AFUB's administrative costs			
			2007		2008	
			Total	For AFUB	Total	For AFUB
03	Women	SRF/SHIA	42	3	41	3
	Women	DAB	29	3	15	1
04	KDDP		75	?	91	?
12	Human rights (AVIYEP)		85	5	93	7
	HIV/AIDS Training		113	?	180	?
	Disability and HR		75	?		
	Civil education Kenya. 3 projects		87	?	59	?
	<b>Total</b>		<b>304</b>	<b>Ca. 20</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>Ca. 20-25</b>

The AVIYEP project – which is implemented “outside” AFUB’s project list, contributes US\$ 10.000 annually towards AFUB’s administration. The existing list of projects and agreements contributes a total of between US\$ 20.000 – 25.000 to AFUB’s overheads.

Contribution from present partners’ projects will never be sufficient to support a well-functioning board and secretariat. Such contribution will have to come from new partners. Projects are - as a general rule - a positive element in AFUB’s secretariat, but it will need an annual volume of around US\$ 1.5 mill only to cover the present administrative costs. That volume will need extra office space and additional staff that is unrealistic to plan for under the present financial strain. We assume therefore that for the next 2-3 years any budget should limit contribution from project activities to US\$ 25.000 with all increases coming from new partners’ projects.

Individual items of the AFUB budget could possibly be funded in conjunction with project implementation. Also NABP has indicated its willingness to consider such funding, but not all items are suitable for that. An example of unsuitable funding would be individual salaries which should for independency considerations be funded from project incomes and/or membership fees.

## **6 AFUB and its members: Commitments and activities**

AFUB is a continental umbrella body of the national organisations<sup>8</sup> of the blind and partially sighted persons on the African continent. It is also member of the World Blind Union (WBU).

At the time of its founding in 1987, there were only about 10 national associations of and for the blind in Africa, but since then, AFUB has helped in the formation and strengthening 54 national associations of and for blind and partially sighted people in 50 African countries. These 54 organisations are of various levels of strength (see table 6, page 38 for a full list of national organisations).

The bleak HD-picture indicates very well what scarce resources AFUB's members have access to within their countries. An assessment of AFUB's activities and priorities must take these facts into consideration. These organisations have to a large extent to rely on external resources for capacity building and support to its members.

Assessments of whether a low HD-index automatically leads to a weak organisation of the blind show that other factors may play greater roles than the HDI. In the last column of table 6 a rough assessment shows that out of the 50 member organisations, 22 are strong, 20 average and 8 weak. One of the weak member organisations, Seychelles is a country with a high HDI, while 10 of the strong members are national organisations from countries with low human development index. One key factor determining the strength of the national organisations is whether it has support from an external funding partner. National organisations that have received or are receiving bilateral support from NABP, Danish Association of the Blind, Sight Savers are considered strong.

---

<sup>8</sup> To be defined as a recognised organisation of blind people the organisation shall be representative of the blind of that country, having a substantial number of members, with a majority of its membership consisting of blind persons ordinarily paying a membership fee and having a governing body with a majority of blind persons elected by the members at regular intervals.

## **6.1 WBU membership**

Each member of AFUB is also automatically a member of the WBU. The membership fee has until recently been US\$ 225 for each member organisation, but payment has been unsteady. WBU has therefore decided to restructure the membership fee based on the HDI-status of the member country.

## **6.2 Membership fee to AFUB**

AFUB's annual reports are repetitively pointing to the fact that communication with and between members are weak, and only 60% of its members are willing to pay the membership fee. Out of the 50 countries (including Somalia) that have recognised membership to AFUB in 2008, 21 countries were recorded with irregular payment of membership fees. Of the 21 countries, 13 had not paid their membership fees since 2005. The list of non-paying members includes countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, and Nigeria which one ordinarily would not expect to have problems raising the fees.

At the Cairo Board meeting in March 2009, the Board decided to write off all arrears up to 2008 as a kind of amnesty for the defaulting countries. However, the same meeting seems not to have discussed any means of motivating the perennial defaulting organisations to pay. The decision is highly questionable at a time when AFUB is in dire needs for member support and all sources of funds.

A closer look at the member organisations that have had a consistent record of paying shows that a good number includes those bilaterally funded by NABP and or other sister organisations of or for the blind from the North.

## **6.3 Membership profiles**

Efforts are being made to develop a membership profile database. A questionnaire has been designed and sent out to collect information to complete the membership profiling process but is yet to be accomplished. If completed this will be a good public relations and marketing document for AFUB. The database will also help AFUB secretariat to assess better the capacity of each member and the kind of support each might need to strengthen it. Currently the capacity of each member organisation is based on the assessment of a few parameters such as having an office, the regularity of communication with AFUB, and whether it has a functioning board. However, these are not adequate parameters for assessing organisational capacity as it is dependent on several other factors as well; available resources, strategies, services ren-

dered to its members, established network etc. Currently, AFUB does not have this picture of its membership.

#### 6.4 Value addition from membership

The evaluation team tried to explore the issue of value addition of AFUB on the members from member organisation and even staff at AFUB secretariat. The question was whether AFUB was adding value to the members such as UNAB, MUB, KUB and others. Respondents from the member organisations in Malawi and Uganda were positive about the value addition of AFUB in spite of the challenges. According to them, AFUB had succeeded in achieving its mandate of mobilising and establishing organisations of the blind where they did not exist and also by trying to strengthen those that are weak.

##### **Box 2: Value addition of AFUB**

*“By the time of establishment of AFUB there were only about 10 organisations of and for the blind on the African continent. There are now over 48 organisations. This is a credit to AFUB.*

*AFUB is a relevant structure that has played a key role in establishing the majority of the national organisations of the blind and partially sighted. It is also in good position to play a mentoring role in strengthening these organisations.*

*It has the most well-positioned network to be the continental advocacy body to influence policies affecting blind people on the African continent”.*

- Participants, KUB

Furthermore, AFUB has given member organisations a profile and helped them to connect to other global and regional bodies such as WBU, European Blind Union and others. It has also been an effective means for the member organisations to build solidarity and exchange strategies and good practices especially during the General Assembly meetings.

##### **6.4.1 Membership survey as of January 2009**

The following list shows that only 29 of AFUB’s 50 members paid the annual fee for 2008. The most striking result from this list is that 7 out of 11 board members come from national organisations that **have not** paid the fee.

The team tried to get a picture of the strength of the member organisations. The list must be read with great caution as only 3 factors were assessed: a) frequency and contents of communication with the secretariat, b) payment of fees and c) operational efficiency. According to these criteria AFUB has 22 strong members, 20 with “average” strength, and only 8 weak organisations.

**Table 6. Fees paid 2005-2008 and an assessment of organisational strength.**

Region	2005	2006	2007	2008	Strength
<b>Northern Africa Region (6 countries)</b>					
1. Morocco	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
2. Algeria					Average
3. Tunisia					Strong
4. Mauritania					Average
5. Libya	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
6. Egypt	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
<b>East Africa Region (10 countries)</b>					
1. Somalia	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Weak
2. Ethiopia	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
3. Eritrea	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
4. Mauritius	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
5. Sudan					Average
6. Uganda	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
7. Kenya	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
8. Tanzania	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
9. Seychelles	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Weak
10. Madagascar	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
<b>West Africa zone I (7 countries)</b>					
1. Cape Verde					Weak
2. Sierra Leone	Paid				Strong
3. Liberia	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
4. Nigeria					Average
5. Ghana	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
6. The Gambia					Average
7. Guinea Bissau	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
<b>West Africa Zone II (8 countries)</b>					
1. Burkina Faso	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
2. Niger	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
3. Mali	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
4. Senegal					Average
5. Cote d'Ivoire					Average
6. Benin					Strong
7. Togo					
8. Guinea					Average
<b>Southern Africa Region (9 countries)</b>					
1. South Africa	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
2. Zimbabwe	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
3. Malawi	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
4. Mozambique	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong

*The African Union of the Blind (AFUB)*

5. Lesotho	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
6. Botswana	Paid	Paid			Average
7. Namibia	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
8. Zambia					Average
9. Swaziland					Average
<b>Central Africa Region (10 countries)</b>					
1. Rwanda	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Strong
2. Congo	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
3. Gabon	Paid	Paid			Average
4. Chad	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
5. Cameroon	Paid				Strong
6. Central Africa Republic	Paid				Weak
7. Angola	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Average
8. Sao Tomé	Paid	Paid	Paid	Paid	Weak
9. DRC Congo					Weak
10. Burundi					Weak
<b>Total paid memberships</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	

The most peculiar information from the list is that countries like Tunisia, Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon and Benin – from which countries some of the board members come – have not paid the US\$ 100 fee to AFUB. The immediate question that comes to one's mind is: Why should the weak members of AFUB pay while the stronger ones do not feel that obligation?

The team also observes that many of the strong organisations have bilateral agreements with international donors, while the weaker ones have problems to find these. It is a challenge for AFUB to reach the smaller and poorest members.

## **7 AFUB and NABP**

NABP and AFUB have had a nearly symbiotic relationship since 1987. This relationship has from NABP's side until recently been governed from a blindness-political side that has put questions related to operational results on hold.

The present agreement between AFUB and NABP terminates a 20-years co-operation with NORAD funding. According to NABP, NORAD cannot continue to support a project beyond the 20-year limit. The main question now, however, in the AFUB-NABP relationship is how the phasing-out strategies have been communicated by NABP, and how these signals or statements have been understood by AFUB.

### **7.1 NABP's support to AFUB**

The total support from NABP to AFUB from 1987 up to 2008 is approximately US\$ 4.7 mill. The co-operation has been governed by 3-years' agreements with the general funding clause that support is dependent upon necessary grants from NORAD. The 2006-2008 agreement expired on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008, and a bridging agreement dated November 2008 covers the support up to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. The cooperation and financial support has verbally been extended to the end of 2009.

The phasing-out communication has been expressed both in verbal "speeches" and in letters from NABP. The formal agreements, however, are less clear on the subject, but the short-term nature of the extensions should provide enough formality for the board of AFUB to react.

NABP has used various voices and channels to present its standpoint. We have previously mentioned that NABP according to the minutes of the fundraising committee in 2006 stated - in relation to an expansive budget for 2007 - that its financial support to AFUB would not increase. Minutes from the board meeting in October 2007 show that the board (following a statement made by NABP) "*concluded that although NABP support is to continue until 2010, AFUB must begin thinking of the nature of NABP partnership after 2010*". A letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008 from NABP to AFUB's board members and ED stated clearly that NABP would end the general funding to AFUB by 2009. NABP repeated this position in the GA-meeting in November 2008, and in a letter to the board and ED in January 2009.

AFUB reacted to the information in different ways. The GA-meeting (November 2008) does not seem to have taken any steps following termination-statements made by NABP-representatives, neither did the board meeting following the GA-meeting. ED had planned (and had for all practical purposes most pieces for such a meeting arranged) to convene a donors' meeting in connection with a board meeting scheduled for Nairobi in March, but the President changed the venue for the meeting to Cairo, with the result being that donors found it difficult to rearrange their travelling plans. An "input letter" from NABP to the board with several recommendations as to "The way forward" was red to the board members at the Cairo meeting. The reactions from the board were according to the minute from the meeting quite surprising; some found the letter insulting, some said it was unpleasant. The main problem that AFUB would be facing 2010 without funding was resolved by setting up a committee of 6 persons to come up with recommendations to the board.

The evaluation team also concludes that the communication between ED and the Board has been inadequate. The presentation of the "Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012" shows actually little concern of how shaky the funding base was. The decision to shift the venue for the March 2009 board meeting to Cairo was taken to save money, but the results of a donors' meeting in Nairobi could have raised far more money than savings in Cairo.

NABP may be blamed for not speaking with a fully coordinated tongue. However, "everyone" has been informed that AFUB must find new ways of financing its operations, but few have taken the statements seriously.

NABP's exit strategies have – at least in the case of AFUB where the co-operation has a 20-years history – been unclear. The team finds only vaguely expressed statements of an exit strategy from NABP's side before early 2008. AFUB's finance committee was in 2006 informed that "the amount from NABP will not increase", in response to a substantial proposed increase in the 2007 budget. Minutes of the board meeting in London in October 2007 refers to statements by NABP that the present funding arrangements with AFUB will end in 2010 and "*AFUB must begin thinking of the nature of NABP partnership and support after 2010*". The minutes also indicate that NABP will continue to be AFUB's main partner and no decision as to the issue of finding new partners was made.

AFUB's board, finance committee and secretariat do not seem to have taken NABP's statement very seriously. The long co-operation and previous po-

litical statements may have led everyone to hope that funds will eventually come. The 6-person strong committee that was established in March 2009 should have been established one year earlier, and even that is probably too short time to find a reasonable funding for AFUB's general expenses. As per June there is no report from the committee's work.

In sum: NABP may be blamed for being unclear with regard to future funding of AFUB until early 2008. That is – after a 20 years history of co-operation for all practical purposes a short time. Funding of the 2009 budget was made on a short-term basis (until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009), and later extended to 31<sup>st</sup> December. A weak point is therefore how the exit strategy for the symbiotic relation between the two partners over the past 20 years has been presented. It ought to have covered a longer period than 2 years.

AFUB should have started to seek new partners years ago. Since early 2008 has NABP's position been clear. The fact is that the governing bodies did not act when the facts should have sunk in. Approaches should have been made to the obviously realistic and relevant African partners: AU and its social and human rights programmes for the disabled population of Africa.

## **7.2 Activities under the NABP's support**

NABP's support has so far covered the administrative expenses of AFUB. In development co-operation this is an uncommon way of supporting an organisation. NGOs tend to shun administrative expenses and prioritise project funding with a small contribution towards the administrative costs.

The annual administrative costs of keeping the secretariat's present structure are around US\$ 120 – 130.000. Salaries account for more than 50% of this amount, and have increased considerably over the past few years.

Table 7 (next page) may be a starting point for an assessment of AFUB's financial vulnerability when NABP's support expires. Board and GA-expenses are major expense items. The activities in these structures are necessary for any organisation but AFUB will in the future not be able to fund the size, structure and activities of the board and GA-meetings on the same level as in the past. All signals indicate at the moment that delegates to future GA-meeting will have to fund travelling expenses themselves.

**Table 7. Administrative expenses (ex. training and evaluation) 2004 – 2008.**

All figures in 1000 US\$

Type of expense	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 Budget
<b>Personnel Expenses</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>67</b>
Salaries	43	46	53	71	87	67
<b>Other expenses</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>37</b>
Telephone/communic.	16	17	20	19	16	7
Travel and subsistence	20	14	4	10	9	7
Office expenses	15	17	15	19	8	7
Bad debts				9		
Evaluation					7	
Other expenses	32	10	19	18	21	16
<b>Board and GA-expenses</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>18</b>
GA-expenses/seminars		57	31	27	126	
Board meetings & exp.			71	77	46	18
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>122</b>

Our recommendations are based on the assumption that AFUB’s administrative costs stay – for the next few years – at the 2009-level, i.e. around US\$ 125.000. The percentages shown in recommendation number 7 refer to the 2009 level. For NABP’s part that means that its total contribution to AFUB – for specific elements and through projects – will be a minimum of US\$ 50.000 in 2010 and \$ 25.000 in 2011. “Specific elements” must not include the salary or expenses connected to the Executive Director as that would only prolong the feeling that NABP has an ownership to AFUB. But, “specific elements” could for instance be the salary of the bilingual secretary, board meeting expenses, translation costs or similar.

The clear condition for NABP’s future commitments must be that AFUB has been able to find financial coverage for the balance of the budget. We assume that NABP will continue to support AFUB also after 2011, but after 2011 NABP is free of all commitments to participate in the efforts to make AFUB financial sustainable.

We have assumed that all expenses in connection with the General Assemblies are to be financed outside AFUB’s budget.

The team has few comments to the accounting system. However, the system of having external check signatories in addition to one AFUB-staff (one of the two is actually an NABP employee) only strengthens the impression of a paternalistic relation between NABP and AFUB.

## **8 Co-operation with other partners**

Tables 3-5 (pages 26 and 33) show AFUB's project partners. In terms of money these partners are in total far larger than NABP's support, but their support goes to specific projects and only a small portion provides contribution for administrative costs.

No NGO fancy administrative expenses. That is why NABP's support has been an extraordinary agreement in development co-operation - and that is why it will need coordinated efforts by everyone in AFUB to find other sources of funds when NABP's support ends in 2009.

Although the team has not made a larger scale survey of the relation between AFUB and its partners, responses indicate that they seem to be satisfied with the work AFUB is doing. That includes both its professional competence and implementation capabilities.

So far AFUB has to a large extent relied on international NGO-partners. The team has talked with representatives from VSO, Sight Savers, and DAB, and all of them voice a positive impression of AFUB's work. AFUB's severest challenge is now to develop a close partnership with the pan-African and global organisations. International development assistance operates more and more through the national government structures and AFUB's main potential partners will therefore be found among existing international and pan-African social programmes, trusts, foundations and corporate organisations. African Union, with its many social programmes for disabled, is a prime partner for AFUB.

In terms of providing technical competence to the blindness prevention programme WHO is a more than relevant partner, and the various regional development programmes in Africa have all sub-programmes for social inclusion of disabled people. The review team is of the opinion that AFUB has not related to these partners in a satisfactory way and AFUB should have been far more visible as an implementing partner for pan-African organisations. AFUB's network of national membership organisations is its strongest asset in negotiations with them.

The potential programme co-operation with AU's many odies makes it necessary to discuss whether AFUB's secretariat should be moved to Addis Ababa. The board must discuss whether that location will improve AFUB's

possibilities to advocate for social inclusion and human rights for disabled people.

## **9 Sustainability**

If AFUB's members want, or needs, a secretariat for Africa's blind, someone will have to pay for the fixed secretarial expenses. Fundraising will therefore in the future be a major activity for AFUB.

Fundraising for AFUB may unfortunately prove to be a conflict filled area for the board members. One comment (not from a board member) was that board members also have their own organisation in mind when funding opportunities appears, and most people would most likely inform his/her own organisation of the opportunity instead of AFUB. One should bear this in mind when income sources for AFUB are discussed.

There are three potential sources of income to meet the administrative expenses of a secretariat like AFUB's.

1) Through members' contribution.

Members must look upon AFUB's secretariat as an essential entity both in terms of influencing national and pan-African political structures, and in terms of providing necessary professional resources to its members. Members paid for 2008 a total of US\$ 2.900 in fees. That is about 2% of the cost of running the secretariat. If every member pays its fee it amounts to about US 5.000 annually. One alternative to increase the contribution from the members is to structure the fee according to size and/or strength. Another could be in the form of support to AFUB to implement activities in a member's country in fields where AFUB has specific competence. It is unclear to the team whether members consider AFUB to represent this extra value for them, and the team believes members may represent a minor source of funding.

2) By contribution from implementing partners' projects.

Co-operating partners – national or international – must in that case find AFUB to be the most relevant implementing organisation of their projects. It is, however, important that there is no conflict between AFUB and the national member organisation as to who should implement the project.

Table 5, page 33 shows that the present agreed level of projects' contribution towards administrative costs may never be sufficient to re-

place NABP's support. An activity volume that is 3 times the present level will contribute about 50% of the 2009-costs of the secretariat. That expense level is with a minimum board activity and no provision for GA-meetings. In order to cover the present level of administrative costs AFUB needs a project volume of US\$ 2.0 mill with 6-8% contribution.

- 3) By implementing large-scale programmes.  
Such programmes may have a budget that caters for major secretarial assistance. Partners would be AU, WHO, SADC etc.

The financial doldrums in which AFUB now find itself require that all unnecessary activities or financial outlay – including activities of the board, standing committees and the secretariat – must be waived until the financial base of AFUB has been secured.

The main “marketing” activity should be directed towards those who run pan-African programmes. The financial potential in being involved in such programmes is, however, a benefit, not a goal. The main goal for AFUB must always be to influence pan-African programmes to target the blind population of Africa, to advocate for social rights and inclusiveness of blind people, and to press for legal rights for the blind in all parts of the society. That activity – including a contribution towards overheads - may be determined as a project that AFUB's partners (including NABP) should be keen to fund.

### **9.1 Alternative sustainability levels**

What happens if it proves impossible to secure the necessary financial sustainability for the present AFUB secretariat? With only 29 of the 50 member organisations willing to pay a mere US\$ 100 per year (2008) membership fee, the future for AFUB may look dim. A completely new attitude has to be established among AFUB's members. Pledges of allegiance are not sufficient for sustainability.

AFUB's members have really never been tested on whether they need or want AFUB to exist. If the present AFUB structure is not financially sustainable, members must decide what to do. The sister structure for Asia, the Asian Blind Union, is organised without a secretariat, but with a General Secretary that co-ordinates member activities. The activities under such a structure will be considerably less, but probably financially sustainable also

for African members. The uncertain side of this structure is that with less activity, membership fees may be even more difficult to collect.

One alternative is to establish mini-secretariats in the regions reporting to a General Secretary. Such a structure may meet the language challenges, and may reduce present claims that some regions or language areas are not attended to in the same manner as others. Such mini secretariats must be located with a “strong” member and most of the costs must probably be borne by the host organisation.

Both alternatives require funding beyond the membership fees. Partners will have to cover some of the costs, and regional differences may be even larger than today as the “rich” regions may provide members with funds other regions are not able to tap.

If the activities and size of AFUB’s present secretariat is not financially sustainable the board should discuss viable alternatives – among these both the GS-sentered structure and a mini-secretariat structure. Reference is made to recommendations in chapter 10.

## **10. Recommendations and possible lessons learnt.**

NABP must be given credit for having supported AFUB through several difficult periods. As per today, organisations of the blind have been established in all but 2 African countries and a rough assessment indicates that nearly half of these are considered to be strong organisations. The objective to establish national organisations of the blind all over Africa has – for all practical purposes - been reached.

The problematic side of the 20 years' nearly symbiotic relation between AFUB and NABP is that NABP has allowed AFUB to constantly delay its sustainability debate. NABP has acted as if it has had an ownership stake in AFUB – at times so strong that other supporters have backed out.

Based on the findings and impressions of the evaluation, the review team makes the following recommendations (numbered 1-25 and printed in bold) for further discussion in the Board and among members and supporters of AFUB. (NABP has asked for clarification of some of the recommendations. Reference is made to annex 5 for questions related to recommendations 5, 8, 10, 18 and 19, and the teams comments to these).

### **A) Activities**

AFUB has in addition to its general support to members, initiated and implemented a long list of projects. These projects are self-financed and include a small contribution to AFUB's general administrative expenses. There are two recommendations as to project activities:

- 1. AFUB has successfully implemented projects funded by other organisations. Through this activity AFUB has gained a reputation of being a well-organised and efficient implementer and partner. AFUB should continue to develop, initiate and implement such projects.**
- 2. There are potential conflicts in cases where AFUB implements projects that the member could/should have done (ref. voter education in Kenya). AFUB must be highly aware of not getting involved in potential conflict projects.**

### **B) General affairs.**

In spite of – or rather because of - the huge challenges AFUB now faces to find new supporters for its activities, we recommend that every effort be

made to maintain AFUB as a vibrant organisation. The rationale for this is that AFUB has a key role to play in building the necessary capacity in the national organisations of the blind, in establishing networks with other pan-African organisations working for the blind, and in playing a key advocacy role for the blind in the whole continent.

- 3: AFUB is a valuable instrument for Africa's blind and every effort should be made to maintain the structure of AFUB, and continue to develop it further.**

### **C) Sustainability**

Recommendation 3 is only sensible if AFUB can prove that there is a realistic possibility to obtain the necessary funding to replace part of or all of NABP's support. That issue must have the highest priority in all AFUB's decision bodies:

- 4: The table officers and ED should immediately convene a meeting with donors to identify potential sponsors in the amount of \$ 130. – 200.000 a year.**

Finding new sources of funds does not come easy. Most activities, however, require negligible amounts of money and the 2009 budget might find room for these. Others, and highly necessary activities (a donors' meeting for example) may need funds that the 2009 budget may be insufficient to cater for. The "reasonable" amount is a once-and-for-all amount, and the activity it is used for must be exclusively targeting future funding. We therefore recommend:

- 5. We find it reasonable to challenge NABP and other partners to grant a "reasonable" amount exclusively earmarked for activities related to funding AFUB after 2009.**

It is necessary that both the board (first and foremost the table officers) and the Secretariat share the responsibility to find new sources of funds, but it is also necessary that member organisations come on board – not only to voice their support for AFUB, but also to support it financially.

- 6. Member organisations must contribute more than the about US\$ 2.900 they pay today. An amount of 10-15% of AFUB's administrative costs must come from members.**

For 2009 AFUB has an administrative budget of US\$ 122.000 (excluding expenses for the evaluation and leadership seminars). Future income targets from the various stakeholders should be set at the percentages below to reach this amount. A proposed structure could be:

**7. Proposed targets for sources of income:**

<b>Support from</b>	<b>Budget 2010</b>	<b>Budget 2011</b>	<b>Budget 2012</b>
<b>Own projects</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>New funding partners</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>From NABP</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>	

NABP has made it clear that they will not be able to fund administrative expenses from 2010. However, NABP has indicated that it is open to discuss other program support through AFUB, and the 40% and 20% levels for NABP would include both specific elements and contribution from NABP-funded projects that AFUB implements. (See para 7.2 page 43 on why ED's salary should not be funded by NABP).

**8. NABP should continue to support specific elements of the budget for 2010 and 2011 according to the table in recommendation 7. NABP's commitment must be on the condition that funding of the total budget has been contractually secured before the budget year starts.**

If necessary funds to maintain the present Secretariat are not obtained, a new structure has to be found. We recommend:

**9. If new funding for the present AFUB structure is not found, the ABU-model of having a part-time General Secretary should be discussed. Mini-secretariats based on the regional/language divide should be discussed as a supplement to the GS.**

## **D) Organisational structure**

Until the financial basis has been secured it is necessary to reduce or - for a time - keep even constitutional meeting frequency and –attendance at a minimum (without creating legal hassles). The rationale for this is that all constitutional requirements can be met with less use of meetings, less ex-

penses and less administrative resources. The following are recommendations for the organisational structure.

#### **BOARD STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITY**

Board members should have access to necessary technology to hold teleconferences instead of face-to-face meetings. We recommend:

- 10: We recommend that only the board members (10 persons + ED and the Honorary Treasurer) participate in the board meetings. Communication and travel allowances must be replaced by a meeting fee.**
- 11: All board meetings – except for tele-conferences - should be held at the AFUB secretariat. GS prepares the agenda in cooperation with the President and ED.**
- 12: Until the financial problems are solved – and for efficiency - table officers should be given the authority to decide on matters related to the funding beyond 2009. Full board meetings should only be called if and when issues of vital importance to AFUB are to be discussed.**

#### **HONORARY TREASURER**

This is presently a sighted person and it needs to be so. We recommend:

- 13. Until further the Honorary Treasurer should be engaged to assist ED in meetings with potential sponsors. We expect that such a support come with an expense budget line.**

#### **REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

The RR structure seems to have had minimal effect and most RRs have not functioned as planned. Our recommendation is:

- 14. A clear criteria for choosing an RR must be that he/she meets the same professional criteria as of a board member and has access to office functions of a well organised member. The arrangement with a deputy RR should be cancelled.**

#### **SECRETARIAT**

AFUB is by constitution a networking/and membership organisation. The 20 organisations with “average” strength and 8 “weak” organisations represent the strongest challenge for AFUB for the next few years.

- 15: AFUB should as much as possible use the knowledge and professional resources from the country where a project is implemented. For organisational capacity building AFUB should use the resources of “strong” national members to strengthen the “weaker” ones.**

AFUB is also a blindness-political organisation and must actively develop its links to the present AU and other pan-African organisations. Moving the Secretariat closer to AU is one element of that objective<sup>9</sup>.

- 16: The board should assess the pros and cons of moving the Secretariat to Addis Ababa in order to actively lobby for and seek funding through the AU- and other pan-African systems on behalf of its 50 member countries.**

## **E) Communication, reports and documents**

Minutes of the meetings are voluminous. It is necessary that a clear format is developed that do not reduce the information value, but reduces the translation time. Electronic translation programmes should be tested.

- 17: It is necessary to continue the practice of issuing all documents in English and French, but it is also necessary to find a format that reduces the volume of the minutes.**

## **F) NABP**

NABP’s support over the past 20 years is commendable. However, time is overdue for a rescheduling of NABP’s funding. For that process NABP’s exit strategies should have been clearer. Our recommendations are:

- 18: We recommend that NABP for the next 2 years funds a (or some) specific activity under AFUB’s administrative budget.**
- 19: We recommend that NABP channel some of the project funds for Africa through AFUB. A 6-8% administration fee to be earmarked to cover administration costs.**

---

<sup>9</sup> During the final stages of the evaluation it was mentioned that recently passed Ethiopian laws could make the recommendation less realistic.

- 20: NABP must strengthen its exit strategies. These must have a 2-3 year time span. Partners with majority funding from NABP may need even more time.**

## **G) Member organisations**

Member organisations must demonstrate that they want an active AFUB. Statements of loyalty are not enough. We recommend:

- 21. Members must provide financial support to AFUB that demonstrates that they want AFUB to live. A minimum of US\$ 12.000 per year (ca. 10% of 2009-budget) should come from membership contributions.**

## **H) General Assembly.**

The structure and activities of the GA are described in the constitution and by-laws of AFUB. Clauses of founding documents are “holy” and must be followed. However, as funds may not be available for general representation at the GA, we recommend that the board discuss the following:

- 22: National organisations should in principle raise the necessary funds for transport for the delegates, while AFUB and the organising member negotiate with local and international organisations to cover hotel expenses.**
- 23: Member countries that do not find the funds to travel may vote by proxy. And, whether we like it or not: Delegates must be able to communicate either in French or English.**
- 24: The nomination committee must work out clear professional and geographical criteria for selection of board member candidates. Candidates to the board must have easy access to office facilities in its own national organisation.**
- 25: The chairperson of the Youth committee ought to be a board member in the same way as the chairperson of the Women’s committee has been.**
-

**TERMS OF REFERENCE  
EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF  
THE AFRICAN UNION OF THE BLIND  
(AFUB)**

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The African Union of the Blind (AFUB) is a registered Continental non governmental umbrella organisation uniting 54 National associations of and for Blind and Partially Sighted people in 50 African countries. It was founded in Tunisia on 29th October 1987 when its first constituent assembly was held. AFUB is a member of the World Blind Union (WBU) and has observer status with the African Union (AU), in whose member states it has mandate to operate through initiation and promotion of development programmes to uplift the living standards of blind and partially sighted people.

Since inception, AFUB has among others, worked with the Norwegian Association of the Blind and Partially Sighted (NABP) as a key development partner. The nature of the partnership has often been in the form of technical, financial and administrative support on the part of NABP.

Total support from NABP to AFUB from 1987 up to 2008 is approximately 4, 7 million USD. Most of this funding support has gone towards headquarter administrative costs and board expenses. However some funding has also gone towards membership development through capacity building sessions. As the current support ends at the close of 2009, NABP has taken the initiative to conduct an external evaluation of what has been achieved by more than 17 years of support. Since an external evaluation was conducted in 1999 the period of concern for this external evaluation will be limited to the last ten year period, from 1999 up to 2009.

**The goal and purpose of the Union in accordance with its mandate are to:**

Encourage exchange of information and experience among AFUB members and other organizations whose activities relate to the goals of the Union.

Influence public Policies and practices governing the education, health, welfare, social security, rehabilitation, employment, sports and recreation of blind people in membership countries on the African continent.

Working for increased access by blind and partially sighted people to basic human rights in membership countries on the African continent, through advocacy for the elimination of discriminatory laws and practices affecting blind and partially sighted people.

Establishing, strengthening and developing national associations of the blind and partially sighted.

Mobilising resources at the local, national and international levels to support human resource development, and economic empowerment services for blind and partially sighted people.

The status of the Union is a non-governmental and non-profit making organisation. The Board of Officers is the principal administrative organ of the Union. The Union is financially supported by NABP, but also other donor such as SRF, Sight Savers International, CNIB/CIDA, DAB contribute. However the size of the funds and the length of funding vary.

The main goal of the evaluation task is to assess and analyse the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of AFUB's work as supported by NABP. Whether the support given by NABP has led to a positive change and a positive development for national member organisations on the African continent?

Recommendations from the evaluation team are most welcome and will be of great value for future planning.

The following is an outline of the terms of reference for an Independent External Evaluation of NABP's assistance and support to AFUB from 1999 up to 2009.

#### **PURPOSE OF EVALUATION**

The evaluation has been initiated by NORAD/ ATLAS is financed by ATLAS/NORAD. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the support provided by NABP to AFUB, and further to assess the level of added value derived from the partnership/relationship between NABP and AFUB (this include the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness).

Further, the evaluation aims at assessing to what extent the support provided by NABP has been conducive for AFUB in implementing its mandate. Likewise achieved results, those should be in accordance with annual action plans and strategic long term plans.

The evaluation is expected to provide information, recommendations and lessons learnt. Based on findings, the evaluation will hopefully serve as a guiding tool for AFUB's future work.

#### **SCOPE OF WORK:**

The key areas to be considered and analysed by the evaluation team should include:

##### **1. AFUB – organisational structure, achievement of objectives, level of sustainability and relation to member organisations.**

- Assess AFUB's organisational structure information and management structure, capacity and resources, and outline how the human and financial resources are used by AFUB and its conditions for achieving the overall AFUB objective and mission. This includes AFUB's ability to adapt changes and develop in line with the needs of its members.

- Assess the role of AFUB in assisting member organisations to influence their countries public policies and practices.
- Assess the level of added value related to the method of channelling resources from NABP through AFUB rather than directly to its member organisations.
- Assess the relevance of AFUB`s support in establishing national organisation of the blind where such organisations do not exist.
- Analyse the relevance and impact of Board Members work methods. Assess how effectively and efficiently AFUB has utilized the communication and travel allowances annually advanced to members of the Board?
- Assess how AFUB can ensure future sustainability, (e.g. suggestions on how AFUB board and administration can function without the massive NABP support).
- Assess the focus on gender in AFUB`s strategic plans and in implementation of AFUB activities.

## **2. AFUB – NABP relation.**

- Assess the nature and impact of the partnership between NABP and AFUB. To what extent has the partnership contributed to AFUB`s institutional development, (including relevance and usefulness of capacity building, mentoring and training by NABP, clarity of roles, lines and methods of communication).
- Other relevant matters in the assessment of AFUB, which needs to be taken into consideration.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

Desk study of key documents (planning and reporting documents from AFUB to NABP from 1999 up to 2009, AFUB strategies, policies and relevant evaluations. The evaluation will limit the document study to the cooperation period from 1999 up to 2009.

Filed visit to AFUB headquarter and to the member organisation in Uganda, which has hosted one of AFUB`s youth projects. Interviews with AFUB staff, management and Board both individually and in groups. Interviews with a selection of AFUB member organisations (e.g. both a new and a well established member) as end users of the NABP support (target of AFUB) – field visit and /or telephone conferences. Interviews with key NABP staff and management in Norway.

## **REPORTING**

A draft report with main findings and conclusions from the evaluation shall be submitted to NABP, AFUB and NORAD/ATLAS by week 22 for their review and consideration. Based on comments by NABP, AFUB and NORAD/ATLAS the team shall submit a final report within one week of receiving written comments to the draft report. This final report shall be submitted to NABP, AFUB and NORAD/ATLAS not later than week 25.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: Oslo Norway

**SUGGESTIONS ON PERSONS TO BE INTERVIEWED:**

the Executive Director, Elly Machat he President of AFUB  
Mohammed Ezzaoui also the former Vice President.  
Members of the AFUB Board, including the immediate past President  
Former Executive Director, Thomas O ngolo  
Volunteers working for AFUB  
Other donors such as SRF, DAB, Sight Savers

**DATA COLLECTION: Documents to be analysed are limited to the period of concern, from 1999 up to 2009.**

- the agreement between NABP and AFUB
- the review of AFUB, evaluation report from 1999
- the internal evaluation report from 2008
- other project documents such as quarterly reports, annual reports and other background documents are available in NABP office in Norway

**WORK-PLAN**

The review will begin week 19 and should start with the desk study and interviews in Norway.

The field visit should be limited to AFUB Headquarter in Nairobi and one member organisation in Uganda, which is the neighbouring country to Kenya and has hosted one of AFUB's youth projects. The field visit should be conducted in week 19-20.

Draft report should be represented to AFUB and NABP by week 22.

Final report should be submitted by week 25.

### **9.1.1 Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations have been used in the report:

AFUB	African Union of the Blind
AU	African Union
AVIYEP	African Visually Impaired Youth Empowerment Proj.
CIDA	Canadian Development Assistance
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
DAB	Danish Association of the Blind
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EBU	European Blind Union
ED	Executive Director of AFUB
GA	General Assembly of AFUB
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GS	General Secretary of AFUB
HDI	Human Development Index
GDP PPP	Gross Domestic Product Per capita at Purchasing Parity
HDI	Human Development Index
ICEVI	
KDDP	Knowledge on Democracy and Development Project
KUB	Kenya Union of the Blind
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MUB	Malawi Union of the Blind
NABP	Norwegian Assoc. of the Blind and Partially sighted.
NGDO	Non-Government Development Organisations
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
NPPB	National Program for Prevention of Blindness
OAS	Organisation of African States
PWD	People With Disabilities
RR	Regional Representative
SADC	Southern African Development Cooperation
SANCB	South Africa National of the Blind
SRF	Swedish Association of the Visually Impaired
TOR	Terms of Reference

UNAB	Uganda National Union of the Blind
UNAIDS	United Nations HIV/AIDS program
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
WBU	World Blind Union
WHO	World Health Organisation

**List of persons consulted**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Dr. Elly Macha	Executive Director	AFUB Secretariat
Bernard Mogesa	EFA-VI Africa Regional Co-ordinator	International Council for Education of Persons with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)
Rosemary Ndutu Wainaina	AFUB Bi-lingual Secretary	AFUB Secretariat
Sally Nduta Ng'ang'a	Program Coordinator, HIV/AIDS Program	AFUB Secretariat
Nancy Amwoso Aswani	Accountant	AFUB Secretariat
Patrick Wanjala	Logistics Officer	AFUB Secretariat
Dandy Mubima Kikok	Membership Liaison & Data Management	AFUB Secretariat
Chomba Wamunyi	Chairperson	Kenya Union of Blind (KUB)
Martin Kieti	Executive Officer	Kenya Union of the Blind (KUB)
Frederick Haga	AFUB Eastern Africa Regional Officer	AFUB
Simon Munde	Vice President	Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB)
Ezekiel Kumwenda	Executive Director	Malawi Union of the Blind
Penny May Kamau	Honorary Treasurer	AFUB
Ronald Luyima	Branch Development Officer	Uganda National Union of the Blind
Charles Byekwaso	Program Officer, Resource Mobilisation	Uganda National Union of the Blind
Florence Ndagire	Volunteer, British Council Kampala	Uganda National Union of the Blind
Richard Anguyo	Executive Director	Uganda National Union of the Blind
Kennedy Akolo	Program Manager, Disability	VSO Jitolee
Dr. Johnson Ngorok	Deputy Regional Director	Sight Savers International, ECSA Regional Office
Mohamed Ez-zaoui	President	AFUB
Madam Rajae Alaoui	Member Womens Committee	AFUB
Terje Iversen	Director International Development Cooperation	NABP
Hanne M. Agerup Kildahl	Adviser	NABP

**References and Documents reviewed:**

AFUB	Annual report AFUB project. 2004-2008 Financial report AFUB-project. 204-2008 Strategic plan 2004-2008 and 2009-2012
General Assembly	Report from GA-meeting Casablanca 2008
Board of AFUB	Minutes from board meetings 2006 - 2009
Table officers meeting	Minutes from table officers meeting 2007-2008
Sub-committee meetings	Finance and fundraising committee. 2004 -2009 Women's committee. 2005-2008 Youth committee. 2007-2008 Education, Rehabilitation and Human Rights Task Force 2004-2008 African Solidarity Trust Fund 2004-2008
NABP	Review of AFUB January 1999 AFUB Internal evaluation. Draft report September 2008 Project proposal to Norad Agreements between NABP and AFUB 2006-2008 Extension agreement up to 1. April 2009
Project documents	Planning and Reporting Form for ongoing projects.

**Questions of clarification received from NABP.**

Re. 5. NABP to grant an amount exclusively earmarked for activities related to funding AFUB after 2009. Do you then mean fundraising activities, donors conference etc.?

Re. 8. NABP support to elements of the budget. You suggest 40% for 2010. You then mean we cover 40% of the 122 00 usd adm cost and in addition support other AFUB activities like seminars, board expenses etc ? And that we only do this if AFUB can prove that they have alternative funding for the rest?

Re. 10. Board meeting. Communication allowance to be replaced with a meeting fee? You mean that board members should get a kind of payment for attending meetings?

Re. 18. NABP to fund specific activity under AFUB adm. budget. Do mean it is recommended that we cover some specific things like telephone, insurance salary for one person etc. as specific activities?

Re. 19. NABP to channel some project funds through AFUB. I hope you then mean that we run some project in cooperation with AFUB like the proposed strengthening of Portuguese speaking countries and put aside 6-8% for adm cost in that budget? And not that we channel money through AFUB for other projects where they are not involved.

**Comments to NABP's mail.**

Re. 5: As the introduction to R5 says, most of the activities AFUB need to plan for 2010 funding may be implemented within the present budget. If there are very specific activities – as for instance a donors' conference, necessary travelling etc. – the budget is not sufficient. It is for such activities that we recommend “NABP and others” to find “a reasonable amount”. It is a once-and-for-all amount, and the activity has to be exclusively targeted for funding AFUB.

Re. 8: The rationale for this recommendation is to ensure a reasonable phasing-out obligation for NABP. The proposed 40% level for 2010 does not mean that there is a general funding of the AFUB budget as we know

NORAD may not accept that. Our proposal is that NABP for instance funds a specific element (for instance board meeting costs, translation costs including a bi-lingual secretary etc.) or channels projects through AFUB that contribute (6-8%) to the total administrative costs – or both. Chapter 7.2 (page 43 says briefly why we do not include the ED’s expenses under “specific elements”.

We have assumed that AFUB’s budget for 2010 and 2011 is around the same level as for 2009 (\$ 125.000) and that NABP’s activities cover minimum \$ 50.000 in 2010 and \$ 25.000 in 2011. The clear condition for that is that AFUB has been able so find firm commitments for the balance, either in direct support or through projects. Hopefully NABP’s co-operation with AFUB continues after 2011 but after that date NABP is free of any commitments. A reasonable phasing-out period is over.

Re 10: A meeting fee creates no administrative hassle. It is an easy form of remuneration to administer. If a “meeting fee” is hard to swallow, call it something else. The main idea was to avoid doubts and detrimental discussion as to whether board members have spent the allowance in a proper way or not.

Re 18: See 8 above.

Re 19: Yes. AFUB should not be an exclusive partner for NABP. NABP must be free to select the most appropriate partner for implementation of its projects. Until 2011 some projects must be channelled through AFUB in order to meet the 40% and 20% obligation, but after 2011 the obligation is not there.

18.06.09