



CSOs, Evidence and Policy Influence: National Seminar

**Maputo, Mozambique
14th February 2005**

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Executive Summary

The UK Overseas Development Institute's (ODI) Research and Policy in Development Programme (RAPID) has been working on the interface between research and policy for the last five years. It has developed a framework to help researchers and practitioners understand the policy context they are working in and make strategic choices about what they should do to maximise the impact of their work on policy and practice.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) also have an important role to play in influencing policies and practices to make them pro-poor. More and more CSOs are recognising the need to understand policy processes better and use evidence to engage with them more effectively.

ODI has recently launched a new programme to help CSOs do this better. Through this new Civil Society Partnerships Programme (CSPP), ODI has organised regional workshops and national seminars aimed at providing a forum for CSOs to discuss the opportunities and challenges they face when trying to inform policy and share experiences about what works and does not work, learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area, and identify gaps for future work. The second of these national seminars in Southern Africa was held in Maputo on the 14th February 2005, in collaboration with the Cruzeiro do Sul – a Mozambican research organisation working on issues around poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Cruzeiro do Sul is a Mozambican civil society organisation comprising a network of Researchers and Specialists from various institutions. Its mission is to produce independent theoretical reflection concerning problems found in development, and the development of knowledge considering national reality. It has been operating for eight years with the goal to help Mozambique with poverty reduction by studying the reasons behind Mozambican poverty, promote the participation of everyone in the decision making process for poverty reduction, and research and study the current policies for an improved reformulation.

The RAPID Framework provides both an analytical tool to help understand the political context CSOs are working in and a practical approach to decide what needs to be done to maximise impact. The framework also emphasises the importance of evidence and having links in influencing policy processes. Furthermore, it is important for CSOs to understand the role of external influences in policy processes.

Presentations were given at the seminar on the Role of research-based evidence and CSOs in the policy process and ODI's CSP Programme. The case study from Mozambique highlighted how evidence gathered by CSOs usefully contributed to national policy on land reform in Mozambique with active participation of CSOs.

Participants at the workshop, members of Civil Society Organisations and private and public sector, made a number of suggestions and comments for further work to help promote approaches to policy makers including practical training and means of distributing information to the common person.

The seminar was opened by Mr. José Negrão from Cruzeiro do Sul who stressed the importance of having civil society inputs for policy elaboration. The PARPA (Action Plan for the Absolute Poverty Reduction) will be revised in 2005, and this revision was used as an example and opportunity to involve the community in this process.

Presentations 1 and 2

Introduction to the role of research-based evidence and CSO's in policy processes (Elizabeth Cromwell, ODI)

An introduction to ODI's CSO Partnership (Naved Chowdhury, ODI)

First, the process of gathering evidence research for a policy was explained. Throughout the presentation the steps to consider when researching for evidence for a policy review were described in detail. These are:

- Identify the problem
- Commission research
- Analyse the results
- Choose the best option
- Establish the policy
- Implement the policy
- Evaluate the results

At the same time, to better analyse the steps, there is an Analytical Framework to consider:

- **Political Context** (political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressures, incremental vs radical change, etc.): Is there political interest in change? Is there room for manoeuvre? How do they perceive the problem?
- **Links** (between policy and research communities – networks, relationships, power, competing discourses, trust, knowledge, etc.): Who are the key individuals? Are there existing networks to use? How best to transfer the information? The media? Campaigns?
- **Evidence** (credibility, the degree it challenges received wisdom, research approaches and methodology, simplicity of the message, how it is packaged, etc.): Is it there? Is it relevant? Is it practically useful? Are the concepts familiar or new? Does it need re-packaging?
- **External Influences** (socio-economic and cultural influences, donor policies, etc.): Who are the key factors? What is their agenda? How do they influence the political context?

Ideally, it would be best to have at least the Political Context, Links and Evidence all inter-linked to be able to reach a common ground. However in reality, often there are only two of them working together, while the other is not considered until later. Overall, there are two things to consider when analysing a problem – Relevance and Credibility.

For a CSO to be strong, it needs to be able to:

- Understand the political context;
- Do credible research;
- Communicate effectively;
- Work with others; and
- Have organisational capacity (staff, internal processes and funds).

A 'Partnership Programme' is ideal for a CSO because it strengthens them in the development of policy processes. This will bring a better understanding of how CSO's use

research, regional capacity to support CSO's, improved information from ODI and global collaboration.

Participants Observations

- *Question:* In a place where access to information is hard for the common person, how are policies elaborated? What can be done to be present in the decision making process?
- *Comment:* In Mozambique there is the concept that 'information equals power'. Therefore, when a person obtains information, normally they keep it for themselves, while in other countries, this information is used! Here, there is the example of University students who need to gather information for their dissertations and they have to interview people at the Government level, who in return answer that they can not give the information needed because they do not have the authorisation from their superiors.
- *Comment:* If we want to gather evidence, there is a need to share the information already available.
- *Comment:* There is also a problem in obtaining information at an international level, even if they are partners with a Mozambican Company.
- *Comment:* There is also a need to divulge the information already available to the population. In some cases, there is information available to be researched; the problem is actually the means of distributing this information.
- *Comment:* There are always people in the Ministries who do not know anything.
- *Comment:* There is a lack of communication between the State and the private companies.
- *Comment:* There is a lot of discussion about what to do, but there is no action.
- *Comment:* There is a lack of capable workers and money.
- *Question:* Are the Syndicates (Unions) part of the CSOs internationally?
- *Comment:* The Syndicates are normally used at the last minute to 'put out the fire'. There is no appreciation for the Syndicates.
- *Comment:* There is a need to communicate with civil society on the political events that take place, and obtain their feedback.
- *Question:* How can the involvement of the civil society actually help in policy development?
- *Question:* How to incentivate the pro-activity of civil society?
- *Comment:* Most of the civil society in Mozambique does not have access to means of information, therefore when considering involving them this needs to be taken into consideration. At the same time, most of them cannot read or write to have a voice in the matter.
- *Question:* How to improve the knowledge of the Mozambican Civil Society?

Responses

- One of the key objectives is to work hard on strengths and links. There is the experience in Malawi, where there was an active involvement in the PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers) programme since 2002 until today. The Government was happy to have Civil Society engagement in this. However, there was a problem;

the Civil Society was still weak. In their first year the PRSP went wrong because it was rushed, but it did not end there, they worked harder in the second year and managed to get funds to aid the university researchers. With time it improved, and now the means of obtaining information from the Government are better.

- The fact that there was participation from the Government at this Seminar already shows that there is an interest from it to improve the situation in Mozambique.
- Regarding the information being distributed within the communities, an example of the creation of a 'Sex Workers Organisation' in India was used. This was a process that started off with a small investigation where the researchers went to brothels to talk about overall concerns. With time, the prostitutes started noticing that their ideas were being implemented and they started to have confidence to stand up for their rights with the Government, therefore causing 'social change'. There is a need to meet with communities and talk to them about the various changes.
- If the Government does not give out information, civil society has to be more proactive to obtain the information they want.

Presentation 3

Evidence and Policy: A case study from Mozambique (José Negrão, Cruzeiro do Sul)

The case study illustrated by Cruzeiro do Sul shows how it has been possible to use the influence of civil society participation in the policy processes of the Land Use Regulation where the following ideas were integrated into the Law:

- Occupation acquisition of individual and collective rights;
- Acknowledgement of plain rights of the poor people with regards to land, even if they do not have a title for it;
- A claim to land security for private investment; and
- A reinforcement of the family sector and enterprise sector aimed to put an end to dualism.

After these ideas were integrated to the Mozambican National Law, neighbouring African countries started noticing that this was also ideal for them, and their Laws.

The results obtained from incorporating these ideas were as follows:

- In the last five years, there has been a 9% per year rise in agricultural product;
- There is new investment, national and international;
- Now only less than 1% of the population do not have land;
- In the Southern Africa region, the levels of conflicts are lower;
- In some regions, economic value was set to the land, without having to substitute the values that were already there.

Nevertheless, they did face some problems which should be taken into consideration for future proposals, mainly regarding communication and information available.

Participants Observations

- *Comment:* The question is not the lack of investigation, but the guarantee that the results will be implemented.
- *Question:* How to connect the information gathering with quick delivery of the same?
- *Comment:* We are in a civil society organisation because we have optimism and we believe. It is important to take opportunities and be more pro-active. We need to have more initiatives to be able to do things instead of waiting for the Government to take action.
- *Question:* To what point has the actual land claim contributed to the 9%?
- *Comment:* We find that at the moment, NGOs have lost sight of their objectives and are here to gather funds.
- *Comment:* The donating companies are usually more worried about the results that they do not see, and at the same time, they just want bigger projects.

Responses

- Using the evidence is not enough, that is why there is a need to develop communication channels and talk with the interested parties.
- There is a need to have a sense of trust between the people, be it Government or Civil Society.
- There are already nucleus' in Universities that deal with civil society.
- Civil societies should be institutionalised.
- Use the claim to land security.

The Seminar was concluded with the closing remarks of Mr. António Almeida Matos from Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda who emphasised the significance of communication between Government and the public, the importance of sharing information and the value of training within NGOs to better deal with the Mozambican Government.

Conclusions

- There is still a lack of access to available information. The majority of public sector employees still think that the information they gather is not to be shared with the public, and is filed away. In the developed world, the information gathered is used, shared and not stored;
- There is a lack of communication within the different levels of the Government, and from the Government to the public. There are always public servants who know little, and that slows processes down;
- Most people who want to obtain information from the Government find themselves going from person to person, and sometimes they do not get the information they want;
- There is a need to capacitate the people, to educate them on how to share information so that the civil society is more aware of the political background of the country and aware of their rights;

- The little information available sometimes does not get to the population outside Maputo City due to the lack of means of communication (newspapers, radio, television, internet) and illiteracy. There is a need to elaborate an easier way of divulging the information;
- Pro-activity should be promoted within communities so that they do not become Government dependent – this will lead to greater confidence to confront the Government and express their rights. There is a need to create initiatives within the population;
- Most of the NGOs have put aside their objectives, and their role is now to fund projects, and they expect immediate results which are usually hard to obtain (due to the lack of information available).

(Summary notes by Patrícia Figueiredo)

Annex 1: Seminar Programme

09.00 - 09.15	Welcome Address
09.15 - 10.30	Introduction to role of research-based evidence and CSOs in policy processes – Elizabeth Cromwell, ODI An introduction to ODI's CSO Partnership Programme – Naved Chowdhury, ODI 10.15 - 10.45 Discussion
10.45 - 11.15	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
11.15 - 11.45	Evidence and Policy: A case study from Mozambique – José Negrão, Cruzeiro do Sul
11.45 - 12.30	Discussion
12.30 - 13.00	Vote of thanks – António Almeida Matos
13.00	<i>Buffet Lunch</i>

Annex 2: List of Participants

No.	Contact Person	CSO Name
1	Africa Soeiro	Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda
2	Alda Salomão	CTV
3	Ana David	Monaso
4	Ana Vasconcelos	Monaso
5	António Almeida Matos	Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda
6	António Gravata	Livaningo
7	António Reina	FNP
8	Carla Mendonça	UNICEF
9	Carlos António Simbine	Associação Industrial de Moçambique
10	Caroline Duconseille	Kulima
11	Célia Diniz	The Africa-America Institute
12	Chege Ngugi	Care International
13	Chiara Panaroni	Naima + (NGO AIDS + Malária + TB - Imp. M. Associtaion)
14	Claire Bader	PMA (WFP)
15	Clara Muchine	UNICEF
16	Doménico Liuzzi	Kulima
17	Domingos Mazivila	UNDP-Mozambique
18	Eduardo Siteo	Reitoria da Universidade Eduardo Mondlane
19	Égas Mussanhane	CTA
20	Elizabeth Cromwell	ODI
21	Etelvina Mahanjane	Voluntary Services Overseas Mozambique
22	Eufreginia Duarte dos Reis Manuela	Grupo Moçambicano da Divida
23	Filomena Rogero	FUNAB - Fundo do Ambiente
24	Gerónimo Napido	Rede do HIV/Sida
25	Isilda Nhantumbo	UICN/UCN Moz
26	João Uthui	Teia
27	José Negrão	Cruzeiro do Sul

28	Júlia Thomas	Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda
29	Leena Vaaranmaan	KEPA
30	Lina Magaia	Ribangua Agricola
31	Lisa Dacosta	UNDP-Mozambique
32	Lotta Valtonrn	KEPA
33	Luís Pereira	Cruzeiro do Sul
34	Luís Siteo	Ministério da Indústria e Comércio
35	Maja de Vibe	DFID Mozambique
36	Margarida Isabel	UGC - Urban Agriculture Movement
37	Maria da Graça Samo	Fórum da Mulher
38	Mário Raimundo Siteo	OTM - Central Sindical
39	Mário Souto	Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda
40	Matt Picard	Chrsitian Aid Mozambique
41	Naftal David Simbine	Consilmo
42	Naved Chowdhury	ODI
43	Necodimus Chipfupa	Helpase International
44	Patrícia Figueiredo	Austral Consultoria e Projectos, Lda
45	Patrícia Sousa	UNICEF
46	Paulo Cuinica	KEPA
47	Peter Beck	DNPO - Monitoria do Parpa
48	Reverendo Dinis Matsolo	Conselho Cristão de Moçambique
49	Rito Mabunda	WWF
50	Rosânia da Silva	ISPU
51	Saide Habibo	Movimento Islâmico
52	Sónia Santos	DNPO - Monitoria do Parpa