



## **CSOs, Evidence and Policy Influence: A National Seminar**

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**John Young**  
Overseas Development Institute, UK

Email: [j.young@odi.org.uk](mailto:j.young@odi.org.uk)  
Web: [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid)

**Kaima Meya Country Director**  
Farm Africa, Uganda

Web: <http://www.farmafrica.org.uk/>

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## Executive Summary

The second Eastern Africa national seminar of ODI's new Civil Society Partnerships Programme's (CSPP) Regional Consultation in Southern Africa was held in Kampala on the 25th February 2005, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Research Management (FARM-Africa).

The objective of this national seminar was to provide a short open forum where policy makers, practitioners and civil society can learn more about and discuss how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) use evidence in policy processes, and learn about the new ODI programme. Representatives from policy research institutes and non-governmental agencies were able to discuss the opportunities and challenges for CSOs to use evidence to inform policy, learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area, share experiences about ongoing activities and identify opportunities for collaborative work.

The UK Overseas Development Institute's Research and Policy 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.

Food and Agriculture Research Management (FARM-Africa) is a UK-based NGO working with smallholder farmers and herders in six countries in Africa. FARM-Africa has been providing funding for technology transfer projects to contribute to realisation of farmers' dreams and enable them appreciate the need to demand for appropriate policies to accelerate development.

More than thirty participants representing CSOs, national government organisations, bilateral and multilateral development partners and the media attended the seminar.

A case study by FARM-Africa highlighted how the CSO has targeted policy through:

- Use of contact farmers and private service providers in offering agricultural extension services;
- Promoted commercialisation of agriculture in line with the Government of Uganda policy of Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA);
- Targeted poverty reduction by targeting and empowering farmer groups in decision making.

It was however noted that FARM-Africa has not done much in line with active advocacy on policy issues using research information as it is a relatively new CSO. However, there was indication that after consolidation of the project and a greater realisation of their legitimacy, the future plans include a detailed analysis of the household assets in order to have a baseline against which future achievements can be gauged. This will generate data that can be used effectively for policy development.

A case study presented by National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) illustrated how CSOs have been actively engaged in offering advisory services under

NAADS. It was noted that several NGOs, especially in Kampala City, have been engaged in identifying gaps in the NAADS programme and advocating for policy change. The CSOs' efforts are evident in many reports, however there is no evidence to show that this has caused change in policies.

Presentations were also made on the 'Role of research-based evidence and CSOs policy processes' (Julius Court) and on 'ODI's CSO Partnership Programme' (Kate Bird).

Participants observations included the following:

- Sometimes politicians challenge the legitimacy of CSOs to question policies. It was noted that there may be a need to package the advocacy messages properly so that they are more acceptable to politicians. The policy advocates also need to be carefully selected, based on their skills and areas of expertise.
- The need for CSOs to create partnerships was emphasised because there is strength in numbers.
- The CSOs indicated the need to build their capacity, especially in research and advocacy skills so that they can be more effective.
- The CSOs were also challenged to empower communities to demand for services so that they can eventually demand the formulation of policies appropriate to their needs.
- The participants also appreciated the importance of knowing the policy processes so that they target the right people, with the right messages, using the right approach and at the right time.
- Resource mobilisation was also indicated as a major step in the policy change process, however the resources should be used effectively to avoid waste and duplication of efforts.
- Participants noted that the impact of their efforts is often not realised because they lack success indicators. It was agreed that indicators should always be developed at the design stage so that they can later be used to track achievements and to record milestones.
- Monitoring and evaluation was also noted as essential in the policy advocacy process.

In the closing speech, it was noted that the government appreciates the CSOs' efforts in improving policy processes, however, information dissemination and effective communication may need to be strengthened for a better working relationship.

## **Introduction**

The seminar was organised by The UK Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and FARM AFRICA. The objective of the national seminar was to provide a short open forum where policy makers, practitioners and civil society can learn more about and discuss how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) use evidence in policy processes, and can learn about the new ODI programme. Participants were mainly drawn from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations, Professional Associations, Trade Unions, Research Institutes and Think Tanks (see Annex 2). The programme for the day is attached (Annex 1).

The Research and Policy 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.

Food and Agriculture Research Management (FARM-Africa) is a UK-based NGO working with smallholder farmers and herders in six countries in Africa. FARM-Africa has been providing funding for technology transfer projects to contribute to realisation of farmers' dreams and enable them appreciate the need to demand for appropriate policies to accelerate development.

## **Welcome remarks**

### ***Kaima Meya, FARM-Africa***

Eng. Kaima welcomed participants on behalf of FARM-Africa and declared the workshop open. He appreciated efforts of CSOs but noted, however that there are still limitations to CSOs success such as failure to use research. He noted that research evidence has not been successful in Southern African countries and in Asia.

He was joined by Kate Bird (ODI) who welcomed participants and thanked ODI and FARM-Africa for organising the workshop. She emphasised that ODI is not an NGO, not a Consultant Firm, and not a University, but a policy think-tank carrying out research covering Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. ODI works on humanitarian issues, natural disasters such as the tsunami, poverty eradication, aid effectiveness and economic issues through the World Trade Organisation. ODI also works on HIV and Water Programmes and the RAPID programme focuses on improving research using evidence, aiming especially at publications for civil society.

## **Case Study 1**

### ***Dr. Michael Wandukwa, project Coordinator, FARM-Africa***

Michael Wandukwa presented the first case study which involves the implementation of a Dairy Goat and Animal Health Project in the districts of Mbale and Sironko in Eastern Uganda.

In one and half years of working with smallholder farmers, support has been drawn from the participating communities, local governments and collaborating institutions. The project has given communities goats, both local and toggenburg breeds and trained farmers and extension staff to manage the project.

Institutional arrangements are underway to develop the skills of communities to empower them to sustain the project activities. Some lessons have been drawn from the experiences of working with rural farmers and other stakeholders.

The case study highlighted how the CSO has targeted policy through:

- Use of contact farmers and private service providers in offering agricultural extension services;
- Promoted commercialisation of agriculture in line with the Government of Uganda policy of Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA);
- Targeted poverty reduction by targeting and empowering farmer groups in decision making.

## Discussions

The following is a summary of the discussions held after the presentation:

Issue	Response
What has FARM-Africa brought into the policy arena in Uganda?	FARM-Africa has not done much in influencing policy because it is only one and a half years old, however, after consolidation of its legitimacy, more effort will be put into identifying policy issues for advocacy.
Were other issues involved in the initiation of the programme for example gender issues and political environment?	Cross-cutting issues were identified and incorporated in design of the programme.
What are the unintended consequences (lessons learned) as a result of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success of the project needs support from local government;</li> <li>• There is need to build capacity of local institutions e.g. breeder associations;</li> <li>• There has been change of attitude among the majority of the farmers towards commercialisation of agriculture;</li> <li>• Project success has generated demand even in areas outside the project area.</li> </ul>
Has asset management improved and	It has lead to improvement of assets

will this improvement go beyond rearing of goats?	management to match the baseline information. There is indication that their poverty has changed. Hopefully as their incomes increase, they can take on other income generating activities.
What efforts have been made to help the disabled people?	The disabled were not excluded from the programme although they did not have a peculiar intervention.
Why has agriculture been chosen to be used to eradicate poverty in Uganda?	Agriculture has been specifically selected because the majority of people in Uganda (>70%) derive their livelihood from agriculture.
Livelihood interventions have been known to fail once donor funding stops; how has FARM-Africa safeguarded against this?	FARM-Africa has worked hand in hand with the local government staff and other local institutions to ensure sustainability of the project.
Were the communities consulted before giving out the goats?	The farmers were consulted and the data gathered from the baseline surveys indicated that goat farming was an appropriate enterprise because of the small land holdings dominant in the area.
Has there been any impact on the dimensions of poverty, has monitoring and evaluation been done?	Monitoring and evaluation will be done this year so that a detailed analysis of asset changes can be made.

## Case Study 2

### ***Dr. Francis Byekwaso, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, NAADS***

A case study by National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) illustrated how CSOs have been actively engaged in offering advisory services under the NAADS.

Emerging coalitions/research fora that have been noted under the programme were highlighted as follows:

- District-based Coalitions of NGOs in order to pull resources in service delivery, e.g. Coalition for Effective Extension Delivery (CEED);
- National Level Coalitions focusing on lobbying and advocacy for NAADS, e.g. Gender Alliance on NAADS (GAN);
- Intensified debate and research at the centre (championed by NGOs) to find out whether the resources under NAADS are correctly targeted to benefit the poor, e.g. OXFAM/Forum for Women in Development (FOWODE) study in Luwero;

- Central Government agencies rethinking the adequacy of some of the policies / guidelines, e.g. whether advisory services should not be exempted from taxation, like education and education services, etc.

A diversity of lessons and experiences was also shared with the participants.

## Discussions

The following is a summary of the discussions held after the presentation:

Issue	Response
What is the role of government in building the capacity of NGOs? Is there any effort to make the NGOs realise that they can advocate for change of gaps in the NAADS programme?	There is no clear and direct effort by government to put in place capacity building for CSOs. Indeed, some NGOs involved in capacity building sometimes lack capacity themselves.
Have other NGOs complemented NAADS in the monitoring and evaluation processes?	Several NGOs have been actively involved in implementation of NAADS activities; however some of them need a lot of capacity building.
Has the increased open partnerships between NGOs and Government provided an opportunity for NGOs to influence Government policy? Have the NGOs used any evidence in advocacy and lobbying to do this?	Few NGOs lobby to influence policies and this is evident in reports however there is no evidence whether this has caused change in policies.

## ODI Presentations

These focused on two short presentations followed by general discussions

- Role of research-based evidence and CSOs in policy processes (see Annex 2), *Julius Court, ODI UK*
- ODI's CSO Partnership Programme (see Annex 2), *Kate Bird, ODI*

## Discussions

Issue	Response
When should we have networks and when can CSOs work as individuals?	Networks work better than individuals because they help to generate evidence, share evidence and amplify evidence because they are faster.
There are cost implications in generating research, what is the most cost effective way of doing research?	Liaise with the government entities that have collected data and use them to get useful information. For example the Ministry of Health, Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), the internet. You can also use other people to do it for you e.g. you can get a student of a Masters Degree, or a PHD student to develop the questionnaires with the methodology and research design, or you can get international researchers with donor funding or work together to attract the donor funding. You may use interns who want to improve their CVs or find donors and other Civil Society Organisations because you have to get the evidence.
In most cases, the research done is qualitative and people do not appreciate it, how can this be improved on?	This depends on what you are doing the research for. For example you can turn qualitative research into quantitative research depending on what one wants to do. The research should be basically done using quantitative research by designing a methodology, a research design, because this makes it more understandable.
In which areas should CSOs focus when doing advocacy?	CSOs should focus in areas of their interest because this is where they have most evidence.

## Approaches to influencing policies: some experiences from participants

- Changes in government provide a good opportunity to put across demands;
- Use research based evidence in CSOs in policy processes, because policy formulation becomes better.
- Use of monitoring and evaluation to identify the impact of the project for example the TEHIP Project. Also, in Thailand CSOs have played a vital role in

combating HIV spread and the symptoms of HIV fell immediately, unlike in Southern Africa and Uganda.

- We need to look at the value of the research, rather than looking at the expense. If we look at it like a waste of time then we shall not generate any evidence and evidence is very important.
- Attractive packaging of the messages. That is, the better packaged it is the better and the less problems in convincing.
- Building capacity of the advocacy teams.

## **Participants observations**

- Sometimes politicians challenge the legitimacy of CSOs to question policies. It was noted that there may be need to package the advocacy messages properly so that they are more acceptable to politicians. The policy advocates also need to be carefully selected based on their skills and areas of expertise.
- The need for CSOs to create partnerships was emphasised because there is strength in numbers.
- The CSOs indicated the need to build their capacity, especially in research and advocacy skills so that they can be more effective.
- The CSOs were also challenged to empower communities to demand services so that that they can eventually demand for formulation of appropriate policies to address their needs.
- The participants also appreciated the importance of knowing the policy processes so that they target the right people, with the right messages, using the right approach and at the right time.
- Resource mobilisation was also indicated as a major step in the policy change process; however the resources should be used effectively to avoid waste and duplication of efforts.
- Participants noted that the impact of their efforts is often not realised because they lack success indicators. They agreed that indicators should always be developed at design stage so that these can later be used to track achievements and to record milestones.
- Monitoring and evaluation was also noted as essential in the policy advocacy process.

## **Recommendations**

- Civil society has a lot of good results but they do not mention the success stories, thus CSOs should get certifications through governments so that they are no longer tossed around.
- The capacity for monitoring systems is still lacking and CSOs should endeavour to build this capacity.
- Government should make consultations easy and provide the necessary information to the NGOs and vice versa.

- CSOs worldwide should step up by joining places of high influence in Government e.g. government taskforces etc.

## **Closing remarks**

***Mrs. Rhoda Tumusiime, Commissioner Agricultural Planning and Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries***

The Commissioner noted that policy makers appreciate the importance of information, for example the development of the Poverty Eradication, Action Plan (PEAP) took a lot of time and a lot of references from written data. Thus, the packaging matters greatly in putting across any issues that may need policy redress.

Collaboration is necessary when making policies with the people concerned. Disseminating the information in relevant ways is also very important. She noted the need to relate the politics of the day with what is taking place in the research and emphasised the importance of use briefing papers to explain matters in a simpler way so as to make reading easy. She cautioned against duplication of efforts and reiterated the importance of two-way partnerships. She thanked all the facilitators and organisers of the meeting and thanked the participants for coming and urged all to continue in the same spirit.

## Annex 1: Seminar Programme

08.15 - 08.40	Registration of Participants
08.40 - 08.50	Welcome Remarks – <i>Kaima Meya, FARM AFRICA and Kate Bird, ODI</i>
08.50 - 09.20	Self-introduction by participants
09.20 - 09.40	Address by guest of honour and official opening
09.40 - 10.10	Case Studies: 1. Farm Africa, <i>Dr. Michael Wandukwa, Project Coordinator, FARM Africa</i> 2. NAADS, <i>Dr. Francis Byekwaso, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, NAADS</i>
10.10 - 10.50	Discussion
10.50 - 11.20	<i>Tea / Coffee</i>
11.20 - 11.40	Role of research-based evidence and CSOs in policy processes – <i>Julius Court, ODI</i>
11.40 - 12.00	ODI's CSO Partnership Programme – <i>Kate Bird, ODI</i>
12.00 - 13.00	Discussion and Way forward
13.00 - 13.10	Vote of Thanks – <i>Martin Roberts, Farm Africa and Naved Chowdhury, ODI</i>
13.10 - 14.00	<i>Lunch</i>

## Annex 2: Seminar Evaluation Results

13 forms returned

### 1. What two things you have heard about in this workshop will most help your organization? (Please be as specific as possible)

- Use of evidence (or best practice examples) to influence policy and practice
- Networking and coordination with relevant stakeholders help process of policy formulation
- Using evidence for policy formulation
- The vast experiences (doing research in many countries)
- Importance of networking among CSOs, government, to create policy
- Providing evidence by CSOs to influence policy
- Use of research to fight poverty
- Use of evidence to influence government policy
- Evidence based – but evidence that is appropriate to policy makers in form of content and packaging
- Policy analysis resources
- How to influence pro poor policies
- Policy analysis and influence tools
- Policy evidence
- The skills required to link research based evidence to policy; the organisation has been left with a challenge of developing or fostering these skills
- Make use of assertive persons in advocacy
- Create partnerships as an advocacy strategy
- Build capacities for advocacy in communication
- Using evidence to influence policy
- Involving CSOs / NGOs in the policy development process

### 2. Please rate the following aspects of the workshop/seminar

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Objectives defined and achieved	1	8	4		
Concepts explained clearly	5	6	2		
Time allocated for the seminar	1	5	6	1	
Relevance to my work	6	4	2		
Well-organized	3	6	4		
Overall quality of the Workshop/seminar	2	8	1		

### 3. Please comment on the overall workshop/seminar quality and value:

- Quality has been excellent and valuable to help one start thinking about the project and how to influence policy in future
- The participants were very relevant and participation was excellent
- High quality and the presentations are based on grounded work
- It has proven very important and meaningful for the work CSOs play in Uganda; I encourage ODI to follow up and strengthen the outcome of this session for success of CSOs in Uganda's policy formulation processes
- Good
- Very relevant to CSO work

- The workshop was good although am not sure I heard evidence (from the case studies) of policy influence
- I expected to hear and learn about various Ugandan case studies that have influenced policy, unfortunately what I heard was inadequate, and this affected the quality; the value I got relates to ODI information on policy influence.
- The seminar allowed participation of the participants; it is good to share experiences
- Seminar is very valuable, but wondered whether the organisers obtained the intended output
- Good quality but little time was allocated because issues were wide and need indepth discussions to overcome challenges

**4. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for future workshops like this?**

- Plan for more case studies to be presented and discussed
- More time
- Avoid duplication of info on seminar info sheet and participant sheet and seminar evaluation sheet
- More of these workshops should be taken on
- Organisers may as well target not only the CSOs but also government representatives, parliamentarians who are directly concerned with policy issues
- More participants to be invited
- Have more case studies for policy work done shared from Ugandan CSOs for sharing best practices
- Organisers should involve or invite organisations that have long term practical experience in policy influence so that others can learn from them
- Could consider holding full day workshop to cover a lot
- Discussions require more time – half a day is not enough
- Other workshops should included policy makers
- Keep the objective simple and manageable within the time frame

**5. What follow-up support would be most useful for your work?**

- Training in advocacy to improve project impact to use this as an example to influence policy in smallholder agriculture in Uganda
- I would wish to get case studies from countries other than Uganda
- The contacts I have received will be used to consolidate future collaboration
- Building CSO capacity in advocacy issues relating to policy
- Receiving research findings / reports
- Get more information
- Greatly recommend a programme to build CSO capacity
- Case studies from various sectors that have endeavoured to influence policy
- Continue to hold stakeholders workshops to share experiences
- Accessing more information

**6. In your country, to what extent do: (Score between 0 = none and 5 = always)**

a) Policymakers use research-based evidence to be important in policy making?	2	0	2	3	1	4	2	5	3	5	3	3
b) CSOs contribute to policy making?	3	5	3	4	2	4	3	3	4	5	4	2
c) CSO's use research-based evidence to inform their work?	4	2	1	5	2	3	3	4	3	5	4	3