

ODI's Civil Society Partnerships Programme: Progress and Plans
16th A Meeting at ODI, 14th March 2006 1.00 – 7.00 pm

Dear Colleagues,

We have just come to the end of the first investigatory phase of our new six year Civil Society Partnerships Programme. I am writing to invite you to a half-day meeting at ODI from 1-6.30 pm on Thursday the 16th of March where we would like to share some of the results so far, discuss what we plan to do next and explore opportunities for collaboration and/or synergy.

As some of you already know our CSPP aims to strengthen the capacity of CSOs to contribute to pro-poor national and international development policies through i) better understanding how CSOs can use evidence to influence policy; ii) strengthened regional capacity to support CSOs to do this; iii) better information on current development policy issues for CSOs; and iv) helping CSOs to participate more actively in Southern and Northern policy networks. Given the nature of ODI, our entry point has been through Think Tanks and Policy Research Institutes that are already working with other elements of Civil Society. You can find out much more about the programme at www.odi.org.uk/cspp

Work in the first phase focused on a) improving ODI's understanding of the CSOs that are involved in policy work; b) improving ODI's capacity to work with CSOs; c) "learning by doing" through small collaborative projects; d) contributing CSO perspectives meetings and seminars; and e) initiating a small number of larger collaborations with southern organisations on global policy issues. Substantial background research has been completed, a number of Working Papers have been published, and we have held consultative workshops with TTs and PRIs and other CSOs in fifteen countries worldwide.

Twenty representatives from organisations we worked with during the first phase attended a workshop at ODI late last year to help us to develop a plan for the next phase. They are keen to continue to work together to learn more about how to use research-based evidence more effectively, and the core element of the next phase will be build this enthusiasm into a thriving community of practice where members learn together and help each other. This is summarised in the attached 2-pager.

The meeting on the 16th will be in 2 parts. In the first part (starting with a sandwich lunch at 1.00) will share with you some of the lessons we have learned so far, and would be keen to hear about your own experiences of engaging with southern CSOs. In the second part (starting at about 4.00, after tea, and finishing with an informal drink or two), we would like to share our plans in a bit more detail and discuss with you opportunities for collaboration and/or synergy.

I would be most grateful if you could let our administrator, Cecilia Norlander, (c.norlander@odi.org.uk) know as soon as possible if you would be interested in coming to this meeting. You would be welcome for just first part, or just the second part, or for all of it, just let her know which.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Young'.

John Young
Head of Partnerships and Communication, ODI, London

Programme

1.00 - 2.00: Informal sandwich lunch

2.00 - 4.00: How CSOs use research-based evidence - what we have learned so far

- Introduction to ODI's RAPID and Civil Society Partnerships Programme Phase 1 (John Young)
- How CSOs use research-based evidence (Julius Court)
- CSO capacity issues (Naved Chowdhury)
- Can CSOs effectively use research-based evidence to influence development policy/ (Discussion)
- ODI's plans for the CSPP Phase 2 (John Young)

4.00 - 4.30: Tea

4.30 - 6.00: Building Networks for Capacity development

- ODI's planned Network (Naved Chowdhury)
- Other's experiences of building networks (eg INTRAC's Praxis Programme and IIED's The Ring and others)
- Key issues for building successful networks (Discussion)
- ODI's "services" in this area (John Young)
- Could we do more? (Discussion)
- What next?

6.00 - 7.00: Informal drinks