

## **CSPP Regional Consultations – African Case Study Summaries**

### **Civil Society Participation in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy**

Taking the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MRPS) as an example, the Malawi Economic Justice Network case study discusses key issues of participation in the policy process by CSOs in Malawi. Although PRSPs called for an extensive broad-based participatory process that not only involved the government, but also members of civil society, especially the poor, in the design of policies that will affect their lives, this was not an easy challenge to overcome in Malawi. The participation of CSOs in MRPS was ensured through consistent advocacy by the civil society, while external development partners also put considerable pressure on the government to include them. The Malawian CSOs have been engaged in the budget monitoring process by analysing expenditures in different sectors under PPE (Priority Poverty Expenditure). The contribution of civil society consisted of the submission of sectoral networks to the parliament on PPEs and monitoring citizens' satisfaction with the quality of the public services using the service delivery satisfaction survey (SDSS). The study highlighted several important issues: the diverse agenda of the civil society community makes it difficult to have a common voice on policy issues; the lack of financial resources and skilled staff frequently exacerbates their limited capacity to analyse complex quantitative data; and most important of all, it is difficult to harmonise the grassroots evidence from different areas of the country in order for it to be effectively linked to the policy debate.

### **Evidence and Policy: Budget Transparency and Participation in Zambia**

The Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR) case study in Zambia was part of a bigger piece of research in which researchers from 10 African countries came together to undertake a cross country analysis to identify major weaknesses in the budget process, explore how research by civil society can assist in overcoming these weaknesses, and suggest how a platform for the involvement of civil society in the budgetary process and decisions can be developed. The major findings of the study are: i) while the legal framework that guides the budgetary process in Zambia exists, it is particularly weak in the area of procuring and managing domestic and external debt; ii) a substantial number of financial transactions take place outside the established financial system in Zambia, contributing to under-reporting of national economic activity; iii) the total resource envelope of the government is unknown because of weak accounting and information management systems; iv) government officials' lack of skills in budget management has brought the watchdog role of various ministries and institutions under question; and v) pre-budget consultations between civil society, parliament and government are particularly weak. The study findings are expected to be a factor in designing the Parliamentary Reforms programme (PRP) which seeks to improve the role and accountability of the parliament and other national institutions in budget formulation in Zambia.

### **Evidence and Policy: A case study on Land Reform in Mozambique**

Cruzeiro de Sul's case study illustrated how advocacy by civil society led to equitable land distribution in Mozambique. Motivated by the proposal that no rural dweller should be without land, 200 NGOs, churches and academics got together and launched a Mozambican civil society campaign – the Land Campaign. The Land Campaign proclaimed that in all villages in Mozambique all male and female rural dwellers have rights to land through occupation. The Land Campaign also maintained that in order to avoid conflicts over land, partnerships should be established between rural dwellers and businessmen. In 1997 the new Land Law was approved after a big struggle between civil society and the private sector which, to the delight of the civil society, did not call for privatisation of land. At the same time, the following suggestions were integrated into the Law: acknowledgement of the rights of poor people even in the absence of any title in their name; acceptance of land as security for investment; and a single system for land owned by families or private sector, putting an end to dualism. The impact of this relatively more equitable distribution of land has been evident, with the most notable changes in agricultural

productivity – which has risen 9% per year, an increase of domestic and international investment, and a dramatic decrease in the number of landless people in Mozambique. It is easy to realise that the new land law is a mix of modern and customary (traditional) law which has helped to minimise the incidence of conflicts over land. Not surprisingly, the study has also unearthed some interesting findings: access to credible information is still a challenge for civil society, with the majority of public sector employees not willing to share it with the public; there is a communication gap between different levels of government and, more importantly, between government and civil society; and the little information which is available often does not get to the population outside Maputo City due to the lack of means of communication. Finally, communities need to be proactive so that they do not become dependent on the policymakers for change. The study showed that proactive policy engagement helps to institutionalise a culture of collaboration with the government which is dynamic, equitable and participative.

### **Use of Evidence in Informing Policy Process in Tanzania: The case of ESRF**

Economic and Social Research Foundation is a Tanzanian think tank which is assisting the Government of Tanzania in developing various policies for the country. ESRF gathers evidence through its wide portfolio of work such as research, commissioned studies, policy dialogue and capacity building. In this context, it was asserted that studies and research undertaken by ESRF have impacted on policy in Tanzania. Examples include: social and economic impact of HIV/AIDs in Tanzania; Trade and Poverty issues in Tanzania; the Participatory Poverty Assessment; and public expenditure reviews. In order to strengthen its credibility with the policymakers ESRF puts emphasis on extensive consultation with the government institutions, while developing appropriate research methodologies, publishing research papers regularly (i.e. quota expenditure review), organising public seminars, workshops and policy dialogues and capacity building through training for other CSOs in Tanzania. The challenges faced by ESRF, quite appropriately, resonated with the comments made by CSOs elsewhere. These were limited financial resources, low demand from the private sector, retention of quality staff and an overall development environment where the agenda is set by different stakeholders making the policy process complex and varied. The presentation was concluded with remarks that ESRF has contributed substantially in making development research in Tanzania credible, so that in the future policies in Tanzania will have substantial research built into them; policymakers in Tanzania are now more accommodating to civil society involvement and therefore to sustain this involvement there is a urgent need to explore effective ways of financing policy research.

### **National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Uganda**

National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) of Uganda is part of an Africa-wide network for Agricultural Advisory Services (AAS) which was formed in an effort to foster and enhance experience sharing and lesson-learning on AAS in the Sub-Saharan African region. The rationale behind NAADS is the failure of the traditional extension approach to bring about greater productivity and expansion of agriculture in Uganda, despite costly government interventions. A key feature of this problem is the lack of effective approaches to empower farmers, hence the emphasis in NAADS' approach is to empower farmers to demand and control agricultural advisory services. Coupled with this, is the need to have efficient and sustainable service delivery. While NAADS provides the biggest source of financing for advisory services, through a budget support arrangement involving government and development partners, there is no clear effort by the government to enhance the capacity of CSOs in agricultural advisory services and policy research. While there are several networks in the country lobbying and advocating with NAADS, i.e. Coalition for Effective Extensions Delivery (CEED) and Gender Alliance on NAADS (GAN), there is no evidence to suggest that this has had any impact on policy. Therefore, although the trend towards private service delivery is positive in Uganda, there are still important gaps that need to be tackled. The main reasons for inadequate performance of service providers revolve around issues of technical competency, use of participatory and practical extension approaches, and application of knowledge and skills acquired. Not surprisingly, therefore, progress on development of private sector oriented service provider networks is quite slow. This has left service provider firms working in an isolated way, and not having a common voice to negotiate with local governments, as well as ensuring farmers obtain value for money.

## **Community Composting Project in Ghana**

The case study from Ghana detailed a composting project which was facilitated by a CSO called Legal Resource Centre (LRC), with two communities in Accra, namely Nima and Mamobi. The project had the twin objectives of providing employable skills to the unemployed youths in the community and managing the composting activities through active collaboration between the people and the authorities. Analyses of the policy environment revealed that although the necessary laws and regulations exist on making sanitation accessible to all Ghanaians, it was the lack of implementation which hindered their effectiveness. Composting was not considered to be an acceptable way of using the waste generated and therefore in rural Ghana this was hardly practiced. The study drew attention to various factors which influenced the decision of government on whether composting should be encouraged through supportive policies including: advocacy and lobbying by LRC for efficient and affordable sanitation services; cooperation of the community in generating evidence regarding their needs for sanitation services; and collaboration between various government ministries and institutions. The approach of gathering evidence over a long period of time increased the authenticity of the data, while the resultant qualitative and quantitative analysis also made it more credible. The experience also showed that documentation of data is crucial in making sure there is a better chance of a successful impact of research on policy.

## **The Role of Civil Society in Influencing Policy in Cross River State, Nigeria**

This case study by Development in Nigeria (DIN) illustrated how CSOs working on environmental issues have used research and advocacy to influence policy at both the state and community level in Cross River State. The issues in which the CSOs have been working include illegal logging, conflicts resulting from shifting cultivation involving Fulani pastoralists and local people, and concessions to private companies to construct roads and other infrastructures in the rainforest. Various networks, NGOs (CRS Forum for Development, Forest Monitoring Network, RRDC, One Sky, SPACE and Pastoral Resolve) and programmes (DFID funded Community forestry project, and programme and projects funded by IUCN and CIDA) also lent their support in making environmental policies in the state more pro-poor. Consequently through campaigns and environmental education programmes, the level of awareness about the impact of high risk programmes has increased significantly, community royalties for logging have risen, a logging concession to a private company by the state government was cancelled – all of which have led to increased trust between communities and local CSOs. The successes are due to working through networks, coalitions and through using advocacy and lobbying to instigate policy change. Attention can be drawn to several lessons from this exercise: research has much greater impact when it is topically relevant; members of networks working together are more effective than if they work separately; and, most importantly, communication between policymakers, CSOs and communities should be participatory, open and continuous. All of these activities together have advanced a more conducive environmental policy under the present government of Cross River state.