CSOs, Evidence and Policy Influence: Regional Workshop

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Nairobi, Kenya

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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 maximize 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. This workshop was designed to provide a forum for CSOs in Kenya to discuss the opportunities and challenges they face when they try to inform policy and share experiences about what works and doesn’t work, learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area, and identify gaps for future work.

The African Energy Policy Research Network (AFREPREN) brings together 106 African energy researchers and policy makers from Africa who have a long-term interest in energy research and the attendant policy-making process. AFREPREN is involved in a major study of bridging research and policy in the energy sector in Africa for the Global Development Network.

A case study of work by AFREPREN illustrated how it has been possible to influence energy policy through participatory research, information provision and the strategic use of simple policy advocacy tools, and workshop participants shared a wide range of other examples based on their own experience. While it clearly is possible for CSOs to influence policy, the policy context in Kenya makes this difficult and few CSOs have well developed policy advocacy skills.

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 maximize impact. There are a wide range of communication and policy advocacy tools to ensure that policy makers and practitioners get the message.

Participants at the workshop made a number of suggestions for further work to help them to promote pro-poor approaches to policy makers in Kenya including practical training, information about policy options from other countries, and help to establish policy fora and networks in Kenya.
ODI / AFREPREN CSOs, Evidence and Policy Workshop

Background

There is widespread agreement on the vital role that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can 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. Sometimes, however, it seems that CSOs, policymakers and researchers live in parallel universes. This workshop focused on how CSOs can use evidence to promote pro-poor policies. Active participation was the cornerstone of the approach in the workshop, with emphasis placed on participants' own knowledge and experience.

Objectives

The workshop was designed for the senior staff of CSOs that are engaged with the use of evidence to influence policy in East Africa as well as other key stakeholders in the policy process (governments, donors, professional associations, etc.). The workshop provided a forum for participants to:

- discuss the opportunities and challenges for CSOs to inform policy
- learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area
- share experiences about ongoing activities and what works
- identify gaps for future work

Programme

1. Introduction to the Day: CSOs, Research, Policy – Parallel Universes? (See Annex 1 for full programme)
2. Introduction of Workshop Participants (see Annex 2 for list of participants)
3. Energy policy in Ethiopia: What can CSOs do? (see Presentation in Annex 3)
4. Discussion: Insights on CSOs and policy influence
5. CSOs, Research and Policy: A Framework (see Presentation in Annex 3)
6. Challenges and Gaps: What next?
7. Evaluation and Close (See Annex 4 for results of evaluation)
Introduction Session

Opening remarks

John Young welcomed participants to the workshop, and provided an outline of the day. He provided some background information about the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Research and Policy in Development Programme (RAPID). This workshop is one of a series of workshops which are being held around the world by RAPID to help develop ODI’s new Civil Society Partnerships Programme (CSPP). The new programme aims to strengthen the capacity of southern civil society organisations to promote evidence-based pro-poor development policy. The programme will use a learning approach, first through these workshops, then through small collaborative projects with CSOs around the world, then through longer term strategic partnerships with organisations that are interested to work more in this area, and to help other CSOs in their region.

Julius Court provided a brief overview of what RAPID has learned so far about the role of CSOs in policy processes. There is good evidence that the poor benefit when civil society organisations (CSOs) are engaged in shaping policy, particularly when engagement is well-informed and leads to evidence-based policy. CSOs increasingly recognise the need to use evidence and engage with policy processes more effectively. All too often, however, it seems that researchers, civil society actors and policymakers live in parallel universes, and relations between government and civil society are strained. Researchers cannot understand why there is resistance to policy change despite clear and convincing evidence. Policymakers question the legitimacy of NGOs and bemoan the inability of many researchers to make their findings accessible, digestible and in time for policy discussions. Often, CSO’s engagement in policy processes fails to do justice to the diversity of the issues and quality of the evidence.

There are a number of challenges:

- one challenge is the limited amount of research being undertaken in the South mostly individual rather than coordinated research initiatives, (with poor research capacity) and not enough to influence policy
- there is a need to demystify policy processes and in addition, researchers need to simplify the evidence and avoid jargon while presenting their research results
- researchers do not always consider the policy influencing as part of their activities and that makes the link between the researchers and policy makers tenuous
- the majority of the research are influenced by donors as they are funded by them

The workshop objectives were to enable participants to:

- discuss the opportunities and challenges for CSOs to inform policy
- learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area
- share experiences about ongoing activities and what works
- identify gaps for future work
Presentation 1: AFREPREN case study


Waeni used Ethiopia as a case study to discuss key issues of energy policy in Africa and how CSOs can promote pro-poor policy.

Energy use in many African countries remains dominated by biomass (wood, charcoal, bio residues). There are very low levels of access to modern energy services. For example, many ordinary Ethiopians live in gross poverty because biomass is not only a form of energy but also a means of subsistence. The pressing need is for low-cost, small-scale, affordable and cleaner energy solutions for the poor. These might include small-scale investments in renewables such as solar, wind and biomass.

The bulk of funding, however, is going towards large scale investments that meet the needs of elites. These include large-scale hydro, oil and gas investments. They primarily benefit high income households, commercial/industrial sector and export to industrialized countries. This remains the focus of national energy policy in many African countries – and also in NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development).

In sum, the problem is that African energy policy is much more oriented towards elite uses rather than the majority of people, particularly the poor. The example of Ethiopia also indicates that policy is actually getting worse – the attention to small-scale and affordable energy solutions for the poor is decreasing in public expenditure.

Worryingly, there are similar patterns in other sectors:

- **transport sector**: Focus on highways but not on low cost transport options;
- **agriculture sector**: Large-scale farming approaches vs. small-scale agricultural solutions;
- **health sector**: Large urban hospitals vs. small scale rural health centres;
- **industry**: Large scale industry vs. SMEs/informal sector.

The key question is: How can one push for the needs of the poor in existing energy policy and investment patterns in Africa?

AFREPREN is responding in a number of ways to influence energy policy and investments. These include:

- **political context**: Flagship studies and projects in countries with strong pro-poor credentials (e.g. Mauritius experience with co-generation of electricity using sugar cane from small-holder farmers);
- **evidence**: CBO participation/consultation, multiple country studies provide compelling evidence; policymakers are averse to the risk of being the first to try option;
- **CSOs**: Joint government/academia/civil society studies, strengthening links with CBOs/trade union umbrella agencies and networks;
- **external**: influencing international stakeholders via the Johannesburg WSSD Conference and MDGs processes.

**Participants Observations**

- Large investments are preferred to small ones by most Governments of developing countries and is therefore difficult to push for options for the poor.
- Poor are left out of the policy processes for energy options in Africa. This is reflected by the energy polices which are skewed towards large investments mainly benefiting a small minority of middle and rich classes living in the urban areas instead of the poor in the slums and rural areas. Renewable energy options are hardly given any importance by the government.
- Cogeneration can be good source of energy for the poor. Mauritius is a good example where sugar cane is used as a source for energy which is produced through cogeneration. In this process energy can be made available without any large investments and the revenue can accrue to the small scale farmers having significant impact on their poverty.
- AFREPREN has members in government who have experience as researchers and they can assist in making sure that impact and evidence is reflected through policies.
- Multistakeholder views and involvement is crucial in making any policy acceptable to the poor. Indigenous participation process and voices from bottom is very important. Workshops and meetings which bring together different stakeholders especially from the government are very useful in solving misunderstanding between CSOs and the government regarding intentions and jurisdictions.
- It is difficult for CSOs to influence policy processes in Kenya. Overlap between ministries regarding responsibilities creates policy vacuum. In Kenya there is a serous lack of coordination between Ministry of Energy, Environment and Agriculture. Each ministry tend to have a monopoly over the policies it promotes and rarely involves other relevant ministries in making polices.
- Pressure and lobbying by the local community can help push through a policy agenda. Sondu Miriu Power Project in Nyando District was given as a case example.
- It is very difficult to access information stored at the ministries and that makes the evidence generated in the field quite biased and one sided.
- Evidence is not only about informing polices as it has also strong ethical and political implications.
- Policy processes are not well documented by Government and the public is therefore not enlightened on how they can participate. The policy making process seems to be closed and access to policy makers is limited.
- There is an obstacle in terms of political will and ethics in Kenya. Even when there is compelling evidence, policy change does not happen and other triggers
are still needed. Need to find out how to overcome selfish ambitions in the political arena.

- AFREPREN should consider actively engaging in lobbying and collaborating with pressure groups to influence policy.
First Group Session

In the first group session, participants were divided into three groups to consider the following questions:

1. What do you do to promote pro-poor policy? Share examples of success and failure.
2. What are the key factors affecting: (i) The impact of your work and (ii) CSOs, policy and evidence in E. Africa.
3. What is your insight on how CSOs can use evidence to promote pro-poor policies?

Group I Notes

- CSO should give the poor a voice
- advocacy (Very effective if it is backed by hard facts, highlights the issues of the poor and is targeted at the right audience – policy makers)
- CSOs should form network in order to have a stronger voice
- provide access to information
- CSOs should get involved in educating communities
- there should be more communication between CSOs in similar areas to reduce duplication
- find ways to link grassroots activism to national policy

Case Example

- Policy for the water sector – CSO engaged a wide range of stakeholders (communities, faith based organisations, private sector). In addition, government was involved, to (1) understand their context (2) sensitize them
- Lobbying through MPs, and using the ‘power of the vote’ i.e. if you do not push for our priorities, we will not vote for you in the next election.
- Identify local leaders with an interest and work through them.

Factors affecting the impact of CSOs, policy and evidence in Africa

- lack of goodwill
- lack of information/ignorance (lack of transparency in policy making process; communities do not know their rights; available mechanisms are not used)
- disconnect between different players (who is responsible for what unclear; acts and legislation governing the sectors are unclear) e.g. irrigation is a responsibility of many ministries (water, agriculture, land, energy) but responsibilities are not well streamlined.
- vested interests - policy process being hijacked by bureaucrats/politicians e.g. constitutional review process and proposed health bill in Kenya
- rationalization of various acts and legislation
• process would be better with more participation
• the government is very suspicious of the CSOs historically: although this is changing in recent times as many of the CSO members are now in the government
• it is difficult to reach the policymakers as they are very busy and have lots of pressure from different groups
• CSOs also have negative attitude towards the policymakers: this needs to change

Lessons
• try to change the policy makers point of view/frame of mind
• involve policy makers from the beginning
• engage pressure groups
• “positive” lobbying
• have hard data and numbers to back your case
• clearly articulate your legitimacy and mandate – mobilization of communities to back your ideas
• well researched policy papers
• take advantage of policy windows e.g. energy policy is reviewed every 10-15 years, need to get into the process early enough
• CSOs should share information with each other

Group II Notes
• An example where pro-poor policies have succeeded to some extent is in the “Jua Kali sector” in Kenya which promotes small scale, light industry.
• The sector has enjoyed Government support through introduction of technical courses in the Primary and Secondary school education curricular
• Jua Kali (informal sector, small enterprises) is a sector, development of which is strongly supported by the evidence in the ground. Large scale urban unemployment prompted various stakeholders to get together and support the development of this sector in Kenya. This proves that when the situation in the ground is ripe for change the necessary inputs can come from the ground instead of from the top.
• Jua kali sector has encouraged self employment and led towards small scale industrialization in Kenya. The development of this sector was also facilitated by the support provided by CSOs in order to get the youth groups together and provide the members with vocational skills.
• Financing of Jua kali is still a major impediment towards development and strengthening of the sector. This illustrates the lack of policy incentive for a thriving sector. Thus micro financing for micro enterprises is a major policy failure and needs to be addressed.
• Jiko (solar cooker) sector is another sector which shows the linkages between employment, gender and renewable energy. The sector is still in its early phase
but clearly shows that the burden of gathering fuel wood will be hugely reduced if women are provided with solar cooker. The policy also needs to be, therefore developed so that this sector is properly supported.

Case example:
- To gather evidence in the ground Action Aid in Kenya mobilises community groups. A good example is its work with Kenya Sugar Board where it has mobilised farmers to lobby with the board to cancel their debt. This has also become a major policy agenda of the government. Unfortunately the coffee farmers have not been able to do that.
- Through its work with Kenya Sugar Board, Action Aid Kenya also successfully lobbied with the members of the parliament to lobby with the concerned ministry as they have greater access to the policymakers.
- Gender issues in sugar farming have also been highlighted.

Lessons Learnt
- Votes can be used by civil society as an incentive tool to policy makers such as councillors and MPs to encourage them to lobby for the community issues in Government.
- CSOs should realize that sometimes takes time for results to be achieved. It took 3 years of lobbying for sugar cane farmers before results could be seen.
- CSOs should involve the community in all stages of the project including collection of evidence and lobbying.
- CSOs should start documenting successes and failures in project undertakings to enhance the learning process and sharing of experiences.

Factors affecting the impact of CSOs, policy and evidence in Africa
- The government is very suspicious of the CSOs historically. Although this is changing in recent times as many of the CSO members are now in the government.
- It is difficult to reach the policymakers as they are very busy and have lots of pressure from different groups.
- CSOs also have negative attitude towards the policymakers. This needs to change.

Group III Notes
- There was limited participation by NGOs in the PRSP process in Kenya and they were unable to contribute substantially for example to the financial recommendations and trade policies.
- CSOs participated and provided inputs during the stakeholder workshops organized to review the draft Kenya Energy Policy. AFREPREN Contributed substantially to the Renewable Energy Chapter.
• AFREPREN and ACTs (African Centre for Technology Studies) held a side event during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg providing a forum for stakeholders to discuss development priorities for Africa.

• Most African Governments are not receptive to CSOs. On the other hand, most CSOs have a negative attitude towards Government and working with policy makers.

• CSOs in Kenya lack capacity to influence policy and have limited understanding of the policy making process.

• Research sometimes does not serve its purpose because of the way it is presented and communicated.

• CSOs should use evidence from other countries with similar conditions to influence policy.

• CSOs should publicize the issues and problems they are tackling to policy makers and the wider public.

**General Comments During Plenary Discussion**

• Litigation could be an effective way of influencing polices. PRSPs are not a representative way of dealing with development issues as it was hugely influenced by the government agenda and the participation of CSOs was largely ceremonial. The case of the Human / Wildlife conflicts in Kenya presents a good example of how you can influence policy through litigation.

• PRSP process needs to have proper participation so all the stakeholder can put forward their agendas.

• The consultative PRSP process was controlled and participating stakeholders were not able to raise controversial issues affecting the poor such as the adverse Structural Adjustment Programmes. The process was strictly monitored by Government who wanted IMF to approve grants. It is therefore recommended that in future, CSOs could organize their own forums to look at alternative PRSP options.

• CSOs need to be like story tellers in the sense that they need to put forward hard facts in way that the policy makers can understand and relate to them.

• Not everyone has all the qualities so it is important to have people with different skills and background working together in a team.

• Policy makers are very difficult to access and rarely help the CSOs in understanding the policy making process.
Presentation 2: CSOs, Research and Policy – A Framework for Action

John Young and Julius Court focused on how CSOs can engage with researchers and policymakers to improve development policy and practice.

Better links between researchers, policymakers and civil society groups can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. For example, the results of household disease surveys informed processes of health service reform which contributed to a 43 and 46 per cent reduction in infant mortality between 2000 and 2003 in two districts in rural Tanzania. The problem is that the link between research and policy is tenuous and difficult to understand because policy processes are complex and much research is not very policy relevant.

ODI’s Context, Evidence and Links Framework is an analytical and practical tool. The aim is to simplify the complexity of how evidence contributes to the policy process so that policymakers and researchers can make decisions about how they do their work to maximise the chance that policies are evidence-based, and that research does have a positive impact on policy and practice. It is based on a thorough review of the literature and a wide range of case studies at international, regional and national level across the developing world.

Four broad groups of factors have been identified, the first of which we call external influences. These are the factors outside a particular country which affect policymakers and policy processes within the country. For example, in small, heavily indebted countries, World Bank and bilateral donor policies and practices can be very influential. At national level the factors fall into three main areas. The political context includes the people, institutions and processes involved in policymaking. The evidence arena is about the type and quality of research and how it is communicated. The third arena links is about the mechanisms affecting how evidence gets into the policy process or not.

For CSOs wishing to influence policy and practice, understanding the context, evidence and links is just the first part of the process. Our case studies also identify a number of practical things that researchers need to do to influence policy and practice, and how to do them.

- In the political context arena you need to get to know the policymakers, identify friends and foes, prepare for regular policy opportunities and look out for policy windows. One of the best ways is to work with them through commissions, and establish an approach that combines a strategic focus on current issues with the ability to respond rapidly to unexpected opportunities.
- Make sure your evidence is credible. This has much to do with your long term reputation. Provide practical solutions to policy problems in familiar language and concepts. Action-research using pilot projects to generate legitimacy seems to be particularly powerful.
- Make the most of the existing links by getting to know the other actors, working through existing networks, and building coalitions and partnerships. Identify the key individuals who can help. You need people who can network with others, mavens to absorb and process information, and good salesmen who can
convince the sceptics. You may also need to use informal “shadow networks” as well as more formal channels.

Influencing policy change is an art as much as a science, but there are a wide range of well known and often straightforward tools that can provide powerful insights and help to maximize your chances of impact on policy.

**Comments after the presentation of the RAPID framework**

- are there ways of engaging policy makers on a more regular and long term basis?
- the framework is very practical but needs more time to unpack it.
Second Group Session

In the second group session, participants were divided into three groups to consider the following questions:

1. **What would help you influence policy more?** (More research? What capacity building efforts would help? Would networking initiatives help? International collaborative policy influence?)
2. **What is value added of ODI in this area?**

**Group I Notes**

- CSOs need to build their Capacity and learn about advocacy
- CSOs need to undertake more research on issues concerning communities that is issues at local level rather than national.
- CSOs need to assist persons with identified problems. An example of an organisation that has tried to do this is the International Commission of Jurist (Kenyan chapter). They identify aggrieved parties in need of legal assistance and help them seek justice. This strengthens their case when they are advocating for human rights policies to be implemented.
- CSOs need to know how to access policy information. In Kenya, policies are formulated in Nairobi and most community-based organisations do not have access to the documents and might not even be aware of their existence.
- CSOs need to know more about budgetary processes. This is important because sometimes CSOs come with policies that cannot be implemented by the government because of budgetary constraints.
- ODI could assist in the following ways:
  - ODI should help convene policy forum and invite policy makers to attend.
  - ODI should form a network that brings together CSOs and continue to support it.
  - ODI could recommend how people at grassroot level can be informed on policies affecting them
  - ODI could recommend how Community Based Organisations can be linked to research institutions in order to access evidence
  - ODI should set up a website that would be accessible to Community Based Organisations as well as other information modes for those who cannot access the internet
  - ODI should do more on the area of generating policies from grassroot level (participatory action research)
  - ODI should undertake more case studies in Kenya

**Group II Notes**

- CSOs need to understand policy processes better
- CSOs need to build institutional capacity to manage funds better
• CSOs need to simplify jargon in their communication
• Need to domesticate global issues and make them relevant to our situation and not take them on first hand. For example need to understand cultural hindrances.
• It pays to be consistent in the stand taken
• ODI can do the following
  Fund similar workshops with wider participation from policy makers to create awareness on importance of policy engagement
  Could develop practical tools that CSOs can refer to while undertaking a needs assessment

Group III Notes

• CSOs need to undertake more research to influence policy effectively.
• Community should be invited give comments during the design phase of the research.
• Evidence provided by CSOs needs to be practical
• Sustainability is important when looking at capacity building initiatives. Need to facilitate skills transfer Sustainability is a very important issue in capacity building and this needs to be addressed through analysis of different capacity building tools. Skill transfer should be an integral part of any capacity building work.
• Research findings need to be presented in layman’s language.
• Leadership training can be very useful.
• Policy can be hugely influenced by networking and partnership with various stakeholders.
• CSOs in Kenya need to improve on Networking because it makes the message louder and reduces duplication
• ODI can do the following
  Facilitate leadership training for CSOs especially on how to apply the RAPID framework
  Help point out policy windows.
  Assist in resource mobilization for CBOs,
  Information dissemination
  Provide funding and help the local CSOs in resource mobilization.
  Capacity Building in research and policy arenas.
  Networking and collaboration in identifying policy windows and police influencing
  Research and Information dissemination.
General Comments

- More work is needed on how CSOs can interact with policy makers and simplify the message for example translating the technical ideas in local language.
- How do you ensure continuity of advocacy especially on issue of National concern when project funding is exhausted and the project has come to an end? One solution would be to think of programs instead of projects since programs can be funded by donors and different projects.
Conclusions and next steps

John Young thanked all participants for their hard work during the workshop, which had really helped him to understand how CSOs are engaging with policy processes in Kenya. As in most countries, it’s clearly difficult, with much overlap between ministry responsibilities and opaque policy processes, so it’s difficult for CSOs and the public to contribute. But there are success stories, and AFREPREN’s case study and other stories during the day illustrate that CSOs have clearly succeeded in influencing policy (e.g. in the Jua Kali sector) but it clearly takes time. In some cases CSO views are actively sought but, as the experience of PRSPs across Africa has shown, often only to discuss the non-controversial aspects.

It is reassuring that the RAPID framework seems useful, though it clearly needs further development, and that participants expressed interest in learning policy advocacy skills. A number of useful suggestions have been made about how ODI could help in this area: by convening policy fora, establishing a network, providing examples from elsewhere, providing training on the framework, and capacity building in research and policy formulation. We will work these into plans for the next stage.

In the meantime, John promised to send all participants a full workshop report, and a CD-ROM with all of the background materials (and everything else that is on the RAPID website), and to be in touch soon to discuss the next steps.
Annex 1: Programme

CSOs, Evidence & Policy Influence: A Regional Workshop
Jacaranda Hotel, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.
2 December 2004, 9:00 – 5:30

Background and Objectives

There is widespread agreement on the vital role that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can 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. Sometimes, however, it seems that CSOs, policymakers and researchers live in parallel universes. This workshop focuses on how CSOs can use evidence to promote pro-poor policies. Active participation will be the cornerstone of the approach in the workshop, with emphasis placed on participants’ own knowledge and experience.

The workshop will provide a forum for participants to:

(a) discuss the opportunities and challenges for CSOs to inform policy;
(b) learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area;
(c) share experiences about ongoing activities and what works;
(d) identify gaps for future work.

Audience

The workshop is designed for the senior staff of CSOs that are engaged with the use of evidence to influence policy in East Africa as well as other key stakeholders in the policy process (governments, donors, professional associations, etc.).
Workshop Programme

8:30 - 9:00  
Registration

9.00 - 9.30  
Opening, Introduction and Outline
Self Introductions by Participants

9.30 - 10.30  
Case Study of Energy policy in Ethiopia: What can CSOs do?
CSOs, evidence and policy influence: Introduction
Discussion

10.30 - 11.00  
Coffee

11.00-12.30  
Feedback and discussion of the Group work

12.30 - 1.45  
Lunch

1.45 - 2:15  
Practical RAPID framework & Tools for Policy Influence

2:15 - 3:15  
Group work. 3 groups:
  o one to look at Political Context/Evidence Interface;
  o one to look at Evidence/Links interface
  o one to look at Links/Political Context interface
each to consider: i) specific examples of things that CSOs do in this area (& what other actors do) ii) what seems to work well
Feedback and discussion

3:15 – 3:30  
Tea

3:30 – 4:00  
Challenges and Gaps: What next

4:00 – 5:00  
Group work: What CSOs need to be able to better use evidence to influence policy (same groups as above)
Feedback and Discussion of Options

5:00 – 5:15  
Conclusion / Evaluation
Close
Annex 2: Workshop participants

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Annex 3: Presentation

Slide 1

CSOs, Evidence and Policy Influence
Learning Workshop
Workshop, Nairobi, 2nd December, 2004

Slide 2

Outline of the Workshop
Registration
• Introductions
• Case Study and Key Issues
Coffee
• Groups & Feedback
Lunch
• Framework & Practical Tools
• Key Gaps for Future Work
Tea
• Groups & Feedback
• Close

Slide 3

Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- Britain’s leading development Think Tank
- £8m, 60 researchers
- Research / Advice / Public Debate
- Rural / Humanitarian / Poverty & Aid / Economics (HIV, Human rights, Water)
- DFID, Parliament, WB, EC
- Civil Society

For more information see: wwwodiorguk

Slide 4

RAPID Programme
- Research
  - Developed literature reviews
  - Bidding Research and Policy
  - Communications
  - Knowledge Management
- CDIP: Project
  - 30 primary case studies
  - Phase III studies (35 projects)
- CDI projects
  - 4 detailed case studies
  - HIV/AIDS
- Advisory work
  - Workshops and seminars
  - wwwodiuk

Slide 5

Partnerships Programme
Aim:
Strengthened role of southern civil society organisations in development policy processes
Outcomes:
- Understanding how CSOs use research
- Regional capacity to support CSOs
- Improved information from ODI
- Global collaboration

Slide 6

Regional Capacity
- Ethical Principles of partnerships etc
- Mapping of CSO’s and organisations that support them
- Small-scale collaborations (internal)
- Regional Workshops
- Small-scale collaborations (external)
- Identification of long-term partners
- Support (and capacity-building)
- Collaboration on global projects

Slide 7

Self Introductions
1 minute
- Name
- Organisation
- Area of Work

Slide 8

Background
- CSOs increasingly being involved in policy processes (from service delivery).
- Move from challenging state / overall governance to policy engagement.
- But, engagement often doesn’t do justice to the breadth of evidence.
- Southern research capacity has been denuded.
- The credibility and legitimacy of CSO involvement is questioned.
- CSOs, researchers and policymakers seem to live in parallel universes.
The Opportunity

• The results of household disease surveys informed processes of health service reform which contributed to a 43 and 46 per cent reduction in infant mortality between 2000 and 2003 in two districts in rural Tanzania.
  – TEHIP Project

Objectives

To provide a forum to:
(a) discuss the opportunities and challenges for CSOs to use evidence to inform policy;
(b) learn about the latest worldwide research and practice in this area;
(c) share experiences about ongoing activities and what works;
(d) identify gaps for future work.

AFREPREN

How can CSOs promote pro-poor policy & practice in the African Energy Sector?

Africa - Energy Sector

• Energy use in many African countries dominated by biomass (wood, charcoal, bio-reations)
• Low levels of access to modern energy services
• Pressing need for low-cost, small-scale, affordable and cleaner energy solutions for the poor

Should Have More Investment in Smaller and Renewable Energy Options

- Large-scale energy e.g. large-scale hydro
- Small scale renewable energy e.g. solar, wind, biomass, etc.

Expect Greater Use of Abundant Small-Scale Renewable Energy Resources in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Expect Use</th>
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<tr>
<td>Solar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Biomass</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydros (Small)</td>
<td>Extensive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Slide 17
Current Energy Policy Focus on Conventional Large Scale Energy Investments

- Large-scale hydro and oil & gas investments
- Primarily benefit high-income households, commercial/industrial providers, and export-oriented countries
- Focus of national energy policy of many African countries including RAPID (Rural Partnership for African Development)
- Few benefits flow to the poor in Africa

Slide 18
Energy sector capital budget share (%) and total budget share of household income in Ethiopia, 1992-2005

Slide 19
Current Energy Policy Promotes Inverse Energy Investment Pattern

- Large-scale technologies
- High energy costs
- Few benefits to the poor

Slide 20
What Can CSOs Do To Influence Energy Policy/Investment Trends?

- How can one push for the needs of the poor in existing energy policy and investment patterns in Africa?
- Energy policy approved as technical issue undertaken by small group of “experts” – How can the voice of the poor be heard?
- Similar patterns in transport sector: Focus on highways but not on how transportation options – Agriculture sector: Large-scale farming approaches vs small-scale agriculture solutions
- Health sector: Large urban hospitals vs small-scale rural health centers
- Poverty: Large-scale industry vs O&M/Institutional sector

Slide 21
Insights/Examples

- What advice do you have for the Energy Sector case?
- What can you do to promote pro-poor policy?
- What’s your insight on how CSOs can help promote pro-poor policies?

Slide 22
What Did AREPREN Do To Influence Energy Policy/Investment Trends?

- Political context: Fragile studies and projects in countries with strong pro-poor credentials (e.g. Mauritius operation with co-generation of electricity using sugar cane farm small-scale farmers)
- Evidence: CSOs participations (consultation, multiple country studies, provide compelling evidence – policy makes-practice to risk of being the first to try a plan to try using traditional energy in Asia/South East Asia)
- Links: Joint government/academia/NGO/society studies, strengthening links with CSOs and social unionism agencies and networks
- External: Johannesburg WSSD Conference, MOG

Slide 23
Any clarifications?

Slide 24
CSOs, Evidence and Policy Processes
CSOs: Definitions and Functions

- **Definition**: "organizations that work in an arena between the household, the private sector and the state to negotiate matters of public concern".

- **Functions**:
  - representation
  - technical inputs and advocacy
  - capacity-building
  - service delivery
  - social functions

Research: "any systematic effort to increase the stock of knowledge"

Policy: a "purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors"

- Agendas/policy horizons
- Official statements/documents
- Patterns of spending
- Implementation processes
- Activities on the ground

**Reality...**

- "The whole life of policy is a chaos of purposes and accidents. It is not at all a matter of the rational implementation of the so-called decisions through selected strategies."
- "Most policy research on African agriculture is irrelevant to agricultural and overall economic policy in Africa."
- "politymaker's "aem to regard research as the opposite of "action" rather than the opposite of "anarchy."

**Reality II... Parallel Universes?**

*Vincent Cable – MP on legislators & use of evidence:*

- speed
- Superficiality
- Spin
- Secrecy
- Scientific ignorance

More at: [www.cd.org.uk/rapid/Meetings/ Evidence](http://www.cd.org.uk/rapid/Meetings/Evidence)

**Any Clarifications or Questions?**

**Discussion & Group Work**
Slide 33

Group Task 1: CSCs, policy & evidence in East Africa

- What do you do to promote pro-poor policy? Share examples of Success and Failure
- What are the key factors affecting ... The impact of your work? CSCs, policy & evidence in E. Africa?
- What is your insight on how CSOs can use evidence to promote pro-poor policies?

Please find a volunteer to take notes!

Slide 34

Feedback: CSCs, policy & evidence in East Africa

- What do you do to promote pro-poor policy? Share examples of Success and Failure
- What are the key factors affecting ... The impact of your work? CSCs, policy & evidence in E. Africa?
- What is your insight on how CSOs can use evidence to promote pro-poor policies?

Slide 35

An Analytical Framework

External Influences
- Domestic and international influences
- Donor policies etc.

The political context
- Political and economic structures
- Policies, culture, institutional
- Changes in leadership

The evidence
- Evidence, policy changes
- Knowledge etc.

The links between policy and research
- Policy uptake, research approaches

Slide 36

Other models

1. Ideal model
2. Duty-dominated model
3. Island model
4. Technocratic model
5. Policy failure model

Slide 37

Political Context: Key Areas

- The macro-political context (democracy, governance, media freedom, academic freedom)
- The sector / issue process (Policy uptake = demand - competition) [H3 Domain: political and social. Power]
- How policymakers think (narratives & policy streams)
- Policy implementation and practice (bureaucracies, incentives, street level, own for marshalls, participatory approaches)
- Decisions made by the policy process (policy processes, votes, policy windows and crises)
- Context is crucial, but you can maximize your chances

Slide 38

Evidence: Relevance and credibility

- Key factor – did it provide a solution to a problem?
- Relevance:
  - Typical relevance – What to do?
  - Operational usefulness – How to do it?
- Credibility:
  - Research approach
  - Of researcher or of evidence itself
- Sustenance advocacy efforts are often needed
- Communication

Slide 39

Links: Feedback and Networks

- Feedback processes often prominent in successful cases.
- Trust & legitimacy
- Networks:
  - Epistemic communities
  - Policy networks
  - Advocacy coalitions
- The role of individuals: connectors, mavens and salesmen, champions.

Slide 40

External Influence

- Big “incentives” can spur evidence-based policy - e.g. EU access for PRSP processes.
- And some interesting examples of donors trying new things re. supporting research
- But, we really don’t know whether and how donors can best promote use of evidence in policymaking (credibility vs backlash)
Conclusions
- Research is essential but...
- Other work is needed to ensure it contributes to the development and implementation.
- Clear lessons about how are emerging:
  - Political context is crucial — understand it to maximize your chances
  - Figure out what evidence is needed and how to package it for policy makers
  - Collaborate with other actors

**Practical Framework & Tools**

**The Analytical Framework**
- External Influences: Demographic, economic, and cultural factors
- The political context: Political and economic structures and processes, culture, institutional pressure, contextual radical change
- The evidence: Involves the regime it challenges, wisedom, research approaches and methodology, authority of the message, how it is packaged

**A Practical Framework**
- Campaigning, Advocacy, Networking, Research, Policy Making, Evidence

**Using the framework**
- The external environment: Who are the key actors? What is their agenda? How do they influence the political context?
- The political context: Is there political interest? Is there room for manoeuvre? How do they secure the agenda?
- The evidence: Is it there? Is it relevant? Is it practically useful? Are the concepts familiar or new? Does it need repackaging?
- Links: Who are the key individuals? Are there existing networks to use? How best to transfer the information? The media? Campaign?

**What researchers need to do**

**Skills of (pro-poor) policy entrepreneurs**
- Storytellers
- Networkers
- Engineers
- Fixers

**Practical Tools**
- Overarching Tools
  - The RAPID Framework
  - Using the framework
  - The Entrepreneurship Questionnaire
- Communication Tools
  - Communications Strategy
  - SWOT analysis
  - Media/Device
  - Making use of the media
- Policy Influence Tools
  - Influencer Mapping & Power Mapping
  - Lobbying & Advocacy
  - Campaigning, Simple Guide
  - Competency self-assessment

---

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Slide 49

**Outcome Mapping**
- Define the desired outcomes or changes in the context of a policy decision.
- Prioritize development by listing the change with anticipated outcomes.
- Linking to the legal or policy framework that outlines the desired outcomes.
- Linking to a specific goal of the project, strategy, policy, or program, and give the timeline of achieving the desired outcome.
- Assessing the development, facilitation, and implementation stages.

Slide 51

**Political Context Assessment Tool**
- The macro political context
- The sector / issue process
- Policy implementation and practice
- Decision moments in the policy process
- How policymakers think

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of Interests of Policymakers</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Public Interests</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Interests</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interests</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slide 53

**Communications Strategy**
- Identify the audience(s)
- Identify the message(s)
- Promotion
- Evaluate impact and change as necessary
- Clear strategy
  - Interactive
  - Multiple formats

Slide 55

**Practical Tools**
- **Outcome Mapping & Power Mapping**
- **Cost-Benefit Analysis**
- **Message Design**
- **Making use of the media**

Slide 50

**Mapping Policy Processes**
- Central Government
- Parliament
- Bureaucrats
- Civil Society
- State Government
- Implementation
- Civil Society

Slide 52

**Forced or Analysis**
- Force Field Analysis Change
- Force Field Change

Slide 54

**Different Roles**
- Advocate
- Facilitator
- Communicator

Slide 56

**Discussion:**
Tools for policy influence
- What tools & tricks do you / CSCs do to promote pro-poor policy?
  - Specific examples of things you / CSCs do
  - What other actors do?
  - What seems to work well?
Challenges and Gaps

Implications for CSOs
- Need to be able to:
  - Understand the political context
  - Do credible research
  - Communicate effectively
  - Work with others
- Need organisational capacity
  - Staff
  - Internal processes
  - Funds

Managing Think Tanks
- Type, Focus and Niche
- Staff and Motivation
- Quality Control
- Communication
- Getting the most from your board
- Fund-raising
- Financial Management

(Surprisingly little on policy influence in different contexts)

Networks
- Roles of Policy Networks
  - Filtering
  - Amplifying
  - Inveter / Provider
  - Facilitator
  - Convening
  - Communities
- Policy Code Sharing
- Some networks net; some networks work

Discussion & Group Work

Group Task 2:
Needs and Future Work
- What would help you influence policy more?
  - More research?
  - What capacity building efforts would help?
  - Would networking initiatives help?
  - International collaborative policy influence?
  - What else?
  - What is value added of ODI in this area?
- Please find a volunteer to take notes!

Other sources of information:

Visit http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid
or email rapid@odi.org.uk for a copy of the RAPID CD-ROM

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Annex 4: Evaluation results

CSOs, Evidence & Policy Influence: Regional Workshop
Nairobi, Kenya, 2 December 2004

Evaluation Form (22 participants)

1. Please rate the following aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>FAIR</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>VERY POOR</th>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Concepts explained clearly</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time allocated for the workshop</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance to my work</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop was well-organized</td>
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<td>Overall quality of the Workshop</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. What aspect was the most value to you and why?

- Example of CSO influence in policy process and use of evidence. It gave me an opportunity to learn and share from others.
- CSOs engagement with government on policy review and ability for CSOs to influence policy
- CSOs – Policy links
- Case studies – researching theory and practice
- Experiences from other sectors on their experience in influencing policy
- Examples on forestry in the ODI literature provided
- Tools and skills to use in policy influence
- Digesting concepts in group discussions
- Evidence on policy
- The conceptual framework of policy development using research studies / evidence and how to package it for use by actors
- Group discussion
- Getting different opinions was enlightening
- Group discussion. Getting different opinions was enlightening
- Discussions because there was more time to express opinions, learn and share experiences
- Relevance to my work
- Help in improving knowledge of weaknesses or lack of proper links in the various task and objectives we aim to accomplish
- The status of energy policy in African countries and how it can be made to reflect pro-poor aspirations
- Group discussion – because of learning from the others and sharing experience
• Learning on the practical RAPID framework and tools for policy influence – quite informative
• ODIs capacity building and how we can work with them in future.
• Networking with other organisations was perfect!
• Additional information and networking
• Using evidence to influence policy, well explained

3. Please comment on the overall workshop's quality and value:
• Very good
• Was very incisive and informative. It has definitely added value in our day to day operations in policy review and influence
• Good but need more time
• Very rich information (background info) and good mix of participants
• To me, it is between fair and good
• Very valuable but less time to go into issues deeply
• The quality was high in time management, engagement of participants
• More time needed for interactive discussions / presentation on the policy influence framework
• Very good and valuable
• Quite good. However was not very exhaustive owing to limited time
• The workshop was informative, objective and highly inspiring, and has added lots of value to my journalistic endeavours
• Both the quality and value was good. My request would be for AFREPREN to reach more organisations
• High quality and with a lot of value in the policy influencing process
• The workshop was perfect, very educative and elaborate. But the information was bulk and it was too squeezed (timewise), it's a pity it was too short. I learnt a lot
• The concept was very good
• Simple to understand but of high quality
4. What other areas would you be interested in?

Please indicate your level of interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>VERY HIGH</th>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>VERY LOW</th>
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<td>Building Institutional Capacity</td>
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<td>Support with Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other: Capacity building; Involving more policy makers in workshops; Advocacy at community level; Advocacy must be retraced; Local linkages; Funding</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?

- Provide more time for discussions.
- Probably make it 2 days
- Keep us posted on new developments
- Please reorganise another workshop for participants in a consortium form
- Thank you for sharing your knowledge and experiences with CSOs of Kenya
- Arrange for a follow-up to the workshop
- Do more capacity building for the civil society organisations
- Very good time organisation and time keeping
- Attendance was not very punctual by most participants
- More information on the energy sector in Africa
- Increased networking among various actors working in the field of energy
- I am willing to contribute more to future workshops, god willing and once the communication is done on time
- Key need for the workshop information / presentation to be packaged and distributed to participants
- I am very interested to attend more of your workshops and hope you shall contact us (KEWFA) when you do
- Need a wider audience and more time
- Should organise more of these and form a network