

Re-Inventing Civil Society Formations for More Effective Pro-Poor Regional Policy Influencing in Southern Africa



A quantitative assessment of progress in the Southern Africa Trust's work between baseline indicators of 2007 and results in 2010.

March 2011

Undertaken for the
Southern Africa Trust

by



PO Box 12364, Mill Street, 8010, South Africa
info@nbideas.co.za

Postnet Suite 100
Private Bag X121
HALFWAY HOUSE
Midrand
1685
South Africa

4 Midridge North
International Business Gateway
6th Road (Off New Road)
Midrand
South Africa

Tel. +27 11 318 1012
Fax. +27 11 318 0814
E-mail: info@southernafricatrust.org
www.southernafricatrust.org

ISBN: 978-1-920260-10-1

| TRUST 3101/05
052 - 116 - NPO
PBO No 930020783

© Copyright - Southern Africa Trust

Table of Contents

Summary Overview	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Process and Methodology	6
3. Comment on Response Rate, Database and Sample	8
4. Profile of respondents	10
4.1 Type of Organisation	10
4.2 Geographic Scope of Work	10
4.3 Extent of Work in the SADC Region	11
4.4 Grant Recipients	12
4.5 Primary Activities for all Respondents	13
4.6 Primary Activities of Trust Grant Recipients	13
4.7 Thematic Focus of Organisational Work	13
5. Survey Findings	15
5.1 Capacity	15
5.2 Evidence-based Research	21
5.3 Networks and Dialogue	25
5.4 Knowledge	28
5.5 Participation in Regional Processes	32
5.6 Enabling Environment	35
6. Conclusion	39
Annexure 1: List of research reports and policies developed	40
Annexure 2: Copy of questionnaire	42
Annexure 3: List of policy makers and donors interviewed	51

Summary Overview

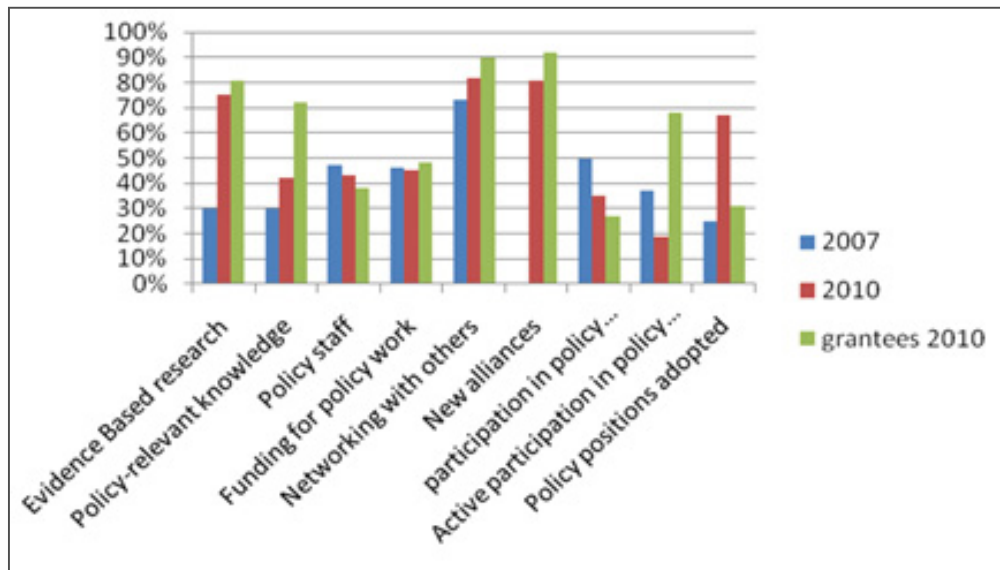
Four years ago the Southern Africa Trust conducted a baseline survey as part of its monitoring and evaluation programme. The purpose of the baseline was to provide a snapshot of the capacity for, and extent and quality of engagement in, pro-poor regional policy influencing by civil society formations in the southern Africa region, against which the Trust could evaluate the impact of its work. The indicators used in the baseline measurement corresponded with the Trust's programme logical framework plan for its first five-year programme. This mid-term review uses the same questionnaire as the baseline survey of early 2007 to provide a snapshot of the sector in 2010 and track any changes.

The key findings of the survey are that:

- Capacity for policy-relevant work in the sector, taken as a whole, has strengthened.
- The general knowledge base about regional policy development processes has improved. In particular, the knowledge base of responding grantees, advocacy organisations, and those focused on development governance practices has improved. The Trust is recognized as an important source of knowledge on regional policy development processes for these partners.
- Networks across sectors have significantly strengthened, with substantially more organisations networking and with a broader range of interest groups, especially researchers, the mass media, business groupings, and parliamentarians, and especially on development governance issues.
- Funding to grantees of the Trust for policy influencing work is better than the average for the sector. However, this is not matched by their human resourcing for policy work. Yet, there is significantly increased engagement by the sector in pro-poor regional policy development. This corresponds with the Trust's capacity building strategy of creating better value-adding linkages and alliances (i.e. a policy influencing value chain) between the resources of different types of civil society formations rather than attempting to build all dimensions of capacity for better policy work exclusively within individual civil society organisations. The study suggests that grant partners of the Trust are linking with, and relying more on, the external resources available within other types of civil society formations (such as research and advocacy groups) for policy influencing capacity. More investigation and analysis of this trend is required, relating to the innovativeness and effectiveness of the Trust's capacity building approach.
- There is a significant increase in the proportion of organisations in the sector doing evidence-based research. The study shows that 81% of responding grantees base their policy work on evidence-based research, compared to 2007 when only 30% of respondents reported evidence-based approaches. This is especially seen on themes relating to informal cross-border trade and development governance.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents and 80% of grantee partners of the Trust that produced new policy recommendation had their inputs taken up in policy development processes, up from 25% in 2007. Groups working on trade, migration, and social protection have the highest success rate in inserting their policy positions into policy development.
- Compared to national level evidence-based research, organisations in the sector are still not doing enough regional level (including country comparative) evidence-based research to influence regional policy development.

- The Trust is an important actor in regional multi-stakeholder dialogue and a critical enabler of pro-poor regional policy engagements, especially through its role in linking different civil society groups and creating networks amongst them, as well as linking civil society groups to policy making forums.
- The Trust would benefit from reviewing its database and better categorising organisations. This would permit targeted communications and surveys.

The key survey indicators are summarised in the table below:



The survey was administered in English, French and Portuguese to a randomly selected sample of 500 organisations from across the southern Africa region, drawn from the Trust's database. Fifteen percent (15%) of the sample submitted completed responses and a further 6% returned incomplete responses.

The main reasons for the fairly low response rate were that the database used to draw the sample was not focused enough specifically on the target groups, the high turnover of personnel in the sector, and changes in the contact information of targeted respondents.

Respondents were most likely to be non-governmental organisations working on advocacy at a regional level on development governance and food security. There was a much more even spread of respondents across the whole southern Africa region compared to 2007.