

Enabling environment

The Trust's fourth strategy or output area focuses on creating an enabling environment for policy engagement by civil society organizations representing the voices of poor people with the targeted output being:

"Innovative approaches to build an enabling environment for civil society organizations to play a more effective role in policy development will be developed and disseminated."

Four enabling environment change objectives are detailed to achieve this, namely: creating new poverty focused regional and national policy development processes and mechanisms; increasing the public profile of innovative policy engagement practices, models and practitioners; generating new learning about the operating and legislative environment for civil society organizations; and ensuring mass media coverage of civil society perspectives on relevant policy issues.

Seventeen percent (17%) of the Trust's grants portfolio has been given to supporting 29 projects that contribute towards an enabling environment for civil society policy engagement. This amounted to \$1,812,402 at the end of February 2009.

List of past grant partners contributing towards an enabling environment

Mail & Guardian, Music Is A Great Investment, Sauers Street charities, Center for Civil Society, Fundacao Desenvolvimento Comunidade, Gun Free South Africa, Institute for Global Dialogue, Inter Press Service (IPS), Pamuzinda Productions, SADC-Council of Non Governmental Organisations & Southern Africa Regional Documentation Center

List of current grant partners contributing towards an enabling environment

Fairtrade in Tourism South Africa, Inter Press Service (IPS), Media Institute of Southern Africa, Save the Children (UK), Southern African Broadcasting Association, Mail & Guardian, Central Region Milk Producers Association, Save Zimbabwe Now!, AFS Interculture South Africa, Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN), The Helical Group, Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa

This strategy is best reflected in the creation of national and regional poverty observatories in the region, building on the work of G20 and the national poverty and development observatory in Mozambique which is discussed in the case study following.



**Case Study 16:
Mozambique's national Poverty and Development Observatory
shares its learning**

Mozambique emerged in the 1990s from a civil war driven by the supported by the apartheid regime in South Africa which necessitated a centralised State where autonomous civil society action was largely absent. Shifts towards neo-liberalism and democratisation, most evident in the 1990 Constitutional change, created some space for NGOs and partnerships between the State and civil society. The government's review of the first Plan of Action for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) broadened the space for engagement. Mozambique's national Poverty Observatory, created as a platform for engagement between the government and civil society organizations became a mechanism for government and its partners to develop a national vision and development plan (including the PARPA), facilitate citizen participation in the development and implementation of the PARPA, and monitor the implementation of the PARPA and other activities aimed at poverty reduction.



In 2003, the Mozambican government invited about 20 organizations and networks from civil society (representing the religious sector, trade unions, peasants, the private sector, technical and professional associations, and research institutions) to take part in the first panel of the Poverty Observatory. This group eventually became known as the G20. The core objectives of the G20 are to:

- Facilitate the participation of civil society in the Poverty Observatory;
- Facilitate the engagement of civil society organisations in the analysis, discussion, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction and development policies; and
- Contribute towards capacity building on matters of advocacy and negotiations with State entities to enable the voices of the poor to be heard in decision-making.

The G20 has become the national platform for Mozambican Civil Society to engage with all levels of government and international donors in the context of direct budget support for poverty reduction. The Annual Poverty Report produced by civil society organizations is a proactive mechanism for engagement in the Poverty Observatory. With support from the Trust to the G20, the Poverty Observatory has been extended to include representation from provincial structures and other civil society groupings and is now a 60 member body that is engaging citizens at district level across the country on the national poverty reduction and development strategy.

Despite the clear successes of Mozambique's Poverty Observatory and the G20, there is a need to continuously review and improve it. Emerging issues to ensure its continued success relate to protecting the space for debate and engagement, improving the quality of evidence-based and informed engagement by civil society organizations, ensuring government accountability, and preventing the co-optation of civil society organisations by government so that civil society organizations are no longer seen to be independent.

As part of profiling best practices and also of creating mechanisms for civil society inclusion in poverty related policy dialogue, the Trust supported the G20 to document and shared its experience with other civil society organizations in the SADC region. Equally, after a long process of relationship building and dialogue with national partners across the region, the national Poverty Observatory model was shared with poverty focal points of other national governments in the region through a linking and learning workshop facilitated by the Trust in partnership with the Mozambique ministry of planning and development, targeting five countries in the region: DRC, Mauritius, Madagascar, Angola, South Africa, and Mozambique. Experiences were shared about the different models for stakeholder engagement in national poverty observatories, as well as the value and difficulties of institutionalised civil society engagement in poverty observatories. Since the workshop, the DRC has requested the Trust's assistance with the establishment of its national poverty observatory. Mauritius is also setting up a poverty observatory with involvement from the Trust, while in Malawi the Trust is supporting the national civil society umbrella body, CONGOMA, to undertake work on the possibility of setting up a national poverty observatory. In the case of South Africa, the Presidency has asked the Trust to partner with it in supporting the development of a national social contract between the government and civil society organizations for the development and implementation of a national anti-poverty strategy. The Trust's work to link poverty focal points across countries in the region is clearly having a significant impact on the development of new national stakeholder engagement platforms for the development and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies.



New poverty focused regional and national policy processes and mechanisms created that include the structured participation of civil society organizations

The Trust has increased dialogue for better policies and strategies to overcome poverty at a national and regional level within SADC. It has focused on creating new poverty-focused regional and national policy development processes and mechanisms that include structured participation by civil society organizations.

While different models are being adopted in different member countries there is growing recognition of the need for a structured mechanism for the engagement of non-state actors in poverty reduction policy development. The DRC is setting up a national poverty observatory. Dialogue in Madagascar, Angola and Malawi is on-going to determine the best platform for such engagement. Using a different model, the Trust has supported civil society organizations in South Africa to engage in the national anti-poverty strategy which prioritises a partnership with CSOs.

“The struggle against poverty requires support, not only from the state, but also from business, NGOs and others who are not poor. The Presidency will develop an explicit strategy for working with existing structures to prioritise the elimination of poverty, encourage concrete commitments outside of the State and get feedback on programmes.” (South African national Anti-Poverty Strategy, 2008)

At a regional level the Trust’s focus has been on supporting SADC to set up a SADC regional poverty observatory.

“We further resolve to work towards the establishment of a regional poverty observatory to monitor progress made in the implementation in the regional main priority areas of poverty eradication (food security, climate change, energy, economic development, infrastructure and human capabilities)” SADC Heads of State and Government SADC declaration on poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The Trust has worked with SADC to set up a multi-stakeholder advisory group to guide the establishment of the regional poverty observatory, while it also separately supports the regional civil society apex organizations to develop their own thinking about national and regional poverty observatories through ongoing national and regional civil society dialogue about the issue. Further than this, the SADC secretariat has also proposed an annual stakeholder consultation forum to provide a standing platform for civil society organizations, including business, to directly engage the executive secretary of SADC about the regional development agenda in general. Such a forum, if approved, will ensure that SADC deepens its accountability to citizen’s organizations in the region – as compared to the current institutional arrangement that includes only a standing accountability and dialogue forum between donors or International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) and the SADC secretariat.





DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Increased public profile of innovative practices, models and practitioners

Publicising innovative and effective practices for civil society engagement in policy development and implementation for poverty reduction is part of building the momentum for change in the region. As a donor and actor in the region, the Trust is well placed to both identify and publicise good practices. One of the Trust's change objectives is therefore increased public profile of innovative practices, models, and individual policymakers and development practitioners.

The primary mechanism for identifying and sharing best practices is the Drivers of Change awards. Organised in partnership with the Mail and Guardian newspaper's Investing in the Future awards (which the Trust supports), nominations for the Drivers of Change awards are accepted annually in English, French and Portuguese. The prestigious awards highlight innovative approaches that directly impact on poverty and recognise policy work that makes a real difference to the material conditions of people living in poverty. Nominations are received in four categories: government, business, civil society and individuals.

Since 2006, 10 drivers of change from Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, South Africa and Zambia have been recognised in the business, civil society, government and individual categories. To date, 118 nominations having been received from 13 SADC countries. Only Botswana and Seychelles are yet to participate in the awards.

Innovative examples of models for inclusive policy development and strategies to overcome poverty that have been profiled through the Drivers of Change awards consist of forums for stakeholder engagement in policymaking, sector-wide industry partnerships amongst companies that partner with development agencies and other civil society organizations to address poverty-related challenges while improving productivity and employment creation, outstanding civil society initiatives at the core of supporting sustainable local livelihoods, and remarkable individuals who have driven change in the way the sector from which they come engages in development with other role-players.

For example, one winner was the Basic Needs Basket project run by the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) based in Lusaka. The project is an innovative monthly survey of how much it costs a family of six to meet its basic food and non-food essentials, compared against an average family income. Over the years, the independent survey produced through the involvement of ordinary people in districts throughout Zambia, has shaped how the national budget is interpreted. It has become a major tool for ordinary people to talk to policymakers about national priorities to overcome poverty. As a result of the Trust bringing together several interested partners from several countries across the region to learn from this model with a view to piloting it in other counties of the region, this instrument is now being used in Malawi and South Africa, as well as in Kenya and Nigeria.

"This is a very innovate project with a very strong impact in the region and its partnership with other organizations is a good example . . . it demonstrates that real people are making an input" the Drivers of Change and Investing in the Future panel of judges said in giving the award.

Each year, the awards are presented at a celebration in Johannesburg that attracts a wide range of high level leaders from business, civil society, and government. The guest speaker at the awards celebration is customarily a former head of state from southern Africa. This has included former president Joachim Chissano of Mozambique and former president Cassam Uteem of Mauritius. The winners of the awards are selected by a panel of judges, most of whom are independent specialists from different sectors – but including the executive director of the Trust and one trustee.

The case study below of the Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) and the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) provides an example of how this approach is being expanded through the Trust's grant making, while at the same time linking into the strategic interventions led by the Trust's programme team in its regional poverty observatory unit.





Case Study 17:

Measuring the changing cost of a household food basket tells the real story of survival for poor people

Drawing on the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection's (JCTR) work on its Basic Needs Basket project, the Pietermatizburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA) initiated a similar project in South Africa. The Trust facilitated the link between JCTR and PACSA. The Trust supported PACSA to develop and undertake its networking and research as a basis for developing a common tool for advocacy purposes in southern Africa. Linked to its grant support to PACSA to do this work, the Trust also linked PACSA with the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute (SPII) as a technical resource agency that could help PACSA to develop this initiative. SPII was established through seed funding from the Trust. It received support from the Trust to contribute to the development of an appropriate measure of poverty in South Africa from a civil society perspective, in order to strengthen poverty eradication interventions. The partnership with PACSA enabled SPII to link its theory with evidence gathered from poor people and illustrate its objections to

an exclusively monetary approach being used to determine a poverty line in South Africa.

SPII conducted the research as part of engaging in the SA poverty debates. As Isobel Frye, executive director of SPII comments: "The partnership enabled us to make the break into primary research and changed the way we work. The approach now informs a lot of our work." PACSA also benefited from the theory and rigour of working with researchers in SPII. PACSA was assisted to adapt the Zambian tool which was designed for a subsistence economy to one applicable to a cash based economy in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. Finally, by working together both organizations increased their impact on policy and also their profile. SPII is now recognized as a key national think tank on poverty in South Africa. It has become a key civil society role-player in the development of South Africa's national anti-poverty strategy and discussions to establish a national social contract against poverty between the South African government and civil society organizations.

New multi-country comparative learning about the legislative and operating environment for civil society organizations

Prevailing legislation has a huge impact on the ability of civil society organizations to engage in policy processes. The Trust therefore prioritised generating multi-country comparative learning about the legislative and operating environment for civil society organizations in southern Africa to inform national review of the enabling environment for civil society organizations.

The Trust adds value to existing work in member countries by providing multi-country comparative learning about the legislative and operating environment for civil society organizations. It also makes every effort to link its work in this area with what is being done by other organizations such as the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and Civicus. To this end it has partnered especially with Trust Africa, an independent pan African foundation that strives to secure the conditions for democracy and equitable development throughout Africa. Efforts were combined to commission national studies into the legislative environment facing civil society organizations in the region. Through the Trust's contribution to this partnership, national studies provide information on all SADC countries. In addition, Trust Africa seconded its programme director to the Southern Africa Trust to focus on this and other joint programmes, who prepared a synthesis report of the findings for dialogue between members of the Pan African Parliament and civil society organizations (as explained on page 70). The complete report is still to be published, but it will also be taken to the regional civil society apex organizations and their national members in all SADC countries for engagement with parliamentarians and policy makers in the countries of the region.

Increased regional mass media coverage of poverty related issues

The mass media is an important vehicle to reach beyond a narrow circle of development specialists to set a poverty-focused agenda in the public sphere at large. The Trust has recognised this and targeted increased and sustained cross-border mass media coverage of poverty-related issues related to the work of partner organizations and thematic issues that are addressed by the Trust.

As with most of the other change objectives the Trust has developed several partnerships with key agencies to achieve this objective. Firstly, it has partnered with the Mail & Guardian newspaper to profile regional development issues and the work of its partners on those issues. The Mail & Guardian newspaper is one of only two print media that is widely distributed across most of the countries of southern Africa, with a rapidly growing youth readership. It also has a very popular online version of the newspaper that attracts a large international readership. A secondary aim of the partnership is to develop a pool of regional journalists reporting on development issues and expand the Southern African media coverage on development issues. The Trust supports the Mail & Guardian newspaper to become a truly southern African regional publication.

Case Study 18:

The Mail & Guardian expands its regional development coverage

The Southern Africa Trust has partnered with the Mail & Guardian newspaper since 2006 to bring news of both the incidence of, and initiatives to end, poverty in the southern Africa to its readers. Initially a monthly and then weekly southern Africa page has become a regular feature in the newspaper.

Through this partnership, the Trust has profiled 56 issues and related partner organizations. Some of these articles have been syndicated and appeared in other publications in the region.

The Mail & Guardian is widely regarded as being the foremost development newspaper in southern Africa. Its partnership with the Trust has helped to:

- grow the newspaper's readership in the region
- increase the profile and credibility of organizations while simultaneously developing a bank of documented articles and photos for the Trust and its partners for use by others (including the Trust's back doors)
- strengthen the impact of the policy influencing work of its partners
- raise the level of debates about regional issues amongst the newspaper's readership,
- contribute to the development of a regional perspective and a regional identity amongst the newspaper's readership – which includes many decision and opinion makers in all sectors of society, especially in South Africa but increasingly across the region.

The Trust also partners with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) to recognise and promote journalism that profiles poverty related work, to popularise the right to information, and to link the campaign on the right to access information to issues of poverty reduction.

Thirdly, the Trust partnered with Inter Press Service (IPS) in Africa to strengthen coverage of the key poverty-related development issues expressed in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This partnership is developing a body of journalism and analysis on progress towards the achievement of the MDGs in Africa to contribute to increased debate and a higher profile for the activities of African civil society organizations in poverty reduction. IPS is a press agency that develops development news stories and opinion pieces that are syndicated to newspapers and other publications.

Fourthly, the Trust partnered with the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) to produce the regular radio show SADC Calling, which addresses southern African regional development issues. SABA is a network of public broadcasting corporations from throughout the region that promotes the development of broadcasting excellence, promotes capacity building through staff training and broadcasting programme exchange; and provides a platform for professional dialogue and technical advancement amongst public broadcaster in the region. SADC Calling covers stories from a southern African perspective with the purpose of promoting peace, democracy, cultural exchange, gender equality, non racialism, good governance, HIV and AIDS prevention and care, trade and others topical issues. It is broadcast in the across the southern Africa region and national radio stations further rebroadcast the programmes in their respective countries.

Through the support of the Southern Africa Trust, SABA was not only able to improve the quality of the SADC Calling programme and generate renewed regional interest from national broadcasters, but it also boosted its Channel Africa staff capacity. Channel Africa is the SABC radio station that produces SADC Calling on behalf of SABA. The reporter is now able to do field trips to rural areas to directly seek out community voices.





“Through Southern Africa Trust support, SADC Calling has given the SABA respect in the region. We are at this stage planning a regional workshop for the media that will take place in mid-2009, focusing on audio streaming. We realize that there are some countries in the region that do not have the right software to rebroadcast the programmes and we intend to educate them in order to reach more people,” explains Amina Frense, SABA project manager.

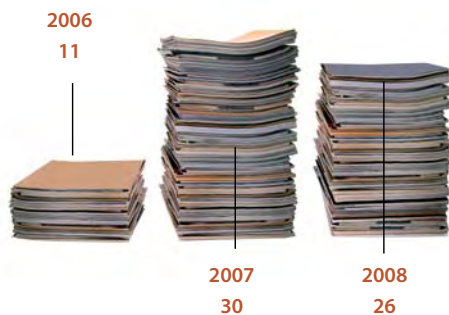
In addition to the above partnerships, the Trust also supported the development of SADC Today – a regional bulletin about developments in SADC processes that is produced by the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) for distribution in all SADC countries. It has proved to be a very helpful resource for civil society organizations to be kept informed about regional policy development processes in SADC.

These partnerships, combined with the communications functions internal to the Trust, have contributed to the massive growth in the profile of the Trust and its partners in the region. The Trust has had print and broadcast media coverage originating in 20 different countries, 12 of which are southern African countries. In the 12 months prior to March 2009, the Trust was reported in media reports originating in 16 different countries, compared to 10 countries the previous year and five in the Trust’s first year of operation. As at the end of March 2009, the Trust was reported in the mass print and broadcast media 346 times. This excludes the 56 project features published in the Mail & Guardian newspaper. The graph below reflects the coverage from June 2006 to March 2009.

The Trust had more than two-and-a-half times more media coverage in its second year of operation than it did in its first year and almost seven times more in the 12 months before the end of March 2009. Media coverage was about 2.7 times higher in those 12 months compared to the previous year.

Figure 10: Steady year-on-year increase in media coverage by type of media hits

Print



Radio



Television



Internet

