

In addition to the support for country wide and regional processes, the Trust has worked with individual partners and sectors to increase the number of partner civil society organizations participating in regional policy processes. In part, this is due to the Trust's support of the various regional civil society apex organizations that in turn have encouraged their members to participate in shaping regional policy processes. Some examples are detailed in the case study below.

Evidence-based Advocacy by the Poor and Marginalised

The third strategy and output area focuses on ensuring the regional policy agenda reflects the policy objectives identified by poor and marginalised constituencies.

The regional policy agenda will reflect policy objectives identified by poor and marginalised constituencies

This is achieved through increasing by strengthening the credibility of regional civil society voices by ensuring the inclusion of marginalised civil society organizations that truly represent voices of poor people in policy discussions, and ensuring that policy statements reflect their perspectives.

The output is best demonstrated by work done by the Trust towards the SADC poverty and development conference as detailed from page 53 and by the work towards the establishment of national and regional poverty observatories, detailed from page 72. However, as the list of grant partners below reflects how the Trust has also worked with a host of partners to strengthen the voices of the poor and marginalised through representative civil society organizations, and in particular to increase these voices in policy development. These voices will be further strengthened as the regional poverty reduction framework is formally adopted through consultation and dialogue in SADC and through the establishment of the SADC regional poverty observatory. As at the end of February 2009, the Trust spent \$2,329,594 or 22% of its grant portfolio in this area and allocated 30 grants. Thirty-two percent of the live grants portfolio is allocated to evidence based advocacy.



List of past grant partners supporting evidence-based advocacy by the poor and marginalised

Khanya African Institute for Community Driven Development, Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Agency, Siyabhabha Trust, Skillshare South Africa, Youth Development Network, Foundation for Civil Society, Helical Group / Tsebo consulting, South African National NGO Coalition, Forum das Angolanas, Organisation TARATRA, SADC Secretariat, Southern Africa Microfinance and Enterprise Capacity Enhancement Facility, Zambia Council for Social Development, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Gun Free South Africa, Institute for Democracy in South Africa

List of current grant partners supporting evidence-based advocacy the poor and marginalised

Amka Kazinga, Progressive Communal Farmers Association, Thusano Lefatsheng, Sedikong sa Lerato, GADRA Advice and Community Work, Machobane Agricultural Development Foundation, Makandi Tea and Coffee Estate Ltd, Connect Africa, Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, Human Sciences Research Council, Leonard Cheshire International (Southern Africa), South Africa Liaison Office, Trade and Development Studies Center, Tiger Kloof Educational Institution

In addition to working indirectly with partners through the grants allocated for institutional development and strengthening organization, the Trust also directly supports opportunities for the poor and marginalised to mobilise for regional advocacy and activism through direct action. One such example was support for the People's Summit on Reclaiming SADC: Building a Democratic SADC for People's Development in Johannesburg in 2008. This provided a platform for local activists from poor communities across the region to review the regional situation and share views on the state of regional development and cooperation. It was attended by over 400 participants from 11 SADC countries, a significant increase from previous years. A People's Summit Declaration, reflecting the voice of poor communities themselves, was issued at the end of the meeting culminating in a citizen's march to the SADC summit venue to make their presence felt and their voice heard. Support from the Trust offered popular social formations of the region the space to share their experiences and formulate strategies on how best to improve the plight of the impoverished in SADC.

At a national level, the Malawian example below provides some insight into how voices of poor people are being directly engaged to influence the policy agenda.

Case Study 11: Speaking out against poverty in Malawi

Poverty in Malawi is deep and widespread. Malawi is one of the least developed countries in the world with a GDP per capita of US\$195.3. According to the 2006 Human Development Report, Malawi ranks 11th from the bottom out of 177 countries, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of about 0.388. This means that about two thirds of the population of around 12 million people, 51% of whom are women, live in deep poverty. Malawi is one of the 189 countries that committed themselves to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Council for Non-Governmental Organizations in Malawi (CONGOMA) is an umbrella body for over 300 members and is an influential member of the national civil society taskforce on MDGs in Malawi. In 2007, the Trust supported CONGOMA's Stand Up and Speak Out Against Poverty campaign aimed at motivating the poor to take responsibility for demanding accountability from government in reducing poverty towards achieving the MDGs, as part of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP).

The intended impact of the campaign was to renew government's commitment to the MDGs, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and regional and global development strategies; increase policy, social and political dialogue between government and civil society; and increase awareness of the MDGs within the country with a special focus on women, girls and other excluded groups. The October 2007 campaign happened when the world had reached a mid-point in the 15-year time frame for achieving the MDGs, and only weeks after the national ministry of economic planning and development had announced that Malawi would not be able to achieve its MDGs by 2015.

Over 2 million people participated in the Malawi campaign, which mobilised rural communities, educational institutions, markets, churches, government departments and ministries, and some funding partners. The popularisation and localisation of the MDGs was achieved through activities such as SMS texting, distribution of MDG materials like T-Shirts and fliers, and whistle blowing at the launch of the MDGs mid-point progress report. The media partnered through radio and television programmes and printed articles. Over 1.6 million school children participated in the campaign.

Whilst it is difficult to measure the impact of the campaign in the short-term there are indications that the campaign has made a significant impact: increased public expenditure allocations to education, health and agriculture; poverty relief interventions; increased consultation with civil society organizations and the inclusion of civil society organizations such as CONGOMA in government development task forces and committees; the participation of CONGOMA members in the national monitoring and evaluation system resulting in the production of civil society shadow reports on development progress; and the participation of government institutions in some CONGOMA campaign activities.

Similarly, the Trust's support to the civil society trade network in Malawi (CISANET) enabled thousands of ordinary poor people to mobilise their voices against the economic partnership agreement (EPA) that was on offer from the European Union (EU), because they felt it would unfairly damage their economy and result in further job losses. As a result, the government declared that it would not sign the EPA with the EU in its current form.



An increase in the formal inclusion of pro-poor civil society voices on policy issues

As the knowledge base and capacity of civil society organizations has been strengthened they have been able to take better advantage of dialogue opportunities that have been created. This has resulted in an increase in the formal inclusion of civil society voices on poverty-focused policy issues during key regional policy development discussions. There are numerous examples that demonstrate the success of the work of the Trust in this regard. For example, at the launch of the SADC Free Trade Area during the SADC summit in Johannesburg in 2008, both civil society organizations and business had space to formally speak to their positions on the free trade area. The civil society position was developed through consultation by a wide range of representatives of trade unions, faith based organizations, and NGOs from across the region, in cooperation with popular formations in a regional Peoples' Summit. This came about as a result of the Trust's consistent efforts in collaboration with partner civil society organizations since 2006, to ensure that regional policy makers recognise the importance of including civil society perspectives in deliberations at key meetings. The example below describes how the work of the Trust has helped to insert voices of the poor in policy dialogue.

Case Study 12:

The poor speak out on poverty in South Africa – and get a response

With grant, technical, and logistical support from the Trust, the African Monitor along with several other civil society organizations in a coalition, has been able to gather data from grassroots communities that reflect the perspectives of the poor and channel them towards shaping the development of the governments national anti-poverty strategy. The coalition of organizations held community based poverty hearings in all nine provinces of South Africa in 2008. They created a platform for community members living in poverty to share their daily challenges and to measure the government's progress in addressing poverty. Each public hearing was presided over by independent commissioners drawn from the national Human Rights Commission, the national Gender Commission, the Southern Africa Trust, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the national NGO coalition (SANGOCO), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other civil society groups. Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, founder and president of the African Monitor, presided as chair commissioner. Attendance varied from 300 to 1500 participants per hearing. Participants were provided the opportunity to share their stories through public testimonies, focus group interviews, one-to-one interviews as well as written testimonies. All evidence was documented through digital and written recordings, as well as widespread media coverage.



“At the hearings we listened to people living in poverty, who told their stories with dignity,” explains Archbishop Ndungane. “We found terrible disparities between the richest and poorest. I saw the face of poverty in the eyes of far too many men and women, children and the elderly, and especially people with disabilities.” The 2008 Poverty Hearings concluded that there is a huge mismatch between the national constitutional provisions, policies and programmes that the South African government has put in place to address the plight of the poor and the daily reality of the poor.

Demand is high for this kind of qualitative and quantitative information that is rooted in evidence drawn directly from the grassroots, which is reliable and up to date. The African Monitor has had requests from government ministries, the private sector, regional structures such as Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), media agencies, donor agencies, NGOs and academia for the outcomes of the hearings. Consequently, data from the poverty hearings has been invaluable. The national government and many of the provincial governments recognised the importance of the hearings from the outset, and followed the proceedings with attention.

Namhla Mniki from the African Monitor maintains that the impact of the Poverty Hearings has been significant for the following reasons: broad participation in policy dialogue by communities that “felt free to participate and share their experiences”; the highlighting of hunger as an increasingly important poverty issue in South Africa; the “receptiveness and excitement” by the South African government “to hear end user feedback”; and

the eventual launching of a national anti-poverty strategy by the government. The hearings also opened doors for the formal inclusion of civil society voices, directly representing perspectives of poor and marginalized people, in the policy development on poverty. In South Africa, the Office of the President and the Department of Social Development have both since established formal engagements with civil society organizations to guide the country's antipoverty work. The new national anti-poverty strategy that has been crafted includes a firm recognition of the importance of government partnerships with civil society organizations. It is identified as one of key pillars of the strategy: "The strategy aims to reinforce partnership at all levels among government departments and agencies, business, organised labour and other civil society and nongovernmental organizations."

In line with this recognition, the coalition of organizations involved in the hearings formally voiced the outcomes of the hearings as recommendations during the launch of the draft anti-poverty strategy at the South African presidency. And it's now gone even further with dialogue already on the way between a broad spectrum of civil society organizations and the Presidency of South Africa to establish a national social contract against poverty, to back up the national anti-poverty strategy with a plan for practical action. This national process in South Africa links directly to the Trust's regional work to put poverty at the top of the regional policy agenda and establish national and regional poverty observatories or other institutionalized forums for ongoing visioning, planning, implementation, and monitoring of anti-poverty strategies through the engagement of all key social partners – especially organizations representing voices of the poor.

Namhla maintains that the Trust is playing an important facilitative role within the region. "The Trust is filling a gap. We started conversations two years ago and the Trust is consistent in finding funding and staff to drive the (anti-poverty) agenda. We can see the trail and the milestones being met," she says.

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In another example, the Trust's support to the work of Save the Children on migrant orphaned and vulnerable children has impacted on the regional policy agenda. Research undertaken through the project, working directly with migrant children, challenged the common understanding that child migration entails only trafficking and refugee movement. It demonstrated that children often cross borders in southern Africa, unaccompanied, as a survival strategy. The research report focused on South Africa and its response to unaccompanied migrant children because South Africa is a popular destination country and should provide more comprehensive support and protection to unaccompanied migrant children. As a result of this research work and subsequent lobbying by a coalition of civil society organizations, migration has been included as a dimension of child vulnerability in the SADC Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Youth Strategy. In addition, Save the Children has been recognised as a key actor on the issue as the extract from the SADC statement launching the SADC Brigade below confirms:

"Initial engagement with the host nation may be limited to socio-economic and political development as part of international conflict prevention efforts and relief agencies. Such development and relief agencies may be UN bodies, such as United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Save the Children" (SADC Media Statement August 2007)

In another example supported by the Trust, Gender Links focused on driving change in the gender and development policy environment in southern Africa through the coordination of a regional civil society coalition of gender focused organizations called the Southern African Gender Protocol Alliance. The alliance campaigned for the drafting and adoption of a SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. It played a major role in lobbying and advocating, at both the national and regional levels, for the Protocol to be signed. Through this work, there has been awareness raising on key gender challenges in the region through advocacy on the Protocol.

Also, the Trust's research, coordination, platform building, and policy dialogue facilitation work on informal cross border trade, food security, and microfinance has all begun to find traction in SADC policy discourses – all based on making evidence-based knowledge development linkages and building regional alliances between poor people's direct experience and voice, representative civil society organizations, researchers, and policy makers. The example on microfinance below details one such case.



Case Study 13:**Microfinance practitioners raise concerns about the regional policy environment**

Growing international evidence shows that access to micro-finance is regarded by the poor, especially women, as a highly valued resource with tangible benefits such as long-term increases in income and consumption, greater cash-flow stability where access to food, clothing, shelter and education is protected, decreased vulnerability to disasters or shocks, and increased ability to build their asset base.

In recognition of the potential of the micro-finance sector to contribute to poverty eradication, the Southern Africa Trust commissioned research to examine the nature of the sector and its impact on poverty reduction in the SADC region. This enabled stakeholders to be better informed in their positions towards developing a SADC regional poverty reduction framework.

The research was led by Southern Africa Microfinance and Enterprise Capacity Enhancement Facility (SAMCAF), an independent regional microfinance capacity building agency. Researchers interviewed several microfinance practitioners to determine the benefits and problems associated with the provision of microfinance in the region. A panel of experts reviewed the findings of the research in June 2008 and a policy dialogue was convened in May 2009 between microfinance national associations, regional microfinance research networks, representative civil society organizations, and specialist resource people. This regional platform worked to make recommendations to integrate microfinance issues into the SADC finance and investment protocol. Participants confirmed the evidence from the research study which concluded that overall, the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction in the region has been minimal. They were, however, convinced on the basis of the experience of some of successful microfinance institutions that the sector has potential to contribute significantly towards poverty eradication. The workshop identified a number of constraints which included inadequate microfinance policy and regulatory frameworks in the region, poor policy coordination among governments, donors and other agencies seeking to support the sector, inadequate capital to allow for increased outreach to the poor, limited capacity among many microfinance institutions, and the poor image of the sector due to rampant malpractice by some practitioners in the region.



The outcomes of the discussions were subsequently fed by the group into recommendations towards the SADC poverty reduction framework for consideration at the SADC poverty and development conference. The regional poverty reduction framework now contains these recommendations on microfinance.

Subsequently, the group of microfinance associations met in Lusaka, Zambia, with support from the Trust and agreed to constitute themselves as a new southern African regional platform of microfinance associations with a regional secretariat based at SAMCAF, to engage with SADC governments to take forward the implementation of the recommendations contained in the regional poverty reduction framework.

The Trust continues to support the development of this platform and to facilitate its engagement with SADC.

Formal recognition of credible civil society voices is permeating policymaking structures in southern Africa. This is reflected in the unprecedented decision of SADC to include civil society organizations as equal partners in an advisory group on the design and set-up of the SADC regional poverty observatory. The Trust also serves on that advisory committee of SADC.

Regional policy statements directly address poverty issues inserted through advocacy by civil society organizations

The Southern Africa Trust works to ensure that regional policy statements, influenced by civil society organizations, directly address poverty-related issues. With support from the Trust, civil society organizations have not only responded to existing regional policy development processes by ensuring that these reflect the interests of the poor but have, in some cases, broadened the policy agenda.

The work of EcoCity supported by the Trust on biofuels and trade policy in the case study below is one example of how civil society organizations have engaged constituencies and influenced the regional policy agenda.

Case Study 14:

Stretching the policy agenda to make agrifuel production work for the poor

Biofuel production is high on both the energy and food security agendas – not least on southern Africa. If done incorrectly, increased agrifuel production could have serious and lasting negative implications for land rights and food security in the region – affecting poor people in a disproportionate way, especially rural communities and those dependent on access to low priced staple foods for their survival. Yet, many countries in southern Africa are rapidly developing biofuel programmes based on the need to meet energy global energy demands. And civil society organizations have not yet adequately engaged this new phenomenon.

A project supported by the Trust through Citizens United for Renewable Energy and Sustainability (CURES), which is hosted by the EcoCity Trust, therefore convened a network of community-based organisations, NGOs, and researchers and gave them the opportunity to learn more about the reality of biofuel production in southern Africa so as to give input into policy development on biofuel production. The project sought ways in which the potential of biofuels for cleaner and cheaper energy could be realised while avoiding the negative impacts on poor people and the environment. Through ongoing research and dialogue between stakeholders, the project identified possible ways in which biofuels can provide a sustainable solution for energy requirements while at the same time benefiting poor rural communities.

CURES held a number of capacity building and policy dialogue workshops in the region to give civil society organisations, smallholder farmers and policy makers an opportunity to engage with each other to explore the link between increased biofuel production and poverty, and to develop policy recommendations. Discussion papers and policy papers on food security and land rights related to biofuels were developed. Small scale farmers and civil society organisations met in forums where their concerns were raised and debated, and where evidence-based models were developed to promote the positive aspects and avoid the risks of large scale agrifuel production. The draft policy recommendations were accepted by most of the participants in the development process as representing their views, providing a basis for further dialogue and policy development. CURES partnered with an international initiative, the Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels, which has developed draft standards for certification of biofuels. Civil society organizations in the region thus had the opportunity to influence the international standards for certification in its development phase.

The discussion documents and policy recommendations will be taken further by both the CURES secretariat and its network partner organizations through both national and international meetings and through publications and articles. The regional civil society network that emerged from this process over the past year will also use the document to engage policy makers in their own countries towards pro-poor biofuel policy development.



In another example focused on food security, the Trust partnered with Cruzeiro do Sul, a Mozambique-based organization that does policy relevant research on rural development. With the Trust's support, Cruzeiro do Sul commissioned research in Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia to develop a better understanding of the policy environment affecting the ability of smallholder farmer organizations to contribute to poverty reduction. On the basis of the research, Cruzeiro do Sul strongly motivated for how, with appropriate capacity development support, associations of smallholder farmers can play a crucial role in rapidly increasing food production by smallholder farmers. As a result of the project's recommendations, space has now been opened for dialogue between the Malawi government and civil society on how to formulate a policy that is supportive of smallholder farmer organizations.

In the narrative that precedes this section, there are several examples of how new alliances, networks, and coalitions of civil society organizations at national and regional levels have made an impact towards a pro-poor SADC regional policy agenda. All this taken together, was filtered by the Trust (working in partnership with key regional civil society apex organizations and research networks, as well as the SADC secretariat) into SADC's draft regional poverty reduction framework, which reflects civil society input on informal cross border trade, microfinance, human security, and food security to name just a few of the issues. The draft SADC regional poverty reduction framework, which identifies explicitly poverty focused interventions for implementation by all SADC stakeholders within the broader Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ on Defence and Politics of SADC, has been further developed by SADC through engagement with its member states for adoption in 2009.

The regional work of the Trust and its partners is not limited to SADC. It includes other regional policy making forums. The Trust sees this to be crucial if there is to be a coherent upward flow of voice for southern African organizations of poor people from local communities to national, regional, continental, and global policy development. At a continental level, the initial focus has been on securing recognition of the value of engaging stakeholders such as civil society organizations and business, and creating appropriate institutionalised mechanisms for this to happen.



Case Study 15:

Civic organizations open new doors to the Pan African Parliament

In 2006, the Southern African Trust established a collaborative partnership with the president and bureau of the Pan African Parliament (PAP). At the same time, the Trust convened a network of major civil society organizations working across the continent to explore how they could work together with the Trust to strengthen citizen voice in the pan African institutions based in Midrand, South Africa – where the Trust is based. These include the Pan African Parliament, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). A similar effort to support civil society engagement with the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa had already been initiated by some of the organizations. As a result of brokering strong working relations with the Pan African Parliament, the Trust convened the first consultative dialogue between the Pan African Parliament and African civil society organizations during the May 2007 session of the Parliament, on behalf of the broader network of civil society groups.

The dialogue aimed to find workable mechanisms to foster a greater mutual flow of information between the Parliament and civil society organizations, direct engagement between civil society organizations from across the continent and the different structures of the Parliament (including its committees), and better coordination of input by civil society organizations. It was a groundbreaking meeting, resulting in the Parliament offering to host a mechanism to facilitate civil society engagement with the pan African institutions based in Midrand, through the Parliament. However, civil society organizations also identified the need to have their own independent mechanism for self organization established to facilitate more effective engagement with the Parliaments proposed civil society liaison desk.

Research was conducted in July 2007 on the usefulness, feasibility, and possible modalities of establishing such a mechanism, through interviews with a wide spectrum of civil society organizations. The recommendations were considered by a civil society reference group before the Trust in 2009 established a civil society support mechanism to interface with the pan African institutions based in Midrand. As a result, civil society engagement with the Parliament has been significantly widened and deepened. For example, the Midrand civil society support facility organised a follow up civil society dialogue with the Parliament in 2009 on the legislative environment for civil society organizations in the different countries of the continent. The dialogue was based on comparative research conducted by the Trust and its strategic partner TrustAfrica across several countries and attracted almost all the members of the Parliament as participants, along with an increased number and diversity of civil society representatives. The meeting resulted in commitments by some of the members of the Parliament to take forward the issues within the relevant parliamentary committees. The policy issue was not previously on the agenda of the Parliament. This is being taken forward through the Midrand civil society support facility.



Creating an inclusive regional civil society platform to undertake joint poverty focused policy initiatives

The Trust's third change objective in this output area is to create an inclusive regional civil society platform that undertakes joint poverty focused policy engagement initiatives on the basis of research generated through CSO work. Civil society organizations in the region often work in isolation from each other, sometimes as a result of insufficient sharing of information and other resources, but frequently also because they intentionally and unintentionally mutually exclude particular types of groups based variously on political ideology, sector, thematic focus, language, country base, differences in strategies adopted, or interpersonal issues between leaders of key organizations.

The Trust has supported the key regional civil society apex organizations to create a more coordinated and inclusive regional civil society platform with a primary concern to include more mass based, community based, and participatory forms of civil society organization. The platform currently includes three of the regional civil society apex bodies, namely the SADC Council of NGOs (SADC-CNGO), the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC), and the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA). Discussions are underway to broaden the coordination platform to include the Southern African Peoples' Solidarity Network (SAPSN) which includes community based campaign and activist groups. Since its establishment this platform has enabled the main sectors of civil society organization across the region to develop a common agenda and collectively prepare for key regional policy discussions. It has also created a coordinated platform with which policy makers in SADC can more easily and effectively engage. This has resulted in an expansion of SADC's direct engagement with non-state actors at a regional level to include faith based organizations. Faith based organizations previously had no formal channel for direct policy engagement with SADC, not being officially recognised in SADC as a social partner alongside business, labour, and NGOs.

As part of building the credibility and effectiveness of this platform, the Trust has worked with the four regional apex organizations to build their organizational and institutional capacity, as well as expanding and strengthening their connectedness with national members and diverse thematic sectors from as many SADC countries as possible, as discussed on page 60.

In addition, the Trust has facilitated a range of regional platforms for civil society organizations linked to SADC events as detailed on page 68. The input from these, as well as the Trust's direct technical support to the SADC secretariat, culminated in a proposal from SADC to set up an institutionalised annual stakeholder consultation forum similar to the SADC international cooperating partners' forum. This forum will further strengthen engagement and mutual accountability between SADC and civil society organizations in the region. If formally adopted, this development will demonstrate that the change produced through the work supported by the Trust is producing lasting, institutionalised rather than temporary change.

Also at a regional level the Trust has created inclusive thematic platforms of civil society. One such example is the regional civil society platform on human security. This platform is significant as it introduced a new dimension to the conventional regional security agenda of the big NGOs in the region who dominate the security sector, namely human security. It has also provided a platform for actors to meet and agree a common agenda in a relatively uncharted policy arena. The platform brings together research institutions, NGOs working in the region that could include human security issues in their work, and social movement representatives.

In another example, the Trust worked with the regional campaign coordinating secretariat to support regional mobilisation in support of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) across several countries in the region. Globally, this campaign achieved a Guinness Book of Records entry for the largest coalition against poverty. Over 23 million people participated in the global event, 4 million of whom were from Africa with over 2 million (9% of the total participants) from southern Africa. This is three times more than the percentage of the global population living in the region, representing a remarkable regional mobilisation that included individuals and groups that do not normally cooperate with each other in anti-poverty initiatives.

To support the creation of a credible, inclusive, and well coordinated regional civil society platform, the Trust has also worked with partners at the national level in the Angola, DRC, Madagascar and Mauritius to create similar inclusive national civil society platforms. In this way the Trust is contributing to building the strength and credibility of the regional platforms.