

“There is evidence that certain initiatives would not have taken place without the support and commitment of the Trust. Amongst these are the broader engagement of civil society in the SADC poverty and development conference and national preparatory work. This set a precedent for stakeholder engagement with policy makers in the region.”

DFID & CIDA 2009 Review

Policy Dialogue

The Southern Africa Trust’s second strategy and output area is to increase dialogue between civil society organizations, the private sector and the state with the following expected outcome:

Increased dialogue between civil society organizations, the state, and the private sector for better policies and strategies to overcome poverty

Three strategic change objectives are used to achieve this outcome, namely, creating opportunities for civil society participation, increasing the number of business people engaged in poverty-focused policy processes, and finally, increasing the number of civil society partners participating in regional policy development processes.

A combination of grants and facilitation is used to create opportunities for dialogue. Nineteen percent of the live grant portfolio amounting to \$1,025,000 and 24% of the full portfolio was allocated to policy dialogue at February 2009. This translated into 39 grants totalling \$2,453,244. Of the partner organizations supported, five were headed by women and two projects had an explicit gender component. The table below provides a list of grant partners. Sometimes this involves support for more than one project to the same partner.

List of past grant partners supported to facilitate dialogue

Southern Africa Peoples’ Solidarity Network (SAPSN), Business Unity South Africa, Justice & Peace Catholic Archdiocese of Johannesburg, Khanya College Johannesburg Trust , Mauritius Council of Social Service, Mineworkers Development Agency, New Partnership for Africa’s Development NEPAD, African Wildlife Foundation, Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), Civil Society MDG - GCAP, Councils for NGOs in Malawi, Cruzeiro do Sul, EISA, Emerging Market Focus, and Gender AIDS Forum, Institute for Social Development and Peace, Media Institute of Southern Africa, Mthente Research and Consulting Services, Mwelekeo wa NGO, National Association of Non - Governmental Organizations, SADC Council of Non Governmental Organisations, SADC Secretariat, Southern African Legal Assistance Network (SALAN), Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN), Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute, Zambia Council for Social Development

List of current grant partners supported to facilitate dialogue

Conseil national des organisations non gouvernementales de Developpement de la RD Congo, Fundacao Desenvolvimento da Comunidade, Khanya- African Institute for Community Driven Development, SADC Council of Non Governmental Organisation, Trust for Community Outreach and Education COR Consulting and Communications and African Wildlife Foundation.

The process of preparing for, supporting and following up the SADC poverty and development conference is probably the best example of how the Trust has coherently worked in numerous ways to create and support opportunities for policy dialogue by civil society organizations in the region. The case study below describes this process and the multi-layered way in which the Trust works. As Barry Smith, CEO of the Synergos Institute in southern Africa commented: *“The Trust is pioneering a new quality of dialogue in the region.”*

Case Study 6:

The Trust's work on the SADC Poverty and Development Conference and Summit demonstrates how it has increased regional policy dialogue by civil society organisations

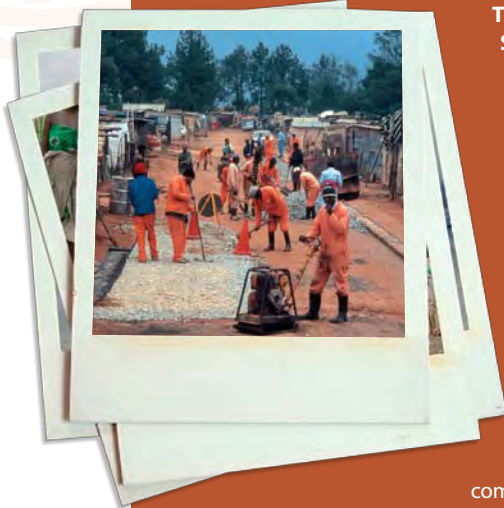
SADC, at its summit in Maseru in August 2006, recognised poverty as one of its major challenges – a region where about 40% of the population live in abject poverty. It was recommended that SADC hold a strategic dialogue amongst state and non-state actors on poverty eradication to assess progress in achieving the MDG goals by 2015. Since that decision was taken, the Trust put in place multiple strategies to support both non-state and state actors in the region to ensure the success of that important process. Called the SADC International Consultative Conference on Poverty and Development (Poverty and Development Conference), it was held in Mauritius in April 2008.

The Trust's work included technical and financial support to the key regional civil society apex organisations including churches, trade unions, and business associations; national civil society platforms in all SADC countries; the SADC secretariat and national governments, as well as extensive research commissioned through strategic partner agencies in each of the thematic focus areas relevant to regional integration and poverty.

The theme of the conference was "Regional Economic Integration: A strategy for poverty eradication and development". The key issues addressed at the conference were: trade including informal trade, infrastructure development, education, the role of agriculture in poverty eradication, gender development, health (focusing on communicable diseases), and cross cutting issues such as HIV/AIDs. The conference was the first time in southern Africa that a wide range of civil society organizations were around the same table as Heads of State discussing a common regional agenda focused on poverty. Two of the most exciting outcomes of the conference were the adoption of a draft regional poverty reduction framework and the decision to set up a SADC regional poverty observatory. This will provide a platform for monitoring the implementation of poverty reduction policies through the participation of civil society organizations and the private sector.

In preparation for the conference, the Trust worked with the SADC Council of NGOs, the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC), and the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils of Southern Africa (FOCCISA) and their members. Preparatory meetings were held in all SADC countries both through government led processes and through independent civil society initiatives. The latter brought together national members of each of the regional civil society apex associations (i.e. non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and faith based organizations) and their partners at a country level to strategise around their national poverty reduction agenda and the regional dimensions of this agenda. One such example was the work of the Trust in the DRC. The Trust supported the DRC National Council of Development NGOs and other partner to establish a broad-based national umbrella body for civil society organizations in the DRC. As part of this process, the Trust itself facilitated a dialogue of all sixteen national civil society sector formations and agreed how best to support a broad based, united, and credible civil society effort. The Trust is now supporting different civil society organizations in the DRC towards the common objective of coordinated civil society input into public policy in the DRC, especially as the DRC prepares to take the chair of SADC after August 2009. Similar processes were held in all SADC countries.

In addition, the Trust supported the convening of two Regional civil society preparatory meetings. The first was a three-day SADC civil society workshop on poverty and development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshop consolidated national civil society positions on poverty and development and identified regional issues from a civil society perspective. The second follow-up meeting was held in Mauritius just prior to the poverty and development conference to prepare civil society delegates for effective participation. Both these preparatory meetings contributed to coordinated and focused civil society efforts at the conference and summit itself. During the civil society preparatory meetings, Abie Dithlake, the general secretary of SADC-CNGO, noted the catalytic role of the Trust in creating a common platform for NGOs to work together towards a common goal. Since the conference the Trust has continued to support several national and regional civil society initiatives aimed at taking forward the outcomes of the civil society preparatory dialogues and the conference itself. Again in the DRC, the Trust held meetings with 16 civil society networks and the DRC government's poverty reduction strategy unit and national poverty observatory to explore ways to facilitate greater coordination and formal engagement of civil society organizations in poverty reduction strategy development.



More details on the related work of the Trust's support for the development of poverty observatories are detailed from page 53. As part of the build up to the poverty and development conference, the Trust supported the SADC secretariat to convene a regional meeting of the national poverty focal points of SADC countries to engage on poverty in southern Africa with a regional perspective. Held in Maputo, it was the first ever such meeting in the region. What's more, national delegations from various countries included both business and civil society representatives along with government officials.

The Trust also supported the SADC Employers' Group to prepare a business position on poverty and development on behalf of the SADC Business Forum, through consultation with national members in several countries. At the regional preparatory meetings for the poverty and development conference, business participated and made input along with other civil society organizations.

In addition, the Trust convened six regional policy dialogues on food security, regional integration, informal cross border trade, migration and social protection, microfinance and human security – all on the basis of research commissioned through specialist strategic partner organisations. These thematic dialogues provided platforms for organizations and researchers working on specific thematic issues to coordinate efforts and develop a common agenda, in cooperation with the regional civil society and business apex organizations.

In the end, the SADC poverty and development conference kick-started widespread engagement between key state and non-state actors in the thematic areas related to poverty and regional integration, set a far-reaching precedent for regional stakeholder engagement in policy development, and resulted in new institutionalised mechanisms for sustained engagement being set in motion. It set a new conceptual and policy agenda to make regional integration work for the poor – by involving all social partners in the region.

New opportunities for civil society participation in poverty related policy development

Through linking actors together the Trust has created new opportunities for civil society participation in poverty related policy development. New opportunities have been created for civil society organizations to link with other civil society organizations and policy advocates to strengthen their collective inputs. Civil society organizations have been able to engage in policy development processes with policymakers, researchers, and sectors that they do not conventionally engage with, such as business, in their own country and at regional forums. Some examples of the new opportunities created are detailed below.

- The Trust worked with SADC national committees to encourage them to engage with stakeholders in Mozambique, Angola, DRC and South Africa. This involved building their knowledge and understanding of the civil society sector and also helping them develop a stakeholder engagement strategy and the requisite mechanisms to implement this strategy. In Mozambique, for example, the Trust is supporting the SADC national committee (CONSADC) to develop a strategic plan for Mozambique to deepen its regional cooperation and integration strategy, including through deeper stakeholder engagement.
- The Trust has lobbied for national delegations to official regional policy discussions to include non-state actors. For example, in the meeting of national poverty focal points held in Maputo, government, business and civil society organizations were included in national delegations.
- The Trust has worked to strengthen the capacity of regional government officials to dialogue and engage the civil society organizations, including business, by seconding a senior policy advisor to SADC secretariat to facilitate better engagement.

In addition, the range of national and regional processes linked to the SADC poverty and development conference have created opportunities for multi-stakeholder dialogue as discussed in the case study above.

Indirectly the Trust has contributed to creating opportunities by strengthening the knowledge base and networks within the CSO sector. Armed with their new numerical strength and knowledge, the sector has lobbied and created openings for their inclusion in poverty related policy development processes. For example, thematic focus groups that bring together researchers, NGOs, think-tanks and community structures have been created and supported to engage in policy dialogue. The success of the newly established regional informal cross border traders' network is one example of how, by bringing stakeholders together, supporting them with knowledge development, and informing them of regional processes, organizations representing voices of the poor have been able to scale up their impact. This is elaborated in the case study that follows.

Case Study 7:

Informal cross-border traders get organised to input on regional trade policies

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is a source of livelihood and employment and plays an important poverty reduction role for many people in southern Africa who are economically destitute. The sector has seen unprecedented growth since the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. The ICBT sector consists of a diverse group dominated by women and representing the vulnerable, unemployed, orphans, refugees, youth, school leavers and widows. Available statistics quantify the contribution of the sector to be over US\$17.6 billion per year to the SADC economy. Using a poverty and gender lens, ICBT is therefore one of the most important trade issues. Yet, despite national and regional policy initiatives such as the SADC Trade Protocol and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) which portray intra-regional trade as an important means for economic development and poverty reduction, the ICBT sector is marginal in regional trade integration discussions.

On the basis of regional research that was commissioned, the Southern Africa Trust and its faith based partners in the Economic Justice Network therefore linked up with the Malawi National NGO Coalition and Malawi Informal Traders Association to organise a regional gathering of national informal cross-border traders' associations from several SADC countries in Lilongwe, Malawi, November 2008. The gathering

followed extensive regional research on ICBT sector by the Trust and EJNI. The research and workshop with the informal traders' associations highlighted the significant contribution of ICBT to the: economies of many SADC countries; the need for re-allocation of regional resources; the contribution of the sector to the achievement of the MDGs; and its importance for the livelihoods of large numbers of poor people. They also highlighted the challenges facing the ICBT sector, such as lack of regulation, human rights abuses especially of women traders, corrupt border officials soliciting bribes, limited access to formal credit, an unfavourable policy environment, drug trafficking and illegal goods smuggling, customs and tax evasion, and illegal currency trading.

The outcome of the gathering was the traders' associations decision themselves to establish a regional informal cross-border traders' association in SADC that could represent the voices of poor traders in regional trade discussions.

In addition the meeting provided:

- A broad understanding of each country's ICBT work and challenges;
- The identification of ICBT regional opportunities;
- Recommendations to national governments, the SADC secretariat, private sector and local ICBT organisations to create an enabling environment for the sector across the region; and
- Concrete country action plans to strengthen ICBT as an important component of regional trade integration.

Informal cross border trade has been recognised as a key issue in the SADC Regional Poverty Reduction Framework considered at the SADC poverty and development conference. The establishment of the regional ICBT platform has taken the voice of informal traders to higher levels. At the last Pan African Parliament (PAP) dialogue with civil society organizations organised by the Trust (which is another new opportunity that the Trust created for civil society organizations to participate in policy development), the voice of informal traders was heard for the first time on regional integration in that continental forum, with the inclusion of the new alliance amongst the civil society representatives at the meeting.



In another example, the Trust commissioned research on "Aid Effectiveness: Trends and Impacts of Shifting Financial Flows to Civil Society Organizations in Southern Africa". The research findings were presented at a one-day roundtable discussion with donor organizations active in the region, in March 2007 in Gaborone, Botswana. Donors and civil society organizations who participated in this meeting were able to establish the extent to which external donor support to southern Africa civil society organizations is being affected by the new emphasis on aid effectiveness. They recognised significant shifts in the way donors are channelling their support to civil society, including the pooling of donor support through national and regional intermediaries.

In addition, there were concerns about the pace and limited impact of improving aid effectiveness through harmonisation (donor cooperation) and alignment (support to partner priorities), especially in relation to addressing issues of the quality of aid, moving from project support to budget support, aid absorption capacity of southern Africa civil society organizations, and the limited participation of key interest groups in influencing decisions on how aid is given, managed and utilised, among other issues.

The outcome of this meeting has resulted in a stronger focus on how aid flows to civil society organizations is changing, creating the basis for more informed dialogue between donors and civil society.

Increased engagement of business in regional policy development

The Trust has focused on increasing the number of business representatives engaged in regional poverty-focused policy development processes with other stakeholders. The Trust worked with regional business formations to create opportunities for the business sector to develop a regional position on poverty and development. This included facilitating consultations with national members in several countries and providing support to the regional business apex organizations to focus their efforts and strengthen their impact on policy. It also involved supporting a joint steering committee of the secretariat of the SADC Business Forum (SBF) hosted by the Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACUA), the secretariat of the SADC Employers' Group (SEG) hosted by Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), and the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI) to undertake this work cooperatively. This work culminated in a regional declaration by business on their role in poverty-focused development in southern Africa which states:

"We are confident that with a strong partnership between all social partners, poverty will be eradicated. We commit ourselves to strengthen, ameliorate and sustain our efforts and programmes to fight poverty in the region and beyond."

This is the first time a regional business voice on poverty has explicitly been placed on the regional policy agenda. Seizing the new opportunities this created, the delegation used the declaration to inform its input into the SADC regional poverty reduction framework and dialogue at the SADC poverty and development conference.

Building on the success of this work, the Trust has engaged business as an active partner in the fight against poverty. The Trust has facilitated more coherent and coordinated cooperation between the regional business associations, supported them to develop a multi-year strategic plan, strengthened a unified secretariat for regional business, facilitated their engagement in the launch of the SADC free trade area, and is now supporting the business associations to implement their plans to take forward regional policy influencing work for a more favourable intra-regional trade environment, as well as developing the self-understanding of business about their role in poverty reduction and development. The creation of a business for development charter, barometer and toolkit detailed in the case study below is one example of how the Trust is working with business to take this initial excitement and success forward. It intends to develop a coherent poverty focused programme for business in the region that is owned by the regional business associations.



Case Study 8:

The Business for Development Pathfinder

The Southern Africa Trust's new B4D (Business for Development) Pathfinder project promotes the concept of 'inclusive business' to contribute to inclusive economic growth. Inclusive business is defined as the "corporate sector bringing in excellent profits that are derived from business practices that uplift the lives of low income populations". It seeks to develop business approaches that, at once, maximise the social benefits and profitability of businesses. It's an explicit attempt to involve the poor in the business value chain as suppliers and as consumers of products and services, as well as potential distributors, retailers, employees (including shareholders, owners and partners in joint ventures) or sources of innovation. It represents a shift from corporate social responsibility being only a defensive business function to being pre-emptive and pro-active in a context of widespread poverty. The Trust is working with regional business associations to mobilise multi-national market leaders as champions or as 'encouragers' for inclusive business. The case for SADC governments to co-operate in support of this effort by business is very strong since inclusive business is synonymous with poverty alleviation.

The B4D Pathfinder project is now in the final stages of a feasibility and preliminary design phase (until August 2009) which includes the initial development of a suite of specialised products that provide meaningful, pragmatic and value-adding tools to inspire businesses with operations in the SADC region. These products include a charter (that expresses commitment and aspiration), a set of knowledge-based tools (that provide pro-poor information and services to a business, such as legal tools, contact details, guideline documents, business plan case studies), and a B4D barometer (that measures progress to help businesses along their journey to include the poor in their value chains and promote public accountability).

This high-level regional initiative draws on some very practical experiences gathered from projects the Trust has already been supporting. On the ground, the case study detailing the work of Connect Africa is a practical demonstration of how businesses can work towards development. The Trust financed the initial pilot development and trials in South Africa and is now testing regional application in Zambia through its support to Connect Africa.

Case Study 9:

Using mobile communications technology to boost development through a community based franchise model

Connect Africa is an innovative information and communications technology (ICT) initiative that combines entrepreneurship and social enterprise to bring communication, business and public services to poor rural communities across Africa. Connect Africa uses satellite antennae mounted on mobile panel vans to locate signals, powered by solar panels, making it possible to be connected even in the remotest of areas where there are no mobile-phone signals. The vehicles are equipped to allow users to make phone calls at much cheaper rates than they would if they had to travel into commercial centres to do so, access information on public and private services, and get training on the use of ICT products. The Trust provided the seed funding to develop the new innovative model for the sustainable, routine and effective delivery of public and private sector services to marginalised rural communities. The mobile units and business model is franchised out to community-based entrepreneurs who are selected by and remain accountable to a local community committee, while getting ongoing support to sustain the franchise from Connect Africa.

The initiative has attracted partnership support from a range of private telecommunications and transport companies. As a result of the success of this pilot, local municipalities, government departments and commercial banks have expressed interest in collaborating to roll the concept out further.

Following success in Limpopo province in South Africa, Connect Africa is now testing the concept further in Zambia, with great potential for replication across the region. With further funding from the Trust, Connect Africa's expansion into Zambia exceeded even their highest expectations. "We've had to set up special arrangements with the satellite network to keep up with airtime demand – this is a tremendous result," explains Dion Jerling, CEO of Connect Africa. The Communications Authority in Zambia plans a launch event and has invited Connect Africa to present its concept and model to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organization (CTO) Conference in Livingstone during August 2009. Fifteen ministers will hear about the partnership between the government of Zambia and Connect Africa, and how they plan to expand the project to other rural areas.

“The Trust has managed through its interventions not only to facilitate dialogue among civil society organizations (faith based groups, trade unions, NGOs, parliamentarians, researchers, and business associations), but also between civil society organizations and governments. This achievement should not be under-estimated. The Trust has gained trust, credibility and established relationships and networks.”

DFID review, 2008

Says Jerling of the Trust’s support to this initiative: “We wouldn’t be where we are right now without your support ... the Trust is a catalyst for the subsequent projects.”

This is just one example of how the Trust has used its grants to expand services to the poor by reaching out to partners in the private sector, and linking them with public institutions for more effective poverty reducing interventions. And then taken the learning to develop deeper and wider engagement in the whole sector through, for example, the B4D Pathfinder project.

Increase in the number of civil society partners participating in regional policy development

The graph below demonstrates that one of the outcomes of the Trust’s work has been to increase the number of civil society partners participating in regional policy processes. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the Trust’s grant partners reported, in December 2008, that they were now engaging in regional policy processes, compared to 12% in the baseline survey. The graph below depicts the number of partners engaging in policy development at the regional level in each thematic area that the Trust works on.

*Figure 9:
Number of grant partners engaging in official policy development processes at a regional level in each thematic area that the Trust works on*

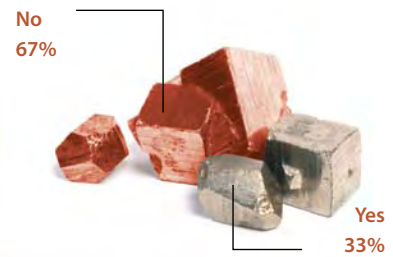
The state of civil society organization in southern Africa



Finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth



Regional inter-dependence in natural resource management, incl. food security and livelihoods



Governance for development, incl. human security



The regional dimensions of migration and social protection



Not specified



In Madagascar, the Trust worked simultaneously with civil society and with the government to support better engagement in the national poverty reduction strategy, with a view to ensuring linkages with regional processes. With support from the Trust, the national civil society platform convened a national civil society dialogue to develop a common civil society agenda for engagement in the national poverty reduction strategy. This was followed by a national consultation organised by SADC and the government of Madagascar, to develop a national position on the SADC regional poverty reduction framework. Civil society organizations were part of this meeting. The minister of economic planning and the national secretary of the Madagascar Action Plan (i.e. Madagascar's national poverty reduction strategy) highlighted the importance of civil society participation in policy processes at a meeting with the Southern Africa Trust. On this basis, Madagascan civil society organizations for the first time participated in a coordinated and informed way in the development of the SADC regional poverty reduction framework that was shaped through the SADC poverty and development conference. They also participated in an inter-country linking and learning dialogue on modalities and practices of national poverty observatories amongst five countries, convened by the Trust in partnership with the Mozambique ministry of planning and development. Through this support, Madagascan civil society is now formally included in regional policy development processes through the regional civil society apex organizations – which was previously not the case.

**Case Study 10:
Regional apex organizations mobilise their national members**

The strategic support provided by the Southern Africa Trust to SADC-CNGO, SATUCC, EJM, SBF and the Southern African Peoples' Solidarity Network (SAPSN) has enabled them to mobilise their national members to participate in shaping regional policy development.

One mechanism for engaging with the regional policy agenda is the annual SADC Civil Society Forum, a standing platform for non-state actors to effectively input into the annual SADC summits that is convened and organised by the regional civil society apex organizations at the time of SADC summits. In this way, members influence what their regional representatives will take to the summit. The forum develops recommendations aligned to the theme of the SADC summit, as well as other recommendation that civil society organisations think should be on the SADC summit agenda but may not be. The recommendations are communicated to SADC through preliminary meetings with the Council of Ministers and the SADC Secretariat.

But this process of making recommendations does not begin at the Forum. With support from the Trust to the regional civil society apex organizations, it increasingly starts many months before with the convening of planning committee meetings over several months, formal and informal consultations with the SADC secretariat and host governments, and consultation with national members of the regional apex organizations, and the development of evidence based research to inform thematic discussions. In 2007/8 for example, the Trust supported a policy analyst to work with SADC-CNGO to undertake research and inform policy positions as part of the preparatory work for each forum – through engagement with national members.

The changing character and shape of the SADC civil society forums since 2005, especially its greater inclusiveness across sectors, its broader national participation, its deepening technical content on specific thematic issues, and its more pro-actively engaged position, is a practical demonstration of the emergence of a broader and more effective alliance of civil society organizations engaged in official policy development processes as a result of the Trust's support. At the last forum in 2008, for example, the different sectors (i.e. faith-based organizations, trade unions, and more conventional non-governmental organisations) were all equally represented in addition to there being a more even regional spread of delegates from SADC countries. Previously, trade union and faith based representation was weak, and fewer countries participated.

In the 2009 forum the agenda is designed to maximise impact at the Summit in DRC with a focus on implementing the outcomes of SADC Poverty and Development Conference held in April 2008 and the Fourth SADC Civil Society Forum held in August 2008. The proposed theme for the Forum will be Transformation of SADC: Towards equitable and people driven regional integration. The planned output of the Forum will be a roadmap to accelerate progress towards regional priorities, indicating specific tasks, actors and timeframes. The meeting will be attended by the regional civil society apex organizations and their national members, representatives from thematic networks civil society, research specialists, professional bodies and partners such as the Trust.

