



# Introduction

This report demonstrates that the Southern Africa Trust has delivered substantive progress in all of its planned strategic output areas and made significant progress towards the achievement of its planned outcomes, with clear progress in achieving its overall purpose. It has worked to increase the knowledge base and capacity of the sector, making civil society organizations more effective in their regional policy work.

It has created platforms for dialogue that allow civil society organizations to be active in regional policy processes. It has commissioned and funded research that is evidence based and informed by the experiences of poor people as part of informing the positions of civil society organizations and, in turn, regional policy statements on poverty. It is working to improve the legislative and broader enabling environment in which civil society organizations work. It has also provided significant resources into a sector that has been faced with funding cuts as donor strategies shift.

In the three-and-a-half years that the Trust has been active, significant progress has been achieved to create new opportunities and mechanisms for civil society organizations representing the voices of poor people to participate in regional poverty-focused policy development. And regional policy statements are increasingly reflecting poverty-related concerns put on the agenda through the participation of civil society organizations. On the whole, civil society organizations (including business) are increasingly being recognised by governments and inter-governmental institutions in the region as value-adding partners in poverty reduction and development, rather than adversaries. Through this work, the Trust is developing new approaches to building social cohesion and ensuring social accountability across the region, with governments increasingly becoming more attentive to being accountable and more closely engaged with the citizens of the region.

The report reviews the Southern Africa Trust's progress in achieving its stated impact, outcomes and outputs. It was compiled based on interviews with the Southern Africa Trust team, project partners and donors. Interviews have been supplemented with information extracted from project files and reports.

The report includes an overview of the Trust's strategy and approach, in Section 2. Section 3 details the monitoring, evaluation and impact findings in respect of the 5 strategies and output areas of the Trust, along with their related change objectives. Section 4 focuses on the impact of the Trust's work and its achievements in strengthening the capacity of the civil society sector in pursuing pro-poor change in the region. The report concludes in Section 5 with some indications of how the performance of the Trust will be strengthened in the future.

Report summary  
Rapport condensé  
Relatório resumo



This report provides an overview of how the Southern Africa Trust has implemented its work since 2006 and what its impact has been towards achieving its founding purpose to support deeper and wider regional engagement in policy development to overcome poverty in southern Africa. This summary gives brief pointers to some but by no means all, of the main outcomes of the Trust's work over the period. It demonstrates how the Trust has enabled voices of the poor to have an impact on policy development in southern Africa.

## Defining Programmes and Strategies

*“You need to work with governments and civil society organizations simultaneously to build a common vision and trust between stakeholders. The Trust does just this.”*

*Malcolm Damon, Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2006/7*

In the three and a half years since it started working, the Trust used a set of five inter-related strategies in five output areas, focused on five thematic issues and grouped into five programme areas. The report is structured into sections aligned to the Trust's five strategic output areas. This is done to enable easier comparison against the Trust's logical framework. This framework charts out the areas of work of the Trust, and the indicators by which it assesses the difference that it is making.

The Trust's geographical focus has been the fifteen countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region<sup>1</sup>, more recently with a targeted focus on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Madagascar, South Africa, and Mauritius. During this period the Trust worked with a wide range of more than 120 partner civil society organizations including community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, trade unions, social movements, non-governmental organizations, media houses, think tanks, research institutes, governments, inter-governmental agencies, business associations, development consultancies, and campaigning coalitions.

The Trust's five main thematic areas of focus were:

- Governance for development, including human security;
- The regional dimensions of migration and social protection;
- Finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth;
- Regional inter-dependence in natural resource management, including food security and livelihoods; and
- The state of civil society organization in southern Africa.

The Trust used five inter-related strategies within its five output areas to achieve its objectives:

- Capacity building – improving the capability of civil society organizations to do relevant and effective regional pro-poor policy development work;
- Policy dialogue – increasing regional dialogue between civil society organizations, the state, and the private sector for better policies and strategies to overcome poverty;
- Evidence-based advocacy – ensuring that the regional integration agenda reflects policy objectives identified by poor and marginalized constituencies;
- Creating an enabling environment – creating a conducive environment for civil society organizations to play a more effective role in pro-poor policy development and implementation; and
- Grant making – sustaining a regionally owned, coherent, and accessible source of financing for southern African organizations engaged in pro-poor regional policy development and implementation.

Through dialogue with the partner organizations that it was established to support, the Trust developed clearly defined strategic change objectives that further articulate the expected outcomes from each of these strategies.

<sup>1</sup> SADC includes Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This was done in five inter-related programme focus areas:

- Learning for better poverty reduction policies and results;
- Knowing civil society organizations in southern Africa;
- Creating opportunities for voices of the poor to be heard in policy dialogue;
- Activating civil society capability for pro-poor policy work; and
- More and better financial flows to civil society organizations in southern Africa.

Key elements of the Trust's work involved: brokering new ways of policy engagement; building strong relationships of cohesion and accountability between state and non-state actors; catalyzing systemic change in development cooperation; adding impetus to existing policy engagement models and processes with proven effectiveness; facilitating inclusive policy dialogue; strengthening the credibility of civil society organizations including stronger linkages between regional apex organizations and their national members; building partnerships and networks between the different regional civil society sectors; promoting innovation in pro-poor policy development within SADC's regional integration framework; building alliances and coalitions of civil society organizations on specific thematic issues such as informal cross-border trade; and acting as an intermediary between donors, civil society organizations, business associations, and governments. The Trust has done this through direct technical support and indirectly through grant making.

Through this active engagement to make regional integration work for the poor, the Trust's goal has been for the regional pro-poor policy work of civil society organizations to be more:

- Effective;
- Active;
- Informed;
- Inclusive; and
- Resourced.

*“The significance of the Trust is that no-one else with the resources is looking at the big picture in the region, as well as a combination of the capacity and institutional needs of civil society organisations.”*

*Brendan Pearce, Umhlaba Development Services, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2006/7*



*“The Trust has provided opportunities to bridge the gap between civil society organisations and governments.”*

*Abie Dithake, SADC Council of NGOs, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2006/7*

## Learning For Better Poverty Reduction Policies and Results

Apart from enhancing its own learning, the Trust employed a combination of its strategies to build the knowledge base of civil society organizations. Research was conducted in all 5 of the Trust's thematic focus areas. By the end of March 2009, the Trust's research spending as a measure of knowledge creation totalled R6.6 million. The Trust commissioned this research both through grant making and directly by its Regional Poverty Observatory unit. The Trust also provided support to civil society organizations to enhance their capacity to do research and to learn from it. It provided support to enhance the understanding of the poverty dimensions relating to each of the key pillars of the regional integration framework in SADC. The Trust worked further to deepen the understanding of the regional institutional policy environment by civil society organizations. This learning helped civil society organizations to engage more confidently and with credibility in policy processes, informed by evidence and analysis generated through the Trust's support for technical knowledge development amongst civil society organizations. The Trust also conducted studies to analyse the state of poverty in each of the SADC member states, and the comparative trends in the development and implementation of poverty reduction strategies in the countries of the region. This included an assessment of the extent, nature, and quality of civil society participation in the different countries and the content of the poverty reduction strategies.

Through this process of applied learning to achieve practical change in attitudes, practices, and knowledge levels related to pro-poor regional policy development, the capacity of both the civil society sector and policymakers in the region has improved.

The Trust has been instrumental in enhancing the quality of civil society involvement in regional pro-poor policy development. This is evident by partner organizations that are generating policy positions informed by evidence – developed through engagement with their members. Eighteen per cent (18%) of the Trust's grants portfolio focused on evidence-based advocacy through the development of informed policy positions by civil society organizations themselves, or by mass-based civil society organizations engaging with researchers supported by the Trust to provide unprocessed experience for analytical work that resulted in evidence-based policy positions. About 60% of these grants focused on issues that have a strong gender dimensions, with particular impact on women and children.

## Knowing Civil Society Organizations in Southern Africa

The Trust has worked to develop a clearer and deeper understanding of the state of the civil society in the region, including its challenges. This process commenced with a baseline survey conducted in 2006 that sought to assess the capacity needs of the sector and an understanding of the ability of civil society organizations to do pro-poor policy development work. The Trust then commissioned research to understand the civil society sector better, including the legislative and regulatory environment in which civil society organizations operate. Further to that, it commissioned research to examine the way civil society organizations are structured and organized in the region, as well as their organizational health. This research on the civil society architecture in the region sought to analyse the architecture of regional civil society organizations and the relationships between them.

The Trust has used this knowledge to promote learning amongst civil society organizations so that the sector can build a more coherent regional approach, including coherent linkages with policymaking institutions. By providing funding, technical assistance, learning opportunities, and brokering new relationships, the Trust has significantly strengthened these linkages among civil society organizations and between policymakers and civil society organizations.



*“There are two things that are unique about the Trust. Firstly, it introduces the possibilities of a regional dimension by providing funding for regional projects. Secondly, it facilitates networks and links grantees with other organisations doing similar work. We are now working with the United Nations Development Programme and the Southern Africa Regional Poverty Network as a result of the interventions of the Southern African Trust.”*

*Ian Goldman, Khanya-aicdd, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2006/7*

### Creating New Opportunities for Voices of the Poor to be Heard in Policy Development

Through the work of the Trust, broad based stakeholder engagement forums have been created, enabling a variety of voices, including those of diverse civil society groups, to be heard in pro-poor policy development. Towards this end, the Trust also worked with SADC National Committees to encourage them to engage with stakeholders, particularly in Mozambique, Angola, DRC and South Africa.

The Trust has enabled structured participation of civil society organizations in forums such as those advising SADC on the establishment of a SADC regional poverty observatory and the drafting of a SADC regional poverty reduction framework.

The Trust has been instrumental in supporting the growth of civil society platforms such as the SADC regional civil society forum and the annual regional forum of social movements, and strengthening their engagement with SADC summits.

The Trust worked at the same time to increase the number of business representatives engaged in regional poverty-focused policy development. This included facilitating consultations by regional business associations with their national members in several countries and providing support to the regional business apex organizations to focus their efforts and strengthen their impact on regional development policies. The Trust's partner organizations in this work include the SADC Business Forum (SBF), the SADC Employers' Group (SEG), and the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI).

A major example of how the Trust did this was its active support for the process of preparing and for the hosting of the SADC poverty and development summit held in Mauritius in April 2008. By linking various actors, the Trust created new opportunities for structured participation of civil society in pro-poor policy development at both national and regional levels. Almost 1,000 organizations participated in region-wide consultative dialogues with the Trust's support. The Trust's work in this area ensured that the model of dialogue broke new ground in the region, with roundtable policy discussions on poverty and regional integration held between government, civil society, and business leaders together, along with donors.

Further, the Trust has worked to secure and facilitate increased formal inclusion of civil society voices in ongoing regional policy dialogue in southern Africa, as was evidenced at the SADC summit that declared a free trade area in southern Africa in August 2008. Both business and civil society voices were heard in that process, with support from the Trust.

To ensure enhanced engagement of civil society organizations in a coherent regional drive to overcome poverty, the Trust worked to foster environments that are conducive to meaningful and

*“The important contribution the Southern Africa Trust made towards the SADC International Conference on Poverty and Development... was instrumental in the success of the preparations leading to the conference and the conference itself... the summit conference adopted a declaration on poverty eradication and sustainable development which was a much needed instrument to strengthen the work on poverty eradication in SADC. This mandate certainly gives new impetus to the region in the fight against poverty.”*

*Tomaz Salomão, Executive Secretary of SADC, Letter of Appreciation to the Southern Africa Trust, 2008*

*“The Southern Africa Trust has provided support at a crucial time for the strengthening of the private sector in the region. Through the relationship between the Trust and the SADC Employers’ Group, it was possible for business to play an active role in the preparations for, and at, the SADC poverty and development conference. A coordinated business position was developed and presented. This signalled the start of a renewed engagement between business and SADC member governments, as well as the SADC secretariat.”*

*Catherine Grant, Business Unity South Africa / SADC Employers’ Group, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2007/8*

credible policy engagement. It has done this, for example, through promoting the establishment of the SADC regional poverty observatory as well as supporting countries to establish or strengthen national poverty observatories that include meaningful civil society engagement.

In the first year of its operation, the Trust launched its annual regional Drivers of Change awards, in partnership with the Mail & Guardian newspaper’s Investing in the Future awards that the Trust also supports. This partnership profiled and widely publicised innovative and effective practices for civil society engagement in pro-poor policy development and implementation in the region. It is today widely regarded as the premiere award that recognises good practices for effective pro-poor development in the region.

In partnership with a number of media agencies and networks including the Mail & Guardian newspaper, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Inter Press Service (IPS), the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA) and Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), poverty-related regional policy issues have been put in the mainstream public spotlight by the Trust. Its partnership with SABA to produce a weekly regional radio show called SADC Calling and with SARDC to produce the widely distributed publication SADC Today are examples of this, as is its bi-weekly southern Africa development news spread in the Mail & Guardian. This media support has raised public attention and understanding of the regional dimensions of poverty as it is experienced at a local level, and the poverty dimensions of regional integration.

### Strengthening Civil Society Capability

The Trust supported civil society organizations through institutional and organizational strengthening, as well as through knowledge development. It has supported this work to improve the capability of the civil society sector to do regional pro-poor policy work through small grants for strategic planning, providing external support for the improvement of governance and management systems, and the creation of cross-sector civil society coordination platforms at national and regional levels. The Trust’s approach is particularly characterised by a practical, applied approach where civil society organizations are encouraged to learn and grow while actually working on key programme initiatives. This has ensured that the improvement observed in the capability of civil society organizations is directly related to doing better pro-poor regional policy work and the achievement of better programme results in this area, rather than capacity development for its own sake or simply for the sake of the relevant civil society organizations continuing to exist. The Trust’s capacity development support has therefore also supported civil society organizations to proactively participate in policy dialogue.

The Trust has worked to create new regional platforms for voices of the poor, the “owners” of the policy issues being focused on, to be clearly articulated and organised on specific thematic issues that are relevant to making regional integration work for the poor – and to support existing alliances where they already existed. These include regional platforms of informal cross border traders, microfinance practitioners, youth at risk, gender activists, social agencies concerned about growing xenophobia as a result of migration, smallholder farmers, organizations working to improve social protection for migrant children, advocacy groups on the protection of citizens against human rights abuses, and organizations concerned with promoting a human security perspective in the region.

*“Thanks to the Trust, Madagascar civil society is connected to the regional process. Contact with the Trust has also helped to improve our relationship with the government of Madagascar, since we understood that a cooperative approach is more fruitful than the contestation approach used before.”*

*Mahamoudou Ndriandahy, Madagascar National Civil Society Platform, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2007/8*



*“The Trust’s work has convinced SADC that multi-stakeholder approaches are useful and can be done in ways that are collaborative and not confrontational ... An important aspect of this capacity building is that it will lead to building sustainability in the region and reduce the region’s dependence on northern civil society organisations, while at the same time strengthening the voices of southern civil society organisations in shaping policy.”*

*DFID review of the Trust, 2008*

Through its close working relationship and support for the regional civil society apex organizations including regional representative structures of non-governmental organizations, trade unions, social movements, churches and businesses, as well as its links with research institutes and think tanks, the Trust has enabled the voices of many of these platforms to be coherently inserted in policy development. The Trust will do much more work to strengthen this area of work in the future.

The regional civil society apex organizations that the Trust has worked closest with include the SADC Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (SADC-CNGO), the Economic Justice Network (EJN) of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), the Southern African Trade Union Coordinating Council (SATUCC), the Southern African People’s Solidarity Network (SAPSN), and the regional business associations including the SADC Business Forum (SBF) of which the Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) is a member, the SADC Employers Group (SEG), and the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI). Trust support to these apex organizations has included development of strategic plans, increasing the knowledge and skills base of the organizations, fostering networks and collaboration amongst different sectors, and institutional support to establish better leadership, governance, and management systems.

Correspondingly, the Trust supported the SADC secretariat to strengthen its ability to engage with non-state actors at a regional level.

The Trust’s support to improved knowledge of both regional policymaking processes and specific thematic issues is contained in the section above on learning for better poverty reduction policies and results. This was particularly done in the areas microfinance, informal cross-border trade, human security, governance for development, and youth and violence. It involved both research and policy dialogue amongst partner civil society organizations the represent sectors, researchers, development practitioners, and people directly affected by the issues addressed.

Over the last three and a half years, the Trust allocated 38% of its grants portfolio, the largest proportion, to projects that contribute to improved civil society capability to do pro-poor regional policy work. As at March 2009, the number of projects to boost the capacity of the sector comprised



the largest portion of the Trust's grants portfolio. A total of 51 grants amounting to \$3,791,160 were issued for this kind of capacity development.

When the Trust was first established, only 6% of civil society organizations demonstrated good knowledge of regional policy processes in a baseline survey. Today, almost all the Trust's partner organizations report having good knowledge of regional policy processes. With the Trust's support, the number of organizations reporting active participation in SADC policy development processes rose from just 12% in the baseline study in 2006, to 33% in December 2008.

### More and Better Financial Flows to Civil Society Organizations in Southern Africa.

To understand the state of financial flows to civil society organizations, the Trust commissioned research on aid effectiveness that focused on the trends in, and impact of, shifts in financial flows to civil society organizations in southern Africa. Apart from providing a deeper understanding of this issue, the work created a basis for more informed dialogue between donors and civil society organizations.

The Trust has actively advocated for more and better financial flows to civil society organizations in southern Africa. In relation to this, it commissioned research to give a clear picture of donor and civil society perceptions of each other so as to develop a better self understanding amongst both groups.

Related to this, the Trust's organizational and institutional development support to civil society organizations not only enabled them enhance their credibility but also to attract more funding.

The Southern Africa Trust has established itself as a regionally owned grant maker on the regional landscape that supports voices of the poor to be heard in regional policy development. As at March 2009, the Trust allocated 169 grants amounting to \$10.3 million. It gave support to 119 organizations working in all 15 SADC countries.

Its trustee and staff complement has reflected its regional identity. These have been drawn from countries in the region including Zambia, South Africa, Botswana, Malawi, the DRC, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Mauritius.

Reflecting its regional ownership and relevance, the Trust's website has seen a rapid increase in the number of hits from a range of diverse visitors. The number of visitors to the Trust's website demonstrates increased interest and value addition of the Trust to the work of others, in the pursuit of pro-poor change in the region. During the last three and a half years, the number of visitors to the Trust's website was more than 15 times the numbers in the first year of the Trust's operation.

*"I congratulate the Southern Africa Trust for the work it has done to make NGOs more visible and recognised in the SADC region. Thanks to the dedication and lobbying efforts of the team, the Trust has boosted regional policy dialogue between governments, the business sector, NGOs and civil society in general. I am sure the Trust will continue to benefit from the support of all stakeholders to pursue their mission and respond effectively to the needs in the sector."*

*Manda Boolell, Mauritius Council of Social Service, Southern Africa Trust Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2007/8*

*"The Trust has some comparative advantage in the areas of access, interactions, and communications."*

*Jonathan Kaunda, Formative Process Research on Integration in Southern Africa (FOPRISA)*

The steady year-on-year increase in the number of visitors to the Trust's website from a rapidly increased number of countries represents sustained demand for the Trust's offering and consistent international relevance of its work. The proportionally higher growth in the number of visitors from other southern African countries compared to South Africa represents a deepening of the regional identity, presence, and appeal of the Trust despite it operating only from South Africa.

The Trust's work was reported 346 times in the mass print and broadcast media over the past three years, excluding coverage in the Mail & Guardian newspaper.

The steady year on year increase in both the number of countries in which media coverage of the Trust originated and the number of mass media hits, represents a strong and growing regional media interest in the Trust's work. This presents a firm foundation on which to expand and sustain the Trust's regional media strategy. Significantly increased broadcast and online coverage reflects the Trust's deliberate effort to increase these types of media exposure to reach a broader target group.

The Trust itself has actively worked to secure a diverse range of funding sources attracting financing from a range of organizations. In addition to its founding relationship with the British government's Department for International Development (DFID), the Trust established a major funding relationship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It has also received funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and MTN, and cooperated in co-financed programme partnerships with TrustAfrica, the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), Action Aid International, and Oxfam GB.

In September 2007, the Trust launched a bold local fund-raising campaign called change4ever. Since its launch the public has identified this campaign as the Southern Africa Trust's awareness raising, public participation and direct-from-public fundraising brand.

The details of outcomes of the Trust's work over the past three and a half years since it began operating and the difference that it has made to voices of the poor being heard in policy development in southern Africa, are detailed in the rest of this report. Results are presented in qualitative and quantitative indicators, and case studies. The results are drawn independently from surveys, analysis of grant recipient reports, interviews with partner organizations, annual donor reviews of the Trust's work, and reflections with the Southern Africa Trust team.

As a result of regular review and evaluation exercises as well as this interim impact assessment, the Trust proactively works to address areas of weakness in its approach. These include a more systematic articulation of the its capacity development strategy, deepening its analysis of gender-related impacts, more consistent documentation of the outcomes of initiatives, sustaining excellence in its operations by maintaining a highly skilled, well networked, and high performing team, and deepening its support for indirect strategies to influence policies for the benefit of poor people.

While it is clear from the pages of this report that much progress has been made in achieving real but tentative results, the Trust is now focused, within its sphere of influence, on institutionalising this progress so that cooperative pro-poor change can be sustained in the region for long term results.

The real measure of the impact of the Trust's work in the long term must remain the extent to which poverty is sustainably reduced in southern Africa through the active engagement of all social actors. That is a big and bold vision. But one to which the Trust has already made a significant contribution and to which it remains firmly committed . . . and by which it will continue to assess its relevance and impact.