Knowing Civil Society Organisations

Learning from civil society organisations doing regional policy work in Southern Africa based on the Southern Africa Trust’s portfolio of grant recipient organisations.

2012

The Southern Africa Trust is an independent agency that supports deeper and wider engagements in regional policy dialogue to overcome poverty.
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1. Introduction

The previous report of the Southern Africa Trust (the Trust), up to October 2009, reflected the status of the grant recipient organisations three years into the operations of the Trust. The following progress was noted:

- The Report concluded that the Trust’s role has been to support its partners in coalition building and networking that strengthens horizontal and vertical engagement in national and regional pro-poor policy development;
- The Report also noted an increased emphasis on developing evidence-based research and policy analysis through both technical and financial support.

The outcome of this progress has been an increased level and enhanced quality of regional responses by civil society organisations, coalitions and alliances to poverty-related policy issues, and how these can best be integrated and consolidated across the region to achieve more effective programme impact.

This report will use the these conclusions as a baseline for assessing the extent to which the organisations funded by the Trust have continued to strengthen their pro-poor policy work, as well as the extent to which they are forming and strengthening national and regional networks for integrated policy responses. The report will assess the degree to which organisations have aligned themselves with the Trust’s five thematic areas of focus, as well as assess the extent to which the Trust’s five inter-related strategies have been translated by partner organisations into effective implementation for achieving their key objectives and results areas.

Figure 1: Reports Received for Reporting Period

1.1. Work of the Southern Africa Trust

The Trust’s geographical focus has been the fifteen countries of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. There has also been a shift of focus, with greater emphasis being placed on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Zambia, Angola, Madagascar, South Africa and Mauritius. During this reporting period the Trust has provided grants to focused projects working in the five thematic areas of focus in the following countries:
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1.2. Focus Areas of the Trust

In this reporting period the partner organisations have been implementing their initiatives across the southern Africa region in each of the five thematic focus areas identified by the Trust. The partner organisation reports clearly demonstrate capacity and commitment to addressing specific challenges within the broad thematic focus areas, but at the same time it is evident that many issues are cross-cutting and that the policy work being done in one specific area can have significant overlaps into other thematic areas. A case in point is the work being done by two organisations in the area of cross-border migration, with a focus on how vulnerabilities arising from migration (for whatever reason) impacts heavily on people’s security, capacity to manage natural resource, and to engage productively in trade-related activities.

From a strategic developmental perspective the Trust has outlined five output results areas through which it intends to achieve its objectives. Organisations that receive grants from the Trust are then encouraged to incorporate capacity building, policy dialogue, evidence-based advocacy and the creation of an enabling pro-poor policy environment as core elements of their interventions.
The individual partner organisation reports demonstrate that significant progress has been made in achieving the results set out in their grant agreements with the Trust:

- Ensuring and maintaining optimal levels of organisational health to ensure strong capacity to respond to the needs of constituents;
- Engaging grass roots organisations and the voices of ordinary women and men in the formulation of strategies and interventions to address issues of concern to poor communities;
- Building strong evidence bases and ensuring that knowledge products are widely disseminated so that they can facilitate informed policy dialogue;
- Building communities of practice for improved policy making across the public, private and non-state spheres;
- Ensuring that the voices of the poor are equitably reflected in regional media coverage that captures innovative practices and indigenous developmental models; and
- Creating a more enabling national and regional environment for collaborative and integrated multi-stakeholder policy formulation that will benefit poor, at-risk and marginalised communities.

Over this reporting period the Trust has continued, through its strategic support to partner organisations, to strengthen civil society alliances and networks so that experiences and learning gained serves to enhance the regional pro-poor policy agenda.
Figure 4: The Strategic Focus of the Trust

The Trust has been placing a growing emphasis on learning as a key modality across its portfolio of programmes. The regional nature of the Trust’s work lends itself to a focus on knowledge generation, experiential learning and the sharing of new insights and emerging issues across the SADC member states. The reports from the 44 partner organisations reflect a strengthened capacity to engage with key regional poverty related issues, to generate new knowledge and understanding around these issues, to reflect on the learning that has emerged from their specific projects or initiatives. This approach illustrates the Trust’s developmental thrust designed to strengthen the capacity of civil society in the region to engage in effective pro-poor policy advocacy work.

The partner reports demonstrate how evidence and learning-informed civil society engagement with critical national and regional socio-economic policy and implementation challenges can facilitate more pro-poor responses by:

- Framing socio-economic challenges using the voices of ordinary women and men;
- Systematically retrieving, translating and packaging the best available evidence on national and regional interventions and implementation issues;
• Using this evidence to advocate for, recommend and formulate – in a deliberative process – options to solve these problems and to inform policy-making, the level of decision-making where different courses of action are considered;
• Provide insights on the strategies that can be followed in order to implement and evaluate a given social or economic policy;
• Working in informed and often innovative ways to support governments in bridging the knowledge-policy and policy-practice divides.

It is evident from the reports that the policy and practice linkages between civil society agency and the formal policy making processes at national and regional level are typically forged through a deliberative process where knowledge, experience and information is shared, interpreted and contextualized. During the deliberative process, which has included a very extensive range of stakeholders, potential users, and beneficiaries of policy, knowledge and learning has been exchanged, filtered (stakeholders themselves deciding on the relevance of evidence), and amplified (stakeholders stressing evidence consistent with their perspectives). Anecdotal non-formal evidence – which in the reports is both tacit and experiential knowledge – has clearly helped to interpret or contextualize research or policy oriented evidence and to address issues which research evidence is not available for but that plays a role in policy decisions. As some of the reports have noted, these may be things such as considerations about the political implications of decisions, about the potential vested interests of stakeholders or about degrees of access to decision-making processes. It would appear, in light of some of the reports, that making experiential evidence explicit and giving it popular voice has added some measure of transparency to the policy development process.

The diagramme below is a knowledge translation framework that aims to illustrate the way in which the Trust’s civil society partners have reported their engagement across the research (inputs), policy (outputs) and socio-economic (impact) domains. The vertical rectangles contain the methods or approaches that the Trust encourages its partners to use to bridge each phase, the frames at the bottom indicate the products for each phase, and the concepts in between the vertical rectangles represent the different forms of knowledge that emerge. Systematic reviews are summarized into a unified body of knowledge that links priority challenges with the effects of interventions and implementation strategies. Knowledge summaries support the deliberative process in which stakeholders develop guidance products that, in turn, result in policies that enhance service delivery and programme arrangements. Ideally, from the Trust’s perspective, the pro-poor outcomes (impact) of programmes and services will need to be evaluated to ascertain the extent to which the needs of the population are being met. Evaluation will then inform further research and shape programme design in an iterative process.
2. Profile of Partner Organisations

2.1. Methodological Note

The 44 (forty four) organisations that have provided reports to the Trust for the 2012 reporting period have done so using the template provided to them. For the purposes of data collection the template allows for the organisations to provide the following information:

2.1.1. Qualitative Data:
Section one and two require the grantees to provide organisational details, as well as information on organisational risk indicators. This allows the Trust to monitor the extent to which the grantees are complying with good governance criteria in the management of the grants, and to assess the overall organisational health of each grantee. The information is used to assess each grantee individually, as well as to gain a composite picture of the grant portfolio.

2.1.2. Quantitative Data
The Trust has a particular interest in the kind of results that grantees are achieving in their efforts to promote a pro-poor policy advocacy agenda. The Trust also has an interest in the extent to which organisation are drawing learning from their interventions and how they are using this to inform ongoing programming. Sections three and four require the grantees to provide qualitative, evidence-based information on the extent to which they are achieving their project objectives, results and milestones, Section five requires the grantees to comment on strategic learning and emerging understanding from project implementation. Sections six and seven require the grantees to provide information on project implementation and the extent to which they are achieving key project milestones. Section eight asks grantees to reflect on their contribution to a deeper and wider engagement in policy dialogue with a regional impact on poverty. This section provides an opportunity to extract both quantitative and qualitative information.

2.1.3. Year to Year Comparisons
The data for the 2010 Knowing Civil Society Report was collected from 31 grantee reports. The data for the 2012 Civil Society Report has been collected from 44 reports. While some of the grantees are the same there are also a range of more recent grantees reporting on their projects. This means that for the purposes of this report the data can be compared to reflect broad trends, but does not present a direct year on year comparison.

2.2. Grant Partners
In this current reporting period 44 (forty four) organisations funded by the Trust have submitted a total of 48 (forty eight) reports. Two of these organisations (Mail&Guardian and SADC Council of NGOs) have each been funded for 3 separate projects. This means that
in the reporting period a total of 48 reports are being reviewed. The majority of the organisations funded are defined as NGOs, with 68% of funded organisations falling into this category. The next largest grouping comprises business organisations, with 9% of organisations falling into this category. Research institutes and media comprise 7%, and each of the remaining organisations (faith-based organisations and labour and) comprise 5%.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Grant Recipients by Organisation Type 2010 and 2012**

The 2012 period shows that there was an increase in the number of NGO grantees, and a very slight increase in the number of business and labour grantees. Overall the picture across the two reporting cycles is quite stable.

### 2.3. Thematic Focus Areas

The 44 organisations funded by the Trust are implementing projects that are spread across the five areas of thematic focus. Of these projects the majority (64%) are engaged in activities related to governance, development and human security. 5% of the funded
organisations fall within the area of finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth, which suggests that there is an increasing policy engagement across the region with issues related to economic development, and an improved networking with the private sector. 4% of the funded organisations fall with the category of the state of civil society, and the projects reported on indicate strong linkages between national pro-poor policy inputs from civil society on regional policy initiatives such as those linked to SADC processes. 22% of the funded organisations fall into the category of natural resource management, with three of the organisations working on national level issues related to the empowerment of small-scale farmers and one working with trans-border issues. In the current set of funded organisations only 5% of organisations are working in the area of migration and social protection, with the focus being on the regional impacts of migration and the extent to which national and regional policy-making processes are responding to cross-border movements and social security issues.

Figure 8: Percentage of Grantee Projects by Thematic Focus Area 2010 and 2012
While three of the thematic areas show very similar coverage to the previous report, the percentage of organisations receiving grants in the thematic area of governance, development and human security has shown a significant increase from 34% to 63%. Grants to organisations in the thematic area of finance, trade, investment and growth has increased from 6% to 23%, while the percentage of those receiving grants in the area of state of civil society has dropped from 31% to 23%.

2.4. Country Base of Funded Organisations

Funded organisations are spread across 14 countries in the SADC region. The work undertaken by these organisations is, however, regional and in many cases the projects are not implemented in the country base. The majority of the organisations receiving grants from the Trust are based in South Africa, although in most cases their work is regional in nature. Between one and four projects are based in each of the countries represented (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mauritius, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia, Tanzania and Swaziland).
2.5. Size of the Organisation

In this reporting period 17% of the funded organisations are categorised as very large, meaning that they have staff complements of over 50, with one organisation having a sizeable staff complement of 450 permanent and contracted members. 50% of the funded organisations are categorised as large, with staff complements between 15 and 50. 20% of the organisations are categorised as medium, with staff complements of between 5 and 15. 13% of the organisations are categorised as small, with staff complements of less than 5.
The size of the organisation is not a determining factor in the ability of NGOs to engage with and influence national and regional policy dialogue on core development priorities. The Progressive Communal Farmer’s Association in Zimbabwe is a small NGO that is having an increasing influence on policy-related issues linked to food security.

2.6. Level of Grants Allocated to Trust Partners

The Trust awards grants based on the nature of the project as well as the capacity of the organisation to absorb and manage the grant. The majority of partner organisations receive grants in the 0 to 49,000 range. Many of these grants are intended as seed funding for innovative projects that have the potential for national and regional scalability.
3. Health of Partners – Organisational Risk Indicators

3.1. Good Governance Practices

The goal of establishing sound good governance practices within civil society has increasingly gained traction, and is now very much on the global CSO agenda through instruments such as Codes of Conduct, self-regulatory mechanisms and the introduction of corporate governance standards. The Trust itself has flagged good governance as an important element in the decision to allocate grants, as well in the extension of grants and the provision of new grants to well-performing partner organisations. One of the Trust’s key change objectives is that of sustained improvement in the organisational health of civil society organisations, reflected by staff turnover, audits, board meetings, donor commitments and performance reviews of CEOs over the reporting period. This takes into consideration the fact that effective implementation is a function of the organisation’s ability to govern itself and strengthen its own management and performance capacity.
The existence of an effective board that has a regular cycle of meetings, and consistency in retaining board members, are strong indicators of good governance practice. The frequency of board or governance structure meetings during the reporting period is reflected in the following graph:

![Graph showing frequency of board meetings](image)

**Figure 13: Frequency of Board Meeting Reported by Organisations for Reporting Period**

The stability of boards or governing bodies is generally a good proxy indicator of organisational stability. The reports indicate that the majority (70%) of organisations had stable boards, with no turnover in the reporting period. Most partner organisations reported functioning boards, with only one organisation (research institute attached to a university) reporting that board turnover was not applicable. Two organisations reported that their boards had reached the end of their tenure, and that new boards had been
appointed. There was no indication from the reports that there was a correlation between the size of the organisation and resignations from the board.

**Figure 14: Percentage Turnover of Board Members**

Organisations that reported the resignation of board members cited the following reasons:
3.2. Status of Staff Complements

Over the reporting period 66% of organisations noted that they had experienced some level of staff turnover. The turnover varied in terms of reason and severity. Although this represents a fairly high level of turnover only 3% of staff leaving organisations was as a result of dismissal or resignation as a result of misconduct, and the largest proportion of dismissals occurred in a single organisation. A number of organisations provided reasons for staff leaving, including end of contract, maternity, early retirement, furthering of education and the taking up of alternative opportunities. The information provided in the reports suggests that staff turnover was within the norm for average human resource churn.
The trend in this reporting period is similar to that noted in the previous reporting period. In general the larger organisations tend to be more stable, although one large research institution linked to government experienced the most significant staff turnover, together with the highest number of dismissals. This was explained as internal issue around the nature of contracting modalities, as well as some challenging human resources issues that required stringent disciplinary responses. The following graph illustrates the level of staff turnover across four categories of organisation size. The smaller organisations (with staff complements of 5 and less) experienced the highest level of staff turnover with 14% of staff leaving during the reporting period. The large organisations (with staff complements of between 15 and 50) experienced the lowest level of staff turnover, with only 7% of staff leaving during the reporting period. It is important to note, however, that there is no direct correlation between staff turnover and the overall effectiveness of the organisations to work effectively in serving the interests of the poor.

Figure 16: Percentage of Staff Dismissals during Reporting Period
Financial and Legal Status

Financial due diligence and legal status are key indicators of an organisation’s health, as well as its capacity for sound internal good governance practices. The reports indicate that the majority of organisations have good financial management systems in place, and with one exception all organisations are up to date with their tax compliance. One organisation has had a tax issue with their national revenue authority, but this is currently being resolved. One organisation has been involved in a legal case, linked to a dismissal case brought through the CCMA. According to the report this legal case is still in the process of arbitration.
Despite the tightening funding environment – brought about primarily by the effects of the global economic recession – only three of the organisations indicated that they had been affected by funding cuts. One organisation noted the following:

- The funder ended their support as their priority areas changed;
- The funder has closed their national office;
- The funder has suspended country support while they reassess their strategy.
### 3.4. Performance

In the context of shifts in the global development terrain funding for organisations – both governmental and civil society – is increasingly being linked to performance and the achievement of results. A key element of the Trust’s approach to project performance is through institutional and organisational strengthening, as well as through knowledge development and leadership. The improvement in individual and organisational performance is a critical component in enabling the organisation to achieve its stated regional pro-poor development and policy results. In a competitive funding environment it is critical that civil society organisations in the region have the performance capacity that enables them to plan and implement projects in a strategic and effective manner. Strong and effective leadership is critical to achieving organisational results, but at the same time it is equally important that organisations have adequate performance management systems in place to ensure that the performance of all staff members, including the operational head of the organisation, are monitored and evaluated in an equitable and consistent manner. In this reporting period organisations were asked to indicate whether the performance of the operational head of the organisation had been assessed in the preceding twelve months. 59% of organisations indicated that an appraisal had been conducted, with a number noting that this was a regularised procedure within the organisation. 41% of organisations reported that no performance appraisals had been conducted in the reporting period. This indicates that a number of partner organisations have not as yet institutionalised the practice of regular and consistent performance appraisals for all members of staff, including the operational head of the organisation.

#### Performance Appraisal Completed 2010

- **Yes**: 63%
- **No**: 37%
Figure 19: Percentage of Organisations Completing Performance Assessments for CEOs

A number of partners that reported that their operational head of the organisation had not undergone a performance appraisal noted the following reasons:

- The operational procedures for the review are still being put in place;
- At present the organisation does not have an operational head;
- The performance review process was disrupted by organisational change, but is now being re-instated as a key governance process.

A number of partners that reported that their operational head of the organisation had been through a performance appraisal process noted the following:

- The executive board carries out regular quarterly performance reviews;
- Performance reviews are directly linked to contract renewals;
- Performance reviews are built into board meeting processes;
- The board places high importance on the performance review of the executive director;
- The organisation undertakes regular staff performance reviews;
- The organisation conducts an annual review of the director’s performance, linked to the achievement of organisational results areas;
- All staff members undergo regular appraisal and job descriptions have been reviewed;
- The board has appraised the director’s performance and affirmed his leadership in repositioning the organisation after a period of uncertainty.

3.5. Purchase of Assets

As a grant-maker the Trust has overall responsibility for the funds disbursed, and the extent to which its partner organisations utilise their grants in a financially responsible manner. The Trust monitors the expenditure of its partners, in particular where it related to the purchase of assets valued at US$5,000 or more. In attempting to capture this information there has, however, been a challenge as not all the narrative reporting form that partners
are required to complete included a question on the purchase of assets. The following graph indicates responses to this question:

![Pie chart showing purchase of assets over US$5,000]

**Figure 20: Purchase of Assets over US$5,000**

The three organisations that reported purchasing assets over US$5,000 utilised funds for the acquisition of computers and office furniture.
4. Contribution to Deeper and Wider Engagement in Policy Dialogue with a Regional Impact on Poverty

One of the strategic objectives of the Trust is to strengthen Policy Dialogue in the southern Africa region through facilitating increased regional policy dialogue amongst civil society organisations, states, and the private sector, focused on overcoming poverty. The aim of the Trust is to increase dialogue for better policies and strategies to overcome poverty, with a focus on the following sub-objectives:

- Governments will acknowledge the positive role of civil society organisations in developing policies and strategies to overcome poverty through better forms of engagement;
- Social trust and cohesion will be promoted amongst private business forums and individuals through their engagement in inclusive policy dialogue on poverty; and
- The impact of civil society policy work will be increased by identifying strategic entry points in policy processes and facilitating participation by civil society organisations.

To achieve these objectives the Trust works with diverse civil society organisations from southern Africa and beyond that promote public policy dialogue with a focus on poverty, especially those with a significant regional presence and impact. Partnerships with networks are of particular value to the Trust. The Southern Africa Trust supports and develops networks amongst a wide range of role-players in civil society, representing different interests and constituencies that are focused on overcoming poverty. In addition, the Southern Africa Trust has strong collaborative relationships with governments and governmental and inter-governmental agencies in the national, regional, and global spheres.

4.1. Overview of Policy Engagements across all Thematic Areas

4.1.1. Development of Evidence-Based Policy Positions

37% of the organisations report having developed an evidence-based policy position on an issue within the scope of their work. From the perspective of the Trust’s strategic objectives this represents an area that still requires further strengthening, with 61% of partners indicating that they had not made inputs at this level. A key focus for the Trust is the development of partner capacity to frame pro-poor policy positions based on the knowledge and understanding emerging from their work. Ideally partners should be developing policy positions that can then be inserted as evidence-based pro-poor policy agendas into national and regional policy dialogues. It is evident from many of the reports that partners are very focused on implementation and that policy-level thought leadership tends to take a back seat. It would appear from other reports that some partners may not fully understand how their work could translate into clear policy positions that are based on the learning that is emerging from their initiatives.
4.1.2. **Linkages with Pro-Poor Popular Based Organisations**

A good percentage of partners (73%) reported that they have been engaging with popular-based (community level and grass roots) organisations. This suggests that there is a substantial commitment to working with organisations at this level. This approach is based on the understanding that the voices of poor people are best articulated at the community level where the issues are most immediate and real. Many of the reports have been able to elaborate on this element of their work, primarily where organisations engage in extensive and substantive participatory work at the community level.
4.1.3. New Engagement with Other Civil Society Organisations

A high percentage of partners (77%) reported that they have been engaging with civil society organisations that they have previously not worked with. This indicates a broadening of networks between CSOs, and an increasing interest in collaborative working relationships.

4.1.4. Policy Engagement across the SADC Region

The data illustrates the varied nature and purpose of the organisations that partner with the Trust. The 43% of organisations that operate and engage more broadly within the SADC region are generally fairly large organisations that are either regional in their remit, or are apex bodies, coalitions, networks or alliances.
The work of these organisations is regional in nature and their ability to engage regionally is well-established. The 55% of organisations that do not engage at the regional level are generally national or local level organisations that manage initiatives within national boundaries. It is clear from the reports, however, that many of these organisations do communicate with other similar organisations across the region and information is shared.

### 4.1.5. Policy Dialogue at Government Level

Just over half (52%) of the organisations reported having engagement with either parliamentarians or government officials. In terms of policy dialogue this is an important indicator of the extent to which partners are able to interact with and potentially lobby or influence decision makers at national and local level. Some of the partners have reported that there are issues of access, and that it is not always easy to engage directly with key government decision-makers. This seems, however, to be a function of the political dynamic within individual countries and the openness of government officials to engagement with civil society actors.
4.1.6. Policy Engagement with the Private Sector

39% of partner reports indicate that they have engaged with private sector organisations. This relatively modest level of engagement suggests that there is still significant space for more strategic interaction with the private sector, particularly around leveraging opportunities for both Corporate Social Investment (CSI) as well as business-oriented investment. A number of the organisations reporting engagement with the private sector are situated in the agricultural, food security and environment sectors where private sector interests are clearly evident.
4.1.7. Engagement in Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogue

The reports suggest that there is a satisfactory level of multi-stakeholder engagement, with 57% of partners indicating that they have had dialogue across different state and non-state sectors. With 41% of organisations indicating that they have had no multi-stakeholder dialogue would suggest that this needs to become a strengthened focus for the Trust and its partners. This is clearly aligned with the shift towards greater inter-sectoral engagement and collaboration, and with the targets set under MDG 8.

4.1.8. Policy Dialogue - Composite Perspective

The following graph presents a composite picture of the information provided in the sections above, and provides an indication of where further efforts need to be made in strengthening the capacity of partners to engage both widely and strategically with a broader range of stakeholders across different state and non-state sectors.
4.2. Overview of Pro-Poor Project Interventions by Thematic Areas

4.2.1. Pro-poor Interventions in the Area of Governance for Development

Twenty seven partner organisations reported under this thematic area. These partner projects are diverse, but the commonalities are a focus on strengthening organisational systems and capacities for more organised, structured and effective advocacy, planning and policy engagement with key stakeholders. The following table highlights some of the interventions and identifies areas of pro-poor focus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Pro-Poor Governance Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Building the capacity and empowering communities to participate effectively in multi-country trans-frontier conservation policy formulation to ensure that issues of poverty reduction and the sustainable use of natural resources | • Engagement with regional policy dialogue on conservation and sustainable development  
• Review of all legislation and policy frameworks relevant to the trans-frontier initiative  
• Integration of natural resource enterprise into policy frameworks |
| Promoting popular participation and engagement by civil society in the design and implementation of regional and national Poverty Observatories to ensure | • Dissemination of information, raising awareness and strengthening understanding of the role of Poverty Observatories |
that they address the needs and concerns of communities

- Lobbying for membership of grass roots organisations on the Poverty Observatories
- Strengthening the watchdog and advocacy roles of CSOs in the operations and decisions of the Poverty Observatories
- Enhancing the capacity of local consultative councils as platforms for poor people to articulate their issues

Developing a body of knowledge on youth at risk at country level, with particular reference to youth violence and crime. The research augments work already done at the SADC level.

- Assessing the capacity and needs of organisations working with youth and linkages with violence and crime
- Highlighting the extent to which current policy conditions constrain the ability of organisations working with youth to operate optimally and make policy recommendations
- Utilising good practice that has emerged from work being done in the youth sector to strengthen current initiatives across the region

Strengthening the governance capacity of a regional confederation of agricultural unions and its membership with the aim of strengthening the livelihoods of farmers in Southern Africa and increasing their contribution to food security and economic growth

- Ensuring that standards of corporate governance were developed
- Strengthening the accountability and transparency of farmer’s organisations
- Engaging and capacitating the membership on key governance areas such as the board charter, code of conduct and ethics, and the statutory and governance frameworks

Strengthening solidarity networks in the region that can effectively promote people-centred socio-economic policies that foster a just society, people-based regional cooperation, integration and a genuinely united and developmental region

- Engaging in participatory policy making processes
- Building solidarity networks that serve as platforms for joint action in the struggle against globalisation, global trade injustices, debt, poverty and gender inequality
- Articulating a position that takes a stand against oppressive and discriminatory laws in the various countries of the region

Developing and strengthening a shared vision about the future of Africa among African civil society, through ongoing and open dialogue about the past, present and future experiences and direction of the continent

- Creating open spaces for participatory inter-generational dialogue
- Working, through debate and discussion, to explore the contemporary identity of Africans
- Addressing, in a proactive manner, the current status quo in the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world
- Interrogating, through robust debate, the issues of African agency, self-esteem, diversity and common identity
In comparing the information provided by governance for development partner organisations from 2010 with that for 2012 the following trends can be identified:

- The data from 2012 indicates a significant decline (22%) from 2010 in the number of organisations developing evidence-based policy positions;
- The data from 2012 indicates a significant decline (25%) from 2010 in the number of organisations engaging with popular-based organisations representing the voices of the poor. The comments (or absence of comments) provided suggest that there is not a clear understanding of what is meant by “popular-based” and that this may need to be more clearly defined for future reporting purposes;

*Figure 17: Networking of Organisations in Area of Governance for Development*
• There has been an increase from 2010 (28%) in the number of organisations reporting an increased engagement with private business. It is evident from some of the comments provided that more civil society organisations are recognising the importance of partnering with private sector entities to strengthen their interventions.

The partners that have been working in this thematic area have engaged in substantial and increasing levels of engagements with popular (65%) and community based (85%) organisations. There has also been a noticeable level of policy engagement through multi-stakeholder forums (65%). A significant proportion of this policy level dialogue has been centred on the facilitation of popular engagement with the national Poverty Observatories in Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Swaziland. Much of the work being carried out in this area has seen partner organisations engaging extensively with popular based organisations and CSOs, with a strong focus on capacity development, awareness raising, lobbying and advocacy.

The efficient and comprehensive delivery of basic services to communities across the Southern Africa region remains a significant challenge for governments. The Human Sciences Research Council, a significant research agency in South Africa, has been conducting a multi-country assessment in selected Southern Africa countries to explore the challenges and opportunities around meeting key service delivery targets contained in the RISDP and in the Millennium Development Goals. The aim of the project is to generate a set of analytical tools that will be used to draw out lessons for analysis, policy formulation, improved service delivery planning and practice. Countries of the Southern African community are committed to periodically reviewing progress towards the MDG. However, reporting is often not sufficiently rigorous enough to review priorities and reallocate resources and thus focus attention on key areas. Progress in four countries across four sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>Botswana</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Water</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sanitation</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Health</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The results from the research conducted by the HSRC and research partners in the four countries show that there is most progress in meeting basic human needs in water and sanitation.

Key learnings that have emerged are as follows:

- **Generating strategic knowledge for policy development**
  - Improved human services and their effectiveness is linked to international donor support - the link between performance and resources being well-established. This highlights a clear link between MDG 8 (global cooperation) and the sectors in which performance is poor. Regional groupings such as SADC could play a crucial role in ensuring greater effectiveness in service delivery and in establishing the fact that resources are decisive factors in social progress.

- **Generating a strong evidence base through focused research**
  - Uneven communications and access to internet facilities is a constraint in developing research partnerships across the region. These partnerships are very productive and substantially reduce the inequalities in contract research but at the same time require innovative communication and feedback. The difficulties in communication can limit more innovative methodologies such as the use of “shared workspace” to speed writing and editing.

- **Mapping trends to understand the variations in service delivery effectiveness**
  - Evidence from HSRC research across four social sectors indicates that greater progress is being in service delivery than in impact. There is considerable lag in progress on impact indicators. Progress is, in different ways, being indicated by phenomena such as the HIV pandemic and the global recession. Compared to other regions the Southern Africa region shows least reduction in key development indicators such as child and maternal mortality rates, and the most marked slowing down of an improving trend.

### 4.2.2. Pro-poor Interventions in the Area of Regional Dimensions of Cross Border Migration

The two partner organisations reporting under this thematic area provided strong evidence that there has been an increasing consensus amongst role players that migration requires policy responses that address the very particular challenges faced...
by people who have either chosen to or been forced to migrate across the region. Through a comprehensive research agenda one of the projects has been enhancing understanding of informal and formal social protection instruments and strategies used by intra-SADC migrants, with the purpose of providing evidence for the development of a regional framework for the coordination and harmonisation of social security in the SADC region. The other project has a specific focus on people with disabilities in the SADC region, seeking to achieve equal access to HIV information, testing, treatment, support and care services through local collaboration and partnerships.

Figure 19: Networking of Organisations in Area of Regional Dimensions of Migration
For this thematic area (regional dimensions of migration) it is not really possible to make any substantive comparisons between the two reporting periods. The number of projects is too small to provide any significant statistical evidence of shifts in emphasis or trends. It can be noted, however, that as with the previous thematic area (governance for development) there is a drop off in the development of evidence-based policy positions.

The project on social protection has resulted in various research outputs that are intended to inform policy making. These include nine country studies; a synthesis report on access to social security by intra-SADC migrants; a concept note on the linkages between citizenship, human rights, empowerment and inclusion; and the implications for social protection and social security harmonisation policies in SADC. The project focusing on reducing the vulnerability of persons with disabilities has been disseminating the results of its initiative in twenty African countries. It has also promoted its Africa Campaign on HIV/AIDS as an advocacy tool for sharing best practice in gathering evidence to support lobbying activities linked to the mainstreaming of disability in HIV/AIDS programmes across the region.

The Centre for International and Comparative Labour and Social Security Law (CICLASS) at the University of Johannesburg has been researching informal and formal social protection instruments and strategies of intra-SADC migrants through active engagement with academics, researchers, migrant organisations and civil society activists across the SADC region, as well as with migrants themselves. Migrants themselves were empowered as interviews were conducted with migrants and migrant organisations during the preparation of the report on The Social Protection of Migrants in South Africa. The project has been able to identify problems and gaps in social protection and social security harmonisation and coordination for migrants in the SADC region and proposed solutions to these challenges. A project workshop brought together participants from some of the SADC countries, as well as academics, researchers, migrant organisations and civil society activists to discuss these issues and articulate common solutions. The project has also resulted in various research outputs that will inform policy making. Key learnings that have emerged are as follows:
4.2.3. Pro-Poor Interventions in the Area of Finance, Trade, Investment and pro Poor Growth

The three partner organisations reporting under this thematic area are focusing on the kinds of strategic linkages at national and regional level that can leverage enhanced socio-economic development through public-private partnerships and through social entrepreneurship initiatives with local communities. A core element of these projects is the attempt to ensure that rural communities are connected and networked with initiatives that have the potential to provide opportunities for small business development and income generation for these communities. One project has been in active discussion with multiple government ministries to facilitate the delivery of sustainable ICT services to excluded rural communities. The reports reflect an ongoing trend towards greater community engagement in such areas of equitable resource distribution, sustainable economic development and the broadening of ICT platforms. One project is working to influence agricultural trade policy formulation and implementation in favour of smallholder farmers by channelling their voices to decision making fora and by building capacity to engage in evidence based advocacy on trade and food security issues. Another project is working to establish strong regional networks of intermediary stakeholders in the tourism sector to facilitate economic development that is consistent with the principles of sustainability and poverty alleviation. A third project is working to influence rural telecommunications regulatory and policy frameworks across SADC by providing a viable model for sustainable and effective rural ICT service delivery network.
For this thematic area (finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth) it is again not really possible to make any substantive comparisons between the two reporting periods. As with the previous thematic area the number of projects is too small to provide any significant statistical evidence of shifts in emphasis or trends. It can be noted, however, that as with the governance for development thematic area there has been a fall in engagement with popular-based organisations representing the voices of the poor.

Figure 21: Networking of Organisations in Area of Finance, Trade, Investment & Pro-Poor Growth
Connect Africa Services (CAS) has been working throughout the region using a methodology that combines ICT, social enterprise and entrepreneurship together with public and private sector partnerships. This approach is specifically designed to offer a sustainable and effective means to deliver multiple essential services directly to rural communities across Africa. It is based on an understanding that direct access to essential public, private and communication services will guide and assist poor communities and individuals to move out of poverty using ICT related opportunities. CAS is also aware that they have an excellent opportunity to influence the rural telecommunications regulatory and policy structures across Africa by providing a good practice model. Key learnings that have emerged are as follows:

**Engaging Policy Makers**
- Policy makers can be influenced if they clearly understand and can see that a project with a policy changing objective is working and making a difference. Qualitative and quantitative impact research, analysis and monitoring is essential in order to provide an evidence base for building a strong social enterprise business case.

**Inter-governmental cooperation**
- Getting multiple government departments to cooperate is possible given the right environment (effective engagement mechanisms), the right individuals (key decision makers), the right timing (what policy issues are topping the policy agenda), and a focus on senior civil servants rather than politicians.

**Multiplier Effect**
- Active discussion and cooperation with multiple government ministries in preparing the ground for the delivery of ICT services to excluded rural communities in central Zambia - and it is anticipated that the deployment of a district wide infrastructure service will provide a model pilot that could be rolled out to the rest of the country.
4.2.4. Pro-Poor Interventions in the Area of Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Livelihoods

The eleven partner organisations reporting under this thematic area are working to catalyse and establish more sustainable and environmentally sound production environments for small-scale agriculturalists and community agri-businesses to utilise natural resources in a way that promotes food security and broadens economic opportunities. Partner organisations working in this thematic focus area have highlighted the value of awareness raising and capacity building at community and village level as a means to enhancing food security. It is clear, however, that these interventions do not constitute “business as usual” but represent a push towards introducing innovative natural resource management strategies and technologies that are geared towards longer term agricultural sustainability. These include the production of upland rice farming, keyhole and pothole gardening, dairy cattle cross breeding, non-chemical compost building, preservation of fruit and vegetables and soil fertility restoration. Other projects focus on protection and restoration of indigenous forests, the role of ecology in sustainable agricultural production and the cultivation of indigenous plants as a nutritious food source.

Some of the partners are already reporting on impact, while others note that an adequate impact evaluation will only be possible at the end of the project. One of the projects has noted that setting up small cross breeding units for dairy cooperatives is a long term investment and that income generation from milk production will only occur after a few years, although currently the animal manure generated is being used to grow and market vegetables. Partners have reported some challenges both to policy and implementation, particularly with regard to the vulnerability of small-scale farmers and community enterprises in the region to both natural (drought, heat waves) and political impediments (political uncertainty, political factionalism, local level political divisions). One of the partners reports challenges in working with young people as there is a low interest in agriculture among the youth, even though unemployment amongst young people remains high. Another partner notes that governments need to ensure that they play their part in
supporting innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture and food security by ensuring the provision of adequate numbers of extension officers.

One of the partners has a strong focus on the empowerment of small-scale women farmers, using access to water through women-owned and managed boreholes as means to securing food security, good sanitation and economic empowerment. All eleven organisations indicate that a critical area of their work focuses on the building and strengthening of local networks of community-based organisations, farmers associations, cooperatives, women’s groups, agri-business and local government agencies to better promote sustainable livelihoods. One organisation notes that the strengthening of linkages between local farmers and local suppliers and business development services is resulting both in higher yields and improved income flows. At the same time the reports indicate that current levels of networking remains weak, and that there is scope for greater engagement. In this thematic area in particular organisations appear focused on actual project implementation, and in most cases staff and financial resource constraints mean that there are limits to the amount of time that these organisations can spend on advocacy, research and partnership building. From the reporting it is clear that in many cases the building of networks is a work in progress, and that for most of these organisations it is easier to establish networks with popular-based organisations and CSOs than it is with government and business. 64% of the organisations report that they have not engaged in any joint CSO-government-business networks, which shows an improvement in comparison with the last reporting cycle.
In comparing the information provided by natural resource management partner organisations from 2010 with that for 2012 the following trends can be identified:

- There has been an increase since 2010 in the number of organisations engaging with popular-based organisations. This indicates a greater emphasis on working with community based structures to address issues of poverty and food insecurity;
- There has been a slight increase (11%) in the number of organisations working with private business. It is evident from some of the comments provided that organisations are recognising the utility of working with agri-business to strengthen their interventions and ensure a greater degree of sustainability for the projects;
- There has been a significant increase (from a 0 base) in the level of engagement with multi-sector processes. This indicates that organisations that work with small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs are increasingly aware of the need to work in
partnership with government structures, other NGOs and the private sector to strengthen these interventions and ensure that they are embedded in national and regional processes.

Sedikong sa Lerato is a small NGO working with rural communities in the Limpopo province of South Africa. The project is focusing on promoting the cultivation of the indigenous *moringa oleifera* plant as a crop that has significant nutritional benefits. The project has distributed free seedlings to every household in Tooseng village and other communities across Limpopo and to several community-based projects in Lepelele-Nkumpi municipality, as well as raising awareness and providing education about the nutritional and the health benefits of the *moringa* tree. Seedlings were also distributed to community-based organisations in Limpopo, including those at schools, home-based health care providers, drop-in centres, traditional healers and small-scale farmers. At the same time Sedibong has provided capacity building for community members in personal nutritional wellbeing, as well as the health benefits and nutritional value of the *moringa*. Mentorship is also being provided to three cooperatives in the area. Sedikong is also promoting the benefits of the *moringa* more widely, and have reported an interest from organisations in other parts of South Africa and indicated that there is a possibility of future partnerships. Key learnings that have emerged are as follows:

**Using innovative approaches to address food insecurity**

- The "Lammangate Moringa" is an innovative food security project in South Africa that aims to stem hunger and malnutrition by offering the remarkable nutritional benefits of moringa oleifera to the poorest of the poor in the rural communities in Ga-Mphahlele and in the rural communities across Limpopo province.

**Ensuring participation and community "buy-in"**

- The project has highlighted the importance of engaging with disadvantaged community members and other key stakeholders from the planning and initiation phase. Provincial and local government officials have participated in the project as they see the benefits that can arise in terms of community empowerment and the sustainable use of natural resources.

**Working in collaboration with local structures**

- The project has demonstrated the high level of community responsiveness to an initiative that meets their basic food security needs. It has also shown - in terms of policy advocacy on food security - the value of engaging jointly with communities and local government structures in order to strengthen the sustainability of the intervention. It has also highlighted the value of utilising available natural resources to meet immediate nutritional and health-related needs.
4.2.5. Pro-poor Interventions in the Area of the State of Civil Society in Southern Africa

The Trust is aware that within SADC there are important political, social and economic challenges still to be confronted if the vision of a pro-poor regional community that is informed by the values of solidarity, social justice, equality, dignity, freedom, democracy and collaboration that meets basic human needs are to be realised. It is significant that there is a general consensus on the need for a strong, cohesive and effective civil society in the region. Collective and networked leadership united under a common vision for the region is the key. Across the region key sectors such as the labour movement, faith-based organisations, women’s organisations, community based organisations and intellectuals have a wealth of programmatic and organisational knowledge and experience coupled with newly established organisations that are dedicated to advocacy and single issue campaigns. This collective experience, commitment and skills when collectivised and working in unison can be a formidable strategic alliance for positive prop-poor social change rooted amongst people in the region that offers hope for sustained development in the region. The three organisations that have a focus on strengthening the state of civil society are working to improve the governance dimension of civil society coordination, civil society facilitation of small and medium enterprise development, and the coordinated dissemination of information on pro-poor interventions.
Figure 22: Networking of Organisations in Area of State of Civil Society

For this thematic area (state of civil society) it is not really possible to make any substantive comparisons between the two reporting periods. The number of projects is too small to provide any significant statistical evidence of shifts in emphasis or trends. It can be note that there is a downward trend – as with the other thematic areas – in the development of evidence-based policy positions. Overall it would appear that there has been less emphasis in this reporting period on broad networking initiatives.

One of the projects has focused on strengthening the capacity of the regional civil society NGO apex body in order to build and consolidate its governance, organisational and advocacy capacity. Through the project the capacity of the apex organisation has been strengthened, with a major achievement being the development of a Board Policy Manual. Further work was undertaken to develop strategies, approaches and protocols for civil society participation in and input into the Poverty Observatory, with a significant achievement being the development of a Five Year Strategic Plan. Through the project a targeted research agenda has also been developed. Another project has been engaged in assessing the extent to which small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the region are being integrated into their national economies and the regional economy. The project has also been analysing the specific barriers and constraints that face SMEs in the sectors within which they work. A key learning from this project has been that there are gaps in the availability of sector-specific data for certain countries including Mozambique and Zambia. A recommendation is that efforts need to be made to improve the availability of economic data at the sectoral level in the SADC region in order to ensure meaningful economic analysis to inform the decisions of policy makers and practitioners. A third
project has been working on the development and improvement of the coverage of news from the SADC region with a focus on poverty eradication and policy making. The project has been successful in bringing new correspondents on board from across the region, including Angola and the DRC, and articles have been written on issues of security, civil society participation in policy making, economic development, and foreign investment.

Through the facilitation efforts of one organisation a regional workshop for CSOs was held to consult on the Regional Poverty Observatory (RPO). Civil Society views were captured in a regional civil society report, which then served as the basis for engagement between civil society and SADC. The project made significant progress in galvanising civil society to speak with a unified voice and to use this strength to lobby SAD to incorporate the perspectives raised by civil society in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing capacity strengthening for CSOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Both national and regional thematic members are critical actors in SADC-CNGO lobbying and advocacy programmes and should therefore be continuously capacitated, mobilised and remain engaged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generating a strong evidence base for pro-poor interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lobbying and advocacy that is informed by national level research and consultations carries weight and is likely to be respected by SADC policy makers and consequently successful hence the need to strengthen civil society at national level. The fact that poverty is not static makes a strong case for continuous research and consultations on poverty and development issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengthening collaboration and joint action between civil society sectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration amongst churches, labour, NGOs and social movements is critical in strengthening civil society voices. This joint action and common purpose has resulted in the development of a poverty reduction framework that will serve as the basis for monitoring poverty reduction efforts in the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Policy Engagement: Impact Assessment

5.1. Progress on Anticipated Impact

The interventions that are being undertaken in the current reporting period are at various stages of implementation, with some having actually been completed and others only starting off. Nevertheless, it is possible from the reports to begin to identify the different ways in which the projects are impacting on policy issues, processes and programme design across the region. The reporting format has encouraged partner organisations to shift their focus from activity reporting to a style of reporting that identifies and assesses the nature of emerging results and the degree to which project results are having discernible and measureable pro-poor policy impacts.

5.2. Target Groups Reached

The forty eight interventions undertaken in the current reporting period have targeted a wide range of public, private sector and civil society groupings across the region. The following table lists the main target groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTOR</th>
<th>TARGET GROUPING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Organisations</td>
<td>• Bilateral donors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multilateral agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional official inter-</td>
<td>• African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>governmental organisations</td>
<td>• SADC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Regional policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National organisations</td>
<td>• SADC member states</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National and district government departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National policy makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public sector service delivery agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National AIDS Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural groupings</td>
<td>• Small scale farmers’ organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rural women’s organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Farm workers’ unions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Landless people’s organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rural SMMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Sector</td>
<td>• Tourism organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tour operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community tourism initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tourism boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Destination marketing agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>• Media organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Journalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Agencies</td>
<td>• NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Faith based organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• National trade union federations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Sector</td>
<td>• Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Environment Sector
- Academics
- Students
- Progressive researchers
- Environmental networks
- Trans-frontier implementing agencies

### Social Justice Sector
- Organisations working with youth at risk
- Social justice activists
- Social justice advocacy groups
- Organisations working for peace

### Marginalised Groups
- Persons with disabilities
- Vulnerable households
- Poor people
- Children living with HIV
- Elderly living with HIV
- Migrants
- Asylum seekers
- Refugees
- War affected people

### Community
- CBOs
- Communities
- Community leaders
- Community development trusts

### 5.3. Key Results Achieved

The reports indicate that some interventions have been completed, while others are still underway and at various stages of implementation. Each partner was requested, however, to reflect on the results that they have committed themselves to and then to assess progress against these outcomes. As the trust programme of support to civil society in the regions matures the focus on impact becomes more critical. It is clear from the partner reports that a significant level of effort has gone into the development of capacity within civil society organisations. The development of capacity has included the following:

- Improving and expanding understanding of sub-national, national, regional and global policy making processes;
- Enhancing the ability of organisations to leverage key policy making entry points within national and regional governance systems;
- Increasing the knowledge base within specific sectors such as food security and poverty alleviation in order to provide an evidence base for effective advocacy and policy engagement; and
- Strengthening organisational skills in the areas of good governance, financial management and programme management in order to ensure a more robust and credible level of engagement with stakeholders across different state and non-state sectors.

The expectation is that improved levels of capacity will translate into strengthened practice in critical areas of regional policy work. Many of the reports demonstrate enhanced practice in the following areas:
• Advocacy;
• Lobbying;
• Building joint collaborative networks for action;
• Ability to generate and use project informed evidence and data;
• Ability to analyse project progress and adjust accordingly;
• Utilising Good Governance approaches;
• Engaging substantively and proactively with policy processes

The following figure illustrates how some of the progress on results that is being achieved by the partners is supporting and strengthening the results logic of the Trust’s regional programme:

**The Trust Results Logic**

**Poverty reduction** through empowered citizens facilitating sustainable development initiatives

**Impact**

**Access**

**Conditions**

**Practices**

**Capacities**

- Strengthened linkages and collaboration between CSOs in the SADC region
- Increased CSO knowledge and understanding of pro-poor policy advocacy work, networks, engagement and development processes

**Figure 23: Mapping the Logic of the Trust’s Regional Programme**

70% of partner organisations have reported clearly achieved or emerging results, while only one partner organisation has been unable to demonstrate results owing to delays in implementation.
The overall quality of reporting on results by partner organisations is variable, with some organisations providing comprehensive detail on their efforts to achieve the agreed results, and others providing very little information.

**Figure 24: Number of Organisations Reporting Progress against Results per Results Category**

The overall quality of reporting on results by partner organisations is variable, with some organisations providing comprehensive detail on their efforts to achieve the agreed results, and others providing very little information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some organisations demonstrate a solid understanding of the changes that their interventions are bringing about</td>
<td>• Many organisations report on activities rather than results</td>
<td>• Partners would clearly benefit from an enhanced understanding of results-based programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are examples of good analysis of the impact of interventions at the regional level</td>
<td>• Some organisations provide too much explanation and not enough analysis</td>
<td>• The Trust can engage with partners around the theory and practice of performance based reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A number of partners have used their implementation learning to strengthen implementation in a constructive feedback loop</td>
<td>• In some cases little or no attempt has been made to report against agreed results</td>
<td>• Partners can be engaged more proactively around “learning reflection” and the generation of project knowledge and evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. Strategic Learning to Date

5.4.1. Capacity of Organisations to Report on Strategic Learning

The reports provided to the Trust have been completed on a standard reporting template. This has clearly allowed for some degree of consistency across the reports and allowed for a more integrated analysis. Many of the reports have been completed as required and have provided a satisfactory quality of information. There are, however, quite a number of reports that have not been adequately prepared. Some organisations have failed to provide information on key sections of the report and this then makes it difficult to assess progress at the individual organisation level as well as to develop a cohesive higher level overview. Reporting against results is clearly easier for some organisations than it is for others. Some organisations have provided strong analysis of the results that they are achieving and the impact that these are having, while others appear to have less capacity to report substantively on results being achieved. Where organisations have struggled to demonstrate the changes – or value-add – of their interventions, they have also struggled to reflect adequately on the learning that has emerged from their work. The following table presents a comparative overview of the last two reporting periods, showing that the ability to report on key implementation learning remains a challenge:

![Figure 25: Degree to Which Organisations Report on Strategic Learning](image)

75% of organisations provide feedback on strategic learning that is either average or weak, while only 25% of the organisations are able to demonstrate substantive
learning. Almost all the organisations are engaged in innovative or ground breaking engagements around key pro-poor policy issues in the region, but there appears to be a capacity constraint in terms of breaking away from the “activity trap” and analysing their work at a deeper level. This concern should be an area of focus for the Trust moving forward – given the importance it places on the catalytic effect that effective multi-stakeholder engagement can have in terms of leveraging pro-poor policy shifts. The following table provides a sample illustration of where partner organisations are making progress against the results that they committed themselves to in the grant agreements with the Trust:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
<th>Results Provided in Original Proposal</th>
<th>Progress on Achieving the Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance for development, including human security</td>
<td>Young people get to know other cultures, which assists in tackling prejudices and creates a better understanding among people from different cultures</td>
<td>Participants demonstrate an understanding of the importance of volunteerism and building an active / engaged civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A space created for dialogue where the new generation and old generation of Africans come together and openly share ideas about a new vision of Africa</td>
<td>A space was created and there is motivation from participants from other parts of the continent to continue the dialogue, including showcasing the achievements of African individuals and communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increased civil society participation and influence on monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction and development strategies at national and local level</td>
<td>Strong participation by sector networks is leading to a multiplier effect in terms of the dissemination of information on the poverty observatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of a body of knowledge and increased level of knowledge of youth at risk and youth involvement in crime and violence in Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Summary Report and In-country Report provide new information about youth violence in Zimbabwe, further complimented by the report on youth violence in the SADC region submitted by VOSESA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations mainstream issues of economic and social justice and solidarity in their day to day activities</td>
<td>Ordinary people are now beginning make demands for a people centred SADC, as well as making demands for interventions that will improve their livelihoods – for example, the issue of free movement for informal traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The regional dimensions of migration and social</td>
<td>Contribute to evidence-based policy making that will enhance formal and informal social protection and social</td>
<td>This has been achieved through country studies, research reports, interviews with SADC migrants in South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>Security harmonisation / coordination for different categories of migrants in SADC</td>
<td>Africa and through engagement with academics, researchers, migrant organisations and civil society activists from across the SADC region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities will be recognised as vulnerable to HIV and will have access to crucial HIV information, testing, treatment, support and care services, reducing this vulnerability</td>
<td>This has been achieved in South Africa. In Lesotho and Mozambique recognition has been achieved and awareness increased. In Namibia and Lesotho accessible services have been launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations have acquired new capacity to influence tourism development in the region in ways that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development and poverty alleviation</td>
<td>The Sustainable Tourism Network SA (STNSA) has been instrumental in providing 14 certification organisations with opportunities and a shared platform to engage with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how the integration of SMEs in SADC countries into their national economies and the regional economy can be encouraged via the identification and removal of internal constraints to SME development</td>
<td>Six case studies have provided a good basis to inform the assessment of how SMEs can be integrated into their national economies by identifying internal constraints affecting SMEs and factors affecting the establishment of business linkages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth</td>
<td>Securing formal and practical support from the Communications Authority of Zambia for the implementation of project recommendations</td>
<td>An MOU is currently being drawn up to facilitate the district roll-out. Connect Africa has also formally engaged with an additional eight government departments to facilitate the roll-out of their respective services once the district roll-out has been implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional inter-dependence in natural resource management, including food security and livelihoods</td>
<td>Smallholder farmers will be able to produce their own organic fertilisers</td>
<td>Smallholder farmers who have attended training have embarked on building their own compost and some farmers have applied the compost in their gardens to test its effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering women in creating their own income generating enterprises</td>
<td>Small groups of women who have received training are forming small income generating enterprises and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The state of civil society organisations in southern Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small income generation, food stability and health benefits derived from growing and selling vegetables</td>
<td>Benefit from financial incentives from local government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The produce from the training garden is sold to the public and local clinic. This income is shared amongst the group working in the garden. Women beneficiaries thrive off the interest shown in them and self-worth has been improved as they realise their potential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building momentum for engagement in SADC policy advocacy, campaigns and strengthen the foundation for Apex Organisation’s partnership through a clear and well defined Alliance Pact</td>
<td>Alliance Pact was agreed upon by members and the pact is being shared with their constituencies before the Secretariat takes up its mandate to operationalise it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased development news coverage of the region</td>
<td>Articles have been published on Mozambique, Zambia, DRC and Tanzania on the issues of security, civil society participation in policy making, economic development and foreign investment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the critical internal constraints currently affecting the development of SMEs and the establishment of business linkages between SMEs and large domestic and international corporations operating in the SADC region</td>
<td>Significant progress has been achieved in identifying critical internal constraints affecting SME development and factors hindering the establishment of business linkages in each sector through the completion of case studies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A SADC-ONGO with the capacity to provide effective co-ordination of NGO and civil society in the SADC region to advocate for pro-poor development policies</td>
<td>Progress has been made with the coordination of civil society to engage with the SADC Heads of State Summit through annual Civil Society Forums and through the coordination of NGOs to participate in Regional Poverty Observatory processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.2. Relevance of Strategic Learning to Agreed Results

The implementation of planned interventions is generally not a linear or straightforward process. While intended outcomes may emerge, the shifting contextual dynamics and operational exigencies of implementation often result in unintended outcomes, new insights, instructive lessons, revised conceptual frameworks, understanding of new trends and emerging issues, and other strategic knowledge related to undertaking policy work to address poverty and inequality in the southern Africa region. The Trust recognises that enhanced civil society engagement with regional pro-poor policy processes is both ongoing and evolving. This “learning by doing” lens is a critical element of the Trust’s regional pro-poor policy approach, and it places great emphasis on the scope and quality of the experience and capacity gained, as well as the depth of learning that takes place through the work of its grantees. In this reporting period the Trust has placed greater emphasis on eliciting the different kinds of learning that partner organisations have experienced through implementation, and how this reflects an enhanced capacity to engage more effectively at a regional policy level.

The reports provide the grantees with an opportunity to reflect on and document some of the intended or unintended insights, lessons, trends, concepts or other strategic knowledge that have emerged as a result of policy work undertaken to overcome poverty in the southern Africa region. The importance of these lessons is that they can be fed back into further work in the specific policy areas being undertaken, thereby enriching and strengthening regionally integrated pro-poor policy dialogue. The quality of the reporting on organisational learning in turns determines the extent to which the Trust can assess and analyse the depth and effectiveness of both individual organisation projects as well as the aggregate impact that the programme as a whole is having. The following table presents a sample of this policy-related learning as it relates to the intended results of partner organisations together with some reflection on each of these reported learnings:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Focus</th>
<th>Reported - New and/or Unintended Policy-related Learning</th>
<th>Analysis - Relevance for the Pro-Poor Policy Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance for development, including human security</td>
<td>“Running a programme that plans to tackle poverty in South Africa and Mozambique is complex due to the differential in the material realities of people in the two countries. Therefore the application of the same principles may not be ideal. In the context of this programme participants from South Africa did not need financial assistance to obtain medical clearance to fulfil grantee operational requirements, whereas Mozambican participants were not able to meet the financial requirements of applying for medical clearance and therefore required additional support”</td>
<td>From a regional perspective it is important to ensure that assumptions made about people and their material circumstances and financial capabilities are deconstructed and tested to ensure that programmatic responses are appropriate. Poverty and lack of access to opportunities impact on the lives of people in different ways in different parts of the region. What emerges from this experience is the importance of understanding the scope of people’s agency within given sets of circumstances rather than assuming an African “sameness”</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“Participation of local communities in policy work, especially in influencing policy, requires that communities have the capacity to understand policies – and link to their rights and access to natural resources. This basic ability is lacking and CSOs need to work on training and capacity building to bring up local communities to a level where they can start to influence decision making processes. The establishment of Community Development Trusts can be a good starting point to have these as legal persona for communities”</td>
<td>The promotion and facilitation of community participation in and ownership of policy issues that impact on their lives is an important pro-poor advocacy and mobilisation strategy. It is critically important, however, to have a clear understanding of the levels of capacity within communities, and to determine where communities may lack particular knowledge or skills – particularly with regard to the policy-making process</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The political situation is currently sensitive. As such the organisation has to demonstrate neutrality with regard to the two main political parties, and focus on project delivery in a cohesive and participatory manner”</td>
<td>The policy advocacy work that is carried out in the region is subject to or determined by the political circumstances that prevail at country level. In many instances there is a need to craft strategic responses in a way that pro-poor work can most effectively continue within the existing constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Participation by governments in consultations continues to reduce suspicion between government and civil society organisations”</td>
<td>Traditionally the oppositional nature of state-civil society has been viewed as an obstacle to meaningful policy-level engagement. Increasingly it is being recognised by both sectors that ongoing substantive dialogue promotes greater levels of mutual trust and respect and provides a more effective platform for engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Uneven communications and access to internet facilities is a constraint in developing research partnerships across the region.”</td>
<td>The Trust’s focus on policy dialogue is, to a large extent, dependent on the availability and reliability of information and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These partnerships are very productive and substantially reduce the inequalities in contract research but require innovative communication and feedback. The difficulties in communication can limit more innovative methodologies such as the use of “shared workspace” to speed up writing and editing. Developing research partnerships throughout the region takes time to develop and needs commitment to orientate towards the key objectives of the Trust.

The regional dimensions of migration and social protection

- Access by migrants to social protection is restricted due to various factors, including socio-economic, labour market and poverty contexts of intra-SADC migrants, restrictions contained in the legal system and policy framework of SADC member states, the formal sector bias of most SADC social security systems, the adverse impact of immigration law on the social protection status of migrants, the non-ratification and/or non-enforcement of international social security standards, and the absence of bi- and multi-lateral social security coordination arrangements (such as the portability of benefits) within the region. Extending social security to migrant workers within SADC would therefore require the examination and elimination of these and other obstacles to social security coverage.

- From a SADC perspective progress has been made with regional integration, particularly in the economic and social spheres. There has, however, been less progress on addressing the movement of people across national borders. Migration in the region is driven primarily by socio-economic factors – poverty, unemployment, climate change and environmental factors, as well as political conflict. The issue of migrants and their reception by host countries is an ongoing and unresolved issue, and constitutes a significant human rights challenge to governments and civil society in the region. This highlights the critical role that civil society needs to play in ensuring that the human rights agenda is actively promoted at all levels in advocacy work and through multi-stakeholder policy dialogue.

Finance, trade, investment and pro-poor growth

- Many tourism businesses in SADC are presently struggling to survive due to declining occupancies related to the global economic downturn. This is especially so for tourism-related communications technology. This is a critical element in the rapid real time dissemination of information across the region via internet, through e-mail and Skype, mobile technology and the full suite of social networking platforms. Poor ICT networks in the region, connectivity unevenness from country to country, and capacity challenges in using ICT modalities are obstacle to effective communication and information sharing in the region.

- Key populations and marginalised groups in the Southern Africa region often experience stigma and discrimination as a result of a general ignorance and lack of information about them and about the specific issues that impact on their lives and that often make it difficult for them to access their basic rights. Increasing awareness of key populations, such as people living with disabilities, and actively lobbying for their interests and rights to be recognised, respected and protected across the region is a critical policy intervention.

- Policy making in the SADC region should rightfully be driven by the economic and social imperatives of member states. The policy formulation process, however, does not exist in isolation from
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Regional interdependence in natural resource management, including food security and</strong></th>
<th><strong>products which are essentially dependent on international markets. There is an opportunity for market diversification, eg. the growth of domestic and intra-regional travel as well as an opportunity to stress quantitatively and qualitatively the links between sustainability and improved competitiveness</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“The development of case studies has revealed shortcomings in the availability of sector-specific data from desktop sources for certain countries, most prominently Mozambique and Zambia. Efforts to improve the availability of economic data at the sectoral level in the SADC region are of paramount importance if meaningful and high impact economic analysis of the region is to take place with the purpose of informing the decisions of policy makers and practitioners”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>events, trends and economic developments beyond the southern Africa region. Pro-poor policy advocacy must, therefore, be informed by global processes and trajectories, and public, private and non-state actors need to be sufficiently well-informed to be able to shape flexible and responsive policies that take into account the real and potential impact of the wider context.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“In the fight against globalisation, global trade injustices, debt, poverty and gender inequality, the organisation has learnt that there is a need for effective networking so as to learn from each other and stand with one voice. This includes devising new strategies for lobbying and confronting regional leaders in the quest for economic and social justice”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A key element in the Trust’s understanding of pro-poor policy advocacy and engagement initiatives is that they should be evidence-based and premised on up-to-date, accurate and relevant data. Inadequate or unavailable data compromises the ability of policy makers and those who influence policy making to articulate policies that respond to needs that are based on solid data.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Forming smallholder farmer groups and establishing demonstration farms in villages inspires other smallholder farmers to learn and adapt very easily to the new farming techniques from their fellow farmers. This facilitates on-site training and adaptation of quality seed farming that then has a strong multiplier effect”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The perceived “capacity gap” is often a key feature of discourse on African development. It is evident, however, that there are many examples of instances where local knowledge and experience leads to innovative practices that can be shared more widely and replicated.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livelihoods</td>
<td>“During discussions with farmers at training sessions it was found that some farmers extract sap from Aloe Americana leaves to control insect pests. Aloe American grows in abundance in the country and if this indigenous technology for extracting sap from its leaves could be improved through the intervention of the relevant government departments this could lead to a more environmentally sustainable and less expensive method of pest control for small holder farmers”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Explaination and sensitisation on the climate change attracted the attention of the farmers because they are directly observing and facing it (for example the late arrival of rainfall, irregular quantities of rain, longer dry seasons) It is easier for them to agree to contribute to the project activities. Moreover, using technologies allowing them to adapt to climate change are more attractive to them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“If the basis of human rights is the right to life then food security, as a means to satisfy that right, must be the first priority of agricultural policies – the production of agricultural products that feed humans should be prioritised more than agro-fuels that feed cars”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A concerted effort must be made to expose learners in schools so that they are informed and empowered around the role of”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The state of civil society organisations in southern Africa</strong></td>
<td><strong>agriculture in general and sustainable agriculture in particular</strong>*</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Discussions and debates showed that the process of establishing an African identity is much more complex than the efforts made by governments and some civil society organisations, as well as individual professionals in all areas. The focus remains strengthening the identities of sovereign countries. Many participants have some fears around engaging in discussion about unity amongst Africans. This is a topic for further research and continuous dialogue”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Policy advocacy and lobbying from an informed position through research and the documentation of practice is central to the engagement of national committees with key stakeholders, therefore civil society needs to invest more on research and documentation for policy advocacy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From a composite perspective the reports are illustrative of the diverse range of intervention that the 44 organisations have been involved in, and how each individual initiative forms part of the broader strategic focus of the Trust to strengthen regional integration through pro-poor policy advocacy.

The insights, lessons learned, trends and challenges that have emerged from the efforts of partner organisations demonstrate a growing awareness of the importance of a results-orientation and some understanding of the critical response elements that are necessary for a more focused, informed and strategic civil society action. The following matrix summarises the key elements that have emerged from partner reporting.
The partner reports illustrate the multifaceted nature of the Trust’s regional grant making programme. It is also encouraging to note from the reports that there is a more evident clustering of joint effort around key components of the programme, including support to the strengthening of Poverty Observatories, improved governance and reach of apex organisations, and the enhancement of sustainable agriculture and food security. Many of the reports also demonstrate the innovative thinking and cutting-edge interventions that have been undertaken to strengthen grass roots and community voice and integrate it with key national and regional policy initiatives. The reporting reflects areas where impact is starting to be felt, as well as some of the challenges that are being experienced with implementation. A snapshot of some of the successes and challenges that have been highlighted by partner organisations have been extracted, and clustered into ten thematic areas:

**Table 6: Organisations Reporting on Challenges and Successes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Concern</th>
<th>Challenges and Gaps Identified by Partner Organisations</th>
<th>Impact Successes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation and ownership</td>
<td>• There have been some challenges in transferring ownership from the project to the community, with issues around dependency</td>
<td>• Following intensive awareness raising and capacity building with smallholder farmers many of the farmers have adopted environmentally friendly farming practices by planting upland rice, with immediate improvements in food security and increased household income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, understanding 0and capacity</td>
<td>• Low levels of trust and involvement in the project activities</td>
<td>• Training, ongoing technical support and relationship building with farmers and buyers has built the confidence of farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As a result of the economic recession newspapers have been very small and in many cases sections have been restricted</td>
<td>• The value-add of partnerships such as the one with the Trust is that they provide opportunities to create additional space in newspapers each month to report on SADC issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Climate change is having a significant impact on agricultural production in the region but knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon remains limited</td>
<td>• Small scale farmers have been eager to learn more about climate change and the impact that it is having on their production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poorly developed understanding of corporate governance practices undermines the ability of civil society organisations to operate effectively, transparently and sustainably</td>
<td>• Draft SACAU standards on corporate governance have been produced with inputs from the Secretariat and circulated to all members for comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In-country political tensions make non-partisan decision-making a challenge</td>
<td>• Communities have strengthened their capacity to work strategically with local government structures to ensure that political factors do not impede implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The issue of trans-frontier conservation continues to lack genuine and adequate political buy-in as despite there being SADC protocols that provide for TCFAs, the reality is that formal signing is a political process which does not translate into actions on the ground</td>
<td>• All legislation and policy frameworks relevant to the ZIMoZA initiative as well as SADC protocols have been reviewed and feedback made to the local communities to clarify areas of divergence and commonality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Perspective, position and solidarity

- **Perspective, position and solidarity**
  - Poverty has the effect of disempowering communities and leaving people feeling hopeless
  - Successful project implementation enhances the level of self-esteem and confidence within individuals and communities
  - There are capacity weaknesses and fragmentation of efforts that limit the ability of civil society organisations to play an effective role in influencing policies to overcome poverty
  - Networking and linking up anti-poverty struggles was one of the key strategies identified in the Winter School for strengthening organisations and building working class movements
  - Prejudice, inaccurate assumptions and a lack of inter-cultural understanding inhibit regional collaboration between people
  - The first Youth Exchange Programme orientation exposed participants to the importance of volunteerism and building an active/engaged civil society
  - The Pan-African agenda remains weak amongst civil society organisations, and is some fear around engaging in dialogue about unity amongst Africans
  - There is a recognition of the importance of starting a Pan-African dialogue at grassroots level (at schools, community groups, universities) before taking it into the conference fora
  - There are significant internal constraints to SME development and the establishment of business linkages in the region
  - Case studies have provided a good basis to inform the assessment of how SMEs can be integrated into their national economies
  - Many communities in the region are exposed to political, economic and environmental insecurity, which negatively impacts on their livelihoods
  - Broad agreement has been reached on the utility of a regional network of civil society formations to promote and champion concerted efforts against poverty and underdevelopment using the concept of holistic / multifaceted human security
  - There is still some reluctance on the part of national governments to
  - The involvement of civil society in the Regional Poverty Observatory
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>integration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Communication and information sharing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Access to policy and decision making processes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Improving livelihoods</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engage with civil society on the monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction and development strategies</td>
<td>research on youth violence in SADC shows that current policy conditions constrain the ability of organisations working with youth to operate optimally and make policy recommendations</td>
<td>policy makers and opinion formers in the region often lack access to up-to-date and credible information on pro-poor development issues</td>
<td>many poor rural communities remain trapped in cycles of unproductive and environmentally damaging farming practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formulation stage has laid a foundation for positive outcomes</td>
<td>there are many good practices emerging from a range of organisations that can be applied to the interventions to address youth violence</td>
<td>monitoring and evaluation of regional poverty interventions, strategies and plans remains a challenge for civil society</td>
<td>there is lack of understanding at community level of policies and how these link to their rights and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication and information sharing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitoring and evaluation of regional poverty interventions, strategies and plans remains a challenge for civil society</td>
<td>• Policy makers and opinion formers in the region often lack access to up-to-date and credible information on pro-poor development issues</td>
<td>• Many poor rural communities remain trapped in cycles of unproductive and environmentally damaging farming practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• As a result of the national and regional consultations awareness and interest has been raised prompting civil society in member countries to initiate advocacy programmes</td>
<td>• Four editions of the publication Change Mudança have been produced and are appropriately pitched and packaged to reach the target audiences in French, English and Portuguese</td>
<td>• Diversified and innovative approaches to small scale agriculture have a significant impact on levels of production and the generation of surplus for sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Studies on the existing situation for persons with disabilities were disseminated to key decision makers and capacity building training and advocacy activities have been initiated</td>
<td>• Through community consultations done during the period under review, serious sensitisation has been made on the need</td>
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Gender Equality

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<th>Access to natural resources</th>
<th>For partnerships with the private sector to get optimal livelihood outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The success rate for women-run small scale income generating enterprises remains low</td>
<td>• It is evident that careful and targeted allocation of resources can create improved access for women and facilitate the attainment of poverty reduction targets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In general women farmers continue to lack key farming and production skills</td>
<td>• Women benefit from the acquisition of specialised production and value-addition skills</td>
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The reporting template does not really provide space for the partners to reflect directly on the kinds of challenges that they are experiencing, and it may be useful for the future to revise the template so that it allows for some degree of reporting on key challenges, implementation bottlenecks and risk mitigation. Many partners have, however, alluded to some of the difficulties and obstacles that they have been experiencing as they work to implement their projects. Quite a number of the learning reflections make reference to direct and indirect contextual factors that limit the organisation’s ability to make optimal progress on the results areas that they have committed themselves to. Some efforts were also made to explain how the organisation dealt with these issues so as to minimise risk to the overall project. This kind of reporting enables the Trust to better assess the progress that is being made by individual partners and to understand the extent to which these organisations are able to develop and apply flexible and innovative solutions to these challenges. It needs to be stressed, however, that a number of the partners have provided fairly weak reports with very limited information being provided on progress against results and learning that has emerged from implementation.
6. Conclusions and Way Forward

The Southern Africa Trust Report 2009 emphasised the impact that the Trust’s grant partners were starting to demonstrate in the areas where they are working. It also noted that in reviewing the reports and the information provided the focus had been less on the processes of implementation, and more on the level of outcomes that were being achieved and the nature and quality of learning that was taking place within the organisations. The approach in this reporting period has been similar, but more focus has been placed on examining the extent to which partner organisations have been able to report on results using a clear analytic logic:

The ability of partner organisations to use the reports as assessment tools is an important element of the results-based approach. Measureable quantitative and qualitative results are key indicators of the extent to which projects are achieving impact at the regional pro-poor policy level. At the same time the assessment of progress on results and reflection on implementation learning serve to strengthen the partner organisation’s ability to undertake the following crucial project tasks:

- Tracking and monitoring their own progress against set results and timeframes;
- Evaluating the extent to which progress made is translating into measureable change (impact) in the areas where they are working;
- To be able to identify the risks and challenges to effective project implementation, and use this knowledge to generate mitigation strategies;
- To translate project implementation learning into strategies for strengthening the nature and extent of the project and building longer-term project sustainability.

The overall success of the Trust programme is a function of its partner’s capacity to achieve their individual results. The reports indicate that the efforts being undertaken by partner organisations are having a degree of impact in targeted pro-poor policy areas, and also illustrate how the utilisation of key entry points, innovative practice and joint action build more cohesive and effective interventions. A challenge is that much of the reporting remains at the narrative or “story telling” level and that many of the organisations are not transitioning to a more analytical approach to their reporting. It is evident that the grantees need to be able to report on their results in a more formalised and structured way – for example through referencing targets and indicators that have been used to measure actual progress. The grantees also need to understand the importance of reflecting on intended and unintended learning that emerges from their implementation – and how this serves as part of the feedback loop for informing and improving project performance. The reports that are prepared by the partners provide the Trust
with critical information on the performance levels of the grantees both at an organisational and at a programming level. As the previous Trust report noted it remains crucial that partner outcomes and learning are comprehensively captured and analysed, so that they can add greater insight and value to regional development processes at both the policy and implementation levels. It should be noted that the current set of reports are uneven in terms of quality. In assessing the reports it is possible to identify a number of challenges around the reports and overall reporting practices:

- While some organisations have provided rich and detailed reports, others have produced weak reports that lack crucial information;
- In some cases it is evident that organisational reporting capacity is weak;
- In other cases it is evident that little though or effort has been put into the preparation of the reports;
- Many of the reports have not been reviewed or edited before being sent to the Trust – this is evidenced by obvious mistakes, unclear information, information gaps and internal inconsistencies;
- It would appear that some organisations are not clearly understanding the report template and the kind of information that is being sought;
- It is evident that a lot of organisations are not well-versed in performance (or results) based reporting and struggle to articulate clear outcome / results areas;
- Many of the reports are not providing clear feedback on the experiences and learning that is emerging from their work.

These reporting challenges create a problem in terms of the synthesis of information, comprehensive mapping of results across the programme and generation of new learning, understanding and innovation. The current set of reports have provided a significant amount of information, which has allowed for a good overview of progress to emerge there are remedial actions which the Trust can take to improve and streamline the process. By undertaken these remedial actions the Trust will be able to strengthen organisational capacity support to its civil society partners in the region so that they are further strengthened in their efforts to shape and direct regional policy responses to poverty-related policy issues. Going forward the following recommendations should be taken into consideration by the Trust:

- The current reporting template is reviewed and revised so that it serves as a more effective data collection tool;
- The Trust should develop a short questionnaire that requests partners to comment on some of their reporting challenges and any issues that they have with the current template – this information can then be used to inform the review and revision of the template;
- In future the reporting template should include a set of explanatory notes that will guide the report writer in providing accurate and relevant information;
- The sections of the report (together with the specific questions) should be re-formulated so that they elicit the required information in a very focused way and avoid duplication;
- The Trust should provide generic feedback to all its grantees on the reporting process, emphasising that it is a key element of the Trust’s performance based funding approach and that the quality of information provided to the Trust is critical to the development of
programme synthesis reports as well as its ongoing monitoring and evaluation responsibilities;

- Some further support should be provided to the grantees to guide them in better understanding the concepts of “outcomes” and “impact” so that they move from reporting on outputs to demonstrating the various levels of change that they are bringing about;
- Together with this guidance grantees should be supported to understand the concept of “project learning”, and the value of reflecting on learning as a way of improving and strengthening project implementation;
- In some cases the Trust may need to provide some form of additional and/or ongoing technical support / capacity development to those grantees that are clearly struggling with their reporting.

In preparation for the development of the *Knowing Civil Society Report* the Trust compiled a database of excel spreadsheets to capture the quantitative elements of all the reports. While this serves as a useful tool for developing the report it should be noted that the database needs to be accurately compiled and summarised in a more comprehensive manner. The spreadsheets provided for this round of report were incomplete, had a number of gaps and inaccuracies, and in some cases were categorised in an arbitrary manner. For future KCS reports the Trust may want to consider improving their in-house capacity to provide an accurate database, or alternatively assigning this task to the person who is writing the report. The second option may be preferable as the process of collating the information also enables the writer to familiarise themselves in a substantive way with the reports.