

Local organisations – central but neglected roles in poverty reduction and environmental management

Discussion session at ADB
Poverty Environment Partnership
Manila, June 2008

Why look at local organisations?

Local orgs (local govt, CSOs...) are at the 'end of the MDG delivery chain'
So development aid ultimately depends on local orgs' resources, knowledge, objectives, incentives, and timing. *But...*

1. Paris agenda emphasises '*country*' ownership, alignment, financial management, and accountability – not *local*
2. Donors *criticize* local orgs as: unaccountable, not representative, unable to go to scale, co-opted – they look at local orgs in donor terms only
3. Donor objectives, resources, procedures, relations and conditions are *not* built on local orgs as drivers of change

Therefore IIED sought local orgs' views on good development, their own roles vis-à-vis national govt, and effective support models

Organizations engaged in self/mutual review

- Pamoja Trust/Kenyan Homeless People's Federation – Kenya
- Pastoralist Women's Council – Tanzania
- Organisation of Rural Associations for Progress – Zimbabwe
- Associates in Research and Development/ARED – Senegal
- Community Organisation Resource Centre – South Africa
- Urban Resource Centre – Pakistan
- Neighbourhood Credit, IIED-America Latina, Argentina
- Association for Nature and Sustainable Development/ANDES – Peru
- North Rupununi District Development Board – Guyana
- Casa Pueblo – Puerto Rico
- Caribbean Natural Resources Institute – Trinidad
- More...

IIED's work to date with local organisations

Phase 1: Self-profiling of successful organisations

- 'Telling the story' in their own terms
- Mutual peer review workshop, London – joint analysis + case
- Publishing self-reflections (IIED Gatekeeper series)
- Draft synthesis – roles of local organisations re 'MDGs'

Phase 2: Influencing aid and governments; inter-I.O. networking

- Short Opinion Paper for OECD aid effectiveness – Ghana Sept
- Workshop on influencing aid – at PEP 2009?
- Further profiling and networking

7 lessons and 2 challenges *[add a quote for each one?]*

1. **Local culture** is the ‘DNA’ of effective organisations – but also sympathetic cross-fertilisation that creates a ‘new idea that fits locally’
2. **Local rights – or the struggle for rights** – are the ‘substrate’ for effective local organisations, especially environmental and/or women’s rights
3. **Empowering constituencies** is a mark of effective local orgs – educationally, politically, economically, and using science and analysis
4. **Precedent-setting** with the aim to change government, often explains success, not just ‘delivering’
5. **An emphasis on self-reliance** helps local orgs mature: from protesting, to developing ideas, to taking responsibility, to influencing far beyond
6. **Long time horizons but often low budgets** are needed for change – and local sources of finance are often best (cf. OECD/multilateral)
7. **Listening to poor groups** – and gradually improving accountability to them – shapes successful local org roles

1st shared challenge is achieving spatial scale-up whilst acting on 1-7 above

2nd challenge is getting support, but avoiding capture, by external agencies

Some early aid architecture/funding proposals

- Support to proven effective local orgs e.g. Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility CLIFF (Sida, DFID)
- Global funds on which grassroots orgs can draw directly, managed by trusted intermediaries e.g. International Urban Poor Fund (foundations)
- In-country (multi-)donor funds on which grassroots orgs can draw directly at municipality/locality level
- Support other channels for local orgs – intermediaries helping S-S learning, trade in community products

Points for discussion with PEP

- PEP interest in forming a small group to shape the findings/communications from this work?
- A PEP session with some of the local organisations?
- Where are best 'entry points' in the aid system for better inclusion of, and support to, l.o. roles?