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Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
Association de Coopération et de Recherche pour le Développement
Agência para Cooperação e de Pesquisa para o Desenvolvimento



Building accountability - CSOs, citizens and the post-2015 agenda

ACORD's engagement in post-2015



- ACORD has been heavily involved in CSO mobilisation around the post-2015 process
- We are an active member and founder of the African Working Group, consisting of African CSOs working on post-2015
- We lobbied for an established CSO Secretariat to sit in the office of President Sirleaf of Liberia, one of the High Level Panel (HLP) co-chairs
- In this role we coordinated the global HLP civil society consultation in Monrovia
- We were also an active participant in the global HLP civil society consultation in Bali
- But at the heart of our work in 2013 has been our **citizen-driven workshops** held with the grassroots communities to ascertain the people's aspirations, experiences and needs for the new global development framework

Citizen-driven accountability



- My focus here will be on accountability, with particular reference to citizens ability to hold governments to account
- Partnerships are vital in the post-2015 framework, and CSOs have a large role to play
- For ACORD the post-2015 framework must have at its heart a commitment to building decision-making processes and accountability mechanisms that are participatory and transparent
- We carry this ethic out in our work. We held 38 citizen-driven workshops in 11 African countries, reaching nearly 4,000 people
- Idea was to ascertain peoples aspirations, experiences and ideas for how they want too see their world change after 2015
- This dialogue between ACORD and the communities we work with started before the post-2015 agenda processes, is ongoing and will continue
- Over the next 2 years this will evolve into a process of increasing the knowledge and skills of communities, strengthening their ability to claim their rights and hold national governments to account
- The aim here is to strengthen vibrant, empowered communities who are able to monitor and advocate on the implementation of the post-2015 agenda

ACORD and citizen-driven accountability



- This approach is fundamental to ACORD, it reflects our values and how we see positive lasting change taking place
- It is where we have years of established practice, research and knowledge
- Allow me to share two examples that demonstrate the role we play in mobilising communities to hold governments to account on national level implementation of policies and building effective partnerships between government institutions and community groups

Conflict resolution and the governance of elections



- Conflicts in Africa today, are characterized by deeply-rooted fear and stereotypes. ACORD, in 2001, developed the Community Social Peace and Recovery Model (CSPR) to facilitate healing, truth, reconciliation, reparation and forgiveness at community level
- Through the CSPR, communities negotiate their peaceful coexistence through the signing of ‘social contracts’ and joint implementation of peace and recovery projects
- Through CSPR, ACORD is also working with communities to transform high level political peace accords into concrete and practical solutions at the grassroots level
- E.g. ACORD has been working with communities in Guinea and Kenya on civic education issues for the March 2013 presidential elections (Kenya) and June 2013 legislative elections (Guinea)
- Community elders from former warring communities in Western Kenya demanded that all politicians running for elective posts amongst their communities “abide by” and “pledge” to support implementation of the social contract known as Mabanga Resolutions
- These are examples of how the CSPR approach can equip communities to hold their leaders to account for peace and stability

Community mobilisation on CAADP & Food Sovereignty



- To ensure that CAADP implementation process adequately addresses and responds to the needs of African communities, ACORD has contributed to enhancing farmers knowledge on pertinent agricultural policies, information and practices and facilitated active participation of small-holder farmers and pastoralists, especially women in national processes linked to CAADP implementation
- We have put special emphasis for citizen engagement, in particular small-scale farming households as crucial to promote food sovereignty through CAADP in terms of investing in local food producers and sustainable agriculture (incl. management of natural resources and climate change) and local, national and regional market access
- In Uganda, through the Agri-Profocus Policy Group, ACORD and partners are engaging with policy makers to review policies such as the National Agriculture Policy, the National Cooperative Policy as well as the Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) with an aim of making them beneficial to smallholder farmers

Community mobilisation on CAADP and FS (ctd.)



- In food sovereignty, consistent with our vision of facilitating the emergence of grassroots voices, ACORD, in collaboration with PCFS (People Coalition on Food Sovereignty), supported a CSO rural sector consultation to advance the principles of food sovereignty in the post-2015 development agenda. Through this consultation, ACORD has contributed to supporting capacity of CSOs to develop multi-stakeholder spaces in agriculture and rural development policy, planning and implementation to engage policy makers
- As a result, there is increased popular mobilisation and engagement of farmers' organisations at local and national levels with policy makers, creating more opportunities for farmers to benefit from government support

Accountability and MDGs



- MDGs have shaped development policy and political commitment, and registered some important successes in areas such as HIV/AIDS and gender parity in education, as well as increasing aid finance and budget in developing countries
- But they are symptomatic of a development model that places strong emphasis on aid flows from North to South and on service delivery in social sectors
- Perhaps less noted is that they are also symptomatic of a model of development that relies on top-down design and implementation, with little meaningful participation or accountability. MDGs had little provision for participation and accountability, and represented a narrative of how to achieve change that did not privilege the ability of citizens to define their own needs and solutions
- This results in an inability of these efforts to respond to local realities and needs, and doesn't challenge/change the power structures that entrench inequality and exclusion

Accountability and MDGs (ctd.)



- Where the MDGs proved useful, especially in Africa, is a rallying point for civil society and community-based organisations
- The commitments entailed in the MDGs were a means for CSOs to hold governments to account
- But this was advocacy alone – and did not include a formalised system of partnership between governments and other actors, including citizens, to enforce strong systems of formalised accountability

Accountability and monitoring in post-2015



- It is vital that the post-2015 framework corrects these failings
- Strong and effective partnerships are crucial, but their foundation must be a privileging of the voices and aspirations of citizens at the grassroots
- A key finding from our citizen-driven workshops was that community members thought that change in the lives of the most marginalised cannot be understood without understanding the political economy of development – how power is distributed, how it effects resource distribution, and who benefits from the development economy

Accountability and monitoring in post-2015



- Citizen-led monitoring and accountability is essential in ensuring the successful implementation of the framework – increasing the ability of citizens to challenge the power structures that restrict positive lasting change
- It is essential that the framework is based on subsidiarity – that actors are able to integrate into their own priorities and planning processes
- As the goals of the new framework are integrated into national and local development planning processes, there must also be a strong role and space allocated to citizens and civil society
- The framework must guarantee investment in this approach – both institutions and citizens require their capacity to be strengthened to transition to a model of development based on citizen-driven accountability

Accountability and monitoring in post-2015



- For ACORD and its partners, a focus on accountability and monitoring in the post-2015 framework cannot be restricted to merely ensuring that the framework is implemented
- The framework itself must be a vehicle for increasing political accountability within decision-making at all levels
- It must have a focus on transforming the way in which policy making and resource allocation for development are practised – a goal on political accountability and measurements on accountability would go some way to achieving this
- The framework should mandate the creation of strong inclusive and functioning public institutions that promote multi-stakeholder and social dialogue among relevant actors
- It should also incentivise the upholding of the civic and democratic rights essential to ensuring political accountability

Thank you!