

WORKING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AFRICA

Building a Pan African Social Movement



ACORD's Citizen-Driven Workshops – methodology and outcomes

www.acordinternational.org

Venue

Date

Rationale



- Consultations to date on post-2015 have been an improvement, when compared to the process to define the MDGs
- However, they have largely remained business-as-usual style consultations
- The UN national consultations did not get to grassroots
- The MYWORLD internet survey has reached 1 million people, but is largely a tick box exercise
- The HLP process of consultation has centred on CSOs, academics and the private sector, and was more consultative than many similar global processes
- However, did not have the scope to reach grassroots
- When we talked to the communities we work with across the continent no one had talked to them, so we did

Rationale



- ACORD's vision for social justice and ending poverty has at its heart the understanding that people are the primary actors in their own survival and development, and that we must work alongside communities in our work
- Through participatory processes and consultation we frame our own inputs into decision-making in the perspectives and views of the communities we work with
- Our engagement in the post-2015 process has been governed by this ethic

Rationale



- For ACORD it is vital that any framework which speaks on issues of poverty and sustainable development must be informed by those who experience them on a daily basis
- This is particularly true of the communities we work with, who are predominantly rural and economically marginalised, and are amongst the poorest in their respective countries
- As an active participant in the post-2015 process it is thus essential that our own interventions should be governed by what these communities see as most important
- In the absence of spaces within the post-2015 consultative process we wanted to create our own space to ensure communities could engage with and provide their own views on the issues at the heart of the debate

Citizen-driven workshops

- We developed a methodology for ACORD country team staff to use to trigger debate and conversation within communities on the issues at the heart of the framework
- We wanted the workshops to create a space where participants are able to share and reflect on their own lives, experiences and priorities
- We used guiding questions which were used by facilitators to shape the debates
- The aim was to allow participants to define the changes they would like to see in order for them to live well, what factors were preventing this change from taking place, and what has changed for better or worse in the community since the introduction of the MDGs in 2000

Citizen-driven workshops



Citizen-driven workshop in Chad

Citizen-driven workshops

- The workshops were held in a highly varied range of geographical locations in West, East and Horn of Africa as well as Southern Africa
- Demographically they included a huge variety of different social groups, spanning areas with different environmental conditions, local economic characteristics, and political systems
- In some areas ACORD held workshops with urban and peri-urban communities, living through the rapid urbanisation currently found on the continent
- The majority of communities participating in the exercise were found in rural areas, and amongst these were a variety of different ecological conditions and social dynamics, where small-scale farming and pastoralism are the dominant livelihoods
- Some areas are transitioning from national conflicts, while others face incessant localised conflict between communities
- Taken together the 38 different workshops paint a vivid and diverse portrait of the experiences and aspirations of vulnerable communities living in Africa today

Citizen-driven workshops



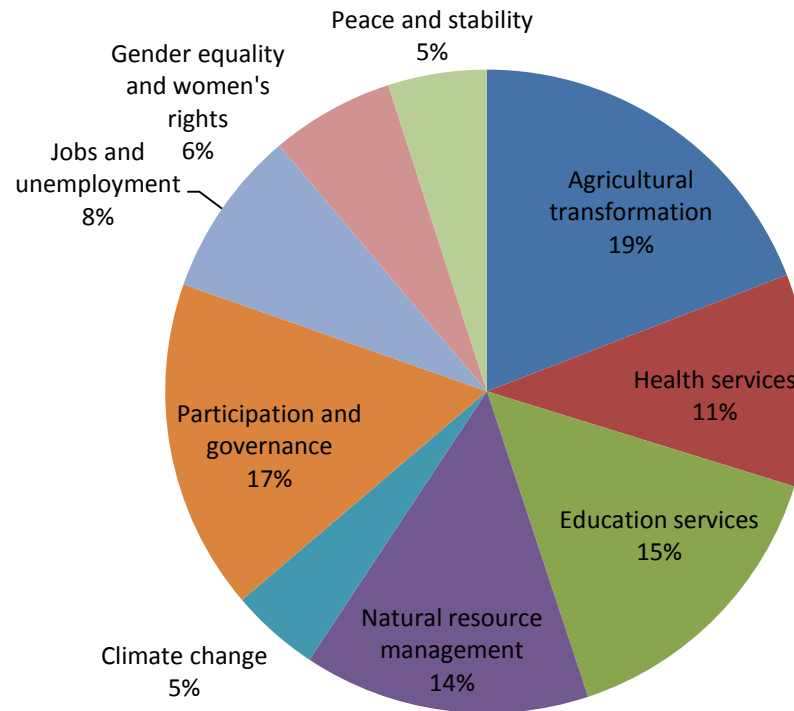
Workshop in Inhambane, Mozambique

Citizen-driven workshops

Participating countries	Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Chad, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali
Number of citizen-driven workshops held in different communities	46
Total number of participants	4,112
Proportion women participants	47.5%
Proportion under 25	22.2%
Proportion over 60	10.6%

The issues raised

- A huge number of different issues were raised by participants
- Most prominent issues raised were:



Citizen-driven workshops



Workshop held in Juba County, South Sudan

Interface of the three dimensions of sustainable development



- The CDWs provide an intimate portrait of how the three dimensions of sustainable development interact at the community-level
- They demonstrate how in African communities the poorest live through a complex reality of social marginalisation, natural resource dependency and economic inequality
- The findings further underline the challenge and the for the High-Level Political Forum in ensuring integrated implementation of sustainable development policy across all three dimensions
- At the same time they underline the necessity of this role – for people on the ground all three are deeply interlinked, and citizens are calling for interlinked solutions across all dimensions

Transformation in small-scale food production



"The most important priority is changing agricultural policy: the plains of Imbo can feed the entire population of the country" (Small-scale rice producer in Burundi)

"Community lands are being grabbed for the benefit of foreign investors, and nothing is being done about it. Sometimes the army is involved, and there is killing" (Said Akur Elizabert, South Sudan)

"When I was a young girl, you would know which month we would have rain, which month would be dry, so as a farmer you could prepare what you are going to plant. But things are different now, everything has changed. The rainy month turned to drought, the dry month turned rainy" (Woman Participant, 56yrs, Mwanza, Tanzania)

Transformation in small-scale food production



- Rural areas lacking in investment, services, distribution of wealth
- For most participants transforming rural areas meant transforming small-scale food production
- This means giving people the tools, resources and power to transform small-scale food production into a sector that provides food, social and environmental sustainability, and safeguards livelihoods
- The dominant theme was self-determination – giving small communities the mean to determine how the sector will evolve
- Through finance, productive assets, training, the ability to communally manage natural resources, policies that empower, participation in the regulation of markets → control over food systems

Citizen-driven workshops

“The issues affecting farmers in this region are real. We ask the government to facilitate farmers in acquisition of title deeds. This is seriously affecting production because we cannot access loans. We also need to establish machines and equipment like the milk coolers and other storage facilities to enable us fetch better market prices if not value addition. We work hard throughout the year only to sell our products at a throw away price to very selfish middle men. We remain poor yet very hard working. On Natural resources this also real, the Trans Nzoia Pokot Border is seriously affected, especially during the dry season, the Pokot, for lack of pasture for their animals would graze their animals on any green plantations. Imagine the conflict between them and the farmers.”
Harrison Dickson, farmer in Mount Elgon, Kenya

Universal access to services



“I appreciate the health services, I’ve received treatment since 2004. Those who have not had the opportunity to access free treatment died long ago. Myself I would not be alive today, but I’m healthy” (Priscilla Uwimbabazi, 54 years, Kamonyi, Rwanda)

“In our dispensaries we have one nurse who serves the whole community and because of fatigue she is not able to see all the clients” (Participant in Mount Elgon, Kenya)

“Free schooling is a good thing but there are problems to solve: poor infrastructure, few teachers, overcrowded classes” (Participant in Muramvya, Burundi)

Universal access to services



- Overarching theme was that participants expected the state to provide universal access to basic services
- Health, education and vocational training
- Where universal, and free, access had been implemented was celebrated
- Overall picture was of services that were inadequate and difficult to access
- Distance to services, especially for pastoralists
- Costs a drain on livelihoods – user fees, drugs, hidden costs like transport, cost of drugs or school equipment
- Vocational training consistently raised – linked to large numbers of unemployed youth

Citizen-driven workshops

“Before, there were not enough schools, students would travel so far to join their classes, yet there was some standard of education, and they could find a job. Now there is almost a school in every village, the standards are still not high, and youth cannot find jobs. I find it ironic. What are the reasons? For me there's the question of the quality of training and education” **Aissata Camara, Niono, Mali**

Participation and civic rights



“Only livelihoods of those allied to the ruling party are improving, so growth is not inclusive. Participation of communities is only restricted to certain conversations, the government won’t talk to our community about electricity or land.”
(Participant in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

“Some of us have never seen or do not understand what is in the new constitution, so we do not even know which laws apply to us”
(Participant in Turbi, Kenya)

Participation and civic rights

- Change cannot be separated from questions of how power is distributed, how it effects resource distribution, and who benefits
- Participants wanted to be able to have more power to impact on decision-making
- Consultation cosmetic, and decisions over resource allocation overshadowed by corruption and patronage
- Political rights welcomed in many communities, need to be increased
- Policy literacy also vital
- Devolution of decision-making to local-level gives more opportunity to influence
- Community mobilisation and organisation needs to be supported – effective way of having influence

Citizen-driven workshops

“Democracy is for us something utopian, something which is not yet 100%, but maybe 20%. You can express your opinions or ideas but they remain a dead letter, they are worthless. Indeed, the grassroots are often consulted as a mere formality. Their opinions are not considered as important conclusions, and decisions are made well before consultations happen! I think the crux of the problem lies not at our level but also within local authorities, who are unable to enforce or challenge a directive from higher levels but that do not fit with the realities of the population. Take for example the policy advocating monoculture: how can you expect us to take ownership of this policy, when this policy aims to separate our knowledge and from what we practice? If our suggestions were to be listened to, the population could accept and own this policy and its implementation.” **Marc Niyonshuti, Gashora, Bugesera, Rwanda**

Conflict and peace-building



- Conflict and fragility amongst communities causes reversals in developmental gains
- Massive displacement of people within countries and across borders is a defining feature of conflict
- Allocation, management and exploitation of increasingly limited natural resources can and does contribute to conflict in Africa
- Citizens outlined strong correlation between conflict, natural resource management and leadership/governance
- Conflict is creating stigma and discrimination, exclusion, human rights abuses at the local level for young boys and girls
- Strong and accountable institutions that are responsive to empowered citizens, rather than to elite networks competing for resources, was often raised as an example of how best to prevent future conflict

Citizen-driven workshops

"I am displaced from Lere and presently residing in Niono. We left all our goods, and the Islamists have taken or destroyed our homes, livestock and even our clothes and utensils, we lost everything. Here in Niono we lack any livelihood. We live thanks to support from NGOs such as ACORD who give us food, cash for condiments, hygiene kits, medicines etc.. We are very happy. But we would also be provided agricultural inputs so that we can produce something for ourselves"

Fatoumata Namakri (Mali) testifying how Islamists pillaged Lere village in 2012

Gender and women's rights



- Violence against women is prevalent, and perpetuated by both perceptions and attitudes within society, and a lack of security, support and justice for victims
- Women and girls face unequal access to, control over, and ownership of resources, including land, credit, energy, information and technology
- Women want more voice and participation – both at household level, within their communities, and within policy and political processes
- Women face unique and particular problems in accessing basic services, most notably in services that allow them to exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights

Citizen-driven workshops

“We women need education for a better life. Educated people know how to make changes in their life. So we must position education as a source of change for girls. We mothers look after livestock. We wake up early at 6:00am and make tea and their arrange their education materials and send them to school while we also take livestock to field. Then 1:00pm when they return back from schools they look after the livestock. We mothers must send both girls and boys equally to school. What is needed additionally for our betterment are full rights, we don't attend community meetings. Genital mutilation is also another problem. To stop this the only solution is awareness and we need to be organized at district level to stop the action that harm us and save the children, and give birth safely.”

Sasure Haluke, 45, pastoralist from Borana in Ethiopia

Integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development through National Democratic Ownership



- The HLPF mandate to ensure states follow-up and implement globally agreed commitments on sustainable development is vital
- For it to do this effectively it must ensure these commitments are implemented in a way that addresses the lived reality of citizens at the grassroots, where all three interact
- For it to do this effectively it must be attuned to and based upon the concept of National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda

National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda



- Across the workshops two fundamental points were regularly brought up by participants, both of which have important implications for the structure of the post-2015 framework:
 1. Interventions, whether by national or local institutions, or by aid agencies, often were inappropriate to the specific needs of the communities we talked to. Lack of localised policy design and implementation ended in an unsuitable intervention which wasted resources and didn't help communities
 2. Participants underlined a clear and inexcusable accountability gap in programmes for socio-economic development. The absence of a role in formulating policies is compounded by the inability to challenge them. The obligations of states and other actors to take responsibility for their actions, to explain and justify them, and to have systems and institutions in place that allow them enforce a change in behaviour, are not present in many participants lives.

National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda



- For the post-2015 framework to effectively build a new relationship between citizens and states then it must be rooted in national contexts, and national governments and their citizens must have primary ownership of it
- This means the framework must mandate and empower national and local application of goals and indicators
- National democratic ownership of the post-2015 framework can lay the foundations for effective and meaningful participation by citizens in the formulation of plans for implementation.

National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda



- The framework should mandate the creation of multi-stakeholder, participatory, empowered and country-led bodies to decide to translate global goals into appropriate country targets and indicators, review existing national and local plans for social and economic development, and plan on how the targets will be mainstreamed into them
- These bodies should privilege the role and voices of citizens, and grant them institutional authority in the bodies' decision-making processes
- The post-2015 framework should have clearly defined responsibilities for a number of different institutions, at global, regional, national and local level, as well as the private sector and civil society

National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda



- Defining the roles and duties of these institutions is vital, as is building, empowering and mandating strong accountability mechanisms to ensure these responsibilities are adhered to
- A central part in ensuring that the framework is accountable to citizens is through effective and participatory monitoring mechanisms
- This should be based on extensive and deep measurements of local realities - framework should galvanise and resource a revolution in data generation. This should be aimed at gathering accurate measurements across social, economic and environmental issues, and across different demographic groups and marginalised communities, at disaggregated levels.
- Monitoring should privilege the role of citizens in ensuring programmes and policies are responsive to their needs, and build an effective role for them in both data collection and monitoring

National Democratic Ownership of the post-2015 agenda



- The HLPF must then be designed as a crucial part of this system – built around these principles and mechanisms
- It must exist as the global body for accountability over implementation – with a clearly defined understanding of the roles and responsibilities of global institutions and bodies
- But it must be effectively linked within a chain of roles and responsibilities and accountability – from global to national level to community level
- Finally, in order to effectively ensure integrated implementation of the three dimensions of sustainable development it must privilege the knowledge and agency of those who experience them on a day to day basis – citizens themselves
- This will require a sophisticated and ground-breaking institutional design – but a necessary one