

ACORD

Pan-Africa Food Sovereignty Programme 2007-10

End of Project Evaluation



Foreword

This independent evaluation was commissioned by ACORD and performed by Pesh Framjee and Tom Davies of Crowe Clark Whitehill LLP.

We would like to express our thanks to ACORD's staff, partners and other stakeholders who participated in our evaluation.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACORD – Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
ACP – Africa Caribbean and Pacific group of countries
ATN – African Trade Network
AU – African Union
AWEPON – African Women’s Economic Policy Network
CAADP – Comprehensive African Agriculture and Development Program
CAP – Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union
CBO – Community Based Organisation
CBOA – Community Based Organisation Association
CEMAC – Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CILONG – Centre de Liaison et d’Information des ONGs
CPF - Confederation Paysanne du Faso
CSO – Civil Society Organisation
DfID – Department for International Development
EAFF – East African Farmers’ Federation
EPA – Economic Partnership Agreement
ESAFF – East and Southern Africa Farmers Forum
EU – European Union
FASPACO – Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou
HIV/AIDS – Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus / Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
IGTN – International Gender and Trade Network
JPA – Joint Parliamentary Assembly
NGO – Non Governmental Organisation
PLHA – People Living with HIV/AIDS
TWN – Third World Network
ROPPA – Network of Farmers’ Organisations and Producers in West Africa
UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WTO – World Trade Organisation

Methodology

The methodology behind this evaluation report was:

- A review of the full proposal and the Log frame (including amendments) submitted to DfID.
- A start-up meeting with ACORD staff in Nairobi and London.
- Desk research - a review of documents associated with this programme including the organisation's Pan African Programme strategy document, the annual Pan African Programme reports and a previously commissioned evaluation report.
- Interviews (telephone and face to face) with programme partners, ACORD staff and other stakeholders.
- Questionnaires (and on occasion follow-up telephone calls) for programme partners, ACORD staff and other stakeholders.
- Submission of a draft report to ACORD staff in Nairobi and London for feedback prior to report finalisation.

Executive Summary

In 2006 ACORD launched its Pan African Programme (PAP) focused on advocacy for food sovereignty and with gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS as intervening themes. The overarching aim of the programme is achieving food sovereignty in Africa and supporting small-holder farmers and other small-scale food producers. In the period 2006 to 2009 the campaign on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) was the main advocacy focus within this, due to the concern that poorly negotiated agreements could damage agricultural livelihoods in Africa as well as also impacting on other areas, including health and education.

As part of the PAP, ACORD received funds from the UK Department for International Development's (DFID) Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) for a "Pan African Food Sovereignty Programme". This programme is the subject of this evaluation report and was implemented between April 2007 and March 2010. It involved work in five countries: Rwanda, Chad, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia. The goal of the project was to:

"Promote food security in Africa through broad based civil society participation in global agricultural trade debates and contribution to EPAs and CAP reform."

The purpose of the project was to:

"Democratise the debate on EPAs and CAP to enable poor and marginalised communities dependant on agriculture to articulate their rights and advocate for policies that benefit their development."

We have performed the evaluation of this programme by posing and answering three principal questions:

- 1) Did the programme do what it said it would do?
- 2) Did the programme make a difference?
- 3) Did the programme do the right thing and what lessons can be learnt?

In the evaluation's Terms of Reference, we were asked to consider the assessment criteria of relevance, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, replicability, lessons learned, information, dissemination, networking and recommendations. These criteria are addressed within the three questions. The first considers effectiveness, efficiency, equity, relevance as well as information, dissemination and networking. Impact is considered in question 2 and sustainability, replicability and recommendations are covered in the last question, along with lessons learnt from the evaluation.

Did the programme do what it said it would do?

The revised log frame presented three outputs:

- 1) **At community level:** Small-scale farmers and pastoralists are organised and equipped with the knowledge and awareness of policy mechanism & tools to advocate for their rights to healthy and culturally acceptable food and protection of their livelihoods by inputting into national, regional and global mechanisms that protect food sovereignty.
- 2) **At national and regional level:** Civil society successfully advocates for governments buy-in into the long term agenda for food security and sovereignty, translating into pro-poor national and regional agricultural and trade policies.
- 3) **At international level:** UK and European NGOs and civil society networks integrate the perspectives of small African farmers in their campaigns for CAP/EPAs, resulting in a more participatory approach to food sovereignty policies and better informed policy decisions.

Output 1 – At community level:

It is reasonable to conclude that this was an area of major success for the programme. ACORD contributed significantly to the strengthening of the capacity of small-scale farmers, pastoralists and other Community Based Organisations to advocate and to ensuring that their voices were heard in national and regional policy discussions relating to food sovereignty to a degree greater than before.

Naturally there was a particular focus within this food sovereignty programme on the impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and the programme contributed significantly to raising the profile of this issue and resulted to a degree in governments taking notice of civil society's concerns – including the concerns of small scale and subsistence farmers.

As with all advocacy programmes, it is always hard to attribute directly the impact of a programme on government policy. The 'Stop-Think-Resist' EPA campaign to which the programme contributed sought to persuade African governments not simply to reject the EPAs but rather for them to challenge the false urgency in the negotiations. Governments were encouraged to negotiate and work to an extended timetable to enable them to carry out necessary assessments of the impact of the EPAs. With the popularisation of this issue engendered by this pan-African advocacy campaign it is reasonable, we believe, to conclude that it did play a role in forcing the initial extension in the deadline for signing EPAs from 31 December 2007 to 31 December 2009 and then the subsequent delays in the initiative.

It should be noted that this headline success of the programme is due in no small part to the role that ACORD was able to play as a result of its positioning on the African continent. ACORD was already firmly established at the community level

through its 17 country offices, multiple local field offices and many CBO partner organisations with which it had worked for many years prior to the start of the programme. Not only did these existing links enable the programme to reach such a large number of Community Based Organisations so rapidly, it also rightly enables ACORD to be attributed with bringing to the national and pan-African EPA campaign networks the “missing constituencies” – ie the grass root organisations.

Examples abound from the programme focus countries of the impact of the capacity building of these CBOs and their resulting ability to input into national and regional policy discussions. For example, in Rwanda, it was reported that workshops held and facilitated by ACORD to update representatives from over 60 CSOs on the interim EPA contributed to increased dialogue between civil society and government. In addition, from mid 2009 onwards, CSOs started advising and accompanying the representatives of the Rwandan Government in the trade negotiations in order to ensure that any negotiations took into account the possible impact on small scale and subsistence farmers.

However, in relation to the participation of Community Based Organisations and small scale farmers in trade policy formulation and implementation, the programme started from a very low baseline. For many members of these CBOs and CSOs, many of whom were small scale farmers and pastoralists, it must be stressed that their involvement in the EPA campaigns and events such as the World Food Day, represented their first active engagement with trade policies. As one participant said, prior to these campaigns, ‘trade had been viewed as the domain of only a few informed elites’.

Naturally as a result of this starting baseline, there were of course limitations in the spread of knowledge in relation to EPAs and their impacts on individuals’ lives. As the ACORD programme manager reported from Mozambique, *“In Mozambique awareness raising was mainly achieved in cities and some patches in the districts. To date many people do not understand what the EPAs are and what they mean to their livelihoods. The problem here is that the popularisation of the debate seemed to be the sole responsibility of the CSOs and the government did little to spur public debates.”*

Output 2 – At national and regional level:

It should be noted that in hindsight this output was probably overly optimistic in its expectations. Governmental policy changes usually take place over a prolonged period of time and accordingly it was unlikely that the programme would have resulted in new agricultural and trade policies on both a national and regional level during the lifetime of the programme.

Notwithstanding this, at the commencement of the project period, it could reasonably be argued that many African governments would have most likely adopted EPAs in their original format had it not been for the Pan African EPA campaign and that a delay in their signing does represent a change in national trade policies. Certainly, it

can be concluded that agricultural and trade issues are now higher on the agenda of African governments.

Dialogue between civil society and parliamentarians over the issues of trade and agriculture increased at both national and Pan African level, and advocacy campaigns became increasingly well co-ordinated – including on such occasions as the annual Stop EPAs day on 27th September.

The importance of EPAs became more prominent at both regional and international events. Initially regarded as a marginal agenda item in the AU summit in Ghana in July 2007, lobbying of parliamentarians by ACORD and other civil society partners helped to contribute to the increase in their importance throughout the summit. At the end of the summit, a declaration was issued urging the EC to put in place transition measures for those countries which would not sign by the end of 2007 and calling for the AU and AU Commission Chairpersons to engage the political leadership of the EU at the highest level on the EPA negotiations.

Such engagement at a Pan-African level continued throughout the programme period – focussed, as before, on the issue of the EPAs. ACORD and partners actively engaged decision-makers through a variety of forums and conferences during the project period, including: the UNCTAD meeting in Accra, Ghana in April; the 3rd Citizens Continental Conference on the 11th AU in Egypt in June; the African Social Forum in Niamey (Nov 08); the annual Stop EPA days in September and partnerships with African parliamentarians were strengthened further by the participation of some in the “Speakers Tour of Europe” in March 2009.

At a country level, lobbying of government ministries and parliamentarians was in part facilitated by the contacts made during the JPA meetings and the AU summit and it is reasonable to conclude that they also benefited greatly from ACORD’s EPA policy briefs.

For instance, in Burkina Faso, ACORD established contact with the political sub-commission within the national assembly. On the occasion of the Pan African film festival, FESPACO, ACORD also made lobby visits to the Minister of Human Rights in Burkina Faso, and the Minister of the Environment in Mali who both showed encouraging signs of support for the EPA campaign. Active networking and lobbying of the delegation from Burkina Faso during the JPA was followed up with a dinner meeting in Ouagadougou to take stock of the Kigali meeting. This led to the setting-up of a small committee within the parliament that sought to sensitize the other members of parliament on the EPAs.

Whilst feedback from Parliamentarians has confirmed that the information provided by ACORD and other civil society organisations was of considerable use not only in understanding the impact of EPAs on their own countries but also on the issues being faced by parliamentarians in other countries, it is hard to ascertain the impact of such advocacy and engagement with the executive arms of governments. What can be said with some degree of certainty, however, is that that agricultural and

trade issues, especially in relation to EPAs ended up being higher on the agendas within the African governments and to some extent this can be attributed to the activities facilitated by this programme.

Output 3 – At international level

The general consensus of those representatives of UK and European NGOs who participated in this evaluation, was that they warmly welcomed the African voices that ACORD helped bring forth and that these contributed to them being better informed of the opinions and concerns of grass root organisations and small scale farmers and pastoralists within Africa in relation to EPAs and even agricultural/trade issues more broadly.

Amongst other activities, ACORD facilitated a tour of European capitals in late 2007 – visiting London, Brussels, Madrid, Paris and Rome at which representatives of African Trade Unions, farmers groups and civil society organisations were able to meet with Northern NGOs as well as parliamentarians. A further “speakers tour” was facilitated in March 2009 and in September 2009 ACORD participated in a conference organized by the UK Food Group in London on the 28 September 2009, Entitled “Rewriting the rules...to secure our future food”. A representative from ACORD Rwanda also participated.

One participant has suggested that ACORD has in effect “Africanised” the UK Food Group. The organic contacts ACORD has established for the UK Food Group has enabled it to far more effectively incorporate the opinions and perspectives of small African farmers within their campaign, research and information dissemination and that has added real value to the Group as a whole. These links and contacts have remained since and continue to be drawn upon today.

Equity

Specifically in relation to gender, it is without doubt that one of the project’s key successes was the means by which issues of gender equality were mainstreamed throughout the programme.

Gender equality is integrated as a strategic objective within ACORD’s Pan Africa Programme, of which this DfID funded programme is part. Initially it was found that the link between trade movements and the women’s rights movement was relatively weak. ACORD sought to facilitate broader participation of women’s organisations in the food sovereignty and trade debates. As an example in the Africa Trade Network (ATN) review meeting in Ghana in August 2008, ACORD was central to the strategy session which sought to engage the women’s rights sector in the EPA campaign agenda.

The needs of people infected by HIV and affected by HIV/AIDS were mainstreamed in the project and in ACORD’s overall food sovereignty agenda as part of its Pan Africa Programme. Specific studies on the linkages between HIV/AIDS, food and nutrition were done and the project worked with associations of People Living with

HIV/AIDS, to build their capacities in policy analysis and to support their active involvement in agricultural and trade policies.

Did the programme make a difference?

This question considers the programme in its wider context – what was the impact of the programme and how successful was it in achieving its purpose and contributing towards its ultimate goal? We also consider the programme’s success in relation to the Department for International Development’s own Civil Society Challenge Fund goals, its country strategy and the Millennium Development Goals.

With regards to the EPA negotiations, it is evident from the previous question that during the programme the range and number of individuals and organisations, from grass root CBOs to wider pan-African associations, who became actively involved in the EPA debate grew substantially. That the issue became highly popularised is without doubt. As always in a review of advocacy projects, what amount of this popularisation can be attributed to the programme itself is harder to ascertain.

However, it is without doubt that the programme contributed significantly to not only increasing the knowledge levels of grass root organisations of EPAs, their capacity to advocate but it also helped to create a more organised pan-African civil society movement in relation to the EPA debate.

At AU summits, EU/Africa meetings, Civil Society was better organised, well informed and regularly well targeted in its lobbying of delegates. There were significant successes such as the assistance and input provided by Civil Society in the Kigali declarations. Without doubt, this better organised Civil Society movement contributed to EPAs gaining increased prominence in these events.

The lobbying of parliamentarians from country to country clearly became more organised and effective as a result of the programme. In some cases as we mention above, Parliamentarians requested civil society representation on their trade delegations and regularly requested information from them on the impact of EPAs.

To this end, did the programme contribute towards its ultimate goal of promoting food security in Africa through broad based civil society participation? A measurable indicator of the goal is that *“adjustments and changes in EPAs and/or CAP framework that can be attributed to participatory African civil society advocacy”*. From what has been written above, we believe that it is reasonable to conclude that the fact that no final EPA was signed by any of the focal countries is in some degree attributable to the advocacy and awareness raising of EPAs espoused by the Civil Society organisations involved in this programme.

In terms of estimating the indirect number of beneficiaries for the programme as a whole, participants have suggested that at least 2000 CSOs have indirectly benefited given the programme’s implementation strategy which focussed on alliance building and working

In relation to the core Civil Society Challenge Fund goals, it is reasonable to assume that the programme contributed to the achievement of its goals by helping to strengthen civil society institutions in policy literacy, networking and their advocacy skills at a national and regional level. The programme also encouraged exchanges and knowledge sharing with Northern CSOs through improved international linkages and global advocacy.

In relation to DfID's country assistance plans we have also noted in the report a number of areas where the programme directly relates to the organisation's plans in the beneficiary countries of this programme. The programme contributed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 – the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

Did the programme do the right thing and what lessons can be learnt?

This question seeks to consider the lessons learnt from the programme and its overall sustainability and replicability.

Without doubt the programme's primary legacy will be the capacity building of grassroots and other civil society organisations it undertook and the creation and strengthening of Pan African civil society networks concerned with food sovereignty and trade issues. As we said above, partners and beneficiaries have stressed to us that the programme, through its work in creating and/or strengthening these networks on food sovereignty and trade, in effect facilitated the emergence of a Pan African nascent movement on trade and food sovereignty.

This movement continues. The networks which were created and or strengthened by the programme continue to be used – and most interestingly, not just on the issue of EPAs but also on wider trade (including WTO) issues.

At a national level, we also understand that the capacity building delivered to CBOs has enabled them to participate on a number of local issues such as land grabbing campaigns as well as in debates on bio-fuels. We understand that on a number of occasions in such campaigns the toolkits developed for this programme have been utilised.

To a lesser extent, the linkages between some members of this movement and the Northern NGOs has been sustained since the programme end. This is primarily the case in relation to the UK Food Group which still utilises contacts with Southern NGOs to help develop its agenda.

It should also be noted that following this programme, ACORD's work itself has shifted to focus more on agriculture policies. This change in focus is in part as a result of the issues raised by the many regional and national farmers networks and civil society organisations that were involved in this programme.

An example of this is ACORD's work around the Comprehensive African Agriculture and Development Programme (CAADP) which was established in 2003, when

African governments committed themselves, in the Maputo Declaration, to increase their investment in agriculture to 10% of national budgets and which since the global food price spikes in 2007-8 has regained prominence in both the work of national governments but also within the international aid agenda.

Lessons learnt and recommendations:

Finally we have considered the lessons learnt and recommendations arising from our evaluation. These are:

- 1) The need for a development in advocacy methodology to ensure that future campaigns reach a larger number of grass root organisations;
- 2) The need to engage more effectively with the media in future programmes;
- 3) The need for more formalised monitoring and evaluation of the programme's impact; and
- 4) The need for more timely communication with donors when changes to programmes are envisaged.

Introduction

Pan-Africa Food Sovereignty Programme – 2007-2010

In 2006 ACORD launched its Pan African Programme (PAP) focused on advocacy for food sovereignty and with gender, conflict and HIV/AIDS as intervening themes. The overarching aim of the programme is achieving food sovereignty in Africa and supporting small-holder farmers and other small-scale food producers. In the period 2006 to 2009 the campaign on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) was the main advocacy focus within this, due to the concern that poorly negotiated agreements could damage agricultural livelihoods in Africa as well as also impacting on other areas, including health and education.

As the organisation itself stated “the choice of food sovereignty arose from ACORD’s long standing experience working on livelihood issues in Africa and observation of the growing threat posed by global processes. Over 70% of Africa’s population get their livelihoods from agriculture, yet at a time when the MDG goal of halving hunger and poverty was high on the international agenda, little was being done to support poor food producers in Africa. At the same time, most African countries were in the midst of complex trade negotiations with the European Union that had the potential to have an immense impact on food security in Africa for good or ill.”

As part of the PAP, ACORD received funds from the UK Department for International Development’s (DFID) Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) for a “Pan African Food Sovereignty Programme”. This programme is the subject of this evaluation report and was implemented between April 2007 and March 2010. It covered work in five countries: Rwanda, Chad, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia; and was coordinated from ACORD’s secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya.

The goal of the project was to:

“Promote food security in Africa through broad based civil society participation in global agricultural trade debates and contribution to EPAs and CAP reform.”

The purpose of the project was to:

“Democratise the debate on EPAs and CAP to enable poor and marginalised communities dependant on agriculture to articulate their rights and advocate for policies that benefit their development.”

The log frame for the programme presented three outputs:

At community level: Small-scale farmers and pastoralists are organised and equipped with the knowledge and awareness of policy mechanism & tools to advocate for their rights to healthy and culturally acceptable food and protection of

their livelihoods by inputting into national, regional and global mechanisms that protect food sovereignty.

At national and regional level: Civil society successfully advocates for governments buy-in into the long term agenda for food security and sovereignty, translating into pro-poor national and regional agricultural and trade policies.

At international level: UK and European NGOs and civil society networks integrate the perspectives of small African farmers in their campaigns for CAP/EPAs, resulting in a more participatory approach to food sovereignty policies and better informed policy decisions.

The planned activities of the project were:

- CBOs/ CSOs engagement on EPAs/CAP and food sovereignty.
- Assess the effectiveness of national policies on food sovereignty and small scale agriculture in Africa and the impact of EPAs on these policies.
- Popularisation / broadening the African constituency of the EPA and CAP campaign, especially in relation to national policies on food sovereignty.
- Integrating the African Perspective into the Debate on CAP reform.
- Engendering the EPA/CAP Advocacy work.

During the course of the project, amendments to the original plan arose as a result of the stalling of the CAP negotiations within the EU in 2007 and the momentum and prominence that accrued to the end of 2007 deadline within the EPA negotiations.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff of ACORD, its partners and other stakeholders who participated in this evaluation report.

Did the programme do what it said it would do?

In this section we discuss to what extent the programme achieved the outputs as presented by the revised logical framework matrix (as at June 2009). In relation to the terms of reference for this evaluation, we will seek to cover initially the area of effectiveness in this section. Following this, we will consider the areas of efficiency, equity, relevance as well as information, dissemination and networking.

The revised log frame presented three outputs:

- 1) **At community level:** Small-scale farmers and pastoralists are organised and equipped with the knowledge and awareness of policy mechanism & tools to advocate for their rights to healthy and culturally acceptable food and protection of their livelihoods by inputting into national, regional and global mechanisms that protect food sovereignty.
- 2) **At national and regional level:** Civil society successfully advocates for governments buy-in into the long term agenda for food security and sovereignty, translating into pro-poor national and regional agricultural and trade policies.
- 3) **At international level:** UK and European NGOs and civil society networks integrate the perspectives of small African farmers in their campaigns for CAP/EPAs, resulting in a more participatory approach to food sovereignty policies and better informed policy decisions.

Output 1:

It is reasonable to conclude that this was an area of major success for the programme. ACORD contributed significantly to the strengthening of the capacity of small-scale farmers, pastoralists and other Community Based Organisations to advocate and to ensuring that their voices were heard in national and regional policy discussions relating to food sovereignty to a degree greater than before.

Naturally there was a particular focus within this food sovereignty programme on the impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and the programme contributed significantly to raising the profile of this issue and resulted to a degree in governments taking notice of civil society's concerns – including the concerns of small scale and subsistence farmers.

As with all advocacy programmes, it is always hard to attribute directly the impact of a programme on government policy. The 'Stop-Think-Resist' EPA campaign to which the programme contributed significantly sought to persuade African governments not simply to reject the EPAs but rather for them to challenge the false urgency in the negotiations. Governments were encouraged to negotiate and work to an extended timetable to enable them to carry out necessary assessments of the impact of the EPAs. With the popularisation of this issue engendered by this pan-African

Did the programme do what it said it would do?

advocacy campaign it is reasonable, we believe, to conclude that it did play a role in forcing the initial extension in the deadline for signing EPAs from 31 December 2007 to 31 December 2009 and then the subsequent delays in the initiative.

ACORD took the lead in a number of countries in the facilitation of national level food sovereignty alliances and organised a range of workshops to strengthen CSO and CBO capacities and engagement in the food sovereignty agenda. Within 18 months of the programme's start date it was possible to ascertain that over 1,000 grass root organisations and 500 CSOs were informed and conversant with EPAs. In addition, there were more than 300 grass root organisations and 100 CSOs and national EPA/food sovereignty networks which had been formed and were actively involved in the pan-African EPA campaign. Many of these were farmers associations, pastoralist groups and women networks.

It should be noted that this headline success of the programme is due in no small part to the role that ACORD was able to play as a result of its positioning on the African continent. ACORD was already firmly established at the community level through its 17 country offices, multiple local field offices and many CBO partner organisations with which it had worked for many years prior to the start of the programme. Indeed, as one participant commented: *"those existing links and networks were pro-actively capitalised on in the awareness raising and capacity building under this project."*

Not only did these existing links enable the programme to reach such a large number of Community Based Organisations so rapidly, it also rightly enables ACORD to be attributed with bringing to the national and pan-African EPA campaign networks the "missing constituencies" – ie the grass root organisations. ACORD brought in organisations from country level and facilitated and influenced them to focus on food sovereignty issues and on EPAs in particular. When brought into the trade campaign, these missing constituencies added much value to the policy analysis and advocacy of other established CSO networks involved in the campaigns – including the Africa Trade Network (ATN), TWN, Seatini and Econews.

The creation of country level networks working on food sovereignty led one participant to comment that the programme *"marked the emergence of a nascent movement on trade and food sovereignty"* and as we note in section 3, this legacy continues in subsequent campaigns. As an example of the coalition and network building that ACORD facilitated, in Rwanda, ACORD spearheaded the coalescing of up to 40 national organisations who became involved in the EPA campaign.

Integral to these networks were small scale farmers and pastoralists. Many local farmers organisations were actively involved, such as the Confederation Paysanne du Faso (CPF) in Burkina Faso. Regional farmers' networks were also actively engaged and ACORD regularly collaborated with the Network of Farmers' Organisations and Producers of West Africa (ROPPA), the East and Southern Africa Farmers Forum (ESAFF) and with the East African Farmers' Federation (EAFF).

Did the programme do what it said it would do?

Examples abound from the programme focus countries of the impact of the capacity building of these CBOs and their ability to input into national and regional policy discussions. In Ethiopia, for example, it was reported that through awareness and capacity building trainings, policy literacy workshops, policy dialogue forums and use of the media, the programme managed to generate interest and awareness of EPAs among large sections of the population as well as consolidating the civil society movement. The acquired information combined with existing knowledge enabled CBOs, CBOAs and CSOs to participate in the local and national policy debate and to influence policy making.

In Rwanda, it was reported that workshops held and facilitated by ACORD to update representatives from over 60 CSOs on the interim EPAs contributed to increased dialogue between civil society and government. From mid 2009 onwards, CSOs started advising and accompanying the representatives of the Rwandan Government in the trade negotiations in order to ensure that any negotiations took into account the possible impact on small scale and subsistence farmers.

In Mozambique, ACORD worked closely with ROSA, a national network of civil society organisations. This network was focused on working on food security and actively engaged the government on EPAs and food sovereignty. Round table discussions with other CSOs and Government officials were held and helped all parties involved to develop a better understanding of these issues.

ROSA also organised an East and Southern Africa Civil Society Strategy meeting on the EPA negotiations in Lusaka, Zambia. The meeting sought to review and assess the current situation in relation to the negotiations, highlight key issues, challenges and opportunities for the ESA member states and, propose alternatives, agree common positions on some of the key contentious issues and make recommendations on the way forward, thus strengthening the Pan-African CSO networks.

In Chad, to help strengthen civil society awareness and capacity, ACORD organised a forum on food sovereignty and linkages to EPAs from 15-20 October 2007. This brought together more than 20 rural associations of producers. The seminar had sessions explaining food sovereignty, food security and the EPAs. A special session was also devoted to Women and the EPAs and how EPAs could impact on Chadian women in particular.

Participants have reported that those present responded with great concern about what would potentially happen to the market for their produce if Chad were to sign an EPA by end 2007 and how they could organise themselves in response to this situation. ACORD shared information about the ongoing civil society collaboration on food sovereignty and how these producer organisations could join in the national and Pan-African level work.

In partnership with the national civil society umbrella association, CILONG, ACORD also organised a day of information and awareness raising on the EPAs and food

sovereignty for CSOs in Moundou (the economic capital of Chad). 33 CSOs participated in the workshop, along with representatives of the regional authorities.

Following such awareness raising and alliance building with CSOs in Chad, ACORD helped organise a delegation that went to lobby parliamentarians and Ministries in the capital of N'Djamena.

In relation to the participation of Community Based Organisations and small scale farmers in trade policy formulation and implementation, the programme started from a very low base. For many members of these CBOs and CSOs, many of whom were small scale farmers and pastoralists, it must be stressed that their involvement in the EPA campaigns and events such as the World Food Day, represented their first active engagement with trade policies. As one participant said, prior to these campaigns, *“trade had been viewed as the domain of only a few informed elites”*.

Naturally as a result of this starting baseline, there were of course limitations in the spread of knowledge in relation to EPAs and their impacts on individuals' lives. As the ACORD programme manager reported from Mozambique, *“In Mozambique awareness raising was mainly achieved in cities and some patches in the districts. To date many people do not understand what the EPAs are and what they mean to their livelihoods. The problem here is that the popularisation of the debate seemed to be the sole responsibility of the CSOs and the government did little to spur public debates.”*

Output 2:

Output 2 was that *“civil society successfully advocates for governments buy-in into the long term agenda for food security and sovereignty, translating into pro-poor national and regional agricultural and trade policies.”*

It should be noted that in hindsight it could be considered that this output was overly optimistic in its expectations. Governmental policy changes usually take place over a prolonged period of time and accordingly it was unlikely that the programme would have resulted in new agricultural and trade policies on both a national and regional level during the lifetime of the programme.

Notwithstanding this, at the commencement of the project period, it could reasonably be argued that many African governments would have most likely adopted EPAs in their original format had it not been for the pan African EPA campaign and that a delay in their signing does represent a change in national trade policies. Certainly, it can be concluded that agricultural and trade issues are now higher on the agenda of African governments.

In relation to EPAs, one of the primary issues was that in general Parliamentarians had very little knowledge of EPAs and their possible impact. Engagement with parliamentarians and the production of information for their use was therefore an important aspect of the programme. One document in particular – “EPAs: What Every Parliamentarian Needs to Know” has been regularly cited as being of considerable importance in raising Parliamentarian awareness of the potential issues of EPA adoption.

Dialogue between civil society and parliamentarians over the issues of trade and agriculture increased at both national and Pan African level, and advocacy campaigns became increasingly well co-ordinated – including on such occasions as the annual Stop EPAs day on 27th September.

The importance of EPAs became more prominent at both regional and international events. Initially regarded as a marginal agenda item in the AU summit in Ghana in July 2007, lobbying of parliamentarians by ACORD and other civil society partners helped to contribute to the increase in their importance throughout the summit. At the end of the summit, a declaration was issued urging the EC to put in place transition measures for those countries which would not sign by the end of 2007 and calling for the AU and AU Commission Chairpersons to engage the political leadership of the EU at the highest level on the EPA negotiations.

Other examples of civil society’s impact on regional conferences followed. Civil Society’s engagement with delegates to the 14th EU/ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) in Kigali, Rwanda, was facilitated by the ACORD’s Rwanda team together with 2 visiting staff from the ACORD Secretariat. They organised additional policy briefing documents for delegates and a luncheon discussion, which was well attended by over 100 Parliamentarians. ACORD gave a presentation on the exclusive negotiation process and the role of civil society. The MPs present wanted

Did the programme do what it said it would do?

to know 'what to do.' ACORD answered with recommendations for language changes to the draft Kigali Declaration, urged them to contact civil society groups in their countries, and provided more information on the role of Parliament in trade negotiations.

The final Kigali Declaration on EPAs by the JPA was a critical statement, pointing out problems with the European Commission's tactics and timing in the negotiations, highlighting the primary aim of regional integration and the threat of Interim agreements to this as well as the need for both least developed countries (LDCs) and non-LDCs to have options at the end of 2007.

Such engagement at a Pan-African level continued throughout the programme period – focussed, as before, on the issue of the EPAs. ACORD and partners actively engaged decision-makers through a variety of forums and conferences during the project period, including: the UNCTAD meeting in Accra, Ghana in April; the 3rd Citizens Continental Conference on the 11th AU in Egypt in June; the African Social Forum in Niamey (Nov 08); the annual Stop EPA days in September and partnerships with African parliamentarians were strengthened further by the participation of some in the "Speakers Tour of Europe" in March 2009.

At a country level, lobbying of government ministries and parliamentarians was in part facilitated by the contacts made during the JPA meetings and the AU summit and it is reasonable to conclude that they also benefited greatly from ACORD's EPA policy briefs.

For instance, in Burkina Faso, ACORD established contact with the political sub-commission within the national assembly. On the occasion of the Pan African film festival, FESPACO, ACORD also made lobby visits to the Minister of Human Rights in Burkina Faso, and the Minister of the Environment in Mali who both showed encouraging signs of support for the EPA campaign. Active networking and lobbying of the delegation from Burkina Faso during the JPA was followed up with a dinner meeting in Ouagadougou to take stock of the Kigali meeting. This led to the setting-up of a small committee within the parliament that sought to sensitize the other members of parliament on the EPAs.

In Chad, ACORD was the only civil society actor to invest financial resources into community awareness raising on food sovereignty and the EPA negotiations. ACORD invited representatives from key CSOs to participate in engaging with the Parliament. This was coordinated via the national civil society umbrella association in Chad, CILONG which met with a group of parliamentarians. In the meeting, the civil society coalition was able to present their message on the potential negative impact of the EPAs on African communities.

The parliamentarians committed to contacting the Ministry of Trade and Industry to seek to understand better the ongoing EPA negotiations. After the awareness raising meetings of the CSO coalition, the Ministry of Trade organised a national workshop on EPAs. It should also be noted that Chad was the only country in the Economic

and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) to undertake a study on fiscal implications and impact on strategic crops in relation to the EPAs – something which the CSO coalition was actively advocating.

In Ethiopia, following discussions with their Ministry of Trade and Industry, ACORD agreed to conduct media advocacy around EPAs. Since it became clear that the EPA negotiations would carry forward into the 2008, Ethiopia spent the latter part of 2007 developing 6 months' worth of radio programs in Amharic that would fill in the information gap on EPAs. The radio programs aired on national radio in bulletin format, and featured prominent Ethiopian persons discussing the negative impacts of EPAs on Ethiopian agriculture and food sovereignty.

Whilst feedback from Parliamentarians has confirmed that the information provided by ACORD and other civil society organisations was of considerable use not only in understanding the impact of EPAs on their own countries but also on the issues being faced by parliamentarians in other countries, it is hard to ascertain the impact of such advocacy and engagement with the executive arms of governments. What can be said with some degree of certainty, however, is that that agricultural and trade issues, especially in relation to EPAs ended up being higher on the agendas within the African governments and to some extent this can be attributed to the activities facilitated by this programme.

Output 3:

“UK and European NGOs and civil society networks integrate the perspectives of small African farmers in their campaigns for CAP/EPAs, resulting in a more participatory approach to food sovereignty policies and better informed policy decisions.”

Without doubt, the general consensus of those representatives of UK and European NGOs who participated in this evaluation, was that they warmly welcomed the African voices that ACORD helped bring forth and that these contributed to them being better informed of the opinions and concerns of grass root organisations and small scale farmers and pastoralists within Africa in relation to EPAs and even agricultural/trade issues more broadly. This is discussed further in Section 3.

It should be noted that a key lesson learnt here is that ACORD does occupy a unique role in its positioning – a UK registered charity, with its executive split between London and Nairobi since 2005 and with its country and field offices deeply embedded within African communities. In effect it is then able to ‘straddle’ both the Northern and Southern hemispheres, commanding respect and facilitating discussion between civil society in both hemispheres.

Amongst other activities, ACORD facilitated a tour of European capitals in late 2007 – visiting London, Brussels, Madrid, Paris and Rome at which representatives of African Trade Unions, farmers groups and civil society organisations were able to meet with Northern NGOs as well as parliamentarians. A further “speakers tour” was facilitated in March 2009 and in September 2009 ACORD participated in a conference organized by the UK Food Group in London on the 28 September 2009, Entitled “Rewriting the rules...to secure our future food”. A representative from ACORD Rwanda also participated.

The representatives presented the position of Southern women farmers on EPAs at the conference and had meetings with small scale farmers in the UK and with government representatives from the Department for International Development (DfID) among others.

One participant has suggested that ACORD has in effect “Africanised” the UK Food Group. The organic contacts ACORD has established for the UK Food Group has enabled it to far more effectively incorporate the opinions and perspectives of small African farmers within their campaign, research and information dissemination and that has added real value to the Group as a whole. These links and contacts have remained since and continue to be drawn upon today.

Within Germany, a German coalition on NGOs which was working on the EPA agenda reported that their discussions and meetings with the African delegation had proved to be very fruitful. They reported that they had specifically used some of the African delegation’s arguments and stories within their campaign in Africa.

The German coalition also reported that their campaign in Germany gained more traction amongst parliamentarians after the African delegation had held a meeting with African parliamentarians. Furthermore, a debate was triggered in the German Parliament soon after the meeting whereas no such debate had been planned beforehand.

A German coalition member also reported that the African delegates meeting (along with members of the German Coalition) with the German Ministry of Development proved to be a “helpful reality check” for the Ministry whose previous comments on EPAs had been considered by many civil society organisations to be lacking reality.

It should be noted, however, that it is hard to discern any changes in either the UK or the German Governments’ positions on EPAs during the period of the programme.

Equity

The evaluation terms of reference has asked that we comment specifically on the impact of the project on more disadvantaged groups.

Specifically in relation to gender, it is without doubt that one of the project's key successes was the means by which issues of gender equality were mainstreamed throughout the programme.

Gender equality is integrated as a strategic objective within ACORD's Pan Africa Programme, of which this DfID funded programme is part. Initially it was found that the link between trade movements and the women's rights movement was relatively weak. ACORD sought to facilitate broader participation of women's organisations in the food sovereignty and trade debates. As an example in the Africa Trade Network (ATN) review meeting in Ghana in August 2008, ACORD was central to the strategy session which sought to engage the women's rights sector in the EPA campaign agenda.

This subsequently led to the expansion of the ATN working committee on EPA's to include a representative from a women's rights organisation. Again, in the annual meeting of the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) meeting in Dakar in September 2008, ACORD engaged with a feminist analysis of trade issues to enhance networking with economic and social justice groups working on trade in Africa.

Other specific examples of the mainstreaming of gender equality within the programmes include:

- In 2007 ACORD assisted the African Women's Economic Policy Network (AWEPON) to develop the toolkit on gender and trade;
- ACORD prepared a policy briefing document on EPAs and their impact on women. This was used when civil society organisations were engaging with parliamentarians and other policy organisations;
- On a country level, as part of the food sovereignty programme in Ethiopia, ACORD worked in alliance with the National Ethiopian Women's Association in its advocacy of improving women's access to land.
- The impact of EPAs on women was a specific topic within the capacity building workshops performed as part of this programme.

The needs of people infected by HIV and affected by HIV/AIDS were mainstreamed in the project and in ACORD's overall food sovereignty agenda as part of its Pan Africa Programme. Specific studies on the linkages between HIV/AIDS, food and nutrition were done and the project worked with associations of People Living with HIV/AIDS, to build their capacities in policy analysis and to support their active involvement in agricultural and trade policies.

In relation to mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in the food sovereignty agenda, a few months prior to the start of the DfID funded programme, ACORD had organised a workshop

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on HIV/AIDS and EPAs during the World Social Forum, in Nairobi. The panel was composed of people living with HIV and AIDS, famous parliamentarian and then Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga, and ACORD staff.

The workshop focused on how EPAs risk hampering the efforts to fight against the disease and the need to enhance understanding of the issue. Similar workshops were subsequently held for associations of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) and organisations working to address HIV/AIDS at the country level in the various countries where ACORD works. These workshops contributed to the PLHAs commitment to integrate the EPAs and its relevance for HIV/AIDS in the advocacy work of their associations.

Efficiency

When considering the efficiency of this project, we believe that the chief achievement in this area was the partnership nature of the programme. As a result of ACORD's pre-existing presence in these countries and their networks of grassroots organisations, a large number of individuals and organisations could be engaged rapidly, at a reduced cost, and with a resulting impact that is far greater than if these networks had all required establishment from scratch.

In relation to financial and risk management, this evaluation revealed no specific issues of concern in these areas. The financial systems are reported to have worked satisfactorily with effective financial management being provided from the ACORD secretariat.

Did the programme make a difference?

The previous chapter has considered the programme in relation to its intended outputs. In this chapter, we consider the programme in its wider context. What was the impact of the programme – how successful was it in achieving its purpose and did it contribute towards its ultimate goal.

We will also consider the programme's success in relation to the Department for International Development's own Civil Society Challenge Fund goals, its country strategies and the Millennium Development Goals.

The log frame stated that the purpose of the programme was to *“democratise the debate on EPAs and CAP to enable poor and marginalised communities dependent on agriculture to articulate their rights and advocate for policies that benefit their development”*. This was to contribute to achieving the ultimate goal which was to *“promote food security in Africa through broad based civil society participation in global agricultural trade debates and contribution to EPAs and CAP reform.”*

As we have noted in our brief introduction to the report, the changes to the political landscape during the period naturally meant that the CAP agenda became less relevant and that instead emphasis was placed on the EPA negotiations.

With regards to the EPA negotiations, it is evident from the previous chapter that during the programme the range and number of individuals and organisations, from grass root CBOs to wider pan-African associations, who became actively involved in the EPA debate grew substantially. That the issue became highly popularised is without doubt. As always in a review of advocacy projects, what amount of this popularisation can be attributed to the programme itself is harder to ascertain.

However, it is without doubt that the programme contributed significantly to not only increasing the knowledge levels of grass root organisations of EPAs, their capacity to advocate but it also helped to create a more organised pan-African civil society movement in relation to the EPA debate.

At AU summits, EU/Africa meetings, Civil Society was better organised, well informed and regularly well targeted in its lobbying of delegates. There were significant successes such as the assistance and input provided by Civil Society in the Kigali declarations. Without doubt, this better organised Civil Society movement contributed to EPAs gaining increased prominence in these events.

The lobbying of parliamentarians from country to country clearly became more organised and effective as a result of the programme. In some cases as we mention above, Parliamentarians requested civil society representation on their trade delegations and regularly requested information from them on the impact of EPAs.

EPAs became a pan-African issue and the programme without doubt achieved a greater impact as a result of the partnerships which ACORD helped to facilitate across the civil society sector. Any review of press coverage on the internet (such as AllAfrica.com) of ACORD and EPAs shows that the issue was gaining traction from all parts of the continent – not just within the focal countries of this programme.

To this end, did the programme contribute towards its ultimate goal of promoting food security in Africa through broad based civil society participation? A measurable indicator of the goal is that *“adjustments and changes in EPAs and/or CAP framework that can be attributed to participatory African civil society advocacy”*. From what has been written above, we believe that it is reasonable to conclude that the fact that no final EPA was signed by any of the focal countries is in some degree attributable to the advocacy and awareness raising of EPAs espoused by the Civil Society organisations involved in this programme.

Whilst this is the position within Africa, we should also consider the possible impact of the programme on the other side of the negotiating table of the EPAs – namely with the EU. The programme did of course aim to encourage the integration of the African perspective in the advocacy of the Northern Civil society allies. Whilst we have cited examples above of where the networking between the North and South as facilitated by ACORD has helped the integration of African perspectives in their advocacy, we have not been able to note any discernable impact on EU governments and their approach to the EPA negotiations, albeit outside of the remit of the programme.

With regards to the wider beneficiaries of the project, as we noted above, within 18 months of the programme’s start date it was possible to ascertain that over 1,000 grass route organisations and 500 CSOs were informed and conversant with EPAs. In addition, there were more than 300 grass root organisations and 100 CSOs and national EPA/food sovereignty networks which had been formed.

In terms of estimating the indirect number of beneficiaries for the programme as a whole, participants have suggested that it is reasonable to assume that at least 2000 CSOs have indirectly benefited given the programme’s implementation strategy which focussed on alliance building and working through regional and national level CSO umbrella associations for maximum outreach.

In relation to the core Civil Society Challenge Fund goals, it is reasonable to assume that the programme contributed to the achievement of its goals by helping to strengthen civil society institutions in policy literacy, networking and their advocacy skills at a national and regional level. The programme also encouraged exchanges and knowledge sharing with Northern CSOs through improved international linkages and global advocacy.

In relation to DfID’s country assistance plans we would also note the following contribution of the programme:

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DfID believes in social participation: “Enabling people to realise their rights, to participate in and access information relating to the decision-making process which affect their lives” (*Realising Human Rights for Poor people*, DfID) and has also stated that “EPAs must be designed to deliver long-term development, economic growth and poverty reduction in ACP countries” (March 2005). In line with that philosophy, the programme focused on strengthening civil society involvement to participate in the agricultural and trade policies debate in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Specifically for some of the countries involved in the programme it is in line with the DFID’s country assistance plan. For example, in Rwanda this plan aims to empower Rwandan citizens in a long term initiative by committing to developing closer relations with organisations outside of government and to promoting greater government accountability and more effective dialogue between government and civil society.

DfID’s support to Ethiopia focuses on food security, education, capacity building in the implementation of the sustainable development and poverty reduction programme. In Mozambique, DFID support is directed towards supporting an enabling environment for pro-poor growth, an effective civil society and capable government. While in Burkina Faso and Chad, DFID has no country strategy, these two countries at the forefront of the food sovereignty campaign that is central to achieving food security in their respective regions.

The programme contributed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 – the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

Did the programme do the right thing and what lessons can be learnt?

In the previous two chapters, we have considered the achievements and limitations of the programme in relation to it achieving its intended outputs, purpose and goal. In this chapter we intend to consider the lessons learnt from the programme and its overall sustainability and replicability.

We start first with the issue of sustainability and the programme's ultimate replicability. Without doubt the programme's primary legacy will be the capacity building of grass root and other civil society organisations it undertook and the creation and strengthening of pan-African civil society networks concerned with food sovereignty and trade issues. As we said above, partners and beneficiaries have stressed to us that the programme, through its work in creating and/or strengthening these networks on food sovereignty and trade, in effect facilitated the emergence of a pan-African nascent movement in trade and food sovereignty.

This movement continues. Already following the end of the programme, the networks which were created and or strengthened by the programme continue to be used – and most interestingly, not just on the issue of EPAs but also on wider trade (including WTO) issues.

At a national level, we also understand that the capacity building delivered to CBOs has enabled them to participate on a number of local issues such as land grabbing campaigns as well as in debates on bio-fuels. We understand that on a number of occasions in such campaigns the toolkits developed for this programme have been utilised.

To a lesser extent, the linkages between some members of this movement and the Northern NGOs has been sustained since the programme end. This is primarily the case in relation to the UK Food Group which still utilises contacts with Southern NGOs to help develop its agenda. In Germany we understand that the change in staff has led to a breaking of contacts made in this programmes.

It should also be noted that following this programme, ACORD's work itself has shifted to focus more on agriculture policies. This change in focus is in part as a result of the issues raised by the many regional and national farmers networks and civil society organisations that were involved in this programme.

An example of this is through ACORD's work on the Comprehensive African Agriculture and Development Programme (CAADP) which was established in 2003 and which since the global food spikes in 2007-8 has regained prominence in both the work of national governments but also within the international aid agenda.

For example, in 2010 ACORD's own Pan Africa programme worked with some of these national farmers networks and civil society organisations across Africa to

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promote meaningful engagement from the grassroots in the CAADP process and convened an Experts Meeting on Food Sovereignty in Arusha to discuss a draft Framework for assessing agricultural policies from a gender and food sovereignty perspective. This meeting was attended by regional farmers groups, womens' groups, land right groups and other civil society organisations as well as East African parliamentarians. Following the meeting case studies in a number of African countries (including Mozambique Rwanda, Burundi, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia) have been commissioned to assess the usefulness of the Framework for assessing policies related to food security from a food sovereignty and gender perspective; and to assess the effectiveness of specific policies in each country in terms of its impact on achieving genuine food security.

We understand that an unintended consequence of this programme is that Parliamentarians who were involved in the programme (such as on the tour to Europe) have themselves developed contacts from these activities which they still call upon to assist them in their monitoring of wider trade issues.

When considering lessons learnt from the programme, we consider one of the most important to be in relation to the campaigning tactics used by the organisations involved. The EPA campaign became highly popularised during the programme's life-span – indeed EPAs became a household issue in many areas of the continent. Without doubt, a key success factor for the popular campaigning at the country level was the translation of the EPA material into local languages and popularisation of the messages through music and active use of radio. In Ethiopia in particular, the six months of radio programmes broadcasted in Amharic were considered to have had a particularly strong impact on the popularisation of the issue.

Joint action across several countries, such as for the International Women's Day and the Stop EPA day were also effective for broad outreach. Being able to draw on and adapt material developed under the leadership of the Secretariat was essential in this as was the advocacy support it provided as most of ACORD's country offices and its local partners had limited experience with popular campaigning and advocacy at this scale.

In relation to lesson learning and recommendations, some participants have commented that more could be done to develop such methodology further to ensure that future campaigns are able to reach deeper into local grass root organisations. Could additional information and educational materials be developed. How could the mobile phone network be utilised to ensure a more widespread involvement? The use of SMS for collecting petitionary signatures, for example, or even further use of e-mail where appropriate.

It is recognised throughout the programme's proposals and annual reports that effective engagement with the media is crucial to an advocacy programme such as this. It is reasonable to conclude that this is an area of mixed results. As we mention above, it is clear that there was Pan-African coverage within the written media of the EPA campaign throughout the programme. The media were also represented within

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the workshops and were recipients of the various information documents produced for the programme.

However, we have learnt from respondents that coverage in East Africa was not as effectively managed and, as a result, was not as successful in comparison to the other countries involved in the programme. The mid-term evaluation recommended that steps be taken for increased investment in the area of media management and whilst this did result in an increase in media presence in 2009 and early 2010, this is an area which could have been utilised further, had the necessary resources been available. Furthermore, engagement with media outlets in the Global North was an area that yielded few results, even during the trips organised to Europe as part of the programme.

Without doubt this is an area which we would recommend that ACORD works to develop further in future programmes. Firstly, we would recommend that active media monitoring is implemented as soon as possible and that mentions of ACORD in the Pan-African or Global press are recorded and saved – we understand at present that this is not happening and this information could be hugely valuable in measuring the impact of ACORD and its partners in their advocacy work. Following this, we would recommend that ACORD and its partners to consider devising and implementing a formal media strategy for future advocacy programmes in which they are involved.

Utilising its unique position of an INGO straddling both the Global North and South, ACORD should also attempt to build more effective relationships with media outlets in the North to the fullest extent possible.

Another area where we would also recommend that lessons can be learnt is in the area of monitoring of the programme's effectiveness. We have reviewed all of the information which has been provided to us by ACORD but there have on occasions been gaps in the information available to us – such as reports from AU Summits or reports from some of the local workshops and as we mention above there does not appear to have been a systematic approach to the collection and retention of media appearances.

In general this suggests that there has been a lack of a formalised monitoring structure to the programme as a whole. Whilst we are fully aware that monitoring such a Pan-African initiative would place additional strains on ACORD's limited resources it would also have enabled a more effective evaluation of the programme's overall impact to have been performed and for more lessons to have been identified. We recommend that with similar such programmes in the future additional consideration is given to this aspect of the programme management.

It should also be noted that we did identify one issue in the management of the relationship between ACORD and the donor, DfID. Following the receipt of the year one report, DfID grew concerned that the project had altered considerably from its initial purpose and the following e-mail was received by ACORD from DfID:

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“The project appears to be making good progress but it seems to be moving away from its original agenda. The project proposal aimed at 'democratising the debate on EPA's and CAP to enable poor people and marginalised communities dependant on agriculture to articulate their rights and advocate for policies that benefit their development'. Accordingly, activities focused on awareness raising about EPA's and ensuring that civil society had an input into the process which was timely given the ongoing EPA negotiations and CAP reform debate.

In the annual report - Section B - Significant Changes - you state that "popularisation and broadening of the African constituency to the CAP debate in Europe and publication of case studies on CAP have been postponed to the second year. In year 1, we chose to focus on the 'stop EPAs' campaign". It appears that the focus of the project changed in Year 1 and this change goes beyond attempting to change the process through which EPA's are developed.

We have concerns that the focus of the project changed considerably in Year 1 and we were not informed until the annual report but, more importantly, we (DFID) are supporting the EPA's by continuing to talk to the EC, EU Member States and ACP stakeholders on the policy content and approach to EPA's and therefore the change to the project in Year 1 goes against DFID policy on this matter. We are gravely concerned that we (DFID) are supporting the EPA process from 2 very different angles.”

DfID did ultimately accept the changes to the programme, but we would strongly recommend that ACORD seeks to avoid such issues arising in the future, by ensuring that the donors are involved early in any discussions of change. Not only would this ensure that additional resources are not required late in the day to negotiate changes after their implementation but it would also reduce the risk of donors project drift away from the reason for the funding.

Finally, we would comment that perhaps one of the most important lessons learnt from this programme is that because of its status as a UK registered charity with an executive base in the Global South, ACORD has particular strengths and can play a unique role in programmes such as this. It is in a fundamentally strong position to facilitate horizontal linkages between grass root and national organisations, between national and Pan-African movements and vertical linkages between civil society in the Global North and South.

In this programme we saw the organisation capitalise on this unique position and the management and donors now need to consider how best this can be utilised going forward. Clearly in a year when we have again seen regular protests in the South over escalating food prices, food sovereignty remains as important as ever as an area of concern. The position ACORD occupies can be used for wider issues to ensure that where possible civil society within countries, Africa and the Global North can develop effective linkages to campaign effectively to champion the needs of some of the world's poorest.

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Summary of lessons learnt and recommendations

- 1) Development of advocacy methodology to ensure that future campaigns reach a larger number of grass root organisations and capitalise on new social media.

Feedback from our evaluation has suggested that ACORD should seek to further develop its advocacy methodology to ensure that it has the maximum impact.

ACORD could give further consideration as to how best educational/advocacy materials can be disseminated. The evaluation has highlighted the success of using radio media (such as was used in Ethiopia) and translating materials into local languages. However, relatively little use was made of the internet and mobile phones (including SMS) to engage with the grass root organisations. As an example, SMS could be used to encourage a larger number of people to sign up to any petitions being run as part of a campaign.

- 2) Engagement with the media.

As we noted in the main body of the report, the programme experienced mixed results in relation to how effectively the media was engaged during this advocacy programme.

For future advocacy programmes we recommend that ACORD and its partners devise and implement a formal media strategy to ensure that maximum impact can be achieved in disseminating key messages through the media. This should include establishing and building on existing relationships with media organisations not only in Africa but also in the Global North. The responsibility for implementing and managing this strategy should be clearly delegated to an individual or a team of individuals and key performance indicators (such as number of articles in a newspaper) should be devised and monitored.

As an extension of this last point, we would recommend that active media monitoring is implemented as soon as possible and that mentions of ACORD in the Pan-African or Global press are recorded and saved – we understand at present that this is not happening and this information could be hugely valuable in measuring the impact of ACORD and its partners in their advocacy work.

3) Monitoring and evaluation of programme impact

Our evaluation report identified that there was no formalised monitoring process by which the programme's impact could be assessed. We have reviewed all of the information which has been provided to us by ACORD but there have on occasions been gaps in the information available to us – such as reports from AU Summits or reports from some of the local workshops.

We recommend that with similar programmes in the future consideration is given to this aspect of the programme management. For example, ACORD should seek to receive feedback from partners and other stakeholders involved in the programme both at the time of their involvement but also at a later date (for example, a year after their involvement) to assess and collect information on the programme's impact

When we came to perform this evaluation, stakeholders were being asked to comment on events that at times was up to three years ago and naturally there were gaps in their recollections of the events. A more timely process for collecting feedback would also most likely yield more lessons learnt.

4) Timely communication with donors

As we highlighted in the report, DfID was concerned after receipt of the first year's report from ACORD that the programme was altered to an extent that now made it potentially contradictory to DfID's own engagement with the EPA negotiations.

Whilst DfID did ultimately accept the changes to the programme, we would recommend that ACORD seeks to avoid such issues arising in the future, by ensuring that the donors are involved early in any discussions of change. Not only would this ensure that additional resources are not required late in the day to negotiate changes after their implementation but it would also reduce the risk of ACORD having to repay funds spent on activities perceived as being ineligible by the donors.

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