

# LEARNING FROM THE CIVIL SOCIETY CHALLENGE FUND: NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE



## KEY INSIGHTS

CSCF natural resource governance and climate change projects have raised the awareness of target communities of their rights to natural resources and better environmental conditions, and have facilitated the development of structures and channels to enable them to better represent their interests and participate in decision-making. Projects have contributed to changes in policy and legislation, and have created multi-country networks to jointly address environmental challenges. Implementation of these projects has generated some key findings, expanded upon in this paper.

- 1 The CSCF has made a significant contribution to policy changes, which address environmental degradation and climate change.
- 2 Achievements were successfully made by linking entrepreneurship and income generation with policy, plans or new ways of working to protect natural resources and address climate change.
- 3 The process of establishing conditions for policy change has been valuable in all CSCF projects – for raising awareness at local and national levels and in designing context-appropriate and practical ways of addressing environmental and climate change problems.

## CHANGING POLICY IS A LONG TERM PROCESS

Some CSCF projects aimed to achieve policy change within a three to five year project timeframe. Projects that were able to achieve changes in policy or planning processes were found to have the following success factors:

- Decision-makers were more willing to engage with a project where the project's aims matched the government's own priorities.
- Organisations with an established reputation and strong technical competency in the focal areas of the project already had a degree of credibility and access to decision-makers.

The **CIVIL SOCIETY CHALLENGE FUND (CSCF)** was a demand-led fund which aimed to enable poor and marginalised people to have a voice on issues that affect them and to be included in local and national decision making forums. Running from 2000 to 2015, it supported 526 projects in Africa, Asia, the Americas and the Middle East, each with a grant of up to £500,000 and running for 3 to 5 years.

This learning brief is one of six, prepared upon completion of the CSCF, focusing on key areas of best practice within the fund. These briefs aim to share learning with practitioners and civil society learning networks, and help inform future fund management in DFID and beyond.

### CSCF AND NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE

From 2010 to 2015, CSCF funded 9 projects on natural resource governance and climate change. Together they represent almost £3.6 million in DFID funding, directly reaching more than 400,000 people, and many more indirectly. The themes of the projects have been diverse, including waste management, climate change adaptation, access to forest, land and marine resources and pesticide management. The projects have targeted slum dwellers, indigenous forest communities, poor coastal communities, unemployed youth and women working in the informal sector. Approaches used in these projects included:

- Raising awareness and educating communities through a range of civil society, community and media channels, on their rights and responsibilities regarding the environment.
- Working with community groups, civil society and coalitions to gather evidence and advocate for rights of access to natural resources and a safe environment.
- Filling gaps in public environmental service delivery or fulfilment of environmental policy by helping to design and implement entrepreneurship projects and forming public-private partnerships.

- More success was found at the local level, as opposed to the national level, within the project timeframe.
- Projects that facilitated links between local and national change processes and decision-makers through coordinated advocacy, were particularly effective.
- Using evidence-based data for advocacy facilitated success. Some projects collected primary data on local conditions, involving the targeted communities. This was used to demonstrate key issues to stakeholders, develop advocacy strategies and advocate for policy changes. See Case Study 1 for an example of this work.
- Long-term relationships with relevant local civil society partners was key. Building trust with communities takes time. Projects with strong relationships with local civil society organisations, who have an established and trusted network, are more likely to succeed. This is particularly pertinent when working with marginalised groups in remote or slum areas.

Achieving policy change was found to be challenging, and took longer than anticipated. Reasons for this

include the need to investigate and understand the problems and constraints, build community awareness and knowledge (often in remote places), develop and implement an advocacy strategy and engage with stakeholders. Policy and decision making processes at local or national level can be slow in target countries.

Although not all projects achieved changes in policy, or secured a natural resource or environmental protection plan, all projects demonstrated the benefits of working towards those aims. These include:

- Making affected communities, many of which are poor and marginalised, more aware of their rights under national and international law regarding access to natural resources and protection from negative environmental impacts.
- Enabling communities to understand and develop skills in gathering evidence on natural resource governance or environmental impact issues.
- Enabling communities to develop practical or innovative means of addressing their local natural resource and environmental

### CASE STUDY 1

A project working across 8 African countries supported civil society to work on the African Stockpiles Programme (ASP), tackling the problem of obsolete pesticides at the community level. The grant holder and partner NGOs (with expertise in addressing pesticide contamination and its prevention) raised awareness and worked to achieve elements of the ASP that would not otherwise be funded. Focusing on locust pesticides, the project gathered local data from marginalised communities, which was then used at national and international level in advocacy, and at local and regional level to raise awareness and design relevant community



projects. The project built relationships with local advocacy groups and regional organisations, as well as working to influence global networks and organisations. The result was the agreement and commencing of implementation, across the target countries, of 4 key recommendations by the project on safe locust control.

issues.

- Mobilising communities and civil society to advocate for their rights. Communities may be aware of the environmental and resource rights problems that need to be addressed, and in-country civil society may already be working on these issues. CSCF projects have, in some cases, been able to act as a catalyst to drive advocacy forward, an umbrella under which different parties can converge and act together in a coordinated way.

---

## LINKING INCOME GENERATION TO BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Where projects have successfully achieved policy change, or agreed a plan for environmental management and governance with decision-makers, the next step is implementation. Sometimes this is a significant stumbling block in terms of resources for poor countries that have a relatively small private sector and numerous demands on stretched

government resources. Donor funding itself can be a useful catalyst to kick start implementation, as in the pesticide example detailed in Case Study 1, where some of the funding was used to initiate community work on dealing with obsolete pesticides.

### Bringing people together

The CSCF has been effective in providing the expertise and technical resources to enable communities, decision-makers and other stakeholders to come together and devise more sustainable ways to implement an agreed policy or plan.

### Seed funding

The use of CSCF complementary funding, which the government cannot fully resource themselves, can be demonstrated by a project in Ecuador (detailed in Case Study 2), which used £80,000 of seed funding as a way to encourage interest and trust in a Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP), and enhance its credibility as a key player in achieving change. The MSP seed fund provided financing to local governments for small scale initiatives, meeting the priorities of the Galera San Francisco Marine Resource (GSFMR) management plan. As a result of seed funding, six communities have access to a clean supply of water run by local water management committees. In conjunction with the Red Cross and

### CASE STUDY: YOUTH-LED CLIMATE ACTION TEAMS

A project in Kenya demonstrated that small scale private enterprise can work with local government to improve a climate change response strategy. The project worked with poor youth to influence uptake by community and local government of actions in line with the National Climate Change Response Strategy. 18 youth-run Climate Action Teams (CATs) were supported to establish local climate change adaptation and mitigation projects (green businesses) and carry out awareness-raising. They identified local climate change challenges and designed activities to address them. A range of green businesses were established, such as briquettes, solar lamps, organic compost, farming diversification and green houses.

This work acted as a catalyst to stimulate wider interest in green business in the community. By the end of the project, there were 36 CAT-run and 50 individual enterprises. More than 90% of the businesses were profitable by the end of the project, with private and public sector clients, and some are now being replicated in other localities, generating further employment and economic growth alongside environmental improvements.

The CATs groups are recognised by local government and other stakeholders as champions of local issues. Over 540 youth from CATs participated in decision-making on climate change adaptation and disaster risk management. A Kenya-wide CAT has been established to support the work and act as a national lobbying platform. This project effectively demonstrates a mutually reinforcing cycle of business and environmental improvement at a local scale, with potential for further replication and upscaling to a national level.

### CASE STUDY 2

A project in Ecuador, working to enable poor coastal communities to take part in decision-making processes and protect their rights over access to natural resources and basic services, carried out surveys of living conditions with target communities, and sensitised them on their rights to contribute to the Galera San Francisco Marine Reserve (GSFMR) management plan.

The project helped to establish three government fora in the communities. They created space for dialogue on local development issues and supported community members to attend and represent their interests. The project established a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP), with representatives from a wide range of community groups, to which the three fora fed their ideas and plans for local development. Extensive capacity building and mentoring of the MSP built its ability to coordinate interests, create planning proposals and strategies, and advocate to Ministerial decision-makers. The MSP had a significant role in the preparation of the GSFMR management plan and its approval by Ministers. Equally important is the fact that communities are informed of and participating in decision making, and the MSP is recognised by the communities, institutions and government as a serious and proactive entity, to support community interests in local development, governance and protection and use of natural resources.

local government, the funding enabled the delivery of first aid kits and training to communities. Actions in standing forest protection and promoting best practices for water use are all actions that are being initiated as a result of seed funding.

## Delivering environmental services

The CSCF helped to raise awareness with communities in relation to environmental services, and empowered small enterprises to deliver such services, thus improving service delivery and environmental conditions at the same time.

One particular CSCF project working in slum areas of Port Harcourt in Nigeria addressed waste management as part of a pan African waste to wealth (W2W) programme. This was done through a combination of:

- Business training of small and micro enterprise (MSE) owners and working with MSEs to identify ways of their tackling waste management.
- Awareness raising in the slum communities of their rights and responsibilities in waste management.
- Supporting 313 community leaders to engage in local decision-making processes on priority community issues, with a particular focus on access, waste services and

sanitation.

- Training 224 local government and waste management staff on engaging with, and properly contracting and managing, the private sector to help address waste management.

By the end of the project, 15 MSEs had secured contracts with local government for waste and environmental management services. 2,155 entrepreneurs and employees of MSEs and social enterprises (1,251 of which were women) were generating increased income through new waste recycling and waste management activity streams.

The project has been successful in demonstrating opportunities and appropriate approaches for public-private participation to address waste management. A total of 131,400 slum dwellers have access to improved waste management services with a corresponding impact on the local environment, community health and community well-being.

A key benefit of this project has been the opportunity it has created for new business income for women. Despite the cultural barriers to women entering the waste management sector, the project was able to frame the issue in terms of civic pride and responsibility, while building the capacity of women, highlighting female role models and carrying out female-only business training to overcome the barriers.

## TANA RIVER DELTA

In Kenya, a project working to achieve local control and sustainable management of natural resources built on the grant holder's existing relationship with a local CSO, to achieve a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the Tana River Delta. County government officers were trained and closely involved in the SEA, as well as the communities, ensuring mutual understanding and ownership of the project. The project facilitated the formation of an Inter-ministerial Technical Committee and negotiated separately at community, county, and national level. All were brought together to contribute to a Land Use Plan, drawing on the evidence from the SEA. The same process is now being used for a National Land Use Planning Bill, and has informed the development of national SEA guidelines.

### Photo (front cover)

Traidcraft Exchange, Ensuring the rights of small scale tea farmers in Kenya

### Photos (in order)

Pesticides Action Network (PAN) International, Civil society preventing obsolete pesticides in Africa

Living Earth Foundation, Promoting women's empowerment and entrepreneurship in Nigeria

This report was prepared by Triple Line Consulting in joint venture with Crown Agents. Any views within are not necessarily held by DFID.



**TRIPLELINE**  
CONSULTING



The CSCF has been managed by Triple Line and Crown Agents from 2010-2015.

This paper looks at how CSCF projects addressed natural resource governance and climate change.