

NGO Policy Forum Annual Report

July 2003 to December 2004

Introduction and Background

2003 and 2004 has been a period of new beginnings and continuous lesson-learning process for NPF and its members. Although the NGO Policy Forum (NPF) had been evolving since early 2002, it is not until February 2003 that members met to agree on a framework within which NPF would operate and a strategy for operationalizing the framework. It was then that the basic framework for what eventually became the *NPF Strategy and Programme Proposal* was agreed. During this meeting, a Steering Committee was elected to lead the process of taking forward the agreed framework and it was agreed that a Secretariat would be appointed to facilitate the finalization of the NPF Strategy and to coordinate its activities and the activities that would lead to the achievement of the agreed objectives of NPF. The establishment of a Secretariat for NPF began on 1 July 2003 with the appointment of the NPF Coordinator.

NPF's strength is derived from its diversity and approach. Although it is distinctly Tanzanian-led, it includes both national and international NGOs. It is a network whereby members are expected to take a leading role in the initiation and implementation of its activities rather than leaving many of these functions to the Secretariat. It has a focused fundraising strategy aimed at safeguarding its independence. It relies very much on the commitment of its members over whom it has little control. Finally it epitomizes a constant and continuous negotiating and balancing of the diverse needs of members and the external pressures set by outside forces.

These characteristics of NPF have meant that its coordination and membership to the coalition have been a constant challenge of negotiation, learning, give and take. This type of coordination effort has been new for both NPF members and NPF staff. We have learnt that the changing of attitudes, mindsets, and habits takes time. It has taken time for members to adapt to the NPF way of working and to see the benefits of working in this way. The process of selling the benefits of coordination has been slow and the road has been rocky at times but the achievements that are articulated in this report are evidence of the fruits of this labor. Had we taken this into consideration during our initial planning we would probably have been somewhat less ambitious in what we set out to achieve during the last year and a half of operation. We had an ambitious, perhaps over-ambitious, plan for this period and the extent of this is also evidenced in this report. As a result a number of activities were not completed as planned. Overall, however, the achievements have been considerable, and in several instances have exceeded expectations.

The challenge now remains to learn the lessons that this experience has taught us and to apply these to future planning and implementation of NPF activities.

Key Elements of the NPF Programme Proposal and Strategy

The 3 key features that underpin the NPF strategy, as articulated in the *NPF Strategy and Programme Proposal*, are as follows:

1. "To focus on three policy processes that are critical to human rights and development in Tanzania in order to achieve the specific NPF Objectives. These are the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), the Public Expenditure Review (PER) and the Local Government Reforms (LGR)".

2. "To make policies work for people, especially for the poor, and for policy processes to be opened up and be made more transparent, democratic, participatory and accountable. Accordingly, attention will be paid to bridging the persistent gaps between policy and practice, and between national level policy making and the experience of quality of life at the community level."
3. "To make the policy engagement of each member stronger and more effective, rather than to replace or subsume it. NPF (or NPF Secretariat staff) will implement as 'NPF' in very few instances. In most cases the members (and groups of members) will largely initiate activities and implement them. In other words, the NPF will convene, stimulate and facilitate, and its members will be primarily responsible for action and implementation".

From these key features, four more specific objectives were derived and these are as follows:

1. A broad base of NGOs are effectively engaged in the PRS, PER and LGR processes.
2. NGOs have strengthened analytical and activist capacity for proactive policy engagement.
3. The effects of policies on people, especially the impoverished and socially disadvantaged, are monitored, documented and shared broadly by NGOs, and used to hold leaders to account.
4. Information about policies and policy processes are made accessible and shared regularly among NGOs and the public.

This report will cover one and a half years of operation since the NPF Secretariat was established. The July to December 2003 was primarily focused on establishing, concretising and articulating an identity and a strategy for NPF. Until December 2003, NPF existed entirely from voluntary financial contributions from its member organisations. It was only towards the end of 2003 when a clear strategic direction for the coalition was articulated in a Strategy and Programme Proposal for NPF that funding was sought from external partners. It was therefore agreed during the NPF Monthly Meeting of January 2004 that the first reporting period would cover a year and a half and subsequent reporting years would cover one calendar year (January to December) to coincide with the Steering Committee's term of office between elections.

This report is divided into 3 sections. The first section will give a general overview and context and a broad assessment of the achievements, the challenges and the lessons learned during the first year and a half of operating under the agreed strategic framework. The second section is a detailed report on progress against the NPF activities articulated in the 2003/04 Work Plan. It also includes a detailed justification for the year's spending profile and explains major deviations between allocation and expenditure for each budget line. The third section contains a financial report and an audited statement for this period.

Objective 1: A broad base of NGOs are effectively engaged in the PRS, PER and LGR processes.

Achievements

Over the last year and a half policy processes in Tanzania have become increasingly open to civil society engagement. This has in part been the result of increased demand by civil society, including NPF, to participate in these processes. For example, NPF was invited by the Ministry of Finance to coordinate civil society participation in the National PER Consultation of May

2004. NPF facilitated the attendance and participation of members from civil society in all 4 zones of the country. A pre-meeting was held in advance of the consultation to bring all participants up to speed on the issues. NPF representatives prepared and delivered the civil society commentary for each of the 3 sessions that formed the consultative forum. The Ministry of Finance has also guaranteed spaces for civil society participation in the PER Working Groups at national and sector level. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance has on several occasions publicly solicited civil society participation in these working groups, and acknowledged the contributions that various NPF members and partner NGOs have made to the PER process.

The PRS Review process also sought to enable and facilitated civil society participation. NPF and other members of civil society were involved in the design of the Review's consultation process. Specific NPF contributions included increased access to timely information about the review process which enabled NGOs through the major NGO networks to contribute to the process. Increased citizen engagement in the review process through the design of a flyer to solicit views from the public; radio spots and radio programmes to raise public awareness of the process and to spur public debate on the issues; the simplification and translation of the first draft of PRS2 into Kiswahili (and use of cartoons) and its dissemination through the national daily newspaper network to enable ordinary citizens across the country to have access to it and the opportunity to comment on it; and the translation of the second draft of the PRS (now known as the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty - NSGRP) to facilitate district level consultation on the document.

Two major analytical submissions formed NPF's substantive contribution to the new NSGRP. The first of these submissions was used as one of the key background documents for drafting the new PRS. Many of the key recommendations made in both NPF submissions were adopted in the final document, the most important of which was the increased emphasis on governance which has become one of the three pillars of NSGRP, with clearly articulated goals, outcomes and strategies. The stage has been set for broader and deeper participation in policy processes outside of Dar es Salaam through the establishment of and support to 2 regional policy networks based in Arusha (to cover Arusha and Manyara) and Mwanza. This will enable NGOs and CBOs in these regions to be supported in policy engagement on issues of relevance to their particular regions which should help to deepen participation and to extend participation to those who do not have the capacity or interest to engage on national level issues.

Finally, NPF members are increasingly engaged with issues of local government reforms, and in the linkage between local government and national policy processes. In 2004, the Annual Consultative Forum for Local Government Reform included formally invited representatives from civil society.

Challenges

Opportunities for policy dialogue have increased in recent years, but the challenge remains for civil society organizations to take up these spaces and use them effectively. While clear progress has been made in some areas, there is still much work to be done to increase the base of NPF members contributing to the national policy debates. At the same time there is also resistance to participation of independent minded NGOs, particularly at the sectoral level. This manifests itself in NGO representatives not being invited to meetings, being denied timely access to documents and being treated as less than equal partners in meetings. Several NGO representatives report a climate of unwillingness to address and openly discuss critical issues.

Overall, the quality of dialogue and integrity of policy processes is also a concern. For example minutes of official meetings are at times selective and do not represent a full and accurate

account of what was agreed or discussed. Access to public documents has improved, but is still not optimal and documents are not always widely available. In other instances agreements made are not followed through on time, or carried over to the next level. Sequencing and timing remains a challenge too. For example, PER studies are seldom completed early enough to fulfill their purpose, which is to substantively inform the budget. Some of these challenges are inevitable as new approaches to policy dialogue and participation evolve.

The language of policy dialogue needs to be one that is inclusive of and accountable to domestic stakeholders. The PRS Review here was a case in point. Despite the fact that the Review process was open and participatory, all documentation produced by government relating to the PRS Review was produced in technical, jargon-filled, acronym-laden English. This would lead one to question whether the primary target audience for the consultation process was the Tanzanian citizen or whether the documents were written with other stakeholders in mind. Ordinary language was used to solicit views from citizens at the beginning of the PRS Review, but there is little evidence that the feedback was qualitatively compiled, analyzed and used. These concerns were raised repeatedly by national stakeholders during Poverty Week in November 2004.

Lessons

Broad civil society participation in national level policy processes is relatively new in Tanzania. Previously policy engagement was restricted to a few organizations that had access to the system. An important lesson is the art of influencing. The various ways of doing this, what is effective in which situations, how we can be more strategic in order to enhance our engagement, is a continuous learning process through NPF's participation in the policy processes as well as by observing those who have more experience in interacting with these processes. This will be a key aspect of NPF capacity building during 2005.

Engaging with policy has risks and does not always lead to the desired result. Those who recognize this, who identify these risks early, and who look for ways to preempt and/or mitigate them tend to be more effective at influencing policy. However, there needs to be a recognition that, as with all negotiations, a compromise must be reached in which not all of what is desired will be achieved. The challenge here is to be clear about what is non-negotiable and what can be compromised in the short term for greater long term gain or broader impact on those we represent.

In coming years, NPF will need to press for clear 'rules of the game' for policy processes, such that expectations and obligations of all sides are clear and a level playing field is established. These include clarity on powers and terms of reference of various groups, terms of membership, basic rules regarding conduct and documentation of meetings, understandings about access to documents and their availability to the public, and the linkages between different components of the policy process such as policy, budget and local government reform.

Finally, a major policy challenge in Tanzania is to strengthen domestic engagement and accountability, and to reduce excessive accountability to donors. Clear progress has been made in this area through greater consolidation and harmonization under Government leadership, but much more needs to be done. This will need to involve, most critically, more substantive roles for Parliament, NGOs, the media and independent Government institutions such as the Controller and Auditor General, and various Commissions.

Objective 2: NGOs have strengthened analytical and activist capacity for proactive policy engagement

Achievements

Building the required capacity for civil society at all levels to engage effectively with national policy processes is a continuous and long-term process. One distinct achievement that has been achieved this year, and to which NPF has made a significant contribution, is that through its promotion of policy engagement and by demonstrating that effective policy engagement by civil society can have a positive influence on policy decisions, capacity building within civil society for effective policy engagement is now at the forefront of the development dialogue within Tanzania. There is a growing interest among the key players in policy processes to support civil society capacity building in this area as is demonstrated by the numerous studies currently being undertaken on this topic.

NPF members also undergoing a continuous evolutionary process whereby most of our learning takes place through our actual participation in the processes and by observing advocacy techniques. This method has been complemented by more formal learning sessions and retreats to sharpen our skills in certain areas and to address capacity gaps that are identified from time to time. The NPF working group structure and the regular monthly meetings have provided an avenue for information to be disseminated and explained, for theories to be tested, for approaches to be discussed and critiqued, and for lessons to learnt and shared. Although attendance at monthly meetings has remained fairly constant, with 25 to 35 members attending each meeting, the number and diversity of voices heard and contributions made during the meetings have increased and this can be seen in the minutes of the meetings. The number of newer NPF members and smaller member organizations leading on major NPF activities has also increased, and this can also be attributed to increased capacity among a wider group of members within NPF to understand and engage in policy-related activities.

Challenges

A key capacity building challenge has been to keep up with the rapidly transforming policy environment in Tanzania and to respond quickly to demands and opportunities arising from these changes. At times, we have done so at the expense of allowing the network to evolve at its own pace and investing the time and effort required to enable all members to progress to a level where quality participation in policy processes is broad-based. There is a risk that this may make NPF too externally focused at the expense of inadequate attention to the internal evolution of the coalition and its partners at the grassroots level. Consequently more careful choices are being made to guide engagement. The regularization of quarterly orientation sessions for new members is one measure that is being taken to address this issue during 2005. It is also anticipated that this will be a major focus in the capacity building plan currently being developed.

NPF also faces the continuous challenge of how to secure the use and dissemination of the skills and knowledge gained through the capacity building activities. How do we ensure that those who are trained are actually those who will be undertaking the policy-related activities that would benefit from the enhanced skills? This is particularly an issue with formal training sessions where the number of participants is limited and often the people who operate at the level that would benefit from this training are constrained by the competing demands on their time.

Another challenge is how to better address the capacity needs of NPF members, particularly those based outside Dar es Salaam. One lesson we have learnt is that in a network that is growing fast, needs and interests are many and diverse and do not always coexist harmoniously. How to address the policy needs of members with the limited resources available and without losing focus has been a major challenge as we continue to develop a strategic training plan. The emergence of regional policy fora has provided an opportunity to enable capacity needs and

priorities to be identified and addressed in a bottom-up manner. We anticipate that this will continue to be the case as the number of regional policy networks increase.

Lessons

The impact of capacity building activities on increasing member engagement with policy has been evident but there is still much work to be done in broadening and deepening NGO and public participation in the current policy-making machinery. One reason for this that has been cited is that policy engagement is not an area that features prominently in the strategic plans of many NPF members. Therefore when they go back to their ‘real jobs’, the institutional environment in their organizations does not encourage the application of skills gained to their day-to-day activities. Particularly during the latter half of 2004, a capacity building focus of NPF has been to assist its members to better incorporate policy engagement as core activities in their strategic plans. This has been done by teaming up veteran members of NPF with newer members to assist with their strategic planning process and provide mentoring advice. The impact this has had on the participation of some smaller NGOs in NPF activities is starkly evident.

So far, the feedback from the capacity building undertaken through NPF has always been that it was very useful. However, the extent to which this capacity building changes the way members work is uncertain. This is particularly the case with formal one-off training sessions. One lesson we have learned is that if capacity building is to have a real and sustainable impact, it needs to be an on-going process that is integrated with related activities and applied to real life situations. Measures being taken to address this include the development of a comprehensive and ongoing capacity building plan that includes effective orientation of new members and partners, continuous activity-related action learning and effective accountability mechanisms for the use of skills gained to enhance the policy engagement of NPF and its members.

Finally, a question that is frequently discussed among NPF members is “whose needs and interests does this training serve?” The importance of having a strategic focus and not losing sight of it is an important lesson we have learned throughout this year. There is continuous pressure from other stakeholders in development to participate in their capacity building activities and we must always allocate our efforts strategically to ensure that we place them where we can best progress towards our own strategic capacity building goals.

Objective 3: The effects of policies on people, especially the impoverished and socially disadvantaged, are monitored, documented and shared broadly by NGOs, and used to hold leaders to account.

Achievements

Monitoring the effects of policies on the socially and economically advantaged in Tanzania is a core activity for many members of NPF. Some NPF members have used the coalition to disseminate the results of their monitoring work with some success. The study on People’s Experiences of Health Services in Tanzania conducted by the Women’s Dignity Project and the Policy and Service Satisfaction Survey by REPOA contributed by sparking the national debate on the impact of user fees in health on poor people in Tanzania beyond the realm of the Health Sector. Various public expenditure studies undertaken by NPF members have helped to highlight nationally the gap between the allocation of education capitation grants valued at US\$10 per child that are allocated to reach the school level and the amount that actually reaches the school.

Throughout this reporting period, NPF has used the strategic opportunity presented by the Annual national consultation fora for each of the three policy processes where NPF participates (eg. Poverty Policy Week, the Annual PER CG, the Annual LGR Consultative Forum) to raise issues emerging from the monitoring work of its members and partners. Various meetings and consultations with national and international actors, and the monthly People and Policy Debates (co-hosted with HakiElimu), have also been used to disseminate information on the impact and implications of various policies.

The most comprehensive consolidation of the monitoring work of NPF members done during this reporting period were the two submissions made to the Vice President's Office to inform the PRS Review process. Inclusion of certain recommendations made in those submissions in the final document has meant that these outcomes will have to be monitored nationally and the policy process will be held accountable for their delivery.

Challenges

Despite progress, monitoring of policy impacts in civil society is largely ad hoc. Often where standardization of methodologies used would enable more accurate comparison between different studies undertaken and therefore increase the coverage and impact of the information collected and the likelihood of its incorporation into national monitoring systems, there is a reluctance to do so. The monitoring agenda is often set by and therefore more accountable to and useful for the donor than the people in the area where the research is undertaken. As a result there has been little progress in incorporating civil society monitoring work into the National Poverty Monitoring System. The Review of the Poverty Monitoring System to be undertaken in 2005 provides a major opportunity for self-reflection and strategizing in order to improve our influence in this area.

A major challenge in 2005 will be how to generate interest in and use of monitoring information at the local level for planning and prioritization. Even in civil society, the monitoring work is still generally imposed from above and the results are often not shared and almost always not used at the level where the information is generated. Even when studies originate from NGOs they are often intended to influence policymakers and donors at the national level. Therefore the information is collected and the findings are disseminated with this target in mind and packaging and presentation of this information is often inaccessible to other types of user. The challenge will be how to generate information that is accessible, usable and useful at the local level to assist ordinary people to improve their own livelihoods and hold their leaders to account.

Lessons

NPF members have learnt that the system of policymaking in Tanzania is still highly politicized and evidence is sometimes not the most prominent determinant of decision-making. Even when it is used, it is common for evidence to be sought to justify a pre-determined decision rather than vice versa. It is important that civil society organizations are cognizant of this fact and learn to assess different situations to determine, as accurately as possible, the factors that influence decision-makers in various contexts and environments.

Another lesson that has been learned by NPF members who participate in the multi-stakeholder working groups of the PRS and the PER is that one's value, and therefore influence, lies largely in 1) the additional expertise brought to the group and 2) the willingness to engage by articulating constructive and practical ideas and volunteering to do the work required to take things forward, and 3) the legitimacy one is perceived to have within the group. This is a lesson that members who are new to the process of policy engagement would do well to learn. Although participation

is guaranteed provided one has the mandate of those s(he) represents, as with all relationships, acceptance must be earned! The legitimacy issue is interesting because a civil society's main source of legitimacy is its accurate representation of the needs of its constituents. However, in some working groups, information sharing is highly restricted, such that dialogue with their wider constituencies and broader public debate is curtailed.

Objective 4: Information about policies and policy processes are made accessible and shared regularly among NGOs and the public.

Achievements

During the past year and a half, NPF has regularly shared information on policy and policy processes with its members and partners primarily through its e-mail network, regular monthly and sector related meetings with its members, electronic newsflashes, a temporary website set up to facilitate the sharing of PRS Review-related information within civil society, and through an information pack sent to up-country NPF members.

NPF has, in its own work, focused on the demystification of policy information into media that is accessible to the majority of Tanzanians. The simplification, translation and dissemination of PRS2 draft 1 through print media and CSO networks; the translation of NSGRP (PRS2 draft2); the publication of simple booklets on the rights and responsibilities of leaders and citizens in a decentralized local governance context; the use of radio through simple flyers, radio spots and radio programmes to spur public debate on PRS-related issues and to encourage citizen's involvement in the PRS Review process; and the use of monthly public debates to demystify and debate policy issues are among NPF's contributions to expanding the reach of policy information and the extent and quality of policy debate in Tanzania.

Finally, NPF has repeatedly advocated for policy information to be produced and disseminated in a way that is accessible to the majority of Tanzanians. Dissemination of information in a way that is accessible to Tanzanians would be the first step in demonstrating a commitment to domestic accountability as a priority. NPF and its members have used national level consultations, various fora where NPF or NPF members have been invited to present or participate, and discussions with key individuals to convey this message. As a result, NPF has been a key informant in the current dialogue among policy-makers on how to present policy information in a way that more accessible to the majority of Tanzanians.

Challenges

The diversity of its members makes the dissemination of information in a format that is interesting relevant and accessible to all NPF members a serious challenge. What is user-friendly, relevant, or interesting to one member may not be so to another. The fact that the primary medium for communication is electronic restricts access to information by some members. Although all NPF members currently have access to an e-mail account, many can only access their account through a paying Internet café, which makes it quite expensive to download information, especially if the documents are large. How to increase affordable e-mail and internet access for its members in a sustainable manner is an area where NPF will focus its efforts during 2005. Work has in fact already started to look into the possibility of doing this. In terms of how information is presented and conveyed will need to try to reach a satisfactory compromise in terms of addressing the diverse information needs of members. This will be a key consideration in the development of the NPF website during 2005.

Lessons

The main lesson we have learned is that making information accessible is not as simple as just providing it. It requires considerable thought, consultation and a certain level of understanding of the information needs of users. During 2004, NPF has attempted to look for creative ways to make information accessible to its members. Feedback from members suggests that discussion is a more effective way of sharing information than written information. Over the next year efforts will be made to improve information-sharing mechanisms.

Increased access to information will continue to be of limited use if it is restricted to organized civil society. This is unlikely to create the public momentum necessary to spearhead change in policy decisions and their implementation. In order for this to happen, there needs to be robust public demand for and access to information that is useful and used at the local level to influence change. The media is key in generating this type of public awareness, debate and demand for timely, relevant and accessible policy information. Strategic collaboration with the media by NPF to achieve its objectives has been slow but a working group within NPF is now active in this regard and change is expected during 2005.

Establishment of NPF Secretariat and systems for the efficient management & stewardship of NPF activities & resources

In order to strengthen its own governance and accountability, and taking the current legal context into account, NPF decided to establish a formal constitution and register as a not-for-profit company. Its constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association (MEMARTS) were prepared by the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), a member of the NPF Steering Committee, and registration was in process at the time of writing this report. The responsible Government Agency has agreed in principle to register NPF, but recommended that the name be changed to avoid any potential confusion with the formerly existing National Provident Fund, which has the same acronym as NPF. A new name will be considered at the NPF Annual General Meeting in early March 2005 and it is anticipated that registration will be completed within the same month.

A 7-member Steering Committee, elected in January 2003 has been in place throughout this period and has played an active role in guiding and overseeing the work of NPF and the implementation of NPF's 3-year Strategy and Programme Proposal. Members include HakiElimu (Chair), TANGO (Vice Chair), LHRC, Hakikazi Catalyst, The Leadership Forum, Care International and Save the Children (UK). Over the course of this period, Steering Committee Meetings have been regularized and occur on a monthly basis. The Steering Committee has been a constant source of advice, guidance, direction and support to the Secretariat, even outside the monthly Steering Committee.

In the absence of NPF being registered and a separate legal entity, the NPF Steering Committee requested HakiElimu perform the functions that require a legal entity, such as financial management, entering into legal and contractual agreements, and employment of staff among, HakiElimu is therefore the custodian of NPF funds and the same are audited as part of the audit of HakiElimu funds by KPMG. The NPF Secretariat also operates under HakiElimu financial and administrative policies. This arrangement will be reviewed after the election of a new Steering Committee and in light of the expected registration of NPF.

During the latter half of 2003, the NPF Secretariat was established and is now in full operation. The Secretariat comprises three posts, a Coordinator, an Assistant Programme Officer, and an

Office Assistant. The Secretariat office now has a fully functioning communication system and members are receiving information on a regular basis.

Meetings have also been held on a monthly basis for all NPF members in order to share information and to take forward NPF activities. These are usually hosted by CARE International, a member of the NPF Steering Committee, and have occurred on a monthly basis throughout the reporting period.

As a result of a Ways of Working Mid-year Review Workshop that took place in July 2004, the process for organizational application to NPF has been formalized. An application form has been developed and agreed. Criteria for membership have been articulated and appear on the NPF draft brochure, and membership applications are considered by the Steering Committee on a monthly basis. The purpose of these procedures is to promote the same transparency, information sharing and quality standards among member NGOs that we demand from Government.

Recruitment of members, particularly from outside Dar es Salaam, continues. A critical element here is to orient members and their representatives on policy issues and processes as well as the manner in which NPF operates. It has been agreed that orientation sessions for new members will be held on a quarterly basis and the first of these will be held on 2 March 2005.

The first NPF Annual General Meeting of NPF will take place on 3 March 2005 at which time the Steering Committee's term will end and a new Steering Committee will be elected.

Activities for 2005 are articulated in the Annual Work Plan for NPF for 2005 and are currently underway.

Conclusion

Overall this year has been a year of considerable achievement and learning for NPF and its member organizations. We have learned that a coordinated approach to engaging in policy has significant benefits in terms of the analysis, the reach and the ability of our advocacy work to impact on change. However, we have also learned that in our coordination we must make a conscious and strategic effort to do so without drowning out the diverse voices that make civil society a unique entity in the development arena. We have learnt that partnering with other networks on issues where we are like-minded can have a significant positive impact on our access to information, on the richness of our self-reflection and on our influence on policy decisions. We have learned that when organizations are armed with quality, relevant and accessible information, they are able to improve the quality of their analysis and advocacy considerably. Finally, perhaps the most poignant lesson we have learned is that changing the way people and organizations do business has to be a slow and continuous process if this change is to be significant, broad-based and sustained. We are optimistic about our ability to improve on the work we have done this year and to carry the lessons we have learned forward into our work during 2005.