

COLLECTIVE ACTION TRIGGERS INSTITUTIONALISED STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION : POVERTY OBSERVATORY IN MOZAMBIQUE PARPA PROCESS.

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In a Nutshell

This case describes a promising example of institutionalised civil society participation in the PRSP/PARPA process – Observatorio da Pobreza from Mozambique. It involved collective action of about twenty NGOs breaking new ground by initiating effective engagement in national policy dialogue, undertaking an independent assessment of poverty trends in the country and monitoring the implementation of the PARPA. This is the first time in the history of Mozambique that there has been formal engagement between Government and wide representation of civil society.

The Government and donors now recognise the importance of the political space filled by the civil society and the need for institutionalisation of stakeholder participation as key to social transformation and sustainable development. There is also a renewed respect for CSO after the display of the G20s local knowledge and its national community research and analytical capacity.

The Story

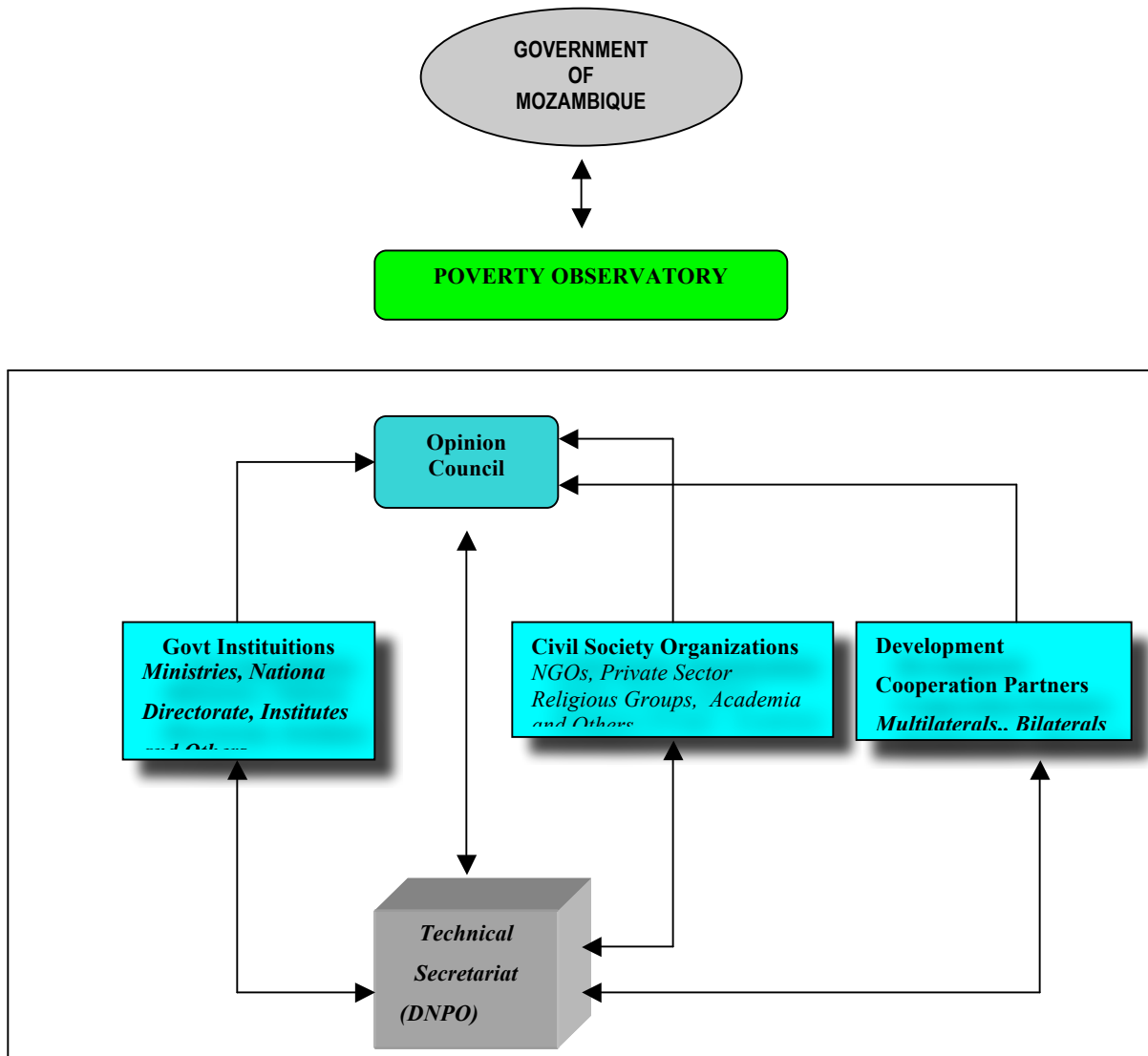
The scenario: On April 28, 2003 the Government of Mozambique formally launched the consultative forum of the Poverty observatory. The meeting was opened by President Joachim Chissano. In his opening statement he welcomed the CSO initiative of collective dialogue with Government and donors and stressed the importance of institutionalisation of such a mechanism. The first meeting of the Poverty Observatory forum which has now become an annual event was attended by all Government ministries at the highest level, Governor of the Central Bank, provincial Governors, private sector, civil society, and donors including World Bank, IMF and UNDP.

As presented at the launch, the overall objective of the PO is to create conditions for an effective consultative process between government and development partners with a view to evaluate the execution of the Government programme for poverty reduction, as well as, increase stakeholders accountability in the fight against poverty. Specifically the PO aims to do the following:

1. contribute to the collection of data and information on PARPA global and sectoral indicators and produce analysis with a view to identify areas in need of improvement;
2. whenever required, analyse and make suggestions on the lists of indicators for PARPA monitoring and evaluation;
3. produce position papers and make recommendations on the monitoring and implementation of poverty related interventions by the Government with a special focus on the challenges faced in the implementation of the priority actions ;
4. analyse and discuss the results of the main poverty impact reports such as the Annual Poverty Impact and Qualitative Participatory Evaluation Reports within the overall framework of poverty impact monitoring (quantitative and qualitative);
5. Strengthen the dissemination of PARPA within the civil society through the media and other means.

The PO is made up of two groups namely the ad hoc advisory group known as the Opinion Council and a permanent Technical secretariat placed in the Ministry of planning (Figure 1). UNDP has played a critical role in establishing the PO technical secretariat with seed funding of a tune of US1.5 million dollars and continues to support capacity strengthening activities. The opinion council is an ad hoc advisory group body which meets regularly once in every six months. While the technical secretariat focuses on coordination of the monitoring and evaluation of PARPA activities implemented by sector ministries; MDGs performance tracking; support to poverty related strategic and impact evaluation studies; nation wide sensitisation and dissemination of information on PARPA and the MDGS ; and PARPA update and revision.

Figure 1



The opinion council is made up of 60 members representing the central bodies of the State, civil society organisations and international development partners. The technical secretariat of the Poverty Observatory is established within the Ministry of Planning. It performs the following functions: (i) to keep abreast with the monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction actions; (ii) to analyse and recommend improvements on the Government Socio-economic Plan a (PES) and State Budget based on the regular flows of information from monitoring and evaluation processes from the Government and other related sources; and (iii) to approve the PO annual agenda.

Results and Critical Factors

Institutionalised stakeholder participation through collective action: The recognition by Government of the need to encourage its peoples to take greater ownership of their own destiny through providing space for dialogue and its commitment to the process provided an incentive to civil society to engage in collective action. However it runs the risk of not being fully representative if it is not broadened to include all eleven provinces.

The G20 were able to voice their concerns over the lack of inclusive policy decision making processes and in so doing were able to have their demand for formal and nationally recognised dialogue responded to by both Government and donors.

Government recognition of complementary CSO research and analytical capacity: The Government conceded to the fact that the G20 were able through their community networks across the country to cover a larger number of households for collection of baseline data required for analysis of poverty trends and come up with concrete proposals to improve Government actions. This data formed the basis for the G20 independent poverty assessment report 'Relatorio Annual de Impacto'. The Government also appreciates the value of the qualitative analysis done by the PO which will feed into the PARPA revision process. One of the major issues raised was the need to redefine the conceptualisation and definition of poverty in the PARPA to pay equal attention to quantitative and qualitative aspects. Consequently the G20 has recommended that the official definition of poverty in Mozambique be modified to incorporate elements that reflect the perceptions held by Mozambicans. The Government is already taking steps to follow up on the main recommendations of the May 2004 PO plenary. In December 2004, the Government organized the first stakeholder workshop to collect contributions and further debate on the poverty definition, a critical step as it embarks in the design of PARPA (PRSP) II.

Replication of PO at provincial level: With support from Government and development partners the exchange of successful implementation of PARPA activities at community can be replicated across the country. Initial steps have been taken to set up provincial PO forums with the first being set up in Nampula Province.

Further Information

Additional information on the Poverty Observatory can be obtained from the PO website at www.op.gov.mz , the Ministry of Planning and from the UNDP Country office in Maputo.