

## Policy advocacy in Partners for Resilience - Reflections from Kenya

This paper is the result of a desk review of the policy advocacy component in the Climate-Proof Disaster Risk Reduction programme in Kenya. Within the policy advocacy component (intervention area 3: *Advocacy of CBOs/CSOs on government institutions*) the review had a special focus on the *Lobbying and policy dialogue* activity. The following is a collection of reflections of how the Partners for Resilience (PfR) can approach policy advocacy and develop and implement a strategic action plan for lobbying. While the reflections are generalised to be applicable on a broader scale, examples from the Kenyan context will be provided for clarification.

### Common definition and understanding

The first step in the area of policy advocacy is for the country team to develop a common definition and understanding of the concept *policy advocacy*. Advocacy is essentially about changing minds, attitudes, behaviour and practices (IFRC 2012:11), and can be defined as ‘*the act or process of advocating or supporting a cause or proposal*’ (Scott & Rachlow 2011:1). It can take many forms including dissemination of research, public education, community organisation, lobbying to enact legislation, ensuring implementation of laws, education of voters and policymakers, etc. (Ottinger & Couto 2010:298-299). In this paper policy advocacy is understood to cover influencing both legislation (bills, acts, regulations, orders, etc.) and policies/government strategies that do not have legal status.

### Setting objectives

Once a common understanding of policy advocacy is developed it is time for the team to identify objectives of policy advocacy in the programme. These could include increased public awareness of disaster risk reduction (DRR), ecosystem management and restoration (EMR) and climate change adaptation (CCA), enactment and implementation of certain laws and policies in accordance with the DRR/EMR/CCA approach, or mobilisation of communities to engage in campaign and lobbying activities themselves. The objectives can in broad terms be divided into two categories *awareness creation* and *lobbying*. These two approaches are interlinked as an informed constituency is more difficult to ease, and will put pressure on decision-makers. Specific objectives under *awareness creation* could be creating awareness about the importance of integrating DRR, EMR and CCA, awareness about rights and duties as citizens, and awareness about abilities and opportunities to act and influence decision-makers and decision-making processes. Objectives under *lobbying* could include integration of the DRR/EMR/CCA approach into national legislation and policies, ensuring that laws and policies are supportive for sustainable livelihoods (e.g. by introducing the wise-use principle), ensuring that land tenure system is conducive to different livelihood systems (e.g. pastoralism), and ensuring budget allocation for DRR/EMR/CCA at all levels of administration.

### Developing an overall strategy and strategic action plan

Inspired by the overall objectives the next step is to develop a specific strategy for policy advocacy. The strategy could include a plan with specific activities and deadlines with assigned responsibilities for the country team. To follow the logic of the objectives, the strategy could also be divided into *awareness creation* and *lobbying*. The rest of this paper will mainly focus on developing a strategic action plan for lobbying activities.

The first step in developing a strategic action plan for lobbying is to identify which legislation and policies are to be analysed and supported or changed. This involves mapping the legislation and

policies in the area of interest, e.g. disaster management or environmental management. Often a number of legislation and policies will emerge, some of which might only marginally touch upon the area of interest. One method to organise the large quantity of legislation and policies that emerge is to arrange the material chronologically and investigate how it has changed over time, what issues have emerged, what worked/did not work, what new challenges have appeared that need to be addressed (e.g. climate change), and what new knowledge exists today to guide the legislation/policies. Next step could be to group the legislation/policies according to type (legislation or policies) as well as status in the process of formulation or implementation.

### Setting priorities

As time and human and financial resources are limited, it can be advisable to shortlist only a few legislation/policies for lobbying. Priorities could be based on the relevance for lobbying objectives, current inclusion of DRR/EMR/CCA concept, timing/status in the formulation/implementation process (e.g. bill still on ministerial level, strategy close to expiring, etc.), and the feasibility of influencing either content or process of the particular legislation/policy.

### Policy analysis

Once the priorities are set it is time for a thorough analysis of the selected legislation and policies. This involves identifying what *problem* the legislation/policy it intended to solve, what the *goals* of the legislation/policy are and which *instruments* are employed to achieve this. Legislation/policies can be influenced by both values of society and scientific knowledge, and identifying these will increase the understanding of the rationale behind the legislation/policy. Moreover, it can be relevant to look into the actor(s) behind the policy and the motives that brought the policy on the agenda – which might differ from the goals of the policy. Finally, the PfR team will need to identify the parts of the legislation/policy it wants to support or change whether in terms of process or content. To increase the prospects for successful lobbying, the team can focus their efforts strategically and develop 3-5 concrete suggestions for changes they want to achieve. Concerning *process* the aim can for instance be to ensure the enactment of a bill/policy under development, halt or delay a bill/policy under development, or terminate or prolong an expiring policy. Concerning *content* the aim can be to amend or add to the analysis of the problem/rationale for the legislation/policy, change or add objectives of the legislation/policy, or change or add instruments used to ensure implementation. These instruments could for instance be direct provision, subsidies, taxation, regulation, fees, information, certification, public investment, prohibition, price controls, etc. (Linder & Peters 1989:56). Other changes could also be to amend or add to the authorities/institutions responsible for implementation or change the timeframe of the policy or strategy.

### Identifying targets

The next step for PfR could be to identify the target or audience of the lobbying efforts. This can be done by mapping the process of developing bills and policies and mapping the actors/decision-makers in the process. In Kenya the actors in the process of developing bills include high-level administrative staff in ministries, ministers, MPs, parliamentary committees and the president. Developing policies mostly involves ministers and high-level administrative staff in ministries or other government institutions, and in special cases they are taken to parliament to involve MPs and parliamentary committees. Specific examples in Kenya include Ministry of Environment, Ministry of State for Special Programmes, National Environment Management Authority, etc. For legislation/policies already passed, mapping the structures and responsibilities in the process of implementation can help revealing venues for influencing the implementation e.g. to include DRR/EMR/CCA aspects. This might be most relevant for policies, but can also be applicable for

enacted legislation that are under review or need complementing regulation/orders that are to be issued by the minister. When identifying where to focus the lobbying efforts, it can be relevant to examine power relations between the decision-makers, investigate who may be receptive to influence and who may support or oppose the case.

### **Building alliances**

To increase voice and appear more convincing it can be relevant to start building alliances to share the efforts of lobbying and identify other targets/audiences, which are outside the reach of PfR. Alliances can include other NGOs, research centres/universities, private entities, forums, etc. with the same objectives as PfR. It can here be an advantage to draw on the network of the PfR partner organisations as well as the networks of the individual staff members. Building alliances can entail knowledge sharing concerning the progress of a particular legislation/policy, increasing the knowledge platform and perspectives on the topic, as well as increasing the voice of the group and the reach of the lobbying activities.

### **Framing the message**

The next step is to frame the message to the target group/audience. When framing the message different types of reasoning can be employed. *Normative* reasoning entails that policies are analysed according to the norms and values of (parts of) society. *Legal* reasoning analyses the consistency of the legislation/policy in relation to remaining legislation and jurisdiction. *Logical* reasoning is employed when the internal consistency (between problem, goals and instruments) is analysed, and finally *empirical* reasoning is applied when the rationale is based on impact, effect, cost and administration of the legislation/policy (Pal 2010:19). No matter which type(s) is employed, effective lobbying requires evidence. Evidence generated by PfR from the programme sites can both include written material as well as photos, videos and audio material. It can be documentation of current situation e.g. environmental degradation, flooding, drought, etc. or documentation of programme outputs such as improved techniques, increased awareness, etc. The PfR team can either ally with journalists to get media coverage (print media as well as electronic), or the team can produce its own material and circulate it on several platforms including online media and social networks, such as Youtube, Facebook and Twitter to increase the pressure on the target/audience. (Cohen 2010:314).

Evidence can also be based on existing data such as statistics, newspaper articles, magazine articles, research or case studies from other NGOs or research centres (Cohen 2010:311). In Kenya this includes programme and institutions such as ALP (Adaptation Learning Programme), REGLAP (Regional Learning and Advocacy Programme), KARI (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute), ILRI (International Livestock Research Institute) and UoN CSDES (University of Nairobi, Center for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies). Moreover, the PfR team can gather evidence and inspiration from similar legislation/policy in other countries (e.g. in the region), or back the reasoning by international agreements and conventions. Specifically concerning ways of influencing the use of DRR/EMR/CCA approach, PfR can refer to the International Disaster Relief and Initial Recovery Assistance guidelines (IDRL) (IFRC 2012:38), and the Minimum Standards for Climate-Smart Disaster Risk Reduction (PfR 2012).

### **Delivering the message**

After framing the message, it is time to deliver it to the target. The mapping exercises above should help giving directions for who the lobbying messages could be delivered to. Different techniques for delivering messages include direct encounters through conferences, seminars, workshops and private meetings arranged by PfR or written material like policy briefs or memorandums. It can also

be more creative and inspired by techniques for creating public awareness such as art exhibitions, theatre plays, music and dance performances, posters, flyers and leaflets or through digital media such as websites, podcasts and video clips (IFRC 2012:36).

### Evaluating efforts

After the message is delivered to the target audience, the lobbying efforts should be evaluated. The aim of this would be to assess achievements and progress of the lobbying efforts to see what worked and what did not, as well as celebrating successes. The evaluation should be focused on giving direction for future lobbying in terms of tools and approaches as well as targets and objectives. This evaluation could for instance be done among the PfR partners on a quarterly basis to review what new legislation/policies have appeared and how new priorities might be set.

### Ensuring sustainability

Finally, it might be relevant during the quarterly meetings to also reconsider the division of roles and responsibilities in the lobbying work. For instance in Kenya, the advocacy strategy suggests that the PfR country team is responsible for lobbying at national level, while the implementing partners are responsible for lobbying at local/county level. To ensure sustainability of the programme activities after the programme terminates, the responsibility for advocating on national level could gradually be transferred to the implementing partners, and the responsibility for lobbying at local level could be transferred to CBOs/CSOs on community level. For this exercise to be successful some efforts must be put in capacity development and training in lobbying/advocacy. Moreover, the efforts could be strengthened by institutionalising policy advocacy into the structures of the implementing partners and CSOs/CBOs, by allocating human and financial resources to the area. This will ensure an informed, mobilised and empowered community and increase the sustainability of the advocacy component.

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