



Learning from Southern Voices

– making advocacy on climate change more effective

Prepared by Raja Jarrah

What is the Southern Voices programme?

Southern Voices is an initiative to improve the advocacy of civil society organisations in the global South on climate change, both in their national contexts and internationally. The programme grew out of a project in 2008-9 to bring southern civil society actors to the UN climate conference in Copenhagen (COP15)¹ in order to influence the negotiations. Since that time it has evolved into a broader programme of capacity building and cross-learning between networks, with more focus on advocacy at national level.

The Southern Voices (SV) Capacity Building Programme has been supported by DANIDA through a Consortium composed of four NGOs in the Danish 92 Group and two international NGOs (CAN-International and IIED). CARE Denmark is the lead agency. The first phase of the programme was initiated in January 2011 for a period of 18 months, focussing on the organisational development and capacity building of partner networks. Following a review in mid 2012, the second phase concentrated on cross-learning between networks, and formally ran from July 2012 to Dec. 2013 (with a no-cost extension until mid-2014). The SV Programme in Phase 2 supports 10 national, five regional and three thematic networks.

SOUTHERN VOICES CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

Danish agencies:

- CARE Danmark
- IBIS
- DanChurchAid
- Sustainable Energy
- Danish 92 group

International agencies:

- International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)
- Climate Action network (CAN) International

SOUTHERN VOICES NETWORK PARTNERS

National networks:

- ETHIOPIA: Ethiopian Civil Society Network on Climate Change
- TANZANIA: MJUMITA – National Community Forestry Conservation Network
- MALAWI: CISONICC Civil Society Network on Climate Change
- NIGER: The national civil society committee on desertification CNCOD as well as the Niger Youth Initiative for Climate Change
- MALI/AFRICA: FEMNET Mali and Mali Climate Network – Reseau Climat Mali
- VIETNAM: NGO Climate Change Working Group (CCWG)
- CAMBODIA: Two networks - National Climate Change Networks of Cambodia (NCCN) and the NGO Forum of Cambodia
- GUATEMALA and NICARAGUA: national focal points for SusWatch regional network

Regional networks

- CENTRAL AMERICA: Sustainability Watch – with members in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and Bolivia;
- CAN Latin America
- WEST AFRICA: CAN West Africa,
- SOUTH ASIA: CAN South Asia (CANSA)
- PACIFIC: CAN-Pacific

Thematic networks:

- The Accra Caucus on Forests and Climate Change (REDD and Forestry)
- INFORSE – International network for sustainable energy (Low Carbon Development), working through regional INFORSE networks in West Africa, East and Southern Africa, South Asia
- CLACC – Programme for Capacity Building in the LDCs for Adaptation to Climate Change. (Adaptation), working through 15 CLACC fellows in LDCs in Africa and South Asia

“In preparing for and participating in the international negotiation sessions, members have been more involved in making the network’s voice heard at the international level, and position papers produced through this process have been very useful.”

Our key messages

The programme has evolved at a time when it has become increasingly evident that climate change advocacy is needed at all levels, and in all places. International negotiations are not enough, as shown by the slow progress made under the UNFCCC. Meanwhile climate change continues to devastate the livelihoods of poor and marginalised people with ever-increasing severity. While governments are taking action at national level, they nevertheless need the support of international frameworks that guide their policies and provide adequate financial and other support. In turn, action at local levels, where the impacts of climate change are being most acutely felt, requires support from enabling and guiding national policies. In all these different arenas, international, national and local, **NGOs have an important role in ensuring that climate policy and action benefit socially and economically excluded people.**

Southern Voices has demonstrated that when civil society organisations are heard internationally, they become more effective in their own countries. This comes about as a result of their improved ability to understand and analyse climate policy; the confidence they gain through wider experience; and the enhanced credibility in the eyes of their governments that comes with international exposure. Thus **investing in the capacity of southern NGOs is an integral part of an equitable response to climate change** that empowers citizens as well as governments. Southern Voices has shown how **strategic alliances between southern and international NGOs can be an effective mechanism for building that capacity.**



In Phase 2, the Southern Voices programme supported 20 national, regional and international climate policy networks around the globe.

CASE STUDY –Climate Change Working Group in Vietnam:

Guidelines and technical inputs from Southern Voices have enabled the Climate Change Working Group in Vietnam to conduct a capacity assessment of the network, research national policies, and develop the Joint Advocacy Strategy with the Disaster Management Working Group. This has become the most important action framework of the group.

The over-riding problem related to climate change in Vietnam is not the lack of policies but the failure to implement these policies effectively. CCWG's advocacy is directed at ensuring that these policies benefit poor and vulnerable people. In 2011, CCWG signed a Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration, coordination and sharing information on climate change with the Department of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change. This has created the opportunity for more open discourses with government bodies on climate change programmes and policies in Vietnam, and provided an entry point for local members of CCWG, communities and those most impacted by climate change to voice concerns and raise issues that matter to them.

As a result of its activities CCWG is gaining more recognition from ministries and government agencies. The government has acknowledged that civil society organisations have extensive experience and innovative approaches to tackle climate change at community level. Key ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment) now see the importance of NGOs' involvement in their consultation process for during decision making.

Examples of achievements by CCWG and its members include:

- Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into the Social Economic Development Plan at commune levels in 10 provinces;
- Approval by the Ministry of Education and Training of a learning package for integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the school syllabus, now being piloted in 12 provinces;
- Incorporating community based mangrove management as an approach to mangrove reforestation and protection under the action plan of the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change;
- Gender integration into the Law on Disaster Preparedness and Prevention, and official membership of the Vietnam Women's Union on the National Committee on Flood and Storm Control.
- A dialogue on climate finance and transparency has been initiated based on a discussion paper from CCWG members

Southern Voices has helped direct CCWG's advocacy work in a more strategic manner. It has provided training opportunities for CCWG representatives through regional and international workshops, and consultancy support for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating its advocacy strategy. Funding from the Southern Voices has made it possible to maintain frequent meetings and events among members and sub-groups, roll out joint advocacy activities, and sustain a full-time Coordinator position for information sharing, capacity building and advocacy work.

What Southern Voices has achieved

Southern Voices brought together partners with very diverse circumstances. Members came from over 20 different countries and a wide range of operating contexts. Some networks were already well established, while others were incipient; furthermore, the nature of partnership with Southern networks, and the respective levels of financial and technical support, varied between members of the Consortium. Consequently there is no single measure of “achievement” than can be applied across all the partners. In more enabling governance contexts, and for networks with existing advocacy experience, more can be expected than from networks new to advocacy or those operating in places where political space is tightly circumscribed.

A good measure of programme impact is what networks themselves consider to be their significant achievements². The successes that networks themselves are proud of span a broad spectrum of achievements, ranging from improved capacity through the various steps towards actually influencing policies. They are clustered in the table below:

Examples of Southern Voices successes

Type of achievement	%age of reported successes	Typical examples
1. Organising better for advocacy	24 %	Improving governance and accountability of networks; developing advocacy strategies; setting up thematic working groups; training for network members.
2. Promoting policy positions	20 %	Providing responses to government policy proposals; interpreting international policy demands for national circumstances; conducting research on policy context; public outreach; training for media.
3. Improving relationship with government	39 %	Creation of forum for dialogue between civil society and government representatives; formal invitation for policy consultations; civil society membership of official country delegation to international events; educating parliamentarians on climate change
4. Policy change	17 %	Visible fingerprint of civil society positions in policy statements; issues raised by civil society inform political agenda

The Southern Voices programme explicitly recognised the need for a step-wise approach to influencing policy. In the project design, there were specific objectives related to organisational and network development (corresponding to “organising better for advocacy”) and to planning, outreach and analysis (contributing to “promoting policy positions”). As Southern Voices participants on the whole adopted a collaborative rather than confrontational advocacy approach to their governments, “improving relationship with government” and thereby creating space for dialogue is a critical step towards achieving “policy change”.

The next section gives are some examples of these four types of achievement from partners within the Southern Voices programme.

² Data source: responses to two on-line surveys conducted in late 2013 and early 2014, supplemented by information from the routine progress reports of programme partners. Percentages are indicative rather than precise, given the nature of qualitative data.

Selected stories from Southern Voices partners

These examples are selected to highlight the work of many different partners. They are not a complete list of what SV has achieved, nor do they represent a comprehensive account of the achievements of any individual partner. Indeed, most networks have made advances in many different areas – when a particular network is mentioned as an example, this does not mean that is all they have achieved; on the contrary – it is most likely to indicate that they have also made good progress elsewhere.

Organising better for advocacy

The **Climate Action Network** in Latin America, West Africa and South Asia³, has combined its own resources with those of the Southern Voices programme to bring together different NGOs from across the region to share experiences, build capacity and identify common areas of work which would benefit from collaboration. This has enabled participating networks to participate more actively in international advocacy activities both globally at the UNFCCC, and at the regional level, such as at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). It has also had the effect of strengthening the capacity and profile of CAN's nodes in the global south, contributing to the evolution of CAN from its origins as a network of largely northern organisations.

The Southern Voices programme also provided guidance, tools and resources to individual national networks to improve their internal organisation and preparedness for advocacy. For example, the **Vietnam** NGO Climate Change Working Group developed a Joint Advocacy Strategy, with its sister working group on Disaster Risk Management, that helped systematise the advocacy interests of the various members and identify priorities for joint action. In **South Asia**, the INFORSE network members found that the very process of undertaking a Network Capacity Assessment, as part of the methodology of the Southern Voices programme, helped improve understanding of climate change, advocacy and its relationship to their work of promoting sustainable energy on the ground.

Promoting policy positions

One of the big advantages of a network approach is that the different strengths of the individual members can be shared and reinforce each other. This is well illustrated in the area of policy analysis, where specialist policy or sectoral NGOs can lend their analytical expertise to other civil society organisations, and help develop positions that can be adopted by the whole network. Meanwhile more operational NGOs can bring to bear their experience on the ground, as well as promoting the voices of affected local communities.

Thus for example the National Alliance on Climate Change in **Nicaragua** (ANACC)⁴ has harnessed this diversity to be able to promote positions on a range of different national policy processes including the Regional Strategies for Climate Change in the Autonomous Regions; Framework Law for climate change; the National Plan for Climate Change Adaptation]; [National Plan for Human Development 2012-2016] towards Adaptation before the CC, and the national strategy for avoided deforestation.

“Our more solid internal structure has created a better image and provided for better continuity of work during the year.”

“Before this programme advocacy work was largely ad hoc. The development of the network’s advocacy strategy has helped to build skills for advocacy in the network.”

³ Respectively CANLA, CANWA and CANSA

⁴ Partner of Southern Voices through SUSWATCH

“Southern Voices made it possible for us to lobby for the incorporation of gender in climate policies and programmes. Women’s perspectives are now part of the working criteria of the Ministry of Environment”.

The **Accra Caucus** used Southern Voices funding to help develop its policy positions on forest conservation and the REDD+ mechanism, highlighting the need for environmental integrity and the rights of forest peoples. To reinforce its policy positions it produced three volumes of case studies that reported on the reality of forest policy, deforestation and land rights, bringing together experiences on the ground from different countries to be used for advocacy at the UNFCCC and in national contexts.

Improving relationships with government

It seems to be generally the case that climate change is one of the less controversial areas for government and civil society to work on together. This is partly because it can be portrayed as a “technical issue”; partly because the demands for action tend to be directed primarily at targets outside the country (at major polluters and funders); and partly because NGOs with international connections often have access to human and financial resources that can benefit government bodies. Thus many civil society networks have constructive relationships with their governments, and there are numerous examples of Southern Voices partners being recognised by governments as legitimate and expert interlocutors on climate change. In several cases, such as Bolivia, Niger, and Cambodia, civil society members have been part of official country delegations to the UNFCCC.



The CCWG held training sessions for NGO communicators to strengthen their messaging. © Vietnam CCWG

The **Vietnam** Climate Change Working Group has negotiated a formal memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Environment, and organised a number of dialogues with key ministries and other stakeholders on climate change adaptation, finance and renewable energy. From those events, government agencies and provincial authorities are more aware of NGOs work and issues at grass root level, as well as CCWG is gaining more attention and recognition from ministries and government agencies.

Zimbabwe has recently completed its draft National Climate Change Response Strategy following extensive public consultations to input into the process of developing a comprehensive action plan on climate change issues. Zimbabwean civil society organisations took part in a series of national consultative workshops on the draft climate change strategy, that will eventually lead to a national climate policy⁵. Instigating such a strategy process had been one of the advocacy aims Climate Change Working Group, a partner of the Southern Voices programme⁶.

In **Bolivia**, the Environmental Defence League (Liga de Defensa del Medio Ambiente - LIDEMA)⁷ was tasked by the government to contribute to the development of a joint mitigation and adaptation mechanism for forest conservation, by sourcing technical inputs and raising awareness about the proposal amongst Bolivian negotiators at the UNFCCC and more widely.

It is worth remembering, however, that influencing climate change policy is ultimately a matter of governance, and is subject to the same opportunities and constraints that affect all civil society action. For example, up to 2012, the **Ethiopian** Civil Society Network on Climate Change was an active member of Southern Voices and had done a great deal of work on raising awareness about climate change amongst its members, politicians, civil servants and the general public in Ethiopia. Its activities included meetings to discuss on Ethiopia's emerging climate programmes, training for journalists and school teachers on climate change, and briefings on international climate negotiations. However with the introduction of new government regulations which constrained the possibility of international support to advocacy activities of NGOs, much of this work has had to be curtailed.

Actually influencing policies

The ultimate result of the different steps in preparing for advocacy, (capacity strengthening, policy analysis, and relationship building) is the ability to influence climate change policies. In **Malawi**, civil society inputs have been incorporated into the National Climate Change Policy and the Civil Society Network on Climate Change CISONICC has influenced government positions to international negotiations. In **Cambodia**, civil society organisations produced a position paper on environment and climate change which was incorporated and mainstreamed into the Environmental Impact Assessment law of the country. Meanwhile the government is drafting guidelines for incorporating climate change into sub-national planning, and CSOs are pushing for decentralized climate finance to support the most vulnerable communities at grassroots level.

“There has been a drastic change in the level of knowledge of the Parliamentarians on climate change, through workshops conducted for policy makers, which the capacity building opportunity under the SV programme helped to create.”

“The opportunity to be part of international negotiations has given us the unique privilege of being able to inform the domestic public about how our country is positioning itself, since there is still no other mechanism for consultation or information about this.”

5 As reported in The Herald, 18th Sept. 2014, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201409180021.html?viewall=1>
6 through CLACC
7 Member of SUSWATCH

Inside our toolboxes

“A very useful workshop. The importance of having a clear objective, understanding stakeholders and their level of influence and how such knowledge should define the influencing strategy were great inputs that will go a long way in enhancing our national advocacy work.”

Over the two phases the Southern Voices has produced two important knowledge products. In Phase 1, advocacy experiences from across the networks were compiled and synthesised into an international report, published as “Southern voices on climate policy choices” in 2012⁸. This publication drew attention to the wide range of work under way by southern civil society to influence climate change policy through a variety of means – lobbying, campaigning, awareness-raising and education, to name a few. Network members appreciated the recognition to their work provided by this report, drawing inspiration from the work of their peers elsewhere, and in some cases being able to use it for advocacy purposes within their countries.

In Phase 2, Southern Voices has produced a series Advocacy Toolbox, building on the experiences of partner networks over five years of climate advocacy. This was combined with best practice from elsewhere and systematised into a series of publications:

- Toolkit 1: Start Here! Introducing Advocacy and the Climate Change Advocacy Toolkits
- Toolkit 2: Planning Advocacy
- Toolkit 3: Framing the Debate: Messages and Communication
- Toolkit 4: Strengthening Advocacy Networks
- Toolkit 5: Influencing Decision Makers
- Toolkit 6: Engaging the Public
- Toolkit 7: Engaging the Media
- Toolkit 8: Supporting Local Voices
- Toolkit 9: Policy Implementation & Finance

The Toolkits are openly available to all those interested to use it, encompassing the good practices and lessons learned by partners over the duration of the Southern Voices programme. The hope is that it will be seen as a useful tool for other practitioners worldwide, including the successor programme to Southern Voices. The toolkits can be downloaded from <http://southernvoices.net/en/resource-centre/tools/687-the-advocacy-toolkits.html>.

⁷ Member of SUSWATCH

⁸ <http://southernvoices.net/en/resource-centre/reports-cases/21-southern-voices-on-climate-policy-choices.html>

CASE STUDY – Civil Society Network on Climate Change in Malawi:

The Civil Society Network on Climate Change (CISONECC) was set up in 2008 to influence emerging policies climate change and disaster risk management (DRM) in the country. Its diverse membership, comprising local and international organisations, brings together experience ranging from international climate negotiations to community projects, and expertise covering policy analysis, working with media, social empowerment and practical technologies.

In the initial phase of Southern Voices, CISONECC carried out a network capacity assessment, in order to identify ways to increase its legitimacy and effectiveness with such a diverse membership. As a result it embarked on a programme of capacity building for its members, and developed a strategic plan with its monitoring and evaluation framework.

The fruits of CISONECC's early advocacy are now maturing as the government of Malawi prepares to adopt two important policies and to pass one piece of national legislation: the Climate Change Policy; the Disaster Risk Management Policy; and the Disaster Risk Management Bill. CISONECC made various proposals which were incorporated in the three policy instruments, such as institutional arrangements and financing mechanisms. The consultants engaged in the development of these policies and government officials have explicitly recognised the contribution of CISONECC and its members to their formulation. CISONECC will now shift its attention to ensuring that these policies are implemented effectively and in ways that meets the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable communities.

Malawi is in the early stages of developing a National Adaptation Plan (NAP), which is an important step towards being able to draw on international funding for climate change adaptation. How Malawi develops its NAP, in terms of the level of civil society participation and the degree to which it effectively targets marginalised communities, will be a major advocacy concern for CISONECC going forward.

Government officials appreciate CISONECC's constructive engagement on disaster and climate policy, and value having a single point of reference on these issues instead of a myriad of individual civil society organisations. In recognition of its legitimacy and expertise, a CISONECC representative sits on the National Climate Change Technical Committee, and individuals from civil society have joined Malawi's national delegations at the UNFCCC. More recently, CISONECC has also been incorporated in a Project Steering Committee of the Department of Disaster Management Affairs.

As well as policy advocacy, CISONECC places a high priority on raising public awareness about the integration of climate change into development initiatives. Its flagship vehicle is a radio programme which is broadcast in the local language at prime time on a station with national coverage, thereby reaching a wide audience.

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CISONECC's achievements can thus be summarized as follows:

- Contribution to various climate policy related processes;
- Supporting government's preparations for Conferences of Parties to the UNFCCC;
- Representation in key national decision making platforms on climate change and DRM, providing space for direct advocacy.

Southern Voices has been important to CISONECC in several ways. Through support from Southern Voices, CISONECC has been able to define its advocacy agenda by developing an advocacy strategy. Tools, guidance and technical support from Southern Voices have helped CISONECC to improve its capacity; serving as the East and Southern Africa regional node for Southern Voices has increased CISONECC's international exposure and reputation; and, not least, it provided the resources for a network coordinator to be seconded from one of the members.

"Southern Voices offers a cross-learning environment about climate change advocacy amongst different networks around the world. This links national advocacy activities by individual networks to a joint advocacy effort at the international level."

What worked well and not so well in SV

As well as benefiting partner networks individually, the Southern Voices programme brought together civil society actors who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to meet, exchange experiences or collaborate. Under the auspices of the programme several regional and global workshops took place, with an explicit agenda of "cross-learning" and a focus on advocacy and policy analysis beyond the more usual exchange of practical experiences from the ground. The intention was for this learning to be both an end in itself and also a means of identifying potential synergies and possibilities for joint working between participants.

In regional workshops Southern Voices partner networks were able to interact, sometimes for the first time, with organisations from broader networks in their regions. Through these exchanges, for instance, anglophone West African partners were introduced to the work of their francophone peers, and vice-versa; Central American networks made common cause with their peers from elsewhere in Latin America; and organisations working on implementing sustainable energy in South Asia began to understand the relevance of climate finance to their work.

While it is not possible to trace systematically how this type of cross-learning will be used, there are some examples already of how it has been applied. At the Southern Voices Regional Advocacy workshop for **East & Southern Africa**, a presentation on Participatory Scenario Planning drew the attention of climate change adaptation

⁹ Submitted to CISU in October 2013 and subsequently approved.

practitioners. Subsequently several members of the Malawian network CISONNECC were invited to a further technical workshop on Participatory Scenario Planning in Kenya, after which they held a national training event in Malawi to share their knowledge.

Beyond shared technical knowledge, participants also expressed that they valued these workshops for the opportunity to feel part of a wider movement, giving international visibility to the work of Southern NGOs and creating a sense of solidarity with allies across the globe.

The Southern Voices website and newsletter are also important vehicles for this visibility, especially as they include not only activities specifically supported by the programme, but also other relevant publications and initiatives with which project partners are somehow associated.

In summary, the Southern Voice programme made an important contribution to the capacity of partners through:

- **Increasing knowledge and capacity through training and learning:** this occurred in national-level events, in regional workshops, and at periodic global meetings to coincide with the UNFCCC calendar, which enhanced the capacity of a committed group of activists representing their organisations through training and exposure to international events.
- **Creating the space and opportunity for improved organisation and networking:** by providing guidance and tools on how to operationalise climate change advocacy, civil society networks identified how to improve their effectiveness and were able to take action to do so. Southern Voices put climate advocacy on the agenda of Southern NGO networks in a structured way.
- **Providing finance for core costs and specific activities:** Southern Voices provided flexible resources that could be used strategically to cover costs that could not be met from elsewhere. This flexibility was important, because even though in some cases the finance provided was quite modest, in the hands of dedicated and creative partners it could be put to good use. Ultimately however the volume of funding is also important: the most common constraint expressed by partners was the shortage of funding, particularly for national-level work.

To maximise the resources available to individual networks, Southern Voices deliberately operated with a light administrative structure. Two staff based in Copenhagen took care of programme management, communications and publicity, and four part-time regional coordinators facilitated exchanges between networks, respectively in Latin America, West Africa, East & Southern Africa and South & Southeast Asia.

The key to the success of Southern Voices in achieving so much with relatively few resources has been the ability to fit into, combine forces with, and supplement (in short, achieve synergy with) the existing efforts of the partner organisations. No partner was required to do anything “because” of Southern Voices – rather, Southern Voices helped them to organise and resource their own plans in line with their own ambitions, and provided a platform for their experiences to be shared. To an extent, this also had its down side, as the programme did not have the mandate or resources to intervene when some partners inevitably lost momentum at times.

“ Before the start of the project, understanding about the climate change and related issues was vague among members. Most of the NGO members didn’t have any skills in climate change related advocacy and the knowledge and understanding about advocacy was at a very low level.”

Evidently, an externally funded capacity-building programme can only address some of the challenges faced by civil society networks in the South. A common constraint faced by programme partners is the difficulty of engaging with some government agencies, including lack of cooperation between different government bodies. In some cases this arises from a reluctance of government to recognise the legitimacy of civil society to engage on national policy issues, beyond perhaps limited interaction with the government department working on climate change, which may itself be a minor actor in the overall political scene, and lack the power to convene others. In other cases governments may not have the resources or staff with the necessary knowledge to maintain a systematic dialogue with civil society on climate change. Indeed, faced with a periodic turnover of the government staff, networks are having to repeatedly build fresh relationships with new post-holders and in the process lose some momentum in their interaction with government. Meanwhile, within the civil society sector itself, climate change is not always the top issue; in some cases, programme partners have had to contend with the competing agendas and time commitments of fellow civil society actors for whom other battles and issues take priority.

Applying the lessons learned

In terms of project implementation, the Southern Voice programme generated three important lessons :

- **Capacity building programmes work better when the participants have similar backgrounds:** SV has found that partners who are working on the same theme, share a language or face similar operating contexts learn more readily from each other, and are more likely to apply that learning.
- **Keep reporting requirements simple and focussed on essential information:** Some partners struggled with the complexity of the reporting formats for the programme, at times missing the chance to convey important information, at other times providing too much unnecessary detail.
- **Deliver early results to encourage the sustained engagement of participants in future.** The slow roll-out of some of the components of the programme, such as the toolbox and the website, led to a perceptible loss of interest and engagement from some partners, which required extra effort to overcome later on.

These observations have been harnessed in the design of the follow-up to the Southern Voices programme.⁹ This consists of **two separate thematic projects**, one focussed on adaptation, the other on low carbon development, to bring together partners with similar affinities. . These include specific **national-focussed components** and budget as part of the project design, to address the need expressed by partners for more resources for national level work. Activity plans are focussed on **achieving early results**, and the **selection of partners with the capacity to deliver** them, as a way of building momentum quickly.

Conclusion – making alliances work

An effective response to climate change requires policies that lead to reduced emissions, effective adaptation, and a shift towards sustainable low carbon economies and societies. Neither governments nor the corporate sector have so far demonstrated that they are willing or able to act with the necessary commitment and urgency, and it is up to civil society actors to keep up the pressure on them to act, both in their respective national spheres and globally. That is why investing in the capacity of Southern NGOs to influence policy is an integral part of an equitable and effective response to climate change.

Alliances between civil society organisations are a good way of building that capacity. Southern Voices has shown that:

- “North-South” alliances are effective when they are flexible, facilitative and empowering, and not conceived as linear relationships of imparting knowledge and know-how.
- “South-south” linkages are important for both cross-learning and building solidarity,
- Alliances give profile and exposure to Southern NGOs increasing their confidence and effectiveness in both national and international arenas.

“The programme has contributed to uniting all the civil society organisations into a single federated platform, to join together their advocacy efforts for a new mechanism to finance adaptation.”

Cover photo: The Southern
Voices held a side event at
COP 17 in Doha to discuss the
learnings of the programme.
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Change.



Strengthening southern voices in advocating climate policies that benefit poor and vulnerable people



Funded by DANIDA and implemented by the Climate Capacity Consortium comprising of CARE Denmark, DanChurchAid, IBIS, Climate Action Network International, International Institute for Environment and Development, Danish Organisation for Sustainable Energy, and the Danish 92 Group – Forum for Sustainable Development.
Visit <http://southernvoices.net/en/about/consortium.html> for more information.