

BUILDING A NETWORK TO MONITOR APRM: LESSONS FROM UGANDA



A PRESENTATION AT A SCOPING
WORKSHOP: DEVELOPING CIVIL
SOCIETY'S CAPACITY TO MONITOR THE
APRM
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Civil Society Governance Monitoring



“I have come to the conclusion that politics is too serious a matter to be left to politicians...”

Charles De Gaulle, French Statesman

MANDATE:

- Article 1 (2) authority of state emanates from the people who shall be governed by their consent and will;
- Sub section 4 ... people shall express their will through regular free and fair elections;
- Civil society monitors performance of MPs;
- Civil society monitors the performance of Local Government leaders;
- Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform (UGMP)

UGMP Monitoring of the APRM



- The UGMP was founded in 2004 as a collective platform for civil society united in the quest for better governance in Uganda;
- Now 17 member organisations representing a wide range of civil society;
- With the leadership of the Uganda NGO Forum member organisations monitor and share annual progress reports on identified themes;
- UGMP's initial premise was the PEAP (PRSP) policy matrix;
- UGMP produced annual governance reports on the progress of the PEAP on the following 4 broad areas: democratization process, human rights, transparency and accountability and conflict resolution;
- Self regulation of civil society (QUAM);
- Transition to the APRM in 2005: right now, UGMP's reporting is based on 32 governance commitments from the national programme of action

Initial Aims and Objectives



- **Aligned to the UGMP's monitoring;**
- **To inform and contribute to the body of knowledge;**
- **To build and strengthen a collective platform for civil society's engagement in the governance discourse**

The APRM process in Uganda



- Uganda acceded to the APRM in 2003. The National Planning Authority is the official agency responsible for APRM implementation;
- The Uganda APRM model has conferred major inroads for different stakeholders to engage with the process;
- This model is one in which the APRM process from its inception has been steered by a blend of state & non state actors allowing cooperation, negotiation and bargain;
- It is this model that has engendered reasonable entry points for civil society engagement over the years;
- Of special mention is the APRM NGC which has the mandate to produce annual APRM reports;
- It also organizes governance fora on selected themes from the NPOA.

Why Monitor APRM



- **Centrality of the APRM; the APRM is a document where government makes actual promises and commitments: provides an avenue for holding it accountable on the promises;**
- **During the transition (2008/9) from the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) to the National Development Plan (NDP), the APRM became a crucial bridge and which informed the NDP;**
- **Credibility of the actors and the management (at least for now).**

Chronology of monitoring APRM



- History of CSO engagements in governance work especially the need to create more citizens' demand;
- Ongoing governance monitoring by the UGMP;
- CSO participation in the APRM since its inception;
- Continuation of that process.

What worked / What did not work?

- Formation (strengthening) of a platform that is not registered but with registered committed members;
 - A history of CS collective engagement – highly networked;
 - Consistency in annual publications (since 2005);
 - Generating passion rather than the need for money;
 - UGMP's initial responsiveness by government.
- Unfortunately, the responsiveness was not sustained by the state;
 - Inability to break ground on old issues;
 - Alignment between CS independent report and the official APRM report;
 - Limited monitoring scope (UGMP monitors 32 indicators out of over 70).

Overarching challenges of the process



- Trends in governance across the country are worrying; APRM could be an exercise in futility if one considers poorly governed states peer reviewing one another;
- Political support for the APRM in Uganda is reducing;
- Constraints in the resources (human and financial) of the APRM;
- Credibility of the peer review countries;
- There is a bias of indicators from the Democracy and Political Governance section of the APRM;
- There seems to be a narrowing space for civil society work (media, NGOs, FBOs, etc) and this limits engagement with important findings of the APRM and governance analysis;
- One can argue that we are in a regime survival mode and when this is the single most important political objective, then there is a problem. (Cross cutting issues in the Uganda APRM report).

Lessons and Advice



- There is need to link the monitoring of APRM to broader civic agency work (citizen's issues);
- Need to diversify target audience: speak to the people, the state, government, private sector etc;
- Formation and strengthening of a coordination platform (the case of UGMP in Uganda is a success story);
- Passion versus money;
- Stay focused on the APRM's bigger picture to project a progressive context for our own work;
- Build on existing CSO mandates and monitoring work rather than seeking to reinvent the wheel.