CSO advocacy: examples of successes and challenges

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Definitions?
Examples of advocacy initiatives

• Freedom of Information legislation- what did we do right/wrong?
• “Chickengate” advocacy on electoral bribery. What worked well? UNCAC advocacy opportunities
• How do you define success?
Kenya’s 7-Step Formula for Impunity

On December 5, 2014, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was forced to drop charges against Kenyan president...

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The KPTJ coalition

- In response to crisis civil society coalition arises-Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ)
- Based on years of collaboration on anti-corruption, governance, human rights etc.
- Organic structure for common action arises including use of technology for quick organisation and agreement
KPTJ- Successes/Challenges

• Advocacy against deferral of ICC cases
• Memoranda/letters to UNSC, Embassies, ASP etc.
• Elements of success: Technical expertise, collaboration at various levels (AU ASP), outreach, timeliness
• Sharing of resources
• Challenges: Complexity of subject matter with multiplicity of actors. Opponents at high risk and well resourced. Beneficiaries scattered, weak, public polarised on political, ethnic lines so weak traction of accountability agenda
Mistakes we often make

• Believing that the sheer moral force of our argument will carry the day

• Not doing our homework – on refining our objectives and strategies, on technical issues, on interests and capacities of supporters and opponents, on understanding our audiences, on monitoring the changing context we work in

• Choosing the wrong sites of engagement / targets for the desired results
Policy change is political

• Every policy change has winners and losers
• The more winners, the better
• The more organised the winners, the better
• The less losers, the better
• The less organised the better
• The more complex the change the more difficult to implement
• The more actors involved the more difficult
• Policy change often unfunded. Mismatch with budget cycle – needs resources
Elements of Success

- Timeliness
- Subject matter expertise
- Research and understanding of the context
- Research and understanding of the stakeholders, negative and positive
- Understanding how to communicate with our target audiences
- Understanding that bringing about change is not just about good ideas and analysis, it’s about the politics
- Choosing advocacy objectives/targets based on careful analysis
- Collaboration with partners at different levels who can advise on best strategies/timelines/actors and their interests