Pressure From Below: The Case of Walukuba-Masese Division in the Municipality of Jinja, Uganda

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Abstract Uganda has recently embraced a decentralised system of governance with the main goal of approaching citizens to participatory decision-making processes and improving efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, as well as fighting poverty and exclusion. Despite a number of important government programmes, policies and structures, a significant number of people in Uganda still remain poor and many still live below the poverty line. There is a high degree of powerlessness and voicelessness that negatively influences the level of organisation for collective action. In the districts of Jinja and Lira, the Pressure From Below experience has been led by a grass roots organisation engaging with government and non-government institutions to influence citizens at the local level to voice their concerns and participate in joint community improvement initiatives.

1 Introduction

Democratic and inclusive governance is significant for fighting poverty, achieving sustainable development and social justice. A democratic governance system entails ample opportunities for citizens and their organisations to engage with government – what is usually termed as participatory governance. Uganda, just like the rest of the East African countries, has embraced the decentralised system of governance, albeit with a number of challenges and with varied impacts on poverty levels across the country. This study documents existing experiences, where building local democratic governance has positively influenced public policies or interventions geared towards reducing poverty, exclusion and inequalities in Walukuba-Masese Division of Jinja Municipality in Uganda.

The research on which this case study draws includes interviews and document reviews. Interviews were held with staff and beneficiaries of both government services and civil society initiatives. National level policy documents and reports were reviewed in order to contextualise the field experiences revealed by the study.

2 Key strategies to address poverty and exclusion

2.1 Poverty and exclusion in Uganda

During the 1990s, income poverty levels fell dramatically. However, since 2002, income poverty levels have risen, with the proportion of people below the poverty line rising from 34 per cent in 2000 to 38 per cent in 2003, accompanied by a marked increase in inequality since 1997 (MoFPED 2007). Factors include a slow-down in agricultural growth during the last three years, declines in farmers' prices reflecting world market conditions, insecurity, high population growth rate and morbidity related to HIV/AIDS.

Regional and gender inequalities are wide, with living standards recently in decline in the East. There is growing realisation that inequality is rising and that a significant proportion of the national population has not benefited from opportunities to escape poverty. Chronic poverty is estimated to affect 26 per cent of the population, or 7 million Ugandans (Development Research and Training 2005). Chronic poverty is associated with lack of access to assets (such as land) at individual, household and community levels, which limits opportunities for employment, production or income generation.

Lack of education and constraints on human capital, as well as high dependency ratios, also account for the persistence of chronic poverty. Poor people can become chronically poor as a result of shocks (e.g. conflict, HIV/AIDS) and longer-term processes (e.g. land fragmentation).

Exclusion and self-exclusion from decision-making and development initiatives also feature prominently. While channels through which the chronically poor and their advocates can participate exist, many chronically poor people remain excluded; local power relations and processes of subordination mean that inclusion in itself does not guarantee influence over local decisions. In addition to the consequences of poor governance, chronically poor people are often found to exclude themselves because they lack the confidence to participate.

2.2 The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)

Uganda's successes in absolute poverty reduction have been widely acknowledged. Consumption poverty has decreased from 56 per cent of the population in 1992 to an estimated 34 per cent in 2001 (Okidi and Mugambe 2002). After a focus on rehabilitating key social and economic infrastructure, the government has turned its attention to structural strategies aimed at translating macroeconomic success into real improvements in people's standards of living. This has been concretised in Uganda's main policy framework, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), initially formulated in 1997 and under implementation since then with five-year revisions. The PEAP provides an over-arching framework for public action on poverty, prepared through a consultative process involving central and local government, parliament, donors and civil society.

In order to reverse the recent marked increase in inequality, the PEAP aims to increase the ability of the poorer households to participate in economic growth through self-employment inside and outside agriculture and wage employment (MoFPED 2007). The core challenges include: the restoration of security, dealing with the consequences of conflict and improving regional equity, restoring sustainable growth in the incomes of the poor, human development, and using public resources transparently and efficiently to eradicate poverty. The PEAP is thus grouped under five pillars:

(1) economic management; (2) production, competitiveness and incomes; (3) security, (4) conflict resolution and disaster management; and (5) good governance and human development (MoFPED 2007).

2.3 Decentralisation

In Uganda, decentralisation refers to the transfer of power over decision-making and implementation to lower administrative levels to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery (MoLG 2006: 13). Decentralisation seeks to promote popular participation, empower local people to make their own decisions and enhance accountability and responsibility, and to introduce effectiveness and efficiency in the generation and management of resources and service delivery. Decentralisation is legally and institutionally well anchored, supported by a strong constitutional and legal framework, as well as by regulations and guidelines.

The thrust of decentralisation policy in Uganda is towards devolution, where responsibilities for delivery of services are transferred to local governments which elect their own chairpersons and councils, raise their own revenues and have independent authority to make investment decisions. Devolved powers are intended to be used in the best interest of the people to enhance service provision, reduce poverty and improve livelihoods (MoLG 2006: 17). Yet assessment of the outcomes of decentralisation in and assessments done in Uganda nevertheless indicate a growing gravitation away from the ethos of decentralisation, with citizens expressing growing disillusionment with their governments – citing such challenges as lack of transparency, responsiveness and accountability. This situation has necessitated the emergence and growth of civil society and social movements to demand for the effective delivery of services towards pro-poor policies.[1]

2.4 Democratic institutionalisation

Articles 176 (3) and 181 (4) of the Ugandan Constitution state that local government is based on democratically elected councils on the basis of universal adult suffrage, with all local government councils to be elected every five years. Apart from youth councillors, councillors representing persons with disabilities and those representing the elderly, who are elected by electoral colleges, all other councillors are

Table 1 Voter turnout trends, local government and central government elections

Type of election	Year	Voter turnout (%)
Parliamentary	2006	68
	2001	56
	1996	61
Presidential	2006	69
	2001	70
	1996	73
Local council	2006	46
	2001	60

Source Electoral Commission (2006).

elected by universal adult suffrage through a secret ballot, using one ballot box for all candidates at each polling station. The electoral areas are: sub-county or municipal division for a district council; city division for a city council; and parish or ward for sub-county, municipality, city division or town council. However, electoral areas for women councillors may bring together two or more local council units using a population quota determined by the Electoral Commission, to ensure at least 30 per cent of council members are women.

Citizens thus have opportunities to participate in local electoral processes, but voter turnout fluctuates (see Table 1). Voter turnout has been higher for Presidential and Parliamentary elections than for local council elections, and the trend for Parliamentary elections appears to be increasing, in contrast to local elections, where it has declined. Low voter turnout could be attributed to higher expectations regarding national positions than local councils, and to lower expectations about the ability of local councils to influence positive policy outcomes.

Multiparty politics were introduced at national and local levels in 2005. A competitive electoral process under this system has only been experienced once, in 2006. Different councils across the country are still grappling with how to function in a multiparty dispensation, while citizens remain accustomed to the one party system, in which candidates were elected on the basis of their individual merit. As such, the electorate are still not empowered to demand accountability from institutions (including political parties). Instead, citizens demand accountability from individuals, who as

individuals, lack the resources and political clout to generate positive policy outcomes.

3 Actors in poverty reduction and local governance
3.1 Actors and spaces

Table 2 briefly describes the key actors relevant to poverty reduction and local governance in Uganda. Policy processes for poverty reduction and local governance comprise a multiplicity of distinct but linked spaces in which a wide range of actors – government and non-government (public, private and civil society) – influence and shape policy outcomes.

The different actors interact at various levels through both formal and informal mechanisms. The formal mechanisms include public–public partnerships, public–private partnerships, civil society organisation (CSO) networks, alliances and coalitions:

- *Public–Public partnerships:* Government sectors partner on projects; local governments partner with each other for better service delivery through the Uganda Local Government Authorities Association (ULGA) and Urban Local Authorities Association (ULAA). The member local governments get together to review performance and implementation and to advocate on, for instance, the Local Government Act. Through these partnerships local governments successfully lobbied for the Local Service Tax to replace the abolished graduated tax, which had been the main source of local government revenue.
- *Public–Private partnerships:* There are a number of initiatives between the public sector and

Actor	Description	Key roles/contributions
Government	Includes the Executive, Legislature (parliament) and Judiciary, and autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies (such as Bank of Uganda, Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets, Uganda Human Rights Commission, etc.)	● Provide a framework of legality, rights and freedoms ● Provide a framework for intervening in the economy to promote economic efficiency, equity and growth ● Policy formulation ● Delivery of public goods and services ● Independent monitoring ● Employment
Civil society organisations	The non-government and non-commercial associational sphere including NGOs, FBOs, Trade Unions, CBOs, sections of the media, interest associations and other citizen groups including community organisations/ social movements	● Work with government to agree on priority needs of the poor and effective mechanisms ● Complement government in service delivery ● Voluntarily provide services not provided by government ● Monitoring outcomes ● Advocacy for interest groups who are otherwise neglected ● Independent research on key policy issues ● Employment
Private sector	Commercial institutions – both national and multilateral	● Productive investments ● Financing ● Provide for-sale services where government delivery falls short ● Employment
Development partners/donors	International bilateral and multilateral funding and implementing agencies	● Financing public expenditure ● Direct support to NGOs ● Support policy formulation

NGO = non-governmental organisation; FBO = faith-based organisation; CBO = community-based organisation

the private sector geared towards better allocation of resources for improved service delivery. Table 3 summarises the linkages across selected sectors.

● *CSO networks, alliances and coalitions:* CSOs aim to identify issues of interest and collaborate with others in the CSO sphere for the common good. This may include pooling of resources, skill/talent and creating a common voice around an issue. Sometimes, this relationship may include collaborating with government actors to promote the issues identified. In Uganda, these networks include DENIVA, NGO Forum, and others that are issue specific.

4 Local governance and poverty reduction: the health sector in Walukuba-Masese Division
4.1 Poverty and health in Walukuba-Masese
Walukuba-Masese Division is one of the three divisions of Jinja Municipal Council, situated in eastern Jinja, with an ethnically diverse population of 25,000, mostly employed in the informal sector. Jinja's importance as a

commercial, administrative, social and cultural centre has diminished over the years. Urban poverty has grown, particularly in Walukuba-Masese Division, which houses hundreds of former factory workers in poor conditions in the dilapidated Walukuba-Masese estates, an expanding slum belt characterised by destitution, very poor business climate, dwindling urban services, very high competition and high levels of insecurity to life and property. The informal sector is characterised by lack of markets, lack support or recognition from stakeholders, high exploitation, serious work hazards and congestion.

Poor health indicators are a manifestation of underlying poverty. There is deprivation – not only malnutrition, housing, water and sanitation but also the high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including high levels of HIV/AIDS, and common conditions such as malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, diarrhoea, intestinal worms, cholera and other diseases related to poor sanitation. Some 95 per

Table 3 Public–Private partnership initiatives in selected sectors

Sector	Relationships
Health	• Health sector working groups composed of officials from government, private sector and civil society that develop policy, monitor and evaluate progress • Provision of private healthcare services in public health facilities • Training of health workers (nursing aides) by (PNFP) organisations • Administration of public facilities by private healthcare institutions under health sub-district framework (29 out of 214 HSDs are run by private institutions). Public Health programmes such as IEC on health, immunisation, epidemic control, HIV/AIDS control facilitated by private health facilities • Provision of referral services from private to public facilities and vice versa
Education	• Sector working groups composed of officials from government, private sector and civil society that set policy, monitor and evaluate progress of the sector • Private investment in education sector (primary to tertiary) • Central Government subsidising privately registered students
Water and sanitation	• Sector working groups composed of officials from government; private sector and civil society that set policy monitor and evaluate progress of the sector • Leasing out public WATSAN facilities to private sector for operation and maintenance

PNFP = private not-for-profit; IEC = information, education and communication; WATSAN = Water and Sanitation Resource Centre

cent of the latrines in the Division are poorly constructed and maintained, contributing to serious sanitation problems and diseases.

Health facilities in the Division include the Walukuba Health Centre IV and a number of private clinics and drug shops. Walukuba Health Centre IV offers inpatient and outpatient services, as well as outreach programmes and diagnostic services; clinics mainly offer outpatient services. This provision is inadequate for the needs of the increasing urban population, lacking sufficient technical staff and drugs. Community participation in health services is also lacking, which is further undermined by the lack of community education.[2]

Patients consulted during exit interviews at Walukuba Health Centre IV revealed a number of challenges they encounter there. These include: drug shortages – patients are only given prescriptions and referred to drug shops; long waiting times – some patients reported waiting from 07.00 to 12.00 before receiving attention; and poor communication with staff, among others.

Although the poor in Walukuba-Masese understand too well what causes their impoverishment, the majority have limited options or knowledge on how they can overcome

these hindrances. Many do not believe that political interventions including local council service delivery can move them out of impoverishment; neither do they believe current efforts at poverty alleviation are improving living conditions. However, there are signs of an emerging social movement, building local democracy and citizen participation. The community in Walukuba-Masese has slowly started demanding some of the basic services from the municipal leaders, and in doing so, have registered a number of achievements in their attempts to address inequality and poverty.

4.2 Existing initiatives by local government

Walukuba-Masese Division council leaders have taken a series of initiatives to correct imbalances to ensure services are effectively used. The division works within the National Priority areas as identified in the PEAP and is thus implementing the Poverty Action Fund (PAF) strategy which identifies expenditure programmes within the budget that are particularly relevant to achieving poverty eradication objectives and priorities of Universal Primary Education (UPE), Primary Health Care (PHC), improvement of feeder and urban roads.

Among other activities, the Division council is attempting to educate and disseminate public

information to create greater transparency through public notices, newspapers/letters, and local FM radio programmes to publicise the resources provided to all sectors. The leaders themselves have taken it to a higher level in an effort to ensure all services are of good quality, and to hold their service providers and contractors accountable to the people.

The personal commitment of council leaders to improving services has meant in some cases that they have been involved in direct confrontations over corruption. In one instance, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Jinja engaged in a scuffle with workers over the materials being used in a local project. During the incident, which was reported in detail in the local print media, the CAO was reported to have said: 'I am in danger of losing my job over shoddy work done by incompetent workers and here you are doing the same, just to eat the district's funds', while trying to strangle a worker. The district vice-chairman had to intervene to stop the violence, and the issue was taken up directly with the contractor, who was later arrested by the police. A number of District projects had suffered from poor quality construction work, all attributed to corrupt procurement, but despite having been blacklisted, the company's contracts had not so far been terminated.[3]

The Division holds budget conferences in which stakeholders exchange views about the budget process and the planned investments. But the local council has also continued beyond the stipulated budget conferences, by providing informal spaces provided for through bye-laws; these include a law that states that the council must consult communities every two months to assess progress, and to permit input into council committee discussions before decisions are made. The Division council aims to continuously promote participatory planning and budgeting in all the three parishes and 20 villages with the involvement of all categories of people and organisations, local politicians, technical staff, NGOs and opinion leaders, youth and women council members, including the private public sector.

4.3 Local/community initiatives: Pressure From Below
In Walukuba-Masese Division, a social/ community movement has emerged to question the traditional paradigm on the Division's policy implementation and strategies for poverty eradication. The

movement, 'Pressure From Below', is a community group supported by FABIO (First African Bicycle Information Organization) in collaboration with DENIVA.[4] Pressure From Below has received support in the form of training in citizenship education, participatory planning processes, social control and budget monitoring skills.

Pressure From Below have adopted a strategy of awareness raising and capacity building of poor people to enable them to influence policy themselves; this strategy is rooted in a belief in the efficacy of empowerment approaches, and the strong links they have built with the grass roots. Pressure From Below's mission is: 'To facilitate the process of building the capacity of Walukuba-Masese community by strengthening organisational capacities, increasing strategic alliances and developing capacities in advocacy and civic awareness with a view of enhancing community participation and consolidating community influence on their development'. The vision is of 'an organised community with the capacity to demand and challenge local leadership to be responsive to community needs, exhibiting a high level of community participation and a sense of social responsibility'. The specific objectives include:

- To raise the consciousness of the Walukuba-Masese community concerning community needs, issues, rights and duties
- To increase the social and political participation and responsibility of the Division
- To build the capacities of the groups in issues of advocacy and lobby
- To strengthen organisational capacities of formal and informal organisations existing in Walukuba-Masese Division.

How Pressure From Below works
In a bid to improve health service delivery in the Division, Pressure From Below has adopted a number of strategies to engage with the various power centres within and beyond the Division:

- *Recruitment of representatives:* Two representatives are chosen by community members in the respective villages, totalling 42 representatives for the 21 villages in the Division. The representatives are responsible for collecting information relevant to the issues around which accountability is to be demanded. They also mobilise communities on issues and guide

development partners who are interested in setting up initiatives in the respective villages.

- *Weekly meetings:* The Executive committee of seven members meets with all the representatives every Monday to take stock of issues emerging from the different villages.
- *Open Day People's Manifesto day:* Pressure From Below hosts a community Manifesto day attended by community members and local government leaders. At this forum, community members present testimonies of successful initiatives during the year, and present issues they would like their local governments to respond to.
- *Lobbying and advocacy:* Pressure From Below collaborates with other organisations such as DENIVA to coalesce around issues of interest. This is especially on issues that need greater evidence of legitimacy.
- *Media:* Pressure From Below sometimes works with the media to expose weaknesses in service delivery and call public attention to issues of interest. This is done through local FM stations and national newspapers.
- *Meetings with several power centres:* Negotiation meetings with councillors, staff and line Ministers, as warranted by the issues over which they are exerting pressure.
- *Forum theatre:* Music, dance and drama are used to explore issues that affect the communities, and to educate communities about their rights and available options for their participation.

Pressure From Below have forged a strategy of bringing the various strengths of their approach – strong local organising, links with larger policy networks (such as DENIVA) and building relationships through dialogue with local officials – together to tackle issues. This can be seen through the polite letters of information intended to generate action by higher order actors such as Ministers, the Walukuba-Masese Division chairman, and traditional leaders. These accounts of particular problems – the lack of nurses in maternity clinics, problems with land title – highlight the organisation's strong grass roots base with their detailed accounts from community members of the problems they face; they also make it clear that they are supported by larger networks of actors from within civil society.[5]

Pressure From Below has enjoyed an amount of success using these strategies to participate in local development processes and hold local leaders

accountable to ensure quality delivery of services. Changes in service delivery that the organising by Pressure From Below has influenced include:

- Renovation of Lake Site Primary School classroom blocks that were in a dangerous condition
- Grading of bad roads
- Replacing street lights
- Improved sanitation and the environment by controlling the dumping of fish carcasses by Masese Fish Parkers, among others.

Box 1 summarises how Pressure From Below has engaged in public action around health issues in Walukuba-Masese. In the case of the ambulance, Pressure From Below's partners, FABIO and DENIVA, helped to catalyse community recognition of their rights. Through discussions with the local council, it emerges that this is a shared concern, and the local councillor's advice helps them to reach a level at which action could be taken. In the second case, the harrowing account of a woman forced to give birth on the roadside because clinic staff were absent results in constructive engagement with health officials, and an institutionalised arrangement for CSO participation in health centre management.

4.4 *A critique of the Pressure From Below initiative*
Pressure From Below's main strength lies in the fact that it is a community initiative and has tried to maintain a community outlook, by avoiding complex processes that involve registration and have the potential to create bureaucracy and organisational conflicts typical of formal organisations. But Pressure From Below can similarly continue to benefit from capacity building support from other actors such as DENIVA, FABIO and other CSOs.

Pressure From Below's experience points to a movement by the civil society further into advocacy and influencing work as part of their demand for accountable systems. This shows that advocacy work does not have to be centralised and hierarchical. This is because participative advocacy is a process by which people articulate their own needs and desires, gain confidence and the ability to influence decisions, which will affect their own future. The Pressure From Below experience points to a process that seeks to influence citizen participation in their own development processes. It also exhibits that a

The case of the ambulance
An ambulance was allocated to Walukuba Health Centre IV by the government. The ambulance was clearly labelled 'Walukuba-Masese Division'. However, from the day of allocation, it was detained at the District Headquarters at Jinja Town Hall. The ambulance was used to transport staff to various functions like weddings and other private errands. After a series of workshops facilitated by FABIO and DENIVA focusing on human rights and the roles and responsibilities of communities in the development process, the community realised that it was their right to demand the ambulance be given to the health centre.

Workshop participants (community members) organised a meeting with their local councillors and submitted their demand for the ambulance. The local council chairperson confessed that he too had tried in vain to retrieve the ambulance. He advised them to write a memorandum through the Assistant Town Clerk of Walukuba-Masese Division to the Town Clerk of Jinja Municipality. In response, the ambulance was released to Walukuba Health Centre IV, where it is serving the community to date.

The absent staff
A young mother aged 23 (Health Centre ID 2019/18) had labour pains on the Sunday morning of 21 September. She went to Walukuba Health Centre IV but found no medical personnel to attend to her. She was informed that the midwife would be at the health centre later in the day. However, the pains were intensifying and she decided to seek assistance from an alternative health centre (Danida Private Health Centre), which has a full-time midwife. Unfortunately, she did not make it to the next destination before the baby came. She delivered by the roadside, assisted by her husband and passers-by. The midwife from the Danida private centre was later called to provide emergency care.

Pressure From Below, in collaboration with FABIO, took up the matter with the Division Council and the health centre staff, demanding permanent residence of health staff at the centre as well as a better attitude of health staff towards patients.

As a result, the councillors and local government staff prioritised the construction of staff houses. Staff quarters are currently being constructed within the health centre premises and old structures refurbished. Pressure From Below is now lobbying for the doctor to move permanently into his already existing house at the health centre. Two members of Pressure From Below have also been appointed to the Health Centre Management Committee.

people-centred process of agreeing an advocacy issue and then framing the range of negotiable solutions to that issue will have a major impact on CSOs/NGOs' ability to realise positive outcomes and effective poverty reduction.

There are legitimate actors defined by law and mandated to act on behalf of and represent communities. These include elected representatives as well as local civil servants. Communities ideally should be able to channel their issues through their elected local leaders. However, these channels have for many structural and other reasons not satisfactorily represented the aspirations of the people. As

such, the emergence of Pressure From Below has redefined representation and power relations in which elected councils are now perceived to be handling political issues rather than service delivery. Communities are now more comfortable to channel their issues through their community initiative – Pressure From Below. This raises questions on the effectiveness of representative democracy.

Rather than seeking to jeopardise the roles of the local council, in many instances it has collaborated with councillors to move processes and lobby at higher levels. The councillors see Pressure From Below as helping them to achieve

positive outcomes through monitoring service delivery and demanding improvement. However, in some circles, Pressure From Below has become unpopular because it is seen to be acting as an inspectorate of government. In defiance of their 'snoopy' work, local civil servants ask Pressure From Below what the source of their mandate is and whether they are legitimate enough to demand accountability. This suggests the need to raise awareness, particularly among the technical specialists, about the purpose of citizen participation.

The successes of Pressure From Below have stimulated positive changes within CSO circles. Rather than work with local councillors as entry points into communities, many NGOs are now using Pressure From Below representatives because they are seen to understand the issues affecting their localities better than elected leaders. The representatives also have the ability to mobilise their communities to participate in development initiatives. Pressure From Below has not entered any formal partnerships with these NGOs, but has remained as a community movement providing an intermediary and the communities' 'voice' and 'eyes'. For Pressure From Below to survive, its safest strategy is to avoid entering formal partnerships that may compromise its ability to demand accountability from these actors.

Funding constraints undermine the ability of Pressure From Below to closely investigate issues presented to the centres of power; this may undermine their credibility as a legitimate actor for the community. Documentation is key to development initiatives, as this helps actors take stock of successes and challenges, and makes replication of best practices easier. Pressure From Below has tried to record its activities and petitions. However, being a community initiative without funding, the documentation is limited and lessons are not easily disseminated or replicated.

However, Pressure From Below and the wider community are likely to miss opportunities for participation in planning and budgeting cycles because of their reactive approach. Pressure From Below needs to occupy formal participation spaces available through the local government planning and budgeting cycle so it can address community problems which have reached unmanageable proportions, involving confrontation or opposition.

While some issues warrant a reactive approach, a consistent approach of participation yields greater results in as far as it allows the social movement to follow issues through from planning to implementation and monitoring. The CSOs and NGOs involved should work with the community (Pressure From Below) in establishing the facts and figures of the advocacy issue, obtaining mandates for the solutions to be promoted openly and democratically, giving responsibility to leaders or role models from within the community and reporting back regularly to the community on progress. In the end, these initiatives increase the community's self-reliance and decrease dependency.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

Civic education for citizens emerges as an important starting point from which people can become able to hold their elected and appointed leaders accountable for their actions. The Pressure From Below experience highlights the importance of improved communication and accountability relationships between constituents and elected leaders, elected leaders and technocrats as well as between the technocrats and service providers. Relatedly, CSOs need the advocacy and lobbying skills to be able to influence policymaking processes, through participation in the drafting of laws and procedures, identification of stakeholders and strategies at different levels.

The Pressure From Below experience also highlights the importance of the legitimacy of social movements, for the issues they advocate on to be accepted by policymakers and service providers, including political leaders. This makes coordination among social movements crucial, so that they speak with a single voice on issues that are of greater concern to a wider constituency.

A final set of conclusions includes that local government should hold regular consultations with CSOs, to build alliances in the fight against poverty and exclusion. As decentralisation has widened the space for citizens to participate in public processes, it also becomes increasingly important for local communities to understand the operational mechanisms of local governance processes. Capacity building for effective actor interaction between state and non-state stakeholders can contribute to enabling people to derive the full benefits of decentralisation.

Notes

1 For some assessments of the development impacts of decentralisation, see Okidi and Guloba (2007); Francis and James (2003).
2 This data was collected during the research, through interviews with community members, officials, civil society representatives, and through review of local and national documents.
3 'Jinja CAO Roughs Up Workers: Foreman Flees from Budondo Site as CAO Strangles Porter', *The New Vision*, 8 August 2008.
4 DENIVA is a national network of NGOs and CBOs which aims to provide a platform for collective action and voice to voluntary local associations to advocate for more opportunities for people and CSO participation in the development of Uganda.
5 A longer version of this article, presented at the Bellagio workshop, contains reproductions of correspondence between Pressure From Below and the actors they seek to influence. These neatly illustrate the mix of strategies being used to exert the necessary pressure, and will be included in a published longer version of the present article.

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