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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Patta Scott-Villiers
Richard Ssewakiryanga
Eberhard Gohl
Josephine Ahikire

Evaluation of the Strategy for Support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations 2010-2014

Final Country Report - Uganda

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**Patta Scott-Villiers
Richard Ssewakiryanga
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Authors: Patta Scott-Villiers, Richard Ssewakiryanga, Eberhard Gohl and Josephine Ahikire

The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

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Abbreviations and Acronym

CBR	Centre for Basic Research
CSO	civil society organisation (including associations, savings groups, churches, mosques, non-governmental development organisations, co-operatives, trades unions)
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
EQ	evaluation question
HRBA	human rights based approach
IAS	International Aid Services
IAS(U)	International Aid Services (Uganda)
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IDP	internally displaced people
IOD	International Organisation Development Ltd
KCC	Kampala City Council
LPO	local partner organisation
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAPE	National Association of Professional Environmentalists
NGO	non-governmental organisation (in particular those which organise their work in the shape of development projects, usually funded from overseas)
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PMU	Pentecostal Ministries Uganda
SMC	Swedish Mission Council
SSA/UHSNET	Shelter and Settlement Alternatives/Ugandan Human Settlements Network
SSNC	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
SFO	Swedish framework organisation
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIPU	Swedish Institute for Public Administration

Executive Summary

This report shares findings from a two-year evaluation of Sweden's civil society strategy,¹ which governs Swedish government appropriation to Swedish organisations for support to civil society actors in developing countries. This study, which focuses on Uganda, evaluates the role and effect of the Swedish CS strategy in contributing to its stated aim of creating enabling conditions for people living in poverty and discrimination. Beginning with an investigation using the Reality Check Approach in households and communities in three regions of Uganda, and drawing on numerous interviews, discussions with partner organisations and secondary studies, this report looks at the efforts of civil society to apply the human rights based approach (HRBA) to tackling the immediate and underlying causes of poverty. It evaluates the Swedish CS strategy in action, by considering the *relevance* of work done through this instrument to its objectives, the *alignment* of this work with people's own efforts, and the *feasibility* of achieving the objectives.

Statistics show economic growth and rising inequality in Uganda.² Our study also finds that while some of the poorest people are seeing some improvement in economic conditions, progress is slow and uneven. Access to a fair share of public goods is not a right, but comes about by luck or through connections. This study shows how people living in poverty are struggling in an increasingly commercialised economy, have few assets, have access only to poor quality and unreliable services, and suffer from high levels of psychological stress. In Wakiso, on the edge of Kampala city, poor families live in cramped conditions and young people find it hard to get anything but low-paid and insecure jobs. In Mbarara in western Uganda, landless women are unable to join co-operatives or savings groups, because their incomes are too unpredictable and their safety nets unreliable. They work extremely hard and spend what little money they can muster on school fees and intermittent health insurance in the hope that the next generation will be better off. In Pader, in northern Uganda, people who have returned to their villages after more than a decade in displacement camps are re-establishing their farms, but they fear that their old social systems have been broken by years of war; levels of sexual violence are high. These are examples

¹ Government Offices of Sweden (2009a) *Strategy for Support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations 2010–2014*, Stockholm: Sida (UF2009/28632/UP, 10 September 2009). We refer to this strategy as the 'Swedish CS strategy'. The strategy has been extended to 2015.

² Povcalnet.iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm? (Accessed 9 October 2014)

of the multidimensional realities of poverty in Uganda today. In all these communities people are working hard to make use of the opportunities that arise from culture, community organisation, economic growth, peace and access to basic services. People who are poor in the selected sites feel that enabling conditions are few. They explain that this situation is the outcome of the system of political power in Uganda, in which a relatively small elite extracts wealth through its control of the economy, politics and the administration.

The Swedish CS strategy, via its support to Swedish organisations, offers resources and solidarity to local partner organisations (LPOs) in Uganda. We find that relationships between Sida, Swedish framework organisations (SFOs)³ and LPOs are good in all cases, facilitating an effective flow of resources to service delivery and advocacy projects and promoting vertical relationships of learning and solidarity from local to international levels. However, resources are divided and sub-divided into numerous small individual projects. Horizontal solidarity between LPOs in broader rights-claiming efforts is less obvious, and our interviewees told us that this is partly to do with the vertical relations required to keep the funding flowing.

The Swedish CS strategy has relevance to poverty reduction in relation to material needs and social protection and is *aligned* with people's efforts in this regard. It is less effective on enabling conditions, i.e. systematic, equitable and accountable provision of economic opportunity, services, security and justice. Its *feasibility* is questionable in current conditions. The supported organisations work with the HRBA, but face many obstacles. The government discourages LPOs from engaging in activities that can be deemed political and does not give high priority to rights awareness or rights claiming among its citizens or functionaries. As a result, civil society appears to be having a limited effect on resolution of problems of poverty and failures of basic civic and political rights in Uganda. People living in poverty in the communities studied mostly do not expect rights from the state or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), nor do they usually try to claim them. We found instances where, with the help of LPOs, basic services had improved – a borehole was drilled or a clinic stocked – but the people we met did not feel that these advances were reliable. There are instances of more substantial progress on rights arising out of the work of Sida LPOs: people insisting on their rights to an unpolluted environment, and women standing up for equality. But people's ability to come out and stay out of poverty is not strong. At present it seems that for every advance that is made, there is always the chance that those who have benefited will fall back again.

³ SFOs are Swedish CSOs funded through the Swedish civil society strategy

Our engagement with people living in poverty and with many different civil society organisations (CSOs) in three different regions of Uganda showed us just how difficult it is to create ‘capacity’ in a country where people living in poverty believe they do not have rights to claim from the state and, instead, rely largely on their own capacities to overcome multiple, unrelenting and intersecting dimensions of poverty. In our meetings with CSOs across Uganda, we noted the numerous obstacles that they face. They often lack the space and powers that would allow them to make significant progress in a difficult political and operational environment.

This study concludes that the Swedish CS strategy is *relevant* to and *aligned* with poor people’s struggles for survival in Uganda and should continue to provide its highly-valued support. However, there is a problem of *feasibility*, given the unpromising context in which partner organisations are working. The strategy’s objective of strengthening civil society capacity to apply the HRBA is only being partially fulfilled. Its aim of enhancing democratisation and human rights is not currently being fulfilled.

There is thus room for improvement in the strategy, specifically to find ways to promote the building of capacity for ordinary citizens to claim rights through *a vibrant and powerful civil society*. We therefore recommend that, in addition to its support to individual organisations, the Swedish CS strategy should also include a specific instrument for promoting collaboration between CSOs specifically to analyse and act on rights and accountable governance. Such an instrument would allow them to work together on the issues that are currently most difficult to tackle as individual organisations, such as gross inequalities in access to decent services, corruption, unemployment, ineffective administration, injustice and environmental exploitation, as well as in the freedom of operation of civil society itself. A stronger link to the bilateral programme delivered by the Swedish Embassy could help towards this end.

To achieve enabling conditions for people living in poverty, the Swedish CS strategy should emphasise enabling conditions for civil society actors, specifically in their efforts to transform the system that tramples on the human rights of poor people. It would put an emphasis on capacity mobilising for this particular purpose within civil society, and would give priority to internal co-operation for creating a powerful civil field.

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THIS EVALUATION

This report presents the main findings and recommendations of a two-year evaluation of Sida's support to civil society actors via Swedish framework organisations (SFOs)⁴ in Uganda, as one of three country studies. It synthesises findings from the evaluation's inception phase and two rounds of fieldwork carried out between September 2012 and November 2014.⁵

The purpose of the evaluation was “to find out if, how and why/why not the support to civil society actors in developing countries via Swedish civil society organisations (CSOs) has contributed to the overall objectives of the support by creating conditions to enable poor and discriminated people to improve their living conditions and quality of life. The focus of the evaluation should be on learning aspects.”⁶

The evaluation focused on whether and how the Swedish civil society strategy,⁷ as put into practice by SFOs and their local partner organisations (LPOs), is *relevant*, *aligned* and *feasible*. The evaluation questions are detailed in section 1.4. Rather than evaluate the entire strategy, the study examined:

- The realities of people living in poverty and marginalisation, and their perceptions of what is changing in the enabling conditions needed to improve their lives.
- The human rights based approach (HRBA), and what its four principles – participation, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination – mean to people living in poverty.

⁴ Swedish framework organisations (SFOs) are Swedish CSOs that have a framework agreement with Sida, and framework status under the Swedish Civil Society strategy.

⁵ The evaluation was carried out by a consortium of three organisations: the Swedish Institute of Public Administration (lead organisation, Sweden), the Institute of Development Studies (UK) and International Organisation Development (UK).

⁶ Terms of Reference, GLOBAL/Unit for Civil Society, case number 2011-001257, 10 January, 2012.

⁷ Government Offices of Sweden (2009a) *Strategy for Support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations 2010–2014*, Stockholm: Sida (UF2009/28632/UP, 10 September 2009). We refer to this strategy as the ‘Swedish CS strategy’.

- The theories of change and strategies of SFOs and LPOs, and how these organisations understand and pursue the four principles of the HRBA.
- The plausible contributions of SFOs and LPOs to creating changes in enabling conditions, and of CSO capacity development efforts.
- The relevance, alignment and feasibility of the theories of change, strategies and interventions of the SFOs and LPOs.

The evaluation used a learning process approach, in which key questions, methods and understandings evolve throughout the evaluation. Learning events and dialogue involving Sida, SFOs and LPOs took place in Nicaragua and Sweden (as well as the other two focus countries – Uganda and Pakistan) during each phase of the evaluation.

The evaluation used the Reality Check Approach (RCA)⁸ to understand the realities and perspectives of people living in poverty and marginalisation. RCA was combined with ‘meso-level’ and organisational inquiry into the efforts of diverse actors – notably the local partners of SFOs – to strengthen civil society and create enabling conditions for change.

The study explored the *theories of change, cooperation strategies, intervention logics and practices of SFOs and LPOs* in relation to *the realities and perspectives of people living in poverty*. Using a mix of methods, the evaluation assessed the Swedish CS strategy as implemented by SFOs and LPOs, considering coherence across the various levels of cooperation – including people living in poverty, SFOs and their local, national and international partners, and the Swedish CS strategy itself. This was not an evaluation of the performance or effectiveness of specific CSOs.

Comparing perspectives ‘from below’ with the strategies and approaches of these organisations, the evaluation assessed the *relevance, alignment* and *feasibility* of the Swedish CS strategy. It inferred the *plausible contributions* of Swedish support to creating enabling conditions for people to improve their lives. It identified opportunities for achieving greater capacity and alignment so that the prospects of achieving results within the strategy are increased. Understanding how change and *human rights based development* are perceived and supported by different actors, and how they align with the realities, perspectives and strategies of people living in poverty and marginalisation, is the central focus of this evaluation.

⁸ The Reality Check Approach (RCA) involves researchers living with families in communities for visits that last several days and are repeated periodically, in order to gain an understanding of the lives and perspectives of people living in poverty and marginalisation. Further details can be found in the Synthesis Report Section 2 and Annex 5, and <http://reality-check-approach.com/>

1.2 SWEDISH CIVIL SOCIETY POLICY AND STRATEGY

According to the *Policy for Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries within Swedish Development Cooperation*⁹, Swedish development cooperation aims to support “a vibrant and pluralistic civil society in developing countries that contributes effectively, using a rights-based approach, to reducing poverty in all its dimensions” and to create conditions that will “enable people living in poverty to improve their lives.”

The Swedish CS policy is made operational by the Swedish CS strategy, which shares its aims, but also has two additional objectives:

Enhanced capacity of civil society actors in developing countries to apply a rights-based approach in their roles as collective voices and organisers of services.

*Enhanced democratisation and increased respect for the human rights of poor and discriminated people.*¹⁰

Swedish cooperation’s HRBA is guided by four main principles: participation, accountability, transparency and non-discrimination:

The human rights based approach puts people who are poor first and helps development cooperation to better take into account the views of men, women, children and young people living in poverty. These approaches provide a clearer picture and better knowledge of local power structures in the provinces and sectors where Sida works. The human rights based approach is primarily a method of working, a ‘how’.

The human rights based approach encompasses the central elements of democracy, good governance and human rights, equality between women and men, and rights of the child. In combination with the human rights based approach, development cooperation shall be pervaded by the perspectives of the poor.

⁹ Government Offices of Sweden, (2009b), *Pluralism: Policy for Support to Civil Society in Developing Countries within Swedish Development Cooperation*, <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/13/13/60/8c589318.pdf>. This is referred to henceforth as ‘the Swedish CS policy’. This policy was replaced in March 2014 by the *Aid Policy Framework - The Direction of Swedish Aid*. (Government Offices of Sweden, Government Communication 2013/14:131)

¹⁰ Government Offices of Sweden (2009a), *Op. cit.*, p.4.

*Sida has chosen to work with these principles as a starting point for both the human rights based approach and the perspectives of the poor. The principles constitute a basis for analysis and assessment and a common basis for dialogue, cooperation and follow-up. The human rights based approach shall strengthen individual empowerment, that is, the human right of individuals to influence their own situation and development.*¹¹

In Swedish cooperation, poverty is understood to be “a condition where people are deprived of the freedom to decide over their own lives and shape their future. Lack of power and choice and lack of material resources form the essence of poverty. Given that poverty is dynamic, multidimensional and context specific a holistic analytical approach is advocated.”¹²

These principles and definitions shape expectations about what should be changing if poverty is to be reduced and human rights are to be realised, and imply *theories of change and action* for organisations seeking to fulfil the aims of Swedish development cooperation. Understanding how these theories are perceived and supported by different actors, and to what degree they align with the realities, perspectives and change strategies of people living in poverty, is the central focus of this evaluation. Sweden is concerned with democratic, social, economic, environmental and civic change in favour of people living in poverty and marginalisation. For such changes to happen, it supports civil society actors to enhance meaningful forms of participation, transparency and accountability in relation to government, to contribute to creating the conditions for economic growth, to work towards gender equality, and to overcome other aspects of discrimination and marginality. Sweden promotes social cohesion through supporting effective interfaces between different social, cultural, religious, political and ethnic groups.

Sweden gives particular attention to groups that are discriminated against on grounds of ethnic origin, religion or other belief, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, or transgender identity or expression. As such, Sida promotes capacity development for CSOs with similar priorities, emphasising a set of domains in which changes, including shifts in power relations and rights, are to be supported and anticipated.

The Swedish CS strategy emphasises some aspects which this evaluation does not directly address, in particular the principles of aid effectiveness, which include donor harmonisation, predictability, long-term support, alignment with partner systems and

¹¹ Sida (2012) *Results for Justice and Development: Report on Sida's Results on Democracy, Human Rights and the Human Rights Based Approach*, Stockholm: Sida

¹² Sida (2002) *Perspectives on Poverty*, Stockholm: Sida

procedures, and increasing the share of the local partner in core and programme support. The evaluation does however address the strategy's aim of seeing CSOs acting as the effective and representative voice of poor and marginalised groups, and enablers of good quality and fairness in provision of services such as health and education. This aim informs decisions about how support through the programmes of SFOs is directed and aligned, and underpins the *results orientation* of this evaluation.

1.3 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

With reference to the Terms of Reference (ToRs), the Inception Report and the Swedish CS strategy, this evaluation aimed:

- To identify the priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty and marginalisation concerning the enabling conditions they need to improve their lives, and perceived changes in these conditions.
- To explore what the HRBA and its guiding principles mean to people living in poverty and marginalisation, and to civil society actors implementing the Swedish CS strategy.
- To infer the plausible contribution and the alignment, relevance and feasibility of SFOs and LPOs to creating the enabling conditions for people to improve their lives.¹³

The evaluation framework combined power analysis with a multidimensional perspective on poverty and vulnerability. The four principles of an HRBA were used as the primary lens for understanding the *theories of change and action* used by SFOs and LPOs to implement the Swedish CS strategy. To understand if the strategy is *relevant, aligned and feasible*, we posed the following broad questions:

- *Relevance* – are the programmes, approaches and theories of change of the SFOs and LPOs relevant to people's priorities and perceptions of the changes that would enable them to improve their lives?
- *Alignment* – are the programmes, approaches and theories of change of the SFOs and LPOs aligned with the strategies of multiple actors at different levels, including actions being taken by local people themselves, to create enabling conditions to improve their lives?
- *Feasibility* – are the programmes, approaches and theories of change of the SFOs and LPOs feasible in terms of their plausible contributions (and in rela-

¹³ Adapted from *The Inception Report*, May 2013, p.10

*tion to what other actors are contributing) to creating enabling conditions for people to improve their lives?*¹⁴

1.4 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

As this was a learning process evaluation, the questions evolved during the inception phase as methods and a sampling approach were developed and piloted.

The ToRs called for a qualitative, participatory, mixed methodology. Rather than attributing specific impacts to specific actors, the team's methods and sampling approach were designed to examine *relevance*, *alignment* and *feasibility*, and to establish the *plausible contributions* of Sida support to civil society. This focus required a purposive and non-probabilistic sampling method, and a reframing of the research questions as follows:

1. What are poor people's perceptions of the changes taking place, or not, in the enabling conditions needed to improve their living conditions – with regard to each key issue (e.g. workers' rights, young people's livelihoods)?
2. What actors, including the Swedish CSOs and their partners, can plausibly be inferred to be contributing positive changes in the enabling conditions?
3. What does a human rights-based perspective mean to people living in poverty and marginalisation?
4. What is the relevance, alignment and feasibility of the theory of change, strategies and interventions of the Swedish CSOs and their partners?
5. What plausible contribution can be inferred to the role of CSO capacity development and enhancement in the context, and in relation to the key issue?
6. (a) What are the theories of change and strategies of Swedish CSOs and their partners? (b) What do the four human rights principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability mean in their practice, in the context of the key issue?

¹⁴ *Synthesis Report, Round 1, January 2014, p.20*

2 Country and Organisational Context

2.1 COUNTRY INDICATORS

Demographics. Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 77% under the age of 30 and 48% under 15.¹⁵ The labour force is growing at 4%, or half a million people, every year.¹⁶ Official figures suggest that 13.5% of the population now lives in urban areas. Using a broader definition of ‘urban’ than just the municipalities, the World Bank estimated in 2013 that the figure was closer to 25% and growing fast.

Human development. In 2013, Uganda was ranked 164 of 187 countries in the Human Development Index. Progress towards equitable development has been slow, despite strong economic growth,¹⁷ and Uganda’s ranking has slipped compared to other similar countries.¹⁸ While the proportion of the population living below the poverty line reduced significantly from 51.7% to 37.8% between 2005 and 2012,¹⁹ absolute numbers of people living in poverty rose because of Uganda’s high population growth.

Poverty histories. While a decline in income poverty is clearly an achievement, recent studies suggest the importance of considering mobility in and out of income poverty. In a study using Uganda Bureau of Statistics survey data, the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network demonstrates that, between 2005 and 2010, while 15.1% of households escaped poverty, 27.3% fell into poverty. The authors show that people who have been poor are more likely to slip back below the poverty line than to stay above it.²⁰

Multi-dimensional poverty. Other indicators give cause for concern on rights issues. The government reports that progress on development indicators such as gender

¹⁵ Population Action International (2010) *The Effects of a Very Young Age Structure in Uganda*, Washington DC: Population Action International, http://populationaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/SOTC_Uganda.pdf, downloaded June 27th 2014

¹⁶ World Bank (2013) *Jobs: Key to Prosperity*, Uganda Economic Update No. 2, Washington DC: The World Bank, p. 45

¹⁷ In his state of the nation speech in June 2014, President Museveni reported growth of 5.7%

¹⁸ UNDP (2014) *Human Development Report 2014 – Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resistance*, New York NY: United Nations Development Programme, p. 166

¹⁹ Povcalnet.iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm? (Accessed 9 October 2014)

²⁰ Scott, L., Hanifnia, K., Shepherd, A., Muyanga, M. and Valli, E. (2014) *How Resilient are Escapes Out of Poverty?* ODI Chronic Poverty Advisory Network Challenge Paper No. 2, London: Overseas Development Institute

equality, wealth equality, educational achievement, health (particularly of women), employment, environmental sustainability and government accountability has stalled.²¹ The Human Development Report reports that 33% of Ugandans suffered severe multidimensional poverty in 2011, having poor education, poor health and poor living standards; nonetheless, this was an improvement on the 2006 figure of 41.5%.²² According to the same report, over 70% of Uganda's population suffers from one or more of the dimensions of poverty.

Public services. Public services everywhere are under stress, and only available for a price. The poor public service system comes from years of diverted or inadequate government investments.²³ A survey of children's performance in primary schools the three East African countries found Uganda performing worst of the three countries: "Many children that attend school are not learning basic skills within the first few years of education. Moreover, a substantial proportion of children in their final years of primary school have not mastered Grade 2 level competencies. Thus the education system is failing many children."²⁴ Most services are now at least partly privatised. Parents pay for education in private schools, citizens pay for health care and water, and those who can afford it find generators to substitute for electricity from the national grid. The multi-dimensional poverty suffered by one third of Ugandan citizens makes it very difficult for the very poor to access the few free services that are available.

Employment. The Brookings Institute noted recently that underemployment is the norm in Uganda. Labour potential is underutilised, young people are working in poorly paid part-time jobs beneath their skills and competencies.²⁵ In 2011, 95% of young people not working in agriculture were in informal employment, mostly doing low quality, low paid, unstable and often dangerous work. While the number of jobs in Uganda has increased rapidly, the increase is mainly in the mushrooming of very small and insecure businesses in which the value of each job has diminished sharply.²⁶

²¹ Republic of Uganda (2013) *State of Uganda Population Report 2013*, Kampala: Government of Uganda and United Nations Population Fund; World Bank (2013) *op. cit.*

²² UNDP (2014) *op. cit.*

²³ Ssewakiryanga, Richard (2013) *Reflections on Uganda's Generational Challenge: Welcome to Uganda @50*, unpublished paper presented at the Civil Society Fair 2013, Kampala

²⁴ Uwezo (2013) *Are our Children Learning? Literacy and Numeracy across East Africa*, Nairobi: Uwezo East Africa at Twawza, www.uwezo.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2013-Annual-Report-Final-Web-version.pdf (Accessed 6 March 2015), p. 25

²⁵ Ahaibwe, G. and Mbowe S. (2014) 'Youth unemployment challenge in Uganda and the role of employment policies in jobs creation', www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2014/08/26-youth-unemployment-uganda-ahaibwe-mbowe (Accessed 6 March 2015)

²⁶ World Bank (2013) *op cit.*, p.28

It is widely accepted that economic growth has not produced decent and productive jobs for the growing numbers of new entrants to the job market each year. Uganda's most substantial economic growth has occurred in sectors like financial services and manufacturing, where increases in productivity have meant an overall reduction in the number of people employed.²⁷ The total number of jobs in the construction sector and agriculture, both vital areas of employment for poor people, have seen the lowest growth.

Private sector. Uganda has secured impressive deals with international oil companies, but the new oil industry is not well integrated into local economies.²⁸ Small businesses face difficulties with infrastructure, including transport bottlenecks and access to energy. They also face difficulties in their dealings with government as the system of political patronage skews their success by putting barriers in the way of those who do not subscribe to the ruling party.

Fiscal discipline. Other difficulties involve the government's own fiscal discipline, both in terms of the inefficient and corrupt use of public funds, and in terms of the political use of public funds, which has yet to be brought under control. This tendency is undermining the quality of services, robbing potentially beneficial productive schemes that might have redistributed the benefits of growth.²⁹

Economic and social rights. There are only two justiciable economic and social rights in the Ugandan constitution: the right to an education and the right to a protected environment. In a recent case of a death of a woman in childbirth, in which a human rights organisation took the government to court for neglect, the court ruled it a political question and threw out the case.³⁰

According to local analysts, state institutions mainly deliver populist measures to the grassroots that have resulted in some improvements to their material conditions, but largely *no change to the systematic realisation of economic and social rights*.³¹ Populism translates into hand-outs at election time, presidential gifts to individuals, primary schools bursting with children but with poor results and high rates of early leavers,

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 24

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 45

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. xiv

³⁰ Interview with human rights expert, June 2014

³¹ Golooba-Mutebi, F. and Hickey, S. (2009) *Governing Chronic Poverty under Inclusive Liberalism: The Case of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund*, Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper No. 150, Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre

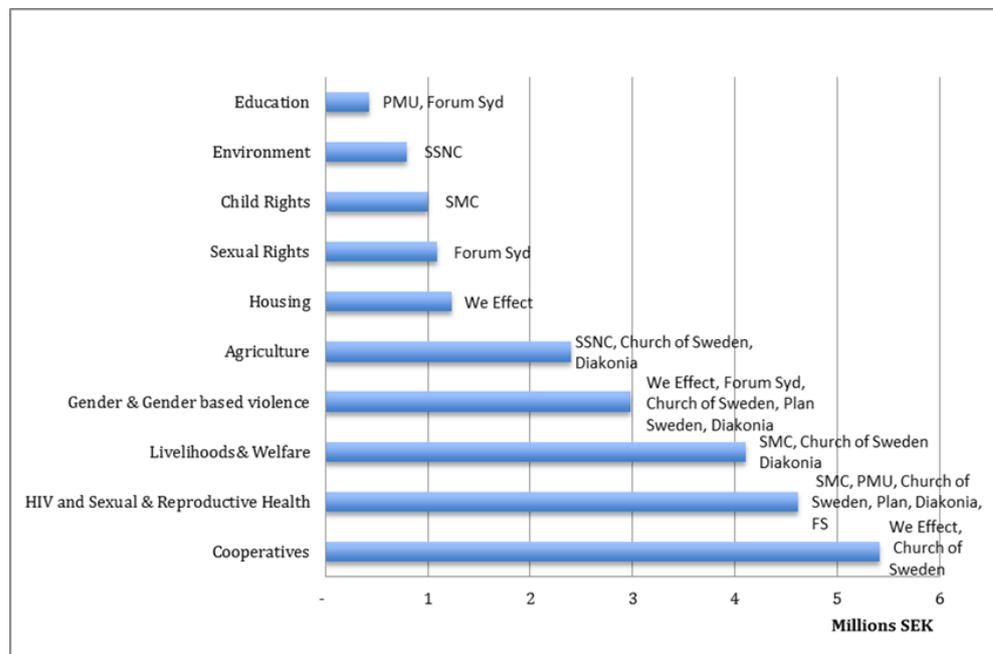
and clinics with few and irregularly paid staff and inadequate supplies. Many ordinary Ugandans think that elites are syphoning off most of the money that the country produces, using their power to annex Uganda's primary productive assets.³²

A leading civil society analyst suggests that all Ugandans, from President to peasant, feel vulnerable: "The President does not want presidential term limits because there is no security for him outside presidency. Rural folk and unemployed youth accept everything that the next politician around the corner can offer because, as we say in Uganda, that is where life has reached. A 500 shilling coin or a glass of *waragi* (local gin) is enough to buy a vote on election night."³³

2.2 SWEDISH SUPPORT VIA SWEDISH ORGANISATIONS

Eight SFOs were listed by Sida as working in Uganda using funds through the Swedish CS strategy in 2014: Diakonia, Forum Syd, Plan Sweden, Swedish Mission Council (SMC), Pentecostal Ministries (PMU), Church of Sweden, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) and We Effect.³⁴ These eight organisations channelled SEK 23 million (US\$ 8.5 billion) from the Government of Sweden to 42 projects in 2014.

Figure 1. Swedish CS strategy support to projects in Uganda via SFOs, 2014



³² *Ibid.*

³³ Interview with civil society analyst, July 2014

³⁴ Sida database, <http://cso.sida.se/>

How well aligned is the Swedish CS strategy to supporting these SFOs and their local partners to challenge discrimination and inequality, and build on advances against poverty? What does it mean for local partners to be aligned with the context and relevant to the needs and concerns of people living in poverty? Uganda presents a difficult landscape for Sweden's long-term hopes for democratisation and human rights, and for its strategic aims of a vibrant and pluralistic civil society. At present the state is discouraging non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from advocacy activities and encouraging them to work with a limited set of activities: training and awareness-raising, distributing production inputs, bringing people into community based organisations, and undertaking measured advocacy activities at the national and district levels.

3 Methodology and Process

3.1 METHODOLOGY

In this section we outline key aspects of the methodology which need to be understood for engaging with the evaluation's findings, analysis and conclusions. The methodology evolved through the tendering process, the inception phase and two rounds of field work, giving rise to much discussion, and some doubts and differences in understanding.³⁵ Here we provide a brief overview of how our methods and sampling processes developed during the course of the evaluation.

Uganda was one of three countries selected by Sida before the tender award. The evaluation was conducted in three 'sites' in Uganda selected to represent a diverse set of the key issues, population groups and partner organisations covered by the Swedish CS strategy.

The ToRs for the evaluation called for a qualitative, participatory, mixed methodology that would combine the RCA with other methods. RCA involves researchers immersing themselves in the daily realities of people living in poverty, in order to understand their lives and perspectives. Given the original research questions presented in the TORs, the evaluation team tendered a research design combining RCA visits at the household and community levels with 'meso-level' research and 'organizational inquiries' to document the theories of change and practices of actors at the local, national and international levels. These meso-level and organisational inquiries focused primarily (but not exclusively) on LPOs and SFOs, and sought to establish how Sida's support to CSOs made plausible contributions to achieving the objectives of the Swedish CS strategy.

An evaluation team of three to four researchers in each country conducted fieldwork, with one person leading the RCA visits, meso-level studies, organisational inquiries and analysis for each site. The teams were trained and methods tested during the inception phase (July 2012–January 2013); the *Inception Report* formed the foundation for the two rounds of fieldwork (March–September 2013 and March–September

³⁵ For example, there have been differences of opinion between the commissioner of the evaluation and the evaluation team about the criteria for site selection.

2014). Fieldwork and subsequent analysis, validation and learning, was conducted as follows:

- *Round 1 reality checks* (RCs) (three to five days each) were conducted in one community per site. Each RC involved the researcher staying with a family, observing and interacting with household members, neighbours and a wide range of people in the community, taking detailed notes, and making preliminary analysis. Once the homestays were completed, the information gathered was shared within the team and the analysis developed collectively. These initial findings informed the focus of the meso-level and organisational inquiries.
- *Meso-level inquiries* involved semi-structured interviews with civil society, state and other actors at the local and national levels, including LPOs and networks supported by SFOs. SFO representatives or their intermediaries were interviewed in countries where they were present; where they were not, they were interviewed in Stockholm. Organisational documents were collected and reviewed.
- *Round 2 RCs* (two days each) followed the same pattern as the first round, and were conducted with the same families and communities in order to build a deeper understanding and to observe any changes over time.
- *Organisational inquiries* with three LPOs (including advocacy NGOs at the national level) were carried out in the second round, in recognition of a need for more detailed information about their theories of change and interventions. The team used qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews, workshops and, where possible, observation of the daily activities of LPO staff.
- *Analysis* of findings was carried out after both rounds of fieldwork, in face-to-face workshops and during report drafting by each country team, in synthesis workshops involving the lead country researchers and other country research team members, and, to engage stakeholders, in validation and learning events.
- *Validation and learning events* were held in all three countries after the second round of fieldwork, and in Stockholm with representatives from civil society, LPOs, SFOs, Sida and Swedish Embassies. These events were vital in feeding back interim findings, seeking clarifications and corrections from key informants, and deepening the analysis. Drafts were reviewed by Sida, the PAG and the SFO methods network, and then revised by the evaluation team.
- *Quality assurance*, following the standards of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, has been provided by Professor David Lewis, University of London, an experienced anthropologist and RCA practitioner.

3.2 SITE SELECTION

Table 1 is a summary of the site selection approved by Sida for Uganda in the inception phase, with some updating on the basis of Rounds 1 and 2. Bugode, in Wakiso, was chosen as a community on the edge of Kampala city where there is rapid influx of young people in search of jobs. Pari, in Pader, was chosen as a community whose members are returning to rebuild life after years in displacement camps during the war in northern Uganda, and Kamanga in Mbarara is a village in an area of agricultural growth and environmental stress.

Table 1. Uganda site selection

Reality check #	Key issues	Swedish framework organisations	Local partner organisations selected	Geographic sites
RC1	Post conflict reconstruction <i>Other issues: gender based violence; social displacement of men</i>	Swedish Mission Council	International Aid Services (Uganda)	Pader District, Acholi Sub-region
RC2	Young peoples' livelihoods <i>Other issues: housing and sanitation</i>	We Effect	Uganda Human Settlements Network	Wakiso, Kampala District, Central Region
RC3	Environmental management <i>Other issues: discrimination, education, agriculture</i>	Swedish Society for Nature Conservation	National Association of Professional Environmentalists	Mbarara District, Western Region

Three LPOs were selected for the organisational inquiry: SSA/UHSNET, IAS(U) and NAPE, receiving Sida funds through We Effect, SMC and the SSNC respectively. We explored with them their ways of operating, their most effective activities, their theories of change and their views on the effect of the Swedish CS strategy. Learning exercises involved three sequential sessions to a) establish the theory of change through appreciative inquiry about most effective projects and programmes, b) give feedback from RCs and discuss the findings and c) align the organisation's theory of change with that of the Swedish CS strategy and look for places where the strategy corresponds well or not so well with the reality and the desired mode of operation of local organizations and their Swedish partners. We also observed the organisations at work in three locations: Pader, Mbarara and Kampala.

We looked into how these Ugandan organisations, with support from Swedish counterparts, are building civil society capacity in terms of two principles: (1) a rights based approach emphasising accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, and participation; and (2) activities in relation to democratisation beneficial to people liv-

ing in poverty. As the realm through which the Swedish CS strategy delivers its support, we also looked at how civil society itself has developed, how it is able to work on rights and to what degree civil society activity can build enabling conditions for people living in poverty in Uganda. This understanding of the realm in which SFOs and their LPOs are operating allows us to come to conclusions on the relevance, alignment and feasibility of the CSO strategy to the conditions for civil society action in Uganda.

Selection criteria

The team used purposive sampling – a common technique in mixed-method qualitative research designs – to select respondents for the evaluation. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on the characteristics of a population that are relevant to the research questions. As the questions in the evaluation ToRs were designed to assess the *alignment, relevance* and *feasibility* of the support provided to CSOs through the Swedish CS strategy, we needed to purposively sample the sources that would give us the best insights into these focal issues, seeking out people affected by the issues that the Swedish CS strategy and SFOs address. If the evaluation had been focussed on assessing the impact of specific projects or organisations, a probability sampling approach – taking a statistically representative random sample of those benefiting from Sida-supported projects – would have been needed instead.

Given the use of purposive sampling, judgements about the validity of the evaluation findings must take into account whether data was drawn from a set of individuals, actors and organisations purposively sampled to comprise those affected by the issues that the Swedish CS strategy addresses. This set includes not only people living in areas of direct intervention, but also those affected through advocacy, watch-dog, policy-influencing and mobilisation activities.³⁶ Given that a probability sampling approach was not used, judgements about the validity of the evaluation findings cannot be made on the basis of whether data was drawn from a representative sample of the population of each country, site or project, or on the three countries being representative of all countries where the Swedish CS strategy operates.

3.3 ANALYSIS, VALIDATION AND LEARNING

The evaluation set out to be a learning process, which the evaluation team pursued in a context of finite resources and wide-ranging stakeholder expectations. We recognise that the outcome is a trade-off between competing priorities.

³⁶ *Evaluation Terms of Reference*, p. 8

The validation and learning events were designed to be the main learning moments for the key stakeholders who participated in them. The evaluation team designed and facilitated customised processes involving presentation of findings followed by focused, small-group discussions of particular aspects of what had been presented. The intention of these processes was to validate – or complement, or correct – researchers’ interpretations and analysis. They were also designed to deepen understanding of the methodology, and stimulate reflection and learning from the findings in ways that could enhance participants’ practice as researchers, development professionals, civil society activists and advocates.

For more detail on method, please see Annex 1.

4 Key Findings

This section begins by detailing the micro-level RC findings, and describing the multiple and intersecting dimensions of poverty and marginalisation that are experienced by people living in poverty in our host communities. This is followed by a description of how civil society has developed in Uganda. The section concludes with an introduction to three LPOs who receive support through the Swedish CS strategy, which discusses their theories of change and activities on the ground.

4.1 NARRATIVES FROM THE THREE REALITY CHECK SITES

Pader District, in the Acholi sub-region of northern Uganda, was heavily affected by the war waged by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on Uganda's government and civilians. Pader District offered an opportunity to conduct RCs in an environment of post-conflict reconstruction involving CSOs that are linked to SFOs. The village of Pari, where our RC was carried out, is a scatter of thatched huts surrounded by tall elephant grass, shea trees and farming plots painstakingly cleared from the bush. To date, 37 families have returned from displacement camps to repopulate Pari, where there is little NGO activity.

The north of Uganda is a priority area for Sweden's bilateral programme. Pader District does not have a large number of CSOs linked to SFOs, but the wider sub-region is a focus area for at least two major SFOs. NGOs are providing livelihood support for returnees from displacement camps, installing water and sanitation infrastructure, and providing capacity building for community empowerment, health and environment.

The Pader RCA team stayed with Francis and Evelyn, who had returned to Francis' parents' land after 15 years, in their compound of thatched huts.

Mbarara District, in western Uganda, is an area of small farms and ranches, active in agricultural production. Three quarters of Uganda's population live in rural areas or small rural towns, while 58% of livelihoods are agriculture based.³⁷ The population

³⁷ Mbarara District Government (2009) *Higher Local Government Statistical Abstract*, p. 5

growth rate in Mbarara is slowing, perhaps indicating outmigration. Between 1991 and 2002, it was 2.58 and between 2002 and 2014 it was 2.26³⁸. Western Uganda is politically distinctive: it is President Museveni's home region, which translates into a relatively high density of tarmac roads, and a relatively high proportion of government funds.

The village of Kamanga, where our RCA was carried out, is a few kilometres outside the growing town of Mbarara. It is inhabited by people with very different levels of income living next door to one another: landless people, small farmers, public servants, business people and traders. The village is filling up rapidly, with better-off people building cement houses with car parking spaces, electricity and running water, and poor people moving from villages in the hinterland, pushed out by a growing population and increasing consolidation of land holdings by richer farmers. Industries are beginning to establish on the banks of the river that runs through Mbarara town, and land use is intensifying and becoming ecologically damaging.

The Mbarara RCA team stayed with Edith and Buku in a run-down rented house in the middle of Kamanga. Edith has three grown-up children and Buku has two young ones, aged four and seven. Edith's husband is dead, while Buku's left her several years ago.

Wakiso District neighbours the municipality of Kampala, Uganda's capital city. With national economic growth largely centred on the city, young people from all over the country come to the capital to seek a living, and many come to live in its surrounding peri-urban districts. The settlement of Bugode, where our RCA was carried out, is 7 km from central Kampala. The brick houses cluster close together on land that slopes down to a swampy area. The community has a high percentage of youth, as well as children of school-going age not attending school. The whole district is undergoing rapid economic and social change due to the influx of people from across rural Uganda. Unlike the city itself, it has relatively low levels of professional CSO activity.

The Wakiso RCA team stayed with three families. Our first host was John, an older man working as a brick maker. His wife was absent, staying in hospital with a daughter who had nearly died from a backstreet abortion. The couple have nine children, of whom six are adults and live in different buildings clustered around the plot. Our second host family was headed by a widowed farmer, Maria, who moved to Bugode 30 years ago with her late husband. Hers is one of the few households that still owns a

³⁸ UBOS (2014) *National Population and Housing Census 2014 Provisional Results*, Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics

relatively large piece of cultivable land in the settlement. She lives with her daughter and grandchildren in one homestead next to the rutted community road. Her sons live in other small brick houses on the plot. Our third host family was a couple, Erasmus and Rachel, who moved to Kampala from Western Uganda 20 years ago. Life in the city did not work out for them and they settled in Bugode in 2003. Their plot is extremely small, fully taken up by the two-roomed brick house where Erasmus works as a cobbler and repairer of bicycles and motorbikes. Rachel is 40 years old and has given birth to 14 children, ten of whom survive.

Our hosts in the three districts explained the main enabling conditions for a good life as: fair access to productivity; markets; decent employment; effective and relevant services (education, health, water and justice); security; a healthy environment; respectful treatment; social networks; spiritual and social belonging; and family support. They explained that securing the more economic and political of these enabling conditions is mostly not within their power, nor within that of their local leaders. They said that even the social conditions of fair and respectful treatment are being eroded by increasing competition in an increasingly commercialised environment. People living in poverty, and especially those who suffer most discrimination (such as women on low incomes, people living in the north, and people with no material or social capital) explained that state institutions and political networks provide little or no support. They see state officials as selfish and exploitative, but they generally placate them in order to avoid trouble and to get what little they can from them.

In Wakiso, Pader and Mbarara, we found that some families had become poorer between 2013 and 2014, while others had become a little better off. But very few spoke of positive changes in enabling conditions. For those who were doing better, the improvement in conditions had come about through the good luck of an inheritance, a good farming season or a market fluctuation. For those doing worse, it was bad luck – poor physical or mental health, or increased competition for markets or jobs – compounded by institutions that failed to help out when things got difficult. While there were a number of references to CSOs providing support such as bursaries or agricultural inputs, we found the families and communities we visited were not well-connected to civil society organisations. Among all those we talked to, their observations about CSOs in general suggested that such organisations are not easily accessible and play only a marginal role in their struggles.

While economic growth in Uganda is reflected by increased exports and investments in oil, horticulture, large-scale agriculture and urban construction industries, the jobs created are not keeping up with demand from an ever-growing young population. People who are very poor, we learned, have poorer education (because they cannot afford extra tuition and are spending most of their income on poor-quality schooling), poorer health (because they cannot afford health care) and poorer connections in finding jobs. Regions that are poor, such as northern Uganda, suffer these inequalities at a regional scale, despite efforts at rebalancing.

4.1.1 Youth in peri-urban Wakiso

Wakiso is a large district, stretching from Lake Victoria in the south to Bombo in the north. Although much of it is now peri-urban, there are still rural farming areas in the parts of the district further from the city. The district has an estimated population of 2 million, and the highest population density in Uganda with a growth rate that increased from 4.1% (1991–2002) to 6.61% (2001–2014).³⁹ Bugode is a peri-urban settlement of about 1,100 households (7,000 people) on the edge of Kampala. There is no tarmac road in the settlement and in the rainy season the big holes and mud hamper traffic.

Bugode's many young people struggle hard to earn a living. New arrivals are still coming to the settlement from all over Uganda: 90 new households arrived between our visits in 2013 and 2014. Some of the newcomers had been displaced from nearby settlements by a new by-pass around Kampala. Land for housing is becoming increasingly cramped, and maize fields on steep slopes and brick quarries in the valley bottoms are being built on. According to the Chairman of the Parish Council, the valley bottom houses are shoddy and unhealthy, with latrines that easily flood with groundwater. Although the government is said to be planning to build a new water line, the settlement currently has one working borehole and the water is expensive, so many get their water from contaminated streams and shallow wells instead. The nearby health centre sees many diarrhoea cases. There is no public primary school in Bugode, but plenty of private kindergartens and schools.

Brick-making, the main source of income and employment in Bugode, is increasingly being squeezed out as housing is constructed on the digging pits and wetlands where brick clay was dug. The construction industry around the edges of Kampala is booming and young people compete for unskilled, low-paid and insecure jobs on construction sites. Skilled workers – plumbers, electricians and plasterers – are increasingly in demand and can make a reasonable living, but poor youth have little or no access to training.

While many young women who have some education tend to leave for central Kampala to live an independent and sometimes precarious life as a waitress, shop assistant or cashier, those that remain mostly do domestic work for their own families or for others, make mats, or run small food kiosks. Their income is minimal and they feel

³⁹ *Ibid.*

that they have few opportunities. Younger siblings still at school hope for jobs, but feel anxious about increasing unemployment.

According to our hosts and their children and neighbours, most of the young men they know are unemployed or underemployed, and their numbers are increasing. There is constant talk of ‘lazy youth’: young men, who spend their time drinking, playing pool, taking drugs and trying to impress young women. They spend whatever money they have as soon as they get it. Several of the youth explained how young men become embroiled in ‘sports betting’ and get into trouble, some even selling off their parents’ land to pay their debts. Others have sold land to buy motorcycles to work as *boda-boda* taxis, a precarious livelihood with fierce competition. At *boda-boda* stands, which edge closer and closer together, where once there might have been three or four bikes, now there are ten or fifteen, and the riders spend much of their time lounging on their bikes hoping for passengers.

Between 2013 and 2014, one of our hosts, John, inherited a farm 12 kilometres from the settlement and began to farm it, but his children were not interested in joining him. John has to pay USShs 10,000 (US\$3.50) for the bus fare each time he goes to work on his plot, so he has used a loan from his church group to re-start his investments in broiler chickens, pigs and a small shop. He had previously abandoned all these activities in 2013 when he became depressed. His children, who are still at school, have gained in confidence since last year. By contrast, another of our hosts, Maria, is worse off than when we first stayed with her. Several of her children have left, others are unemployed, and her grandchildren are not in school because no one can come up with the school fees. Her sons have skills in masonry and mechanics, but they cannot find jobs, and brickmaking is in decline. While young migrants trying their luck in the environs of Kampala are often energetic, it seems that those who have grown up in Bugode can lose hope and fall into passivity.

Local government support to youth employment is limited to a youth livelihood fund that provides start-up capital to a very small number. There are six groups currently being funded in the sub-county, each with 10–15 members, meaning that at present the scheme is reaching around 70 young people with approximately US\$200 each. The requirements are difficult to fulfil and applicants believe that beneficiary selection may be based more on patronage than merit. None of the young people in our host families, nor any of their neighbours, had benefited from the scheme, and applications had been rejected because funds were exhausted. The main issue is coverage – with tens of thousands of young people in search of employment opportunities, the fund is too small.

The local Community Development Officer told us about six NGOs operating in the sub-county, including two international organisations (AMREF and Nature Africa). The most widely known in the community is FOCAGIFO, an energetic local organisation working on AIDS and offering vocational training to girls and boys. Small local community organisations, often associated with evangelical churches, support

orphans in school or run savings and credit groups. Only one of these organisations has had any contact with our host families and their neighbours.

Our hosts and key informants felt that neither government nor non-governmental agencies, nor the private sector, have focused on the key issue of mass unemployment and underemployment of young people. They explained that small-scale credit, which is the most common form of economic intervention, quickly reaches its limit when borrowers can only invest in the same businesses as their neighbours.

Among Swedish organisations whose partners are active in Wakiso county, we collaborated with the Shelter Settlement Alternatives/Ugandan Human Settlement Network (SSA/UHSNET), supported by We Effect, to learn about enabling conditions for NGOs in the area. SSA/UHSNET undertakes advocacy for housing and rent control for poor people, and also gets involved directly in supporting small self-help groups to generate income and save for housing. Advocacy work aims at systematic improvement in rights to shelter, but we are told it will be a long struggle.

While there are many local organisations in the areas, they are not co-ordinated. The larger NGOs explain that donors do not include peri-urban areas in their strategies and guidelines. As one NGO worker put it, “they define vulnerability by remoteness. Therefore, Ugandan NGOs even don’t propose so frequently working in the Central region.” As peri-urban areas are not seen as poor, NGOs do not see that proposals to intervene here are marketable to donors.

Members of all of our households believe that education is the way out of unemployment, and are quick to point out that schools are one of the few enabling conditions to which they have access. But no one thinks that the education system is living up to its promise of helping young people to gain jobs.

4.1.2 Post-conflict recovery in Pader

Pader District is nearly twice the land area of Wakiso, with a population of around 230,000. After peace was declared in 2006 in the war between the LRA and the Ugandan government, people gradually began to return home from internally displaced peoples’ (IDP) camps. During our first visit to Pari in 2013, only a few of the original residents had returned to the village, and our host family was still clearing their farmland and re-establishing themselves. Returning in 2014, we found the family making progress with farming: a good amount of land had been cleared and a crop of cotton brought in. They had used the income from the cotton to start up a small kiosk in the local trading centre and also joined a locally-organised savings group. By the end of a year, the couple had saved US\$200, which they withdrew to hire oxen for ploughing and buy goats and a young ox. There was a sense of taking control of the essentials of life, of purpose, and of solidarity with their fellow savings group members. At the community level, there have been attempts to revive cooperatives, and village savings and loan associations have become common practice. They are often

supported with donor funds through NGOs, including the Sida-supported LPO IAS(U). Many women participate in these associations, which gives them an opportunity to control finance, decide on investments and collaborate with other women.

Other parts of life are not so optimistic. The children of our host family are not going to school, health services are inaccessible and poor, and the local market for agricultural produce offers very low prices, partly because roads, as one official put it, are “in a terrible state.” He added that “schools are collapsing, and I don’t see anyone collecting the energy to put them right.” A former headmaster explained that, while 94% of children in Pader district are ‘school-goers’, “only 6% are learners.” Fewer than one in ten primary school children, he said, know why they are in school. The majority, when asked, answer, “my parents sent me”, or “we have just come to school.” Even though government expenditures have increased since the war ended, the quality of services remains very low: schools are difficult to access, poor quality and badly resourced.

The war has left other scars. Alcoholism and sexual violence are major topics of discussion, the outcome of the trauma of war and of a war-induced collapse in community and higher-level institutions. Post-war compensation is a case in point. Without respect for Acholi leadership in how compensation might be made, the government is presiding over a system that involves small payments to individuals for losses of livestock, with the effect of creating jealousy rather than a sense of communal peace. People complain that this system in no way compensates for or creates reconciliation after 15 years of intense suffering and the near-destruction of a culture. Nor has it helped with widespread mistrust of a government after the years of war.⁴⁰ We were told repeatedly how people do not have trust in the police or judiciary when it comes to dealing with issues of violence, crime or disputes over land.

Post-conflict reconstruction has taken the form of a series of rehabilitation and development programmes delivered by government and NGOs. The large programmes financed by donor consortia and including large amounts of money from the World Bank have been criticised for corruption and inefficiency. NGO workers told us how billions of shillings, supposed to be spent on roads, were returned unspent to the Treasury in 2014, due to problems of ‘inefficiency’, or as one person put it, “undue interference in the procurement process.”

Possibilities of vibrant civil society action in the community seem far off. This situation was summed up by an NGO leader who said “we have been denied a lot and now

⁴⁰ Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2009) *op. cit.*

we are settling for the basics, not even the basics but possibly worse. We have been deprived so much so that we are settling for very little. We have no capacity to want better.” Many NGOs left after the war ended, and the few that remain have had to make a difficult shift to implementing programmes for rights and development. One NGO worker explained that she was not happy that her own and other agencies were now acting as if all is now at peace and that development is just a simple task of providing basic resources and training. She and other NGO workers felt that very few of the NGOs really know how to work on human rights issues in the district, partly because they are discouraged by the authorities: “People consider governance and human rights as political and therefore bad. Those who focus on rights are seen as bad elements who incite the people.” Hesitation about rights is also related to a sense that rights come after development; more than one NGO staff member told us. “you can’t eat rights.”

In IDP camps, NGOs distributed essentials like food and ran education and other services for as long as 15 years, and helped to create structures of camp administration that were widely mistrusted. This mistrust has come back to the home communities with the returning people.

Our hosts told us that they avoid making demands on local government for services or resources that may be their right, as they fear being accused of being ‘opposition’; many people do not feel secure enough to complain about the poor-quality services because of a close perceived relationship between internal security and government administration. One NGO-supported community group we met felt unable to demand a school from the authorities, even though they were entitled to one, and had NGO encouragement. A local councillor had told them, “don’t bother going to the district, because you are poor people and no one will listen to you.”

Some of the villagers suspect that local NGO staff are partisan and distribute resources along political patronage lines. But IAS(U) pointed out that NGOs have as many difficulties in getting through to government as community members do. According to one NGO worker, her organisation used to attend District council meetings, but because her colleagues were asking many critical questions and making demanding, the council stopped invited them.

NGOs have made a considerable contribution in terms of resettlement infrastructure – including water, planting materials, farm implements and community roads – and have also supported reconciliation. The level of need is very high as people struggle to return to normal. Some critics said that NGO contributions might have obscured the lack of government accountability and government’s failure to provide adequate services of reasonable quality.

4.1.3 Landless women farmers in Mbarara

Mbarara town is vibrant and growing. Numerous micro-businesses – tailors, garment sellers, supermarkets, vegetable sellers, grocers, shoe shops, motorcycle taxis and beauty parlours – compete with one another to make marginal profits. New buildings are rising in the town centre. There are a few long-established manufacturing and processing industries, such as a the dairy processing factory.

There was both improvement and decline between 2013 and 2014 in our host household in Kamanga village. One of our hosts, Buku, reported that she was happier but poorer. She had moved house and was suffering from less discrimination than in 2013. Her rented room is smaller and cheaper than her old one, and made of mud rather than concrete. She had a poorer harvest in 2014, but the neighbours are more friendly in her new lodgings. The two children are happier too. She works very hard for each shilling to pay for school fees, health care, water and food. She had joined two self-help savings groups, one to save for insurance against hospital or burial costs, the other to save for school fees. She has moved to a new church, because it offered help with school fees.

Our other host, Edith, still in the original run-down house, was on the verge of being evicted by the landlady. One of her sons had found a job in town as a photographer and was happier, but her daughter, who had come to live with her, was unwell, unable to work and sadder. It had been a bad year for groundnuts, Edith said, because of too much sun.

In the village, as incomes get smaller, many landowners have stopped hiring landless people as labourers and are farming for themselves. More and more people are looking for land, taking back land they had lent out, or trying to get temporary access to church land. Those searching for land include girls who have dropped out of school, or are jobless after becoming pregnant in villages and being brought to town by their boyfriends.

Edith and Buku feel that neither government nor NGOs are interested in people like them. Their lifelines are churches and kind neighbours. When Buku had a problem with children from a nearby school stealing her tomatoes, she told the local council leader, but he did nothing to help. So she lost that crop and found another field where she is trying again. Neither of our hosts nor their neighbours knows any CSO other than the churches. Sometimes NGOs call meetings at the local administration office but, says Buku, “it’s never for people like me.”

The local ‘free’ primary school that Buku’s son attends thanks to a bursary from the Baptist Church is efficient and tidy and its students get good grades, even though teachers are often paid very late. Through local fundraising, the school has been able to build a boarding wing which attracts children from neighbouring Tanzania and Rwanda, but the head teacher explained that this is only for those who can afford to

pay boarding fees. While various churches give bursaries to poor children for the basic 'fees', they often go hungry at lunchtime because they are unable to afford the UGShs60,000 (US\$20) monthly lunch fee.

An NGO has helped install a rainwater catchment system at the school. The NGO promotes environmental education through a system of volunteer committees; members can apply to the organisation for 70% funding of environmental activities, including school water systems. The NGO director argued that the agency needs to create a parallel system of committees to create participation, and pointed out that there is competition between different organisations, each of which finds it necessary to create its own committees. At one school we visited, the committee had collapsed.

The tendency to create more and more committees stems, according to many we consulted, from the need to be able to report specific results to donors. Each NGO leader needs to develop his or her own career, each government office needs to be able to claim specific projects as being under its purview. Partnerships with foreign organisations, including Swedish organisations, are jealously guarded. Such are NGO leaders' fears of being blacklisted that the Mbarara CSO forum is said to be largely ineffective as a body that stands up for civil society space and challenges government inaction.

Mbarara has fewer NGOs than other poorer districts, but can boast a number of organisations working on health, sanitation, education, violence against women and a range of other issues. The district also has at least two organisations that actively support agricultural co-operatives. As an example of how civil society works in the district, we met a young man leading a small NGO advocating for better HIV/AIDS services to market vendors in Mbarara town, giving basic services and advocating for the rights of HIV/AIDS sufferers. In practice, our young respondent conceded, despite much time spent in meetings with government, most HIV/AIDS services come from the 20 NGOs in the district working on HIV, rather than from government. Nonetheless this young activist feels that the NGOs are making some headway by campaigning together, getting, for example, anti-retroviral drugs through the government system.

4.1.4 Multiple dimensions of poverty

The narratives from the three sites illustrate the struggles people make to emerge from poverty and the difficulties they face. In this section we draw together the insights from the three sites and from meso-level interviews to point out the multiple dimensions of discrimination and inequality faced by people living in poverty in Uganda.

Psychological stress. In all of our sites we found that psychological well-being plays an important role in overall well-being. Where people were psychologically strong, they had the optimism and energy to generate ideas, take risks, approach others for help and resolve difficulties. With economic opportunity, such as the successful sale

of a cotton crop in Pader, or an improved family and social situation, like the experiences of Kizza in Wakiso and Buke in Mbarara, we saw people gaining strength. They used this to further their economic position, attempting to consolidate their assets, for example paying more for schooling or putting energy into their networks. But this did not translate into having powers to push government to be more effective or accountable. In the reverse situation, where an investment failed, or the family was in strife, discrimination was acute, jobs scarce, services poor, networks unreliable and politics absurd, people were stressed. They lost confidence and fell into passivity and even depression.

Gender discrimination and gender violence. In Pader high levels of sexual violence indicate a major problem of gender discrimination. The failure to deal with it indicates a profound crisis in leadership and local governance, and leads to psychological stress for both women and men, particularly among the young. Gender discrimination is also present in the Mbarara site, with women-headed households struggling for recognition and support in the face of a society that looks on them as failures. Gender relations in Wakiso have a different shape, as women have more avenues of opportunity. But the choice of a job as a waitress or a cashier does not much reduce women's inequality with men. In all three sites the acute danger of unwanted pregnancy is high, endangering girls' mental and physical health and their prospects. Unwanted pregnancy also has a strong effect on the parents of young women, especially mothers, who often are the ones who try to pick up the pieces, as we saw in both Wakiso and Mbarara. In our inquiries we found one remarkable civil society effort to assist affected young women,⁴¹ but we left with a sense that the roots of the problem run deep and it needs a great deal more attention than it is currently receiving.

Ethnic and regional discrimination. Other forms of discrimination include regional inequalities, not only in relation to the politics of resource provision to different parts of Uganda, but also in a perception that some ethnicities are better than others. This problem is particularly severe in Pader, where years of war have left a devastated infrastructure and a strong sense of negative ethnicity. In Wakiso the mix of different ethnicities in the peri-urban context creates the effect of a melting pot. However, ethnic affiliation is still important for getting a job or calling for advantage from a person in power. Politicised ethnic identity remains an issue across Uganda.

Monetisation of life. In Wakiso and Mbarara in particular, people explain how there is no part of life that does not involve money. While once many essentials were shared without money, now transport, medicine, schooling, food, shelter and water are all

⁴¹ Alice Achan's school in Pader

paid for; members of our households spend increasing time raising cash. Having money determines not only how good an education, job or health care a person will receive, but also who their friends will be. There is more indebtedness than in the past, and more relationships are defined by what people owe. The monetisation of local economies opens them to corruption and this leads to greater inequalities and exclusions.

Unemployment. There is a strong feeling among young people in Wakiso and to a lesser extent in Mbarara that economic opportunities are shrinking. The population is rising faster than job availability. Education services that might support young people who grow up in poverty to contribute to a growing economy are poor. The rise of the *boda boda* motorcycle exemplifies the problem. Young people are willing to take investment risks, yet they can only join part of the economy that is losing profitability. The same can be said for many of the other available choices, such as retailing, tailoring and roadside catering. In farming areas the problem of inequality is manifest in differential access to inputs, which depend on a person's connections. Civil society support to co-operatives is addressing this problem to a degree, but co-operatives are largely inaccessible to people who have low and uncertain incomes, notably those who have no land of their own. Investment in co-operatives is also only a fraction of the levels it reached in earlier decades, even though the numbers of farmers that could benefit is very large.⁴² Government support to small farmers through the National Agricultural Advisory Services programme has been widely criticised by farmers as corrupt, a fact noted by President Museveni himself in June 2014, when he proposed bringing in army personnel to run the programme.

Poor quality services. The quality of government services for people living in poverty is very low. Education, health, policing and justice are not well enough resourced to provide universally equitable access and are widely understood to be moribund and corrupt in many locations. Where citizens have money to pay, they get better facilities and better services. Health workers routinely open private clinics from which they can get an income and sell medicines stolen from the government system, while government facilities provide the bare minimum. Likewise, teachers take jobs in private schools, often offering a level of education little better than that in the under-resourced government schools. In all these services there are committed workers, but there is a feeling of stoical persistence, rather than optimism.

⁴² TUI, CBR and AAU (2013) *The Co-operative Movement and the Challenge of Development*, Kampala: The Uhuru Institute, Centre for Basic Research and ActionAid Uganda

Associations. Associations based on a tradition of working communally are a vital part of the agricultural and social system in Pader. In Mbarara, associations provide an important possibility for making small savings, but as we saw in our host household, it is easy for people who are poor to fall behind and lose the capacity to participate. In Wakiso, people treat non-family associations with distrust. In all cases the association requires a level of social cohesion, and where the cohesion is under stress for economic, social or political reasons, the association too comes under stress. Associations do not lead to social cohesion, but come from it. Their role as CSOs that might press for non-discrimination, transparency, participation and accountability is not realised because most associations have no formal status as rights-claiming entities. Co-operatives and trades unions are associations with multi-level structures that might fill this role, but they have been systematically dismantled over the years and are battling for relevance.

Local and national government. In all our sites local government is perceived as discriminating against people who are poor. In Wakiso, local offices are credited with development initiatives; in Pader, it is believed that the local administration, whose incumbents gained their positions during the time of war and camps, is displacing older leaders in whom people have more faith; in Mbarara, local councillors and members of government are seen as discriminatory and non-transparent by people living in poverty. People understand that government at higher levels makes decisions based on political rather than social priorities. The strained relation between citizens and the state, and particularly between those who are poor and officials supposed to oversee services, feeds resignation.

4.1.5 People's strategies of change

How do people perceive changes in the enabling conditions needed to improve their lives, and what are their own strategies for change and day-to-day survival? This section builds on the preceding analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of the underlying realities and conditions that civil society interventions should aim to engage with in order to reduce poverty.

The multi-dimensional nature of poverty imposes on people a necessity to take a great deal of care and to work very hard. It is important to understand people's strategies, if support is going to be *relevant* and *aligned*. We find three main strategies: carefulness, hard work, and 'rational passivity'.

Carefulness. Our hosts nurtured their resources with infinite care, although sometimes family members will do something foolish. By and large, though, each shilling, each hour of labour and each relationship is carefully deployed, after due thought and sometimes discussion about priorities. When NGOs come to the village calling for meetings, people living in poverty try to weigh up what advantage may be gained over other uses of their time. Other reasons for not coming to meetings include not

being invited, and not feeling welcome. This is another form of care: care for one's own dignity.

Hard work and mutual support. All our hosts emphasised that hard work is the one thing they can rely on to build enabling conditions – although their capabilities can be undermined by illness or accident. They relied on themselves and their families and friends and, in Pader, on communal work. They borrowed money and made small investments, often preferring to borrow from friends and family, so that difficulties in repayment could be managed. Government and NGO projects did not feature as ways of enabling a reliable escape from poverty. Most of the poor people we met saw NGOs as organisations from which gifts might come, rather than as allies for change.

Rational passivity. The third element is to not to rely on the authorities. Our hosts in all three sites saw their own efforts as the way out, while appreciating the opportunities that they could grasp, such as schools. Few of them would go and complain about poor services. It is not realistic to hope or expect that people who are very poor are going to be at the forefront of demands for change.

4.2 MESO-LEVEL INTERVIEWS AND LITERATURE

This section presents the results of interviews, meetings and discussions with over 80 members of civil society and experts and review of relevant literature focusing on civil society, public services and governance in Uganda. It provides the wider context for understanding the support that people living in poverty can expect in their efforts to overcome disabling conditions.

4.2.1 Ugandan civil society

The emergence of formal civil society associations in Uganda first took place in the 1930s. Citizens began to organise around conditions of labour and trade, countering discrimination against the African population in general and women, peasants and workers in particular.⁴³ The main categories of civil society in this period were working class-led and elite-led membership organisations, cultural/ethnic based organisations, and welfare and charitable organisations. Despite these early independent beginnings, these movements were later co-opted, regained independence and co-opted again, at first under the colonial government, again during the Amin years of the 1970s when they were brought under the umbrella of centralised structures, and finally with the rise of Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) in the 1980s

⁴³ Scott, R. (1966) *The Development of Trade Unionism in Uganda*, Nairobi: East African Publishing House

when they became participants in state institutions from local to national level. The NRM suppressed political parties as a way of neutralising ethnicity and promoted national unity.⁴⁴

The case of the women's movement is illustrative. In the 1970s, Amin's regime banned all women's civil society organisations, ordering that they should all come together under one umbrella – the National Council for Women.⁴⁵ Some organisations managed to continue underground, mobilising and expanding membership in times when this could have earned death for the leaders. When the NRM took power in 1986, many women supported the new regime. Museveni established the position of Secretary for Women's Affairs from village to national level. This raised the popular profile of the NRM and in turn ensured that the contribution of women to public politics was recognised in law. The women's movement has subsequently struggled with how to oppose government, while many of its leaders have roots in the NRM and depend heavily on government patronage.

A similar story is told of the trade unions. In 1989, the National Resistance Council agreed to include three trade union representatives,⁴⁶ but this level of representation was not enough to stop policy reforms that led to massive retrenchment of workers, liberalisation of the economy and the collapse of co-operatives. Workers' unions became progressively weaker and their membership and financial power dwindled. Interviewees suggest that today trade unions have been crowded out of civil society by NGOs.

Religion has always been a decisive factor in the political and civil life of Uganda and another important face of civil society. Each religious group has built up its own development organisation that participates in citizen mobilisation and provides vital services, especially to poor people. Religious groups have also been instrumental in the negotiation of peace in Uganda.

Finally, cultural institutions, large and small, make up a mosaic of power that is often overlooked in understanding civil society in Uganda. They create both solidarities and

⁴⁴ Muhereza, F. and Otim, P. (1977) 'Neutralizing ethnicity in Uganda', in Mohamed Salih, M.A. and Markakis, J. (Eds) *Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet

⁴⁵ Kwesiga, J. (1995) 'The women's movement in Uganda: An analysis of present and future prospects', *Ugandan Journal* 43:54–74; Tripp, A.M. (2000) *Women and Politics in Uganda*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press

⁴⁶ Barya B.J.J (1990) *Law, State and Working Class Organization in Uganda (1962–1987)*, PhD thesis, University of Warwick; Baingana, E. (1998) *The Historical Background of Trade Unions in Uganda*, Unpublished paper presented at Uganda Trade Union History workshop, Hotel Triangle, Jinja, 1998; Scott (1966) *op. cit.*

divisions and act as vital networks in civic life. At local level there are a vast number of informal groups and associations that mobilise mutual support arrangements in social and economic affairs. In many institutions of learning, associations based on ethnicity or region come together for collective development and a duty to promote development in their ‘home areas’. Large, historically-important and ethnically-defined institutions such as the Kingdom of Buganda also command significant followings and hold political power.

4.2.2 NGOs today

As donor money started to flow into the country in the 2000s, NGOs began to register at a rapid rate. At first most were involved in reconstruction and service delivery. As the state became stronger and the rehabilitation and reconstruction of most parts of Uganda came to a close, the relationship between NGOs and the state began to change. The development donors that financed many NGOs encouraged more advocacy work. Today’s government views NGOs as useful actors in development, but, just as its predecessors did, it also has concerns about security and politicisation. This is exemplified by two recent actions – the placement of the NGO Registration Board in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the establishment of a law that restricts and monitors NGOs.⁴⁷

Civil society today is made up of many thousands of organisations working against poverty, but space for debate about public goods is restricted. There are a number of established human rights organisations, such as the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, the Human Rights Network and women’s rights groups. Women’s rights groups are said to have some of the strongest purchase on effective advocacy, for example in claiming rights to maternal health, because of the earlier entwining of gender equality movements and politics. However our interviewees tell us that even women’s rights groups have only a small impact on accountability. New organisations, such as the Centre for Health Rights, are now emerging to pursue economic and social rights, seeking enforcement through the courts. A few courageous lawyers have stepped forward to litigate against the Public Order Act (which limits public gatherings and demonstrations), the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and other challenges to the Constitution, including highlighting government failure to provide adequate resources to the universal primary education programme. While such cases are few and are often unsuccessful, they are important civil challenges in the protection of human rights.

⁴⁷ Uganda National NGO Forum (2009) *The NGO Act, Regulations and Policy in Uganda: History, Contentions and Suggestions*, Briefing Paper, Kampala: Uganda National NGO Forum

4.2.3 Projects and capacity building

In interviews with NGO directors, we heard how the nature of most international funding means narrowly focused projects over short time-scales, reducing time and attention for challenging the status quo at a broader or longer-term level. Several NGO leaders explained that they are in ‘survival mode’, spending time writing reports and project proposals to donors, concentrating less on analysis of the country context and even less on building citizen-led change. They complain that current funding patterns create sporadic projects which communities find unreliable.

Capacity building is popular with donors and CSOs, but it is often vague in its intentions. Civil society leaders interviewed in different locations see capacity building as training in organisational management, project design and approaches to problem identification and solution. In the RCs we learned that people living in poverty are often willing to accept poorly thought-out capacity building, because it may be the price one has to pay for getting put on a list for material support. They are the last to complain, just as they are the last to complain to government about inadequacies in services. This reticence puts local organisations in a difficult position, because clear feedback is difficult to get.

The Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) is a successful multi-donor fund supporting civil society and government initiatives that help CSOs to undertake capacity building and projects in the governance realm. It provides a powerful umbrella to organisations wanting to work on more challenging human rights related issues. Sida participates in the DGF (€5.3 million in 2014) as part of the portfolio of the Sweden Embassy in Kampala. The DGF appears to be making a contribution to the enabling conditions for a civil society watchdog role.

4.2.4 Advocacy NGOs

In the 1990s, the NRM government introduced a system of ‘individual merit’ to replace multi-party political affiliation as a mechanism for selecting political leaders.⁴⁸ This system was important to the position of NGOs in social and political life, because when the government was criticised for having no opposition and running a one-party state, it would point to individual NGO leaders as its opposition.⁴⁹ Advocacy-

⁴⁸ Golooba-Mutebi, F. and Hickey, S. (2013) *Investigating the Links Between Political Settlement and Inclusive Development: Towards Research Agenda*, Effective States and Inclusive Development Working Paper No.20, Manchester: University of Manchester

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*; Langseth, P. et al. (1995) *Uganda: Landmarks in Rebuilding a Nation*, Kampala: Fountain Press

cy NGOs were encouraged to offer the alternative position from within the state, providing an uncontroversial opposition voice in the all-inclusive political dispensation.

This form of governance, with its enduring focus on individuals, continues to influence the political economy of Uganda today. In many communities, people look at individual leaders as the ones who will supply all their needs. This focus on individuals rather than institutions fuels political and elite patronage and undermines a rights based agenda. Political leaders are compelled to promise all kinds of services with very little reference to the institutions that are supposed to deliver them. As one respondent put it, “development has been de-institutionalised.” We were told that is not unusual to hear politicians promising to deliver a road, a hospital or electricity to a community in the absence of any discussion with the responsible ministries.

While NGOs were tolerated during the days of all-inclusive NRM politics, the same level of tolerance was not sustained when multiparty politics was reintroduced.⁵⁰ Government leaders began to see NGOs as political vehicles, and feel justified in treating NGOs as a political security threat, or even as organisations that promote ‘foreign interests’. This has justified the laws that have recently been promulgated to oversee NGO activity and limit their operations.

The Government of Uganda NGO Board has announced that forthcoming legislation will require every NGO that wishes to do advocacy to be registered under the Political Parties and Organisations Act. An NGO registered under the NGO Act will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with each local government where it wishes to work, specifying the services it will be delivering. One NGO leader noted that an organisation has more freedom to operate if it registers as a business. The office in charge of registering and monitoring NGOs is located in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an office also responsible for internal security. As a result NGOs engage in ‘self-policing’ and are careful to avoid politics, which can include rights-claiming, in projects and programmes.

4.2.5 Civil society independence

The NRM government stands out in the history of Uganda as the administration that has gone furthest through deliberate policy action to bring previously excluded groups into the mainstream. The constitution stipulates the participation of tradition-

⁵⁰ Makara, S., Rakner, L. and Svasand, L. (2009), ‘Turnaround: the NRM and the reintroduction of a multiparty system in Uganda’, *International Political Science Review* 30(2): 185–204

ally marginalised groups in Uganda, including people living with HIV/AIDS; ethnic minorities; women; youth; children, especially orphans and vulnerable children; people with disabilities; and internally displaced people, especially in the context of conflict in Uganda. From affirmative action for girl children, representation of women and quotas for women and youth in leadership positions including in Parliament, excluded groups have opportunities to engage in the policy process.

Inclusion in the mainstream means becoming a part of the one-party state. As such, the government has made conscious efforts to bring CSOs into processes of identifying poverty issues and service deficiencies and has encouraged NGOs to implement programmes around the country. This inclusiveness was welcomed by civil society and resulted in the formation of many NGOs to work for or speak for the marginalised. Critics, however, question the extent to which such NGOs are representative of these constituencies. They argue that by becoming a *de facto* extension of government, NGOs have lost their independent space for questioning decisions and challenging inequalities.

As we saw in the RCs, poor people do not challenge those in power because they fear losing the small amount of financial and material security and power that they have. The same, we find in our interviews with members of civil society, tends to apply to NGO workers. Particularly at a time when money is so central to a sense of dignity and progress, and when resources are very unevenly distributed, most people are hesitant to rock the boat. These factors impose restrictions on the free action of CSOs, and restrict their ability to struggle for rights that are not also a priority for the state.

4.2.6 Swedish civil society strategy local partner organisations

In this section we look at examples of local organisations that are partners to Swedish organisations under the Swedish CS strategy, and explore their theories of change in the light of the context elaborated above. IAS(U), SSA/UHSNET and NAPE have partnerships with SMC, We Effect and the SSNC respectively. Chosen on the basis of their operations in RC districts, these organisations kindly agreed to act as exemplars of the civil society efforts supported through the strategy. We explored with them their theories of change, and examples of how they operate in practice.

4.2.7 International Aid Services (Uganda)

IAS(U) is the local partner of International Aid Services (IAS), which is a member of the SMC. IAS(U) runs, among others, livelihood support programmes in Pader district, working for its mission to save lives, promote self-reliance and dignity and enable people to invest in their future. The SMC provides support to project activities and has also funded training in the HRBA for all the staff.

IAS is an international, Christian, non-political and non-profit humanitarian relief and development organisation focused on post-conflict situations. Founded in 1989, IAS went to Pader in 2008 and through a partner organisation, Christian Counselling Fel-

lowship, worked with formerly abducted children. In Pader, operations are delivered by IAS(U) and support people to resettle in their villages of origin after up to 20 years of displacement. Thanks to its long relationship with its international sister organisation IAS, IAS(U) has a strong sense of financial security. As an agency dependent on foreign funds, it must give detailed account to government, so effort goes into ensuring that local government approves of projects and programmes.

IAS(U) has built a team of 30 staff in Pader, and they and all their partners have been trained in the HRBA. The organisation has good links to local government, but the staff members also know how hard it is to challenge government. IAS Sweden provided the following description of the IAS(U) approach in Pader:

'In 2008 communities were just resettling and barely had any means of survival. They were so traumatised and life had dealt them a blow that hope for a long life had faded as shown by the communities' reluctance to plant trees, wondering whether they would live long enough to see them grow and harvest them. Communities had no energy to fight on; they wanted to live and enjoy the remaining days that life offered them. For such a community, telling them to defy the odds of culture and engage their leaders (some of whom were far from reach) was unthinkable.

'People needed to believe in life and have confidence for a better tomorrow, which meant having at least food in their granaries and a hut (house) to lay their heads. They were so vulnerable that without basics in life they were open to further exploitation and abuse. Girls had resorted to prostitution as a means of survival. Redeeming the situation was critical. It is against this background that IAS responded to the call by the government for development partners to support the government efforts during the recovery and reconstruction phase. IAS started by providing water through drilling of bore holes and spring protection, plus training communities to manage their water points. Community participation was ensured through community mobilisation meetings where roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder were clearly defined as part of the sustainability plan. Community contribution was essential however basic to ensure ownership. Communities were still dependent on food aid from World Food Programme (WFP).

'In 2009 IAS responded to the request from the target communities for seeds and other farm inputs to enhance food production. 50 Village Farmers Groups (VFGS) of 20 households each were formed and each group received a pair of oxen and ox plough discs. Vulnerable and female headed households received an assortment of seeds. Basing on the suggestion from women, men formed group plots for seed multiplication because the women considered men equally vulnerable. The farm inputs were supplemented with trainings on leadership, modern farming methods and group dynamics. The major focus was on attaining food security.

'In 2011 IAS (U) embarked on livelihood enhancement through transformation of the VFGs into Village Development Units (VDUs). The VDUs received cash start-up

packages, opened up savings accounts, and were trained in various aspects of farming as a business. They all registered as Community Based Organisation (CBOs) both at the Sub - County and District levels. In 2014 the CBOs at Sub - County levels formed Unions of CBOs to enhance bargaining power at market level, attract resources and build the critical mass (the collective voice) needed for advocacy purposes. No more inputs are currently given to these groups except capacity enhancement in farming as a business, group dynamics, and enhancing civic competence. With funding from Lakarmission IAS supports a school for formally abducted child mothers in Pader Girls Secondary School. A total of 230 girls are supported – 200 in Secondary School education while 30 in Vocation Training.

'Human Rights Based Approach Though IAS (U) had not expressly embedded the HRBA approach in its intervention, through the mission, core values and the quality standards IAS subscribes to, IAS (U) had all these principles embedded in operations. Aspects of transparency, accountability, participation and non-discrimination are the backbone of IAS (U) intervention. During the period of major concentration on service delivery (2008-2013) the emphasis had been laid on service delivery, and the communities understanding their own responsibilities, and drawing from the resources around them to address some of their needs. It is important to note that years of displacement bred a dependent community looking to NGOs and the Government to address the community problems even where traditionally communities would mobilise resources to meet their needs or solve community issues. IAS shares plans with the communities to ensure participation and ownership. Furthermore communities would be required to make contributions, however little to enhance ownership and they had to set up teams/committees to manage facilities given to them. The critical issue here is between Rights and Responsibilities, what comes first in a post conflict situation where people have lost a sense of responsibility?

'To ensure sustainability, IAS considered the need for understanding responsibilities as critical otherwise there would have been a constant need for NGOs and government to do basic things like repair of a water point, clearing a feeder road and or constructing household latrines for the households. For example without understanding responsibility, the campaign for Universal Primary Education (UPE) still struggles because parents sat back and left everything to the schools and the government with parents neglecting their responsibility. So, understanding responsibility was essential and that dictated IAS' approach.

'TACT- Tool for Accelerated Community Transformation is a compilation of lessons learnt from 2008 - 2012 geared towards engaging communities to evaluate the impact of various aspects of their cultural values and beliefs on development. It must be noted that even the aspects of the Rights Based Approach cannot yield the much-desired results in such a cultural setting. For example, culture dictates that leaders cannot be challenged; culture dictates that one obeys and does as the leaders do say; culture requires that people 'bow' before their leaders. Unless the communities, through dialogue and other engagements, appreciate the need and possibility of going to leaders

and demanding for rights, the sensitizations will not yield the desired results. Secondly while demanding for rights is critical, there is no community that is better placed to demand for their rights than that community that knows its responsibility. Once the community has understood and strives to fulfil its responsibility then demanding rights from the duty bearers is simplified because then the duty bearers are stripped of excuses and apportioning blame. A very poor person, with no food to eat is easy to manipulate. But if a man can place food on his table and provide for his household, then he will not bow for less than a dollar and sell his vote or for a kilo of sugar cover-up for wrong practices. Hence having the capacity to meet one's basic needs in life is essential in the fight for communities to effectively engage duty bearers.

'Human Rights violations are picked up through a focus on culture since violations are embedded within culture. It is important to note that while there is a conventional understanding of Human Rights, culture, which is highly valued and respected defines Human Rights differently. Worse still some people whose rights are violated have come to embrace the violations as the acceptable way of life. For example, *wife battering* has been accepted by women as a sign of love from the husbands such that if a woman errors and she is not beaten it is considered rejection. Communities thus need to first understand the 'lies' within such beliefs before they can embrace something new otherwise it is resisted and labelled 'Western' which IAS tries to avoid. Once the underlying limiting factors are dealt with, then any principles brought in can be looked at from proper perspective and hence yield the desired results, including holding leaders accountable not being considered as disrespectful Thus through regular interaction with the communities, IAS U evaluates every intervention phase to ensure that one phase feeds into the other. The summary of IAS (U) interventions has been phased thus:

2008-2009: - Give life-saving water and support for food security while ensuring participation

2010-2013: - Enhance community contribution and participation; focus on livelihood development to ensure income security while engaging in enhancing civic competence of grass-roots geared towards sustainability and advocacy

2014-2016: - Enhance communities' capacity to access market, build the critical mass to effect change at all levels, civic competence enhancement and governance.'

Field observation. An evaluation team member visited the IAS(U) team in action, observing community engagement activities in two villages. The first meeting was with two savings and loan groups at the house of the local council chairman in Loi village, Agago District. The groups meet weekly to make repayments and savings and discuss farming. After a welcome from the local chairman, four IAS(U) staff spoke one after another. The staff member in charge of the 'Action Against Alcohol' programme gave a short speech praising the village for combating alcohol addiction and admonishing members not to be tempted. This was followed by inputs from the staff member in charge of livelihoods, who encouraged the group to choose the right crop for communal farming. Then the education staff member praised them for giving up alcohol and advised them to be sure to send children to school and to take part in par-

ent-teacher meetings. A regional manager also praised the community and pointed out that crucial change in relations between them and the organisation had come about when IAS(U) realised that giving material support alone, such as constructing boreholes, was not the right approach, but that it was far better to support the community's own capabilities. The manager pointed out that with the coming election, community members could press for their rights to boreholes, roads and schools, rather than accepting alcohol in exchange for a vote. Group members responded by praising IAS(U) for their inputs of a borehole, start-up capital for the savings and loan groups, and oxen and ploughs. They explained how the village was improving in many ways, including better farming, more savings and a reduction in gender based violence. One young man said he had given up alcohol and was farming, and asked if IAS(U) could help them identify good leaders.

The second meeting attended by the evaluation team was a 'feedback and planning meeting' at Ariaba village, Pader District. The meeting was chaired by IAS(U) and began with 'fellowship' and prayers. The group chairperson then gave a report of how much money had been saved and the plan for next year to work together to cultivate ten acres of maize and ten of beans. The IAS(U) livelihoods officer then encouraged individual members to plan their cultivation for next year. The IAS education officer commended the community on helping to build the primary school and teachers' houses. The Regional Manager thanked the people and exhorted them to begin extending to others what they had learned from IAS(U).

IAS(U) staff members believe that transformation of local people's mind-sets has begun. They point out that post-war recovery is a painstakingly slow process, but that productivity has grown, alcohol abuse has reduced, and that there is general rising optimism.

4.2.8 Shelter and Settlement Alternatives/Ugandan Human Settlement Network

SSA/UHSNET was born out of an organisation known as the Shelter and Settlements Alternatives (SSA), established in 1999 by a group of Ugandans to disseminate information and network on settlement issues. In 2008, spearheaded by SSA, a group of organisations and individuals formed SSA/UHSNET. Its membership has now reached 57, mainly NGOs, community organisations and faith based organisations, but also academics, professional associations and students. It is a young network whose leaders warn that it may not be in a position to have any significant influence yet. Swedish support via We Effect has mainly been spent on institution-building in the network.

Theory of change. The network was formed to address lack of capacity among slum-dwelling communities and agencies working in the sector to influence policies and practices for improvement of human settlement conditions. The theory of change indicates that a credible forum for discussion of human settlement issues and challenges will help generate new and better policy, and mobilise technical and financial re-

sources for decent, affordable and well-planned human settlements for Ugandans, with particular focus on low-income slum-dwellers. The network has benefited from smooth flows of funds from, capacity development by, and dialogue with We Effect. The network activists say that the international contacts and networking within Africa and beyond are an important contribution to its capabilities.

SSA/UHSNET has an original approach to its work. While it aims to change the attitude of policy makers towards slum dwellers, it also puts great effort into being connected to peoples' struggles for housing. It notes the absence of comprehensive policy on slums, and at present is putting effort into lobbying on the Building Contract Act and the law on evictions. But SSA also works with the larger network members to reach out to the grassroots, playing an important role connecting bigger and smaller members. Sometimes SSA/UHSNET identifies needs on the ground and brokers linkages between members to try and meet them. Within the membership, discussions have always been on how the network can improve lives, as well as how it can change policy. SSA/UHSNET identifies communities where it can collaborate and create some impact in partnership with its members.

SSA/UHSNET offers capacity building, research and documentation (including a database on housing and evictions), and lobbying and advocacy. It lobbies government policy makers, civil servants, the media, private landowners and construction companies, and institutions such as the Buganda Land Board, as well as churches and mosques.

The network creates awareness both directly – by providing information on national and international laws and standards – and through building the capacities of community members to defend individual and group rights. It encourages participation and takes an active interest in the civic, cultural, social and moral welfare of the community in relation to shelter and settlements. It organises dialogues for members to agree on UHSNET policy and actions and appoints subcommittees for implementation. At present the group is leading three thematic dialogues – on land, affordable finance and participation in public–private partnerships – that include academics and community leaders.

The network mobilises resources for improving the living conditions of urban slum dwellers and mobilises stakeholder participation in the formulation, implementation and revision of policies and laws affecting human settlements. It gives particular attention to gender discrimination and the problems faced by people living with HIV/AIDS. Women often have few or no assets, low incomes compared with men, and no entitlement to inheritance; in cases of divorce, they can often find themselves homeless. For people living with HIV/AIDS, there is stigma, poverty and sometimes hopelessness.

Field observation. We observed SSA/UHSNET working with Kampala City Council (KCC) by helping local councillors organise a Saturday clean-up activity in the slum

area of Tibaleka. SSA/UHSNET brought the tools for cleaning –including hoes, machetes, rakes, spades, brooms and gloves – and staff and community members wore lime-green reflective jackets displaying the logos of project funders (We Effect and the Embassy of France in Uganda). The three-hour cleaning exercise included removing silt from open drains, cutting grass, gathering rubbish for collection, and sweeping public spaces. Community members led a party for each of the areas being cleaned, and the KCC Sanitation Officer, Divisional Councillor, other local councillors and representatives of youth and women also attended. The clean-up was followed by speeches, and the Chairman of the Local Council thanked everyone and called on local residents to make the clean-up routine, even without the participation of SSA/UHSNET and the City Council. He then asked that the KCC representative to commit to ensuring that rubbish would be collected from the community at least once a week; his request was later repeated by the Divisional Councillor. Neither of the officials neglected to mention that they needed people’s votes in the forthcoming elections. Finally, an SSA staff member announced that they would be building two toilets in Tibaleka.

The cleaning day was an opportunity for SSA to work directly with a community and respond to their needs. The Programme Manager felt that these kinds of initiatives bring SSA/UHSNET and the community closer to government, and some operational challenges are easily dealt with. He also noted that this activity was a good way of ensuring that community members are in touch with local leaders, and are a chance for leaders to account back to the community things they have undertaken to do. His fear was that SSA/UHSNET would have to continue to play a brokering role in bringing together the community members and duty bearers. This is something they would like to change, but they know it takes time.

4.2.9 The National Association of Professional Environmentalists

NAPE is supported, in part, by the SSNC, and concentrates on major environmental and natural resource issues. Its activities include rigorous research, maintaining continuous communication of research to public and private sector powers, mobilising local people into action to resist erosion of their environmental rights, and forging connections with national and international environmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth International.

Theory of Change. NAPE’s theory of change is based on a belief that Uganda will protect and conserve its environment and maintain fair economic growth through an alliance of the political weight of communities and the intellectual contribution of professionals. The core problem that NAPE seeks to overcome in order to protect the environment and the rights of Ugandan citizens to fair and sustainable growth is citizen fear of reprisal and a sense of hopelessness or cynicism that things cannot be changed for the better. People have real fears of challenging the status quo. The oil region, for example, has seen a rapid influx of armed security personnel. Local people also fear losing their livelihoods. People are often ignorant of the law or their rights,

and are not well-informed about the plans of private companies or the government; there is a great deal of misinformation. NAPE believes that people need information, large-scale solidarity and encouragement in order to overcome ignorance and fear and to work with private companies and government towards fair solutions.

NAPE has a history of high-profile advocacy, including a successful campaign with other environmental groups to preserve the Mabira Forest from clear-cutting by sugarcane planters. In this campaign, NAPE drew on the capabilities of its professional membership in pulling together facts and evidence to present to high-level decision makers. Since then, the organisation has added another element to its theory of change: community-driven mobilisation that provides political force from the base, to accompany the compelling logic of its professional research products.

NAPE workers believe that it is essential to mobilise citizens in large numbers to counteract the political forces of vested interests. They understand that sustained mobilisation comes from working on ‘burning issues’, things that ordinary people really care about. They also are aware that there are divisions within communities that can undermine solidarity against an environmental threat in the face of economic stress or other threats. It is a NAPE principle to be awake to social divisions such as gender, and to respect religious, community and cultural institutions where these are held as legitimate by local people.

NAPE pursues four main areas of action: ‘sustainability schools’, sub-granting to local groups, research, and communications/co-ordination. Sustainability schools are regular community dialogues, led by local volunteers, exploring sustainability, environmental change, shared leadership, campaigning, and the belief that they have rights and can succeed. Sub-granting is provided to local groups in the form of ‘core support’ i.e. NAPE trusts each local group to decide how to spend its money, just as SSNC does in its core support to NAPE and Sida does in its support to SFOs like SSNC. A core-support relationship requires agreement on principles and effective accountability mechanisms. NAPE speaks of its relationship with SSNC as a relationship of equals. The two organisations spend time debating principles and practices with each other and exchanging information from their respective areas of expertise, but neither one tells the other what to do.

NAPE’s professional environmentalists bring together empirical scientific data on, for example, levels of pollution and community views. A regular magazine finds its way to key government ministries, private sector companies, international organisations, fellow environmental groups and communities to create a continuous flow of evidence and argument.

Best practice. The immediate effects of NAPE’s work can be illustrated using one of its ongoing campaigns, which aims to prevent oil companies from dispossessing or polluting land occupied by small farmers in western Uganda. NAPE programme staff explain how citizen petitions and community groups coming to Kampala to demon-

strate outside Parliament illustrate the effects of sustainability schools. Staff members also note how community members are directly contacted by members of the media for updates on the oil story. They put this forward as evidence that the media and communities have developed sustained links independent of NAPE itself. Local campaign activities, such as organising peaceful protests at drilling sites, are cited as outputs of sub-granting activities, as are local initiatives to improve the environment or find alternative sources of income for those whose production is threatened. On the research side, NAPE cite strong demand from the National Environmental Authority (NEMA) and oil companies for copies of the campaign publications.

Immediate outcomes of NAPE's work include appreciation from the government, national and local media, oil companies and communities, on the basis of which these groups begin to interact with one another on the topics NAPE champions. The organisation can point to specific cases where land right claims have been upheld, where illegally sited oil wells have been closed, and where oil companies have found it expedient to meet standards. They also point to new legislation on oil exploration and production that has taken account of NAPE-generated evidence and community mobilisation.

5 Analysis of Findings

5.1 POOR PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF ENABLING CONDITIONS AND RIGHTS

EQ1 What are poor peoples' perceptions of the changes taking place, or not, in the enabling conditions needed to improve their living conditions?

EQ2 What actors, including Swedish CSO partners, can plausibly be inferred to be contributing positive changes in the enabling conditions?

EQ3 What does a human rights based perspective mean to people living in poverty and marginalisation?

Our RC findings illustrate multi-dimensional poverty, showing how intersecting vulnerabilities reinforce once another and hinder a sustainable exit from poverty. We learned that the personal difficulties and psychological stress that can overtake a person's life are made more dangerous by a decline in social support, especially in urbanising areas (Wakiso and Mbarara). All social services now have to be paid for. While many of the people we met during the RCs had enthusiasm and optimism and were managing to get by, they also explained that life is becoming ever more expensive and competition for every job or parcel of land is increasing. They told us that political and administrative corruption is not improving, undermining quality of and access to services, from education to justice. The difficulties of getting out of poverty and the ease with which a family can fall back into it are systemic: inequality, discrimination, corruption and unsustainable environmental practices are normal.

NGOs and activists have worked on rights awareness for many years, but we found little evidence in the RC locations that people believe that they can claim rights. Whatever they may have been told by civil society and government leaders about the existence of a right, their own assessment is based on what they have experienced and know to be real. In Wakiso and Mbarara people understand that they have a right to life, to family support, to private property, of access to market, a low quality school and a thinly stocked clinic, but few consider themselves entitled to equal economic, social, civil or political rights. In Pader, the right to life and bodily integrity seems more fragile after the war, but family norms are strong and land rights are being actively claimed. In the majority of cases people have most faith in and take most responsibility for rights embedded in tradition, since they can both claim these from and bestow them on one another. Most do not think that government sees ordinary citizens as rights-holders. When a government-appointed leader provides protection, provision or participation, it is looked on as a favour or as recompense for political allegiance.

Turning to human rights, with a focus on participation, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination, we find slow progress in our Wakiso, Pader and Mbarara sites.

The people living in poverty that we met feel that they have lost opportunities to participate in decisions affecting the development of the community. Today, *participation* is understood as getting a portion of any resources coming into the community from outside. For NGOs, this limited perception of participation presents a challenge. Many organisations believe that if citizens can increase their income and develop an awareness of rights, then they should be also able to claim more power over decisions in the community or even at higher levels of the political structure. The problem Uganda's poorest citizens face, however, is that government is not inviting substantial participation in decisions. They are also the last to get access to economic progress, so they mostly have less economic power than others. With increasing competition for jobs and markets, and with little discernible improvement in the quality and quantity of services, poor people face more hurdles than everyone else. Many NGOs promote savings groups as a means of empowerment and a way of training for participation. But these groups are often very difficult for poor people to participate in: they take up time and require a level of contribution that is often out reach of the very poor.

People expect to be *discriminated* against. They do not expect parity in service access or gender equality. Women and girls in Pader suffer high levels of gender discrimination and widespread sexual violence, with little resolution so far, even though the local courts are hearing cases. Problematic gender relations are everywhere in Uganda, despite many years of women's rights efforts. In Pader people are also acutely aware of the discrimination against northern Uganda that led to the war, but they acknowledge that efforts are now being made to rebalance the situation. Elsewhere in Uganda, there is widespread suspicion between different ethnic groups about favours to the larger groups that belong to the main alliance of power in Uganda. Even in Wakiso, where ethnicity is less visible in the shifting populations of peri-urban Kampala, political conversations are quick to revive ethnic divisions.

Similarly, in all RC sites, local people do not expect *transparency* in political, administrative or CSO decisions. They do not expect to have a right to information. Even if some officials do give out some information, people point out that it is piecemeal and there is no guarantee of accuracy.

Talk of *accountability* generates a variety of responses. Nobody expects accountability from government, particularly not from the country's leaders. They also do not expect to be accounted to by CSOs. People appreciate presidential gestures, but they do not expect them to be accountable. In Wakiso, we were told how people in savings groups often are not accountable to each other, although in Pader and Mbarara the sense was that accountability in such groups is still high.

While people that we met in the RC appreciate the work of NGOs when they can get access to them, they do not feel that they are accounted to, and have no sense of influence. They are aware that NGOs have to be accountable to donors and government. CSOs complain that the majority of the time and effort they put into accountability has to be directed towards their international funders, not to the communities they serve.

Local people in the RC locations are pragmatic. Most spend their time and effort on production, consolidating mutual support and assets, and finding ways to become strong enough to withstand insecurity and negative politics. They do not rely on the state to uphold rights, feeling that it is more likely to take them away, but that it can be cajoled, pressed or avoided.

Despite the difficulties, there are plausible contributions to change in enabling conditions and these must be guides to further strategy. Government documents demonstrate increasing recognition of rights, offering grounds for rights-claiming by effective CSOs. The courageous activities of human rights organisations indicate progress, even though such organisations are often threatened and sometimes closed down.

In general, in relation to how well they aligned with changing the more difficult conditions that might enable democracy and equality, we find a typology of three kinds of local organisations in Uganda (including, but not exclusively the LPOs):

- Type A (least aligned): Most organisations in Uganda work to supplement government services, making space for citizens to participate within non-transparent, discriminatory, and unaccountable government structures.
- Type B (partially aligned): Some organisations advocate for policy change, working to challenge government constructively, but bound by the rules of that same often non-transparent, discriminatory, and unaccountable government.
- Type C (most aligned): A small number of organisations act as independent critical bodies, attempting to raise the cost to government of failing to respect the rights of its citizens, and sometimes suffering the consequences of their actions

Among the LPOs there are also examples of plausible contribution. IAS(U) has shown how local support can accelerate economic empowerment, albeit slowly and painstakingly. The NAPE and SSA/UHSNET examples demonstrate that a measure of responsiveness can be demanded and achieved through collective rights-claiming. Their work presses on the levers of politics and publicity – on the political interests of the elected officials at the SSA/UHSNET clean-up day, or on the concerns of oil companies to demonstrate a good environmental record in the NAPE case. These suc-

successful examples of collective and individual rights-claiming give reason for optimism.

5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF LOCAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS TO POSITIVE CHANGE

Q4 What is the relevance, alignment and feasibility of the theory of change, strategies and interventions of the Swedish CSOs and their partners?

Q5 What plausible contribution can be inferred about the role of CSO capacity development and enhancement in the context, and in relation to the key issue?

Q6 What are the theories of change and strategies of Swedish CSO partners, and what do the four human rights principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability mean in their practice?

The three LPOs – IAS(U), SSA/UHSNET and NAPE – provide us with illustrations of how contributions are made.

5.2.1 International Aid Services (Uganda)

There is alignment between the concerns of people we met during our RC visits to Pader and the issues prioritised by IAS(U). We heard concerns that included clearing land, growing and marketing crops, having accessible water and resolving issues of alcoholism, sexual violence and leadership. IAS(U) is supporting people on all these issues. Its work has relevance. In operating in a way that focuses on immediate needs, psychological and spiritual strength and self-help, IAS(U) is in alignment with the norms of local society, in which those who have resources and power are expected to take a lead on advising people what to do. In a vacuum of leadership, it appears that IAS(U)'s contribution in leading on behaviour and action is appreciated by the groups to which it gives support. In Pari we found that people took action without NGO support in relation to matters agricultural and financial, but they had not taken action on social issues such as sexual violence, nor had they found ways to counteract the vacuum of leadership. It may be that in this regard, IAS(U) leadership offers something that would not otherwise be available. Staff members agree that many of the enabling conditions that should be supplied by government are out of reach, because “the government is not responsive.”

IAS(U) is an example of an organisation that is tackling one of the most difficult elements of enablement – personal, household and community power – through a capacity-building approach. It works on enabling conditions by addressing material needs and community leadership at the same time. The IAS(U) approach of dialogues and group formation, unlike many others, tackles the problem of psychological stress directly, encouraging positive thinking and enhancing vital supportive relations between individuals. However there are many questions about whether the IAS approach is enough, even in over several years, to challenge lack of accountability and

negative discrimination and whether it truly creates leadership, or simply reproduces an elite and exclusive leadership structure. The organisation is aware that it needs to ask itself if its approach could be more empowering, but knows the size of this task, given that local people do not feel empowered or demand accountability, generally fearing their leaders and feeling unable to challenge them. The NGO itself is discouraged from asking critical questions and making demands of local government, but nonetheless has increased its attention to matters of civic competence as its self-help income activities are hindered by poor local infrastructure.

The relevance of the idea of real personal and group empowerment to people living in poverty in Pader is high, as is the relevance of material support for income generation, and support for regenerating leadership and civic competence. The work of IAS(U) is well-aligned, both with the ambitions of the Swedish CS strategy for improving enabling conditions, and with the ambitions of local people. But the question of feasibility is more difficult. How can these efforts begin to snowball into real empowerment, and how can they create lasting change, given the difficult economic, political and social circumstances in which the community members find themselves?

5.2.2 Shelter and Settlement Alternatives/Ugandan Human Settlement Network

From our RC encounters in Wakiso, we learned that key issues for local people include land, housing, sanitation, education and employment. SSA/UHSNET works on the first three of these, so its programmes are relevant. They are also aligned with the political realities of housing in Uganda, for example playing to the needs of political leaders for votes. But this alignment also means that their efforts, such as the clean-up day, risk being attention-grabbing exercises, rather than consistent processes for improving enabling conditions.

SSA/UHSNET considers that its effectiveness comes from the active participation of its members, while direct interface with the community has been useful in building a constituency. On-the-ground activities build community capacities to demand rights through collaborative work with leaders, as well as promoting dialogue on community challenges.

The network promotes *non-discrimination* in its efforts for people in the most difficult situations, and, in particular, to promote the rights to housing of people who are discriminated against, such as those with HIV/AIDS or disabilities. It also puts effort into dealing with issues of gender. It promotes the poor peoples' *participation* in both self-help and local advocacy efforts, including calls for government and private sector *accountability and transparency* in basic protection and provision. It also makes significant use of the media for accountability and transparency.

The SSA/UNSNET leadership notes that most people living in poverty would be satisfied with a decent house, rather than *a right* to a decent house that may never be realised. Speed of progress in housing is very slow, with people living in poverty in

urban areas lacking an enabling environment. As the urban population grows rapidly, housing conditions get worse. The network also reports challenges at a political level: the motivation of the lower tiers of local governments to serve the people is questionable.

The network consciously combines advocacy with service delivery activities. Rather than leaving the task of concrete interventions to its members, it regards it as necessary to be directly active to support the poor. It is not clear whether this relates to an externally-driven results based agenda, which is demanded by both government and donors – producing actual savings and actual housing, rather than working on more abstract and possibly political matters such as legislation and policy – or to the strategic benefits of having a constituency of claimants to help make the point about housing. But the feasibility of achieving objectives of housing rights remains a long way off.

5.2.3 National Association of Professional Environmentalists

NAPE's programme promotes environmental rights, using an approach that respects all players, from diverse members of a community through to elite leaders. Their work appears to be on course to uphold citizen rights, protect citizens from harm done by third parties, and provide compensation.

The organisation uses *non-discrimination* as a means of creating strength for its campaigns. The sustainability schools emphasise diversity in order to get different people involved. Different strengths – of women, young people or traditional leaders, for example – are deliberately sought through the system of volunteers. Non-discrimination is also evident in the way professionals from Kampala will come and support local protestors to resist environmental incursions.

Participation also features quite strongly in NAPE's approach. Since their theory of change involves a mixture of quality knowledge and significant numbers (a sense of the political weight of those protesting an environmental abuse), it is important to NAPE that they encourage the greatest number of people to take responsibility and take part. This is why the organisation puts emphasis on 'burning issues'. It is possible that if the issue were less threatening, poor people in particular would simply be less willing to act, having to make the usual delicate calculations of how to use their time and whether to risk their physical or other forms of capital.

On issues of *transparency and accountability*, NAPE reports that in order for it to remain safe as a small ant biting a large animal, it must make itself completely above suspicion by being transparent and accountable to government and the private sector with which it engages. It is not clear whether it extends the same degree of transparency and accountability towards community members and volunteers.

In its operational approach, NAPE shows respect for participation, transparency, accountability and non-discrimination. Looked at through a NAPE lens, it seems clear that the Swedish CS strategy is right to emphasise these ideals. But there are also other criteria that make it possible for NAPE to be successful. A combination of (a) the *quality of the NAPE community approach* which is based on respect for people's ability to take up an issue and uses a mode of 'consciousness raising'; (b) *an issue large enough* to threaten livelihoods; and (c) *national level lobbying* moving in concert with local action, can lead to a change in conditions. When this happens, local people begin to see participation as worthwhile, contact the media, and take part in demonstrations in an attempt to influence power-holders and protect livelihoods. However, not all communities are faced with a threat as profound as oil pollution, and not all issues leverage international corporate social and environmental responsibility concerns in the way that the oil question does.

NAPE is an example of an organisation that supports citizens, including people living in poverty, to claim environmental rights from government and international companies. The organisation shows that it is possible to develop effective partnerships with whole communities using the HRBA. It also uses HRBA principles in its relations with allies and creates solidarity across differently positioned actors, all of whom have a part to play in pushing for change. It is a powerful coalition approach that includes other CSOs, both local and international. The organisation conducts dialogue with powerful actors in government and the private sector, backed by this substantial coalition.

NAPE does not find that donor funding distorts its choices, nor does it appear to suffer co-option by the authorities. The organisation has an articulate leader, which may be particularly important in Uganda because of the culture of respect for individuals rather than institutions. NAPE's focus on 'burning issues' draws strength rather than weakness from the poor socio-economic conditions suffered by communities as grounds for protest and lobbying.

Some members of government would prefer environmental organisations to conform to the individualisation and co-option agenda. According to NAPE's Director, the government tells environmental organisations that they should concern themselves with tree planting and cleaning up sewage. NAPE resists these suggestions: "we are fighting for human rights and democracy. NAPE is not in service delivery."

NAPE's success also comes down to its support from groups such as SSNC, which have core funding; its ability to put pressure not only on government but on international companies that have concerns about their public profile and want to get a deal for oil extraction; and its genuine respect for the intelligence and capabilities of communities and natural leaders within them.

5.2.4 The role of Swedish framework organisations

What are SFOs doing to help remove the hindrances that limit the use of the HRBA in Uganda? The money they raise for their partners, their efforts to support them, and the links they provide to international networks are widely appreciated. In several cases, however, we observed delicate relations between an international and local organisation, with the SFO trying not to tell its Uganda partner what to do, and the Ugandan partner guessing what the SFO wants. Ugandan partners also talked about a heavy burden of reporting requirements. SFOs suggest that Sida expects this level of reporting from them, and that they must pass on the requirement to the LPOs. LPOs prize their partnerships with SFOs and give these reports high priority. It is not entirely clear how much and what kind of reporting is a specific Sida requirement, and how much the existing form and quantity of reporting is done on the basis of habit. We may underestimate how hard it is for SFOs and LPOs to nudge one another out of old habits..

Relations between national and international development agencies in general have long been characterised by delicate power relations, positive language, a focus on money rather than principles, and a tendency for there to be a belief on both sides that the other has power. This problem is in no way limited to Swedish and Ugandan organisations. These power relations can get in the way of transparency and accountability, mask discrimination and undermine full participation at different levels of the aid chain.

5.2.5 How does the Swedish civil society strategy contribute to changes in enabling conditions?

The Swedish CS strategy has made a contribution to enhancing the capacity of LPOs to apply the HRBA and to operate in the Uganda context. However the feasibility of achieving a substantial change in enabling conditions is low.

In general, we find that the capacity building carried out through the Swedish CS strategy via SFOs and LPOs is making a plausible contribution to small changes in enabling conditions. Their work is relevant to and aligned with the strategies of people living in poverty. LPOs appreciate the way their partnerships with SFOs enable them not only to access resources, but also to participate in international networks, debates and trainings. They argue that these opportunities are invaluable in increasing their knowledge, expanding their ideas and giving them opportunities to refine their arguments and practices.

However, if one of the purposes of the strategy is to build an effective civil society that can fight against those conditions that are infringing the human rights of people in poverty, it has shortcomings. LPOs say that SFOs, as foreign organisations, cannot do much to support them in standing up to government, and that what they need are local alliances, not only with other organisations like themselves, but also with citi-

zens and other kinds of leaders. LPOs and other members of civil society argue that the donor drive for attributable and verifiable results in projects makes it more difficult for them to address deeper causes of poverty, inequality and marginalisation. They claim that are not given the time or money to work on these hard-to-measure aspects of development.

6 Conclusions: Relevance, alignment and feasibility

6.1 RELEVANCE, ALIGNMENT AND FEASIBILITY OF THE SWEDISH CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY

The strategy fits into what we are doing. It's a kind of matching. With each training it becomes clearer. (LPO Director)

How relevant is the Swedish CS strategy to the concerns of poor and marginalised people in Uganda? How aligned are its operations with their own strategies? How feasible is it for Sida to make a difference to people living in extreme poverty in Uganda through this instrument?

6.1.1 Relevance

The Swedish CS strategy encompasses an understanding of factors that are central to achieving social justice. Our findings in the three sites, and discussions with LPOs, civil society actors, experts and professionals indicate that the strategy is relevant to the main survival strategies of people living in poverty, but that it is less relevant to the structural problems of injustice and inequality from which they suffer.

Thus the longer-term objectives of the strategy – democratisation and a vibrant civil society – are out of reach at present. From our limited view, we saw basic enabling conditions (income generation, group solidarity) being enhanced in Uganda, and instances of government responsiveness to CSO advocacy pressure, but we saw little or no consistent improvement in the other conditions that are vital to a good life, such as absence of stress, presence of good leadership, possibilities for effective civic engagement, systematic responsive government and equal rights.

6.1.2 Alignment

What is the degree of alignment or congruence between the Swedish CS strategy and the strategies of Swedish CSOs, their partners and people living in poverty?

The Swedish CS strategy is aligned with the strategies of the SFOs and their LPOs, and is open to a range of different approaches to implementing the HRBA. Sida acknowledges that democratisation may be a long way off in many countries, and that the HRBA may have to begin with attention to basic needs, along with recognition of rights failures.

The strategy is aligned with the status quo. It is not averse to innovation, but innovation is not widespread, at least in the Uganda case. The way LPOs work in Uganda, with full support from SFO partners and Sida, is in many ways conservative. The causes of this conservatism include the disabling conditions for civil society in Uganda, the active choice of agencies to be conservative, and the limitations of funding procedures between SFOs and LPOs or LPOs and their partners, which are heavily oriented towards showing visible results. LPOs explain that they feel they should show short-term results, such as groups having savings, which though important, are not challenging the deeper problems that people face.

6.1.3 Feasibility

How feasible or realistic is the Swedish CS strategy? It is based on the theory that by building the rights-claiming capacity of citizens and CSOs, services will improve, rights be enhanced and poverty reduced. The strategy also indicates that democratisation can be encouraged by CSOs in a mediating role between citizens and the state. In Uganda, citizens living in poverty are not demanding change from government.

First, the people that we met during the RCs did not see NGOs as a route to social transformation, but rather as sources of material assistance and guidance. This is useful, but insufficient. Many people we talked to viewed NGOs as impressive, but unaccountable and unpredictable. True partnership between people living in poverty and organisations that would support and represent them is not happening on a wide enough scale to make a difference in Uganda.

Second, the advocacy carried out by CSOs has a limited effect, at least in the short term. The political economy is very elite-oriented and the conditions under which advocates operate are unfavourable. Political competition does not rely on the opinions of the electorate about whether political leaders have done a good job on public services, so there is little incentive for them to push for better services. Instead political competition relies on elites navigating their relations with one another in order to gain wealth and power. The public has little incentive to demand better services because they fear reprisal and they cannot see how they can make an impact.

There are possibilities for making progress on human rights, democracy and poverty reduction in Uganda, as demonstrated by each of the LPOs met during this evaluation, in their own ways. Although some commentators argue that the situation is worsening for civil society in Uganda, there are others who point to indications that change is under way.

6.1.4 Civil society as a field of power

The Swedish CS strategy works very well when the right conditions are in place. For example, strategic support to SSNC is passed on to NAPE, who in turn use it quite effectively to collaborate with communities and professionals in lobbying for envi-

ronmental rights. But this degree of relevance, alignment and feasibility is not universal. Partners do not always manage to use the HRBA to such good effect.

The strategy is underpinned by an assumption that civil society is a collection of associations, which each has different degrees of effect depending on the conditions, rules, laws, norms and political processes that structure the possibilities of its work. In conditions like those in today's Uganda, where there is hostility to the idea of CSOs playing a role in identifying and claiming rights, a flow of resources to individual organisations like that provided by the strategy may not be enough. Government actively discourages CSOs from collaborating with citizens to change the deep structural conditions that disable poor people. Neither are CSOs encouraged to work on the conditions that constrain the freedoms and powers of civil society itself.

An alternative way of understanding civil society is to see it as a sphere of interaction that must include citizens as well as organisations. The whole field provides a counterweight to excesses of elite power, opens channels for citizens to demand change, mobilises the beliefs and interests of ordinary people, and creates mechanisms of redress for those who suffer inequality and negative discrimination. The field is created by the interaction of people, organisations, ideas and events. A strategy that understands civil society as a field would put emphasis on making *the field* – not just its individual components – *work better*. This would include creating enabling spaces for civil society actors to work in active collaboration with citizens on efforts to transform the system that tramples on the human rights of poor people. Such a shift in the foundational theory would suggest an emphasis on capacity *mobilising* within civil society, and would give priority to internal co-operation for creating a powerful field.

This study has highlighted the importance of enabling conditions, not only for people living in poverty, but for civil society itself. These conditions are important in terms of both the broad (but, in Uganda, narrowing) arena where civil society operates, the spaces and mechanisms by which civil society actors engage with one another, with citizens *en masse*, with powerful actors and with governance processes. If the Swedish CS strategy is to support civil society actors to do better work, it must encompass a theory of how to achieve the conditions of a liberated civil society.

7 Recommendations

7.1 SUGGESTIONS FROM LOCAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

In October 2014, in a meeting in Kampala, 35 members of Ugandan civil society helped us to develop a set of recommendations to Sida. After presenting the findings from the evaluation study, we worked together on a situation analysis of civil society and concluded with four questions as to how to improve enabling conditions for a better performing civil society:

Q1. What conditions would free civil society to mobilise its own and others' capacity? How can civil society and others bring these conditions about?

The political economy influences the space for civil society in Uganda and civil society organisations need to work to change this situation and/or reduce its negative influence on their powers to act as effective supporters of pro-poor change. To do this, civil society organisations need to become more independent of international finance by raising at least some resources locally. CSOs should propose longer projects and more programmatic funding and implement these effectively. They should work together to create a conducive legal environment in Uganda while also debating and developing an approach to human rights that fits well with local realities. CSOs should sign up to an internally-managed quality assurance certification system.

Q2. How can civil society organizations approach service delivery in a way that advances people's rights to services, in particular in pushing for the entitlements of the very poor to equal treatment?

Ugandan citizens are markedly resilient and have done much towards national and local development. CSOs have already contributed to significant change in Uganda. To improve on this progress, they should commit to basing programmes on comprehensive situation analysis and active participation of community in design and implementation of development activities. They should encourage community resource mobilisation, community scrutiny of services and other watchdog roles and, if giving services, set limits. Civil society needs to know the legal and policy provisions relating to rights to basic services, and rights awareness among citizens has to be linked with realising the right itself and to establishing functional mechanisms for feedback between the community and duty bearers, e.g. community monitors using information and communication technologies.

Q3. How can CSOs approach advocacy in a way that advances people's civic and political rights and changes conditions for civil society activism?

Links to international partners are helpful in giving advocacy groups in Uganda access to evidence and information. Advocacy needs to be long-term, well-informed and systematic. It should bring citizens on board and help build a culture of activism for social justice. It should rely on local resources as well as those from outside, to create ownership. CSOs should work together more as social movements. They should be innovative and creative.

Q4. How could a funding strategy improve incentives for co-operation around an effective civil society that promotes the rights of people who are poor and discriminated against?

Funding should be longer term. It should emphasise CSO cooperation rather than competition. At the moment CSOs compete for donor funding and ignore synergy.

7.2 EVALUATORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the above suggestions and on the study findings, we suggest the following areas where the strategy could increase its effectiveness:

1. The HRBA provides important guiding principles to Sida, SFOs and LPOs. However, when it is accompanied by an orientation towards a results-based approach, its principles can be adopted in a cosmetic way, in conditions where it is not easy to do much else. Under pressure to show results, agencies may measure participation by citizens' passive attendance at self-help groups or committees, and government or NGO accountability may be measured by pronouncements rather than actions. To avoid such unintended consequences, it would be useful for *Sida to agree with SFOs, and SFOs agree with LPOs, how the results-orientation can be best aligned with the HRBA in each context*. This might include consideration of the extent to which citizens can become rights-holding members of the NGOs that assist them, rather than beneficiaries.
2. CSOs face many obstacles in acting with courage and independence, in setting the agenda for social justice with citizens. Their fears of reprisals, or of loss of income are genuine. To support parts of civil society to become more oriented towards social movement building and learning and to include both CSOs and citizens, the strategy could include *an instrument for encouraging inter-agency co-operation on social justice and multi-dimensional poverty*. Such an instrument would include funding for activities, including learning and action research, that involve collaborative action between CSOs and between CSOs and citizens. Given the sensitivities in Uganda it may be wisest to begin with rights to social services, employment and environmental security in ways that are gender, ethnic and

age-sensitive. These rights are less immediately political than civic rights or anti-corruption, important as these latter issues are. There is already a small measure of political response on public service provision, for example.

CSOs need space, time and money to focus on supporting innovative social action that co-operates with ordinary people and recognises the complexities of multi-dimensional poverty. An additional collective instrument could make opportunities for CSOs to learn from peers and to generate collaborative actions for which funding could be made available.

3. To promote only the kind of competition between agencies that creates better quality work, rather than that which creates a scramble for available resources, SFOs could be encouraged to co-operate with one another at a country level to agree on ways of working that increase solidarity between LPOs as well as between LPOs and citizens in relation to claiming basic rights. SFOs should consider the kind of funding given to LPOs and the ways in which they call their partners to account, *aiming for more strategic partnerships all the way down the line. Sida, SFOs and LPOs should meet to examine the reporting they give each other, and agree to streamline it where possible.*
4. To create a well-informed, courageous and vibrant civic field, the strategy should support LPOs and SFOs to keep alert to political and social opportunities by offering *safe spaces for learning and debate* on how to make progress on social justice in difficult conditions. The Swedish Embassy could play a role in convening and stimulating such spaces, offering additional political support to courageous civil society work. International SFOs should also be encouraged to work together on analysing the civic field in relation to social justice in Uganda with a view to providing more support to strengthening the field.
5. Community members complained that capacity building is not well aligned to their particular concerns and interests. Capacity building, in many cases, has become another word for providing training, material inputs and leadership through NGO projects. The strategy should give more emphasis to *mobilising existing capacity*. Existing capacity is the strengths already present and initiatives already begun by community members. Support to mobilising existing capacity could include, but not be limited to, capacity ‘building’ to add new skills and knowledge. Mobilising citizen’s existing efforts means finding ways to give these efforts support and seeking models of leadership and provisioning that have lasting effect.

Annex 1 Methodology

1. Site selection

The researchers selected and lived briefly with households in areas that fall within the domains, thematic priorities and geographic regions where Swedish CSO-supported community based and civil society organisations and are working. RCs were given greater time and priority in Round 1 (3–5 days) than in Round 2 (2–3 days), in order to allow more time in the second round to get to know the local organisations. Nonetheless, the return visits were invaluable for identifying change or stasis, and for deepening understanding of household realities.

The RC began with selection of three districts in different parts of Uganda, and selected these districts on the basis of two criteria:

- a) It is a district where CSOs allied to SFOs are active.
- b) It is a district that highlights a specific key issue worked on by one or more LPO, while also showing a diversity of political, economic and social conditions.

The selected districts were Pader, Mbarara and Wakiso districts in north, west and central Uganda respectively. Each district presents a known key issue and demonstrates distinct regional variations in terms of economic status, demography, geography, civil society activity, ethnicity, political power and history of violent conflict.

- i) Pader is a northern district only recently emerged from over 20 years of civil war. Key issue: post-conflict reconstruction.
- ii) Mbarara is a western district with substantial agricultural production and powerful political representation. Key issue: environment.
- iii) Wakiso is a district that surrounds Kampala municipality, representing Uganda's rapid urban growth. Key issue: young people's livelihoods.

See Table 1 in the main text for a summary of the selected sites and key issues and the SFOs and LPOs relevant to each site.

2. Reality checks

An RC is an immersion of several days with a household and community, which identifies the perspectives of people living in poverty. As its originators describe it, an immersion “extends the tradition of the ‘listening study’ (a method used by researchers to understand social reality by listening and documenting what people have

to say) by requiring researchers to stay for several days and nights in the homes of poor families and join in their lives.”⁵¹

This approach involves developing relationships of respect, living with and co-researching with people, following their leads, interests and contacts in order to inquire what is important to them and how they go about their lives, and analysing context and change with them, with particular emphasis on issues of power for change. The RCA emphasises: *living with*, rather than visiting; *conversations*, rather than interviews; *learning*, rather than finding out; *inclusion* of all members of households; and *ordinary interaction* with frontline service providers⁵²

The team used the RCA to gain diverse perspectives about realities and changes in people’s lives. The RCs for this study sought to understand how people understood rights and the HRBA principles, what their priorities were, and what changes in enabling conditions they were achieving or would like to achieve in the context of development projects, programmes and wider social change initiatives.

Teams of between two and four people, a mix of Ugandans and outsiders, went to each site.⁵³ Once in the district centres, the teams met with district authorities to brief them on the study and make sure of permission to proceed. Within a district (or county) there are several sub-counties, and within these a number of parishes. We chose our locations through discussions with key informants, looking for parishes where we would find poor households for whom the known key issues would be relevant in some way. We then chose our households, first by contacting key informants in the settlement and then by walking through the settlement and chatting with people. We looked for households that were clearly poor, and where our known key issue could be expected to be relevant.

We spent four or five days with one household, or a day or two each with more than one household, staying the nights where appropriate. We spent much time with the householders, their children and relatives, and also with their neighbours. We went with them to market or on their errands and to their workplaces, and there met other people and chatted with them. Our aim was not only to learn about the key issues we had already identified, but also to understand the other issues that were given priority

⁵¹ <http://reality-check-approach.com/approach>

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Pader: Josephine Ahikire and Harriet Pamara (CBR) and Rosie McGee (IDS). Mbarara: Joanita Tumwikirize (CBR) and Patta Scott-Villiers (IDS). Wakiso: Margaret Aduto, Margaret Nakibuuka (CBR) and Eberhard Gohl (Impact Plus).

by the householders, their relatives and neighbours. We returned to these same households a second time after 12 months to feed back our analysis and deepen our relationship and learning.

3. Meso-level inquiry

3.1 *Interviews*

This inquiry used mixed qualitative methods to find out about the relevant civic, social and political actors, including the LPOs of SFOs, and their allies engaged with the same issues, geographic areas and populations. This inquiry complemented and responded to the RC findings, using interviews, learning events and secondary data.

In each district we interviewed between 10 and 20 local key informants to ask about issues arising from the RC households. We also interviewed between 5 and 15 representatives of local organisations and the local administration.

In the capital city Kampala, we interviewed a wide range of key informants able to give a national view on the issues arising from our RC communities. We discussed the evaluation and interviewed the Programme Officer at the Swedish Embassy responsible for civil society. For a list of all interviewees, see Annex 2.

Interviews were semi-structured as follows:

- a. Introduce the evaluation.
- b. Establish informed consent to the interview: clarify whether the interviewee wishes to be named or not, give assurance of confidentiality of data.
- c. Request the interviewee to locate her/his own work within a wider context of civil society in Uganda.
- d. Request the interviewee to focus on an area of civil society action that she/he feels is important for us to understand, allow the conversation to go as deeply into that area and its issues as the interviewee wishes.
- e. Keep in mind the RC findings and raise any appropriate items for discussion.
- f. If possible give the interviewee a quick review of key points at the end of the interview.

3.2. *Learning with local partner organizations*

The team conducted a series of workshops and interviews in Pader and Kampala with key staff from LPOs selected as learning partners. Team members also spent time observing the activities of the LPOs as they went about their work. Additionally they conducted interviews with LPO staff in Pader, Wakiso, Mbarara and Kampala. The team conducted the organisational inquiry through engaging in deep dialogue with the three learning partners so that they could learn what they did and when they were doing things as best they could, asking how they aligned themselves with the realities of people living in poverty and asking how well Sida and the SFOs supported them to achieve this alignment. This data was then used to evaluate the relevance, alignment and feasibility of the Swedish CS strategy.

The learning work with the three LPOs was carried out as follows:

In 2013 team members conducted interviews with the Kampala representatives of the three selected partner organisations, SSA/UHSNET, IAS(U) and NAPE. An agreed interview with members of the Pader local office of IAS(U) did not take place as the team found the office locked and empty when they arrived for the scheduled appointment on their last day in the district. An interview with NAPE local volunteers in Mbarara took place in 2014.

In spring 2014 the evaluation team organised a half-day workshop for the representatives of the three learning partners and their Swedish partners (also attended by members of CIVSAM). The meeting consisted of identifying LPO and SFO best practices. This demonstrated the appreciative inquiry approach and secured agreement to go ahead with a learning engagement. The learning was specified as learning about what works in Ugandan conditions and the alignment of the Swedish CS strategy support with that best practice.

In summer 2014 team members conducted a three day visit with each of the three organisations – IAS(U) in Pader, SSA/UHSNET in Kampala and NAPE in Kampala. In February 2015 team members spent 1 to 2 days observing the LPOs in action in the field.

The dialogues consisted of a series of three half-day workshops for each organisation, plus travel, preparation and documentation time. For these events, IAS(U) provided one member of staff, NAPE provided four, and SSA/UHSNET provided two. In each case the organisation's director took part. Team members also reviewed the LPO and SFO published materials in hard copy and online.

Workshop 1 consisted of a discussion of the best practice of the organisation, at which examples were given and details clarified. The team was challenging in these sessions, to make sure that they really understood how the organisation worked when it was working at its best. They sought to clarify why these practices were deemed to work well. When the organisation was achieving its best work, it was dealing with context and aligning itself with the interests of its beneficiaries in the most effective way.

Workshop 2 consisted of developing a theory of change with each organisation, using the best practice results of workshop 1. The theory of change was developed with the staff and the final product agreed by the LPO participants. The purpose of creating the theory of change was to systematise the practice of the organisation in relation to context, and explore the alignment with the RC findings.

Workshop 3 consisted of a discussion of how the organisation's theory of change was aligned or not with the theory of change of the Swedish CS strategy, leading to an

exploration of the opportunities and challenges in the relations between the LPO, the SFO and Sida. The results of the three-day process were summarised to the participants and validated with them. The purpose of this final session was to agree with each organisation an evaluation of the Swedish CS strategy in relation to their own work.

These learning processes were followed by field visits – in Pader to meet self-help groups with IAS(U), in Kampala with SSA/UHSNET to a city clean-up day, and in Mbarara to visit a NAPE community mobiliser.

In addition to learning with the three organisations, the team also conducted numerous interviews with members of civil society and experts on civil society in the districts and in the capital city. Most of the conclusions about the situation, approach and perspectives of civil society in Uganda, to which the example LPOs belong, is gleaned from these interviews and from published literature on civil society and poverty reduction in Uganda and the validation events with Ugandan CSOs. The material from the learning engagements was used specifically to evaluate the functioning of the strategy.

Annex 2 Interviews and Meetings

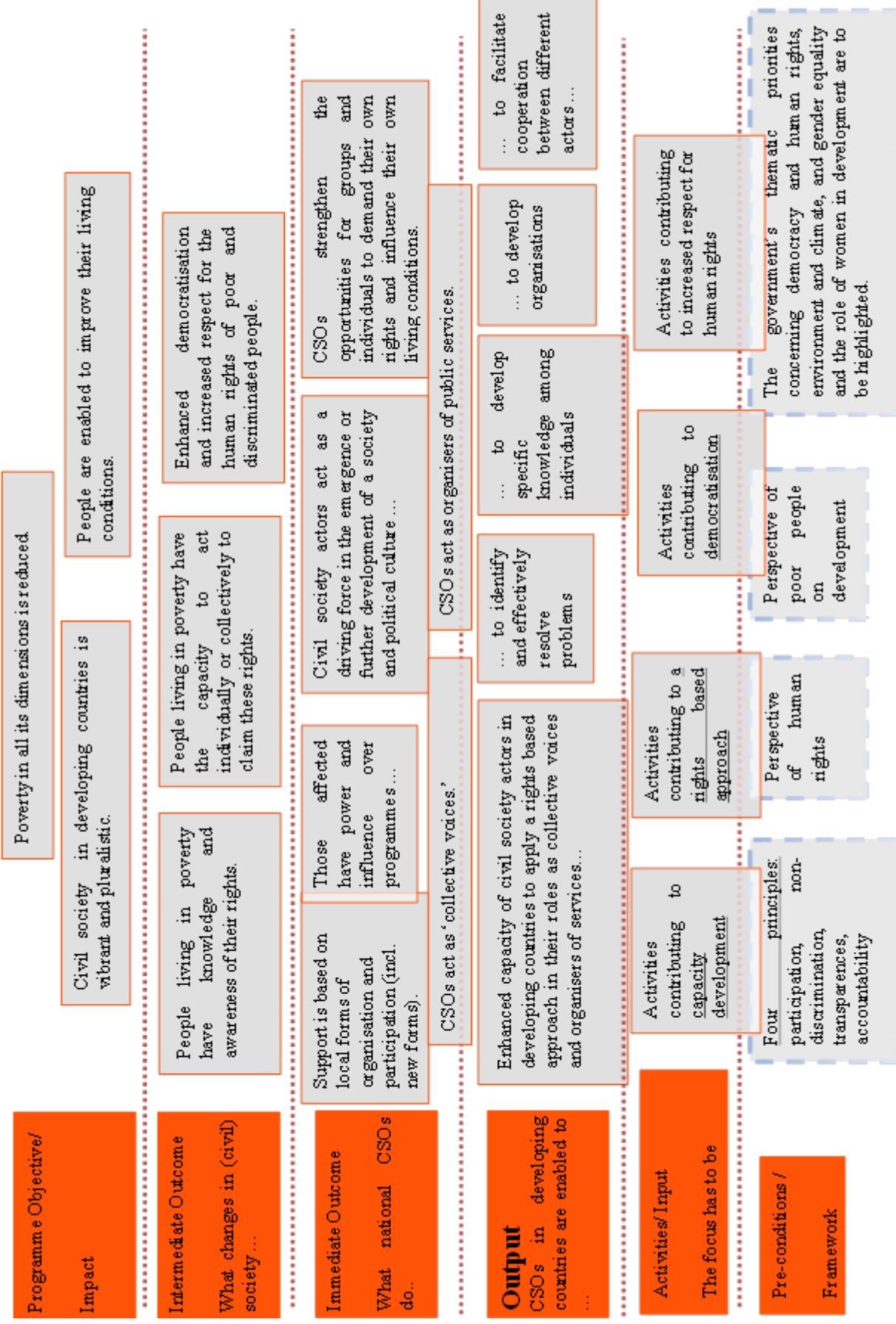
Name	Organisation
Arthur	ActionAid International, Kampala
Kiyingi David	Adventist Development Relief Agency, Wakiso
Bishop Zac	Christian leader, Kampala
Amony Catherine	Community Development Office, Pader
Gerald Twesigye	Conservation Effort for Community Development, Mbarara
Nicolas De Torrente	Deepening Democracy Programme, Kampala
Lars Christensten	Democratic Governance Facility, Kampala
Justus Rugambwa	Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Organizations, Kampala
Baraki Yona	Development Initiative International, Mbarara
Maureen Nahwera	Embassy of Sweden, Kampala
Irene Ovonji	Uganda Association of Women Lawyers, Kampala
Joseph Enyimu	Government of Uganda, Economic Development, Policy and Research Department, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
Margaret Kakande	Government of Uganda, Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit
Albert Byamugisha	Government of Uganda, Coordination and Monitoring
George Odong	Gulu NGO Forum
Mohamed Ndifuna	Uganda Human Rights Network, Kampala
Juliet Namukasa	IAS, Kampala
Joy Kwesiga	Kabale University
Jesse Kamstra	Lutheran World Federation, Kampala
Naomi Achera	Lutheran World Federation, Pader
Sali Simba	Makerere University, Political Science and Public Administration
Joe Oloka Onyango	Makerere University, School of Law
Justus Kibanda	Mbarara Farmers' Association
Imam Kasozi	Uganda Muslim Youth Assembly
Frank Muramuzi	NAPE, Kampala
Rafab Yusu Bwengye	NAPE, Kampala
Akoragye Edwin	NAPE, Mbarara
Peter Werike	National Organization of Trade Unions, Kampala
Achilles Byaruhanga	Nature Uganda, Kampala

Sister Jane	Nature Uganda, Mbarara University
Amb. Kangwagye Gabriel	Government of Uganda, NGO Board
Josephine Akia	National Organic Agricultural Organisation of Uganda, Kampala
Moses Muwanga	National Organic Agricultural Organisation of Uganda, Kampala
Stella Grace Lutalo	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management, Kampala
Dorothy Baziwe	SSA/USHNET
Martin Agaba	SSA/USHNET
Kuzirump Julius	Southwestern Initiative Community Counselling, Mbarara
Margaret Mutungi	St Aloysius Primary School, Mbarara
Sister Beata	St Francis School of Psycho-Social Counselling, Mbarara
Patrick Okello	Uganda Cooperative Alliance, Kampala
Leonard Msemakweli	Uganda Cooperative Alliance, Kampala
Robert Patrick	Uganda Cooperative Alliance, Mbarara
Dorothy Baziwe	Uganda Human Settlements Network, Kampala
Steven Ouma	Uganda Journalists Union, Kampala
Charles Ogang	Uganda National Farmers Federation, Kampala
Leonard Okello	Uhuru Foundation, Kampala
Sharon Achiro	ZOA Pader

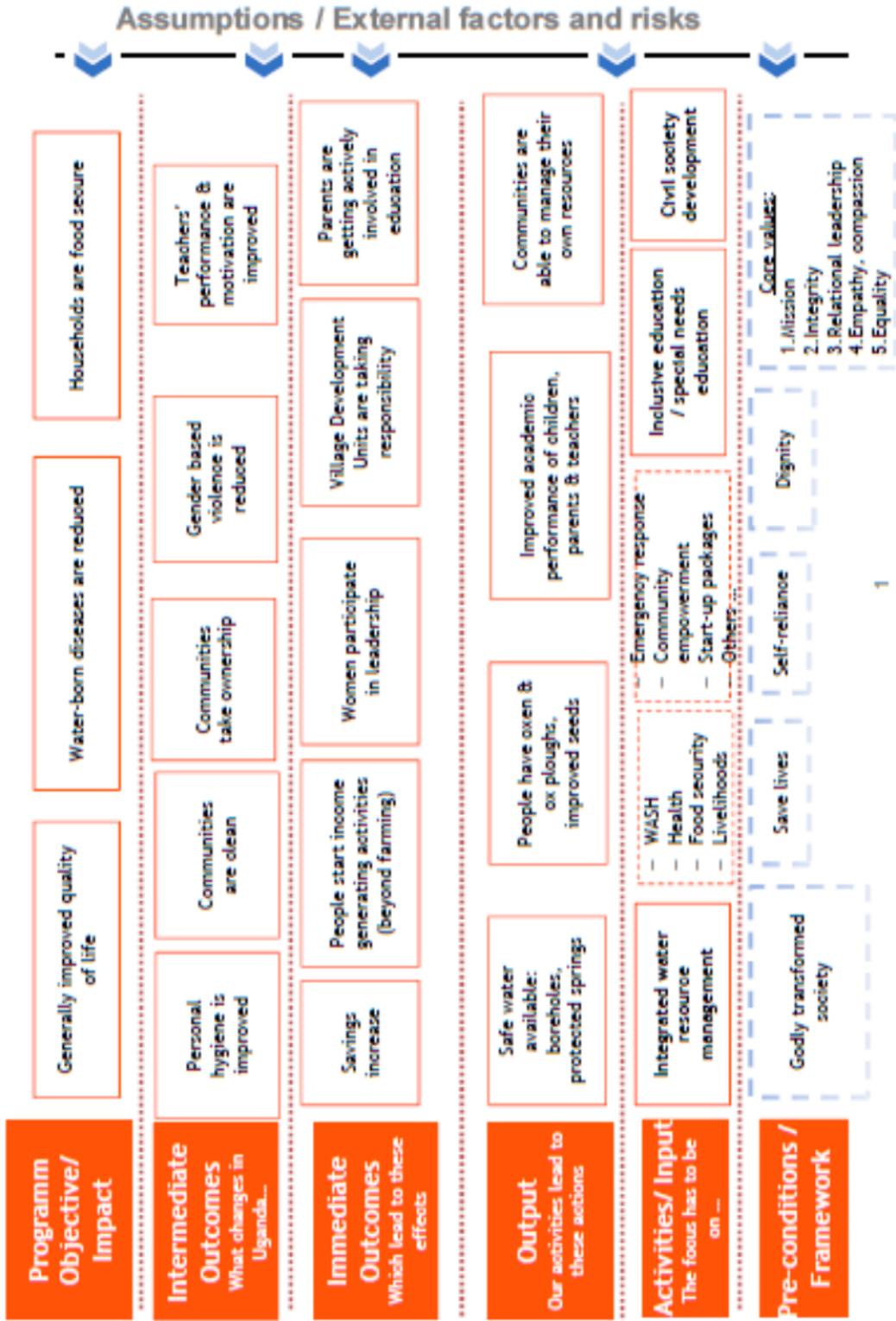
1. Participants at the Validation Event, October 2014	
Name	Organisation
Gimbo Harriet	Action Aid International Uganda
Kawooya Fredric	Action Aid International Uganda
Ogwal Henry Nickson	Action Aid International Uganda
Ahikire Josephine	Centre for Basic Research
Mwiine Amon	CBR
Kangwagye G. William	Chair NGO Registration Board
Eric Coull	Conservation Manager, WWF Uganda
Meyar Sayson Rossette	Delegation of European Union to Uganda
Andeas Ulfsat	Diakonia
Ogwang-Okot Annabel	Diakonia Uganda Country Programme
Okono Dinah	Diakonia Uganda Country Programme
Tumusiime Titus Gerald	ERIKS Development Partner/Erikshjälpen
Hillevi Ekberg	First Secretary, Embassy of Sweden
Eberhard Gohl	Impact Plus
Namukasa Juliet	IAS
Mwanga Julius	Kabarole Research and Resource Centre, Fort Portal
Awici Charles	Lira NGO Forum
Bwengye Rajub Yusuf	NAPE
Muramuzi Frank	NAPE

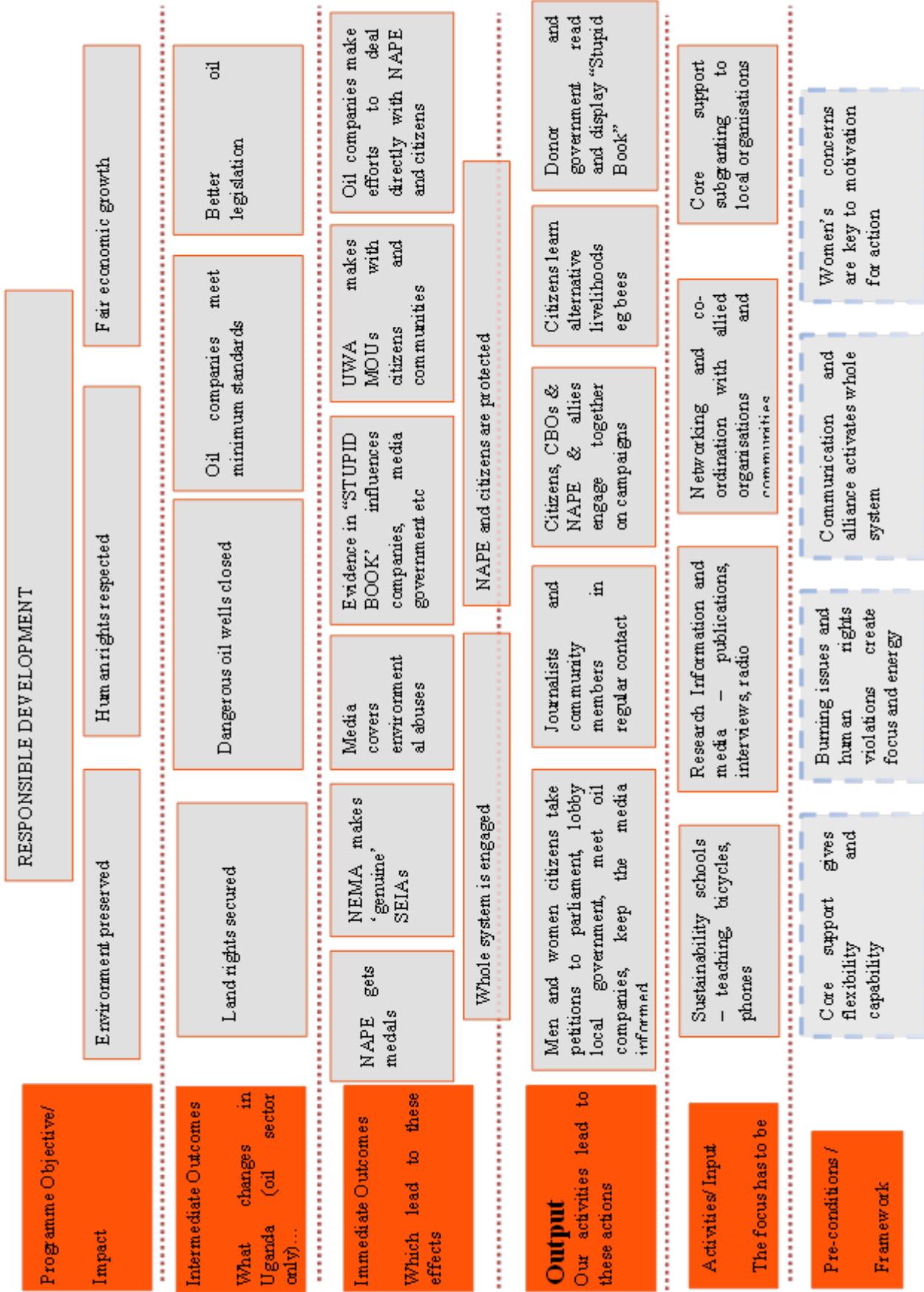
Turyahebwe Antoniyozi	National Organisation of Trade Unions
Ssewakiryanga Richard	NGO Forum of Uganda
Odong Otto George	Pader NGO Forum
Akia Josephine	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management, Uganda
Kipera Issa	Plan Uganda
Mikael Wiberg	PMU InterLife
Anna Winström	Sida
Berg Khan Elisabeth	Sida Civil Society Unit
Ellen Swedenmark	Sida Partnership Forum
Kapwepwe Julius	Uganda Debt Network
Baziwe Dorothy	Uganda Human Settlements Network
Ouma Steven	Uganda Journalists Union
Kakonge Apollo Lee	Western Ankole Civil Society Forum
Hans Lind	We Effect
Kajubi Elijah	We Effect
Isaiah Owiunji	Worldwide Fund for Nature
Otim Thomas	Worldwide Fund for Nature
Norman Rigava	Worldwide Fund for Nature Uganda Country Office
Ddamulira Robert	World Wide Fund for Nature

Annex 3 Theories of Change

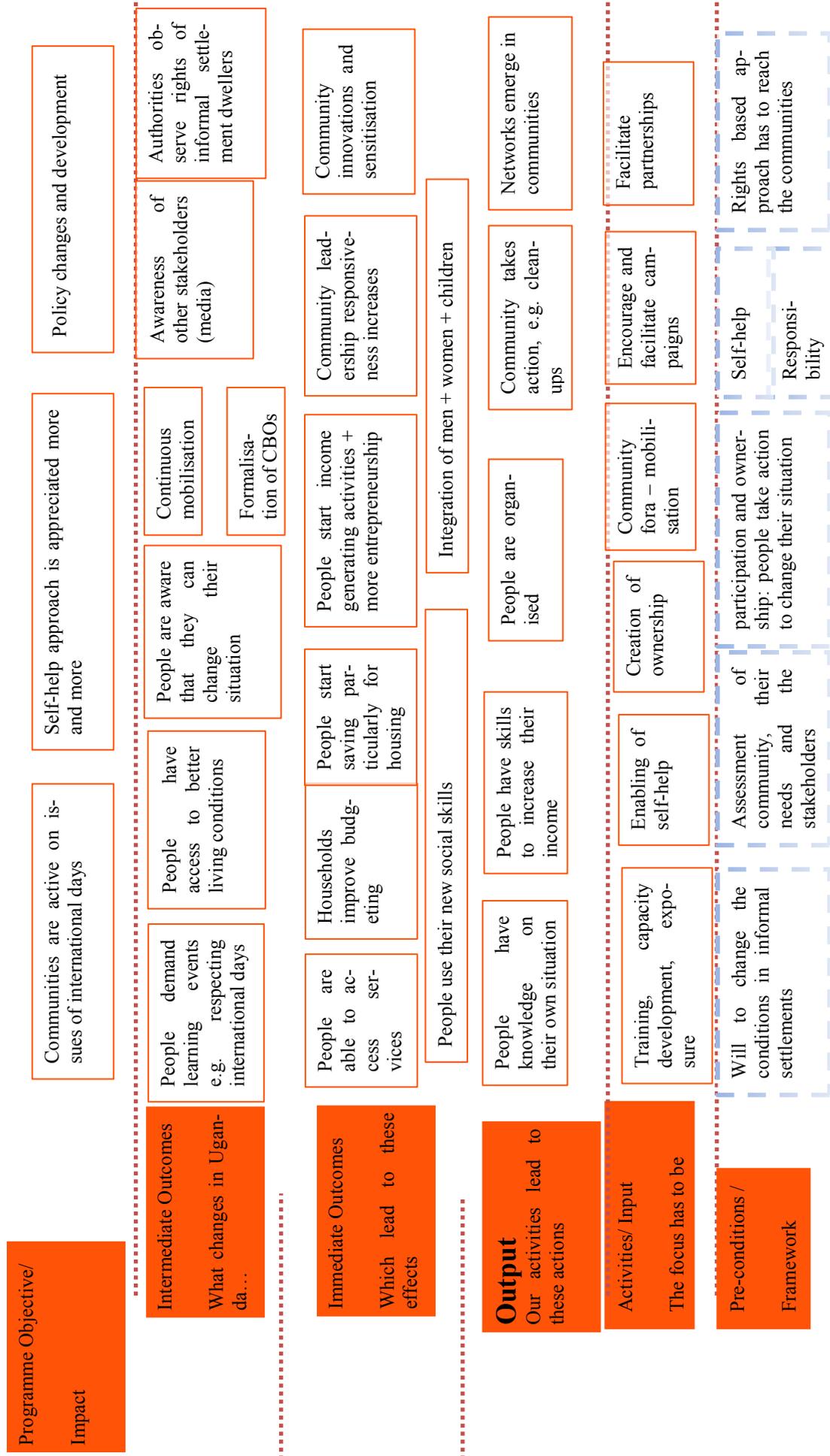


Theory of Change: International Aid Services Uganda (IAS)





Theory of Change: SSA-USHNet: Shelter and Settlement Alternatives - Ugandan Human Settlement Network





Evaluation of the Strategy for Support via Swedish Civil Society Organisations 2010-2014

Final Country Report - Uganda

This report shares the findings and recommendations from an evaluation of Sweden's Civil Society Strategy 2010–2014 as implemented by Swedish civil society organisations and their national partners in Uganda, as one of three country studies.

The purpose of the evaluation was to find out if, how and why/why not Sweden's support to civil society organisations has contributed to the overall objectives of the strategy.

The Reality Check Approach was used to understand the realities and perspectives of people living in poverty combined with 'meso-level' and organisational inquiries. The findings were used to explore the theories of change of the organisations in relation to people's realities, in order to analyse the strategy's relevance, alignment and feasibility.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Address: S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden. Office: Valhallavägen 199, Stockholm

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: info@sida.se. Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

