

THE ECONOMIC JUSTICE NETWORK OF FOCCISA



Angola

Botswana

Lesotho

Malawi

Mozambique

Namibia



South Africa

Swaziland

Tanzania

Zambia

Zimbabwe

End of Year Activity
December 2006.

Executive Summary:

This is an end of year report on activities carried out by the Economic Justice Network (EJN) in the 2006 financial Year. In this period, Economic Justice Network received funds from the Norwegian Church Aid, Church of Sweden, Diakonia, Christian Aid, Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam America, and the Southern Africa Trust amongst others. The funds were used in Budget Monitoring project, Debt Campaign including Ecological debt research, Trade Activities focusing more on the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAS), Cotton Trade Campaign and Food Security issues. These activities were implemented at the country level with support from National Christian Councils (NCCS) and also Civil Society Organizations (CSOS). At the SADC level, EJN networked closely with other regional bodies such as SARPN¹, MWENGO² and just to mention but a few. And at the continental and global, EJN worked closely with such bodies as ATN³, the World Council of Churches and Christian Aid.

The goal of EJN in implementing these activities has been to contribute to the fight against economic globalization which international finance institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and other similar organizations adamantly believe is the panacea medicine to world poverty and the only engine to world economic development. It is for this reason that some of the activities of EJN targeted IFI's neo-liberal policies because the reality on the ground has shown that their policies undermine poor people's access to basic needs.

Of particular mention is the new programme in which EJN will target SADC as strategic regional body that can do a lot to alleviate poverty in the region. EJN has targeted SADC for policy advocacy late in the year.

As a church based organization, EJN's quest in implementing these activities has always been centred around how to build the capacity of Christian Councils and other partner FBOs in eleven FOCCISA countries namely Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana, South Africa, Swaziland, Angola and Zimbabwe so that the NCCs can in turn do more Economic Justice Work in the respective countries.

This report outlines some successes and achievements recorded in the same period, but also some challenges and hardships met, lessons learnt and how EJN intends to carry forward its work in the fight against poverty in the SADC region.

Finally but not least, EJN would like to express heart felt appreciation to all funding partners for the financial and technical support rendered in the year. The support enabled EJN to grow and carry out the outlined activities. It is our hope that you will continue to support EJN in the next course of activities planned.

¹ Southern Africa Regional Poverty Network

² Mweleko wa Non Governmental Organizations

³ Africa Trade Network

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2.0 Budget Monitoring Project

One of the main aims why the *FOCCISA* set up the Economic Justice Network (EJN) was to steer and mobilize Christian Councils in Eleven countries to effectively carry out Economic Justice issues in the areas of Trade, Food Security, Debt and Budget Monitoring Work.

Since then, EJN has placed a lot of weight, resources and time on Budget Monitoring work because the importance of budgets as an instrument of poverty reduction cannot be overstated. A number of workshops have been conducted in the past three years: a regional budget training workshop in April 2003 in Malawi, another country budget workshop in Malawi in August 2005, setting up an EJN/Budget Monitoring Desk in Malawi (2006) and the ongoing Citizen's participation in local government via budget monitoring work, launched in Mozambique in July 2006. The purpose of these activities is to empower Christian councils to be able to intervene and participate fully in the formulation of national budgets and use the budget as a tool for advocacy for good governance in the respective countries.

2.1 Context of the Budget Monitoring Project

Since the 1980s, most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have voluntarily or been forced to focus on fiscal reform as a way of easing up public spending via economic adjustment programs. In most cases, the national budgets have been used as government's key planning mechanism and instruments for implementing the economic reforms besides being tools for allocating resources to programmes and processes that would alleviate poverty.

In addition, budgets have also been used for many other purposes such as restructuring state enterprises, transforming the economy, socio-economic empowerment, determining the size and pay levels of the public service and to create a progressive tax environment.

In the early days of these fiscal and economic adjustments, churches and civil society groups were not given room to participate in the processes because they were thought to be exclusively for government officials. Where they did so, their participation was minimal and most times their input disregarded as a result, the reform programs have not always been positive in many countries.

Civil society groups and churches have not always effectively participated in the formulation and monitoring of the national budgets for various reasons ranging from lack of policy space to failure to get involved due to lack of training and knowledge in budget monitoring work. It is these problems that have led national governments to go it their own way in formulating the national budgets. Such an approach in many countries has led to cases of misallocations of resources, under-budgeting to essential sectors of the society and the embracement of neo-liberal policies that promote poverty rather reducing it.

It was in this light that state budget monitoring work was set up to help empower FBOs and Christian councils to get more insights into formulation of state budget so that the churches could do proper and systematic advocacy to ensure equitable distribution and maximum utilization of state resources to improve the welfare of poor people especially.

2.2 General Objectives for the programme

State Budget Monitoring Work is aimed to address the following issues:

1. Building capacity of FBOs and Christian Councils to carry out budget monitoring work at the regional, national and local levels
2. How to deal with challenges of access to and transparency of information that pertains to revenue sources, monitoring of the revenue base, adherence to budget items at the regional, national and local levels
3. How to strengthen monitoring mechanism in public expenditure and to make the budgets pro-poor
4. And also to improve the Churches' and the CSO's engagement at all levels of the budget process including approval phase of the budget process/monitoring and evaluation of expenditures.

2.3 Work Planned and Done

2.3.1 Training Workshops:

The objective of the training workshops was to build capacity for the Christian councils to engage effectively in budget work. In total 2 training workshops were conducted in 2005 and 2006.

2.3.1.1 Budget Workshops for the Malawi Christian Council, August 2005:

30 people turned up from the various Christians churches affiliated to the Malawi Christian Council. The Episcopal Conference of Malawi through the Justice and Peace Commission also attended the conference. The conference was also graced by the Presidential Advisor on Religious Affairs. At the conference, a task team was formed to steer the setting up of an Economic Justice Desk within the Malawi Council of Churches. One very important outcome of the workshop was the commitment of the churches in Malawi to work on economic justice issues especially advocacy on the state budget as a tool for good governance in the country.

2.3.1.2 Budget Training Workshop for Officers from FBOs and Christian Councils from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland

22 officers were drawn from the aforementioned countries. They were trained on basic skills on budget monitoring work such as theory of budget formulation, budget monitoring tools, and approaches to budget monitoring, advocacy work in budget monitoring and how to mobilize people (Churches/FBOs) around budget work. Country plans of action were drawn to guide the respective Christian councils on developing budget monitoring work in the respective countries.

2.3.1.3 Setting up a desk for Economic Justice/Budget Monitoring within the Malawi Council of Churches

This was a follow up to the 2005 budget workshop for pastors' held in Malawi. Interviews were held in April 2006 and an officer was identified and engaged on May 1st, 2006. EJN gave seed money amounting to US\$ 10,000 for basic activities.

2.3.1.4 Citizen's Participation in Local government processes in Mozambique.

A programme managed by the Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), with technical support from Fair Share of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the Economic Justice Network. The main aim is to promote and enhance citizens' engagement in political processes in Mozambique using the Budget monitoring as a tool beginning at the municipal level. Work already done includes

1. Launch of the project
2. Training of CCM and provincial staff
3. Development of IEC materials: Learners' Guide handbooks
4. TOTs identified awaiting to be trained in September 2006

The project is the first of its nature in Mozambique and the entire Southern African region in that it combines elements of citizens' participation in political processes but focussing on the budget as a tool for good governance. It is expected that lessons drawn from this pilot project could be used to promote similar projects in the region.

2.3.1.5 Needs assessment for FBOs and CSOS in Angola to engage in Budget Monitoring work.

An initial needs assessment exercise for Churches and CSOs to engage in Budget Monitoring work was conducted in Angola in January 2006. The findings showed that before the churches and CSOs could engage in budget monitoring work, there is need for capacity building in the form of organizational development, project design and also strategic planning.

The assessment recommended CICA, Jubilee Angola, the Evangelical Association of Angola and the National Counselling Centre as the potential groups that could work with NCA Angola on the budget monitoring project. It would also be important to situate the budget monitoring project in a broader perspective of Economic Justice that would also have other facets such as debt and ecological campaign and also participation of citizens in political processes especially at the local government level.

2.4. Challenges and Hardships Encountered

2.4.1 Financial Limitations

The biggest hindrance to implementing budget monitoring activities has been the problem of limited funding. Due to this fact, EJN could not cater for the needs of most of the NCCS. It is important to do a thorough assessment of the needs of the NCCs in all the FOCCISA countries so as to come up with a clear picture of delivery capacity needs that ought to be addressed.

2.4.2 Varied levels of development of NCCS

The development level of FOCCISA economic justice desks is very varied. Some NCCs well developed programmes, well trained staff and can carry out budget monitoring and other economic justice activities. Other NCCs are still at the thinking and planning levels and do not yet have programmes on the ground. This variation makes it very difficult to work with the Christian Councils to implement common programmes in economic justice.

2.4.3 Inadequate human Resource

Due to inadequate funding to Christian councils, staff retention has been difficult. Where the NCCs have some personnel, the staff members are spread too thinly over many things and this affects work output. With such a lean staff, capacity building for officers working for Budget work or Economic justice Desk has been difficult. Training of personnel has not been consistent. Each time new people are called for training as a result there is hardly any building up on previous training offered.

2.4.4 Overlapping Programmes

Even though this is peculiar to Mozambique where EJN, Norwegian Church Aid and Fair Share are running a programme that is similar to the Christian Aid/Trocaire on called Budget Monitoring by Faith Based Organizations, this may repeat itself in any of the FOCCISA countries. This may lead to duplication of activities in that it targets the same constituency/people resulting in waste of resources and even send conflicting messages to people.

3.0 Trade Project

Overall Objective: The overall objective of the trade programme is to raise awareness on international trade agreements which have direct impact on trading trends on the local markets and poverty reduction processes especially in third world countries, in this case in the SADC region.

3.1 World Trade Organization Activities

- Organizing trade strategy group for South Africa
- Joint EJN/SARPN Pre Hong Kong Ministerial SADC CSO meeting, November 2005
- Participation at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, December 2005
- Joint EJN/SARPN Post Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, April 2006

3.1.1 Pre- Hong Kong Ministerial Conference

The SADC CSO Pre- Hong Kong WTO Ministerial conference held on 28th-29th, November 2005, was jointly organized by EJN and SARPN. Its main objective was to facilitate the development of a CSO agenda for engagement with other stakeholders in the Trade negotiations or platforms during the WTO negotiations in Hong Kong. The conference targeted CSO people and organizations that formed part of the delegation to the WTO conference and also other CSOs attended the conference as part of the wider CSO contingent. The specific aim of the conference was to prepare the CSO to understand the power play that underpins the WTO negotiations and in so doing, to help build and strengthen national lobby campaign groups towards runner-up of government-civil society consultations on WTO national agendas tabled at the WTO conference. The main outcome of this conference was better understanding of the WTO and also better preparation for CSO cooperation at the conference⁴.

3.1.2 Participation at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference, December 2005

Besides participating as part of the wider CSO contingent at the WTO Hong Kong Conference, EJN together with ZIMCODD and the Cotton Farmers Association from Mozambique (FONPA) focused also on cotton trade issues especially to campaign to remove all trade distorting subsidies in cotton trade. EJN took the lead to communicate to stakeholders back home on outcomes on negotiations on the removal of the subsidies.

⁴ Full report available in the Office

3.1.3 Post Hong Kong Conference in Pretoria, 6 – 7 April 2006.

This was a follow up to the WTO Pre-Hong Kong Conference which took place in November 2005 and the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting which was held in December 2005 EJN in conjunction with the Southern African Regional Poverty Network (SARPN)

The objectives of the conference were:

- To review the role of the CSO at in Hong Kong
- To review and analyse the outcomes of the Hong Kong Ministerial agreements and their impact on poverty reduction policies in the SADC region.
- To evaluate how effectiveness of CSO strategies used so far in influencing the WTO negotiations.

The conference drew 35 participants from Southern African countries working in the sectors of Agriculture, Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The Doha Development Package was also another concern for the conference. Participants were concerned with what the conclusion of the Round would mean for Southern Africa and its poverty reduction programmes⁵.

3.1.3 Economic Partnership Agreements Conference Mozambique

EJN in cooperation with Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM), Economic Justice Coalition (CJE) and Forum Mulher organised an Economic Partnership Agreement Conference for participants from Mozambique entitled the **EPA and its Impact on the Economy of Mozambique whose main objective was to** bring awareness of the impact of the EPAS on the political and economic development of the country so at help build capacity of the civil society to understand the objectives and implications of the currently negotiated EPAS and their linkages to the WTO multilateral trade agreements. The specific aim was to initiate CSO lobbying and advocacy for wider participation of stakeholders in EPAS negotiations for Mozambique.

The meeting brought together civil society drawn from churches, NGOs, FBOs, professional groups and CBOs working on trade, poverty and sustainable development issues in Mozambique and government officials from Mozambique to discuss the impact of the EPAS on the economy of the country and SADC region. The conference was also addressed by the European Union delegate to Mozambique who works with non-state actors on EPA matters.

The conference also highlighted the Fisheries Agreement between the Mozambican government and the EU and how it will with time impact on the fishing resources of Mozambique.

⁵ A full report of the conference is available.

The major outcome of the consultation was a better understanding by the CSO on the probable impact of EPA on Mozambique and why it is important for civil society to engage with their government in EPAS negotiations. Following the conference, a working group on international issues consisting of CJE, CCM, FM and others was formed to steer CSO participation in International issues in Mozambique. EJN will continue to play an important role to support efforts of the working group in its efforts to bring more awareness to many people in the country.

3.3 Cotton Trade campaign

The cotton trade campaign has its roots in the Christian Aid Fair Trade Campaign in which EJN carried out a research on Women and Cotton Trade in Mozambique in 2004; The impact of Trade Liberalization on women in Cape Town and also the impact of Trade Liberalization on the Grain board in Zambia. Cotton trade activities by EJN have been confined to Mozambique where EJN has been working with CCM, ABIODES, CJE, FONPA and the Cotton Institute of Mozambique. Main activities have been how to build and strengthen the Cotton Trade Campaign launched by Oxfam America in Mozambique in June 2005.

The main objective for EJN's role in Cotton trade in Mozambique has been to help promote the livelihoods of poor people especially women farmers who solely depend on cotton for their income in Mozambique.

Cotton's share in the GPD of Mozambique is very small and does not make up part of the major export commodities for the country. Nevertheless, it is the major source of household income earner for most people in the country. It is for that reason that EJN and other partners like Oxfam regard Cotton as an important crop to do advocacy and lobbying for fair trade.

Most of the activities around cotton have been around helping to build capacity for CCM and ABIODES to develop programmes for interventions in policy matters in Cotton trade including technical support to produce IEC materials, proposal writing for funding.

In the last quarter of this year, EJN will work towards organizing regional conference for Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa on how to strengthen the cotton trade campaign in the SAD region.

4.0 Food Security Programme

4.1 Overall Objective

To raise awareness of the causes of the perennial food insecurity in the SADC region and plan on how to build the capacity of the Christian councils to engage in of food security programs

4.2 Working Group Meeting

As indicated in the 2006 Proposal, EJN planned to hold a working group meeting to work on food security and building on previous food security conference held in Swaziland in 2004 and in November 2005 in Johannesburg.

The working group met in May 2006 and later held a joint meeting with SARPN to plan for joint ventures in regional food security programmes before the end of 2006. At the end of the meetings, EJN and SARPN agreed to hold a regional Food security conference under the theme “Effective participation of Faith Based Organizations in national and regional food security processes.”

The purpose of the conference would be to bring together FBOs and the NCCs working in food security to discuss how they could contribute to the alleviation of food shortages in the SADC region by developing long term country specific programmes on food security as opposed to the short termed relief type of food security projects.

The regional conference would be preceded by in-country processes involving research and a one-day in country meeting to validate the findings. The country findings would then be collated and presented at a regional conference where country intervention would be developed thereafter. It is hoped that this conference would take place in late October or early November 2006.

5. Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Project

5.1 Advocacy Project

5.1.1 Overall Objective

With support from the Southern African Trust, EJN has embarked on a research project called the state of engagement of national Christian councils in public policy advocacy work in SADC region. The purpose of this research is to gauge the depth and quality of the level of engagement of the NCCS/FBOs in public policy formulation processes. The research will be conducted in 6 FOCCISA countries namely; Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa

The objective of this research is to inform EJN on the impact of the public policy advocacy training programme it has been giving to the NCCs. This will assist EJN to reformulate its capacity building strategies for the NCCs in public advocacy work, to revisit the mode of engagement with public policy makers at the national and regional levels and to map out SADC policies and protocols for advocacy work towards the end of 2006

Findings from this research at the national level will be collated and compiled in a report to reflect the status of engagement of NCCS and EJN in public policy participation at the SADC level. So far researchers have been identified and appointed. It is hoped that the work will be finalized in October 2006. The results will be presented at a conference to be held in Botswana from 20-23rd November, 2006.

5.2 SADC Advocacy Research

This is a special activity that FOCCISA/EJN has planned as part of its policy influencing activities with regional bodies such as SADC. At its strategic meeting held in October 2005, FOCCISA members and some funding partners observed that EJN was not doing enough on policy lobbying and advocacy with regional bodies such as SADC and others. The research and dissemination of the findings will be the first steps of EJN's activities in influencing regional policy formulation processes. There will be more activities on SADC Advocacy programme in the 2006-2007 work programme.

So far Terms of reference have been developed and researchers have been identified and engaged. It is hoped that the work should be completed by the end of October 2006. The findings from the research would be disseminated at a regional conference scheduled for 20-23rd November 2006 to be held in Gaborone Botswana.

5.2.1 Overall Objective

To build capacity of EJN/FOCCISA to understand the socio-political context of the SADC region and how they can lobby for good poverty reduction policies for the region and

5.2.2 Activities Planned

The research will involve a mapping exercise and research on SADC countries, their political details, research on the SADC Secretariat and some of the protocols that will be relevant to policy formulation processes in the SADC region. This information will be packaged into an info pack that the NCCS could use as required. The last activity will be the regional conference.

6.0 Administration and Finances

In the course of the year, EJN commissioned an audit exercise for the year ending March 2006. An interim financial statement for the last 6 months, January to June 2006 has been attached for your perusal.

Due to pressure of work EJN will engage 2 Project Assistants for period of 6 months to assist in the completion work planned up until; December 2006.

7.0 Conclusions

Despite human and financial constraints, EJN is making good progress and it is its hope that with increased financial muscle from funding partners and more human resource, EJN would make more impact in its efforts to fight for economic justice and poverty eradication efforts in the SADC region.