Networks and policy processes in international development: a literature review

Description

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Authors: E. Perkin; J. Court **Making networks work in international development and influencing policy**
Full text of document (from Eldis)

When, why and how do networks function best for policy impact in international development? The objective of this paper is to review and synthesise existing literature in an effort to answer these questions. The authors take policy processes as the starting point instead of focusing on types of networks themselves.

The three main objectives of the paper are to:

- outline why networks work
- identify how networks can influence policy, focusing on their impact on four key components of policy processes: agenda setting; policy formulation; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation
- identify lessons for capacity building, communications and policy influence activities and areas for further study

The authors highlight 10 keys to success through which networks may overcome their problems and capitalise upon their potential to influence policy. Some of these are:

- clear governance agreements: setting objectives, identifying functions, defining membership structures, making decisions and resolving conflicts
- strength in numbers: the larger the numbers involved the greater the political weight
- representativeness is a key source of legitimacy and thereby influence
- quality of evidence affects both credibility and legitimacy
- packaging of evidence is crucial to effective communication

The paper concludes by pointing out areas in which more research is needed to clarify exactly why and how civil society organisation networks can influence international development policy.

The paper focuses on those civil society networks aiming for policy influence that is in the public interest.

Tags

1. Networks
2. policy

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