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Global civil society advocacy alliances and networks in the changing terrain of global governance and development : a critical inquiry into the politics and dynamics in crafting and operations of the Global Action against Poverty (GCAP)

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Global Civil society advocacy alliances and networks in the changing terrain of global governance and development: A critical inquiry into the politics and dynamics in crafting and operations of the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP)

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ABSTRACT

The last few decades have witnessed the emergence of global civil society advocacy networks as major players in global governance. This research aimed at using a case study of GCAP in critically analysing the politics and dynamics of crafting a global civil society advocacy alliance. Specifically, the study aimed to: a) identify, analyse, and document GCAP's experiences, strategies and challenges in trans-national networking and advocacy; b) generate knowledge on recent developments in global civil society networking and advocacy.

The study analyses the study phenomenon using two central features of GCAP: networking and advocacy. Chapter one attempts to give a background of the study and also discusses the methods used. Chapter two lays the theoretical framework and operationalises the concepts explored in the study. The report argues that alliances are very different from 'normal' forms of organisations because they are made up of diverse forms of organisations, coming together voluntarily to achieve a specific purpose. They are therefore, by their very nature, complex, unstable, and difficult to co-ordinate. Chapters Three and Four look at such intricacies and complexities of crafting and operations of global advocacy networks. I conclude this research arguing that despite challenges in alliances building and operations, global civil society organisations will still need to network if they are to remain relevant and effective in current global governance context. It is only in their unity that they will be able to confront their common challenges.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Jacob Mwathi Mati

20th day of August, 2008.

DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to the millions of the poor, and the relentless activists who selflessly and graciously, advocate on their behalf in the hope and belief that a just world is possible. Let the ideals of a better life for all, and especially for those who have been recipients of great injustices throughout history, come to pass.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In life, sometimes, one does things that have a profound impact on them. Such happened to me in October 2006. TROCAIRE (an Irish non-governmental organisation (NGO) and Abantu for Development (a Nairobi based Pan-African civil society organisation invited me to a conference named *'The Leading Edge NGOs in the Next Decade.'* In the invitation, they asked me to reflect on 'Building Civil Society Alliances and Networks.' The basic research I did to prepare for this reflection led me to have greater interests on a phenomenon that has so much promise in making an impact on the global governance processes. When I enrolled for my MA in Development Studies at Wits, these interests were further nurtured.

This nurturing has benefited from many people some of whom require special thanks and mention. I would like to first and foremost, thank my supervisor Dr. Noor Nieftagodien for all the guidance, patience and challenging comments throughout this project. Your support went a long way in making me a better researcher. Secondly, I would like to thank Dr. Michelle Williams (Wits Department of Sociology) for those critical comments that enabled me develop the proposal for this research. To Dr. Kumi Naidoo, the CEO of CIVICUS, I am grateful for the comments and interview sessions that you offered at the initial and later stages of this study and for 'connecting' me to all those people in GCAP. My colleagues at work: Wolfgang Dorner, Carla Suarez, thank you for the initial brainstorms and comments at the beginning of this project.

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