



Strategies for Civil Society Organisations to strengthen their engagement in research for healthⁱ

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)ⁱⁱ can play a key role in all aspects of the research process, from developing a research agenda that responds to the needs and concerns of the public, to conducting research and transforming research findings into action.

The goal of research for health is *better health for all*. Reaching this goal is possible with the involvement of the actors that represent the rich spectrum of sectors and disciplines, including CSOs. The strategies below have been developed to guide CSOs towards becoming actively engaged with the research for health system. The relevance of each element will depend on a CSO's needs, goals and capacities.

BUILDING RECOGNITION

CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CSO ENGAGEMENT

Develop Awareness

- Advocate for CSO engagement in research and innovation for health, targeting policy-makers, researchers and funders
- Illustrate the holistic approach to health and development, and the advantage of being close to communities
- Show organisational transparency, independence, professionalism, social inclusion and research quality
- Work with the media, communities and like-minded CSOs to create public awareness of the role of CSOs in research for health
- Demand the inclusion of CSOs in national priority setting processes
- Ensure the role of CSOs is described in national policies and strategies.
- Participate in national research priority setting

IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES

ENGAGING WITH GOVERNMENTS

Develop Partnerships and Alliances

- Engage with stakeholders and establish networks and partnerships with CSOs, government, academia, research organisations, private sector, and funders, respecting good partnership principles

Strengthen Capacity

- Build own institutional human resources
- Develop institutional governance policies, structures and procedures for research and knowledge management

Secure Funding

- Advocate for more research funding to be made available to CSOs
- Participate in calls for proposals along or in association with academic institutions
- Allocate funds for research
- Establish appropriate financial management systems

Move from Research to Action to Policy

- Establish an institutional research agenda
- Develop mechanisms to link research findings to policy makers, funders and the scientific community, using appropriate language for each group
- Implement and incorporate new knowledge and evidence in programmes and projects
- Publish research results

MONITORING PROGRESS

ASSESSING ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Evaluate Success

- Identify and apply indicators to evaluate the outputs, outcomes and impact of research and CSO engagement in research. This is an ongoing, cross-cutting process that should be implemented in all strategies that are applied
- Document stories, good examples and lessons learned

ⁱ This worksheet is based on: A Call for Civil Society Engagement in Research for Health. Input to the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health, Bamako, November 2008 (http://www.cohred.org/main/Assests/PDF/Bamako_web.pdf)

ⁱⁱ Civil Society Organisations – CSOs – are defined as organisations that are private, not-for-profit, operate between the state and the public, and between the state and the market. These organisations represent or serve groups of people, are guided by a passion to contribute to social justice, have interest in research, science and innovation, and in using these to assess and tackle health determinants, influence health policies and improve health outcomes.