

# RESEARCH & INNOVATION FOR HEALTH CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT – STRATEGIES FOR CSOs



## Steps and strategies for Civil Society Organisations to strengthen their engagement in research for health<sup>i</sup>

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)<sup>ii</sup> 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 in health that represent the rich spectrum of sectors and disciplines, including CSOs.

### 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
- 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

- Establish and strengthen partnerships and networks among CSOs and between CSOs, government and academia, respecting good partnership principles

##### Strengthen Capacity

- Build own institutional human resources

##### 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

##### Move from Research to Action to Policy

- 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 programme 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
- Document stories, good examples and lessons learned

<sup>i</sup> 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](http://www.cohred.org/main/Assests/PDF/Bamako_web.pdf))

<sup>ii</sup> 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.