



CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX IN KAZAKHSTAN

**Strengthening
Civil Society**

**CIVICUS Civil Society Index 2008- 2010
ANALYTICAL COUNTRY REPORT**

**Authors:
Meruert Makhmutova and Aitzhan Akhmetova**

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The Civil Society Index Analytical Country Report for Kazakhstan was prepared by the research team of the Public Policy Research Center, with support from CIVICUS researchers and programme advisors. The project was funded by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and the European Union (EU) Delegation to Kazakhstan.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan.

Civil Society Index Project Coordinator and Lead Author

Meruert Makhmutova

Public Policy Research Center Team of Authors

Aitzhan Akhmetova: aakhmetova@live.ru

Meruert Makhmutova: meruertmakhmutova@hotmail.com

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation Team of Researchers and Programme Advisors

Tracy Anderson

Yosi Echeverry Burckhardt

Amy Bartlett

Andrew Firmin

Aaron Griffiths

Olga Kononykhina

Megan MacGarry

Mark Nowotny

FOREWORD

It is my honour to introduce to the reader the Kazakhstan Civil Society Index Analytical Country report; a product of cooperation between the Public Policy Research Center and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, made possible through the financial support of CIVICUS and the European Union (EU) Delegation to Kazakhstan.

Knowledge about the state and shape of civil society in Kazakhstan is limited. Two contrary opinions are held: that civil society is a strong and influential actor, and that civil society is in an embryonic stage. Inspired by the lack of information available the Public Policy Research Center joined the international action-research project of CIVICUS: Civil Society Index (CSI), to contribute to the redressing of this issue. Our aim is to increase the knowledge of civil society, identify civil society's strengths and weaknesses, and enable civil society stakeholders collectively - and with representatives of the government and business sectors - to overcome barriers preventing a stronger civil society and more effective citizen participation.

The CSI study in Kazakhstan, the findings of which are presented within this report, should prove a valuable source of knowledge on the current state, capacity and challenges of civil society and its relations with the state, the private sector and population at large. This report should be seen as a tool for enhancing the sustainability of civil society and its emerging contribution to positive social and political change in Kazakhstan.

Meruert Makhmutova
Director of the Public Policy Research Center

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PPRC would like to express its deep gratitude to all members of the CSI project's Advisory Committee, who oversaw the project and provided advice and experienced guidance at critical stages throughout: Arsen Kanafin (Founder, KBS Group, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of PPRC), Bakhyt Yessekina (Director, High Party School), Erzhan Nukezhanov (Ministry of Culture and Information), Gulmira Dzhamanova (Director, Central Asian Sustainable Development Institutes Network), Konstantin Kovtunetc (INTRAC, Civil Society Specialist), Laila Akhmetova (Union of Women of Intellectual Work), Maira Abenova (Director, Dom Public Foundation), and Yurii Buluktayev (Senior Researcher, Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies).

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BCI	Basic Capabilities Index
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil society organisation
EU	European Union
GNI	Gross National Income
INGO	International non-government organisation
NCO	Non-commercial organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPRC	Public Policy Research Center
WB	World Bank

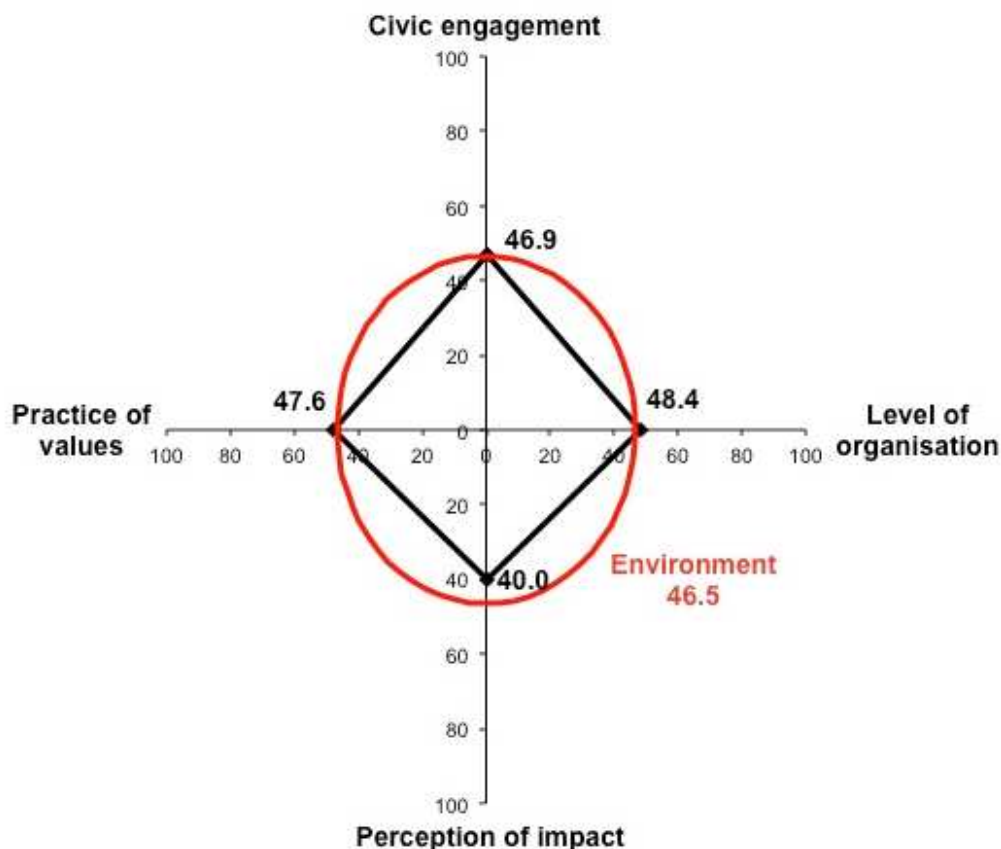
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is an action-research project assessing the state of civil society in different countries around the world. It aims to create a knowledge base for strengthening civil society. CSI is based on a comprehensive methodology developed by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The CSI for Kazakhstan was implemented by the Public Policy Research Center (PPRC) with the guidance and support of the CIVICUS team.

The CSI methodology used a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society in Kazakhstan. The first stage of the project included a survey of civil society organisations (CSOs), the general population and external experts. The second stage included the development of case studies aligned with the five CSI dimensions. The third stage involved consultation activities conducted within the framework of the project, including the presentation of results at regional focus meetings and the National Workshop, in order to obtain feedback on key findings, identify the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Kazakhstan, and develop recommendations for strengthening civil society. Diverse secondary data sources were drawn on throughout the project to supplement the original primary data generated.

The Civil Society Index Diamond (see Figure 1 below), summarises the strength of four core dimensions of civil society in Kazakhstan (Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values and Perception of Impact). The circle around the diamond represents the fifth dimension, the External Environment of civil society.

Figure 1: CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX DIAMOND FOR KAZAKHSTAN



The diamond's size shows an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large.

The overall picture revealed by the Civil Society Index Diamond is one of a moderately developed Kazakhstan civil society. Analysis of each of the five dimensions of the CSI reveals a more detailed picture.

The **Civic Engagement** dimension (46.9%) assessed by the CSI study suggested that citizen participation in Kazakhstan is characterised by more extensive and deeper socially-based engagement than politically-based engagement. Meanwhile, the **Level of Organisation** dimension (48.4%) scored the highest among all five dimensions assessed by the CSI study. It shows that Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operate within a relatively well developed framework of infrastructure and resources. Also, many possess strong internal structures of governance and communicate regularly and well with others in the sector, including through networks. However, the relatively well developed level of organisation within civil society is inhibited by its reliance on a small and often unsustainable human resource base.

The **Practice of Values** dimension (47.6%) shows that the most consistently practiced values within civil society are those of democratic decision-making, non-violence, equal opportunities for men and women, and peace and tolerance. However, the study suggested that civil society does not practice values of anti-corruption to the same level. This can perhaps be attributed to a degree to the high level of corruption in Kazakhstan as whole.

The **Perception of Impact** dimension (40.0%), meanwhile, scored the lowest of all five dimensions. Those inside and outside civil society agreed that civil society has a more limited impact on influencing policy than it does on effecting change in a range of social fields. Within the **External Environment** dimension (46.5%), the CSI study found significant challenges facing civil society, including high levels of corruption, limited political rights and personal freedoms, and significant constraints on the rule of law and state effectiveness. The socio-cultural context, meanwhile, does not seem to be particularly conducive to a strong civil society, primarily because of low levels of trust among members of the society.

The report identifies key strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Kazakhstan. On the one hand, principal **strengths** of civil society in Kazakhstan include the flexibility of CSOs, openness to networking and exchanging information, and some successes in promoting values such as religious harmony and better relations between ethnic groups. CSOs in Kazakhstan tend to be well organised and motivated, and familiar with social needs, and they are often well grounded in the local environment and concerns. A general wish exists among CSOs to participate in civil dialogue, and the fact that CSOs own the necessary expertise to advance policies continues to be a real asset on which Kazakhstan civil society can build.

On the other hand, principal **weaknesses** and challenges facing civil society include the notable absence of a participatory democracy and the low standard of living preventing people from engaging more in civil society's activities. Increasingly individualistic attitudes and apathy towards volunteering continue to be inhibiting social factors. For CSOs themselves, a lack of sustainable human resources threatens to undermine development, while short-term financial survival often demands that values be sacrificed. The greatest threat to the legitimacy of CSOs and, more broadly, civil society stems from problematic accountability and transparency of public funds when they are distributed. The absence of a strong social context or culture of philanthropy in which CSOs could otherwise be grounded

results in CSOs relying on winning unfair competition for public funding. Where public funding is won, CSOs can become dependent, making them fearful of losing hard-won funding sources and therefore prone to self-censorship in their activities. The struggle for daily survival occupies many CSOs, leaving them unable and unwilling to engage on a wider scale. Meanwhile, cooperation between government, civil society and the private sector remains weak, with state authorities both interfering with CSOs and also treating them unequally. State-civil society dialogue and consultations are often treated as a pro-forma instrument by government actors.

This report also presents a number of **recommendations** to strengthen civil society in Kazakhstan, based not only on analysis of the CSI findings, but also on discussions with a wide range of stakeholders at the CSI National Workshop and regional focus group meetings. Recommendations for government include making a series of amendments to existing legislation. These amendments should aim to establish criteria for the work of CSOs in the public interest, to facilitate the organisation, development and formalisation of volunteering, and to encourage a culture of philanthropy and social responsibility among individuals and companies, diversifying the funding base and increasing the autonomy of CSOs. The findings also suggest that government should make funding for state social contracts open and transparent, attempt to create employment opportunities through more stable funding, and replace short-term project-based funding with long term programme-based support. Working with civil society to establish appropriate mechanisms for civil dialogue and investing in training civil servants with technical skills to conduct such dialogue should help boost the quality of government-civil society relations. Meanwhile, the findings suggest that CSOs need to increase efforts to educate citizens about civil dialogue, encourage individuals and CSOs towards activism with the belief that they can make a change, and increase their participation in a number of well-conceived long term campaigns.

I. CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities also remain limited.

The Civil Society Index (CSI), is a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, and contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics, and the public at large.

The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. **Assessment:** CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society using five dimensions: Civic Engagement; Level of Organisation; Practice of Values; Perception of Impact; and the External Environmental context.
2. **Collective Reflection:** implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Joint Action:** the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

The following sections provide a background of the CSI, its key principles and approaches, as well as a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Kazakhstan and its limitations.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 *New Civic Atlas* publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo, 2001). The first version of the CSI methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries.¹ The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated. This evaluation informed a revision of the methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first complete phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich, 2008).

Intent on continuing to improve the research-action orientation of the tool, CIVICUS worked with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current phase of CSI. With this new and streamlined methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected its

¹ The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.

country partners, including both previous and new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table 1.1.1 below includes a list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

TABLE I.1.1 List of CSI implementing countries 2008-2011²

1. Albania	13. Ghana	28. Niger
2. Argentina	14. Italy	29. Philippines
3. Armenia	15. Japan	30. Russia
4. Bahrain	16. Jordan	31. Serbia
5. Bulgaria	17. Kazakhstan	32. Slovenia
6. Burkina Faso	18. Kosovo	33. South Korea
7. Chile	19. Lebanon	34. Sudan
8. Croatia	20. Liberia	35. Togo
9. Cyprus	21. Macedonia	36. Turkey
10. Djibouti	22. Madagascar	37. Uganda
11. Democratic Republic of Congo	23. Mali	38. Ukraine
12. Georgia	24. Malta	39. Uruguay
	25. Mexico	40. Venezuela
	26. Morocco	41. Zambia
	27. Nicaragua	

2. PROJECT APPROACH

The current CSI project approach continues to marry assessment and evidence with reflections and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake, but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks, which have greatly influenced the implementation forming the basis of this report, include the following:³

Inclusiveness: The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

Universality: Since the CSI is a global project, its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

Comparability: The CSI aims not to rank, but instead to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. The possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

Versatility: The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

Dialogue: One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

² Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed since the publication, due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.

³ For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010*. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

Capacity Development: Country partners are firstly trained on the CSI methodology during a three day regional workshop. After the training, partners are supported through the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

Networking: The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (for example, focus groups, the Advisory Committee and the National Workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

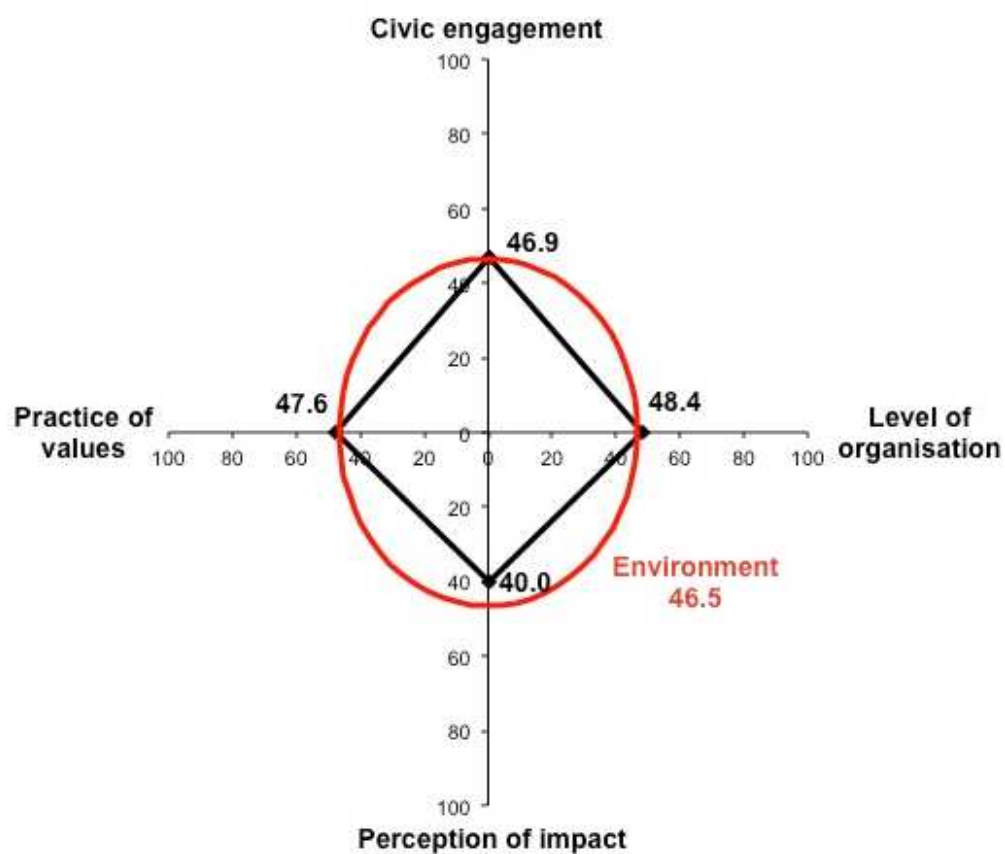
Change: The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

With the above mentioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

- (1) Civic Engagement
- (2) Level of Organisation
- (3) Practice of Values
- (4) Perceived Impact
- (5) External Environment

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure I.2.1), which is one of the most essential and best-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 percentage scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that still remains a crucial element for its wellbeing.

Figure I.2.1 CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX DIAMOND FOR KAZAKHSTAN

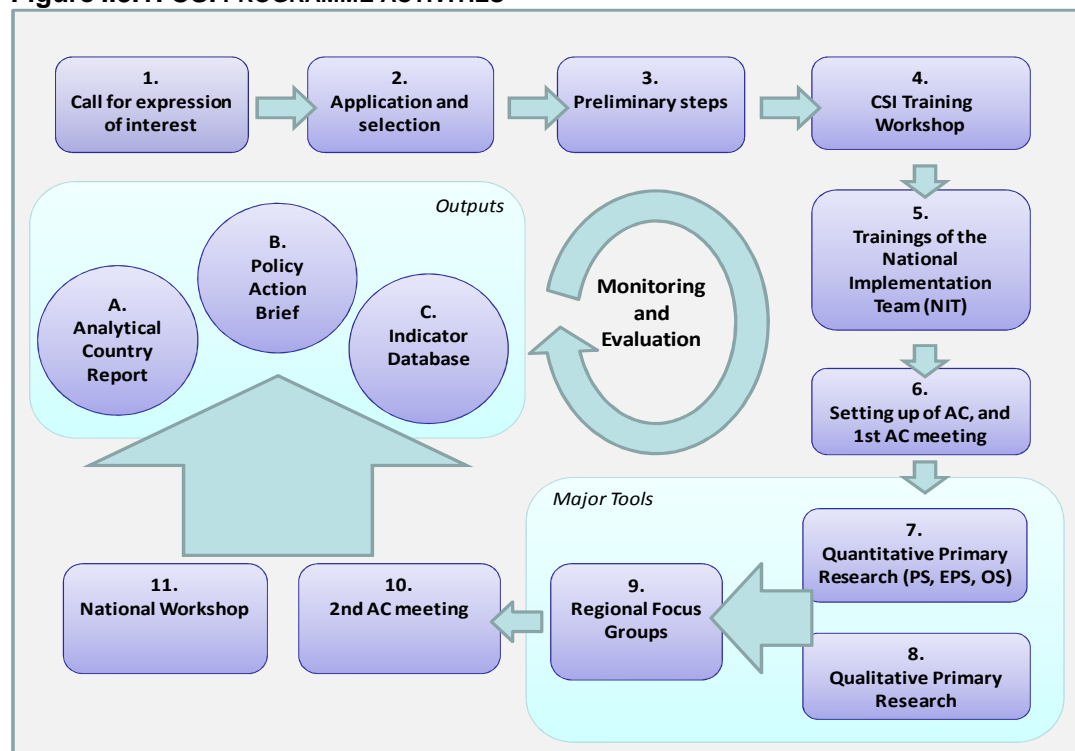


3. CSI IMPLEMENTATION

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarised by Figure I.3.1 below⁴:

⁴ For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al.2008.

Figure I.3.1: CSI PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES



The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

- Multiple surveys, including:
 - i) A Population Survey, gathering the views of citizens on civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations;
 - ii) An Organisational Survey measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and
 - iii) An External Perceptions Survey aiming at measuring the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil society's impact.
- Tailored case studies which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society country context.
- Advisory Committee meetings made up of civil society experts to provide advice on the project and its implementation at the country level.
- Regional and thematic focus groups where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society.

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at a National Workshop, which brings together a large group of civil society and non-civil society stakeholders and allows interested parties to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues.

This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Kazakhstan, and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for strengthening civil society in the country.

4. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE CSI STUDY

The CSI Kazakhstan study has some limitations, both in methodology and implementation.

The broad definition of civil society suggested by CIVICUS was adopted for Kazakhstan with no modification after discussions among the CSI Advisory Committee members. While the CSI methodology attempts to go beyond the usual focus on formal and institutionalised CSOs and to take account of informal coalitions, groups, movements and individuals, the CSI Organisational Survey in Kazakhstan nevertheless covered only registered CSOs, and did not cover unregistered groups. Inevitably, a better-organised sector of civil society therefore answered questions on the level of civil society's organisation.

The international linkages of CSOs are measured in the CSI study by the number of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) present in the country as a percentage of the total number of known INGOs. However, such linkages can also be measured through CSOs' membership in international networks, the extent of implementation of joint projects in the international arena, and the participation of CSOs in international fora. These were not assessed, and it is quite likely that if they had been, the data could have been richer.

The economic context in Kazakhstan is rated as being extremely unfavourable for civil society development. The score for the economic context indicator, based on World Development Indicators data, is the ratio of external debt to Gross National Income (GNI). National workshop participants cast doubt on the notion that this is an effective measure of the economic context for civil society development, arguing that other factors could have been useful supplements.

Nevertheless, these limitations do not have a significant impact on the validity of the overall research work and outcomes. Within the framework of the methodology, the CSI study now presents a valuable source of knowledge on the current state, capacity and challenges of Kazakhstan civil society relations with the state, the private sector and population at large.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Although there are exceptions (UNDP, 2002; ADB, 2007), there is a general lack of literature on the history of civil society in Kazakhstan. However, reviews of the current state of civil society are more readily available (USAID, 2009; Freedom House, 2010; Abisheva, 2009; Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan, 2009; Kovtunets, 2009).

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The CSI methodology, used for the purposes of this report, defines civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests.”

In conceptualising civil society as an arena, the CSI emphasises the importance of civil society’s role in creating public spaces where diverse societal values and interests interact. The term arena is used to describe the particular realm or space in a society where people come together to debate, discuss, associate, and seek to influence broader society. Based on the CSI’s practical interest in strengthening civil society, it therefore conceptualises civil society as a political term (rather than in economic terms as a synonym for the ‘non-profit sector’). This helps to explore collective public action in greater depth in the broader context of governance and development and not primarily in the economic role of non-profit organisations. This political perspective of civil society leads the CSI to focus on issues of power, both within the civil society arena and between civil society actors and the institutions of the state and the private sector.

Members of the Advisory Committee for the Kazakhstan CSI project discussed civil society’s broad definition during their first meeting, and decided to adopt the CSI definition above without modification.

The preamble of the current Constitution, adopted in 1995, states that Kazakhstan has a peaceful “civil society following ideals of freedom, equality and harmony.” The term “civil society,” along with the term “Non-Governmental Organisation” (NGO) became prominent with the influx of donor support in the 1990s. National legislation uses the term “non-commercial organisation” to include organisations with various legal forms, such as institutions, public associations, non-commercial joint stock companies, consumer cooperatives, foundations, religious associations, and associations of legal entities. The Law on Non-Commercial Organisations (2001) defines non-commercial organisations as legal entities that do not make profit and whose incomes are not distributed among their participants.

Later, the notion of civil society has been recognised in other official legal documents in Kazakhstan. A presidential decree in June 2006 entitled “The Concept of Civil Society Development for 2006-2011” offers a formal definition. According to the decree, “civil society is a society where the individual, with all his or her needs, interests and values, is at the centre of all processes and relations.” Civil society means all social relations – political, economic, cultural, national, religious, family and other – that are independent from the state and reflect a variety of private interests. The task of civil society, then, is defined here as mediating between individuals and state. Its main aims are to protect the interests of every member of society and represent them against authorities and society, to conduct public oversight of the authorities’ activities and to formulate internal and external policy. According to the decree, CSOs are political parties, local communities, religious organisations, professional and scientific unions and associations, mass media and NGOs.

The decree states that the formal definition of an NGO is a non-commercial organisation (excluding political parties, trade unions, professional unions and religious organisations) established by the initiative of individuals and/or non-state legal entities on a voluntary basis for the achievement of common goals.

2. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society's development in Kazakhstan during the Soviet period can be divided into two stages: before 1985; and the *perestroika* era from 1985 to 1991 (UNDP, 2002). Within the Soviet framework, all public life in Kazakhstan was ruled by the Communist Party. There were a limited number of civil society organisations connected to the party such as *Komsomol* (the youth wing of the party), *Pioneer* organisations, trade unions and other public associations (mostly formed in the 1930s), voluntary organisations supporting the armed forces, and party-linked sport unions. These organisations later became the basis for the development of CSOs during the transition period.

When, in the mid-1980s, *perestroika* allowed for more civic participation, environmental and democratic issues became hot topics. However, the communist regime continued to limit basic human rights such as freedom of public assembly and freedom of speech. For example, in 1986, in Alma-Ata, when a civil movement of students and workers mobilised against Moscow's appointment of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party, the movement was crudely crushed by the army. With most of the movement's participants imprisoned, the authorities failed to formally recognise the final number of victims.

Nevertheless, public movements played an important part in the democratic transition. Environmental movements such as Nevada-Semey, which sought the closure of nuclear test sites in Kazakhstan, diversified into democratic movements, opening up the political scene and serving as the basis for the first political parties in the newly independent Kazakhstan.

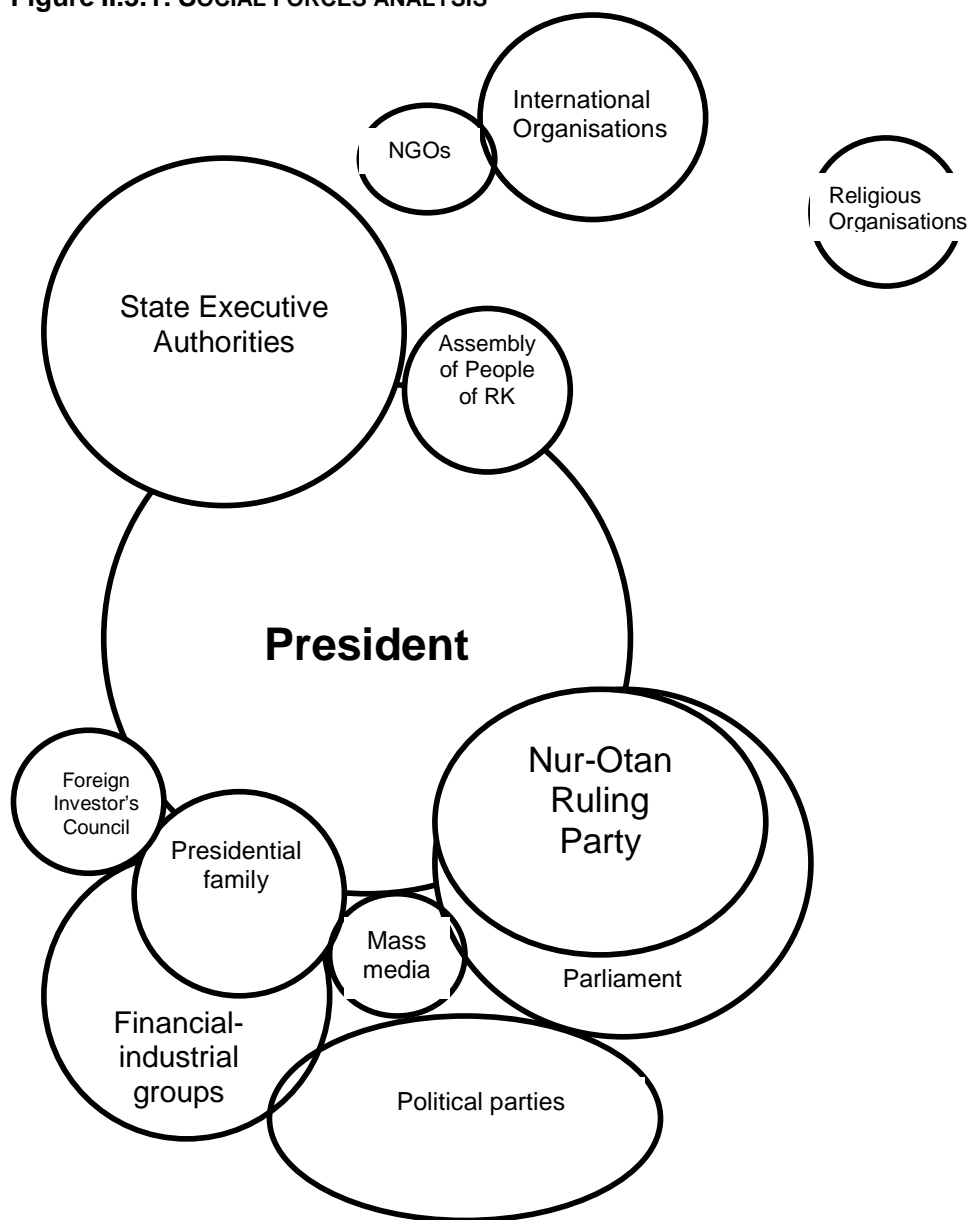
After independence, organised civil society in Kazakhstan became more diverse, visible and robust (ADB, 2007). Since then, it has undergone three periods of development (UNDP, 2002). During the first period, the early 1990s, more than 400 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were established, mostly involved in rights protection. The second period (1994-2001) was characterised by growth in the diversity and quality of NGO activity. NGOs were financially, technically and ideologically supported by a number of international organisations. The international support provided a critical foundation for the emergence and institutionalisation of NGOs. In the third period (2001 to the present) the environment for a healthy civil society seems to have blossomed. Greater recognition from state bodies, formal arrangements for civil society-government cooperation, the establishment of public financing mechanisms for CSOs, and further growth in the number of registered NGOs all form the groundwork for the continued growth and entrenchment of civil society in Kazakhstan.

3. MAPPING CIVIL SOCIETY

This section provides a brief overview of the civil society landscape in Kazakhstan. Key social actors were identified and ranked by members of the CSI project's Advisory Committee as part of a Social Forces Analysis. The largest circle represents the actor with the greatest social impact, while the smallest represents the actor with the least impact.

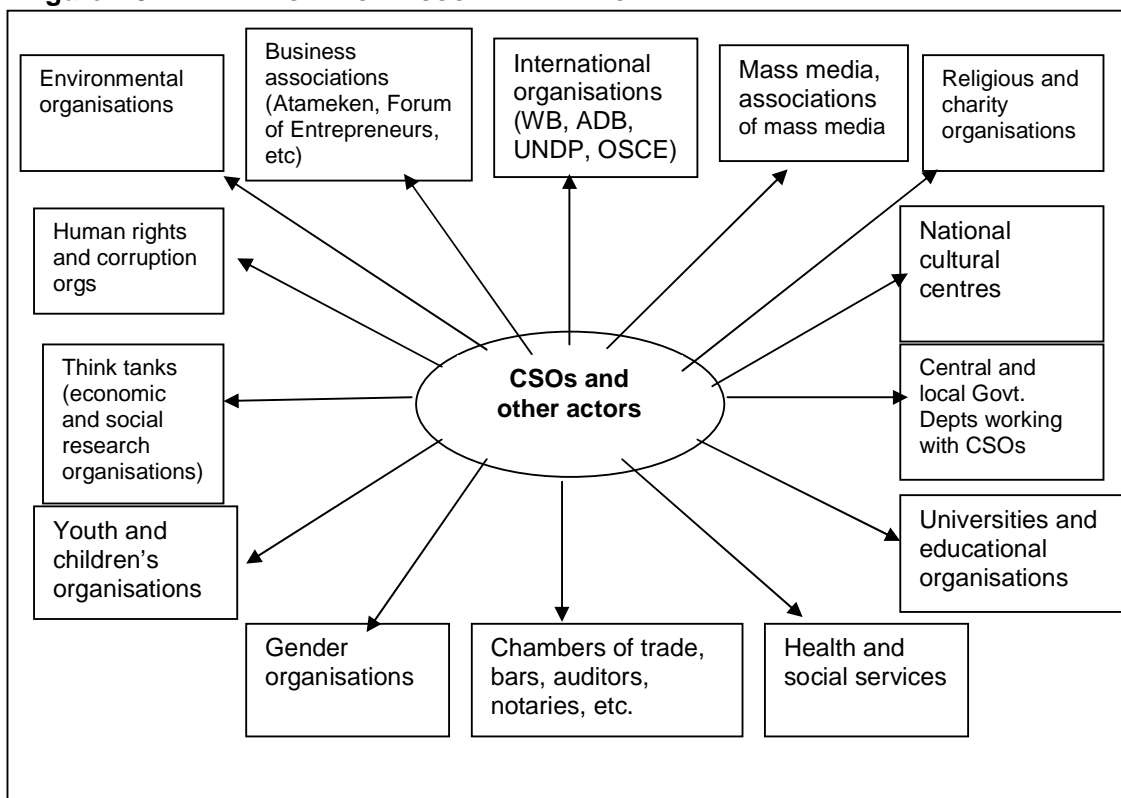
The president, presidential family, the Nur-Otan ruling party, state executive authorities and financial-industrial groups are society's most important and influential actors. The amended election law of 2007 resulted in the president's Nur-Otan party capturing all seats in that year's lower house (Mazhilis) election (Freedom House 2010).

Figure II.3.1: SOCIAL FORCES ANALYSIS



Key actors in civil society include the Foreign Investor's Council, media organisations, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, international organisations, political parties, CSOs such as NGOs, and religious organisations.

The second map presents the key civil society actors within Kazakhstan civil society and also includes local and international actors.

Figure II.3.2: KAZAKHSTAN CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING

Kazakhstan has a large number of professional and business associations and NGOs active in the areas of human rights, women's issues, ecology, youth and others. However, the activities of CSOs depend on various factors.

Freedom House reports⁵ that the government uses its enormous power of patronage to target nascent NGOs and public associations for co-optation, aiming to promote its own agenda of social and infrastructural development rather than allowing the nongovernmental sector to develop independently. While pro-government NGOs are offered funds, publicity, and recognition for engaging in 'constructive cooperation' with the government, independent NGOs that resist such pressures tend to be portrayed as either irresponsible, serving outside interests, or opposed to reform and prosperity.

Vitalino (2005)⁶ noted that the state, the ruling party and oligarchic economic interests associated with the Nazarbaev family have been active in recent years in shaping quasi-official NGOs. Some even registered on the eve of the 2004 parliamentary election, and exist on paper only as government showcases of democracy. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, of over 25,000 CSOs in Kazakhstan, almost 13,000 are NGOs and more than half a million people are employed in the sector.⁷ However, these figures vary from source to source; the Ministry of Justice data on 'non-commercial organisations' (NCOs) in Table II.3.1 below is different.

⁵ Freedom House (2010), Nations in Transit 2010. Kazakhstan Country Report.

⁶ Canas Vitalino (2005). NATO and Kazakhstan. 165 CDS 05

⁷ From a speech at the 4th Civic Forum in November 2009.

TABLE II.3.1 CSOs registered in Kazakhstan by type

	Form	Dec 2003	Apr 2006	Nov 2008	May 2010
1.	State institutions	15,502	20,840	21,280	21,334
2.	Private institutions	7,351	6,097	5,688	*(5,500)
3.	Public associations	4,763	5,820	7,204	8,034
4.	Foundations	2,690	3,340	4,204	4,751
5.	Religious associations	1,265	1,360	1,399	1,388
6.	Associations (unions) of legal entities	949	1,072	1,210	1,324
7.	Consumer cooperatives	4,791	4,846	5,319	5,553
8.	Rural consumer cooperatives	450	833	1,517	1,769
9.	Housing and building cooperatives	273	215	290	339
10.	Non-commercial joint-stock companies ^a	22	*	3	63
11.	Housing owners' cooperatives ^b	2,040	2,186	2,363	2,417
12.	Notary chambers	18	16	16	18
13.	Bar colleges (associations)	14	14	15	16
14.	Auditors' chambers	16	16	13	* (13)
15.	Chambers of trade and industry	29	16	16	*(16)
16.	Agricultural partnerships	430	29	35	29
Subtotal (private NCOs)		25,101	25,860	29,292	(31,201) ^c
Total (including state NCOs)		40,603	47,600	50,572	(52,564) ^c

Source: ICNL, 2010. Figures are based on official information from the Ministry of Justice of Republic of Kazakhstan; the number of organisations according to ICNL's assessment is given in parentheses.

^a Legal entities issuing shares with the aim or raising funds for the implementation of activities, the profit of which will be used only for their own development.

^b Organisations created to manage a condominium of a multi-apartment residential building or a group of nearly located homes.

^c Total numbers, as well as their analyses, are estimates due to absence of information on three types.

* No official data available.

The government has increased its involvement in civil society by establishing state NCOs. The number of state institutions is only about one-third less than the number of private NCOs. By contrast, in the United States, there are one-tenth as many governmental institutions as there are non-governmental entities (ICNL, 2010).

There is a steady growth in the number of registered non-commercial organisations. The most popular forms of NCOs are public associations and foundations. The number of public associations grew by 69% from December 2003 to May 2010; the number of foundations grew by 77% in the same period. It is necessary to take into account that several organisations can be established by the same people. There is a new abbreviation present in Kazakhstan, 'GONGO,' referring to Government Operated Non-Governmental Organisation. Ziegler has argued that only a small fraction of registered NGOs are active,

while the rest exist only on paper. Many are 'dormant' or are quasi-NGOs created by government agencies (Ziegler, 2008). Most active NGOs tend to be concentrated in cities, while they are mostly absent from the rural areas.

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN KAZAKHSTAN

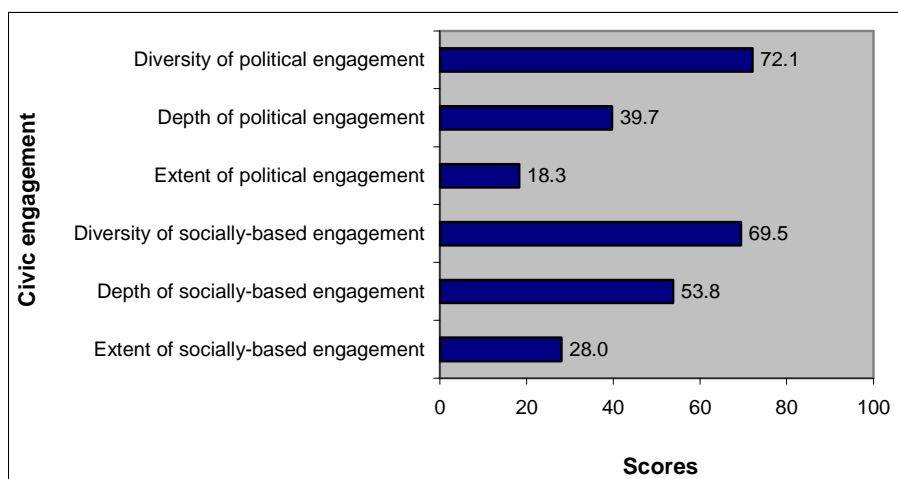
This section presents the key findings and analysis of the information and data collected for the CSI project. It includes an analysis of individual indicators, sub-dimensions and dimensions in various levels of detail, with the intention of identifying the key findings.

This section is divided into the following five dimensions of the CSI diamond: **Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact** and **External Environment**. At the beginning of each section, graphs are provided with scores for all its sub-dimensions on a scale from 0 to 100. The findings for each dimension are then examined in detail.

III.1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This section analyses the overall size, strength and vibrancy of civic engagement in Kazakhstan based on the scores from the population survey (methodology highlighted in Appendix 7). The score for this dimension is 46.9%. Figure III.1.1 below provides the scores for the six sub-dimensions: the extent, depth and diversity of socially-based engagement and the extent, depth and diversity of political engagement.

Figure III.1.1 : CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SUB-DIMENSIONS



1.1 Extent of socially-based engagement

This sub-dimension concerns the proportion of citizens engaging socially in Kazakhstan, and scored 28.0%. Of the population survey respondents, 36.5% are active members of a social organisation such as a mosque, church, religious organisation, sporting, recreational, arts, music or educational, humanitarian or charitable organisations. Also, 19.7% of respondents said that they do voluntary work for at least one social organisation, while 27.9% of respondents engage in social activities in sports, voluntary or service-based organisations several times a year.

1.2 Depth of socially-based engagement

This sub-dimension examines the depth of citizen engagement, and scored 53.8%. The score is derived by measuring the percentage of respondents active in more than one organisation or activity. Of respondents who are active members in a social organisation, 37.4% are active members in more than one social organisation. Of the citizens who volunteer, 50.5% engage in voluntary work for more than one social organisation while

73.5% of respondents who engage in social activities with other people do so at least once a month. Although the depth of volunteering is limited, the relatively high engagement in social activities may provide positive social capital which civil society could develop further.

1.3 Diversity of socially-based engagement

This sub-dimension measures diversity in the community that engages in social activities, and scored 69.5%. The score was derived through the use of variables related to gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and the rural/urban divide. The score shows that, overall, a relatively high proportion of civil society participants come from different social groups. However, the score itself is not conclusive, and does suggest that there is room for further diversity within the group of socially-engaged citizens.

1.4 Extent of political engagement

This sub-dimension, which scored just 18.3%, measures the level of citizens' involvement in politically oriented activities (signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending peaceful demonstrations) and in politically-oriented organisations such as labour unions, political parties and professional associations, or consumer, environmental organisations.

The extent of political engagement is found to be significantly lower than the extent of socially-based engagement. Only 15.5% of respondents replied positively when asked if they are active members of a political organisation, while 16.1% of respondents declared that they do voluntary work for at least one political organisation. The indicator score for individual activism, measuring the extent to which people engage in political activities, reported an overall score of 23.2%. According to the Population Survey, 63.8% of the respondents reported that they would never sign a petition, 74.8% would never join in boycotts, and 58.1% would never attend peaceful demonstrations.

Such remarkably low levels of political engagement can perhaps best be explained by legal constraints in Kazakhstan, where the right to hold meetings and protests has been carefully controlled and limited in recent years. Freedom House (2010) stressed that the right to public assembly, one of the basic civil liberties, remains severely curtailed in Kazakhstan, as any group of more than 20 people must secure permission from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to assemble. Citizens holding a public demonstration are required to notify the authorities 10 days in advance. Indeed, Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI 2010) states that the political centre has been monopolised by the current regime, which has effectively legalised the exclusion of non-regime parties and individuals from the political process. The presidential party, Nur Otan, now occupies a near monopoly of the political space in the party system, making political engagement somewhat of an exercise in futility for other citizens. The CSI Population Survey shows that 80.1% of the respondents do not trust political parties.

1.5 Depth of political engagement

This sub-dimension, which scored 39.7%, measures the share of the population that is "politically active" in more than one political organisation, or is engaged in several political activities. The score is derived from the depth of political membership, the depth of political volunteering and the depth of individual activism. Of survey respondents, 46.7% declared that they were members of more than one organisation of political orientation, while just 23% have participated in various political actions on a regular basis. Of those who volunteer for a political organisation 49.4% reported volunteering for more than one.

1.6 Diversity of political engagement

This sub-dimension explores the diversity of that portion of the population that actively practices various forms of political engagement, that is, the percentage of members of organisations belonging to social groups such as women, older and younger people, those

from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and those from rural areas. At 72.1%, this score indicates a high degree of diversity among politically active people.

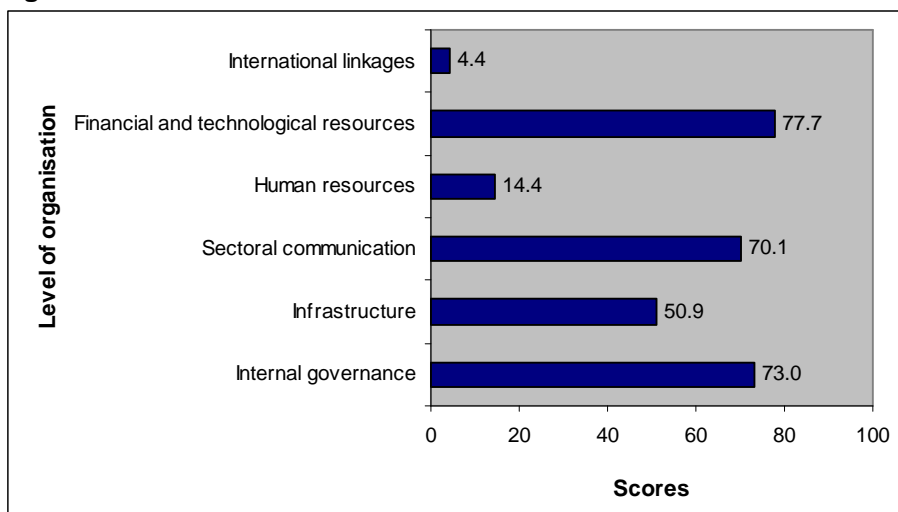
Conclusion

The Civic Engagement dimension of the CSI study revealed low scores and many limitations. Membership in CSOs is low, and the overall levels of formal volunteering are limited. While engagement in community activities is relatively diversified and while socially-based engagement scores relatively highly, the main concern in terms of civic engagement in Kazakhstan is the very low level of political engagement. While it is possible that political apathy is the consequence of citizens' indifference to socio-economic concerns, it seems far more likely that the limited legal framework for political activism and competitiveness is seriously inhibiting the depth, diversity and extent of political engagement. These findings of the CSI study reinforce and provide evidence for serious and emerging concerns about the democratic deficit in Kazakhstan, and suggest that it will be difficult to build an active citizenry without first opening up space for genuine political engagement, competition and contestation. In looking ahead, this will need to be a key area of focus for any attempts to further strengthen civil society.

III.2 LEVEL OF ORGANISATION

The Level of Organisation dimension of the CSI assesses the infrastructure and capacity of CSOs in Kazakhstan to carry out their work. It does so by looking at governance, financial and human resource management, communication, technology, cooperation with other CSOs, and international linkages. 170 CSOs from different regions of Kazakhstan were surveyed in the CSI assessment. The overall score for the Level of Organisation dimension is 48.4%, the highest among of the five dimensions, revealing a moderately healthy level of organisation. Figure III.2.1 provides the scores for the six sub-dimensions that make up the overall dimension score.

Figure III.2.1: LEVEL OF ORGANISATION SUB-DIMENSIONS



The scores for five of the sub-dimensions are based on the findings of the Organisational Survey. The remaining sub-dimension, International Linkages, is scored based on data from the Union of International Associations.⁸

2.1 Internal governance

The score for this sub-dimension, 73.0%, is derived from a single indicator regarding management. When asked whether they had a Board of Directors or a formal steering committee, 73% of surveyed organisations answered in the affirmative.

In Kazakhstan, the type of internal governance is determined by law, which stipulates bodies for different types of organisations, including for example, associations or foundations.

2.2 Support infrastructure

The score for this sub-dimension, 50.9% and is also generated from a single indicator, namely the proportion of surveyed CSOs who are formal members of any association, umbrella group or support network. Of surveyed organisations, 50.9% declared that they are members of at least one support network.

2.3 Sectoral communication

This sub-dimension, which scored 70.1%, looks at the extent of information exchange and interactions among CSOs in Kazakhstan. In the Organisational Survey, 68.7% of

⁸ The Public Policy Research Center and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation would like to thank the Union of International Associations for their collaboration with the CSI project in providing this data.

organisations said that they had held meetings with other CSOs working on similar issues, while 71.5% responded that they have exchanged information, such as documents, reports or data with other CSOs in the last three months. This seems to be a promising level of interaction, signalling that CSOs in Kazakhstan are interested in and committed to learning and exchange.

2.4 Human resources

This sub-dimension examines the human resources available for CSOs in Kazakhstan in order to achieve their objectives. The CSI methodology assesses this by looking at the ratio of paid staff to volunteers. According to the Organisational Survey, only 14.4% of organisations have a sustainable human resource base, with unpaid staff making up 25% or less of the overall staff base.

Because the CSI methodology looks primarily at one indicator, it should be noted that there are other ways of assessing the sustainability of human resources in Kazakhstan which could generate additional or competing findings. Nevertheless, the overall picture of a weak human resource base is an important and significant finding for civil society in Kazakhstan. The sustainability of human resources is linked closely, of course, to the availability of sustainable and adequate financial resources (sub-dimension 2.5). Nevertheless, even in the absence of sustainable funding, there are additional, budget-neutral, measures which could be explored and considered. Examples include those measures aimed at providing sustainable volunteering and junior professional programmes.

2.5 Financial and technological resources

This sub-dimension, which scored 77.7%, examines the financial and technological resources available to CSOs. According to the Organisational Survey, the majority of respondents (68.6%) said that CSOs have a stable financial resource base. However, 41.8% of respondents noted that their organisation's revenue had decreased compared to the previous year. Only 27% said that the revenue had increased and the remainder said that revenue had remained the same. Over the years, CSOs seem to have expanded their capacity in financial and technological resources to some extent. The majority of respondents (86.7%) declared that their CSOs have regular access to technologies such as computers, telephones and e-mail.

Access to adequate financial resources to sustain CSO activities remains a key concern in Kazakhstan.⁹ Most leading Kazakh NGOs are dependent on international donor financing. Since such international funding is declining, the financial sustainability of organised civil society has become increasingly fragile, as was stressed in a recent ADB Brief (2007). According to the Civil Alliance of Kazakhstan (2009), NGOs should have financial independence from foreign donors, and the government looks likely to be a main provider of funding.

The Law on State Social Contracts, adopted in 2005, provides a legal framework for the state to finance CSOs. The main stimulus of the government in providing those funds was to compete with international donors in supporting CSOs. The Ministry of Culture distributed a substantial portion (74%) of state social contracts (917 million tenge, or \$6.2 million (United States Dollars) in 2009, through a relatively small number of beneficiaries (just 206 NGOs). The rise in government funding and decline in international financing bring their own acute problems of political patronage and clientelism, and creates challenges of independence and non-interference.

⁹ The case study "Financial sustainability of civil society organisations in Kazakhstan: challenges and prospects" highlights funding issues in greater detail.

Another form of financial support for CSOs comes through philanthropy and charitable activities. However, information in this area is limited. Today, there do seem to be a number of funds and foundations financing CSO activities. Nevertheless, a broader culture of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility among the private sector seems still to be embryonic. If there is to be a serious change in the financial environment for CSOs in Kazakhstan, there will need to be systemic changes to the legislation on CSOs and the Tax Code, encouraging tax breaks and an environment conducive to giving, philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Further efforts, too, could be made to nudge potential philanthropists and socially responsible corporates towards financing the work of civil society.

The USAID (2009) NGO Sustainability Index suggests that the financial viability of NGOs in Kazakhstan, scored at 4.6, is better¹⁰ than average for the Eurasia region (5.3 on average for Russia and the Caucasus, while 5.5 on average for Central Asia). In the same index for 2008 it was suggested that the domestic funding of NGOs continues to increase. According to the authors of the financial viability index, “local philanthropy is developing, especially in rural areas; the level of state financing for NGOs has grown substantially year by year; businesses finance NGOs in order to benefit from their exercise.” However, the picture painted by these scores was unrealistically optimistic, and did not seem to fit with the realities of 2008. However, in the financial viability index of 2009 the same score was recorded, and according to the authors “annual funding available to NGOs either decreased or remained at previous levels due to the impact of the worldwide financial crisis. NGOs are finding it difficult to raise funds due to the financial crisis, and international donors cut back funding to NGOs in 2009.” Consensus therefore seems to be emerging that there are a number of challenges still facing CSOs in Kazakhstan with respect to the financial resources available.

2.6 International linkages

This sub-dimension, which scored 4.4%, compares the number of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) present in the country with the total number of known INGOs worldwide. Based on data from the Associations Yearbook of International Organisations, the score for this sub-dimension is 4.4, meaning that for every 100 INGOs worldwide, there are 4.4 in Kazakhstan. There could be several reasons for such modest numbers. On the one hand, in 2005 Kazakhstan was ranked as a middle income (rather than developing) country by the World Bank and many donors including INGOs therefore limited their activity in Kazakhstan and closed offices. On the other hand, Vitalino (2005) noted that in March 2005 the Prosecutor’s office in Almaty launched a series of investigations against 33 NGOs – of which only two were national – to verify that their activities conform to the laws of Kazakhstan. In 2005, on the eve of the presidential election, the Parliament adopted two laws which can impose substantial restriction on the activity of CSOs. The laws established strong government control over the financing of NGOs and required foreign and international NGOs to re-register with the authorities within three months of the ratification of the laws. The Constitutional Council subsequently nullified the laws, bringing relief and praise from international organisations and NGOs (Vitalino). Nevertheless, the affair sent a powerful signal to INGOs to limit their activity in Kazakhstan.

The activity of INGOs in Kazakhstan is currently regulated by the Law on Non-Commercial Organisations (2001). According to this law, INGOs are obliged to publish an annual report on their activity and present this to an official body. This requirement, which is necessary for tax purposes, also allows their activities to be monitored and could provide the grounds for termination of their activity if it contradicts state ideology or threatens national security (Makhmutova et al, 2005).

¹⁰ The scale is from 1 to 7, with 1 as the most financially viable and 7 as the least.

Conclusion

Kazakhstan civil society operates within a relatively developed framework of infrastructure and resources, and in most cases has sufficient internal structures of governance, intra-sector communications and networks.

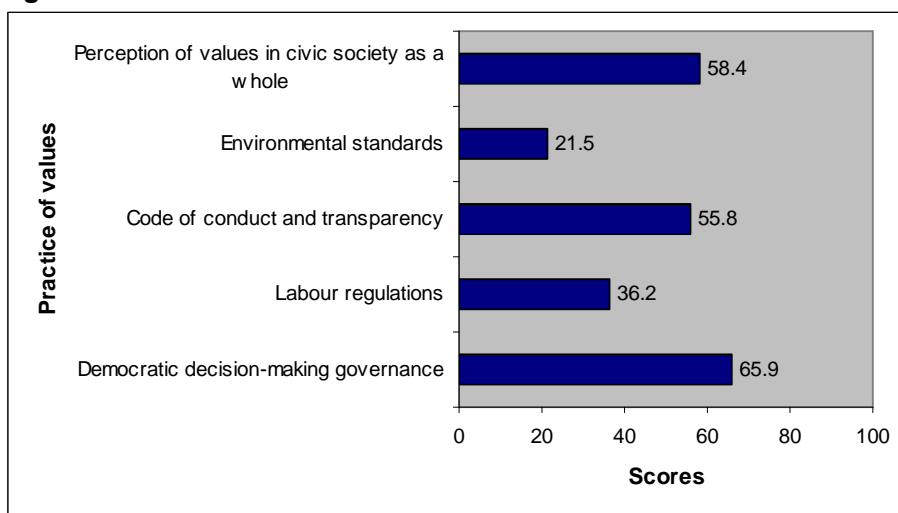
The weakest point of this dimension is the sustainability of human resources, which can be seen as the result of limited financial opportunities and resources, as well as short term project-oriented activities. The main sources of funding for NGOs are grants from international donors, many of whom have tightened funding programmes or closed offices in recent years. A substantial proportion of the government's social contracts are distributed through a relatively small number of NGOs (only 206) and the procedures for state social funding are not transparent. The legal framework, too, is not highly amenable to donations and corporate funding, and steps should be taken to improve this.

More sustainable human resources could directly lead to greater sustainability of civil society activities in the country as a whole. CSOs should incubate more diverse funding sources and sell services in order to sustain themselves. Participants at the CSI National Workshop, discussing the findings, recommended steps to promote a culture of philanthropic giving and greater interest from business.

III.3. PRACTICE OF VALUES

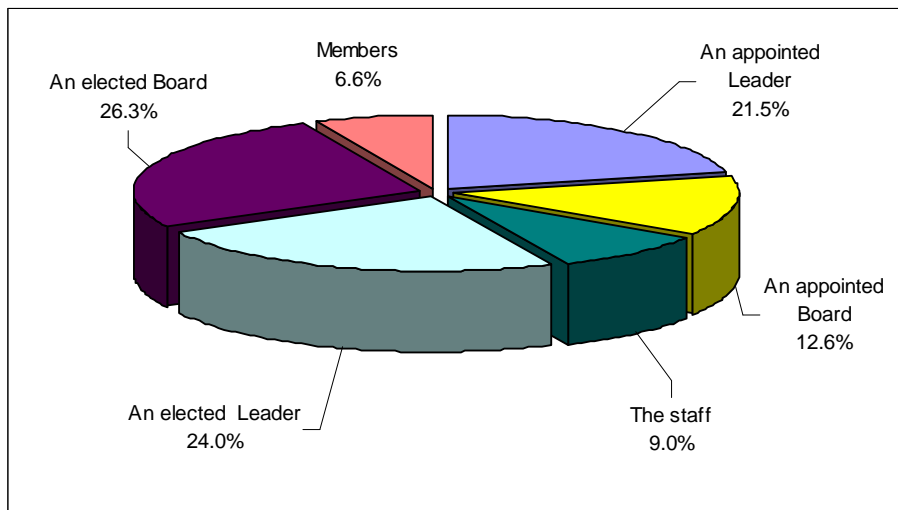
The Practice of Values dimension, which scored 47.6%, explores the values practised and promoted by CSOs. Data for this dimension is generated from the Organisational Survey. The score for the Practice of Values dimension suggests that organisations in Kazakhstan do tend to practise some of the values that they preach. Figure III.3.1 provides the scores for the five sub-dimensions: democratic decision-making governance, labour regulations, code of conduct and transparency, environmental standards, and perception of values in civil society as a whole. The following sections explain the trends for each sub-dimension.

Figure III.3.1: PRACTICE OF VALUES SUB-DIMENSIONS



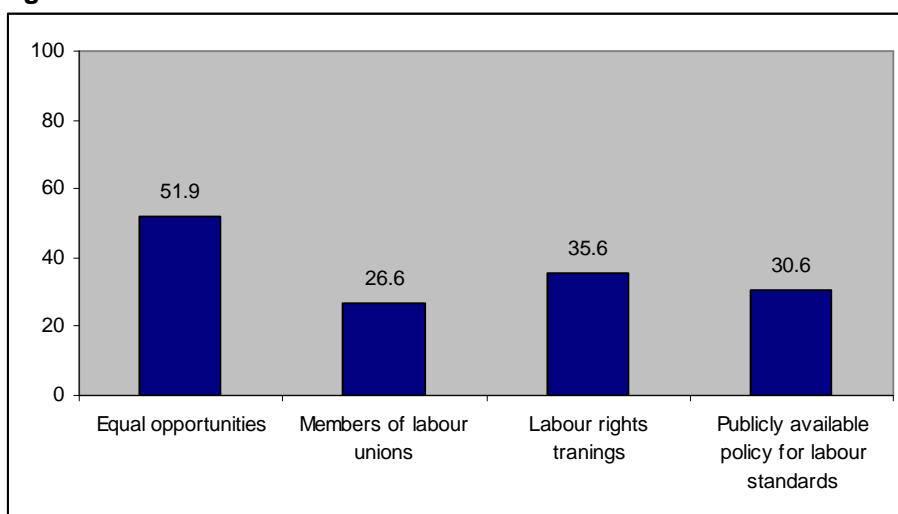
3.1 Democratic decision-making governance

This sub-dimension, which scored 65.9%, shows the extent of democratic decision-making practices within civil society in terms of who makes decisions within organisations: members, elected boards or leaders together with staff, or appointed boards or leaders acting independently. Respondents were required to select a single answer. The CSI Organisational Survey found that some CSOs entrust decision-making to an elected board (26.3%), an elected leader (24%), staff (9%) or members (6.6%). In sum, the majority of CSOs, a relatively high 65.9%, reported that they practise democratic decision-making internally.

Figure III.3.2: DEMOCRATIC DECISION-MAKING GOVERNANCE

3.2 Labour regulations

This sub-dimension, which scored 36.2%, looks at labour rights and policies among CSOs. Figure III.3.3 shows the scores for the four key indicators that generate the overall score. Over one-half of the surveyed CSOs (51.9%) reported having written policies in place regarding equal opportunity and/or equal pay for equal work for women. However, policies do not equate to practice, and only 26.6% of CSOs reported that their staff members are members of labour unions. Meanwhile, over one-third (35.6%) reported that they conduct specific training on labour rights for new staff members and 30.6% said that they have a publicly available policy for labour standards. The picture painted by this data, therefore, is one in which labour regulations are not universally practised or prioritised within CSOs in Kazakhstan.

Figure III.3.3: LABOUR REGULATIONS

3.3 Code of conduct and transparency

This sub-dimension, which scored 55.8%, analyses how many CSOs have developed publicly available codes of conduct and how many CSOs make financial reports publicly available. Over half (52.6%) of the surveyed CSOs said that they have a publicly available code of conduct for staff and a majority (59%) said that their financial information is made

publicly available. Nevertheless, although the score compares favourably with other sub-dimensions, it remains deeply concerning for Kazakhstan civil society that almost half of organisations do not have a code of conduct, and that almost half do not make their financial information publicly available. This remains a key challenge and concern for the future development of civil society.

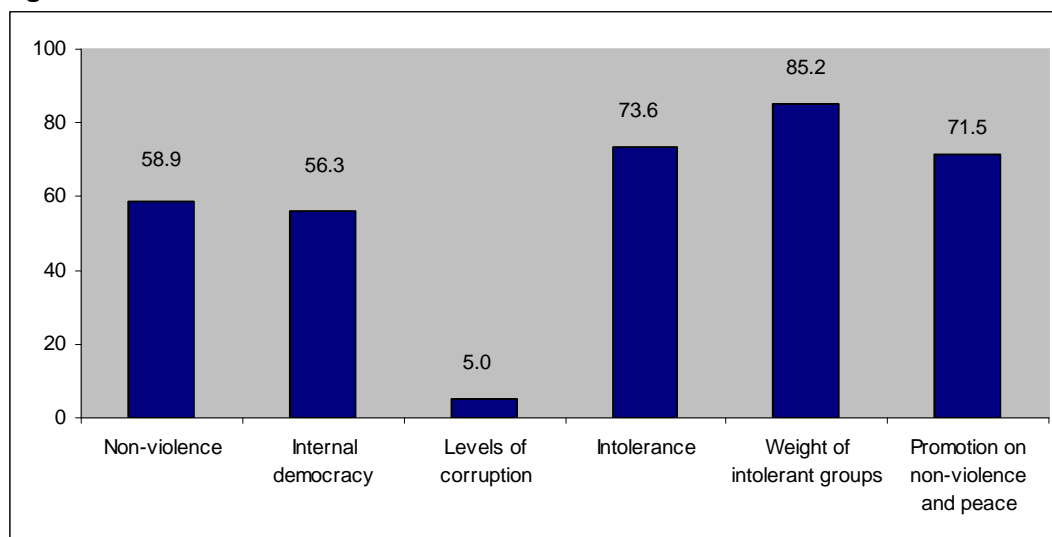
3.4 Environmental standards

This sub-dimension's score, 21.5%, represents the percentage of CSOs that report having a publicly available policy for environmental standards. It is important to note also that the existence of a policy does not equate to implementation. The low rate of organisations with environmental policies, in addition to the question of implementation which was not explored by this sub-dimension, suggests that there are significant challenges ahead for Kazakh CSOs in their efforts to keep to environmental standards.

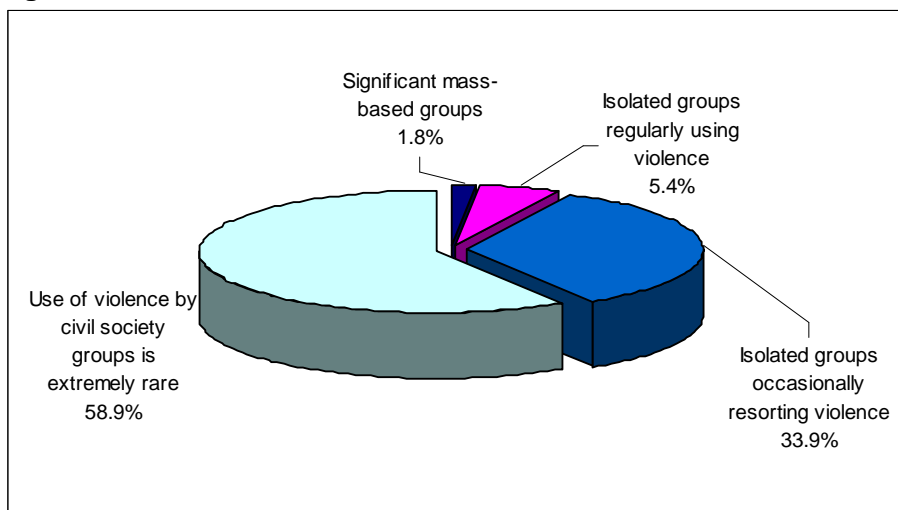
3.5 Perception of values in civil society as a whole

This sub-dimension, which scored 58.4%, looks at whether CSOs perceive that civil society as a whole practices the values they advocate. These values include non-violence, tolerance, democracy, transparency and trustworthiness. Data for this sub-dimension is generated from the Organisational Survey. Figure III.3.4 provides the scores for this sub-dimension: perceived non-violence, perceived internal democracy, perceived levels of corruption, perceived intolerance, perceived weight of intolerant groups, and lastly, perceived promotion of non-violence and peace.

Figure III.3.4: PERCEPTION OF VALUES

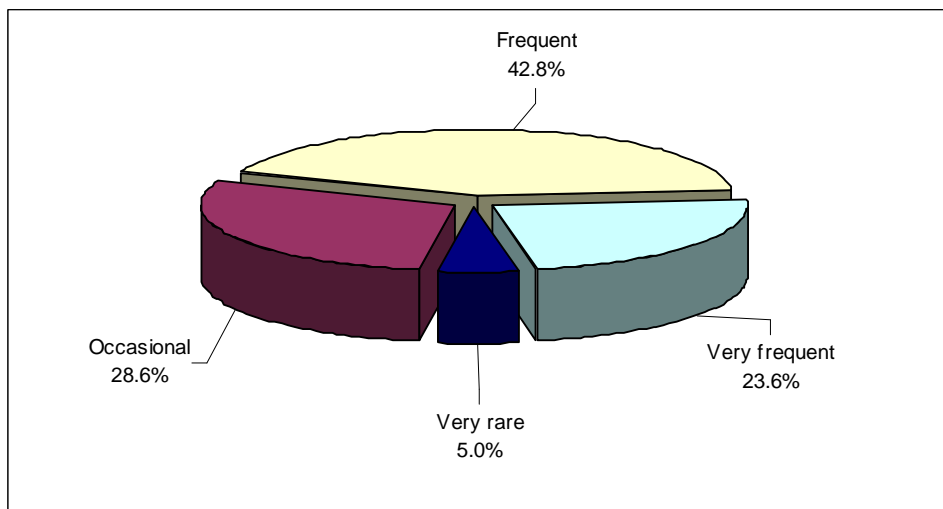


When asked whether there were any forces within civil society that use violence (aggression, hostility, brutality and/or fighting) to express their interests, 32.9% of the interviewed CSOs answered that such forces exist, while most (67.1%) answered that they do not. Those who answered affirmatively were then asked how they would describe the forces within civil society that use violence (aggression, hostility and/or fighting) to express their interests. The majority of respondents (58.9%) believed that the “use of violence by civil society groups is extremely rare.” The remaining responses were distributed as follows: 33.9% of respondents stated that these are “isolated groups occasionally resorting to violence,” 5.4% believed that these are “isolated groups regularly using violence,” and 1.8% thought that these are “significant mass-based groups.”

Figure III.3.5: PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE

Regarding civil society's role in promoting democratic decision-making in their organisations and groups, 56.3% of CSOs representatives assessed civil society's role in promoting of democratic decision-making positively. Specifically, 14.6% believed that the role is "significant" and 41.7% that it is "moderate." On the other hand, 21.9% of respondents believed that the role of civil society is "limited" and 21.8% that it is "insignificant."

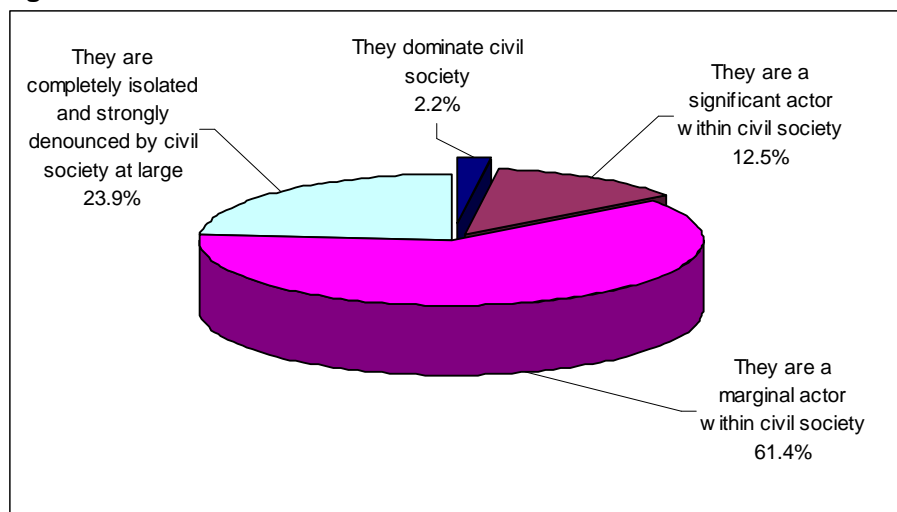
With regard to instances of corruption within civil society, only 5% of the surveyed CSO representatives believed that they do not occur or are "very rare," while 28.6% believed that such instances are "occasional," 42.8% that they are "frequent," and 23.6% that they are "very frequent." Given that these findings represent the perceptions of civil society insiders rather than external critics, the results are especially worrying for civil society in Kazakhstan. Unless the spectre of corruption is addressed urgently, civil society will not possess the moral authority on which much of its work and its activities rely.

Figure III.3.6: PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION

Regarding intolerance, 40.9% of respondents did not know of forces within civil society that are explicitly racist, discriminatory or intolerant and 32.7% knew "only one or two examples." On the other hand, 20.9% knew "several examples" and 5.5% knew "many examples."

With regard to these forces' relationship to civil society at large, CSO representatives mostly (85.2%) answered that racist and discriminatory forces are isolated. The largest portion (61.4%) believed that such negative forces are only marginal actors within civil society; 23.9% of respondents supposed that such negative forces are completely isolated and strongly denounced by civil society at large. A further 12.5% believed that such forces are significant and only 2.2% believed that such forces dominate civil society.

Figure III.3.7: PERCEPTIONS OF INTOLERANT GROUPS



When asked to assess civil society's current role in promoting non-violence and peace in Kazakhstan, 71.5% of respondents assessed civil society's promotion of non-violence positively. Of these 32.9% believed that the role is "significant" and 38.6% that the role is "moderate." Among the more negative responses, 16.5% of CSO representatives believed that this role is "limited" and 12% that this role is "insignificant."

Conclusion

The Practice of Values dimension suggests that, on the whole, civil society in Kazakhstan does practise the values it preaches. Nevertheless, the analysis of the individual sub-dimensions does raise a number of questions.

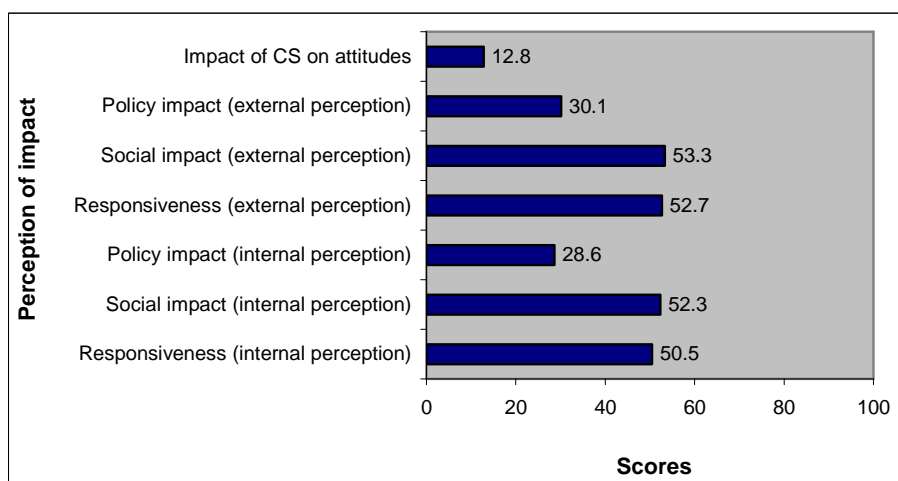
According to the scores, the strongest values of Kazakhstan civil society are democratic decision-making, non-violence, equal opportunities for men and women, peace and tolerance. Of the surveyed CSOs, 52.6% said that they have a publicly available code of conduct for staff and 59% said that their financial information is made publicly available. However, there may be an interesting correlation between the 41% of CSOs who fail to make financial information publicly available and the perceptions of corruption that continue to plague civil society in Kazakhstan. Addressing financial transparency issues among CSOs could help distinguish between, on the one hand, CSOs that are simply opaque or do not prioritise financial transparency and, on the other, those that engage in corrupt practices and activities.

Indeed, the weakest value of civil society is the perceived high level of corruption. In addition to the lack of publicly available financial information, it is quite possible that this perception stems from the generally high level of corruption in Kazakhstan as a whole. In the regional focus group meetings carried out as a part of the CSI study, participants recommended that CSOs pay more attention to improving transparency and accountability.

III.4. PERCEPTION OF IMPACT

The data for the perception of civil society impact dimension, which scored 40.0%, is gathered from all three of the CSI project: the Population Survey, the External Perception Survey¹¹ and the Organisational Survey. Figure III.4.1 provides the scores for the seven sub-dimensions: responsiveness, social and policy impact (internal perception), responsiveness, social and policy impact (external perception) and impact of civil society on attitudes.

Figure III.4.1: PERCEPTION OF IMPACT SUB-DIMENSIONS



4.1 Responsiveness (internal perception)

Data for this sub-dimension, which scored 50.5%, is generated from the Organisational Survey, a fundamental element of the CSI. It addresses civil society's responsiveness to some of the most important social concerns within the country. CIVICUS guidelines suggest that the World Values Survey (WVS, 2005) be used to identify the issues of most concern in country; Kazakhstan, however, was not covered in the 2005 phase of the WVS, so the CSI Population Survey was consulted instead.

Civil society's impact on two of the greatest social concerns within the country was assessed with the question: "What is the impact of civil society when it comes to two of the most important social concerns?"

Almost half of CSO representatives (47.4%) perceived that the impact of civil society on the most important social concern is tangible or high. More than half of CSO representatives (53.6%) perceived that civil society's impact on the second most important social concern is tangible or high (see Table III.4.1). The average score for this sub-dimension was calculated at 50.5%.

TABLE III.4.1: Responsiveness (internal perceptions)

	No impact	Limited impact	Some tangible impact	High level of impact
First most important social concern	14.3%	38.3%	39%	8.4%

¹¹ 41 external experts representing executive branch of government at central and local levels, legislative branch (Parliament and maslikhats members), private sector, media, academia, donor organizations were surveyed in the CSI assessment in Kazakhstan.

Second most important concern	most social	10.6%	35.8%	43%	10.6%
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4.2 Social impact (internal perception)

The score for this sub-dimension is 52.3%. The CSOs surveyed were asked to choose two of the following fields in which they felt their organisation had exerted the most impact: supporting the poor and marginalised communities (for example, people with disabilities), education, housing, health, social development, humanitarian relief, food, employment and other.

The field in which CSOs felt they had made the most impact were supporting the poor and marginalised communities (41%), social development (17.9%), education (16.7%), and other (11.5%). The fields in which they felt they had the second most impact were social development (32%), other (24.3%) and health (11.5%).

Regarding civil society as a whole, 42.5% of respondents believed that civil society's impact is tangible or high: 42.3% believed its impact is tangible or high in the field of supporting the poor and marginalised communities; while 42.7% believed its impact is tangible or high in the field of social development. A rather higher proportion of respondents believed that the impact of their own organisation in selected fields is tangible or high (62.15%).

4.3 Policy impact (internal perception)

This sub-dimension, which scored 28.6%, covers civil society's impact on selected policy issues and on policy in general by determining how active and successful civil society is in influencing those policies. The sub-dimension answers the following questions:

- How active and successful do civil society members view civil society in influencing public policy?
- Do CSO actions/campaigns influence public policy?
- What has the outcome of activism been?
- In general, what kind of impact does civil society as a whole have on the country's policy making?

Approximately one third of CSO representatives believe that the impact of civil society as a whole on Kazakhstan's policy-making processes is tangible (28.6%) or high (4.5%). Asked whether, in the last two years, their organisation had pushed for any policies to be approved, 39.2% answered that they had and 12.9% stated that the policy had been "approved." Respondents listed the following policies: allowances for parents of children with disabilities, the demarcation of the radioactive zone in the former nuclear test site in Semey, and observance of labour legislation.

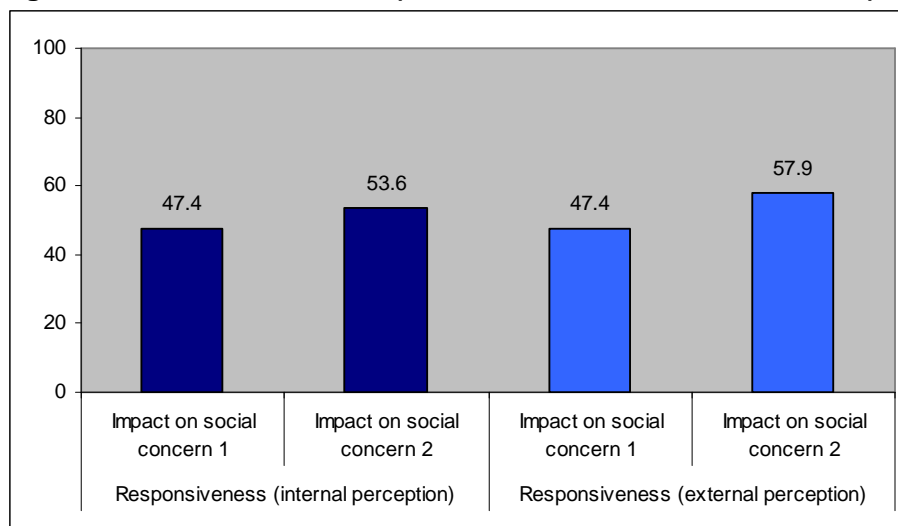
4.4 Responsiveness (external perception)

This sub-dimension, which scored 52.7%, looks at the views of external experts on civil society's impact in the two selected social issues identified and reported in sub-dimension 4.1 above. Key questions include:

- How is civil society at responding to these particular priority social concerns?
- What impact do external stakeholders think civil society has had on these social issues?
- What is the level of impact that external stakeholders perceive civil society to have on these issues?

Of the survey respondents, 47.4% believed that the impact of civil society is tangible or high when it comes to the issues of first concern. Interestingly, this score for the perceived impact of civil society in the External Perceptions Survey is identical to the score in the Organisational Survey. The score was higher for the second concern, for which 57.9% of respondents believed that the impact of civil society is tangible or high.

Figure III.4.2: RESPONSIVENESS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS)



4.5 Social impact (external perception)

This sub-dimension, which scored 53.3%, presents the views of external experts on the impact of civil society on society in general and on the two social concerns mentioned above. The key questions included:

- What is the level of impact that external stakeholders perceive civil society to have on society in general?
- Are they effective at making an impact in general?

The external stakeholders and experts were asked to choose two fields in which civil society has been most active. The fields were supporting: poor and marginalised communities (such as disabled persons), education, housing, health, social development, humanitarian relief, food, employment and other.

Of the respondents, 42.5% selected supporting the poor and marginalised communities and 25% chose social development as the fields in which civil society has been most active. Two thirds of external experts (66.7%) assessed civil society's impact in the selected fields as tangible or high and 40% believed that in general, civil society's impact on the social context is tangible or high. External perceptions of civil society's social impact are slightly higher (53.3%) than internal (CSO) perceptions (52.3%).

4.6 Policy Impact (external perception)

This section reports external experts' views on civil society's impact on policy in general and on selected policy issues. It is based on the following principle questions:

- Do external stakeholders view civil society as having any influence on the public policy process and outcomes?
- If so, what is the level of influence?
- Do CSO actions/ campaigns influence public policy?

- What has been the outcome of their activism?
- In general, how do external experts rate the kind of impact civil society has had as a whole on Kazakhstan's policy making?

Data for the sub-dimension is generated from the CSI External Perceptions Survey. In this survey, 20.6% of the respondents held that civil society's activity in policy-related fields had led to a policy being approved. Nearly twice this many believed that the policy impact of civil society is tangible or high (39.5% of the respondents). As a result, the average score for this sub-dimension is 30.1%. The external experts listed the policies and outcomes in Table III.4.2.

TABLE III.4.2: Policies and outcomes

	Policy	Outcome
1	Implementation of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative in the Republic of Kazakhstan	Policy approved
2	Questions connected with social tension	Policy approved
3	Campaign against the law on regulation of the Internet	Policy rejected
4	Transparency of activity of government agencies	No outcome / Politicians did not listen
5	Democratic elections, encroachments on freedom	No outcome / Politicians did not listen

Once again, the external perception of policy impact of civil society is slightly higher (30.1%) than CSOs' internal perception of policy impact (28.6%).

4.7 Impact on attitudes

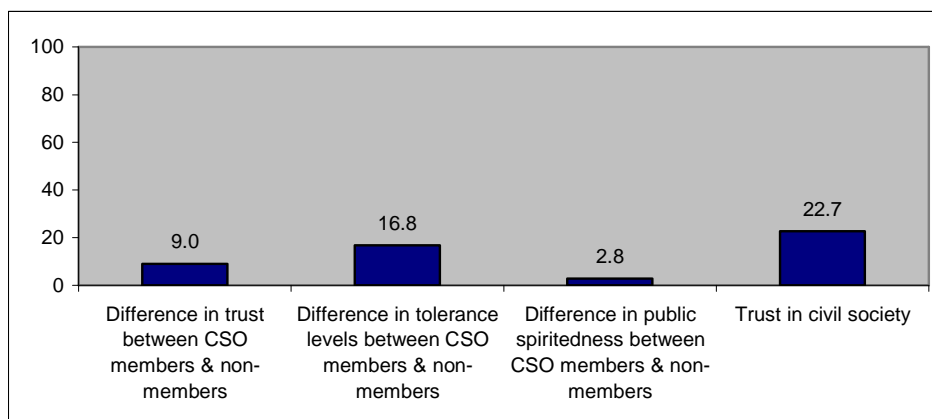
This sub-dimension, which scored just 12.8%, measures the extent to which a set of universally accepted social and political norms are upheld by members of civil society, as compared to the extent to which they are practiced in society at large. The underlying idea is to assess civil society's positive contribution in influencing the practice of these values.

The population survey contained the following questions:

- What is the difference between members and non-members of civil society organisations in their levels of trust in people in general?
- What is the difference between members and non-members of civil society in their levels of tolerance for groups traditionally marginalised, stigmatised or discriminated against?
- What are the differences in levels of public spiritedness between members and non-members of civil society?
- What is the difference between members and non-members of civil society in their levels of trust in civil society?
- How significant are the differences between these two sets?
- What do these results mean in terms of civil society's impact on attitudes?

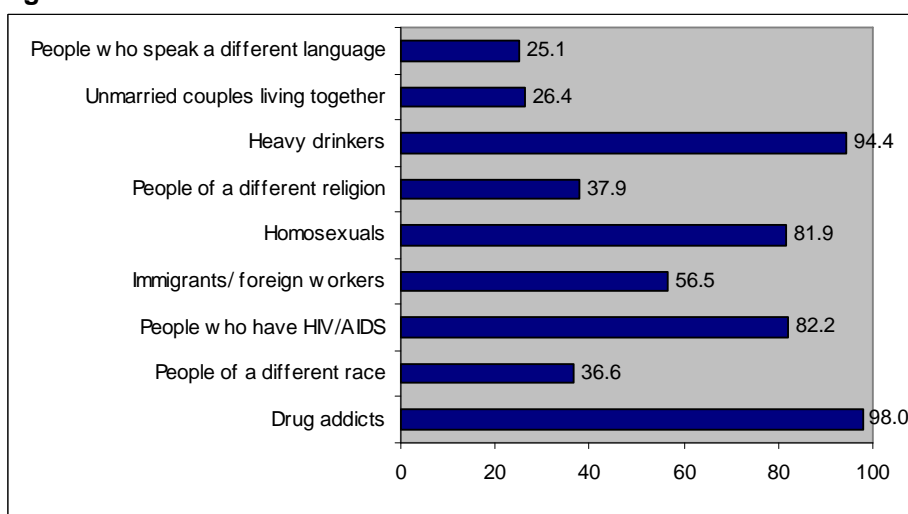
Figure III.4.3 provides the scores for the four indicators: difference in trust between civil society members and non-members, difference in intolerance between civil society members and non-members, difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members and trust in civil society.

Figure III.4.3: IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ON ATTITUDES



Tolerance levels were assessed by asking who respondents would not wish to live next to. Citizen respondents were least likely to tolerate as neighbours drug addicts and heavy drinkers: 98% of respondents said that they did not wish to live next to drug addicts, and 94.4% not next to heavy drinkers. However, there were also strong views on other social groups. For instance, 82.2% of respondents would not want to have people who have HIV/AIDS as neighbours and 81.9% would not want to live next to homosexuals.

Figure III.4.4: LEVELS OF TOLERANCE



On the matter of public spiritedness, there is rather smaller (2.3%) difference between civil society members and non-members. This indicator was conceived in terms of individuals' willingness to accept various actions, social activities or states of being. For example, only 26.1% of citizen respondents believed that euthanasia is never justifiable, while 21.8% of them believe that euthanasia is always justifiable. Table III.4.3 shows the full results.

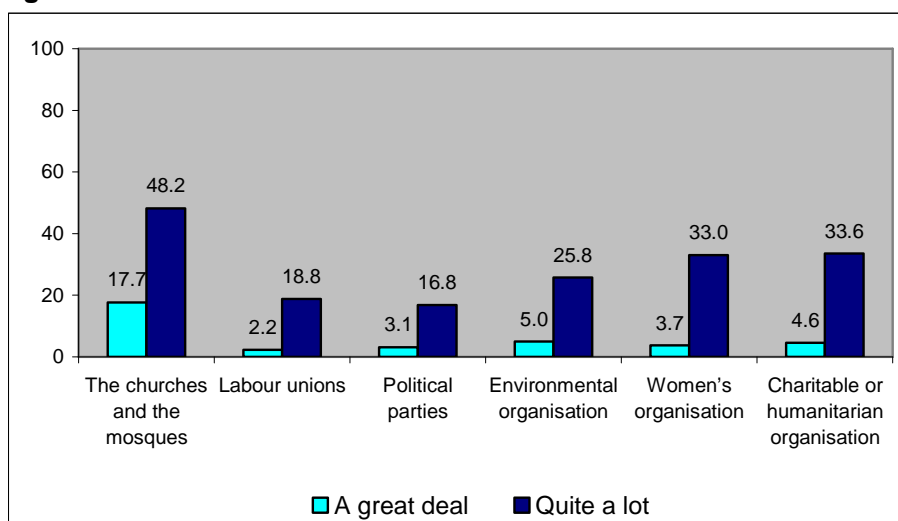
TABLE III.4.3: Level of public spiritedness

	Never justifiable	Always justifiable
Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled	62.8	2.2
Avoiding a fare on public transport	58.7	2
Cheating on taxes if you have a chance	55.1	3.2
Someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties	67	1.3
Homosexuality	66.9	2

Prostitution	68.7	1.9
Abortion	43	3.4
Divorce	31.5	5.4
Euthanasia – ending the life of the incurably sick	26.1	21.8
Suicide	70.9	2.6
For a man to beat his wife	70.2	2.4

Finally, the indicator “trust in civil society” was assessed by asking citizens how much confidence they had in specific types of CSO. The overall score was 22.7%. The highest degree of trust was felt toward the mosques and the churches; 17.7% felt a great deal of confidence in them and 48.2% quite a lot, whereas the lowest scores went to labour unions and political parties.

Figure III.4.6: TRUST IN CIVIL SOCIETY



Overall, the low score for this sub-dimension suggests that although the impact of civil society on attitudes is limited, there is some impact.

Conclusion

Overall, Perception of Impact demonstrates the lowest score of all five dimensions of the civil society assessment in Kazakhstan. This is also one of the most complex dimensions of the CSI and was obtained by triangulating various research procedures. The results were also confirmed by the participants of regional focus group meetings and Advisory Committee members.

There is not a significant gap between internal and external views of civil society's social impact, policy impact, and responsiveness. However, external perceptions are slightly more positive than internal ones, which show that the informed public retains fairly high levels of respect for the work undertaken by civil society. Both CSO members and non-members agreed that civil society has a more limited impact on policy than it does in a range of social fields.

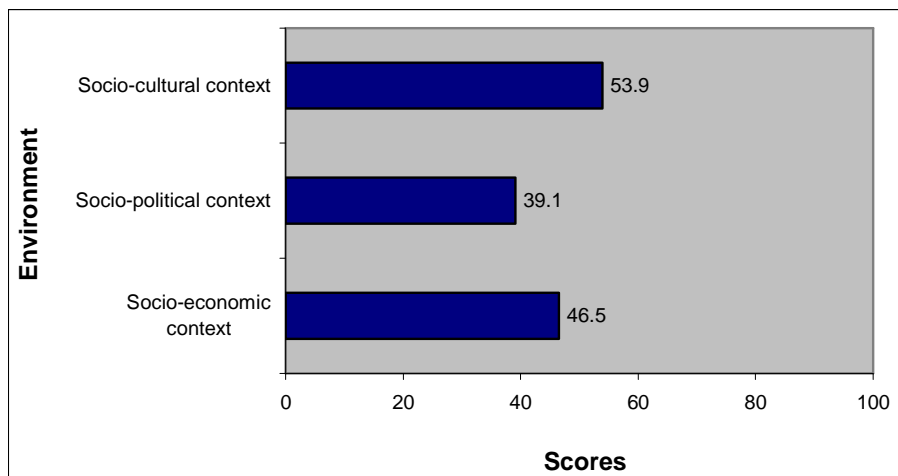
Civil society's perceived impact is weakest, however, on attitudes, with only minor attitudinal differences between civil society members and non-members on issues such as public spiritedness. However, CSO members, encouragingly, show slightly higher levels of trust than non-members. The area where there are considerable differences between CSO members and non-members is trust in civil society itself.

The low score in the Perception of Impact dimension suggests that there is much still for civil society in Kazakhstan to do, both to achieve greater impact and also to demonstrate successes where they exist. However, the better perceptions among citizens outside than those inside civil society seems suggest that perception is not the most acute obstacle which needs to be tackled moving forward.

III.5. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The External Environment dimension, scoring 46.5%, assesses the overall political, social, economic, cultural and legal environment in which civil society exists and functions in Kazakhstan. Unlike the other dimensions, these indicators are largely based on external research data gathered from different sources. Figure III.5.1 presents the scores for the three sub-dimensions.

Figure III.5.1: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT SUB-DIMENSIONS



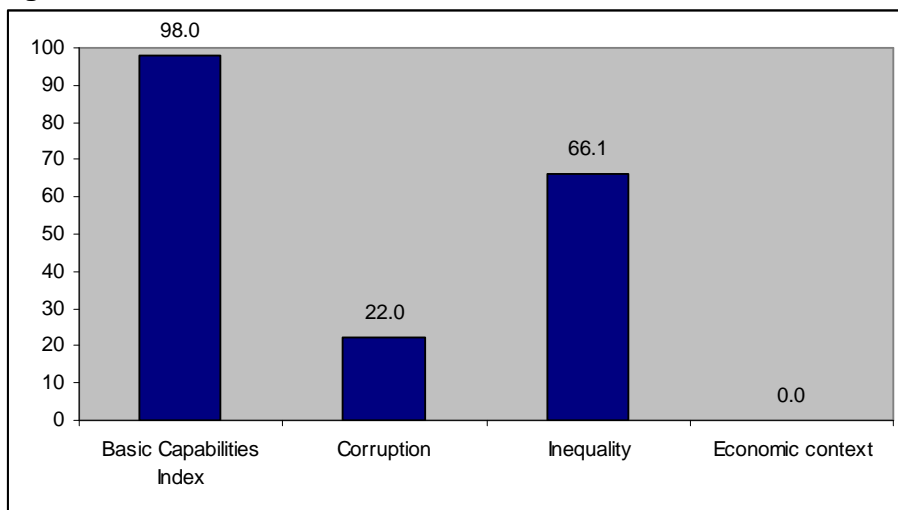
5.1 Socio-economic context

This sub-dimension, which scored 46.5%, assesses the socio-economic situation in Kazakhstan. The score of this sub-dimension is generated from Social Watch's Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) 2008, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2008, the Gini Coefficient, and economic data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators 2007.¹² Figure III.5.2 presents the values of the key indicators that refer to civil society's social and economic context.

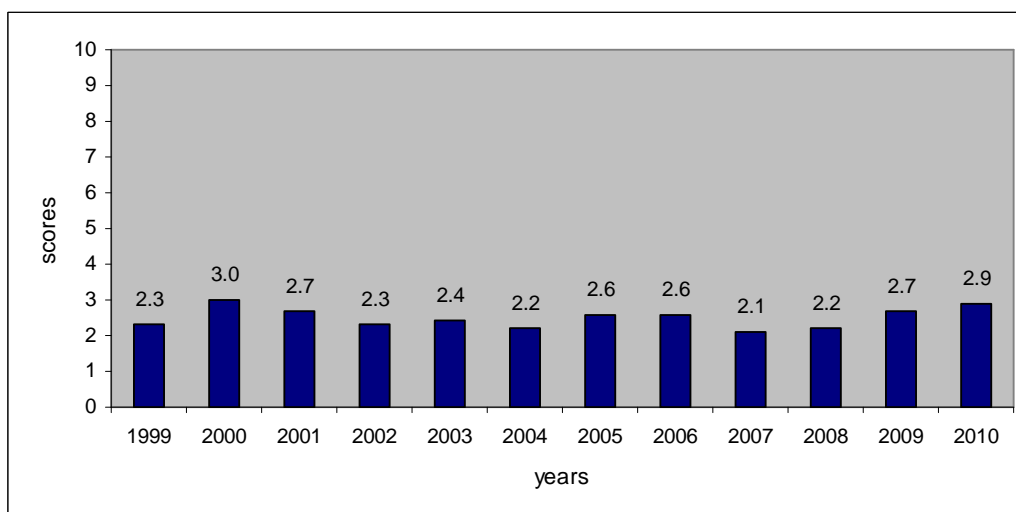
The Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index is comprised of three factors covering health and basic educational provision. These are the percentage of children who reach fifth grade at school, the percentage of children who survive until at least their fifth year (based on mortality statistics), and the percentage of births attended by health professional. The index is scaled from 0-100, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of human capabilities, so no changes were made to the scores.¹³ Kazakhstan scores high at 98%.

¹² The Public Policy Research Center and CIVICUS would like to thank the respective parties for the use of this data.

¹³ Social Watch's Basic Capabilities Index 2008.

Figure III.5.2: INDICATORS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Corruption is systematic and entrenched in the rent seeking behaviour guiding the appropriation, control, and distribution of key resources by ruling elites (Freedom House 2010). Kazakhstan's rating, according to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 2009, was 2.7 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (no corruption).¹⁴ According to the index for 2010 (see Figure III.5.3), which covers 178 countries, Kazakhstan has improved its ranking from 120th in 2009 to 105th in 2010. Nevertheless, corruption is a main concern and was emphasised by participants at the CSI regional focus group meetings and National Workshop as an ongoing obstacle to the development of civil society in Kazakhstan.

Figure III.5.3: TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX FOR KAZAKHSTAN

Inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient. Whereas the Gini coefficient is scored with a value of 0 representing absolute equality and a value of 100 absolute inequality, the CSI

¹⁴ The original data is scaled from 1-10 so scores were multiplied by 10 to create a 0-100 scale for use in the CSI. Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2008.

reverses the scores so that 0 represents absolute inequality and 100 represents absolute equality. Kazakhstan displays a high level of inequality (66.1%).

A reduction in the Gini coefficient from 0.347 in 1998 to 0.267 in 2009 shows improvements in equality in Kazakhstan. But the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Plan 2010-2011 states that high income inequality, large numbers of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and poor economic and social conditions in underdeveloped regions, small towns and rural areas remain Kazakhstan's major challenges.

Poverty is not a major concern of the government of Kazakhstan. Since 2005 when Kazakhstan was ranked as a middle income country by the World Bank, government has not developed poverty reduction programme. According to the data of the Agency of Statistics in 2009, 8.2% of the population – over one million persons – were unable to meet their basic food needs (defined subsistence level). The key reasons for poverty are large household sizes, low level of education of the household's head and limited opportunities to find jobs for household adults. Poverty is higher in rural areas (21.1%) than in urban areas (4.1%). The *oblasts* (provinces) with highest rates of poverty are Almatinskaya, Kyzylordinskaya and Mangistauskaya – the two last of which are oil rich *oblasts* (regions) (Makhmutova, 2011).

The score for the economic context indicator, based on World Development Indicators data, is the ratio of external debt to Gross National Income (GNI). This means that the higher the score, the bigger the debt compared to income and the worse the economic context. In 2007, GNI was at US\$78,281 million and external debt was at US\$96,360 million, which means that the ratio is 123. To fit the CSI diamond's scale of 0-100, the CSI team recoded this score by capping it at 100. This is then inverted to fit the CSI methodology of high scores being positive, giving a score of 0. In these terms, the economic context in Kazakhstan is rated as extremely unfavourable for civil society development. Participants at the CSI National Workshop, however, cast serious doubt on the validity of such a measure of the economic context for civil society development in Kazakhstan.

5.2 Socio-political context

This sub-dimension, which scored 39.1% (the lowest in this dimension), examines the political situation in Kazakhstan and its impact on civil society.

The indicators derive from several sources:

- Political rights and freedoms: Freedom House's *Freedom in the World*, index of political rights;¹⁵
- Rule of law and personal freedoms: Freedom House's *Freedom in the World*, index of civil liberties;¹⁶
- Associational and organisational rights: Freedom House's *Freedom in the World*, index of civil liberties;
- Experience of legal framework (CSI Organisational Survey);
- State effectiveness: the World Bank's *Worldwide Governance Indicators*, indicator on government effectiveness.

¹⁵ A proportional formula was used to change this scale from 0-40 to 0-100 [(score x 100)/40]. The higher the score, the higher the degree of rights present in the country.

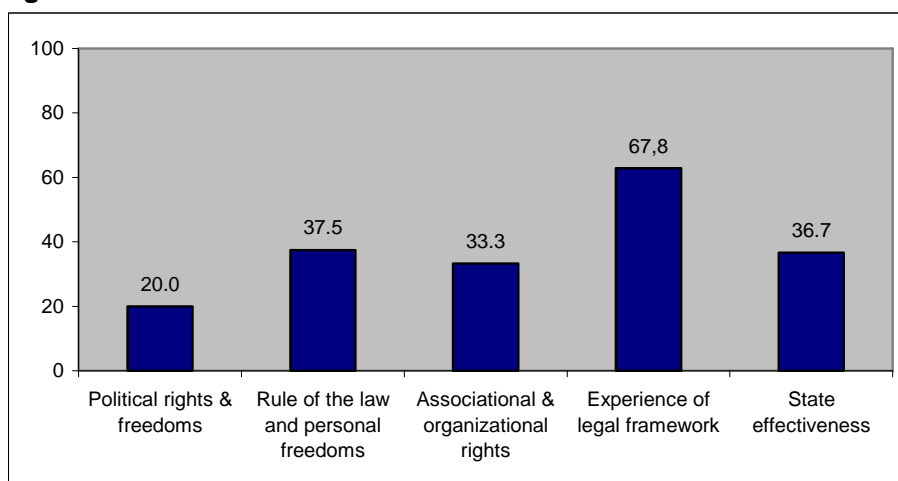
¹⁶ Scores for Rule of Law, Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights, and Freedom of Expression and Belief were added into one score. The range of possible answers therefore became 0-48 (each of the three indicators had a range of 0-16). A proportional formula was used to change the scale to 0-100 [(score x 100)/48]. The higher the score, the higher the degree of rights present in the country.

Political rights and freedoms are measured through the Freedom House Index on Political Rights based on the degree of freedom in 1) the electoral process, 2) political pluralism and participation, and 3) the functioning of government. Rule of law and personal freedoms are assessed using the Freedom House Index of Political Rights and Civil Liberties and are based on scores for rule of law, personal autonomy and individual rights, and freedom of expression and belief. Associational and organisational rights are assessed using the Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* index of civil liberties (indicator on freedom of association and organisational rights).

The legal framework for civil society is measured by findings from the Organisational Survey, specifically the two following questions: (1) Do you believe that your country's regulations and laws for civil society are fully enabling, moderately enabling or quite limiting? and (2) Has your organisation ever faced any illegitimate restriction or attack by local or central government?

The experience of legal framework indicator received the highest score (67.8%). The majority of CSO representatives (62.9%) believe that Kazakhstan's legal framework is either "moderately enabling" or "fully enabling." Asked if their organisations had ever faced any illegitimate restriction or attack by local or central government, just over a quarter (27.3%) said they had.

Figure III.5.3: SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT



State effectiveness is assessed using the World Bank's *Worldwide Governance Indicators*. The government effectiveness score increased from 12.13 in 1996 to 36.7 in 2007 and 48.1 in 2009.

5.3 Socio-cultural context

This sub-dimension, which scored 53.9%, examines the extent to which socio-cultural norms and attitudes in Kazakhstan are supportive of the activities of CSOs. This sub-dimension consists of trust, tolerance, and public spiritedness.

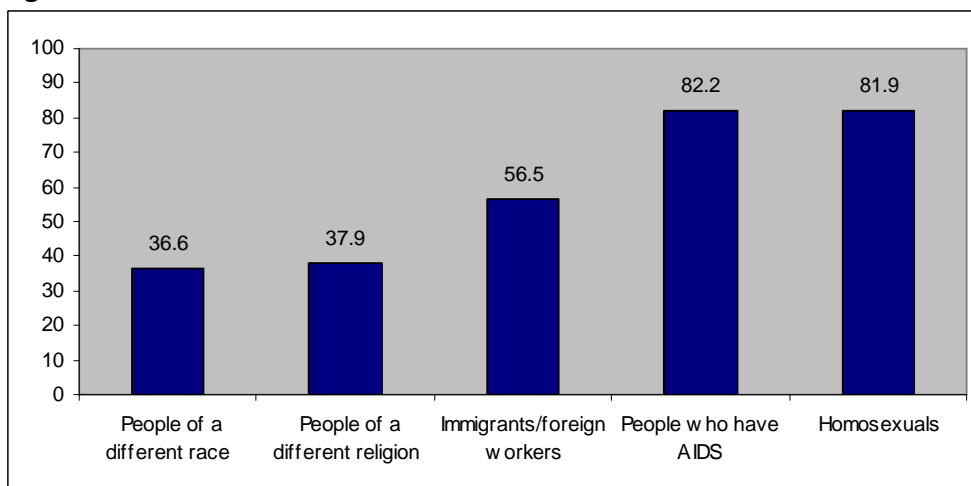
The trust indicator examines the extent to which members of society trust one another. Findings show that the degree of trust among members of the society is very limited. Only 18.5% of respondents believe that "most people can be trusted." Kazakhstan's motto for chairmanship of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) included four T's; namely, Trust, Tradition, Transparency and Tolerance. However the survey reveals

that trust levels are very limited in Kazakhstan society.¹⁷ Indeed, in December 2010 international civil society activists hosted a parallel civil society OSCE conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, to highlight the gaps between the declared principles of the OSCE and some of the political realities on the ground.¹⁸

Trust, according to Fukuyama (1995), is the cultural key to prosperity. The level of trust in a society shapes the nature of its economic transactions and institutions. Advantages of high trust include lower administration costs, higher institutional reliability and large and efficient organisations. Disadvantages of low trust include corruption and trade with influences, as well as small and inefficient organisations.

As discussed earlier, the tolerance indicator assesses how tolerant members of society are towards people of a different race, language or religion, immigrants and foreign workers, homosexuals, heavy drinkers, drug addicts, and people with HIV/AIDS. The level of tolerance stands at 59%.

Figure III.5.4: INTOLERANCE LEVELS FOR VARIOUS GROUPS AS NEIGHBOURS



The level of public spiritedness, however, scores highly. The Population Survey data shows that a large majority of respondents (84.3%) tend to see the following actions as unjustified: claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled; avoiding a fare on public transport; cheating on taxes if you have a chance; accepting a bribe in the course of duties. Of course, this public spiritedness contrasts sharply with the high levels of perceived corruption in society in Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

In the last decade, Kazakhstan was one of the fastest growing economies in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Record-breaking prices on world commodity markets resulted in average, annual real GDP growth of almost 10%. However, favourable macroeconomic indicators were not reflected in the realities of social development. High income inequality remains the main challenge.

High income inequality, large numbers of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, poor economic and social conditions in underdeveloped regions, small towns and rural areas

¹⁷ The case study “Low level of trust in Kazakhstan society: Challenge for further development” provides the main findings of this research.

¹⁸ See <http://parallelosceconference.org>.

remain Kazakhstan's major challenges, and it seems likely that a low standard of living is preventing people from engaging more in civil society's activities.

Particular problematic areas in the external environment include high levels of corruption, limited political rights and personal freedoms, constraints on the rule of law and the state's effectiveness. The level of tolerance stands at 59%.

The weakest point of the socio-cultural sub-dimension is the low level of trust that exists in Kazakh society. Fukuyama argues that such low trust can lead to corruption and influenced trade, as well as small and inefficient organisations. With greater trust, societies can build an efficient economy and better social organisations based on wide and efficient trust networks. Fukuyama also argues that such societies tend to be able to manage internal and external dissidents better.

Finally, the level of public spiritedness in Kazakhstan seems to be high, suggesting that the socio-cultural limitations on civil society growth are not necessarily a result of an absence of social capital.

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN KAZAKHSTAN

One of the goals of the CSI research is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of civil society. To accomplish this, regional focus groups and a national workshop were held to discuss the state of civil society and to reflect on the findings and scores of the CSI research. The outline and conclusions of the survey and the Civil Society Diamond were presented at these meetings and participants identified the strengths and weaknesses of civil society as they appeared in each dimension. Recommendations were then proposed to improve the situation.

Strengths and opportunities:

- Civil society operates within a relatively well developed framework of infrastructure and resources;
- CSOs tend to have sufficient internal structures of governance;
- CSOs are generally open to intra-sectoral communication, networking and exchanging information;
- Socially-based engagement is relatively well developed;
- The strongest values of civil society are democratic decision-making, non-violence, equal opportunities for men and women, and peace and tolerance;
- There is some success on which to build in promoting certain values such as religious harmony, inter-ethnic relations or good neighbourhood relations at the national and regional level;
- CSOs members are slightly more trusting than non-members, suggesting there is a good values base within civil society;
- Establishing a CSO is relatively simple and cheap in Kazakhstan, providing opportunities for growth in the number of CSOs;
- CSOs are well grounded in the social needs of citizens and are in close contact with the local environment. They tend to be sensitive to marginalised social groups;
- CSOs in Kazakhstan do tend to have the capacity to influence policies and achieve impact;
- CSOs wish to participate in civil dialogue and have the necessary expertise to advance policies.

Weaknesses and challenges:

- Low levels of political engagement and general tendency among citizens towards political apathy;
- A constraining and limited framework for political competitiveness;
- The absence of a participatory or deliberative democracy suggests a democratic deficit that if not addressed could threaten to undermine any attempts to further strengthen civil society;
- Low levels of social and political volunteering and undeveloped mechanisms for volunteering;
- Many NGOs exist only formally or were founded only for a specific project;
- High levels of perceived corruption among civil society continues to be a fundamental weakness in urgent need of redress; accountability and transparency of civil society are generally weak;
- Low levels of trust within society could limit the development of civil society;
- A low standard of living and continuing economic challenges prevent people from engaging more substantively in civil society's activities;
- Young people do not receive education about democracy;
- Working in the civil society sector is not highly valued, discouraging a secure and sustainable human resources base;

- CSOs are largely dependent on foreign donor funding because public funding is distributed among only a small number of NGOs. The likely shift towards public funding will in turn bring its own problems of dependence on government;
- There is no common database of implemented projects in the country, meaning that planning is not coordinated and that project work is often repeated or duplicated;
- CSOs are forced to orient their work around short-term and bureaucracy-heavy funding opportunities that may cover their work but not enable them to maintain or upgrade their infrastructure;
- There is an absence of a strong culture of philanthropy, giving, or corporate social responsibility; the social base for providing civil society with resources remains generally weak;
- Limited human resources are available for civil society, with unstable funding cycles causing high staff turnover and preventing long term employee stability;
- The lack of employees results in the dominance of a narrow circle of individuals and there is not enough interest in including new energies;
- Civil society in Kazakhstan has only limited international connections, and the absence of global connectivity threatens to undermine attempts at civil society strengthening;
- Civil society is rarely self-critical, reducing its credibility in the eyes of some external stakeholders;
- Cooperation between the government, civil society and the private sector is low;
- Connections between the population and NGOs can be weak, and citizens are often only interested in civil society's work at particular, sporadic moments;
- CSOs do not rely enough on consultations with citizens and interest groups when involved in policy making processes;
- State authorities can interfere with CSOs or treat them unequally;
- State/ civil society dialogue and consultations are often treated as a pro-forma instrument by governmental actors;
- CSOs still need to improve their understanding of the proper mechanisms for policy impact;
- CSOs are too busy fighting for survival to engage on a wider scale;
- Civic participation depends on CSOs' profile and credibility, but citizens are sceptical of civil society and perceive CSOs mainly as sources of financial benefits;
- The government is unresponsive to initiatives and proposals from civil society;
- CSOs are often unable to present proposals effectively (there is a need for better marketing and lobbying);
- The lack of coordination among state institutions often constrains CSO efforts to improve policies.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to improve the state of civil society were developed based on the discussions at the CSI National Workshop and regional focus group meetings, as well as on the analysis of the CSI findings for Kazakhstan. They reflect major concerns and highlights for all five dimensions of the CSI – Civic Engagement, Level of Organisation, Practice of Values, Perception of Impact and External Environment. The recommendations are divided into three sections, depending on the type of targeted group. More information on the recommendations is available in the CSI Policy Action Brief accompanying this report.

Civil society should:

- Educate citizens for civil dialogue, both in school and at home;
- Provide more education about civil responsibilities and rights;
- Ensure stable sources of financing that enable the independence of CSOs;
- Look for opportunities to strengthen networking and links between CSOs;
- Look for opportunities to boost the confidence of individuals and of CSOs in their belief that they can make a change;
- Attempt to create sustainable employment opportunities in CSOs and develop organisational structures which do not tie employment to project funding;
- Attempt to create opportunities for sustainable volunteer positions;
- Encourage activism among citizens and carry out consultations with citizens and interest groups when involved in trying to influence policy making processes;
- Promote links with academia and seek to improve the image of CSOs in the media;
- Engage in a broad-based consultative process to open dialogue on a long-term plan for the development of civil society in Kazakhstan;
- Ensure they continue to remain grounded in their environment and where possible bring this perspective to policy and decision-making processes;
- Articulate explicitly their values in their strategic plans, if necessary through strategic planning training;
- Ensure they respond promptly to relevant policy issues as and when they emerge;
- Seek to improve and develop expertise in communication and lobbying methods, with a view to achieving policy objectives;
- Push hard for more and better civil dialogue;
- Try hard to escape their “comfort zone” by pursuing socially responsible partnerships with companies and the private sector;
- Proactively seek to engage and integrate with organisations and partnerships in the region and worldwide, particularly CSOs;
- Improve the accountability and transparency of CSOs;
- Promote the civil society sector and its valuable work, seeking to gain greater public approval.

Government should:

- Educate citizens for civil dialogue, both in school and at home;
- Provide more education about civil responsibilities and rights;
- Make real and measurable efforts to expand the concept of democracy practiced in Kazakhstan so that it not only includes parliamentary democracy, but also participatory and deliberative democracy;
- Make real and measurable efforts to develop greater political competitiveness;
- Enact legislation to formally recognise and promote the role of the volunteer;
- Make amendments to existing legislation to establish criteria for the work of CSOs in the public interest;
- Establish an NGO fund that will ensure co-financing in cases when additional funds need to be raised for implementing projects;

- Seek to increase donations by amending the law on non-commercial organisations and tax legislation;
- Make funding for state social contracts open and transparent;
- Provide funding for a full review of the non-governmental sector on a competitive basis;
- Replace short-term CSO funding with long term programme-based funding;
- Design a plan for the long-term development of civil society;
- Work with civil society in establishing appropriate mechanisms for civil dialogue, and train civil servants on conducting civil dialogue.

The donor community should:

- Increase cooperation and coordination among donor organisations in support of civil society initiatives;
- Support initiatives aimed at improving the transparency and accountability practices of CSOs.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The CSI implementation in Kazakhstan was driven by the intention to present a relevant and contemporary assessment of the state of civil society in the country, to identify its strengths and weaknesses, and to develop a plan on how to empower civil society to play better its important role in governance and development. The comprehensive methodology of the CSI project gave space not only to the generation of fresh data on the state of civil society, but also allowed participants to go deeper and to explore a variety of different dimensions of civil society.

A wide range of civil society actors and representatives from other sectors were involved in discussions and consultations during the two years of the CSI implementation. The CSI data indicator matrix for Kazakhstan (see Appendix 1) and other findings formed the basis for such discussions, which should serve as a foundation for follow-up actions to strengthen civil society.

The CSI analysis of civic engagement in Kazakhstan raises concerns over the limited extent of citizen participation. Within this limited participation, however, the social life of the country is characterised by greater depth and diversity. Civic engagement in Kazakhstan seems to be characterised by less extensive engagement that is more social than political in nature. Eliminating an apparent general apathy among the population towards volunteering will be important for further developing civil society.

Level of Organization dimension scored the highest among all five dimensions of the CSI. CSOs operate within a relatively well developed framework of infrastructure and resources, with most possessing sufficient internal structures of governance. CSOs tend to be open to intra-sector communications and networks, but need to ensure better and more sustainable human resources. The most significant and intense discussions at the CSI Advisory Committee and regional focus group meetings were focused on the question of how to ensure the financial sustainability of CSOs and how to diversify sources of funding. Financial survival often demands that values be sacrificed, particularly when faced with securing funds either from foreign donors or from a state which discourages political competitiveness. The accountability and transparency of how public funds are distributed to CSOs remains problematic. Opaque mechanisms for the distribution of public funding at the national and local levels through state social contracts increase distrust and disunity among CSOs. Dependence on certain funding sources, whether foreign or public, makes CSOs fearful of losing them, in turn constraining the ambition and longer-term vision of their activities. Participants at the CSI National Workshop suggested halting the issuing of further state social contracts because the current mechanism is not resulting in strengthening of civil society and effective public expenditure. The social base of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility from which CSOs could potentially draw resources and support remains weak. It is therefore necessary to establish an enabling legal framework and policy environment that is conducive to donations and boosts the culture of philanthropy.

The Practice of Values shows that the strongest values of civil society in Kazakhstan are democratic decision-making, non-violence, equal opportunities for men and women, peace and tolerance. Members of CSOs are slightly more trusting than non-members. CSOs are successful in promoting certain values such as religious harmony and inter-ethnic relations at the national and regional level. The weakest value of civil society, however, is the perceived high level of corruption, perhaps as a consequence of the high level of corruption in Kazakhstan as whole. Regardless of the cause, the challenge of corruption remains a central obstacle to the further development of civil society in Kazakhstan.

The Perception of Impact dimension scored the lowest of all five dimensions. CSO members and non-members agree that civil society has more limited impact on policy than it does on a range of social fields, suggesting that there is further to go in developing civil society's capacity to influence policy. CSOs are familiar with the social needs of Kazakhstan and well grounded in the local environment and context. In general, CSOs do seem to have the capacity to influence policies, but do not always use this capacity to exercise their influence. On the whole, CSOs are interested in participating in civil dialogue and usually have access to the necessary expertise to advance policies. However, cooperation between government, civil society and the private sector is usually poor, and state authorities do interfere with CSOs or treat them unequally. State-civil society dialogue and consultations are often treated as a pro-forma instrument by government actors. Meanwhile, CSOs are often too busy fighting for organisational survival to engage on a wider scale or to act against these challenges with one voice.

The CSI study reveals that the problematic areas of the external environment in Kazakhstan include high levels of corruption, limited political rights and personal freedoms, and constraints on the rule of law and state effectiveness. Low levels of trust constrain the development of social capital and the economy in Kazakhstan, which in turn should be important building blocks for a healthier civil society.

Overall, the picture of civil society in Kazakhstan is, however, a cautiously optimistic one. There seem to be enough positive strengths to build on, but the path ahead will require real focus and commitment from government, civil society and the donor community if the considerable weaknesses of civil society in Kazakhstan are to be overcome. Only time will tell if the potential for developing and strengthening civil society can be realised in the years that come.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CSI DATA INDICATOR MATRIX FOR KAZAKHSTAN, 2009-10

Dimension, Sub-dimension, and Indicator			Scores (%)
1) Dimension: Civic Engagement			46.9
1.1		Extent of socially-based engagement	28.0
	1.1.1	Social membership 1	36.5
	1.1.2	Social volunteering 1	19.7
	1.1.3	Community engagement 1	27.9
1.2		Depth of socially-based engagement	53.8
	1.2.1	Social membership 2	37.4
	1.2.2	Social volunteering 2	50.5
	1.2.3	Community engagement 2	73.5
1.3		Diversity of socially-based engagement	69.5
	1.3.1	Diversity of socially-based engagement	69.5
1.4		Extent of political engagement	18.3
	1.4.1	Political membership 1	15.5
	1.4.2	Political volunteering 1	16.1
	1.4.3	Individual activism 1	23.2
1.5		Depth of political engagement	39.7
	1.5.1	Political membership 2	46.7
	1.5.2	Political volunteering 2	49.4
	1.5.3	Individual activism 2	23.0
1.6		Diversity of political engagement	72.1
	1.6.1	Diversity of political engagement	72.1
2) Dimension: Level of organisation			48.4
2.1		Internal governance	73.0
	2.1.1	Management	73.0
2.2		Infrastructure	50.9
	2.2.1	Support organisations	50.9
2.3		Sectoral communication	70.1
	2.3.1	Peer-to-peer communication 1	68.7
	2.3.2	Peer-to-peer communication 2	71.5
2.4		Human resources	14.4
	2.4.1	Sustainability of HR	14.4
2.5		Financial and technological resources	77.7
	2.5.1	Financial sustainability	68.6
	2.5.2	Technological resources	86.7
2.6		International linkages	4.4
	2.6.1	International linkages	4.4
3) Dimension: Practice of Values			47.6
3.1		Democratic decision-making governance	65.9
	3.1.1	Decision-making	65.9
3.2		Labour regulations	36.2
	3.2.1	Equal opportunities	51.9
	3.2.2	Members of labour unions	26.6
	3.2.3	Labour rights trainings	35.6
	3.2.4	Publicly available policy for labour standards	30.6

3.3		Code of conduct and transparency	55.8
	3.3.1	Publicly available code of conduct	52.6
	3.3.2	Transparency	59.0
3.4		Environmental standards	21.5
	3.4.1	Environmental standards	21.5
3.5		Perception of values in civil society as a whole	58.4
	3.5.1	Perceived non-violence	58.9
	3.5.2	Perceived internal democracy	56.3
	3.5.3	Perceived levels of corruption	5.0
	3.5.4	Perceived intolerance	73.6
	3.5.5	Perceived weight of intolerant groups	85.2
	3.5.6	Perceived promotion on non-violence and peace	71.5
4) Dimension: Perception of Impact			40.0
4.1		Responsiveness (internal perception)	50.5
	4.1.1	Impact on social concern 1	47.4
	4.1.2	Impact on social concern 2	53.6
4.2		Social Impact (internal perception)	52.3
	4.2.1	General social impact	42.5
	4.2.2	Social impact of own organisation	62.15
4.3		Policy Impact (internal perception)	28.6
	4.3.1	General policy impact	33.8
	4.3.2	Policy activity of own organisation	39.2
	4.3.3	Policy impact of own organisation	12.9
4.4		Responsiveness (external perception)	52.7
	4.4.1	Impact on social concern 1	47.4
	4.4.2	Impact on social concern 2	57.9
4.5		Social Impact (external perception)	53.3
	4.5.1	Social impact selected concerns	66.7
	4.5.2	Social impact general	40.0
4.6		Policy Impact (external perception)	30.1
	4.6.1	Policy impact specific fields 1-3	20.6
	4.6.2	Policy impact general	39.5
4.7		Impact of civil society on attitudes	12.8
	4.7.1	Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	9.0
	4.7.2	Difference in tolerance levels between civil society members and non-members	16.8
	4.7.3	Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	2.8
	4.7.4	Trust in civil society	22.7
5) Contextual Dimension: Environment			46.5
5.1		Socio-economic context	46.5
	5.1.1	Basic Capabilities Index	98.0
	5.1.2	Corruption	22.0
	5.1.3	Inequality	66.1
	5.1.4	Economic context	0.0
5.2		Socio-political context	39.1
	5.2.1	Political rights and freedoms	20.0
	5.2.2	Rule of law and personal freedoms	37.5
	5.2.3	Associational and organisational rights	33.3
	5.2.4	Experience of legal framework	67.8
	5.2.5	State effectiveness	36.7
5.3		Socio-cultural context	53.9

5.3.1	Trust	18.5
5.3.2	Tolerance	59.0
5.3.3	Public spiritedness	84.3

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERS

- Meruert Makhmutova: National Coordinator and Lead author of report
- Aitzhan Akhmetova: Researcher and co-author
- Togzhan Lambekova: Civil Society Expert
- Gulnar Mukhambetova: Civil Society Expert
- Karlygash Karaiganova: Assistant

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Arsen Kanafin, KBS Group, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of PPRC
- Laila Akhmetova, Union of Women of Intellectual Work
- Bakhyt Yessekina, High Party School
- Yurii Buluktayev, Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies
- Konstantin Kovtunetc, INTRAC
- Maira Abenova, Dom Public Union
- Gulmira Dzhamanova, Central Asian Sustainable Development Institutes Network (CASDIN)
- Erzhan Nukezhanov, Ministry of Culture and Information of the RoK

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF PARTNERS IN REGIONS

- Gaukhar Omasheva, South Kazakhstan University, Shymkent
- Maira Abenova, Dom Public Union, Semey
- Vitalii Kulik, Zubr Public Foundation, Ust' Kamenogorsk
- Bayan Yegizbayeva, Youth's Problems Centre, Kyzylorda
- Irina Stefanova, Aktau
- Bayan Akhmetzhanova, Forum of Non-Commercial Organisations, Astana

APPENDIX 5: LIST OF NATIONAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

- Zhanat Zakieva, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Saule Alpysova, Information Resource Centre of Non-government Organisation, Almaty City
- Jamilya Asanova, ARGO Association for Development of Civil Society
- Lidiya Astanina, Greenwomen
- Zulfiya Baisakova, Union of Crises Centres
- Azhar Baisakalova, KIMEP
- Yurii Buluktayev, Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies
- Oraz Jandosov, Rakurs Centre of Economic Analysis

- Kairat Imanaliev, Namys Public Union of Disabled People with High Education
- Lazat Kaltaeva, Shyrak the Disabled Women Association
- K. Shamshiev, Kvorum.kz
- Konstantin Kovtunetc, INTRAC
- Asylbek Kozhakhmetov, Shanyrak Public Union
- Burikhan Nurmukhamedov, Akzhol Party
- Yevgeniy Savvin, MediaNet
- Yerlan Smailov, Institute of Political Decisions
- Aigul Tagatova, Eurasia Foundation
- Nataliya Ten, Institute of Cooperation for Development
- Bakhyt Tumenova, Amansauyk Public Foundation
- Artem Ustimenko, Institute of Political Decisions
- Zauze Chulanova, Kazakh British Technical University
- Aizada Manasova, Information Resource Centre
- Bakhyt Almenov, International Human Rights Centre
- Aigerim Islamdzhanova, International Human Rights Centre
- Matt Briggs, Consulate General US Embassy
- Rysbek Kasymbala, Consulate General US Embassy
- Margarita Grigoreva, Regional Office of World Bank
- Yerkin Mamadaliev, Regional Office of World Bank
- Madina Ibrasheva, OSCE Center
- Yerbol Azanbekov, Kasinform
- Assel Tastenova, Institute of Political Decisions
- Inna Yenshina, Civil Servant's guide
- Yana Zadorozhnaya, Megapolis newspaper
- Madina Nurgalieva, Institute of Political Decisions
- Yekaterina Ionova, Kazinform
- Serik Kovlanbaev, Respublica newspaper
- Amina Dzhamalova, Panorama newspaper
- Sergey Domnin, Expert Kazakhstan
- C. Kukenov, Alash Ainacy
- Meruert Makhmutova, PPRC
- Kanat Berentaev, PPRC
- Sholpan Kozhakhmetova, PPRC
- Aitzhan Akhmetova, PPRC
- Togzhan Lambekova, PPRC

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF REGIONAL FOCUS GROUPS

Semey city:

- Vladimir Popkov, Dom Public Union
- Aleksandr Mikhailenko, Nurotan Party
- Murat Kamzin, Azat Party
- Ruslan Bakhtin, Azat Party
- Raisa Abdullina, Union of Medicine Veterans
- Akhmetkali Sadybekov, Pensioner
- Sara Kapanova, Zhensovet Arna Public Union
- Maira Abenova, Dom Public Union
- Nikolay Isaev, Union of Non-Commercial Organisations of Semey City

- Seitkali Imanalinov, Pokolenie Public Union
- Biktor Krasnov, Entrepreneur
- Valentina Izmailova, Entrepreneur
- Murat Iskakov, Azat Party
- Beibut Kikimov, Azat Party
- Rasima Vodolazova, Pensioner
- Valentina Kovyazina, Azat Party

Shymkent City:

- Makhmut Konysbaev, Center for Women Support
- Alina Dzhunusbekova, Kasiet Youth Public Union
- Alya Rustambekova, Bereke Public Union
- Gaukhar Omasheva, South Kazakhstan University
- Danil Shemratov, Karavan newspaper
- Elmira Satybekova, South Kazakhstan University

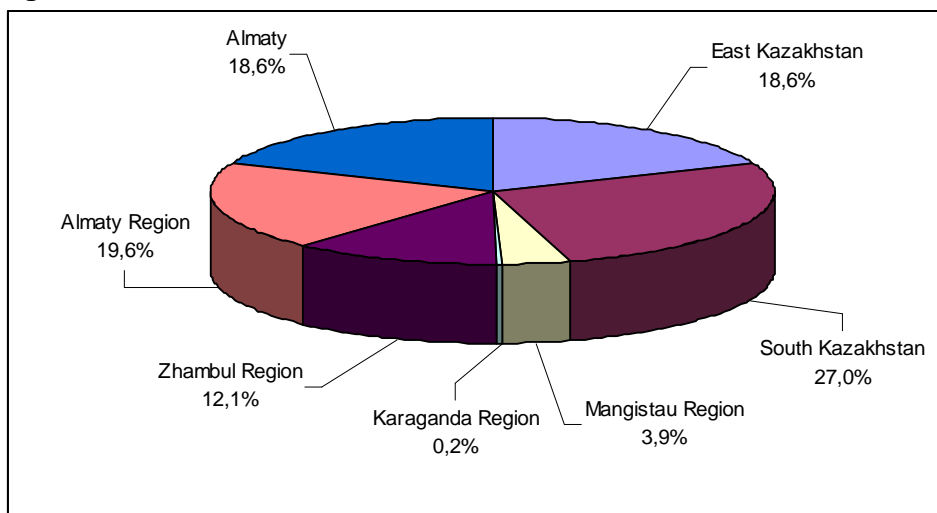
Astana City:

- Bayan Akhmetzhanova, Forum of Non-Commercial Organisations, Astana
- Assel Esmaganbetova, Balamay Center for Disabled Children Support
- Maryam Mukhametgalieva, Union of Disabled Children of Astana
- Orynbasar Eshmukhambetova, Union of bookkeepers and auditors
- Galina Bykova, Consumers Advocate Union
- Sholpan Aitenova, Aimak Foundation
- Leyla Idrisova, Ardager Public Union
- Kamka Zhasanova, Union of Disabled Children of Astana
- Gulzhan Makimova, Children Foundation of Kazakhstan, Astana

APPENDIX 7: POPULATION SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The population survey was conducted in 2009 through personal interviews with a nationally representative sample of 542 respondents over 18 years old spread across the country (see Figure A7.1 for regions).

Figure A7.1 POPULATION SURVEY RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO REGION



Regarding ethnic background, 64.4% of respondents declared themselves to be Kazakh and 23% Russian. The remaining 12.6% belonged to minority groups: Korean (4.1%), Uigur (2.4%), Ukrainian (2.2%), German (1.3%) and other (2.6%).

The sampling achieved a relatively balanced gender representation with a slight predominance of female respondents (54.2%).

In terms of age, the largest groups of respondents were 26-35 years old (31.7%). Table A7.1 shows respondents by age group.

TABLE A7.1 Population survey respondents according to age-group

Age group	% of overall sample
18-25 years	20%
26-35 years	31.7%
36-45 years	21.7%
46-55 years	16.4%
56-60 years	5.2%
Over 60 years	5%
Total	100%

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