CIVIL SOCIETY IN AZERBAIJAN: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSITION

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Azerbaijan
An international action-research project coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

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International Center for Social Research (ICSR)

FOREWORD

In Azerbaijan, the Civil Society Index (CSI) project was implemented by the International Center for Social Research (ICSR), who served as the country's National Coordinating Organisation (NCO). The ICSR is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan, non-political and non-profit organisation based in Baku, Azerbaijan. It was founded in 1996 by a group of scholars and practitioners interested in promoting and carrying out research on socio-political and economical problems in Azerbaijan. The Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan Republic legally registered the ICSR as a non-governmental organisation in October 2000 (Certificate № 1330).

The ICSR was established to provide research, education, and organisational support for socio-economic and democratic reforms and sustainable development in Azerbaijan. The ICSR's mission, therefore, is to contribute to the democratisation process, to build a strong and vibrant civil society, to make a strong impact on the development of democratic institutions, civic culture and market economy in Azerbaijan, and to consult on training and education activities. The ICSR has been involved in completing a large number of international and national research projects related to the transitional issues of Azerbaijani society.

The current project, namely the CSI, can therefore be viewed as a logical continuation of ICSR's previous research projects. The country report is a first attempt to provide a comprehensive picture that captures the various dynamics of civil society in Azerbaijan. The CSI project is an excellent starting point for strengthening civil society and creating networking and cooperation opportunities among civil society and other relevant stakeholders. The CSI has also initiated a new debate on the concept and significance of civil society.

This action-oriented research project involved a wide range of stakeholders throughout the country and will be disseminated among civil society organisations, researchers, government officials, the private sector, national and foreign donors and the general public.

The CSI project in Azerbaijan took place in cooperation with a wide range of organisations, individuals and members of the National Advisory Group (NAG). This relationship and cooperation built throughout the process is expected to continue, particularly with the publication and during presentations of project outcomes to a wider audience.

Today, a strong effort should be made to provide Azerbaijani civil society with powerful instruments for positive change and we hope that the product of our research will be a small input into this extremely important and valuable process.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BP	British Petroleum
CMA	Union of Youth of Azerbaijan
COE	Council of Europe
CHF	Cooperative Housing Foundation
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CS	Civil Society
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICSR	International Center for Social Research
IDP	Internally displaced person
KLO	Karabakh Liberation Organisation
NAG	National Advisory Group
NAPYE	National Plan of Action on Employment of Youth
NAYORA	National Council of Youth Organisations of Azerbaijan
NCO	National Coordinating Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIT	National Index Team
NOC	National Olympic Committee
OSCE	Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute
PLWHIV	People living with HIV
RSC	Regional Stakeholder Consultation
SOCAR	State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic
SPRED	State Program on the Reduction of Poverty and Economic Development
TI	Transparency International
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WB	World Bank
WVS	World Values Survey
YAP	New Azerbaijan Party
YECA	Coalition of Employment for Azerbaijan Youth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section presents the main findings, observations and implications of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project in Azerbaijan, which was implemented by ICSR.

The CSI project was coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The CSI is a comprehensive needs assessment and action-planning tool for civil society actors at country level, and has been implemented in more than 50 countries around the world.

As the National Coordinating Organisation (NCO), the ICSR collected comprehensive information and input from a broad range of civil society representatives, civil society organisations (CSOs), ordinary citizens, experts and researchers on the current state of civil society in Azerbaijan during 2002-2006.

The CSI project brought to light many new ideas and also the impression of civil society in Azerbaijan. In doing so, it was also able to identify key strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Azerbaijan. The main highlights are summarised below.

At the core of the CSI project is the concept of civil society, which is defined as "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests."[1] This definition encompasses a large number of diverse organisations, including voluntary organisations, professional bodies, trade unions, and local informal and formal community.

Having this definition as the starting point, the CSI team in Azerbaijan tried to collect further information to evaluate the state of civil society. The CSI used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including the Community Survey, Regional Stakeholder Consultations, Policy Impact Case Studies, a Media Review, and interviews with key informants.

FIGURE I: Civil Society Diamond for Azerbaijan
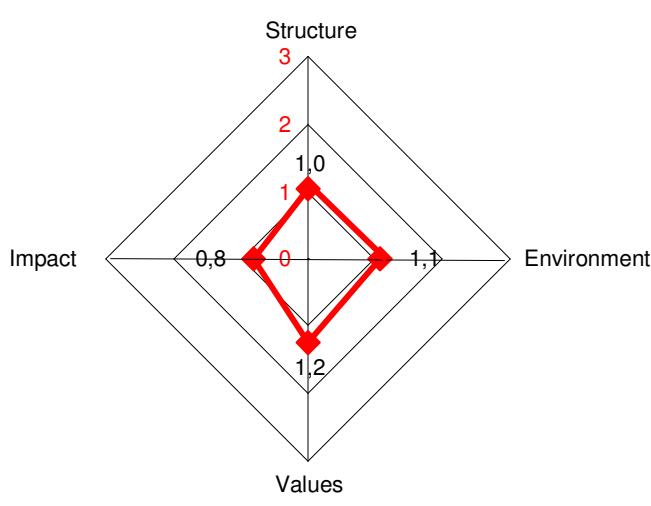
The project's National Advisory Group (NAG) scored 74 indicators, which are grouped under four CSI dimensions: Structure, Environment, Values and Impact. The indicators are scored on a scale from 0 (the lowest score) to 3 (the highest). The scores are assessed by the NAG and are then averaged to give an overall score between 0 and 3 for the four key dimensions. These four scores are then plotted in the Azerbaijan Civil Society Diamond, which gives a visual representation of the current state of civil society in Azerbaijan (see Figure 1).

[1] Heinrich, V. F. (2004) 'Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: A Project Description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index: A Participatory Needs Assessment and Action-Planning Tool for Society.' Johannesburg: CIVICUS

Figure 1 demonstrates that civil society in Azerbaijan is well balanced among its four dimensions (structure, environment, values and impact), although its dimensions are rather limited. The scores for each dimension are low, being within the limits of 0.8-1.2 on a scale from 0 up to 3. It is clear from this diagram that the Impact Dimension is perhaps slightly weaker, while the other three dimensions yielded relatively more positive results.

The Structure Dimension of civil society in Azerbaijan reveals that this dimension is currently below average, confirming the existing opinion that apathy and a lack of civic engagement is widespread among citizens. Some of the factors contributing to the low assessment of this dimension are discussed briefly below.

Citizen participation in CSOs is quite limited because of a limited and ineffective outreach by CSOs to the general population. In addition, there is not enough diversity in the Azerbaijani civil society. The types of CSOs with the largest membership are trade unions, followed by educational organisations and groups. Overall membership in other types of CSO is not very significant. Furthermore, the distribution of CSOs is not even across the country, with most CSOs concentrated in the capital, Baku, or in other large cities. According to the CSI study, while many social groups of the population are represented in CSOs' membership, many of them are underrepresented among CSOs' leadership.

The CSI assessment also revealed that CSO umbrella bodies are often seen as a problematic feature of civil society's structure. For the most part, the Regional Stakeholder Survey (RSC) respondents viewed them as inefficient in achieving their purposes, particularly in increasing their members' access to financial resources and in providing technical and informational support of their activities. Perhaps one of the most serious challenges facing Azerbaijani civil society is the extremely low level of cooperation between CSOs and among CSOs in different sectors, as well as their weak international linkages.

The CSI process showed that the Environment in which civil society operates in Azerbaijan is quite unsupportive of the development of civil society. This is inconsistent and contradictory in terms of the environment's contribution to the long-term sustainability of Azerbaijani CS. Many of these problems stem back to the negative consequences of the Soviet totalitarian system. Indeed, many social-political and legal factors inhibit the development of civil society in Azerbaijan. Additionally, civil society has not developed strong and cooperative relationships with the government or the private/ business sector.

As for the socio-cultural context, the CSI findings also demonstrate relatively low levels of interpersonal trust and public spiritedness, representing significant socio-cultural and psychological barriers to the development of a vibrant civil society. However, it can also be assumed that in the long run, strengthening civil society will also contribute to improving the socio-cultural environment in the country.

This optimistic perspective is supported by the fact that the levels of interpersonal trust, public spiritedness, and tolerance are greater among CSOs members than among non-members. In general, the considerable improvement in both the social and economic situation in the country in recent years can be seen as positive factors in the development and strengthening of civil society.

The CSI assessed civil society's Values Dimension as slightly higher than others with a score of 1.2. This positive picture is connected to a relatively high level of attention to issues of gender equity, non-violence and tolerance within the civil society arena. Despite this fact, one of the basic weaknesses of this dimension is the lack of concrete activities and initiatives to promote

values such as democracy, transparency, gender equity, non-violence, tolerance, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability within the larger civil society. This weakness is closely connected with the fact that civil society in Azerbaijan, in general, is not very influential within the ongoing public processes in the country. Mostly, it acts more as a passive observer than as an active participant in influencing these social processes. At the same time, the limited character of democratic practices, as well as the lack of internal transparency and accountability within CSOs, contributes to a general low score for the Values Dimension.

The Impact Dimension received the lowest score among the four CSI dimensions. This indicates that civil society is still not an influential actor in the policy-making arena in Azerbaijan, and that its overall impact on current policy and society is relatively weak. Therefore, one can assume that civil society's current actions in the field of public policy do not necessarily lead to greater impact on society at large and on the wellbeing of citizens. In particular, CSOs have not been successful at holding private corporations accountable, lobbying for state service provision for the population, and empowering citizens in terms of building their capacity for collective action and supporting livelihoods.

Unfortunately, the success of CSO activities such as holding the state accountable, promoting freedom of the press, influencing public policy in social support of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), promoting transparency of oil incomes, informing and educating citizens and delivering services to marginalised groups, is not much better either. It signals that after the long period of Soviet rule, civil society in Azerbaijan has not yet established and generated effective mechanisms of real influence on the public life as a whole. Nevertheless, as indicated by the 2005 Community Survey, it is expected that over time, the positive influence of CSOs will steadily increase, and there is a belief that civil society in Azerbaijan possesses significant potential for building more social capital.

The CSI project is the first comprehensive and participatory assessment of civil society carried out in Azerbaijan. Its findings will be able to contribute considerably to both forming and shaping the way for civil society progress in the short and long term. As the CSI study has found, the continuing development of civil society in Azerbaijan will require strong commitment and intensive work "in all directions" and in all aspects of the state and development of civil society.

Therefore, priority needs to be given to the task of strengthening the ability of civil society to positively affect the society at large. This means that activities in improving the structural characteristics (particularly civic participation, the strengthening of networking, cooperation, communication and self-regulation within civil society) of civil society, the external environment in which it operates (in particular, state-civil society and private sector-civil society relations), and the internal value system of CS should be undertaken concurrently and in coordination with an increase in social efficiency and influential capacity, thus increasing the influence of civil society in Azerbaijan.

This project provides civil society in Azerbaijan with a collectively created and generated model, a scheme for civil society's future development. It is hoped that the participatory and knowledge-based nature of the CSI project has laid a solid groundwork for civil society and other stakeholders to act upon the goal of making civil society even stronger and more sustainable in the future.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) in Azerbaijan, which was carried out from May 2004 to November 2006. This project was part of the larger international CSI Programme coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation and has been implemented in more than 50 countries.

The CSI is a participatory action-oriented research project that assesses the status of civil society in countries around the world. The project links this assessment with a reflection and action-planning process by civil society stakeholders, which aims to strengthen civil society in the areas where weaknesses or challenges were detected. By seeking to combine valid assessment, broad-based reflection and joint actions by relevant stakeholders, the CSI aims to contribute to the development of knowledge-based policies and practices on civil society.

The primary aim of the project is to strengthen the role of civil society through the elaboration of public policies, and to identify civil society's weaknesses or challenges through a participatory process, involving civil society actors and other stakeholders.

The CSI was conceived with two specific objectives: (1) to provide useful knowledge on civil society and (2) to increase the commitment of stakeholders to strengthen civil society. In Azerbaijan, the CSI was implemented by the International Center for Social Research (ICSR), which served as the National Coordinating Organisation (NCO). The ICSR was guided by a National Advisory Group (NAG) and the CSI project team at CIVICUS. The NAG was composed of 12 people, representing Civil Society (CS) (7), donors (1), media (1), business (1), research/education institutions (1) and government (1).

The ICSR was responsible for collecting and analysing the data and information gathered on the state of civil society in Azerbaijan. This Country Report draws upon a variety of both primary and secondary sources.

The NAG members provided expertise to the ICSR team and were responsible for adapting the methodology for the Azerbaijan context, conducting the social forces analysis and scoring the 74 indicators that correspond to the four dimensions of civil society. Together, these provide a comprehensive assessment of the state of civil society in Azerbaijan. The CSI team based at CIVICUS provided training, technical assistance and quality control to the NCO throughout the project implementation.

In order to make international comparison on civil society, CIVICUS developed a flexible methodology that could be adapted to country-specific factors and conditions. The ICSR made only a few adaptations to the project methodology, and was able to follow the project framework proposed by CIVICUS.

In implementing the CSI project in Azerbaijan, the ICSR faced a number of challenges and gained a comprehensive and realistic picture of the state of Azerbaijani civil society that helped define new issues for future studies on the nature and characteristics of civil society in Azerbaijan. The main benefit of the CSI is the collection of useful data on civil society through the application of the CSI methodology and approach in the context of Azerbaijan.

The implementation of the Civil Society Index (CSI) project in Azerbaijan was made possible by the generous financial support from the Eurasia Foundation, Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation Azerbaijan, US Embassy Democracy Commission Small Grants Program and CIVICUS.

I. CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The idea of a Civil Society Index (CSI) originated in 1997, when the international non-governmental organisation CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation published the *New Civic Atlas* containing profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world.[2] To improve the comparability and quality of the information contained in the *New Civic Atlas*, CIVICUS decided to embark on the development of a comprehensive assessment tool for civil society, the Civil Society Index.[3]

In 1999, Helmut Anheier, then director of the Centre for Civil Society at the London School of Economics, played a significant role in the creation of the CSI.[4] The concept was tested in fourteen countries during a pilot phase, which lasted from 2000 to 2002. Upon completion of the pilot phase, the project approach was thoroughly evaluated and refined. In its current implementation phase (2003-2005), CIVICUS and its country partners are implementing the project in more than 50 countries.

In May 2003, ICSR applied to implement the CSI project in Azerbaijan and was accepted by CIVICUS. In September 2003, staff members Tair Faradov and Rajab Sattarov attended a CIVICUS CSI training workshop in Johannesburg.

The overall goal of the project is to assess the status of civil society in Azerbaijan, to enrich the body of knowledge on civil society, to increase awareness among all stakeholders on the importance of civil society and to learn from comparing the project findings among countries in the world.

The CSI project has become an important tool for strengthening civil society in Azerbaijan, since it combines action-oriented research with a comprehensive set of instruments for civil society assessment, resulting in concrete recommendations and action points for various stakeholders to strengthen civil society.

The CSI project has three key features, which are important in the context of civil society strengthening in Azerbaijan. First, the CSI has become the key method for a systematic and organised collection of data on the state of civil society. Second, the collected data is based mostly on facts, rather than only on perceptions and opinions. Third, the opinions of civil society stakeholders have been an important part of the project and have been used to develop actions regarding the future development of civil society in Azerbaijan.

2. PROJECT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The CSI is based on a broad definition of civil society and uses a comprehensive implementation approach, which utilises various research methods to collect data on the state of civil society on the national level. In order to assess the status of civil society in a certain country, the CSI examines four key dimensions of civil society: structure, environment, values and impact. Each of these four dimensions is composed of a set of sub-dimensions, which are made up of a set of individual indicators.

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[2] CIVICUS (1997) "The New Civic Atlas: Profiles of Civil Society in 60 Countries" Washington, DC: CIVICUS
[3] Please see Heinrich/Naidoo (2001) "Assessing the Health of Civil Society: A Handbook for Using the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society as a Self-Assessment"; and Holloway, R. (ed) (2001) Using the Civil Society Index: A Handbook for using the CIVICUS Index on Civil Society as a Self-Assessment Tool. Washington DC: CIVICUS
[4] Please see Anheier, Helmut K. (2004) Civil Society: Measurement, Evaluation, Policy. London: Earthscan.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

How to define the civil society?

At the heart of the CSI's conceptual framework is obviously the concept of civil society. CIVICUS defines civil society as "the space between the family, state and the market, where people come together to pursue their interests."[5]

In this respect, the CSI has two interesting features that contrast with other civil society concepts. First, its goal is to avoid the conventional focus on formal and institutionalized civil society organisations (CSOs) by also considering informal coalitions and groups. Second, while civil society is sometimes perceived as an area with positive activities and values, the CSI seeks to assess both the positive and the negative manifestations of civil society. In this regard, the CSI assesses not only extent to which CSOs support democracy and tolerance, but also the extent to which they themselves are intolerant or even violent.

How to conceptualize the state of civil society?

To assess the state of civil society in a given country the CSI examines four key dimensions of civil society:

- The *structure* of civil society (e.g. number of members, extent of giving and volunteering, number and features of umbrella organisations and civil society infrastructure, human and financial resources);
- The external *environment* in which civil society exists and functions (e.g. legislative, political, cultural and economic context, relationship between civil society and the state, as well as the private sector);
- The *values* practiced and promoted within the civil society arena (e.g. democracy, tolerance or protection of the environment); and
- The *impact* of activities pursued by civil society actors (e.g. public policy impact, empowerment of people, meeting societal needs).

Each of these main dimensions is divided into a set of sub-dimensions that are further subdivided into a total of 74 indicators. These indicators form the basis for the CSI data collection, which includes secondary sources, a community survey, regional stakeholder consultations, a media review and fact-finding studies. The indicators also inform the assessment exercise undertaken by a National Advisory Group (NAG).

These indicators are at the heart of the CSI and form the basis of the data presented in this report. The indicator - sub-dimension - dimension framework underpinned the entire process of data collection, the writing of the research report, and the NAG's assessment of Azerbaijani civil society. It is also used to structure the main section of this publication.

To visually represent the scores of the four main dimensions, the CSI makes use of the Civil Society Diamond tool. The Civil Society Diamond, with its four extremities, visually summarises the strengths and weaknesses of civil society.

The Civil Society Diamond is the result of the individual indicator scores aggregated into sub-dimension score and then dimension scores. As it captures the essence of the state of civil society

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[5] Heinrich (2004), at footnote 1

across its key dimensions, the Civil Society Diamond can provide a useful starting point for interpretations and discussions about how civil society looks in a given country. As the Diamond does not aggregate the dimension scores into a single score, it cannot, and should not, be used to rank countries according to their scores for the four dimensions. Such an approach was deemed inappropriate for a civil society assessment, due to the many multi-faceted dimensions, contributing factors and actors.

The Diamond also depicts civil society at a certain point in time and therefore lacks a dynamic perspective. However, if applied iteratively, it can be used to chart the development of civil society over time, as well as to compare the state of civil societies across countries.[6]

2.2. Project Methodology

This section describes the methods used for collecting and aggregating various data used in the project.

2.2.1 Data Collection

The CSI recognised that in order to generate a valid and comprehensive assessment of civil society, a variety of perspectives and data should be included - insiders, external stakeholders and outsiders views, as well as objective data ranging from the local, the regional to the national level. The CSI therefore includes the following set of research methods: (1) Review of existing information, (2) Regional stakeholder consultations, (3) Community survey, (4) Media review, and (5) Fact-finding studies.

It is believed that this mix of different qualitative and quantitative methods is essential to generate accurate and useful data and information, and also accommodates the variations of civil society, for example in rural versus urban areas.

The CSI also seeks to utilise all available sources of information to avoid re-inventing research wheels and wasting scarce resources. The research methodology is also explicitly designed to promote learning and, ultimately, action on the part of participants. Besides feeding into the final national-level workshop, data collection processes also aim to contribute to participatory learning. This is done through group-based approaches that challenge participants to see themselves as part of a "bigger picture", to think beyond their own organisational or sectoral context, to reflect strategically about relations within and between civil society and other parts of society, to identify key strengths and weaknesses of their civil society and to assess collective needs.

It is important to note that the CSI provides an aggregate need assessment on civil society as a whole, and is not designed to exhaustively map the various actors active within civil society. It does, however, examine power relations within civil society and between civil society and other sectors, and identifies key civil society actors when looking at specific indicators under the structure, values and impact dimensions.

For the CSI study in Azerbaijan it was possible to implement the entire list of proposed data collection methods, yielding an extremely rich information base on civil society. The specific methods included:

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[6] See Anheier (2004), op. cit

• *Secondary sources:* The project team began by reviewing the information from the many existing studies, published research projects and academic sources on civil society and related subjects. This was then synthesized into an overview report that helped to identify the knowledge gaps on the status of civil society in Azerbaijan.

• *Regional stakeholder survey and consultations:* Representatives of CSOs, government and business, as well as other stakeholders were surveyed in six selected regions: Baku, Agstafa, Masalli-Lankaran, Ali-Bayramli, Mingachevir and Agdash-Geychay. The selection of the towns took into account the characteristics of the regions in which the towns are located. Around 120 persons were contacted and 101 questionnaires were completed. Further, in the same six regions the same representatives of various stakeholders who previously completed the questionnaire were invited to participate in a two-day discussion on the results of the survey and other relevant topics. A total of 117 persons participated in these consultations.

• *Community Survey:* A national representative random sample of 1200 adults in Azerbaijan was surveyed in 2005. Questions were asked regarding citizens' membership in CSOs, the level of volunteerism, involvement in humanitarian actions within communities, their opinions of the role of CSOs, their attitudes and involvement with CSOs, and similar topics.

• *Media Review:* Three media sources (newspapers) were monitored over a period of four months in 2005 regarding their coverage of civil society actors, and related topics and values. The newspapers monitored in Azerbaijan were "Zerkalo" (independent), "Bakinskiy Rabochiy" (governmental) and "Mukhalifat" (oppositional).

• *Fact-Finding Case Studies:* The research team gathered a lot of important information regarding the topics under consideration through various means, including interviews with key informants.

• *Expert interviews:* Finally, a total of 19 expert interviews were conducted among representatives of civil society, state and academic community on specific issues, which emerged through the various research activities. Most of the interviews focused on the issues related to civil society' policy impact.

2.2.2 Data Aggregation

The various data sources were collated and synthesized by the CSI project team in a draft country report, which was structured along the CSI indicators, sub-dimension and dimensions. Each indicator was attributed a score between 0 and 3 (0 being the lowest value and 3 the highest). Each potential indicator score (0, 1, 2 and 3) was described in either qualitative or sometimes quantitative terms.

The NAG's role was to give a score (similar to passing a judgment) on each indicator based on the evidence (or data) presented by the National Index Team (NIT) in the form of the draft country report.

In Azerbaijan, the scoring process was conducted as follows: first, the members of the NAG discussed collectively and made a decision on each indicator score by voting. Each indicator was assigned a final score supported by the majority of NAG members. Then, the scores for the sub-dimensions and dimensions were averaged. The final scores of the four dimensions (Structure, Environment, Values and Impact) were plotted to generate the Civil Society Diamond for Azerbaijan.

2.3. Linking Research with Action

The CSI is not a strictly academic research project. It involves civil society actors within the research process, thus contributing to discussions about civil society and assisting them in strengthening civil society. This categorises the project as an action-oriented research initiative.

In the case of Azerbaijan, various relevant stakeholders participated in the project implementation at several levels. From the very start, the NAG, made up of a diverse group of consultants and advisors, guided the project implementation. The group comprised representatives of CSOs, regional authorities, politicians and specialists in civil society research.

At the beginning of the project, the NAG had the opportunity to amend the definition of civil society used for the purpose of the project and to provide input on the planned methodology. The NAG discussed the interim findings from the project and in the end developed an assessment of the state of civil society in Azerbaijan.

Another interactive element of the project was the use of stakeholder consultations, which were organised in six locations around Azerbaijan. The aim of the consultations was to bring together a wide range of CSO representatives from various areas, such as trade unions, human rights, environment, and social workers, as well as stakeholders from local and central public administrations, businesses, academia, the media and donors. The participants were encouraged to express their opinions on Azerbaijani civil society from the perspective of the four dimensions presented in the project.

2.4. Project Outputs

The CSI implementation in Azerbaijan delivered several products and outputs, including:

• A comprehensive country report on the state of civil society in Azerbaijan to be disseminated among a broad range of policy and decision-makers, members of Parliament (Milli Majlis), representatives of the NGO sector, especially in regions of the country, National NGO Forum, mass media, education and research institutions, as well as international organisations located in Baku (OSCE, CE, EU), and other interested organisations working in the area of civil society, such as Counterpart International, and CHF International (Cooperative Housing Foundation);

• A list of key recommendations, strategies and priority actions for strengthening civil society in Azerbaijan, developed by a broad range of stakeholders;

• Several in-depth reports on the research and consultations conducted as part of the CSI project;

• Consultative meetings with about 150 civil society stakeholders, discussing the status of civil society in Azerbaijan;

• Information on the project and its outcomes presented through several media outlets;

• A press conference on the key findings of the project.

II.   CIVIL SOCIETY IN AZERBAIJAN

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Republic of Azerbaijan lies in the borderlands of Asia and Europe. It is a country at the centre of the historic Silk Road and is located at a strategic crossroads between the East and West. It is situated in the south-eastern part of the Southern Caucasus and shares borders in the north with Russia, in the south with Iran, in the west with Turkey, Georgia and Armenia, and in the east, its neighbours across the Caspian Sea are Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Azerbaijan's boundary length totals 2,013 km, and its capital city, Baku, is located on the Apsheron Peninsula on the western coast of the Caspian Sea.

Azerbaijan is a country with a rich and ancient history. A rich cultural heritage has been created on its territory over the span of many millennia, contributing to a treasure house of world culture. For centuries Azerbaijan was an arena of rivalry and the subject of territorial competitions among various empires and countries. For example, the Russian annexation of the Azerbaijan north and the Treaties of Gulustan (1813) and Turkmanchai (1828) between Iran and Russia divided Azerbaijan into two parts. Southern Azerbaijan became part of Iran and Northern Azerbaijan became part of Russia. (See Figure II.1.1 for more information on country statistics)

FIGURE II.1.1: Country Information

Country size: 86,600 sq km
Capital city: Baku
Population: 8,436,400 (2006)
Currency: Azerbaijani manat (AZM)
GDP: US$ 19.9bn (2006)
GDP per capita: US$ 1,041 (2005)
Literacy rate (% of population): 97%
Annual growth: 34.5% (2006), 41.7% 1st Quarter 2007
Polity: Republic
Head of State: President Ilham Aliev
Next scheduled elections: Presidential October 2008, parliamentary 2010

On 28 May 1918, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) was proclaimed in the northern part of Azerbaijan, formerly a Russian territory. The ADR was the first democratic parliamentary and secular republic in the Muslim world, but lasted only 23 months before the Bolshevik XIth Red Army invaded in April 1920. Overthrowing the ADR government, the Bolsheviks established the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic in Baku on April 28, 1920. In 1922 Azerbaijan joined the Transcaucasian Federation. In December of that year, Azerbaijan became a part of the USSR and a socialist republic was formed with the attributes of state, including a constitution, flag, national anthem, and state emblem. It was later re-established as a separate Soviet Republic on December 5, 1936.

Azerbaijan declared independence from the collapsing Soviet Union on August 30, 1991 following the adoption of the Constitutional Act of State Independence. On October 18, 1991, Supreme Council of Azerbaijan adopted a Declaration of Independence, which was affirmed by a nationwide referendum in December 1991, when the Soviet Union was officially dissolved. The establishment of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan was an important historical event- after a period of 71 years.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, as an independent country, follows a democratic, rule of law governed and secular state construction. The country's basic laws were developed in line with the fundamental principles and norms of international law. At present, Azerbaijan is a member of The United Nations, the Council of Europe (CE), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), GUAM Organization for

Democracy and Economic Development, The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Community of Turkish States, and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation. The country has a Permanent Mission to the European Union, hosts a Special Envoy of the European Commission and is a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.

History of Civil Society

Following centuries of authoritarian, autocratic rule and over 70 years of a repressive Soviet system, Azerbaijan does not possess a long tradition of democracy. This has, unfortunately, adversely affected the process of development of civil society. In fact, most of the population continues to view the state as the main defender of public interests. The totalitarian-authoritarian mass consciousness was largely founded on the mystification and sanctity of the concept of the authorities. In this regard, the state's authority was viewed as some higher, superior force in relation to society at large, which was granted "from outside", and which was beyond the control or influence of ordinary citizens.

However, there are some traditional forms of civil society within Azerbaijani culture. One of the oldest ones include the existence of urban and rural communities *(mahalla),* which are non-organised structures of mutual support. In these community associations, people get together to undertake common social tasks and activities as well as create a system of informal social service provision. Other types of organisations that are particularly popular in rural areas are unions, as well as elder's councils *(agssaggals unions, councils).* Historically, charity activities in Azerbaijan were mainly rooted in Islamic religious entities and figures that provided charitable assistance to vulnerable groups of people.

Civil society in Azerbaijan was mostly associated with trade union activities in industrial Baku until the mid-nineteenth century. This was true mainly with the workers in oil and gas, as well as constructions industries. For example, on November 7, 1906 a Union of Petro-industrial workers of Baku and its suburbs was created to represent and protect the interests of Baku workers in the petroleum industry. The Union organised mass actions for the improvement of the economic and legal statuses of these workers.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries (the 'first oil boom') saw the emergence of private philanthropy by oil magnates who helped to establish a social support system for poor people, as well as to support work in the fields of public education, health protection and culture. Examples of such organisations include the Caspian-Black Sea Oil Industrial and Trading Society of the Rotschilds created in May 1883 in Baku. This also had a branch of the Imperial Russian Technical Society. Others included the Council of Congress of the Baku Petro-industrialists, which has been involved in the construction of hospitals and schools, and the Baku Jewish Charitable Society.

Women's associations have been quite active, also emerging in the 19th and early 20th century. The political, economic and cultural processes occurring in Azerbaijan in this century gave a powerful impetus to the education of women and they became much more active in public life. Moreover, this period is characterised by a high level of creative activities from Azerbaijani women. The creation of secular theatre, a democratic press and schools in the native Azerbaijan language, and female grammar schools all opened new horizons in the development of Azerbaijani women. Female charitable societies, opened up by such famous female figures as Gamida Javanshir, Govhar Gadjar and Nigar Shihlinskaya, carried out a large amount of work at this time.

It is important to note that the Soviet authoritarian regime closely monitored all civil society's

activities, which had to be officially sanctioned. There were no spontaneous or non-permitted civic initiatives. In fact, all public participation and social service provision from youth and women organisations, trade unions and associations, charitable foundations, veterans and disabled persons organisations, professional organisations, or sport and cultural societies was strictly controlled by state structures. Therefore, it is not possible to speak of 'real' active civil society during the Soviet period, as there was no formal independent civil society in Azerbaijan.

Despite some civic activities, such as subbotniks (cleaning offices, streets, gardens), most civic engagement in that period was mainly obligatory and followed the official Marxism-Leninism ideology. The negative effects of the totalitarian Soviet system still exist and will not be easily overcome. For example, paternalistic psychology and attitudes among the great majority of population are common and are deeply rooted in the lack of a sense of social responsibility and the incapacity for self-organisation.

The history of the formation of the civil society in Azerbaijan took a turn near the end of the 1980s, when the Soviet regime fell and information about civil society in the Western countries, the development of the middle class and the role of liberalism in moulding democratic institutions began spreading in the scientific, philosophical and political arenas of the country. However, the same period also witnessed the Armenian-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenian territorial claims for historical Azerbaijani lands and finally aggression against Azerbaijan. All of these circumstances caused a stormy, extremely powerful public movement and influenced the development of civic activity.

This wave of activity indicated that civic participation became a serious and substantial factor of the Azerbaijani political reality. This sharp increase in the activity of the citizens of Azerbaijan was at least partly attributable to society's distrust of the Soviet system. Thus, the civic participation of this period was directed at destroying traditional political institutions and outdated forms and methods of political and social activity.

Obviously, to detect elements of real, genuine civic culture under such circumstances was difficult. According to some analysts, Azerbaijani civil society was and still is poorly structured, amorphous, corporate, dominated by a small group of key actors, and sometimes individualistic in its priorities and attitudes. The emergence of an independent civil society in Azerbaijan is the result of relatively recent social processes. This emergence was preceded by national-liberation movements and people's front (among intellectuals), which emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the second half of the 1990s, the political environment improved and civil society began to have a better profile and play a more active role in Azerbaijani society.

Over the past 15 years, Azerbaijan has been experiencing cardinal socio-political and socio-psychological changes. Indeed, during a relatively short period, Azerbaijani society found itself in a fundamentally new situation, characterised by plurality of ideologies and world-views that differed from the old communist ideology. At the same time a multi-party system of political organisation and public movements with different ideological platforms emerged in Azerbaijan. An opportunity for conscious and free choice of the various forms of economic, political, and socio-cultural existence appeared for both ordinary citizens and the political elite.

Although democratic institutions and practices have been implemented since Azerbaijan's independence in 1991, the initial steps towards democracy revealed the extremely slow and sometimes contradictory character of the democratisation process. Consequently, democratic institutions and civil society in the country have not been sufficiently developed. Laws and regulations are not properly abided on all social levels, and most citizens act like passive observers to socio-political processes. Citizens have not yet taken full advantage of the newly

installed democratic system by exercising their right to participate in elections or by exercising their freedoms guaranteed by law.

Over the last decade, the NGO sector in Azerbaijan has tried to gain greater legitimacy and respect from the public. The professional development of the "third sector", the improvement of organisational development and the quality and impact of services offered have become more evident. The basis for these improvements was laid down in the "Law on NGOs" passed in 2000, which gave NGOs the same legal status as business structures and governmental agencies.

Finding itself in competition with other public bodies led the NGO sector to realise the importance of cooperation, especially as the projects of public organisations have, become larger and more complex. Experience has been gained in social partnership projects in local contexts. Although partnerships have increased, there has been no study done to examine and understand this process on a national level, and, unfortunately, a common holistic approach to the description of such activities has not yet been developed.

Although CSOs impact on the situation in Azerbaijani society remains fairly low, their achievements must not be under-estimated. Still, there are some exceptions to the general positive contributions being made. For example, some civil and legal rights-based organisations have taken non-constructive, uncompromising positions and have avoided dialogue with the authorities, leading to misunderstandings between the state and the "third sector". As a result, some NGOs have been "attacked" and strongly criticised by the authorities, and have constantly appealed to various international bodies for protection in the face of this persecution. At the same time, the majority of NGOs has found more effective ways of identifying and overcoming the deficiencies associated with socio-political development. It is important to note, then, that traditions and the level of citizens' understanding of civil rights and political structure have, to a great extent, determined the forms, scale and aims of the activity of these organisations.

Local NGOs have also established links with the private sector and are gaining positive experiences by forming stronger linkages and interactions with international organisations. Local NGOs, for example, carry out analysis on legislation and conduct human rights education. But for many internal and external reasons, the scale of their activity is still small. Firstly, local CSOs are often unable to represent the interests of a variety of social groups, so they themselves do not represent a real socio-political force. Secondly, CSOs are experiencing serious financial difficulties and problems recruiting qualified experts. Thirdly, public trust of CSOs still remains low, so the public remains passive in their reactions and do not participate broadly in CSO activities. Finally, CSOs simply do not enjoy the wide support of the public.

2. Concept of Civil Society in Azerbaijan

What are the distinctive features of the current social-political and economic context that influence the existence and development of civil society in Azerbaijan?

Currently, civil society in Azerbaijan is at a complicated and controversial stage of its development. This process is closely connected to and determined by the broad range of socio-economic and political factors in the country. At the same time, however, CS does have a certain degree of autonomy. But civil society cannot fully operate without a certain system of norms, values and guidelines, developed and approved by the society itself. Meanwhile, irrespective of the degree of CSO development, civil society needs state institutions that are capable of ensuring an appropriate level of democracy, political and social stability, proper laws and regulations, and elements of healthy political, economic and ideological competition.

Some positive socio-political factors that contributed to the rise and development of civil society include: a multi-party system and political pluralism, relative freedom of mass media, principles of the division of powers, parliamentarianism and constitutionalism (legal state, rule of law). Despite the creation of a multi-party system and political competition, respect for some democratic principles, such as human rights, remains limited.

Irrespective of these limitations, giving citizens the opportunity to vote in a multi-party system has been a tremendous accomplishment. Since 1990, the citizens of Azerbaijan have been taking an active part in the presidential elections (1990, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2003), and, more rarely, in parliamentary elections (1995, 2000, 2005).

Many socio-economic factors have influenced the development of civil society, including rapid economic growth, a non-participatory or active middle class, oil contracts and companies for intensive economic development of the country, problems of social and economic inequality and corruption. Despite some changes and reforms in economic policies, new and emerging small and medium-size business (the so-called economic base of the civil society and middle class) have not been particularly socially responsible or influential. Instead, business structures are closely connected with the bureaucratic class involved in corruption and not able to fulfil important tasks to support civil society organisations. Moreover, the economic independence of various strata of the population is moderate or very low.

The legal environment is another important factor influencing civil society in Azerbaijan, shaping civic culture and civil activity in the country. Civil society has faced several restrictions from the legal environment. For example, serious protracted problems regarding NGO/CSO registration have not been fully resolved, despite, according to some analysts, slight improvements in recent years.

Problems related to the execution of the rights and privileges included in the Constitution and other Legislative Acts are also prevalent. For instance, the right to hold organised meetings and demonstrations is, in some cases, restricted. Political parties and movements and public associations have to get permission from city authorities for organised meetings, and in very many cases they are disallowed. There are also some restrictions in the freedom of information set forth in the some sub-legislative documents.

Additionally, there is little public or state confidence in CSOs. Worse still, citizens have little respect for the values promoted by civil society. This can be attributed to the paternalistic nature of the state, which cultivates the belief that the state is the only actor capable of providing for citizen's needs.

Although there are various political, social, legal and economic challenges, the most significant challenge is that civic engagement in the various aspects of Azerbaijani society is still minimal. Regretfully, numerous CSOs have failed to create effective mechanisms and stimuli to mobilise and organise citizen participation. Meanwhile, some of the most active CSOs are trying to exert influence on social plans, programs and debates through active interaction with mass media and socio-political actors.

Defining Civil Society in Azerbaijan

The concept of "civil society" is largely associated with notions of social responsibility, legal state, social activity and justice. The understanding of the civil society concept in Azerbaijan is mostly related to organisations, associations and initiatives contributing to the public affairs. While the term "civil society" has been used in Azerbaijan more frequently over the past few

years, the terms "non-government organisations" and "non-profit sector" are more popular.

One of the first research projects devoted to civil society problems in Azerbaijan pointed out that "civil society is attributed to spheres where individuals do regulate their relations independently, having no recourse to violence, respecting traditions and the law".[7] At the same time, the author of this project conceded that many people in the country thought the idea of civil society as premature.[8] In addition, in the collection of articles by the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan "Topical Problems of Ethics and Aesthetics," it was noted that "some research works in Azerbaijan are devoted to the civil society, ethics of this society and perception of these ideas by ethics."[9]

In examining the correlation between the civil society and the state, one of the authors of this same collection, R. Alahverdova, emphasises a few important points. First, civil society and the state characterise different but mutually inter-related sides of society as a single organism. Second, a discrepancy between civil society and state is natural, because it characterises the progress of social-economic and moral spheres, on the one hand, and the political sphere on the other. Third, civil society is a fundamental basis for the political system and respective state institutions. Fourth, civil society is not a mere totality of autonomous individuals, but is a form of human community, an aggregation of associations and other organisations in charge of running joint initiatives and meeting citizens' interests and needs. Basically, the state is an official manifestation of the civil society, its political being.[10]

In contrast, the work by Azerbaijani sociologist R. Hasanov showed that the concept of the civil society may be interpreted in two ways - theoretically or realistically, in a way that is consistent with certain requirements of social and political systems and their respective behaviours. This includes the motivation and mobilisation of citizens and social subjects regarding development and the content of various forms of civil activity.[11]

In other words, academic scholars have varying interpretations about civil society. Many of them stress on social active citizens in the so-called "small enterprises". If previously civil society has been perceived as a "private-ownership" sphere and exists as a result of development market relations in society, presently, according to many specialists, the concept of civil society is associated not only with private and corporate interests, but also with a social-political sphere and a certain type and model of citizens' behaviour in society.

Definition of Civil Society used in this Study

CIVICUS defines civil society as "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests."[12] As mentioned previously, this definition of civil society proposed by CIVICUS is very comprehensive and comprises both "positive" and "negative" types of organisations, as well as informal citizens' organisations. Such a comprehensive definition was a challenge to the researchers, who are, as a rule, inclined to look for the positive aspect in civil organisations and initiatives. However, because of its comprehensiveness, this definition is what guided and informed our research. The research team, in cooperation with the NAG, composed a list of CSO types, which they considered the most

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[7] I. Mamed-zadeh, "Civil Society and National Ideology: Philosophy of Political Process in Azerbaijan", Baku, 1995, p.5.
[8] *Ibid*, p.10.
[9] Institute of Philosophy and Law of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan "Topical Problems of Ethics and Aesthetics", *Science*, 2000, p.138.
[10] Ibid, p.17.
[11] R. Hasanov, "Formation of Civil Society in Transformation Condition", 2003, p.23.
[12] See Heinrich (2004), footnote 1.

relevant and appropriate for Azerbaijan context (see Table II.1.1).

TABLE II.1.1: Types of CSOs included in the study

1. Business associations	11. Youth organisations
2. Trade unions	12. Women's organisations
3. Professional organisations	13. Ethnic-based organisations
4. Faith-based organisations	14. Co-operatives, credit unions
5. Culture & arts CSOs	15. Farmers associations
6. Environmental CSOs	16. Civic action/human rights organisations
7. Sports organisations	17. Political initiatives
8. Educational organisations	18. Community-level/neighbourhood groups or organisations
9. Healthcare/social services organisations	19. Research organisations
10. Charitable funds/organisations	20. Hobby clubs/organisations

3. Mapping Civil Society in Azerbaijan

What does civil society look like in Azerbaijan? How does it relate to broader social forces in the country? How can one visually represent these relations? In order to answer these questions, the NAG conducted a social forces analysis that mapped out the broader social forces and civil society.

Drawing on participatory research methods, these mapping exercises sought to map out the major forces within society and civil society respectively and to investigate the relations between these forces, and an example illustrating the social forces in Azerbaijan can be found in Figure II.2.1.

The size of the circles represents the level of power: for example, large circles signify powerful actors. The colours of the circles represent the different social sectors to which the respective actors belong. For example, yellow is for state actors, red for business actors, green for political parties, pink for civil society actors, grey for illegal entities, and blue for other actors.

FIGURE II.2.1: Social Forces Map

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Azerbaijan
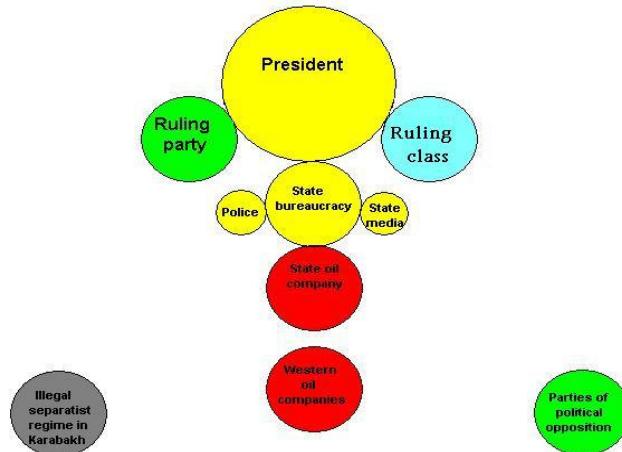
After the Social Forces Analysis exercise, the NAG came to a unanimous and common conclusion that the most influential social force in Azerbaijan is the executive branch of the government, particularly represented by the President of the country, which received the highest social force rating.

Furthermore, in order of importance, the following social forces were mentioned as influential in Azerbaijan: the ruling political party (Yeni Azerbaijan Party/YAP), the governmental bureaucratic apparatus, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) and ruling class/elite. All of these actors are concentrated in the central part of the social forces map and were located in close proximity to one another, representing their close relations. In other words, this group of actors form the basis of a system of political, administrative and economic power in the country.

On the periphery of the Social Forces Map, the NAG placed other political parties, particularly those belonging to the opposition and others such as the illegal separatist and extremist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh. Civil society organisations and independent mass media were not included in the broader and larger social forces analysis, thus demonstrating that they have very little influence in the social process of the country.

It is necessary to note that the Parliament (Milli Majlis), in the opinion of the NAG, does not play any significant role in social processes, as demonstrated by the Social Forces Analysis Map. Also, the courts and municipal authorities are not strong forces, as is reflected on the Map. Political power is not distributed equally among various actors, but is rather, held onto by an executive branch of power. Therefore, it is also possible to assume that this weakness in the courts and municipal authorities is inter-related with some limitations within the civil society sector itself and the poor decentralization process in the country. Oppositional political parties are represented on the Map as social actors that are located a long distance from authorities. In the opinion of NAG members, this position indicates an absence of stable dialogue and even antagonistic relations between the political opposition and authorities.

The Map also demonstrates that the business sector is not well-developed or represented in society. Although NAG members did acknowledge that there are on-going market reforms in Azerbaijan, for the most part, the new business class and structures have not been influential in society, nor have they positively changed the general socio-political processes in the country. An exception to the business sector is the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR), which is an influential economic and social force in Azerbaijani society. This is directly connected with the special role of the oil sector in the economic, social and political life of Azerbaijani society. Indeed, SOCAR is one of the largest oil companies in the world. The Consortium of Western oil companies is also present in the map, which demonstrates its significant economic and public role as a result of the government's 1994 signing of the large-scale oil contracts.

The close relationship on the map between the police forces, the official state-owned mass media and bureaucratic entities is also worthy of special attention. It may be that this close relationship is connected to the fact that, in the view of NAG members, the bureaucratic entities are trying to supervise and control the mass consciousness of society with the help of controlled mass media and with the help of police forces.

The Map also represents the presence of the illegal, non-Constitutional separatist regime in Nagorno-Karabakh. While it does not directly influence the political and social-economic life of Azerbaijan, its existence and aggressive actions against the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan produces extremely negative influence on the politics and economy, and the social, cultural,

social-psychological and informational spheres of the country. Because this illegitimate separatist and extremist regime has placed itself in opposition to the rest of Azerbaijan, it has been located far from all other actors in the Map.

After completing the Social Forces Analysis Map, the NAG followed the same format and completed a Civil Society Map (please see Figure II.2.2). Unlike the previous map, this focuses on civil society actors.

FIGURE II.2.2: Civil Society Map
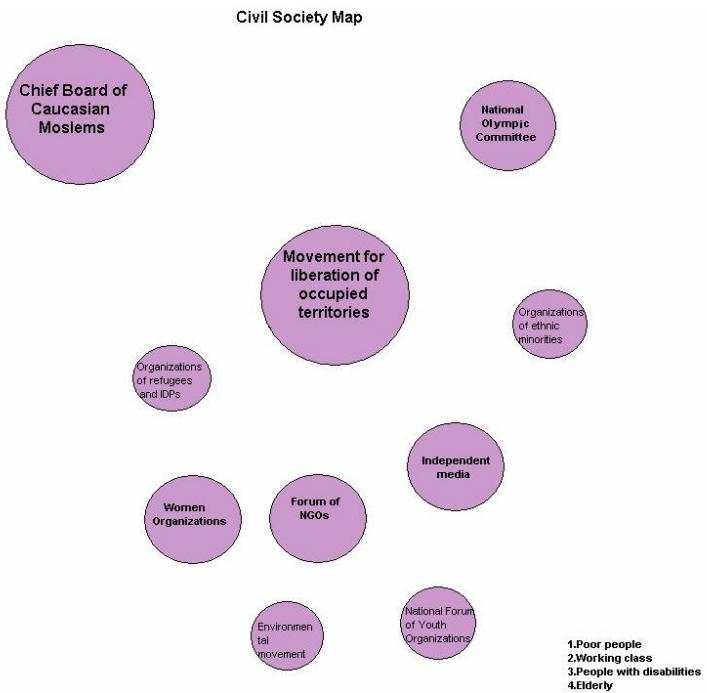
As the Civil Society map demonstrates, the most significant and influential civil society actors in Azerbaijan, in opinion of NAG members, are the Chief Spiritual Board of Caucasian Moslems and the Movement for Liberation of Occupied Territories.

The influence that the Chief Spiritual Board of Caucasian Moslems enjoys is attributed to the support it receives from government officials. It should also be noted that Azerbaijan's population is predominantly Muslim, thus, the Chief Spiritual Board is quite important and popular in society, and has many opportunities to influence religious life in the country.

The Movement for Liberation of Occupied Territories is not a formal, structured organisation. However, given the 15-year Armenian occupation of Azerbaijan territories, it is more likely to reflect the general position of a significant part of the population and a large number of political and non-political organisations.

The National Olympic Committee (NOC), National Forum of NGOs, several women's organisations and the independent press each wield a similar degree of influence. In particular, the NOC has gained popularity because it is headed by the President of the country and extensively supports the Olympic movement and sport development in Azerbaijan. During the

past few years, many sport infrastructures have been constructed and many prestigious international tournaments were conducted in Baku, highlighting the great significance and importance of sports development in the country.

The National Forum of NGOs was created in order to better coordinate NGO activities and consolidate their efforts in Azerbaijan. It seems that the inclusion of the forum in the Civil Society Map reflects the recognition of this forum by the NGO leaders and activists, and to some degree is a sign of recognition of the merits of this Forum in supporting and promoting the development of the third sector in the country. Presently, The National Forum of NGOs has several resource centres in various regions of the country.

The inclusion of women's organisations in the Civil Society Map reflects a significant increase in the effectiveness and productivity of this social group in the country in recent years, specifically in the protection of women rights, gender equality issues, promotion of the democratisation process and in positive socio-cultural change.

Finally, the Civil Society Map shows that even the less-influential organisations, such as those working with refugees and IDPs, organisations of national minorities, national-cultural associations, and ecological and youth organisations, are still quite active and visible in society. After reflection on the mapping exercises, NAG members agreed that some important social groups are very poorly represented in the Civil Society Map, including CSOs representing the interests of vulnerable groups, economically deprived people, the working class, the handicapped and the elderly.

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The majority of the information and data collected during the course of the project is presented in this section. The analysis is structured along the individual CSI indicators, sub-dimensions and dimensions. Accordingly, this section is divided along the four dimensions: **Structure, Environment, Values and Impact,** which make up the CSI Diamond. At the beginning of each dimension, a graph is provided that includes the sub-dimension scores ranging from 0 to 3. Each sub-dimension section also includes the individual scores for the indicators.

1. STRUCTURE

This section describes and analyses the overall size, strength and vibrancy of civil society in human, organisational, and economic terms. The score for the Structure Dimension is 1.0, which indicates a small-sized civil society. Figure III.1.1 below presents the scores for the six sub-dimensions within the Structure Dimension, including the extent of citizen participation, depth of citizen participation, diversity of civil society participants, level of organisation, inter-relations and civil society resources.

FIGURE III.1.1: Sub-dimension scores in structure dimension
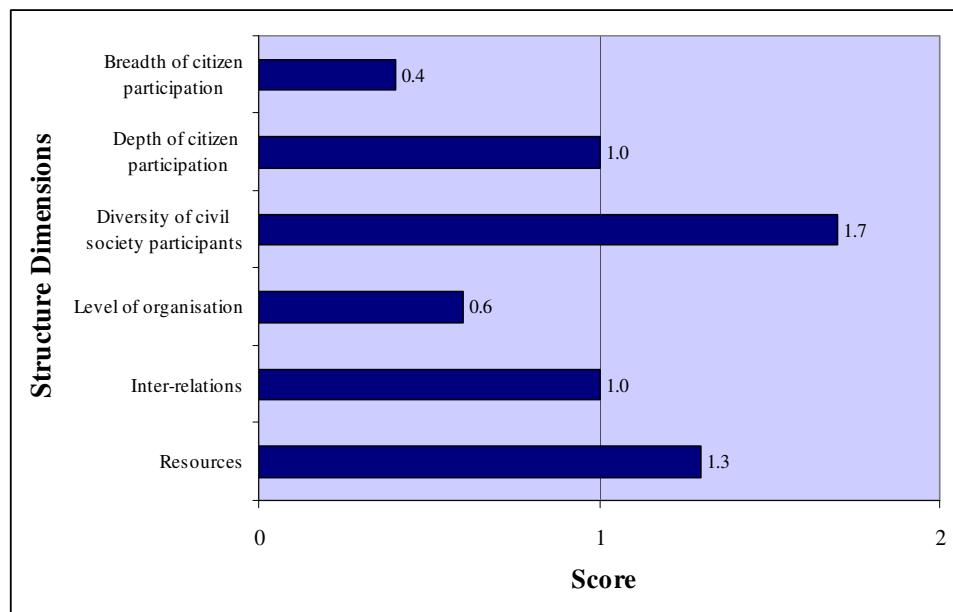
1.1 The Breadth of Citizen Participation in Civil Society

This sub-dimension examines the extent of various forms of citizen participation in Azerbaijan civil society. The average score for this sub-dimension was 0.4. Table III.1.1 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.1.1: Indicators assessing the breadth of citizen participation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.1.1	Non-partisan political action	1.0
1.1.2	Charitable giving	1.0
1.1.3	CSO membership	0.0
1.1.4	Volunteer work	0.0
1.1.5	Community action	0.0

1.1.1 Non-partisan political action. This indicator shows the level of civic participation and the forms that participation takes. According to the Community Survey, in the last five years 11% of respondents wrote at least one letter to a newspaper, 20% signed a petition, and 11% took part in a demonstration. Moreover, the Community Survey showed that 27% respondents undertook at least one of these actions in the last five years. The World Value Survey in Azerbaijan (1995-1997) corroborates the data from the Community Survey. It also noted that 24% of its respondents have participated in non-partisan political action, such as a demonstration, a petition, or a boycott.[13]

1.1.2 Charitable giving. The Community Survey revealed that in 2005, 29% of respondents gave money or in-kind gifts, such as clothes and food, for charitable purposes. The data indicated that respondents' income level influences their charitable activity. For example, among respondents belonging to the lowest quintile income level, only 17% were engaged in charity activity, in the middle quintile this share makes 30%, while about 54% of survey participants belonging to the highest quintile make charitable contributions. The Community Survey also revealed that charitable actions are more common among urban than rural residents. This is closely related to different levels of income earned; people's incomes are considerably lower in the rural areas. There were no statistically significant differences between the genders in terms of charitable activities.

1.1.3 CSO membership. The Community Survey showed that 21% of respondents are members of at least one CSO. The most popular types of CSOs were trade unions (14%) and educational organisations and groups (4%). Membership in each of the other types of CSO did not exceed 3%. Similar to charitable giving, membership of CSOs was much higher among urban than rural residents. Additionally, the survey data demonstrated that citizens with higher education levels are more inclined to CSOs membership than those with a lower education level. Again, the findings did not reveal any major distinctions between male and female respondents in regard to membership in CSOs.

1.1.4 Volunteer work. According to the Community Survey, 9% of respondents did some form of volunteer work in the previous year. Only 2% of survey participants volunteered with any particular CSO, while 8% participated in informal voluntary work during the last year. The most frequent type of volunteer work included taking care of the elderly and disabled people, helping in agricultural work and participation in repairing schools. The survey data also showed that city dwellers are more inclined to engage in voluntary work than rural residents. For the data sample collected, men did slightly more volunteer work than women.

1.1.5 Collective community action. According to the Community Survey, a small minority (13%) of respondents took part in community meetings, while 19% of respondents participated in community activities in the last 12 months. Overall, 22% of participants took part in at least one

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[13] Findings of the World Values Survey for Azerbaijan, Country Specific Data, can be found at www.worldvaluessurvey.org

meeting in their community or participated in some form of collective community action. The Community Survey revealed a considerably higher degree of civil activity at the community level among urban residents, among those people with higher levels of education, and among students.

1.2 Depth of Citizen Participation in Civil Society

This sub-dimension looks at the depth of various forms of citizen participation in civil society, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.1.2 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.1.2: Indicators assessing depth of citizen participation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.2.1	Charitable Giving	1.0
1.2.2	Volunteering	2.0
1.2.3	CSO membership	0.0

1.2.1 Charitable giving. The Community Survey (2005) demonstrated that on average, for the last 12 months, respondents were engaged in charitable giving through offering both money and in-kind donations with an approximate value of 81600 AZM per person (approximately US $17). Taking into account that in 2004 the average per capita income in Azerbaijan averaged 4368000 AZM, this indicates that most charitable contributions and donations were at least 2% of the citizens' annual revenue. Around 77% of the respondents donated less than 100000 AZM (approx. US $20). Respondents living in the capital (Baku), as well as people with higher levels of education and higher incomes tended to give more in charitable donations, including giving money or in-kind gifts and providing needy people with clothes and food.

1.2.2 Volunteering. On average, the Community Survey revealed that its participants spent approximately six hours per month on voluntary work in the last 12 months. Thirty percent (30%) of these respondents spent no more than four hours per month on voluntary work. Overall, including those who did not engage in voluntary work at all, the average amount of time spent on voluntary work was about two hours per month. The most popular and common types of volunteer work among the respondents were taking care of the elderly and disabled people, helping in agricultural work, gardening, repairing schools, building mosques, constructing water springs and water drains, cleaning court yards and streets, and gardening and planting trees.

1.2.3 CSO membership. The Community Survey showed that 21% of respondents were members of at least one CSO. Among them, 18% were members of more than one CSO. Representatives of cultural, women, environmental, and neighbourhood groups and organisations were more likely to be members of more than one CSO. In general respondents who were members in more than one CSO had a higher level of education and a higher income.

1.3 Diversity of Civil Society Participants

This sub-dimension examines the diversity and representative character of the civil society. It analyses whether all social groups participate equitably in civil society or whether there are any groups that either dominate or are excluded. This sub-dimension received an average score of 1.7. Table III.1.3 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.1.3: Indicators assessing diversity of civil society participants

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.3.1	Representation of social groups among CSO members	2.0
1.3.2	Representation of social groups among CSO leadership	2.0
1.3.3	Distribution of CSOs around the country	1.0

1.3.1 Representation of social groups among CSO members. According to CIVICUS, in order to gauge the diversity of CSO members, the representation of five social groups in CSOs should be observed, including: (1) women, (2) rural residents/rural populations, (3) poor people, (4) ethnic minorities, and (5) religious minorities.

According to the Community Survey respondents, and as detailed in Table III.1.4, men (21%) and women (21%) were generally equally represented in CSOs. These respondents were also of the view that there is a slight under-representation in CSOs of rural populations (15%), ethnic minorities (14%), and religious minorities (16%). Among the representatives of poor/deprived people, CSO membership was around 25%, which was a little higher than the average CSO membership among respondents.

Table III.1.4: Representation of social groups among CSO members

№	Social groups	Membership in CSOs
1	Women	21%
2	Rural residents	15%
3	Poor people	25%
4	Ethnic minorities	14%
5	Religious minorities	16%

Source: CSI Community Survey (2005)

The CSI study looked into the degree of participation of various social groups in CSOs activities. The Regional Stakeholder Consultations (RSCs) revealed that most respondents are of the view that the participation of the five social groups mentioned previously are either extremely insignificant or insufficient, as shown in Table III.1.5.

Table III.1.5: Degree of participation of various social groups in CSOs

№	Social groups	Extremely insignificant degree	Insufficient degree	Sufficient degree	Do not participate at all
1	Women	38%	28%	27%	8%
2	Rural residents	56%	26%	1%	18%
3	Poor people	49%	12%	7%	32%
4	Ethnic minorities	30%	30%	16%	24%
5	Religious minorities	40%	22%	10%	28%

Source: CSI Regional Stakeholder Consultations (2004-2005)

It can be noted that there is some divergence between the data of the Community Survey and RSC concerning women's and poor people's participation in CSOs. This divergence may be explained by the fact that majority of RSC participants represented territories outside of Baku and other large cities, where women and poor people have fewer opportunities for participation

in CSOs.

1.3.2 Representation of social groups among CSO leadership. The level of representation among the various significant social groups as leaders of CSOs, is very minimal, as demonstrated by Table III.1.6. In fact, these data reflect a trend similar to the degree of participation of these five social groups in CSO activities, as indicated above. Based on the result of this survey, rural residents and poor people were the least represented in CSO leadership positions with a little more than half of the respondents viewing their representation as extremely insignificant.

Table III.1.6: Representation of social groups among CSO leadership

№	Social groups	Extremely insignificant degree	Insufficient degree	Sufficient degree	Not represented at all
1	Women	37%	27%	24%	13%
2	Rural residents	51%	16%	4%	30%
3	Poor people	54%	9%	2%	35%
4	Ethnic minorities	45%	14%	8%	33%
5	Religious minorities	46%	16%	10%	29%

Source: CSI Regional Stakeholder Consultations (2004-2005)

The RSC results demonstrated that all considered social groups are underrepresented in CSO leadership positions. For example, around 60%-70% of RSC participants mentioned that all relevant social groups were represented among CSO leadership to "extremely insignificant degree" and "insufficient degree". Only 24% of respondents thought that women filled CSO leadership positions to "sufficient degree" with even smaller percentages reported for the other monitored social groups.

1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs around the country. Participants of the RSCs believed that CSOs are not evenly distributed throughout the country but instead are limited to city district/urban areas (47%) or mainly concentrated in the main cities of the country (37%). Although CSOs exist everywhere across Azerbaijan, they are concentrated in the large cities, specifically in Baku. The majority of regions have a very low density of CSOs. The prevalence of CSOs in Baku can be partly explained by the fact that it is the capital, and thus headquarters and offices of most organisations working at the national level tend to be located in this area. In fact, over 600 regional branches of NGOs are located in the capital and only about 280 NGOs in the regions of the country.[14] Indeed, 90% of the most actively working NGOs are located in Baku.

1.4 Level of Organisation

This sub-dimension looks at the extent of infrastructure and internal organisation within civil society, received an average score of 0.6. Table III.1.7 summarises the respective indicator scores.

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[14] Azerbaijan National Non-Governmental Organisations Forum, Report, Baku, 2003, p.23.

Table III.1.7: Indicators assessing level of organisation

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.4.1	Existence of umbrella bodies	0.0
1.4.2	Effectiveness of umbrella bodies	1.0
1.4.3	Self-regulation within civil society	1.0
1.4.4	Support infrastructure	1.0
1.4.5	International linkages	0.0

1.4.1 Existence of umbrella bodies. In Azerbaijan, there is no official record or statistics documenting the number of umbrella bodies that exist in the country, nor their regional or sectoral distributions. The majority (55%) of RSC participants stated that only a small minority of CSOs from the civil society sector belong to a federation or umbrella body. Meanwhile the NAG concluded after discussions, that only 30% of CSOs belong to an umbrella body. However, it is necessary to take into account that among the RSC participants, there were relatively few representatives of trade unions, which are almost all united in the Confederation of Trade Unions, and which, according to Community Survey, are indeed the most widespread and common type of CSOs in Azerbaijan attached to an umbrella or federation body (two thirds of CSOs members are members of trade unions).

According to RSC participants, and also to experts' assessments, practically all alliances, unions, networks or coalitions of CSOs are concentrated in the capital. The major umbrella bodies in Azerbaijan are listed in Table III.1.8.

Table III.1.8 Main umbrella bodies in Azerbaijan

Confederation of Trade Unions, National Forum of NGOs
Association of Assistance to Development of Civil Society
Federation of Human Rights Organisations, Coalition on Monitoring Elections
Coalition of Ecological NGOs
Association of Municipalities, Coalition of Associations of Businessmen and Entrepreneurs
National Council of Youth Organisations
Coalition on Transparency in a Oil Industry
Association of Women Organisations
Council on Press, Azerbaijan NGOs Alliance for Children's Rights
National Group on Budget Monitoring
Coalition of Journalists Associations "New Generation"

The National NGO Forum of Azerbaijan is the main largest umbrella body in Azerbaijan. This association of the NGOs in Azerbaijan was established in 1999 with financial and technical support from NGO Resource and Training Center of UNDP. The principal purpose of the Forum is to coordinate and guide the activities of national NGOs/CSOs and to assist them by providing training, consulting services and networking facilities.

Overall, members of the Forum are involved in social development, advocacy, ecology, human rights and other activities. Their main activities include increasing the independence of NGOs, partnerships with government, decentralization of NGOs reaching from Baku to other regions, sharing experiences of developed NGOs, lobbying activities, struggling against certain legislative problems (registration and taxation problems, etc) and information exchange. It should be also noted that in estimating this indicator, the majority of NAG members voted for a

score of "1". In their opinion, in Azerbaijan more than 30% of CSOs belong to a federation or umbrella body.

1.4.2 Effectiveness of umbrella bodies. To what degree are these associations, networks or coalitions effective in achieving their purposes and goals? According to the RSC, only 8% of participants believed that umbrella bodies are generally effective. Almost half (47%) of the RSC respondents thought that umbrella bodies are on average effective. During interviews with CSOs experts and representatives of organisations involved in umbrella bodies, it was also noted that the majority of these umbrella bodies were largely ineffective, although there are several cases when some of them managed to succeed in public campaigns. Specifically noted were their inefficiency and their inability to increase their members' access to financial resources, or to provide technical and informational support for their routine activities.

1.4.3 Self-regulation within civil society. The RSCs findings showed that the activities of 80% of CSOs are regulated by a charter or similar code of collective conduct or behaviour. In fact, the existence of a charter is required by law for all officially registered organisations. Therefore, this high percentage does not necessarily reflect the current real level of this development or the efficiency of these self-regulatory mechanisms among voluntary CSOs. Moreover, having estimated any steps on development of the code of conduct or other mechanisms of self-regulation undertaken in general by a civil society, almost half (49%) of the RSCs participants noted that preliminary efforts are done to self-regulate, but only a small minority of CSOs are involved, and impact is limited. Another 28% of the respondents believed that there were no steps undertaken in this direction, while the rest of the respondents (20%) indicated that self-regulatory mechanisms exist, but they are not frequently used. Lastly, only 3% of the respondents noted that these mechanisms exist and function effectively.

There are virtually no discussions concerning the adoption of a Code of Conduct for civil society. Concerns on civic ethics are not the focus of CSOs' agenda in Azerbaijan. However, it is necessary to note that within journalists' circles (for example, among such organisations as Coalition of Journalists Associations, "Yeni Nasil"/"New Generation" and others), there is strong agreement about the creation of a Code of Journalistic Ethics.

This Code of Conduct was signed by a number of members of the local mass media in the summer of 2005, in view of the pervasive use of mass media in "black PR" or smear campaigns against political opponents. This document consists of seven basic items expected to guide the mass media before parliamentary elections. Within the framework of this action, a monitoring group has been created under the initiative of the Council of Europe (CoE), which has stressed the progress made by the mass media in adhering to the Code. The Code was signed by 36 representatives of mass media during the joint CoE-Presidential Administration seminar on media issues.

1.4.4 Support infrastructure. A large majority (62%) of RSCs participants indicated that support infrastructure for civil society is very limited, while 15% of the respondents argued that it does not exist. In total, 40 Resource and Training Centres operate in the country, some of which are listed below in Table III.1.9

Table III.1.9 Partial list of resource and training centres in Azerbaijan

Location	Resource and Training Centres
Baku	Resource Center on Migration, Resource Center on Human Rights, Resource Center on Democracy Problems,
Sumgayit	
Ali- Bayramli	Resource Center on Human Rights "Shirvan"
Sabirabad	Resource Center "Dayag"
Saatli	Progress
Lankaran	Information-Educational Center Regional Center on Education in the Field of the Economic Rights
Mingachevir	Regional Information Center
Ganja	Regional Information Center "Kapaz" Educational Resource Center "Citizen"

Source: Azerbaijan National NGO Forum, IOM, Save the Children[15]

Azerbaijan National NGO Forum has its Regional Resource and Training Centres in Guba, Mingachevir, Shamkir, Gabala and Ali-Bayramli. There is also the Mingachevir Center of Young Women "Shams", or Women Resource Center, which was established by and operates with the support of the Global Fund for Women.

According to the 2006 NGO Sustainability Index Report, support infrastructure for NGOs in Azerbaijan received a 4.6 rating on a 1 to 7 scale where 7 indicated a low or poor level of development and 1 indicated a very advanced level of progress.[16] The Index also revealed that even though NGOs have access to a number of resource centres located around the country, most centres could only provide very basic services such as libraries, computers and photocopying. Those are located in the capital, although very few can offer more technical services such as legal aid, donor information, or tax assistance.

A new initiative in this area is with the Azerbaijan Human Rights Foundation, which recently established the League of Regional Resource Centres (LRRC) to increase the quantity and quality of services offered outside the capital. To accomplish this, the LRRC has created an information and experience exchange and offers grants to support the activities of their six resource centres.

Most NGO leaders interviewed considered the available training resources to be sufficient, though they have identified two shortcomings. First, the majority of training programs are located in the capital, and the few resources that are available in the rural areas do not cover the same broad range of topics. Second, some training programs have been offered by international organisations, whose training materials are out of context for Azerbaijan. NGO representatives would like training programs to employ more qualified Azerbaijanis, and to further develop the capacity and experience of trainers from rural communities so that they may increase the training resources in the rural areas.

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[15] Azerbaijan National NGO Forum, International Office for Migration, Save the Children. (2004) "Final Report on Assessment Resource and Training Centers operating in Azerbaijan." Baku.

[16] The NGO Sustainability Index measures progress in seven critical areas: legal environment, organisational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, infrastructure, and public image. Please see "The NGO Sustainability Index For Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia", 2006, Country Overviews, Azerbaijan, www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2006/azerbaijan.pdf)

1.4.5 International linkages. Participants of the Regional Stakeholders Consultations were asked their opinion on the proportion of CSOs with international linkages. The majority of respondents noted that only some (33%) or very few (34%) organisations have international linkages. An additional 28% of respondents believed that no such organisations exist in Azerbaijan. The opinions of RSC participants as to CSO participation in global events are quite divided: for 35% of the respondents, there are no organisations that participate in such events, while a majority of respondents believe that there are either some (23%) or very few (31%) NGOs active in participating in international events and only a few (11%) hold the opinion that there are quite a lot of NGOs in Azerbaijan that participate in global activities.

1.5 Inter-Relations within Civil Society

This sub-dimension analyses the relations amongst civil society actors in Azerbaijan, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.1.10 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.1.10: Indicators assessing inter-relations within civil society

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.5.1	Communication	1.0
1.5.2	Cooperation	1.0

1.5.1 Communication between CSOs. Respondents of the RSCs were of the view that the level of interaction, exchange of information and communication among CSOs is extremely limited (40%), limited (26%), average (33%) and high (1%). However, there are some recent initiatives and activities to establish and increase these communication channels between and among CSOs. For example, in 2005 the Azerbaijan National NGO Forum published a Directory of NGOs in Azerbaijan, which contains detailed information on 903 NGOs in the country. All these NGOs are subdivided into different sectors, depending on their specialisation, including education and research, economy, culture, public health services, youth, gender, peace, democracy and human rights, among others.

Other efforts to encourage communication among CSOs include the quarterly magazine "Third Sector," which publishes information on processes and events in the civil society sector. Results of the media review also showed that the problems/issues related to communication between CSOs are very poorly covered in the press. Only three items mentioned this topic and in none of them was communication between CSOs presented in a positive way. This indicated the limited character of some emerging efforts to establish the initial level of communication between CSOs.

1.5.2 Cooperation between CSOs. This indicator examines what type of cooperation exists among CSOs. More specifically it looks to see whether there are any alliances, unions, networks or coalitions between CSOs belonging to different sectors of civil society on the problems representing the common interest. The majority of RSC respondents (49%) noted that there are only very limited examples of such cooperation, noting that 32% believe there are few examples of such cooperation, 16% believe there are no such examples at all, and only 4% thought that there are an adequate number of examples. The table below (Table III.1.5.2) summarises the examples mentioned by the RSC respondents.

Table III.1.11: Examples of cross-sectoral cooperation

Examples of alliances, unions, networks mentioned	Percentage of respondents Who mentioned this example
National Forum of NGOs	15.0%
Coalition on election monitoring	9.0%
Coalition of ecological NGOs	9.0%
Association of municipalities	7.5%
Coalition of associations of businessmen and entrepreneurs	7.5%
National Council of youth organisations	5.4%
Coalition on revealing transparency in a oil/petroleum industry	5.4%
Association of the women organisations	4.3%
Federation of human rights organisations	4.3%
Association of assistance to development of civil society	3.2%
Confederation of trade unions	2.2%
Council on press,	1.1%
Southern-regional youth coalition "Anti-AIDS"	1.1%
Coalition of youth organisations	1.1%
Youth parliament	1.1%

According to the majority of interviewed civil society experts, one of the main weaknesses of civil society in Azerbaijan is the very low level of cooperation between CSOs of the same sector and among CSOs belonging to different sectors.

1.6 Civil Society Resources

This sub-dimension examines the resources available for civil society organisations in Azerbaijan, and received an average score of 1.3. Table III.1.12 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.1.12: Indicators assessing civil society resources

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
1.6.1	Financial resources	1.0
1.6.2	Human resources	2.0
1.6.3	Technical and infrastructural resources	1.0

1.6.1 Financial resources. The RSCs revealed that a quite significant number (in total 38%) of participants estimate the financial resources of their CSOs to be either completely unsatisfactory (15%) or rather unsatisfactory (23%). However, it is necessary to take into account that these estimations of respondents are mainly based on their subjective perceptions of insufficiency/sufficiency of financial opportunities in terms of their ability or inability to achieve their CSO goals.

Many participants of the RSCs recognised that financial resources from local sources are still insignificant, and that CSOs are receiving larger grant support from international donors, such as the Eurasia Foundation, Open Society Institute (OSI), Program of Social Investments of BP (British Petroleum) and programs of small grants from various embassies. A number of well-established NGOs have expanded their donor base by developing relations with international donors (World Bank, UNDP, Council of Europe, OSCE, USAID, as examples).

On the whole, NGO representatives recognised that they have a strong dependency on international donors, which makes their organisations vulnerable or susceptible to any conditions or priorities attached to their resources. Although there have been discussions in the NGO community on ways to increase local support and diversify their fund resources, several obstacles still need to be addressed, such as the lack of tax incentives for charitable giving, poor relations with local businesses, and negative public perceptions. The 2006 NGO Sustainability Index gave the financial viability of NGOs in Azerbaijan a 5.9 rating out of 7, which confirms that the NGOs are highly dependent on international donors. The limited financial support extended by different groups and volunteers attributed to the "lack of altruism and culture of charitable giving as well as the weak, transitioning economy, which has left the majority of the population to struggle for its own livelihood."[17]

1.6.2 Human resources. The overwhelming majority (85%) of RSC participants reported that the knowledge and skills of the personnel in their organisation either basically or fully comply with the functions, purposes and tasks/mission of the CSO. However, CSOs continue to experience problems in hiring personnel. Given the competition over grants and donors' high standards and requirements, CSOs have started hiring and promoting more qualified experts. Nevertheless, CSOs are quite frequently employing their acquaintances, friends and family members as the heads of these organisations. Those who employ qualified personnel have some difficulties in keeping their staff due to insufficient financial resources and inconstancy of projects. Employees frequently work for a long time in local NGOs to gain the necessary experience for a better-paid position with international NGOs or in the private sector. Some NGOs use volunteers to meet their staffing needs. However, employing volunteers presents some difficulties because of negative public perception about volunteering, specifically that some of the volunteers lack work experience. Other challenges are the lack of well-trained legislation specialists who have a concern and interest in the regulation of NGO-sector activities. Nevertheless, based on the knowledge and experience of issues related to CSO human resources in Azerbaijan, the majority of NAG members have voted for the score 2.0 for this indicator.

1.6.3 Technical and infrastructural resources. The majority (61%) of the RSC participants recognised that the technical and infrastructural resources available to their organisation either basically or fully comply with its functions and purposes. At the same time, during consultations, many NGO representatives remarked that though the NGO sector has now improved access to office equipment and technologies, many of them still do not have any equipment necessary for their effective work. NGOs that receive support from foreign donors have greater access to technology through project grants or special programs aimed at increasing access to technology and equipment. NGOs located in the capital have access to better technology and equipment than NGOs in rural areas. Though financing is undoubtedly a major challenge, NGOs in rural areas face other obstacles such as, absence of necessary infrastructure, intermittent electricity and unstable communication and limited use of Internet and other means of communication. These conditions negatively affect these organisations' technical capacities for successful work.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Structure Dimension in Azerbaijan reveals some interesting results. The diversity of civil society participants and representatives of the civil society arena are slightly higher in comparison with other sub-dimensions. All significant social groups participate to some extent in civil society and there are no groups that are excluded. However, the rural population and ethnic and religious minorities of Azerbaijan are slightly under-represented in

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[17] Ibid.

CSOs as both members and leaders. The geographical distribution of CSOs demonstrates that they predominantly urban-based.

Apathy and scepticism about civic participation is commonly found in Azerbaijan. For the most part, ordinary people are not very interested or willing to take part in informal voluntary action. The extent of citizen participation in Azerbaijan is characterised by rather higher levels of participation in non-partisan political actions and charitable giving, and extremely low levels of civic activism at the community level, volunteering and CSO membership. The level of organisation within Azerbaijani civil society remains low, with limited communication and cooperation among CSOs and across the different sectors.

The following areas were identified as concerns for the participating CSOs: low levels of CSO membership in umbrella bodies; insufficient communication and cooperation among CSOs; a lack of self-regulatory mechanisms; and a lack of international linkages. Inter-organisational links in civil society also remain very weak. They are mostly supported by information sharing and joining conditional coalitions, while the level of formal partnership, federation, umbrella and international bodies' membership is underdeveloped. Despite foreign donor support, on average, CSOs have inadequate financial, technological and infrastructural resources to achieve their goals.

The major structural weaknesses of the Azerbaijani civil society are related to a low level of citizen participation in community life, a poor level of organisation and limited inter-relations among CSOs. All these represent certain barriers and obstacles for the development of a strong civil society sector in the country. The NAG and the National Workshop participants view dealing with these challenges as one of the top priorities for CSOs. Despite these weaknesses it is important to note the gradual increase the number of CSOs and people's involvement into various civic activities.

2. ENVIRONMENT

This section describes and analyses the overall political, social, economic, cultural and legal environment in which civil society exists and functions. The score for the Environment Dimension is 1.1, which indicates an unsupportive environment for civil society. Figure III.2.1 presents the scores for the seven sub-dimensions within the Environment dimension.

FIGURE III.2.1: Sub-dimension scores in environment dimension
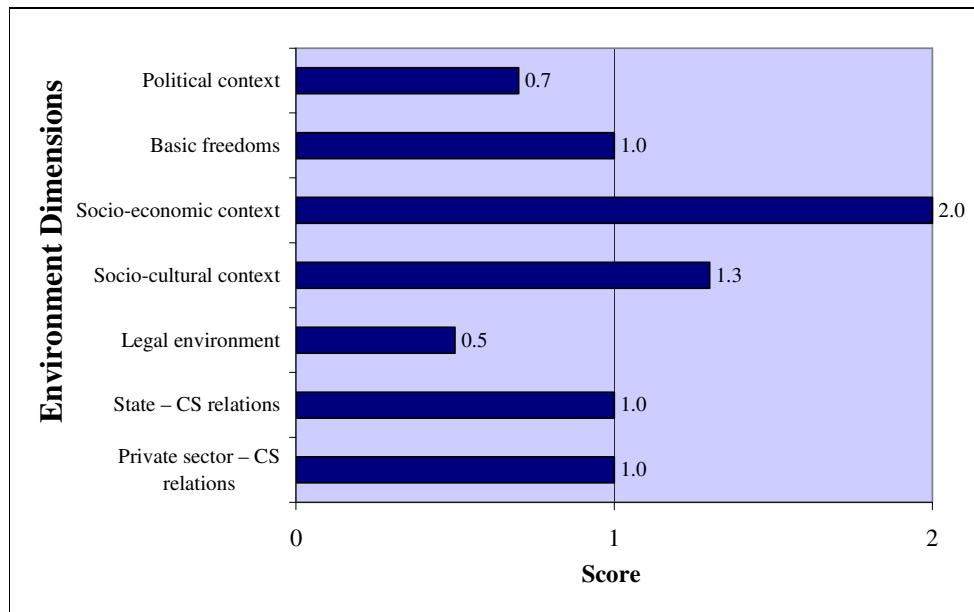
2.1 Political Context

This sub-dimension examines the political situation in Azerbaijan and its impact on civil society, and received an average score of 0.7. Table III.2.1 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.1: Indicators Assessing Political Context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.1.1	Political Rights	1.0
2.1.2	Political competition	1.0
2.1.3	Rule of law	1.0
2.1.4	Corruption	0.0
2.1.5	State effectiveness	1.0
2.1.6	Decentralization	0.0

2.1.1 Political rights. Citizens' basic political rights guaranteed in the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic include the right to freely choose their government representatives, the right to organise themselves in political parties, and the rights to have full freedoms to assemble, form associations and submit petitions. However, these rights are not always respected or realised in practice. Political activities in Azerbaijan were generally limited until 2003 as the judicial and law-enforcement system (Ministry of Justice, police, courts) lacked neutrality and objectivity and functioned mainly to serve the administrative system. Parliamentary (2000) and presidential (1998) elections in the country were rigged in several constituencies and the opposition parties never recognised election results. At this time, some political parties were not registered by the

Ministry of Justice, and the police and local authorities did not allow them to carry out demonstrations and meetings. However, with the change in leadership in 2003, authoritarian practices have considerably decreased, in many respects due to the influence of external actors such as the OSCE and other international organisations.

Political life in Azerbaijan has become characterised by a greater degree of adherence for rule of law, liberal values and norms. Since 2003, "political prisoners" have been released. On the eve of parliamentary elections of 2005, a decree on the participation of opposition parties was adopted and some opposition parties were registered. However, it needs mention that elections are still not democratically organised and conducted. Freedom House assigned Azerbaijan a score of 6 out of 7 on political rights (2003-2005), a "not free" country status, in its annual survey on the state of political rights and civil liberties around the world. Within the sub-categories under political rights, Azerbaijan was rated in the following: electoral process (3), political pluralism (4), and functioning of government (3).[18]

2.1.2 Political competition. In recent years, the number of political parties has increased considerably and currently there are more than forty registered political parties. There is one leading, ruling party, the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) and its satellites (several "pro-governmental parties"), and also a number of opposition parties. Parties are institutionalized and there is constant competition among them.

According to a number of interviewed civil society experts and representatives of opposition parties, healthy and fair competition between political parties is practically absent, as all elections have been carried out with infringements, results falsified, and all levels of the Election Commissions headed by representatives of the ruling party. The ruling party and alliance of "pro-governmental parties" act as a united political force against opposition parties and strive against their expansion, which, in opinion of some political scientists, "obviously disregards the principles of competition".

Despite the deficiencies of the Azerbaijan multi-party system, it is possible to say that a multi-party system has indeed formed and has become a visible factor in political and public life. Today, there is a certain political pluralism and hints of genuine political competition. Azerbaijan actually received a rating of 4 out of 7 from Freedom House for political pluralism and participation (as a sub-category of political rights).[19]

However, it should be noted that the degree of citizens' involvement in political parties is low, and the mechanism of internal democracy in parties is either poorly developed or completely absent.

The majority of influential parties, and in particular the ruling party, have worked "from above" to maintain political support for its leaders and governmental bureaucracy instead of creating a basis for attracting a stable number of ordinary voters and supporters. Experts interviewed also remarked that small "parties" have very few serious political objectives or ideologies, are often created around the charisma and persona of their "leaders", and mainly consist of people worshipping their political idols, who "maintain their unreasonable ambitions and egocentrism."[20]

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[18] "Freedom in the World" is an annual comparative assessment of the state of political rights and civil liberties around the world, published by Freedom House. Countries are ranked according to political rights and civil liberties on a scale from 1.0 (most free) to 7.0 (least free). www.freedomhouse.org/research/survey2005.htm. (Freedom House, Country Reports, Azerbaijan, 2003-2005, www.freedomhouse.org)
[19] Ibid.
[20] From an interview with the political scientist and historian Dr. Irada Bagirova, National Academy of Sciences.

Some experts also believe that many parties are, in essence, organisations or groupings that do not represent any wider social interests, but rather were formed around the "strong", "authoritative" leader and dependent entirely on his/her political fate. These parties do not have the capacity to implement democratic transitional changes. Their activity is mainly concentrated on pre-election campaigns rather than on educating the general public or in strengthening communications with mass social groups by creating organisations that could advance and protect the interests of these groups on the basis of democratic values.

2.1.3 Rule of law. The judicial legal system in Azerbaijan is structured on three levels: municipal, regional and the Supreme Court. Citizens can also submit claims and appeals for violations of their fundamental rights to the Constitutional Court. The independence of the courts is guaranteed by the Constitution. Judges are promoted by the Minister of Justice and appointed by the country President. Since 2004, judicial structures such as the Ombudsman Office have started to operate. However, despite these procedures and mechanisms, the judicial system is mainly inefficient and corrupt and received a 5.75 rating of 7 scores from Freedom House.

The Worldwide Governance Indicators in 2004 somewhat affirm the findings of Freedom House, with Azerbaijan receiving a -0.85 rating out of a -2.5 to +2.5 scale, with higher ratings indicating good governance.[21]

There is also a very low regard and respect for the Azerbaijani courts among the general public. However, during the last few years, opportunities have opened for citizens to make appeals to the European Court on Human Rights in Strasbourg.

2.1.4 Corruption. Since 2001, Transparency International has consistently ranked Azerbaijan alongside highly corrupt countries. The 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score for Azerbaijan was 2.4 within a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 indicating high levels of perceived corruption and 10 indicating low levels of perceived corruption. Azerbaijan was also ranked 130th among 163 other countries surveyed within the Corruption Perceptions Index. The CPI Score relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts.[22]

A survey carried out in 2004 by the Association of Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan revealed that 29% of respondents consider that corruption is distributed everywhere (23% among public officials); 25% consider that corruption does not exist; and 23% could not answer the question. Among those interviewed, 11% had personally given frequent bribes; 18% seldom gave bribes and 64% never gave bribes. Moreover, bribes were given in almost all public sector spheres, such as public health services (31%), education (28%), police (18%), when hiring (6%), army, military registration and enlistment office (5%), social security (4%), in all areas (3%).[23]

However, it is necessary to highlight that since 2003, serious steps against corruption have been taken. The presidential anti-corruption decree was issued on 13 January 2004, and aimed to

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[21] The Worldwide Governance Indicators measure six dimensions of governance: voice and accountability political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption using a scale of -2.5 to +2.5 with higher ratings indicating good governance. Based on the study Governance Matters IV: Governance Indicators for 1996-2004 by D. Kaufmann et al. (http://info.worldbank.org/governance/kkz2004/country_report.asp?countryid=15) See also, "Governance Matters 2007", "Worldwide Governance Indicators 1996-2006", and "Country Data Report for Azerbaijan, 1996-2006", all of which can be found at http://www.govindicators.org
[22] See "Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2006", Azerbaijan, http://www.transparency.org/2006cpi/table
[23] See Association of Civil Society Development in Azerbaijan's "Sociological Survey" Azerbaijan, 2004: http://www.avciya.org/cgi-bin

reduce rampant corruption in the country by creating the State Anti-Corruption Commission. However, based on recent findings by internal and external researchers, these mechanisms to combat corruption have not yet been very effective.[24]

2.1.5 State effectiveness. In general, the Azerbaijani state is completely capable of carrying out its main functions. At the same time, some experts interviewed during the CSI process believed that state institutions cannot be highly effective if political stability and economic growth are maintained by administrative methods and not by democratic methods. The state effectiveness is also reflected in the levels of trust towards the government performance and activity. For instance, the Community Survey shows that only 14% of Azerbaijan citizens trust the government a great deal and 16% do not trust the government at all. These findings are represented in Figure III.2.1.

FIGURE III.2.2 Level of trust in the government
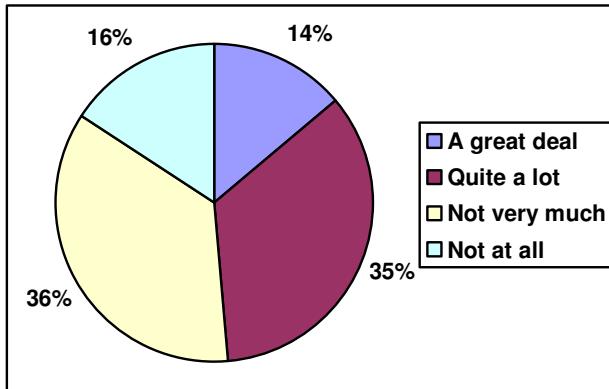
Source: CSI Community Survey 2005

The issue of how the general public perceives the state's effectiveness and the competence of authorities/power structures and governmental officials is of special importance. A survey on "Civic Identity in Political-Cultural Dimension" by Faradov (2005) showed that the desired basic characteristics of public servants and government structures in Azerbaijan, such as effectiveness and competence, were questioned by 42% of respondents. Respondents also expressed the opinion that "a number of complaints and censures concerning bureaucratic style of work of governmental employees are often left unresolved and in many cases their appeals do not find proper solutions."[25]

In 2004, the Worldwide Governance Indicators gave Azerbaijan a rating of -0.81 (from a scale of -2.5 to +2.5) for government effectiveness. In comparison to all countries assessed, Azerbaijan fared better than only 22% of all other countries involved in the study with respect to government effectiveness.[26]

2.1.6 Decentralization. The decentralization process is an important element of post-communist transformation. However, Azerbaijan has made little progress in this direction. Although the

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[24] For more information, please see Transparency International- Azerbaijan's "Country Corruption Assessment: Public Opinion Survey in Azerbaijan", Baku, 2004: www.transparency-az.org; see also "Monitoring of Public Opinion as the Factor of Formation of Civil Society in Azerbaijan", Baku, 2004, pp. 8-14.
[25] Faradov, T. (2005) "Civic Identity in Political-Cultural Dimension" in "The Mass Consciousness in Contemporary Azerbaijan: Searching for New Identities (A Sociological Analysis)", Baku: "Adiloglu" Publishing House, p. 183.
[26] For more information, please see www.info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2004; see also "Governance Matters 2007", "Worldwide Governance Indicators 1996-2006", and "Country Data Report for Azerbaijan, 1996-2006" at: http://www.govindicators.org

territorial self-governing units (municipalities) were created throughout the country, they are not yet able to perform the functions of established authorities since they do not have sufficient financial resources, have limited powers and are completely controlled by the local representatives of the central executive authorities. It is possible, as some interviewed experts-political scientist suppose, that within the socio-economic development policies, that there will be a gradual redistribution of public finances from the central to the regional level. For example, the sub-national share of government expenditure in 2005 was only 15% (this figure was calculated on the basis of the State budget of Azerbaijan for 2005). This figure includes government expenditure devolved to administrative districts and municipalities.

2.2 Basic Rights and Freedoms

This sub-dimension examines to what extent basic freedoms are ensured by law and in practice in the Azerbaijan Republic, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.2.2 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.2: Indicators assessing basic rights and freedoms

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.2.1	Civil liberties	1.0
2.2.2	Information rights	1.0
2.2.3	Press Freedom	1.0

2.2.1 Civil liberties. The Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic guarantees the fundamental rights and freedom of citizens, under Section III of the Constitution. Article 25 guarantees equality rights while Article 25.3 is dedicated to equality of all to enjoy rights and freedoms irrespective of nation, religion, language, gender, property, and party membership. Article 26.1 states that everyone has the right to protect his rights and freedom with help of means that are not forbidden by the law. Article 58 affirms the right on association. Article 58.2 asserts the right to association in parties, trade unions and other social movements and organisations.

However, some subordinated decrees and acts can limit citizens' rights and freedom. As mentioned above, freedom of assembly and holding of meetings, for instance, are restricted. Some parties, specifically those opposing the government, are not also allowed to register by the Ministry of Justice.

Freedom House (2005) rated civil liberties in Azerbaijan as 5 (from a scale of 1 to 7) and expressed that "the government often restricts freedom of assembly, especially for political parties critical of the government."[27]

Although the law permits the formation of trade unions and the right to strike, the majority of trade unions remain closely affiliated with the government and most industries are state-owned. The government, under certain circumstances, can restrict some religious activities of the members of "non-traditional" minority religious groups and sects (i.e. Jehovah's Witnesses) through registration requirements and interference in the bringing and distribution of printed religious materials. Traditional societal norms and poor economic conditions in the regions can, under certain circumstances, restrict women's professional roles, which limits to some degree, their right to have a job. Domestic violence is also a problem, and there are no special laws regarding spousal abuse.

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[27] See Freedom House Azerbaijan Country Report, footnote 18

2.2.2 Information rights. In November 1995, the Azerbaijan Republic adopted its Constitution and enshrined among other fundamental rights and freedoms, the freedom of information.[28] A decade later, the Republic adopted a new law on obtaining information.[29] According to key informants of the CSI study, NGOs and citizens face some restrictions in accessing information relevant to advocacy or other spheres of social life. For example, some Ministries or State Committees are not willing to provide necessary information about state of affairs in their area (education, health, labour market, etc) and reject negative facts. The 2006 Global Integrity Index supports this statement, as it was asked whether the right of access to information is effective in Azerbaijan.[30]

A score of 25 out of a possible 100 reveals that, "in practice, it is difficult for citizens, CSOs and media representatives to obtain information from state and municipal institutions. In other words, inquiries about information are not responded to, not fully responded to or not responded to within the time frame as defined in the law."[31] In some cases, according to the study, voting records of MPs are not shared with the public.

2.2.3 Press freedom. The press in Azerbaijan is "not free" according to estimation by Freedom House.[32] Despite the provisions in the Constitution protecting the freedom of the press and the prohibition of censorship, press freedom in Azerbaijan, according to some experts, continues to reduce. This was first noticed with the closure of the opposition newspaper Yeni Musavat in early 2005. After it was ordered to pay $160,000 in libel charges from various defamation lawsuits and the court froze its assets. Freedom House also cited some examples of how the governmental structures violate press freedom, such as the National Television and Radio Broadcasting Committee's (NTRC) revocation of a private channel's radio license prior to the elections and cases of the government's prohibition of the printing, selling and distribution of independent and opposition-based media.

2.3 Socio-Economic Context

This sub-dimension analyses the socio-economic situation in Azerbaijan, and received an average score of 2.0. Table III.2.3 shows the respective indicator score.

Table III.2.3: Indicator assessing socio-economic context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.3.1	Socio-economic context	2.0

2.3. Socio-economic context. To measure the socio-economic context, eight indicators were selected, including: 1) Poverty; 2) Civil war; 3) Severe ethnic or religious conflict; 4) Severe economic crisis; 5) Severe social crisis; 6) Serious socio-economic inequities; 7) Illiteracy and; 8) Lack of IT infrastructure. Each of these indicators has specific benchmarks that indicate whether the respective indicator presents a socio-economic barrier to civil society. The benchmarks and data for these eight indicators for Azerbaijan are presented below:

Poverty - do more than 40% of Azerbaijanis live on less than 2 US$ a day?

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[28] Article 50, Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 1995.

[29] The Law of Azerbaijan Republic on Obtaining Information, 2005.

[30] The Global Integrity Index assesses the existence and effectiveness of anti-corruption mechanisms that promote public integrity. More than 290 discrete Integrity Indicators generate the Integrity Index and are organised into six key categories and 23 sub-categories. More information on the Index can be found at: http://www.globalintegrity.org. (Global Integrity 2006 Country Report, Azerbaijan).

[31] Ibid, at 16.

[32] See Freedom House Azerbaijan Country Report, footnote 18.

According to the data by the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan for 2006, 21% of the population live on less than US $2 a day.[33]

Civil war - did the country experience any armed conflict during the last five years?
Azerbaijan has not experienced a civil war in the past five years.

Severe ethnic or religious conflict?
In Azerbaijan, there is a long lasting ethno-political conflict associated with territorial claims and a military aggression on the part of Armenia against Azerbaijan. This has resulted in the Armenian occupation of about 20% of Azerbaijan's territory, including Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent seven districts (rayons), and about one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Severe economic crisis - is the external debt higher than the GDP?
Azerbaijan is not in an economic crisis; its GDP is not smaller than its external debt. The high prices for oil in the international market and the fact that Azerbaijan is an oil-producing country creates a good basis for rapid economic growth and economic reforms. The external debt of the country makes up about 20% of GDP. According to the World Bank Global Development Finance (2005), Azerbaijan's external debt in 2003 amounted to about 25% of its GNI.[34]

Severe social crisis - experienced severe social/economic crisis over the last two years?
In the last two years, the Azerbaijan Republic has not experienced any serious social crisis.

Severe socio-economic inequities - is the Gini coefficient smaller than 0.4?
There are socio-economic injustice and inequality in Azerbaijan. According to the 2004 World Development Indicators the GINI coefficient for Azerbaijan is 0.37 (based on 2001 data).[35]

Illiteracy - are more than 40% of the adult population illiterate?
The general level of literacy in the country is high. Only 1.2% of population is illiterate, mainly older people living in the countryside. According to the State Committee on Statistics in 2003, out of the 1000 people over 15 years of age, 782 have completed secondary and higher education.

Lack of IT infrastructure - less than 5 hosts per 10,000 inhabitants
The Azerbaijan Republic in not very well connected in terms of IT infrastructure, with one host per 10,000 inhabitants.[36]

The analysis of civil society's socio-economic environment showed that a number of socio-economic barriers are present in Azerbaijan. Thus, social and economic conditions somewhat limited the effective functioning of civil society in Azerbaijan.

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[33] State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan 2006: Section "Budget of Households": www.azstat.org
[34] See World Bank. Global Development Finance 2005: Mobilizing Finance and Managing Vulnerability: http://publications.worldbank.org
[35] See World Bank. World Development Indicators (WDI) 2004: http://web.worldbank.org
[36] For more information, please see International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Digital Access Index (DAI): World's First Global ICT Ranking Education and Affordability Key to Boosting New Technology Adoption, 2003: http://www.itu.int

2.4 Socio-Cultural Context

This sub-dimension examines to what extent socio-cultural norms and attitudes are conducive or detrimental to civil society, and received an average score of 1.3. Table III.2.4 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.4: Indicators assessing socio-cultural context

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.4.1	Trust	1.0
2.4.2	Tolerance	2.0
2.4.3	Public spiritedness	1.0

2.4.1 Trust. According to the Community Survey only 24% of respondents thought that the majority of people could be trusted, while more than the half (58%) of the respondents believed that it is necessary to be cautious in relations with other people. At the same time, 18% of the respondents did not know how to answer this question. In Azerbaijan, which is not very different from other post-Soviet countries, public mistrust is pervasive. Previous experience with the totalitarian regime and "socialist mode of life" has left many people disappointed, and this contributes to the high level of interpersonal mistrust in Azerbaijani society. This is a common feature in most, if not all post-communist countries. Comparison with World Values Survey (WVS) data (1994-1999) shows that for ten years the level of interpersonal trust among population of the country has slightly grown from 21% up to 24%.[37]

2.4.2 Tolerance. On the whole, Azerbaijani society is characterised by a high level of tolerance. In fact, tolerance is a broadly and commonly accepted norm and there are few problems with xenophobia and intolerance in relation to any particular national/ethnic or religious group. The data of a number of sociological surveys, conducted by one of the report authors, provide broad empirical evidence of a high level of inter-ethnic and inter-religious tolerance in Azerbaijan.[38]

The country's tolerance index was determined from responses by the Community Survey and given a score of 1.6, which indicates that there are moderate levels of tolerance in society. However, during the Community Survey respondents were asked "with whom from the herein provided categories of people, you would not like to live in the same neighbourhood?" A large majority (71%) of respondents indicated that they would not like to live in a neighbourhood with people infected by HIV/AIDS. Table III.2.5 examines these responses in more detail.

Table III.2.5: Tolerance towards selected social groups

Types of people the respondents would not like to have as neighbours:	Mentioned	Not mentioned	No Answer
People of a different race/nationality	22%	72%	7%
Representatives of other religions	21%	68%	11%
Foreign workers/immigrants	21%	57%	23%
People with HIV/AIDS	71%	12%	17%

Source: CSI Community Survey (2005)

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[37] See World Values Survey, footnote 13.

[38] Please see for more information: Faradov, T. "Promoting a Culture of Peace and Tolerance in Post-Totalitarian Azerbaijani Society: A Sociological Analysis", 1998-1999, and "Religiosity in Post-Soviet Azerbaijan: Peculiarities, Dynamics, and Tendencies (A Sociological Analysis)', 1999-2001.

The findings included in the table above show that respondents generally had positive attitudes towards other categories of people, such as people of a different race/nationality (72%), representatives of other religions (68%) and foreign workers/immigrants (57%).

However, at the same time, a sociological survey carried out by UNICEF[39] of the youth in Azerbaijan on their knowledge and attitude about HIV/AIDS has shown that young people in general have a negative attitude about people living with HIV/AIDS. For example, 72% of young people in the age of 15-25 years believed that people infected with HIV should not be allowed to work as a teacher, 80% answered that they will not buy products from shops where HIV-infected people work.

2.4.3 Public spiritedness. This indicator examines how citizens justify or condemn behaviours and norms such as evading tax payments, using public transportation without paying, and claiming government benefits to which one is not entitled. Based on the Community Survey, 9% of the respondents reported they do not pay fares in public transportation, 18% would evade tax payment if given the opportunity, and 10% said it is justifiable to receive state benefits and privileges without being entitled to them. These responses are examined in more detail in Table III.2.6.

Table III.2.6: Level of Public Spiritedness among Azerbaijanis

Practices	Always justifiable	Sometimes	Never
Use public transport without paying	9%	47%	44%
Evade tax payment	18%	28%	54%
Receive state benefits without being entitled to it	10%	44%	46%

Source: CSI Community Survey 2005

The overall public spiritedness index[40] is 2.7, which corresponds to a society with a low level of public spiritedness and merits an indicator score of 1.

2.5 Legal Environment

This sub-dimension examines the legal environment for civil society and assesses to what extent it is enabling or disabling to civil society. This sub-dimension received an average score of 0.5. Table III.2.7 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.7: Indicators assessing legal environment

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.5.1	CSO registration	1.0
2.5.2	Allowable advocacy activities	1.0
2.5.3	Tax laws favourable to CSOs	0.0
2.5.4	Tax benefits for philanthropy	0.0

2.5.1 CSO registration. According to some interviewed experts (NGOs leaders and activists), the Ministry of Justice registers civic organisations within the framework of particular political campaigns. For example, on the eve of or slightly before elections, CSOs that plan to perform the

[39] UNICEF. (2002) "Young People's Health and Development Survey Azerbaijan", p.28.
[40] The three types of conduct specified are: 1=always justifiable, 2 = sometimes justifiable, and 3 = never justifiable; the index is calculated as the average of these scores.

monitoring of elections receive an order requiring them to have official registration. Sometimes "additional" efforts (personal relations, acquaintance, lobbying) are necessary for unobstructed NGO registration. There are several organisations (mostly opposition-oriented), which could not register for many years, but remain in active operation and receive grants. At the same time, organisations supported by and patronized by authorities can become registered very quickly.

The majority of RSC participants made this same observation. When asked whether the registration process for CSOs in Azerbaijan is a burning issue, an overwhelming majority (70%) of the respondents noted that the registration procedure is not quick enough and takes a lot of time. Additionally, 65% of the respondents did not see it as a simple procedure and 80% of the respondents believe that sometimes registration contradicts existing tax laws and procedures. However, the majority of respondents (63%) regard the registration procedure as inexpensive and the official payment for registration is quite acceptable even to small organisations. These questions and answers are examined in more detail in Table III.2.8.

Table III.2.8: Procedure of registration of civil society organisations

№		Yes	No
1	Procedure is quick enough, does not take a lot of time, in average no more than two months	30%	70%
2	It is simple, does not demand special consultations with a lawyer	35%	65%
3	It occurs without infringing any of the existing laws or registration procedures	20%	80%
4	It is applied equally to all organisations without any preference and discrimination	21%	79%
5	This procedure as inexpensive, official payment for registration is quite acceptable even to small organisations	63%	37%

The NGO Sustainability Index (2006) shared these observations about the status of NGO registration in Azerbaijan, which supports the findings of the RSCs.[41]

Laws governing NGOs are often adopted under pressure from the Council of Europe, the European Commission on Human Rights, and other international organisations. However, many activists of NGOs working in Azerbaijan noted that these laws are seldom enforced or respected.

It was mentioned that, for example, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is required by law to respond to an application for registration within 30 days of receiving it. However, the MoJ has yet to create the appropriate registration mechanisms, and the process regularly exceeds the 30-day limit. The inability to register prevents NGOs from opening bank accounts and registering with the Bureau of Internal Revenue Statistics Committee and Social Security Fund, which they are required to do within 10 days of registering with the MoJ. NGOs in the regions outside the capital have even greater difficulties registering. The ten regional departments of the MoJ have the authority to process registration applications but they often do not. The most that an NGO can do is register as a limited liability company. Many NGOs require intervention from "influential forces" or have to pay bribes to register, and once they register they face other legal obstacles to their operations.

2.5.2 Allowable advocacy activities. There are no formal barriers or regulations that prohibit CSOs from criticising the government and public administration. The RSCs data shows that 47%

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[41] USAID. The NGO Sustainability Index, For Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, 2006, Country Overviews, Azerbaijan: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/ngoindex/2006/azerbaijan.pdf

of the respondents consider that there are no legal restrictions to advocacy initiatives. However, 30% of respondents believe that the existing legislation poses unreasonable restrictions and is not supportive to advocacy activities, while the remaining 23% believe that these restrictions exist, but they are could be considered reasonable.

Given that Azerbaijani legislation does not draw formal barriers and prohibit advocacy activities, the answers in the RSCs probably reflect the difficulties that CSOs have when trying to actually influence policy making. It could also reflect the difficulties that CSOs have had in conducting advocacy activities, perhaps not through a law, but in other informal ways. There is a significant gap between legal provisions on civil society advocacy and their actual practice.

Governmental structures frequently create informal barriers and hindrances to activity and events conducted by CSOs that are not in line with official policy. Moreover, they are not tolerant to NGO criticisms of government policies. As a consequence, many CSOs have developed their own self-censorship mechanisms and try to avoid criticising state entities. While the existing legislation allows advocacy activities, there are no established functional frameworks whereby CSOs can interact positively with public authorities.

The key laws and regulations governing NGO activities consist of the NGO Law of June 2000, the Grants Law of 1998, the Tax Code of 2000, the Civil Code of 1999, the Law on State Registration of Legal Entities, the State Register of 2004 and also the Ministry of Justice regulations on NGO registration.

2.5.3 Tax laws favourable to CSOs. In general, the implementation of the current tax system in Azerbaijan can be regarded as unfavourable to CSOs since they do not enjoy significant tax exemptions or preferences. In fact, there are no available tax incentives or stimuli favouring CSOs activities. This situation leads to many complaints on the part of CSOs, which were discussed during the NAG meetings. The greatest concern of NGOs is that the current law demands that organisations pay 22% of their consolidated payroll into the Social Insurance Fund, the same as commercial entities. Until 2007, a tax moratorium is given to NGOs that receive grants for social service projects, although they are still required to pay 14% income tax and 3% from individual salaries into the Fund. Some international donors such as USAID enjoy tax exemptions as the result of bilateral agreements between governments.[42]

In general, the taxation system in Azerbaijan impedes the growth of CSOs with its restrictive laws and structures. All tax regulations are complicated and remain unclear concerning CSOs. This issue is not even a topic of public discourse. This is evident from the media review conducted in accordance with the CSI study; news or articles on this issue are simply absent.

2.5.4 Tax benefits for philanthropy. Currently there are no tax advantages for philanthropy activities. Indeed, there is no special legislation in this regard, and there is no system that would motivate individual donations. As mentioned above, NGOs and charitable organisations have the right to conduct economic activities, but their income is taxed like corporations. In turn, the absence of a law on philanthropy is a major obstacle in developing local philanthropy and it definitely reduces NGOs activities in providing relief and outreach. Nevertheless, some work has been done (for example, rehabilitation of the handicapped, restoration of the housing for the refugees).

Interestingly, the NGO Sustainability Index reported that Azerbaijan "has yet to demonstrate an interest in developing the NGO sector and does not have a program to support its activities. While a presidential decree shields businesses and for-profit companies from excessive state

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[42] Ibid.

intervention, the non-profit sector enjoys no such legal protections. Similarly, the legal framework has yet to recognise philanthropic activity, which the government may treat as illegal."[43]

The tax requirement deters people from working in NGOs, especially since their salaries are not attractive and there are too many tax deductions. Additionally, this measure does not encourage philanthropy and charity because donors do not wish to give money when the significant part of it will just go to taxes instead of funding socially profitable programs and projects. In some cases, at the end of bilateral agreements, grants are exempted from taxation. Other tax problems also inhibit the sustainability and stability of NGOs. NGOs and charitable organisations are permitted to engage in economic activities, but their income is treated like that of a corporation.

2.6 State-Civil Society Relations

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the state, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.2.9 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.9: Indicators assessing state-civil society relations

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.6.1	Autonomy	1.0
2.6.2	Dialogue	1.0
2.6.3	Co-operation/Support	1.0

2.6.1 Autonomy of CSOs. According to the RSCs, 17% of respondents believed that the governmental entities frequently intervene into CSOs affairs, 24% of the respondents were of the view that they sometimes interfere, while 23% of respondents remarked that such cases are extremely rare. A third (36%) of the respondents believe that the government does not interfere at all. Table III.2.10 examines these responses in more detail.

The following examples of state entities interference were cited by the RSC respondents: necessity of acquiring permission from authorities to conduct actions and seminars; not allowing the conducting of actions and seminars in the regions of the country; intrusion in activities of some religious organisations; and intervention in the process of monitoring elections.

Table III.2.10: How often does the state unduly interfere in civil society activities?

	Valid Percent
Not at all	36.3
Rarely	23.1
Sometimes	24.2
Frequently	16.5
Total	100.0

Source: CSI Regional Stakeholder Consultations (2004-2005)

To further measure levels of autonomy, the CSI study asked the participants whether the existing legislation creates any restrictions for CSOs activities and functioning. According to 30% of respondents, some legislation creates unjustified restrictions, while 23% of the respondents think that it creates reasonable restrictions, and 47% believes that there are no restrictions on CSO activities.

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[43] Ibid, p.3.

2.6.2 Dialogue between CSOs and the state. According to the RSCs, 46% of the respondents noted that moderate dialogue exists between the state and civil society, while 36% of the respondents believed that dialogue is limited. For an additional 16% of the respondents, such dialogues were non-existent, and only a very small percentage (2%) viewed that there is an extensive amount of dialogue between CSOs and the state.

According to interviewed experts'[44] estimations, dialogue is more often initiated by CSOs, though a lot of state representatives realise its importance for the development of relationships between CSOs and the state.

Dialogue is not formalised and it can quickly be interrupted or stopped. Public consultations with CSOs also depend on the interests of authorities. For example, authorities considered it possible to involve civil society organisations in issues related to the transparency of the country's oil incomes expenditures, such as the Oil Fund expenditures. At the same time, until now in the solution of corruption problems such organisations are quite poorly involved. Despite this positive example, there is very little or almost no dialogue between CSOs and the state at either the national or regional level.

2.6.3 Support for CSOs on the part of the state. There is no quantitative information available regarding the degree of financial support by the state entities to CSOs in Azerbaijan. However, it is known within the CSO community that some types of CSOs- for example, art organisations, creative unions and sports societies/associations get significant financial support from the state bodies. There are several organisations under the auspices of state ministries, which also gives grants but this is not widely known because of a lack of transparency. According to the RSC surveys, only 15% of represented CSOs received significant financial support from governmental structures, which made 10% and even more of their last year's annual budget. In general, the public administration hardly accepts the idea of an independent and autonomous civil society. There are frequent cases where government authorities co-opt or promote their supporters as heads in CSOs, specifically in trade unions, cultural associations and federations in the spheres of art, literature and sports. The majority of government ministries work with those CSOs in which their supporters are co-opted. In the country there also exists financial control over CSOs activities on the side of tax departments.

2.7 Private Sector-Civil Society Relations

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the private sector, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.2.11 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.2.11: Indicators assessing private sector - civil society relations

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
2.7.1	Private sector attitude to Civil Society	1.0
2.7.2	Corporate social responsibility	1.0
2.7.3	Corporate philanthropy	1.0

2.7.1 Private sector attitude to civil society. Half of the interviewed respondents (50%) reported that the private sector and business associations rarely participate in CSO initiatives and activities, while only 8% of the respondents noted that interactions frequently occur. The

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[44] Interviewed experts in this case include Dr. Rauf Garagozov, Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus, and Dr. Azer Allahverdiev, Baku State University.

remainder of the respondents were divided between "never" (20%) and "sometimes" (22%). However, the general attitude of private sector toward civil society is mainly indifferent, according to 56% of respondents.

2.7.2 Corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility measures how businesses take into account social and ecological consequences of their activity. According to the RSCs, 45% of respondents viewed corporate social responsibility among large business structures in Azerbaijan to be insignificant. A considerably smaller proportion (28%) has specified the limited degree of this responsibility, while 20% believed that businesses are socially responsible on a moderate degree, and only 8% that this responsibility exists to a significant extent.

Within larger civil society and specifically in the mass media, there are significant levels of mistrust regarding corporate social responsibility and responsible "behaviour" of companies. There are very limited examples of positive partnerships between CSOs and businesses. Although some commercial entities support sports teams and the ecological initiatives of CSOs, a large number of interviewed social scientists and NGOs leaders consider these collaborations to be merely attempts to counter negative images of the company caused by their questionable activities. In particular, large companies very rarely publish independent reports concerning their social responsibility.

Some of the civil society experts interviewed[45] noted that there is no activity within the corporate social responsibility framework in Azerbaijan, although this concept is quite often talked about in some publications and the mass media.

One example was when some NGOs repeatedly warned the public that a BTC oil pipeline passed over a route with ecological and historical value. These warnings, however, had no serious effect according to the interviewed civil society experts.

That said, it should be noted that on 15 March 2005 Azerbaijan became the first oil producing country in the world to publish the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) reports, which were examined by an independent audit firm. Moreover, Azerbaijan was also first country to involve civil society in the implementation of this initiative. The reports represent a significant and public step forward in the implementation of the EITI in Azerbaijan and worldwide.[46] Within this initiative several NGOs established the Coalition "For improving transparency in extractive industries" in an effort to ensure public control over the revenues obtained through the exploitation of the country's natural resources and their effective use. Meanwhile, on the basis of the presented information on this indicator and their own knowledge about the behaviour of major companies, all NAG members hold the opinion that major companies frequently disregard negative social and environmental impacts, thus giving this indicator a low score.

2.7.3 Corporate Philanthropy. There is no precise data available on forms and types of corporate philanthropy in Azerbaijan and there are only isolated examples of these activities. For instance, showing adherence to the concept of corporate philanthropy, the company "Garadag Cement" tries to pay attention to programs oriented to development of civil society. In 2005, together with NGOs and with the participation of volunteer groups, many interesting projects in this sphere have been carried out. The production company "Azersun" also works in this sphere. A survey among participants of the RSCs shows that only 7% of represented CSOs received significant financial support from corporate funds (10% and more of their last year's budget).

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[45] Experts interviewed in this case include: Dr. Rauf Garagozov, Institute of Strategic Studies of the Caucasus, Dr. Murad Bagirzadeh, Academy of Public Administration, and Dr. Azer Allahverdiev, Baku State University)
[46] For more information, please see the EITI website: www.eitransparency.org

Conclusion

The general socio-political context continues to be a significant barrier to a more enabling environment for CSO development and activities. Corruption remains a major problem in Azerbaijani society despite both external pressures on the national government to fight against this phenomenon, and an increasing effort by domestic civil society to bring about positive changes. The bureaucracy in the justice system during CSO registration, and the unfavourable implementation of the current tax system on CSOs, has had a negative impact on Azerbaijani civil society. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani civil society has been developing and operating in a relatively positive socio-economic environment.

The relationship between civil society and state entities is still limited, and it is still in an early phase of formation. However, there is some progress being made in the relations between CSOs and local government authorities. The mechanisms of permanent dialogue between the state structures and CSOs have also not been properly developed. The governmental agencies are not very supportive of CSOs' advocacy activity; in turn, CSOs do not receive significant funding from the state bodies.

The CSI study showed that the private sector does not regard civil society as either a full-fledged partner or as an important recipient of corporate donations. The private sector maintains an indifferent attitude towards CSOs, while establishing their own bodies to donate to social needs. The concept of corporate social responsibility is very new for Azerbaijan, although some positive steps have been taken to implement this concept.

From a socio-cultural perspective, social capital remains a weakness of the Azerbaijani society and there continues to be widespread inter-personal mistrust and a low level of public spiritedness. At the same time, the general socio-cultural context is characterised by the relatively higher level of tolerance in society that is crucial for formation of healthy civil society.

3. VALUES

This section describes and analyses the values promoted and practiced by civil society in Azerbaijan. The score for the Values Dimension is 1.2, reflecting a relatively low value basis for civil society. Figure III.3.1 presents the scores for the seven sub-dimensions within the Values Dimension.

FIGURE III.3.1: Sub-dimension scores in values dimension
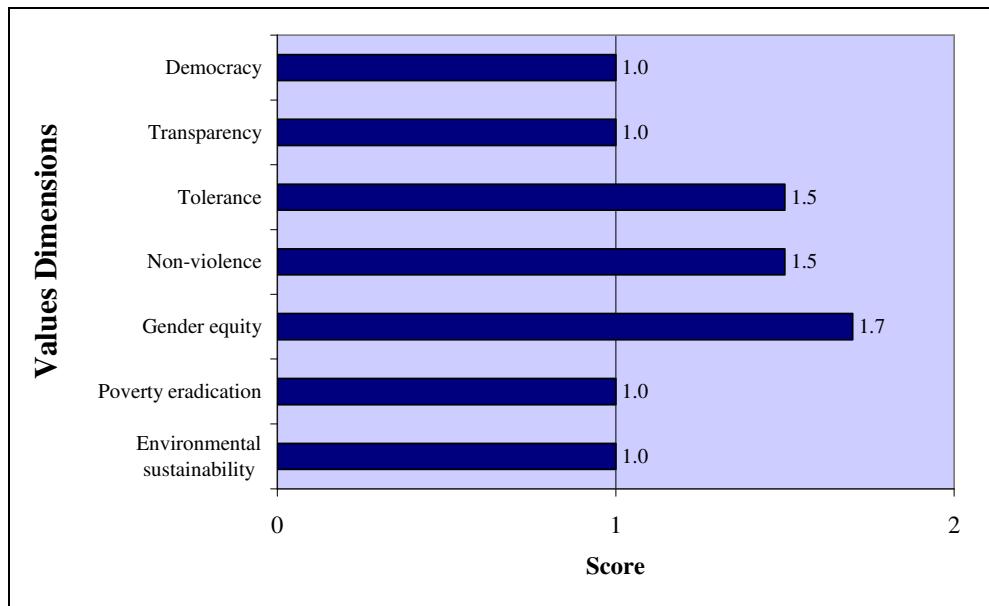
3.1. Democracy

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote democracy, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.3.1 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.1: Indicators assessing democracy

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.1.1	Democratic practices within CSOs	1.0
3.1.2	Civil society actions to promote democracy	1.0

3.1.1 Democratic practices within CSOs. According to the RSC survey, 62% of the respondents believed that heads of CSOs in most cases are selected by members, while 25% of the respondents claimed that they are appointed, and 13% of the respondents were of the view that CSO leaders are self-elected. In regards to the level of influence of ordinary/rank-and-file CSO members, 30% of RSCs respondents believed that members have substantial influence over the decision making process, while 30% believed that they have moderate levels of influence, and lastly 17% of the respondents thought that ordinary member's influence is limited. An additional 23% of the respondents held the opinion that members have little or no influence in decision-making. Thus, the general public and the press do not pay enough attention to the presences of democratic practices within CSOs. For example, only three items on this indicator have been recorded in the Media Review. Two of these items on democratic practices within CSOs were presented positively, and one received negative publicity from the press.

3.1.2 Civil society actions to promote democracy. The RSCs demonstrated that 35% of the participants view CSOs role in promoting democracy to be insignificant, while 29% thought their role is average. An additional 23% believed that they play a limited role and only 13% were of the view that they play a significant role in promoting democracy. There are several CSOs in the country working towards promoting democracy, such as the Foundation for Protection of Human Rights and Democratic Development, Association of Lawyers, Center for Political Culture of Women, Association of Citizens of Azerbaijan, Assembly of Peoples of Azerbaijan, Baku Center of Human Rights, Center for Integration into Democratic Europe, Society for Democratic Reforms, Center For Democratic Elections, Youth Association For Democracy and Civil Society, Center for Islam and Democracy, Society of Protection of Human Rights Free Person, Union of Young Lawyers of Azerbaijan, Helsinki Citizen Assembly, Public Association For Legal and Democratic Reforms, Center of Pluralism "Inam", Bureau for Protection of Human Rights and Legality, Foundation of Human Rights, 21st Century Azerbaijan, Club of Democratic Reforms "Irali", Foundation on Studying the Constitution, Center on Monitoring Elections, Public Association for Democracy and Development (named after Charles Popper) and Center for the Sake of Civil Society. Their main activities and the most prevalent actions include human rights protection, research, training for target groups (youth, women, journalists), awareness raising and information campaigns, election monitoring, legal assistance, consultancy and advice.

There are a number of organisations that provide democratic education and training, particularly on human rights and election monitoring. However, civil society's strategy and concrete program of actions to promote democracy are not very well developed and are sometimes underestimated by majority of local and national organisations, since there is practically no coordination of CSOs' actions in this direction at the national, regional and local levels. Participants of the RSCs were asked to cite any of CSOs' public campaigns, actions or programs aimed at strengthening democracy carried out in Azerbaijan in the last year. The findings show that 39% of the respondents could not name any examples, 31% of the respondents mentioned just two examples, and 25% were able to cite some examples. Only 6% of the respondents could cite many examples. The following examples were mentioned by the respondents: creation of a monitoring election coalition (8%); carrying out campaign in support of freedom of mass media (8%); democratic and civic education of youth (8%); carrying out campaign around an issue of so-called political prisoners (6%); anti-corruption campaign and actions (4%); carrying out seminars on strengthening cooperation between journalists and state structures (1%) and; trainings conducted by Mingachevir Youth Center for Support of Democracy (1%).

3.2. Transparency

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote transparency, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.3.2 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.2: Indicators assessing transparency

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.2.1	Corruption within civil society	1.0
3.2.2	Financial transparency of CSOs	1.0
3.2.3	CSOs actions to promote transparency	1.0

3.2.1 Corruption within civil society. According to the RSCs, 30% of the respondents considered cases of corruption within civil society to occur very frequently and 21% of the respondents considered them to be frequent. Additionally, 26% of the respondents considered such cases to

be rare, while 23% of the respondents viewed corruption within CS as very rare. During the media review, there were a few stories about CSOs covertly receiving money from foreign funds, concealing their incomes, and receiving bribes. These have caused serious condemnation on the part of various political forces and public organisations. Representatives of CSOs themselves obviously would not admit to such allegations of corrupt practices, and would try to ensure that CSOs are transparent and are properly supervised by state institutions. Some interviewed experts hold the opinion that in a country with high levels of corruption such as Azerbaijan, civil society is not exempt from this tendency. For example, CSOs have had to give bribes during official registration and financial checks from the state authorities, to get grants and commissions/orders.

3.2.2 Financial transparency of CSOs. CSOs are closely supervised by the state entities, which they require to provide access to their financial reports. However, CSOs seldom publish financial reports for transparency reasons. According to the RSCs, 48% of the respondents were of the view that CSOs do not inform the public about the financial side of their activities. However, 52% of respondents specified that organisations sometimes do inform the public, but it is not clear in what form and how regularly they do this. Sometimes there are accusations that CSOs do not inform state authorities about the total amount of grant money that they receive. These accusations of non-transparency of NGOs usually come from the Ministry of Justice. Quite a few interviewed experts also consider that clear and simple rules and regulations, avoiding any misunderstanding in this area, should be developed.

In 2004, the National NGO Forum carried out an investigation during which it was revealed that in the specified year, 300 NGOs were engaged in grant operations, but only 33 presented information of the grants they received. However, according to the Law on Grants, NGOs must present information to the Ministry of Justice on each signed grant. The president of the National NGO Forum, A. Guliev, has emphasised that the main instigators of this situation are NGOs themselves. On the other hand, bureaucratic obstacles have been the cause of an increase in the number of such problems. Bureaucratic obstacles include the requirement of a signed grant agreement to be submitted to the Ministry of Justice only after obligatory notarial validation, which is, in A. Guliev's opinion, a superficial procedural rule.

The majority of organisations signing specified grant agreements are legal entities. Notarial validation, assurance of the agreements that are already certified by a seal is superfluous and a waste of time. The analysis of the last two years has shown that only 2% of grant recipients among a number of NGOs have informed the Ministry of Justice. Seven NGOs have been given administrative punishment for non-compliance, six organisations have been warned, and one has been put on trial before the Azerbaijani court. According to an official of the Accounting Chamber of Azerbaijan, out of more than 1500 registered NGOs, only 64 have gone through an auditor's check.[47]

Though the law mandates a state auditor's approval of CSOs financial reports, most of them try to avoid audits, which substantiates the claims of an absence of transparency in their activities. Most of the times they are able to get away with this since there is often no punishment in cases of evasion of an auditor's check.

3.2.3 CSOs actions to promote transparency. Since 2006, CSOs have engaged in a variety of activities to promote transparency among the governmental structures and business corporations. Some CSOs take part in the control over oil incomes by trying to monitor revenues of oil

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[47] Accounting Chamber of Azerbaijan. (2006) "Many NGOs in Azerbaijan Evade from Auditor Checks", 21 February, 2006.

companies. The discussion on the problems associated with the promotion of transparency in the sphere of business-corporations takes place much more rarely, unfortunately. Promoting transparency among other business corporations is even rarer. The general public mistrusts the activity of CSOs on public control over authorities and private business, because they suppose that they are pursuing their own interests.

As a positive point, however, it is also important to highlight that for the first time among post-Soviet countries, Transparency International, with the help of local CSOs, implemented the "Protection of Public Interests" project and set up the Center of Legal Consultations in Baku and Ganja. The project was financed by USAID, the Organisation of Legal Initiative in Central Europe and Eurasia, and the American Association of Lawyers. The purpose of the program was to encourage the active participation of citizens in fighting corruption. So far the Center has received about 190 complaints, most of them focusing on the work of the judicial system, law enforcement entities, bodies of local executive authorities, an education system, and public health services.[48]

The project "The Role of Youth in Struggle Against Corruption" is of particular interest as well. The Union of Youth of Azerbaijan (CMA) together with USAID and Eurasia Foundation launched the project to encourage more youth to participate in anti-corruption campaigns, as well as to inform the public on the current situation and help persons who have faced corruption. The project has been implemented in three regions of the country (Guba, Salyan, Oguz).[49]

Participants of the RSCs were asked about their perception on the role of CSOs in promoting government's transparency. According to 48% of the respondents, CSO engagement in this area was insignificant, 29% believed it to be limited, 17% reported that it is moderate, and only 6% perceived CSOs efforts to be significant in promoting transparency in government.

When asked to cite examples of how or where CSOs promote transparency, 61% of respondents could not refer to any public campaigns, actions or programs aimed at increasing government transparency that had been carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan in the last year. Only one or two examples could be cited by 23% of respondents, while 14% of the participants were able to cite several examples, and a very small percentage (2%) could give many. The following examples were mentioned by the participants: carrying out campaigns and actions for transparency of activity of Oil Fund (8%), realisation of public control over the budget and its execution/performance (5%), and the activity of Transparency International-Azerbaijan (4%).

With regards to promoting corporate transparency, 65% of RSC respondents thought CSOs have played an insignificant role, while 25% of the participants believed that CSOs' engagement is limited. Moreover, 8% of the respondents noted that CSOs' engagement is average and moderate, while small number (3%) of participants perceived CSOs role in promoting corporate transparency to be significant.

On the whole 75% of respondents could not mention any examples of public campaigns, actions or programs aimed at increasing transparency among business-structures that were carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan over the last year, while 13% of respondents could mention only one or two examples. An additional 10% of the respondents could cite several examples and a very small number (1%) of the respondents could cite many instances of such activities. The following examples were mentioned: activity of Committee on Protection of the Rights of Oil Industry Workers (4%); campaign on protection of the rights of the consumers (3%) and; program of Catholic Relief Service (CRS) on taxes for local businessmen (2%).

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[48] Newspaper "Baku Sheets/Vedomosti", 2005, p.2.
[49] Newspaper "Echo", 2005, p.4.

3.3 Tolerance

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which civil society actors and organisations practice and promote tolerance, and received an average score of 1.5. Table III.3.3 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.3: Indicators assessing tolerance

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.3.1	Tolerance within the civil society arena	2.0
3.3.2	Civil society actions to promote tolerance	1.0

3.3.1 Tolerance within the civil society arena. According to the RSCs, the majority (56%) of respondents could not cite any examples of intolerant behaviours within civil society, while 30% of respondents could think of only one or two examples of such activities. An additional 8% of the respondents could provide several examples and, at last, only 6% of the respondents could cite many instances showing intolerance within CS. For example, some religious sects, such as Vahhabits and Jehovah's Witnesses, were mentioned as being intolerant because they propagandize among their followers' intolerant attitudes towards other religions. According to 42% of the respondents, intolerant civil society actors were completely isolated and, in general, strictly condemned by civil society organisations, while 33% of the respondents believed that intolerant actions are isolated within civil society. Considerably a smaller part of the respondents (17%) believed that they occupy quite a significant place, and only 8% believed that these forces dominate within civil society.

3.3.2 CS actions to promote tolerance. The RSC findings demonstrate that the majority of respondents (48%) noted that CSOs role in promoting tolerance is insignificant, while 27% of survey participants believed that their actions are limited. For 20% of the respondents, the role of CSOs in promoting tolerance was moderate and for 5% of the respondents CSOs actions were significant.

When RSC participants were asked to provide examples of CSO public campaigns, actions or programs aimed at increasing the level of tolerance in Azerbaijan over the last year, 54% of the respondents could not cite any examples and 30% could give only one or two examples. An additional 11% of the respondents were able to come up with several examples and only 4% of the respondents could cite many examples of such activities. Some examples that were mentioned include: activities related to people living with HIV/AIDS, seminars on religious tolerance, activity of national-cultural associations, celebrating national-cultural holidays, activities by the National NGO Forum, programs on human rights and tolerance for refugee children, training on strengthening tolerant values among various target groups of population. Another example mentioned is the implementation of the "School of Tolerance" project carried out by the research NGO ICSR and the Society of Tatar Culture "Tugan Tel", with support from the Council of Europe. The School organised a number of trainings with the purpose of increasing inter-ethnic tolerance among youth in a number of regions in the country.

3.4. Non-violence

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the extent to which civil society actors and organisations practice and promote non-violence, and received an average score of 1.5. Table III.3.4 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.4: Indicators assessing non-violence

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.4.1	Non-violence within the CS arena	2.0
3.4.2	CS actions to promote non-violence	1.0

3.4.1 Non-violence within the CS arena. In general, Azerbaijani civil society organisations strongly adhere to the principles of non-violence. The use of violence is commonly condemned by most CSOs as a means of achieving certain social goals and, in opinion of interviewed experts, should not have a place in civil society. The media review did not identify any publication in press where the appeals for violence inside CS appeared, or any incidences of violence by CSOs.

Despite this, there are some public organisations, such as the Karabakh Liberation Organisation (KLO), which support a military solution of the Armenian-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Their belief is that it is only possible regain the territories occupied by Armenia through military actions. In the opinion of almost half (47%) of the RSC participants, the use of violence by CSOs is absent or is extremely rare. Another 31% of respondents thought that in the country there are groups that occasionally resort to violent methods. An equal number of respondents (11%) shared the belief that there is significant and mass-based violence in CS, while another 11% noted that the use of violence is inherent among some isolated groups, but they are groups who use it regularly. At the same time, 33% of respondents were of the view that violent methods within CS are either never or are rarely denounced by some CSOs. As an example, they mentioned mainly ethno-separatist movements and organisations (i.e. Sadval), and some religious groupings, in particular, Vahhabits who resort to violent means and ideas, but are not always criticised by other CSOs. The majority of respondents (67%), however, thought that these displays of violence are either always or usually, strongly condemned by other organisations and groups within civil society.

3.4.2 CS actions to promote non-violence. Generally, civil society openly condemns violence and usually supports the norms and principles of the non-violent resolution to conflicts in society. However, not too many CSOs exist in Azerbaijan that espouses non-violence as their central mission and agenda. Indeed the media review did not identify any CSO collaborations or public campaigns devoted to non-violence. It is not surprising, then, that the general public does not perceive CSOs as entities that promote non-violence within the society at large.

Despite this, there are CS programs that promote non-violent dispute resolution mechanisms and principles at the intra-family level and within relations between the genders. However, CSOs involved in promoting non-violence and their single/separate actions to disseminate the principles of non-violence do not go beyond a small narrow group of individuals committed to these humanistic principles. There are, however, some publications that disseminate ideas and ethics of non-violence among the broader public.

According to the RSCs, 45% of participants were of the view that CSOs activities in the area of promoting principles of non-violence and peaceful resolution of conflicts are insignificant, while 30% of the respondents view their role as limited. An additional 18% found these actions to be average and 7% of the respondents viewed them as significant.

More than half of those interviewed (54%) could not mention any examples of public campaigns, actions or programs that promote ideas of non-violence or the peaceful resolution of conflicts that were carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan during the last year, and 29% of the respondents could cite only one or two examples. Meanwhile, 11% of the respondents gave some examples and only 7% of the respondents cited several examples of such initiatives. The

following examples were mentioned: youth-peace training projects, UNIFEM program "Women for Peace and Peace-Building" together with local NGOs, activities by the Helsinki Citizen Assembly, the political dialogue campaign between parties, religious organisations activities, conflict-resolution program supported the US and, projects of APEAT Center.

3.5. Gender Equity

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote gender equity, and received an average score of 1.7. Table III.3.5 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.3.5: Indicators assessing gender equality

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.5.1	Gender equity within the CS arena	2.0
3.5.2	Gender equitable practices within CSOs	2.0
3.5.3	CS actions to promote gender equity	1.0

3.5.1 Gender equity within the CS arena. The Community Survey showed that in Azerbaijan, membership of men (21%) and women (21%) in at least one CSO is of equal degree. At the same time, in estimating the degree of participation of various social groups in the work of civil society organisations, 8% of RSC participants believed that women's participation in the work of CSOs is absent/ excluded, while 38% of RSCs participants believed that women's participation in the work of CSOs is severely under-represented. The degree of women's representation as heads/leaders of civil society organisations is also severely under-represented, according to 37% of RSCs participants, while women's representation in CSOs leadership positions is totally absent/excluded, according to 12% of RSCs participants.

3.5.2 Gender equitable practices within CSOs. The RSC data indicates that only 18% of CSOs with paid employees have written policies in place regarding equal opportunity and/or equal pay for equal work for women. At the same time, participants reported that these rules are not usually fixed in writing, because equal opportunities and equal payment for employees, both men and women, are largely taken for granted. However, there is no information on the presence of a purposeful CSO policy to maintain gender equality within the sector. At the same time, in all seminars, conferences, and other events organised by CSOs, gender equality is usually observed and respected. Thus, it appears as if there is a self-regulation mechanism among CSOs, even though no actual Codes of Conduct have been developed. The NAG, estimating this indicator, recognised that in Azerbaijan women receive equal salaries for equal work and that this is a well-established social norm irrespective of existence of formal rules.

3.5.3 CS actions to promote gender equity. Many CSOs, especially women-based NGOs, which are more than 40 of the organisations working in the country, tend to focus on gender equity issues. Despite these initiatives, the majority of RSC respondents (32%) viewed the current role of civil society in promoting gender equity in Azerbaijan at the societal level as insignificant, while 29% of the respondents viewed this role as limited. The smaller part of respondents viewed CSOs role as average (28%) or significant (11%).

An estimation by the RSC participants of the role of CSOs that openly "preach" and support inequality and discrimination concerning women, shows the following perceptions: an insignificant role - 62%, limited - 18%, average - 9% and significant - 10%. They mentioned that some groups with old traditional attitudes and views promote inequality in the sector.

Respondents also believed that either as a rule (44%) or always (26%), similar discriminatory appeals or actions concerning women are publicly condemned by civil society.

When asked to provide examples of CSO actions to promote gender equity, 40% of the respondents could not mention any examples of public campaigns, actions or programs on the propagation and promotion the gender equity carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan in the last year. Additionally, 31% of the respondents could only mention one or two examples while 22% could cite some examples, and 7% could provide many examples.

The following examples were identified by the respondents: activities by the public "Women-leaders" Association; Women for peace and peace-building activities; campaign on the protection of the rights of Muslim women to be photographed on documents/passports with headdress/scarf; legal aid to women-businessmen; activity by the Center for Gender Studies; creation of Coalition 1325; activities by the Gender Information Center; campaigns against family or domestic violence; projects directed to strengthening of women's participation in elections; campaign on increase of knowledge on the gender issues/questions; activity of the Center of Young Women "Shams", supported by World Learning; OSI program on empowering education and oral histories; program on prevention of trafficking in women; projects on the rights of women and children; problems of marriage and family, particularly child and early marriage; and seminars for wives of veterans and victims of wars.

3.6. Poverty Eradication

This sub-dimension examines to what extent civil society actors promote poverty eradication, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.3.6 presents the indicator score.

Table III.3.6: Indicator assessing poverty eradication

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.6.1	CS actions to eradicate poverty	1.0

3.6.1 CS actions to eradicate poverty. In general, civil society and the government recognise that poverty prevents development in the country and therefore most CSOs promote/advance the ideas of poverty eradication and work towards that goal. CSOs and state authorities gradually came to the conclusion that it is very important to elaborate special programs and strategies to effectively battle poverty. There are four main directions of the anti-poverty strategies in the country: creating new jobs; increasing minimum wage and pensions; credit programs to develop small and medium businesses; and developing a mortgage scheme that enables the needy and young families to get apartments with favourable credit conditions.

There are several CSOs whose basic mission is poverty alleviation. However, there are no coalitions of CSOs or broad public campaigns devoted to poverty issues. The general public does not believe that CSOs are capable of making significant contributions to eradicate poverty in the country. In fact, the public is sure that it is solely the government's obligation to provide a solution to this problem. Despite this perception, it is important to recognise that CSOs could influence the middle class and could work more closely with state authorities to undertake important steps to reduce poverty. According to several experts, the reason behind the active involvement of the state authorities in this sphere since 2003 is to some extent connected to the activities of civil society calling for the eradication of poverty in the country.

The RSCs findings demonstrate that 45% of the respondents were of the view that civil society actions to reduce poverty are insignificant, while 36% of the respondents viewed them as

limited. Only 20% of the respondents viewed CSOs engagement in poverty alleviation as significant. Moreover, a significant portion (42%) of respondents could not mention any examples of public campaigns, actions or programs to reduce poverty, carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan for the last year, while a slightly higher number (43%) of respondents could mention one or two examples. Some examples were cited by 10% of participants and only 4% could give many examples. The following activities were mentioned: support for charities working with vulnerable groups; increasing capacity of local communities for income-generation activities; building schools and hospitals by charitable funds; the National Forum of Nongovernmental Organisations activities; control over the State Program on Reduction of Poverty and Economic Development (SPRED); assistance/help for children in boarding schools; creation of association on granting loans and credits.

3.7. Environmental Sustainability

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors practice and promote environmental sustainability, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.3.7 presents the indicator score.

Table III.3.7: Indicator assessing environmental sustainability

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
3.7.1	CS actions to sustain the environment	1.0

3.7.1 CS actions to sustain the environment. The RSCs demonstrated that there is a generally low impression of CSOs actions to sustain the environment. For example, 27% of respondents viewed CSOs actions to be insignificant in this area, while 43% thought they were limited, 22% noted that their actions were average, and lastly, only 9% saw them as significant.

There are several CSOs promoting environmental sustainability, including the Azerbaijan Society for Nature Studies, International Ecology Fund "Mother Kura River", Society for Beekeeping and Environment Protection, Public Association for Protection of Flora and Fauna, Center of Ornithology, Center for Ecological Innovations, Azerbaijan Green Movement, Public Association for Biological Diversity, Public Association "Mountain Air", Public Association "ECO", Rehabilitation Center for Ecology and Psychology, Public Association for Ecological Education and Monitoring, "Ecological Balance", Public Association for Journalist-Ecologists, Children Ecological Organisation "Flower/Floret", Azerbaijan Society for Animals Protection, Public Institute "National Health and Ecology", "Women and Ecology", Public Ecological Association "Ruzgar", "For Clean Caspian See" and the Ecotourism Public Association "Shafag."

While civil society generally advances some ideas related to environmental protection, independent activities are minimal and most activities are related to and supported by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, some CSOs actively protect and carry out campaigns to protect the "green zone" of Baku and mobilise social interest in relation to the dangers (oil pollution, dump of waste products), which threaten the Caspian Sea, including its flora and fauna.

However, many of these activities do not bring the desired effect, as ecological movements are not always capable of influencing oil companies and the executive authorities of Baku (i.e. mayor's office). There are several CSOs promoting innovative programs providing water supply, water drain and power supply services to marginalised segments of the population. This initiative has sparked serious interest and is implemented with the help of the World Bank. Additionally,

the Center for the Research of Environmental Problems has received a grant for its human rights project, which includes the preservation of the environment. The President of the Center has noted that the innovative project of the ecological sphere covers three aspects of environmental sustainability - the use of polymeric waste products, waste products in manufacturing aluminium (red dust), and the banning of illegal logging.[50]

The RSCs findings show that 30% of respondents could not mention any examples of public campaigns, actions or programs that focused protection of environment, carried out by civil society in Azerbaijan for last year, while 37% of the respondents could mention only one or two examples. An additional 27% of respondents could provide some examples and only 7% of the participants were able to list many examples. Some of the examples that were identifies include: trees planting campaigns; ecological actions on the oil pipeline of BTC; campaigns around Gabala Russian military RLS; anti-pollution campaigns in the Caspian sea; activity of Southern youth ecological public association ECOSOS; joint actions of municipalities and ECORES in Mingachevir; carrying out "subbotnics" together with the mayor office of Baku; monitoring of infringements of ecological rules during construction/building in Baku; collecting/gathering children's signatures in protection of animals in restaurants.

Conclusion

The sub-dimension scores in the Values Dimension indicate that Azerbaijani civil society is not very active in promoting positive social values and practices such as democracy, transparency, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability.

The transparency sub-dimension received a particularly low score, which is troublesome since the concept of transparency underpins most other norms and values, and is crucially important for society as a whole. CSOs cannot ask that the government be transparent if they cannot practice transparency; thus, CSOs need to be transparent in order to gain more legitimacy.

The CSI assessed that the visibility of CSO activities in promoting transparency in public affairs is low, and the existence of genuine internal transparency and accountability within CSOs remains limited. This situation could be possibly related to the overall level of mistrust and corruption within Azerbaijani society.

Values of tolerance, non-violence, and gender equity are moderately developed, and are practiced and functioning within Azerbaijani CS arena, more so than other values. Although, CSO activity towards the promotion and dissemination of these values within Azerbaijani society still remains weak and ineffective.

Generally, the major weakness of Azerbaijani civil society in values dimension lies in the very limited role CSOs play in promoting these values at a societal level, and the low impact that CSOs have on promoting and upholding this set of values at societal level. Despite a quite broad range of CSOs operating in promoting positive social values, the effectiveness of their activities is still at the low level. They are not yet catalysts for considerable public attitude change.

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[50] Newspaper "Echo", 27 October 2005, p.3.

4. IMPACT

This section describes and analyses the extent to which civil society is active and successful in fulfilling several essential functions within society at whole. The score for the Impact Dimension is 0.8, which reflects a low level of impact for Azerbaijani civil society. Figure III.4.1 presents the scores for the five sub-dimensions within the Impact Dimension. The lowest score for civil society is in holding the state and private sector accountable, and the highest score is influencing pubic policy and responding to social interests.

FIGURE III.4.1: Sub-dimension scores in impact dimension
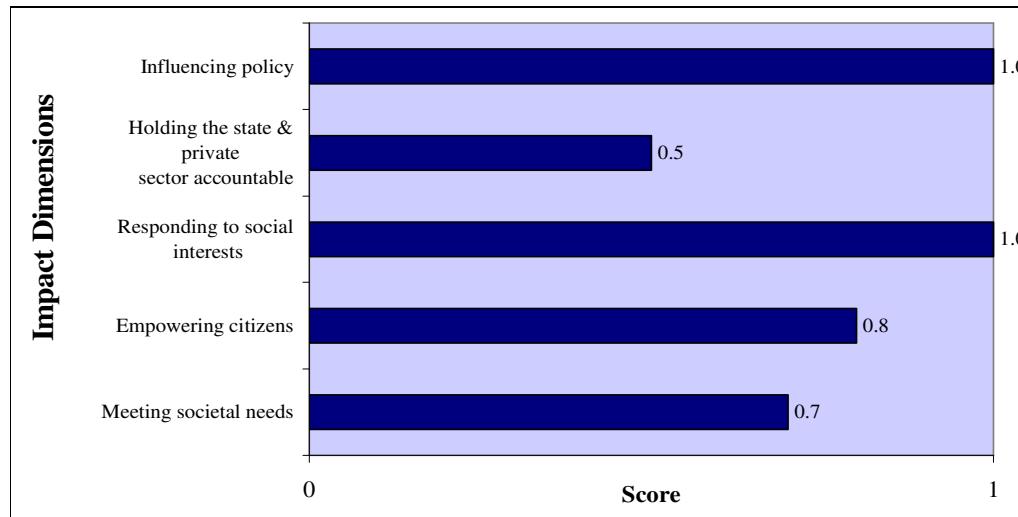
4.1 Influencing Public Policy

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the extent to which civil society in Azerbaijan is active and successful in influencing pubic policy, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.4.1 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.1: Indicators assessing influencing public policy

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.1.1	Human Rights Impact Case Study	1.0
4.1.2	Social Policy Impact Case Study	1.0
4.1.3	Civil Society's Impact On the National Budget Process Case Study	1.0

To assess civil society's impact on public policy, ICSR conducted three specific case studies in the following areas, identified by CIVICUS:
 a) Promoting and maintaining press freedom (i.e. the human rights impact case study);
 b) Public policy in social support of refugees and internally displaced persons (i.e. the social policy impact case study), and;
 c) Promoting transparency of oil incomes (civil society's impact on the national budget process case study).

These topics were chosen while taking into account the opinions of NAG members, who viewed these issues and their respective solutions as vital for Azerbaijan.

4.1.1. Human rights impact case study: Promoting and maintaining press freedom. The larger civil society and CSOs in Azerbaijan are trying to promote freedom of the press and increase the understanding of the importance of this issue among activists and key stakeholders.

While the majority of activists involved in CS promote and appreciate the freedom of the press, there is also a discussion about whether the government should financially support independent press/media outlets. Two positions have been put forward: first, given that the independent press in Azerbaijan is very weak, it should be financially supported by the state as this would be beneficial to its development. The second position recognises that if the state does financially support the press, then it will adversely affect the press' independence from the state.

The majority of CSOs support the first suggestion, claiming that additional financial support will help journalist's organisations successfully implement their main functions and duties, particularly in terms of strengthening feeble efforts from CSOs to broaden the freedom of the press. At the same time, a majority of participants of these discussions remarked that the press is the only unique institution having relative freedom, while other forms of mass media (TV, radio) are relatively more deprived of free and independent activity.

CSOs, particularly those that work in the field of mass media, have played an active part in campaigns and activities aimed at maintaining press freedom. There are several CSOs which are very active on this direction: the Press Council of Azerbaijan, the journalist's association "Eni Nasil", the Union of Journalists, Confederation of Journalists of Azerbaijan, Women Journalists Association, Journalists Without Borders, the Democratic League of Journalists, the International Press Center, Baku Press Club, the Institute of Media and Law (Ganja), Ganja Journalism Center (Ganja), and the Committee for Protect of Journalists RUH (Ali-Bayramli).

A central player in press freedom is the Council on Press, whose main functions include self-regulation, increasing work standards of journalists and the resolution of disputes between the government and mass media outlets. One of the major tasks of the Council on Press is to promote and contribute to the realisation of the Constitutional right to collect information from government offices, public organisations and officials. Also the Press Council of Azerbaijan supports mass media by budgetary financing and the creation of preferential tariff and tax regulations. In addition, the Press Council periodically addresses the Commission on Pardoning and appeal for the pardon and/or release of arrested journalists.

Azerbaijan Free Speech Foundation is also involved in developing and democratising the legal space in which all the mass media of Azerbaijan operate, as well as sensitizing society on issues related to press freedom. The Foundation also carries out the following programs in order to achieve these objectives: monitoring and observing journalists' rights, mass media and freedom of speech in Azerbaijan; providing legal assistance and consulting for journalists and mass media representatives; examining laws on mass media and freedom of speech and gives suggestions on how to improve the existing legislation; and publishing literature and disseminating informational material on the broad range of topics related to the present problems of press freedom.

It is also worth mentioning the project Mutual Rights and Duties of Representatives of Mass Media and the State Structures (2004), and also the project on drawing up the brochure-instruction for journalists and representatives of state organisations on these issues. The Association of Journalists "Yeni Nesil" on regular basis carries out joint seminars and trainings with representatives of governmental structures. For example, a seminar on defamation was organised by this Association in co-operation with the Council of Europe (Baku, 1 April 2004). The overview of the existing legislation in Azerbaijan, and a presentation of main provisions of

the new draft law on defamation were made during this seminar. Representatives of Presidential administration, Parliament members, employees of mass media and the various journalistic organisations took part in this seminar.

According to the RSCs, 17% of respondents were of the view that CSOs are passive in promoting freedom of the press, while 43% of the respondents were of the view that they were insufficiently active in promoting freedom of the press. Meanwhile 39% of respondents noted that CSOs are quite active in this issue. However, the success of CSOs in the promotion and preservation of press freedom has been estimated by respondents to be essentially lower: 22% of respondents believed that this activity had no impact at all and 52% of the respondents thought that it has limited impact, and only 26% found the activities of civil society for the maintenance of freedom of press was rather successful.

4.1.2. Social policy impact case study: Public policy in social support of refugees and internally displaced persons. The influence of civil society in providing and improving social support to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the government/state entities is viewed as insignificant by all civil society experts that were interviewed.

Firstly, in the expert's opinions, refugees and IDPs are practically excluded from civil society's "sphere of influence", and, secondly, within civil society, as well as among the general population of Azerbaijan, the opinion prevails that the state and international organisations have been more active and successful at providing assistance to this vulnerable group. At the same time, it is understood that IDPs and refugees are actually the main responsibility of the state entities, and CSOs can only play a secondary, additional role in these issues, because state entities and CSOs have completely different levels of power and are structurally different in terms of dealing with the needs and priorities of these groups.

Nevertheless, the problems facing refugees and IDPs are the main focus for some CSOs which provide direct social, legal and psycho-social help to this vulnerable group and try to influence public policy surrounding this issue, as well as to mobilise communities around this important issue. CSOs most active in this area include: the Sector of Displaced People of National NGO Forum, Association of Lawyers of Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijan Society for Protection of the Rights of Women, and NGOs "Hayat" and "Umid".

Practice has shown that documenting and monitoring refugees and IDPs' living, health and education conditions, as well as highlighting their existing problems and challenges, and then presenting these findings to the government and/or international organisations has often led to positive results. For example, on 13 May 2004, 32 NGOs created a coalition within the framework of EITI (Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative) project. The Coalition includes 84 nongovernmental organisations that carry out monitoring of any investments into the existing projects specially aimed at the improvement of the quality of life of refugees and IDPs in Azerbaijan.[51]

The RSC survey also demonstrates that civil society is not at all active in this area (according to 39% of the respondents) or its activities are quite limited (according 38% of the respondents) in influencing public policy in social support of refugees and IDPs. Due to this lack of engagement with the issue, participants saw this involvement as either having a limited impact (43%) or no impact at all (39%).

4.1.3. Promoting transparency of oil incomes. CSOs take part in maintaining the transparency of oil incomes of the country, though as stakeholders remarked during the RSCs, this participation

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[51] For more information, see www.eiti-az.org

is initiated, directed and maintained mainly by international organisations. For example, efforts of the Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation (Azerbaijan) in this sphere is quite significant.

In the opinion of nearly half (48%) of RSCs participants, civil society was passive in regards to promoting the transparency of the oil industry in Azerbaijan, 36% estimated this participation as active but only to a limited extent, and only 16% believed that CS plays an active role in promoting the transparency of oil revenues. In particular, the Center for Monitoring Public Finances (PFMC) with support from the Open Society Institute - Assistance Foundation (Azerbaijan), implemented a project and organised a round-table titled "Influence of Oil and Gas Incomes on Economy". At this event, the idea of creating a permanent nongovernmental body "Azerbaijan - 2025" was floated, where experts could exchange opinions on issues about maintaining and promoting the transparency of oil incomes for state budgeting, and has been put forward for consideration.

It has been remarked that Azerbaijan is at a very crucial stage of distributing the income generated by the oil industry. Representatives of CSOs with economic specialisations, as well as government and international financial organisations, have also taken part in this event. The Coalition of NGOs, which has been calling for an increase in the transparency of the mining/extracting industry, and which has carried out public monitoring of oil incomes, was created in Azerbaijan and has concluded that it is necessary to improve the use of petro-incomes in Azerbaijan, in view of the expected flow in the State Oil Fund. The headline "Inefficient use of petro-incomes becomes a big problem for Azerbaijan" has been suggested, according to the chairperson of the Coalition. In his opinion, as much as possible, citizens should be involved in this process of tracking the flow of money from the oil industry and the public should demand from the government a report on how oil incomes are spent.

In the opinion of some interviewed experts, the government's positive attitude towards the transparency of the expenditure of oil income (which is the activity of the State Oil Fund) in many respects is a result of the joint influence of some western states and international financial and civic organisations, as well as CSOs in Azerbaijan. Experts believe that the active role of NGOs in issues such as the transparency of oil income or public monitoring of oil projects has been notably increasing in the last few years in Azerbaijan.

Cooperation between the consortium of oil companies, the Azerbaijani government and the civic sector in the development of initiatives on transparency in the mining/extracting industry has also been observed. Nevertheless, the survey of RSC participants shows that more than half (53%) regarded such activities of civil society as unsuccessful, while 40% believed them to be insufficiently successful and only 7% viewed them as successful.

4.2 Holding the State and Private Corporations Accountable

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society is active and successful in holding the state and private corporations accountable, and received an average score of 0.5. Table III.4.2 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.2: Indicators assessing holding state and private corporations accountable

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.2.1	Holding the state accountable	1.0
4.2.2	Holding private corporations accountable	0.0

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Azerbaijan

4.2.1 Holding the state accountable. According to the majority of interviewed civil society experts, CSOs' activities and impact on holding the state accountable is low. Civil society demands that state entities be more transparent by providing greater disclosure and availability of information about their work and expenditures, towards the end of eradicating corruption practices.

A number of NGOs (such as the Committee for Protection of Rights of Oil Workers, Sheki Regional Public Association for Development of Democracy, the Western Resource Center) have created a coalition that focuses on studying the state, and particularly those issues related to the struggle against corruption. The Society for Protection of Human Rights "Free Person" and the Center for Free Economy through financial support from the Open Society Institute realised the project "Carrying out Monitoring and Maintenance Transparency of Means Allocated from the State Budget to Social Sphere". Another positive example is the fact that more than 20 youth non-governmental organisations led by National Council of Youth Organisations of Azerbaijan (NAYORA) have set up coalition on employment for Azerbaijani youth (YECA), which works closely with the government to provide the youth's contribution to creation the National Plan of Action on Employment for Youth (NAPYE).

However, as interviewed experts have noted, one of the main challenges in holding the state accountable is that civic activist's voices seldom reach all spheres of society, and often do not represent the opinion of the broader society (vox populi), which in general is indifferent to these needs and demands. The reason for this is that the opinion of civil society is not the opinion of the whole society; this is regarded as a Soviet-time "heritage". That being said, the public expects assistance from the state, but is not ready to influence the state in the formation of its policy or how that assistance is delivered.

Nearly half (47%) of RSC respondents believed that civil society in Azerbaijan passively operates in holding state structures accountable, while 45% of the respondents were of the view that civil society is active to a limited extent in this direction, 7% of participants believed that civil society is quite active and an insignificant number (1%) held the opinion that CS is very active in acting to hold the state accountable. Accordingly, 51% of respondents estimated that civil society actions in strengthening state accountability were unsuccessful and insufficient, 44% of participants supposed that these actions were insufficiently successful, and these actions were successful in the opinion of only 5% of respondents.

The Media Review also shows that civil society's role in holding the state accountable is non-visible, minor, and undistinguished. This theme is mentioned in only two reviewed media items, one of which looks into the positive work of CSOs towards holding the state accountable, while the other one presented CSOs work in a neutral manner.

4.2.2 Holding private corporations accountable. CSOs' efforts in holding private corporations accountable are also viewed as weak and ineffective, according to the majority of interviewed civil society experts. It is interesting to note that most projects focusing on accountability, transparency and anti-corruption issues are mainly focus on government bodies, universities/schools and municipalities, but seldom touch upon private corporations. For example, the relatively successful project of the Union of Youth of Azerbaijan "Role of Youth in Struggle Against Corruption" does not look into corruption within private corporations.[52]

Around 46% of RSC participants viewed civil society in Azerbaijan as passive in its role of holding businesses accountable, while 44% of the respondents thought that civil society is

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[52] Newspaper "Echo", 12 October 2005.

insufficient in actively operating in this direction. Another 8% said that CS is active and only 2% viewed CS as very active in fulfilling this role.

Thus, CSO activities in strengthening the accountability of business-structures have been estimated as unsuccessful by 58% of respondents, insufficiently successful by 38%, successful by 3% of the respondents and only 1% perceived CS's role to be very successful. Results of the media review confirm the extremely insignificant role of CSOs in Azerbaijan in holding private corporations accountable: only one reviewed media item was dealt with and related to this issue.

4.3 Responding to Social Interests

This sub-dimension analyses the extent to which civil society actors in Azerbaijan are responsive to social interests, and received an average score of 1.0. Table III.4.3 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.3: Indicators assessing responding to social interests

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.3.1	Responsiveness	1.0
4.3.2	Public trust in CSOs	1.0

4.3.1 Responsiveness. In order to examine how responsive civil society is at meeting social concerns, we first need to identify the main concerns and needs of the Azerbaijan population and to determine how effectively civil society actors respond to these concerns. Surveys among the country population, which have been carried out in recent years consistently reveal four top concerns for the citizens of Azerbaijan: (1) the restoration of the territorial integrity of the country, (2) reducing unemployment, (3) increasing household incomes and; (4) intensifying the fight against corruption.

Many CSOs in the country operate in relation to these top priorities for the population, particularly on the issues related to the restoration of territorial integrity of the country and the struggle against corruption. At the same time, it is necessary to note that within CS, broad, sustainable, influential and effective unions and coalitions have not yet been established to address these main concerns and needs of the general population. Maybe it is not accidental that neither the media review, nor the RSC participants, provided any examples and cases of such associations and coalitions.

According to the interviewed civil society experts, a principal cause of this situation concerning the lack of coalitions is that both the general population and a significant part of CSO representatives continue to believe in and rely on state entities to provide solutions to these above-mentioned issues, as well as many other "burning" problems of the country. In turn, CSO activities have mainly focused on issues of the protection of civil rights, which, according to experts, have advanced more rapidly compared to the activities of state on this subject, and which has helped to gain considerably larger respect and a positive image for civil society in the eyes of the population. However, the main problem is that, in the opinion of the interviewed experts, the voice of civil society seldom reaches all spheres of society, and does not represent the opinion of the larger society, which in general is indifferent to these needs and demands.

4.3.2 Public trust in CSOs. The Community Survey questioned the degree of trust that citizens have towards civil society, social institutions and organisations, religious organisations, armed forces, media outlets, labour unions, police, government, the President, political parties, NGOs, major companies, and the National Forum of NGOs.

Our calculations show that the overall "average index of trust" of the country population towards all listed social institutions and organisations is 2.74, which means that in general the country population is more likely inclined to mistrust them or even have high levels of mistrust. It should be noted that an average trust score of 2.5 or less as an indication of "trust" was used. When we measured the level of trust in CSOs included in the list (religious organisations**,** labour unions, NGOs, and National Forum of NGOs) the average level of trust was at 2.84. As is seen, the level of trust to CSOs is even lower than "general index of trust" for other institutions.

However, there are significant distinctions in the levels of trust towards the different types of CSOs. For example, the National Forum of NGOs is one of the top mistrusted organisations among the social institutions, with a score of 3.12. Religious organisations, on the other hand, enjoy a rather high level of trust from the general population with a score of 2.51. In comparison, the country President enjoys the highest trust (2.19) while the police are least trusted among state institutions (3.13). Table III.4.4 examines the level of trust for each category in more detail.

Table III.4.4: Public trust in social institutions and organisations

CSOs		**Other institutions and organisations**	
Religious organisations	2.51	Police	3.13
Labour unions	2.73	President	2.19
NGOs	2.81	TV	2.45
National Forum of NGOs	3.12	Press	2.46
Average Index of Trust in CSOs	2.84		
General Average Index of Trust in social institutions	**2.74**		

These similar findings were also found by in the World Values Survey (1997), which shows that 70% of the population interviewed indicated that they did not trust CSOs and only 30% of respondents said that they trust CSOs.[53]

Looking at previous indicators also illustrates this level of mistrust of CSOs within the general population. For the most part, citizens remain uninformed about CSO activities and see their contribution in most social and political aspects of the public sphere as insignificant and without much impact. The NGO Sustainability Index (2006) gave a rating of 5.0 to the public image of CSOs in Azerbaijan indicating that it is still in the early transition phase.[54]

4.4. Empowering Citizens

This sub-dimension describes and assesses the extent to which civil society in Azerbaijan is active and successful in empowering citizens, especially traditionally marginalised groups, to shape decisions that affect their lives, and received an average score of 0.8. Table III.4.5 summarises the respective indicator scores.

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[53] See World Values Survey, footnote 13.
[54] See NGO Sustainability Index, footnote 16.

Table III.4.5: Indicators assessing empowering citizens

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.4.1	Informing/educating citizens	1.0
4.4.2	Building capacity for collective action	0.0
4.4.3	Empowering marginalised people	1.0
4.4.4	Empowering women	1.0
4.4.5	Building social capital	2.0
4.4.6	Supporting livelihoods	0.0

4.4.1 Informing/educating citizens. The impact that CSOs have in informing/educating citizens can be analysed by focusing on three specific case studies: (1) Increase of ecological culture of the population; (2) Increase of level of awareness about employment opportunities; (3) Increase of level of youth's legal and civic consciousness.

The data contained in Table III.4.6 (below) demonstrates that overall, civil society's actions in all three case studies are seen to be only somewhat successful by the majority of respondents. However, it is important to highlight that there are currently no CSOs that specifically focus on unemployment issues.

Table III.4.6: Estimation of success of civil society's actions on the three informing/educating issues

Issues	Successful	Somewhat successful	Unsuccessful
Increase of ecological culture of the population	8%	67%	25%.
Increase of level of awareness about employment opportunities	6%	51%	43%.
Increase of level of youth's legal and civic consciousness	30%	54%	16%

Source: CSI Regional Stakeholders Consultations 2004-2005

There is one NGO, however, that focuses on youth employment, called the Coalition of Employment of Youth of Azerbaijan (YECA), which consists of more than 20 youth non-governmental organisations and is led by the National Council of Youth Organisations of Azerbaijan (NAYORA). The purpose of this coalition is to provide an opportunity for the youth to contribute to the creation of the National Plan of Action on Employment of Youth (NAPYE). They have done extensive work to help young people in search of jobs and inform about employment opportunities.

In contrast, there are several CSOs that seek to increase the ecological awareness among the population (see sub-dimension 3.7.) However, it is apparent from Table III.4.4.1 that only a small portion of respondents (8%) considered CSO actions in this sphere to be successful, and the majority (67%) viewed them as somewhat successful.

In comparison with the first two issues, CSOs seem to be most successful in increasing the level of youth's legal and civic consciousness (30%). Civil society experts also noted that one of the most successful activities of CSOs in Azerbaijan is with human rights protection issues,

particularly in increasing the level of awareness on legal and civil culture among the population, including young people.

An important factor of this relative success is that many international organisations and Western donors operating in Azerbaijan view this issue as one of their main priorities.

There are a number of CSOs that focus on informing citizens of their rights and obligations by publishing various resources and materials on human rights, as well as assisting citizens to protect their human rights by educating the broad public about legal issues and current legislation. Some CSOs actively participate in civic and democratic education of Azerbaijani youth.

In general, the majority of RSC participants believed that civil society in Azerbaijan is either passive (14%) or insufficiently active (50%) in informing and educating the population. The majority of respondents regarded these actions as unsuccessful (13%) or insufficiently successful (60%), though more than quarter of respondents counted it as successful (25%) or very successful (2%). The following examples of this activity were mentioned among RSC respondents: informing the population on human rights problems; actions in sphere of ecological education; work of public association "Education/Enlightenment" for rendering assistance to young people; seminars on problems of higher education; informing on the rights of national minorities; "Anti-AIDS" campaign; campaign among youth on illegal drugs; voters education; and religious education and enlightenment. CSOs also play a particular role in acquainting the population with state policies and programs.

Lastly, the low level of CSO activity in informing/educating citizens is reiterated in the results of the Community Survey, where only 8% of respondents indicated that for the last 12 months CSOs have conducted community work in informing people about important social problems.

4.4.2 Building capacity for collective action and resolving joint problems. According to the majority (51%) of RSC respondents, civil society in Azerbaijan operates passively, or is insufficiently active (33%), as regards development issues and the increasing of local communities' capacity in this sphere. CSO activities in building capacity for collective action were mainly viewed as unsuccessful by 43% of the respondents, or not very successful by 41% of the respondents. The following examples of building capacity for collective action were mentioned: the mobilisation of local communities along the BTC pipeline; actions directed on the joint solution of environmental problems; improvement of infrastructure; and the restoration of irrigation systems in a number of regions. However, it was emphasised that this work was carried out because of resources from foreign and international organisations (British Petroleum, World Bank, US Agency for International Development, etc) and usually had no sustainable continuation after the end of the financing period on the part of donors.

The low level of CSOs activity in building capacity for collective action and resolving joint problems proves to be true based on the findings of the Community Survey. The Community Survey also demonstrated similar findings, where only 1% of the respondents have specified that any civil society organisations had helped local people in their efforts to solve certain problems within the community in the last 12 months.

4.4.3 Empowering marginalised people. The Community Survey shows that only 2% of respondents knew of CSO activities that empowered marginalised people, or helped poor people in the community to improve their lives. A mere 1% of the respondents took part in these activities.

RSCs participants shared similar impressions about the work of civil society in empowering marginalised people. There were two ways in which CSOs empowered marginalised people: through psycho-social rehabilitation of both refugees and IDPs, and rendering legal aid to vulnerable groups. As it has been shown above, CSOs are not very effective at raising the level of awareness about employment opportunities among the unemployed.

Civil society experts were explicit in mentioning how insufficiently active and unsuccessfully CSOs are at empowering people affected by HIV/AIDS. Though in the country there are some CSOs that specifically focus on HIV/AIDS-related issues, there is little work in terms of empowerment in this area. An exception to this is the Association "Imdad-SOS", which trains people living with HIV (PLWHIV) to do HIV/AIDS prevention. It is the unique nongovernmental organisation in Azerbaijan as its activity is based on the participation of PLHIV themselves in the prevention HIV/AIDS in the country. Through its work, it has managed to unite over 200 PLWHIV and their close relatives, and also lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, teachers and doctors. The association renders moral, financial/material, social, psychological and legal aid to PLWHIV.

4.4.4 Empowering women. The Community Survey shows that only 2% of respondents recognised CSO activities that dealt with women's empowerment issues, which help women in the community to improve their lives. Of those, only 0.5% of the respondents had personally participated in these activities. According to many civil society experts, one of the weaknesses of civil society in Azerbaijan is that only a narrow circle of CSOs (basically women's organisations) are engaged in empowering women.

Overall, there are over 40 women's-rights CSOs actively working in various areas: health, family and care of children, domestic violence against women, professional development of women, position/status of women in labour market, the status of women in a society and rights of women,.

Some of these CSOs have the aim of solving these problems by encouraging women to actively participate in political and public life. Some organisations are engaged in very sensitive issues such as the trafficking in of women. The Public Association for Civil Rights' brochure "The Pure World" is addressed to heads of NGOs engaged in issues of trafficking in order to coordinate their efforts. The Azerbaijan Gender Association "Symmetry", the public association "Voluntary Rescuers", and the Azerbaijan Children's Association "Fidan" have all joined this initiative. In addition, they closely co-operate with various NGOs, operating in different regions of the country. These NGOs render their invaluable assistance by educating the local population on issues important to women in Azerbaijan, and sometimes help trafficking victims. In Mingachevir, for example, is an NGO that has set up a rehabilitation program that helps return former trafficking victims to a normal life, and it has been quite successful at helping women recover their lives.

4.4.5 Building social capital. In order to gauge the influence of civil society in Azerbaijan, CIVICUS recommends determining how the levels of trust, tolerance, and public spiritedness among CSO members compare to non-CSO members.[55] The Community Survey shows that the level of interpersonal trust among CSO members is considerably higher than the corresponding data among non-CSO members.

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[55] Though the participatory researcher doubts in a methodological correctness to draw a direct conclusion concerning CSO's influence on the level of social capital through comparison of its levels among CSO members and non-members, because it is possible, in his opinion, that levels of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness of people have influence on their participation/nonparticipation in CSOs, rather/but not the opposite/reverse tendency/influence.

Around 40% of members of at least one CSO thought that most people can be trusted, while only 26% of non-CSO members believed that most people can be trusted. Tolerance Indexes in a sub-group of members of at least one CSO and non-members of CSO have been made accordingly, 1.3 and 1.7, which speaks to higher levels of tolerance among CSO members.

Lastly, the Public Spiritedness Index for CSO members is 2.5, and was found to be lower for non-CSO members at 2.3, thus indicating a slightly higher level of public spiritedness among CSO members. Table III.4.7 shows that CSO members often consider infringements of public norms to never be justified.

Table III.4.7: Levels of Public Spiritedness among CS members and non-members

Practices	Never Justifiable	
	Members	**Non-members**
Use public transport without paying	54%	41%
Evade tax payment	65%	51%
Receive a state benefit without being entitled to it	52%	45%

Source: CSI Community Survey (2005)

4.4.6 Supporting livelihoods. According to the Community Survey, only four respondents (0.3%) knew of CSO activities that helped community members set up income-generating activities. Of those, two respondents had personally participated in these activities. Not surprisingly, the Media Review did not cover any stories related to these issues, which is a sign of an extremely weak civil society activity level in creating and/or supporting employment and income-generating opportunities in the country. Civil society experts also noted that there are rare cases of CSOs participation in projects in organising income-generating opportunities, in particular, for refugees and IDPs, which are most often carried out by international organisations.

4.5 Meeting Societal Needs

This sub-dimension examines the extent to which civil society is active and successful in meeting societal needs, especially those of poor people and other marginalised groups in the country, and received an average score of 0.7. Table III.4.8 summarises the respective indicator scores.

Table III.4.8: Indicators assessing meeting societal needs

Ref. #	Indicators	Score
4.5.1	Lobbying for state service provision	0.0
4.5.2	Meeting societal needs directly	1.0
4.5.3	Meeting the needs of marginalised groups	1.0

4.5.1 Lobbying for state service provisions. It is possible to determine that civil society in Azerbaijan is not active or successful in lobbying for the state service provision. This determination was reinforced by the fact that none of the RSC participants could point to any examples of lobbying done by CSOs to the government in order to extend help and improve its services for the population and address the pressing needs of society. Moreover, the case study

on civil society's impact on public policy in social support of refugees and IDPs (see sub-dimension 4.1) confirms the low level of activity in lobbying for government's support on this extremely important and burning issue for the country. The Media Review also shows that in the country, public debates on the appropriate "division of labour" between the state, market and civil society are not carried out, while only one item connected with the given issue has been identified.

4.5.2 Meeting societal needs directly. The Community Survey shows that only 2% of respondents were aware of CSO activities that have directly solved a specific problem in a community over the previous 12-month period. Of these, less than one percent personally participated in these activities. The vast majority (65%) of RSC respondents could not give examples of civil society providing any social services or help to the population.

Other respondents however have mentioned some examples such as help to handicapped and older persons; help to disabled children; free legal aid to the population; providing technical and informational support for citizens; providing information on health problems, ecology and education; psycho-social rehabilitation of refugees and IDPs; consultancy to women affected by problems of domestic violence; and rendering assistance to vulnerable people to protect their civil rights. In the respondents' view, this assistance targeted the population as a whole (28%), the needy/poor layers of population (38%), disabled persons (13%), elderly persons (9%), women (6%), and refugees and IDPs (6%).

Moreover, this activity of civil society has been estimated by the majority of respondents (67%) as insufficiently successful, while it was considered as successful by 30% of respondents, and unsuccessful by 3%. The majority of stakeholders (63%) have also assessed civil society's role in directly meeting societal needs as insignificant (23%) or limited (40%). Additionally, 21% of respondents have characterised this role as moderate, while 16% of respondents believe it to be significant.

4.5.3 Meeting the needs of marginalised groups. This indicator is measured by comparing the extent to which CSOs are more or less effective than the state in delivering services to marginalised groups. According to the Community Survey, only 18% of respondents considered CSO work to be more effective in delivering services to marginalised groups than state agencies. A much higher percentage of respondents (43%) noted that state agencies operate more effectively in meeting the needs of marginalised groups.

However, a significant percentage of respondents (39%), who are not representatives of marginalised groups, were at a loss to express their opinion about this issue. Based on their own experience in applying for help from state agencies and voluntary organisations during the last 12 months, 8% of respondents have declared that voluntary organisations have been more helpful. Twelve percent of respondents perceived that state agencies are more helpful. Representatives of the relatively large marginalised groups in the country such as refugees and IDPs and needy people are inclined to think that voluntary organisations render assistance more effectively. This opinion was shared by 54% of refugees and IDPs, and 53% of respondents from the lowest income quintile. Comparing results of applications for help in both types of organisations, 65% of refugees and IDPs and 77% of representatives of the lowest income quintile have also noted that voluntary organisations have rendered assistance more effectively. This does not necessarily mean that CSOs tend to help marginalised groups to a greater extent than the state, but it is more likely that they are more sympathetic or responsive to appeals from representatives of vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

The CSI assessed the overall impact of civil society in Azerbaijan to be very weak. The sub-dimension scores demonstrate that civil society's role in holding the state and private sector accountable is the weakest and most unsuccessful activity.

While there are initial signs from some Azerbaijani CSOs of playing a more significant role in holding the state accountable, the CSI assessment found that CSOs are mainly reluctant to be involved in government affairs. In general, Azerbaijani civil society is not particularly active or successful in holding the state and private corporations accountable. Civil society is more active than successful in demanding transparency from the state and almost inactive when it comes to promoting the transparency and openness of the private sector.

Civil society in Azerbaijan remains inactive and unsuccessful in influencing public policy. Despite some efforts in the advocacy of human rights policy, social policy, and promoting the transparency of state incomes, the effectiveness of civil society's activities surrounding these issues have been assessed as inadequate.

The lack of public trust in CSOs is another key obstacle to working towards a stronger civil society, although sometimes CSOs do enjoy higher levels of public trust than other institutions in Azerbaijan. However, overall, civil society in Azerbaijan also has a rather negative public image, which is reflected by the fact that CSOs' activities continue to remain invisible to the majority of the population. The NAG and National Workshop participants tended to believe that the low public trust could possibly be related to the low levels of civil society's responsiveness and meeting societal needs.

As for empowering citizens, CSOs in Azerbaijan have been more successful in building social capital than in informing/educating citizens, empowering marginalised people and women, as well as building capacity of people for collective actions, supporting livelihoods, which are, according to stakeholders, on the "zero level".

Moreover, indicator scores in the impact dimension demonstrates that the most significant positive result of Azerbaijani civil society's activity is a building social capital through its contribution to levels of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness in society.

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

This section summarises the main discussions and outcomes of the National Workshop, which was held near the completion of the CSI project.

More than 70 people from CSOs, academic institutions, mass-media, business, development agencies and public institutions participated in the workshop. After a presentation of the CSI project's results, participants at the workshop were invited to identify the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Azerbaijan, and to come up with suggestions and recommendations about how to strengthen civil society in the country.

Participants at the workshop worked in four small groups. Each group debated and examined one dimension of the CSI: structure, environment, values or impact. Though each group was concerned with a different dimension, certain common topics and issues were identified among them. Also, the discussions at the National Workshop, regional stakeholder consultations and NAG meetings indicated that CSO representatives are not only capable of examining their external environment, but are also willing and able to self-examine and assess themselves and their activities and conduct in civil society as a whole, resulting in a wide range of constructive criticism and opinions being expressed.

When participants at the National Workshop discussed the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in Azerbaijan, they chose to focus on the weaknesses and outlined their concerns in more detail, which they described more comprehensively than the strengths of Azerbaijani CS.

However, both the strengths and the weaknesses were thoroughly discussed and considered, and critical and open discussions took place at both at the National Workshop, and at the regional stakeholder consultations and in the NAG. Within these discussions, on certain issues, the opinions expressed varied widely within the group. For instance, the relation between state and civil society was considered a strength by some participants, while others saw it as a weakness.

The relationship between civil society and mass media and the private sector was also debated, and stakeholders had different perspectives on this issue. However, there were many points on which the participants agreed, a summary of which can be found below.

1. STRENGTHS

The following section captures the main strengths identified and discussed during the course of the National Workshop, NAG and during regional stakeholder consultations. Most of the strengths identified by stakeholders related to the capacity of CSOs to do their work. Specifically, this related to human resources, professionalism and specialisations in order to follow through and accomplish their goals and mandates. The discussions at the National Workshop pointed to the relative strengths of civil society in such specific areas as human resources of CSOs, as well as the diversity and value commitment of civil society. This mix of strengths identified by participants is a solid base from which to foster and cultivate their further growth and sustainability.

• **The diversity of civil society:** This was the relative strength of Azerbaijani CS that was noted most often during discussions. It was not easy to assess to what extent CSOs are representative of the society at large, but it was agreed that civil society is certainly quite diverse in Azerbaijan, and that it carries out a broad range of activities and works with a large number of target groups.

There is a large variety of social groups targeted by and participating in civil society, and CSO membership includes a broad diversity of civil society participants. The same positive, encouraging situation is found when examining the level of representation of the various significant social groups among CSO leadership. However, there are some variations, differences regarding various social groups. At the same time, it is possible to judge that many if not all of the marginalised social groups are underrepresented among CSO membership and leadership.

• **Value commitment:** The role of CSOs in promoting tolerance, non-violence and gender equity was also listed as strength of Azerbaijani civil society. Azerbaijani CSOs normally follow a tolerant, gender equal, non-violent mode of conduct. It is grounded in the commonly accepted fact that, as a whole, Azerbaijani society is characterised by a high level of tolerance. This tolerance within the civil society arena was quite highly appreciated when assessed by the participants. For instance, a majority of RSC participants could not cite any examples of intolerant behaviours within civil society. It was believed that this is related, despite some negative facts, to the strong adherence to the principle of non-violence inside the CS arena. As a whole, violence is condemned as a means of achieving CSO goals and should not have a place in society generally. Other values, such as promoting gender equity within the CS arena and gender equitable practices within CSOs, were also mentioned as strengths. However, there is no wide, comprehensive information on the presence of a purposeful policy of CSOs to maintain gender equality.

• **Building social capital as a value:** Participants of National Workshop came to a common conclusion that the levels of interpersonal trust, tolerance and public spiritedness among CSO members are considerably higher compared to non-members of CSOs. It was stressed that CSOs try to make their own contribution to creating a socio-psychological atmosphere of mutual respect and confidence in Azerbaijani society.

2. WEAKNESSES

Based on the research findings and the discussions at the regional consultations, NAG meetings and the National Workshop, a broad range of weaknesses and challenges for Azerbaijani civil society were identified. According to the consultations, the main challenges for Azerbaijani civil society can be grouped into four areas: 1) civil society's infrastructure; 2) public trust and image; 3) relations to the state and 4) civil society's roles and approaches.

• **Human resources of CSOs:** Human resources are an important asset for any local CSO, and particularly those working on specific social and public policies issues. Having effective and strong human resource capabilities means that CSOs can rely on an available number of enthusiastic and committed people who are knowledgeable and capable of performing their assigned tasks and functions within the CSO. However, as was mentioned during discussions, many NGOs continue to experience problems hiring qualified and professional personnel, experts in various fields, as well as recruiting volunteers. According to participants, many CSOs still do not have a sufficient number of professionals with the skills to effectively and efficiently undertake institutional strategic planning, fundraising, management and communication with the public and official entities. Currently in Azerbaijan, CSOs are not seen as a source of expertise or general resource of information for governmental agencies.

• **The low/poor involvement of citizens in CSOs:** Civil society's structure in Azerbaijan is characterised by low levels of informal citizen participation in collective community actions and taking part in meetings in their communities, as well as low levels of non-partisan political action and volunteering. Furthermore, participants mentioned low levels of non-organised

volunteer participation in Azerbaijani CS, and that the level of people's participation in informal movements and meetings, community work and informal action of citizens did not meet the needs and goals of civil society. It was also noted that people prefer giving and volunteering outside of organised structures. It was mentioned that general membership in CSOs is very low and that citizens' general access to CSOs is rather poor. This is illustrated by the fact that CSOs quite often are not perceived to provide a reliable and attractive platform for citizen participation. The reasons for this low level of citizen participation in CSOs are most likely connected to the limited capacity of CSOs to reach and affect as many social groups and categories as possible, and it is rare to actually see a CSO conducting an interesting and attractive, useful, beneficial public event or activity.

• **A lack of umbrella organisations and/or their lack of effectiveness:** The majority of RSC participants believe that only a small minority of CSOs belong to a federation or umbrella body. Also, it was noted that virtually all alliances, unions, networks or coalitions of CSOs are located in the capital. Discussions also pointed to the lack of effective formal and informal networks among CSOs', as well as their general unwillingness to participate in CSO coalitions.

This leads to the current situation in which Azerbaijani CSOs are unable to raise a common voice or to have a more significant and efficient impact on public policies and carry our social actions, for example. Cooperation among CSOs is most often driven by fundraising activities only. This lack of organised cooperation may also be explained by the tendency of CSOs to associate in "informal" ways rather that to create formal bodies.

The opinion of participants was that CSOs perhaps do not particularly want to associate and join in alliances with other organisations because they do not recognise the benefits of working together and strengthening their position. Just a few CSOs have tried to develop communication with others and pursue common interests by joining coalitions and alliances.

This poor level of CSO local linkages also translates into a lack of international linkages, and thus was found to be another weakness of Azerbaijani civil society. The reasons for this deficit in international cooperation are related to a lack of interest in joining various European networks, the absence of a strong desire to participate in international events or global campaigns, as well as a lack of interest in creating mutual relationships and exchanges of available information, and also Azerbaijani CSOs not meeting international standards and criteria for CSOs.

• **Lack of transparency and corruption:** Corruption remains a major problem for Azerbaijani society, and so it cannot but influence Azerbaijani civil society. The lack of transparency surrounding CSOs' activities has been identified as one of the serious weaknesses of civil society. The level of corruption and financial opacity in Azerbaijani CSOs is considered to be high by the participants surveyed. Moreover, the negative activities of a small number of CSOs and their corrupted activities seem to have created an unfavourable public image for the whole sector. It seems that not many CSOs recognise that their financial viability depends on financial transparency and openness. It is believed that CSOs are not willing to be more transparent and open in their activities and strategies because they fear that this might prevent them from being competitive when contending with other organisations for the limited and ultimately insufficient financial resources available. Sometimes, the tough competition for these scarce resources available to CSOs can undermine ethical norms within the sector. It was stressed that the absence of state financial support causes visible and intense dependence on foreign funding and donors, which was also regarded, ultimately, as a weakness.

• **The legal environment for CSO activities** is not favourable in Azerbaijan, and is not compatible with international law. It was the common opinion of participants in the Workshop,

and of civil society in general, that the implementation of the current tax system that applies to CSOs in Azerbaijan is unfavourable, since CSOs do not enjoy any significant tax exemptions or preferences. NAG members agree. In fact, there are no available tax incentives or stimulus favouring CSOs activities in Azerbaijan.

This leads to a wealth of complaints made to the government on the part of CSOs. These tax impediments also inhibit the sustainability and stability of NGOs working in Azerbaijan. For the present, tax advantages and benefits for donors do not exist. Participants agreed that there is no special legislation or system in existence in the country that would motivate individual donations. In turn, the absence of a law on philanthropy is a major obstacle in developing local philanthropy and charity, which reduces NGO efforts in providing social services and support.

• **Holding private corporations accountable.** Poor relations between civil society and the business sector are also seen as a significant weakness in Azerbaijan. The minimal involvement of the business sector in the development of partnerships with CSOs was noted by the participants at the National Workshop. CSOs' actions in holding private corporations accountable, according to majority of interviewed experts, are generally weak and ineffective, and the majority of participants of the RSCs viewed civil society in Azerbaijan as passive in its role of holding businesses accountable. In addition, the actions of civil society in the direction of strengthening the accountability of business structures have been estimated as unsuccessful. The overall conclusion of the participants was that corporate philanthropy has not become a common and acceptable activity in Azerbaijan, and the involvement of the business sector is not sufficiently encouraged by CSOs. Most CSOs have not done enough to gain the trust of the business sector and have not developed strategies or incentives to attract the support of this sector. Indeed, Azerbaijani businesses mostly maintain an indifferent attitude towards CSOs. The discussions also underlined that the results of the media review confirmed the extremely insignificant role of CSOs in Azerbaijan in holding private corporations accountable.

• **Capacity of civil society for collective action and resolving joint problems:** According to the majority of participants of the RSCs, civil society in Azerbaijan operates passively in regards to the development and increase of potential of local communities. Thus, most development activities undertaken by civil society were characterised by the respondents as not successful at all, or not very successful. The group could only point to but a few examples of mobilisation in local communities. The low level of CSO activity in capacity building and for collective action in resolving joint problems was illustrated by the findings of the community survey. It was mentioned that CSOs do not know how to mobilise the general public. This is related to a lack of mobilisation capabilities, a general lack of self-esteem within CSOs and an inability to effectively and efficiently addresses social issues and problems in a way that Azerbaijani society requires.

• **The role of CSOs in supporting livelihoods:** According to participants, the effectiveness of CSOs' efforts to impact the wellbeing of Azerbaijani society remains very low. Civil society is generally not working to improve livelihoods in Azerbaijan, as this is regarded as a task for the government. There was a wide-spread opinion among the participants that the government responds to societal problems much better than civil society. Civil society is thought to be very inactive in influencing policy in this direction because of its underdeveloped capacity to accomplish this goal, and the common view that it is not a primary task of ordinary citizens to improve their own livelihoods. However, experts remarked in interviews that there are rare cases of CSO participation in activities of creating and/or supporting employment and helping community members to set up income-generating opportunities.

• **The orientation of NGOs toward lobbying for state service provisions.** Participants of the discussions pointed out that civil society in Azerbaijan is not particularly active or successful in lobbying the government to address the pressing needs of society. Nobody among the participants of the RSCs could give examples of lobbying done by CSOs for the government to extend help and improve its services for the population.

Civil society's low social service lobbying capacity is a symptom of their weak persistence, lack of mobilisation capacity, as well as their underdeveloped organisational abilities and professionalism. On the other hand, it was stressed that the government tries to preserve the unclear regulation of NGOs' advocacy work, provides no clear provisions for advocacy, or even prohibits their service provision role, which limits civil society's ability to reach out to the population. The dialogue on these issues between the state entities and CSOs has been rather limited, and neither frequent nor systematic. In most instances, the state seeks to avoid having to consult with civil society. Stakeholders involved in the discussion process also noted that CSOs are not active enough in many other fields, like meeting societal needs directly, meeting the needs of marginalised groups or informing/educating Azerbaijani citizens.

• **Low level of trust in CSOs:** Ordinary Azerbaijani citizens' trust in CSOs is still very low, which indicates that there is a general mistrust in the capacity of CSOs to solve peoples' problems, address their needs or protect their interests. There is also a deep mistrust of the work of CSOs among state representatives and the corporate sector. Unfortunately, some experienced CSOs do not enjoy their deserved level of positive public reputation, which they have tried to build up through their intensive and productive activities. There are also some CSOs that are quite fairly negatively perceived by representatives of the state and the media because of their low levels of professionalism, capacity and efficiency. The low credibility and negative image of Azerbaijani CSOs can also partly be explained by the low visibility of positive civil society activities in the mass media. Even when CSOs are involved in successful social campaigns, citizens are typically unaware of civil society's role in those activities. Instead, the negative stereotypes circulated by the mass media are easily accepted by the majority of the population. Ordinary citizens are poorly informed about civil society activities, since mass media coverage of CSOs issues is very limited.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented in this section were made by participants of the National Workshop, by regional stakeholder consultations and by the NAG. They rely on the specific weaknesses identified by these groups and mentioned above, but also on the necessity of supporting and improving the strengths that do exist, some of which were identified and discussed above. The specific recommendations made by the participants included the following:

Improving cooperation within the civil society sector. The participants recommended raising the level of partnership, cooperation, communication and openness within civil society, in order to build inter- or intra-sectoral coalitions, networks and groups. Establishing effective networking, links, communication channels and coordinating bodies among CSOs and between sectors is considered an important step in building confidence among the different civil society sectors. It is believed that this will make CSO activities more effective, productive and will allow CSOs to raise a common voice and interact more efficiently with public authorities and business representatives. Also it was indicated that knowing more about the other CSOs would help build mutual trust and create a sense of common identity. The information exchange and coordination between various sectors of a civil society and among CSOs is of crucial importance for sharing good practices and experiences. And this is particularly the case with regional NGOs in order to develop their local and national capacities and activities. Additionally, it is very important to increase the role of umbrella organisations in Azerbaijan. These organisations could communicate with government and protect the interests of small organisations, and, in general, could contribute to the long-term sustainability of the sector.

Enhance the professionalism of CSOs. The participants recommended strengthening professional skills of CSOs through establishing a system of professional education for CSOs. There is a great need for a coherent and profession-based educational system for CSO professionals to train them and retain them in the sector. It is important to develop special courses on non-profit management, strategic planning, project management, fundraising, public relations and communication, for example. CSOs should also develop their organisational capacity by creating a domestic base of CSO professionals for the mobilisation of local resources. This could have a significant long-term impact on the steady development of Azerbaijani civil society.

Improving citizen participation. As outlined above, the involvement of citizens in CSO activities was regarded as low. Therefore, during the consultations, the participants focused their recommendations on the need to strengthen citizen participation in public life, particularly by increasing citizen involvement in the activities carried out by CSOs. Organisations should develop initiatives and tools to educate citizens so that they can participate in civil society in different ways, such as individual charitable giving, developing volunteer opportunities and assisting in the development of civil society. Some stakeholders pointed out the necessity of clear and feasible procedures for citizen participation in civil society, as well as informing citizens about the role that CSOs already play in Azerbaijani society. It is also important to create a national system of civic education to increase knowledge on civil society among the broader public, and thereby encourage greater participation of citizens in civil society.

Improving the public image and public trust in CSOs. According to participants, civil society needs to address issues of public image, public trust and internal accountability. The participants believed that this could be achieved by increasing open and transparent CSO operations. Ways to achieve this include more effectively presenting civil society's achievements to the media, publicizing more positive examples of best practices, results and successful actions, making

more use of opportunities of mass media, and publishing, as well as disseminating and providing reliable, accurate information about civil society. The media can considerably contribute to the development of a civic culture and, in close cooperation with civil society, stimulate and support important social change processes in the country. The media could also help overcome the low rating and the negative impression (mainly as "grant-eaters") that the general public has of NGOs. Also, to improve public trust, CSOs need to increase transparency by improving their annual reporting and increasing their openness to citizens, and by finding ways to be more accessible and more responsive to public and citizen's interests. Some of the participants expressed their belief that greater public or mutual control in civil society would lead to greater transparency and trust.

Improving cooperation and partnerships, relations with public authorities. It was mentioned that CSOs should closely work with the central authorities to improve the legislative framework that affects CSOs' activity by ensuring their access to public funding. Also, it is believed that CSOs need to strengthen their partnerships with local authorities in fields such as social services, youth, culture and environmental protection. It is important to create partnerships and dialogue mechanisms between local government and civil society, because dialogue should go not for the sake of dialogue, and for the solution of concrete social problems, and if the state will see that the civil society is strong enough, then it will be considered with respect.

At the same time, the state, at all levels of government, should establish an effective communication mechanism with CSOs, with respect to preparing, passing and implementing those policies that are of concern to civil society. In general, the participants believed that more cooperation with civil society is likely to lead to better policies and more efficient service delivery. In order to overcome the permanent financial crisis threatening civil society's sustainability, the state, in cooperation with CSOs, should establish a transparent system of CSO funding at all levels of government.

The participants believed that this is necessary in order to increase the level of resources allocated to CSOs, to provide timely invitations for tenders among targeted organisations and to set up a separate funding programme for innovative projects. Such a funding programme, for example, would provide a powerful impetus for the development of civil society sector, as supported by the recent presidential decree on "Developing a Concept for State Support for NGOs". The implementation of this important document will help to create effective relationships between public organisations and official structures, and will considerably expand CSOs' opportunities in the field of philanthropy. The participants felt that this decree is an excellent opportunity to improve civil society-government interaction and to raise the effectiveness and sustainability of CSOs for many years to come.

Improving relations with corporate sector, business-structures. The participants highlighted the importance of attracting business and the corporate sector support and creating better conditions for the stronger involvement of business representatives in the activities developed and undertaken by civil society. Businesses should take responsibility for the social, environmental and humanitarian impacts of their activities, and should develop a concept of corporate social responsibility. Another recommendation made by the group referred to improving professionalism of CSOs representatives in their relations with the business sector, for there is a tremendous growth potential in this area. It was agreed that this should be seen as a necessity by majority of CSOs.

Strengthening the advocacy and lobbying capacity of CSOs. CSOs should increase their awareness of the necessity of becoming more involved in shaping public policy. It was recommended that CSOs play a more active role in responding to social needs and interests, as

well as independently setting priorities in the public agenda. As one expert remarked, "civil society should have open access to government policy and feedback mechanisms on civil society policy interventions".

Several recommendations related to the specific requirement of strengthening **the "watchdog" and public control role of CSOs** on various issues, such as European integration, democratisation, social services, unemployment, poverty, protecting the environment, fighting corruption, and transparency. The participants believed that a system of public control over government should be implemented, which would include a series of rules and procedures allowing civil society to give recommendations and input on government policies, and then receive feedback from the government on their recommendations. CSOs should develop the capacity to react more quickly and in a more concentrated manner to potential social issues and actions involving public authorities and private companies. This goal requires an increase in CSOs' monitoring capacity and policy analysis skills. It is also important to establish a civil society mechanism to influence the actions and decisions of local authorities, the effective control over their performance. Environmental protection, as well as sensitizing and mobilising the general public around this social concern, should also be a major concern for Azerbaijani civil society.

Improving the legal environment for CSOs activities and philanthropy. Laws and tax regulations should be developed for those NGOs that are accomplishing their key mission of protecting citizen's interests and providing services that are compatible with international democratic standards. It is also necessary to create and unite civil society funding instruments with a wider participation of citizens in philanthropy. The participants believed that it was important to develop a clear policy and transparent legal provisions that ensure the sustainability of CSOs, with a focus on domestic sources for civil society income.

Achieving openness and transparency of CSOs activities. The participants discussed the importance of openness and transparency as a competitive advantage when regulating CSOs, and pointed to the importance of optimizing financial and reporting requirements for NGOs. It is also important to ensure CSOs' accountability in implementing their missions and tasks. It is believed that this will considerably raise civil society's public credibility and trust.

Several recommendations related to necessity of developing an **overall strategy for strengthening civil society** in Azerbaijan, which would considerably contribute to CSOs active participation in the broad, extensive developmental processes in the country.

Finally, it was recommended that civil society conduct **more public discussions** about current social problems facing Azerbaijan, any "burning questions" at a local level, and fostering discussion of the condition of Azerbaijani society and civil society at national and regional levels.

VI. CONCLUSION

The conclusions below draw together the main findings of CSI project in Azerbaijan, and can be summarised in form of the Civil Society Diamond for Azerbaijan (see Figure VI.1).

FIGURE VI.1: Civil Society Diamond for Azerbaijan
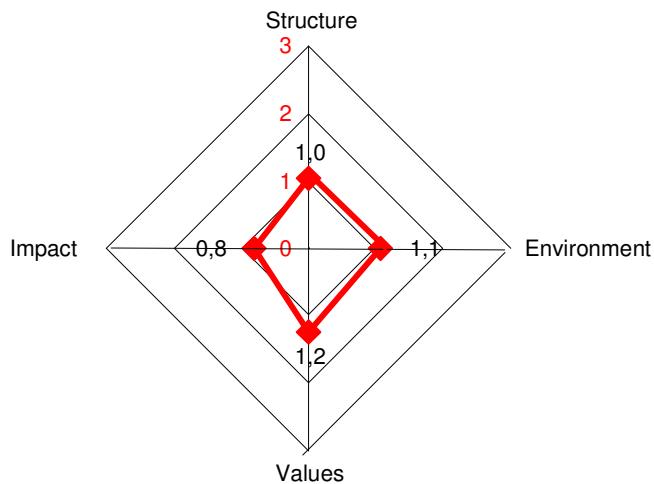
This diagram, visualising the state of Azerbaijani civil society in the form of a Diamond, shows that civil society in Azerbaijan is rather well-balanced among its four dimensions, although all dimension scores are relatively low.

Whereas civil society's **Impact** (discussed below) is considered to be the weakest dimension in Azerbaijan, the CSI assessment for the other three dimensions yielded somewhat more positive results.

With regard to civil society's **Structure** in Azerbaijan, this dimension was found to be low. This low level of structure was seen to be associated with the lack of active civic engagement among citizens at the community level, their general inactivity with CSOs membership, and the widespread apathy and scepticism that exists in the general public towards CSOs. Despite some endeavours by CSOs to mobilise citizens around issues of public concern, at both the local and national levels, the reaction from the population has remained mostly passive.

There is also not enough diversity in Azerbaijani civil society. The CSO types with the largest membership are trade unions, followed by educational organisations and groups. Membership in other types of CSO is not very significant either. Although there are no significant social groups that are excluded from the civil society, the rural population, as well as ethnic and religious minorities are slightly under-represented in CSOs. The geographical distribution of CSOs across the country is not uniform; they are primarily concentrated in the capital Baku and in other large cities.

The CSI assessment of Azerbaijani civil society structure revealed that the lack of CSO umbrella bodies is seen as rather problematic feature of civil society's structure. They exist in a limited

number within specific sub-sectors of civil society, and are generally inefficient in achieving their goals or fulfilling their purposes.

One of the most serious challenges confronting Azerbaijani civil society is the extremely low level of cooperation and networking between and among CSOs in different sectors, as well as their weak international linkages. The lack of stable financial resources and financial security also remains an obstacle to achieving viability and sustainability for the sector. There is extremely limited domestic support for NGOs from the state, business and individual citizens.

The **Environment** dimension in Azerbaijan is regarded as unsupportive to civil society, and is inconsistent and contradictory in terms of contributing to civil society's long-term sustainability. This situation is principally connected with the negative consequences and legacy of the Soviet totalitarian system. The major political and legal factors of this era remain a challenge for the development of civil society. In addition, corruption remains a significant problem for Azerbaijani society despite the existence of external pressures on the government aimed at fighting this phenomenon and the increasing effort by domestic civil society to bring about positive changes.

Relationships between civil society and the government, on the one hand, and the civil society and business sector, on the other, are neither cooperative nor fruitful. However, relations between the state and civil society have slightly improved over the last few years. In addition, the considerable improvement in the social and economic situation of Azerbaijan in recent years can be seen as a positive contributor to the development and strengthening of civil society.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the level of social capital remains a weakness of Azerbaijani society, with such dominant features as widespread inter-personal mistrust and a low level of public spiritedness. At the same time, the general socio-cultural context is characterised by relatively higher level of tolerance in society, which is crucial for the formation of a healthy and active civil society.

The CSI assessed Azerbaijani civil society's **Values** dimension as slightly higher than the other dimensions. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that values are considered the strongest feature of civil society in Azerbaijan. This situation is connected to a relatively high sensitivity to gender equity, non-violence and tolerance within the civil society arena.

Despite this fact, one of the basic weaknesses of the Value dimension in Azerbaijan is the lack of concrete activities and initiatives to promote positive social values in the larger society. In general, CSOs play a very limited role in promoting these values at a societal level. A low score for transparency was predictable and reflects an external environment where corruption still represents a major problem for all sectors of society, including civil society.

As mentioned above, the **Impact** dimension received the lowest score among the four dimensions of the CSI. This indicates that civil society is still not an important actor in the policy-making arena in Azerbaijan, and its overall impact on policy and society is weak. This also means that civil society's actions in the field of public policy do not necessarily lead to greater impact on society at large and on the wellbeing of citizens.

The CSI has drawn attention to the weak role of civil society in addressing issues such as holding private corporations accountable, lobbying for state service provision for the Azerbaijani population, and empowering citizens in the building of their capacity to undertake collective action and supporting their livelihoods. This limited role is connected to the legacy of socialist times, when the state was regarded as the sole responsible actor for social issues.

It is possible to make a general conclusion that due to the long period of Soviet totalitarianism and its lingering effects, civil society in Azerbaijan has not yet generated effective mechanisms of real influence on the public life of the country as a whole.

CSI participants in Azerbaijan proposed concrete measures to improve civil society's impact, particularly around strengthening the advocacy, lobbying, cooperative, and empowering capacities of CSOs. It is hoped that these measures will increase the impact of CSOs and improve the state of civil society in all of its dimensions.

For the first time in civil society in Azerbaijan, a comprehensive and participatory assessment of civil society has been carried out through the CSI project. Its findings contribute considerably to civil society's progress and development, both in the short and the long term. This project has provided civil society in Azerbaijan with a collectively and cooperatively created model, a scheme to develop civil society's future.

It is hoped that the participatory and knowledge-sharing nature of the CSI project has laid a solid groundwork for civil society and other stakeholders to act upon, with the goal of making civil society in Azerbaijan stronger and more sustainable in the future.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: MEDIA REVIEW

Introduction

A specific study on the representation of civil society in Azerbaijani media was conducted as part of the CSI. The study draws on the monitoring of three newspapers in Azerbaijan during the period of July to December 2005.

The three publications were: *Bakinskiy rabochiy* (governmental), *Mukhalifat* (the newspaper of opposition party) and *Zerkalo* (independent). The choice of this mass media has been based on reasons of diversity of political orientation, the type of property/ownership and publication profiles.

The monitoring was carried out by ICSR. The media monitoring process was guided by the criteria outlined by CIVICUS, which involved an initial screening of the media for civil society related news, followed by the classification of this news according to standardized criteria. Then, the data was inputted into an MS Access database which was used to analyse the data.

Research Findings

In the following, we present the main findings of the Civil Society in the Media Study.

Quantity: Civil society issues receive a fairly extensive coverage in Azerbaijan. Over a period of four months, a total of 421 news items were found to be related to civil society issues in three newspapers. The frequency of reporting varies considerably among three media. The newspaper *Zerkalo* has by far the largest number of items related to civil society (302 items), which reflects appreciably high propensity of independent and politically relatively neutral media to covering of activity and problems of civil society, as well as more close communication, connection of CSOs and actors of civil society with politically neutral and unbiased press.

The newspaper *Bakinskiy rabochiy* which adheres to the pro-governmental publishing policy, has the least number of items related to civil society (49 items).

Form: Examining the form of reporting on civil society reveals that civil society is frequently in the centre of the analysis of mass media. Plenty of items (58%) were news analysis devoted to civil society. A rather significant part of articles also makes news stories (27%). At the same time, only 3.5% items were opinion pieces and 5% are interviews about civil society activities.

Linked to this, only a small share of items are direct quotes from civil society actors. Thus, CSOs' ability to put their own views forward in the media is extremely limited. The position of a news item within the structure of a newspaper is an indicator of the importance that is attached to the respective piece of information. Only 8% of the total numbers of articles referring to CSOs occupy very prominent positions in the monitored newspapers.

Issues: Most frequently topics presented are related to politics and war (20%) and justice system (14%). Other frequently discussed topics in the Azerbaijani mass media related to personalities (13%), ethnicity (10%), sports (8%), business (7%) and local government (6%). Comparing the four dimensions of the Civil Society Diamond, the environment (50%) and structure (28%) dimensions clearly receive the most extensive coverage, whereas impact (12%) and particularly values (10%) are rarely the subject of media reporting.

Of the news items, 77% reflect activities that took place at national level, 15% at international level, 6% at local level and almost 2% at regional level.

Actors: There are stark differences in the frequency and prominence of reporting on different types of CSOs. The CSOs that receive most of the attention are the advocacy CSOs (34%) and social movements (20%).

They are followed with a huge gap of community-level groups/associations (6%), and student and youth associations (5%). While it is difficult to hypothesize about the causes for the lower coverage of other civil society groups, such as social service NGOs, environmental CSOs, and women's associations, potential reasons could be their less media-worthy activities, less developed media skills or lack of relations to individual journalists.

Civil Society Image: The media's reporting on civil society news is rather neutral with a score of 0.096 on a scale from -1 (negative) to +1 (positive). Most of the news items (83%) represent CSOs in a neutral manner; 4% express a negative image and 13% see civil society positively.

Among various types of CSOs, professional and business organisations merited a score of 0.50, CSO networks/federations (0.40), and sport organisations (0.39) that receive the most positive representation. Trade unions receive the most negative representation (-0.13).

The non-favourable image of trade unions is connected to formalism in their activity, which is still kept since socialist times.

There is not much of a strong divergence in civil society's image according to type of news story (see table A6.1).

Table A6.1: Civil society's image by type of news story

Type of news story	Average score
News Story	**0.1**
In Brief / Short	**0**
Editorial	**0.27**
Opinion Piece	**-0.08**
Feature / News Analysis	**0.1**
Business	**0**
Opinion Poll	**0**
Interview	**0.1**

It is obvious that the estimation is inclined to being neutral, but at the same time in those articles, in which the opinion of the editor plays a rather strong role, civil society receives higher estimation. Also in articles of news character, where there is a minimal space/place for expression of opinion, the estimation of civil society is more likely positive. The less positive image of civil society is inherent in opinion pieces in which the opinion of the author plays a strong role.

Comparing the representation of civil society along the four dimensions of the CSI, the structure and impact dimensions receive slightly more positive representation (0.18 and 0.17), while the other two dimensions get less positive ratings (values = 0.07; environment = 0.05).

Conclusion

The findings of the media study indicate that certain civil society issues are described more often than others in the media outlets examined in Azerbaijan. For example, advocacy CSOs and social movements clearly dominate the reporting. However, most of the coverage does not involve civil society actors themselves and is limited to a factual presentation of events and news analysis. Civil society groups and individuals do not seem to have sufficient space to present their own views in the media. Overall, treatment of civil society issues in Azerbaijani media is rather common, yet superficial and focused on a small subset of CSOs.

Another conclusion is that newspapers attitudes towards civil society vary. The independent press shows much greater interest to issues of civil society, rather than governmental and political party-oriented. On the other hand, for the press controlled by political opposition and independent press a more critical approach in an estimation of condition and activity of civil society is inherent.

Appendix 2: CSI Scoring Matrix

1 - STRUCTURE
1.1 - Breadth of citizen participation
Description: **How widespread is citizen involvement in civil society? What proportion of citizens engage in civil society activities?**

1.1.1 - Non-partisan political action
Description: What percentage of people have ever undertaken any form of non-partisan political action (e.g. written a letter to a newspaper, signed a petition, attended a demonstration)?

A very small minority (less than 10%).	Score 0
A minority (10% to 30%).	Score 1
A significant proportion (31% to 65%).	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%).	Score 3

1.1.2 - Charitable giving
Description: What percentage of people donate to charity on a regular basis?

A very small minority (less than 10%).	Score 0
A minority (10% to 30%).	Score 1
A significant proportion (31% to 65%).	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%).	Score 3

1.1.3 - CSO membership [24]
Description: What percentage of people belong to at least one CSO?

A small minority (less than 30%).	Score 0
A minority (30% to 50%).	Score 1
A majority (51% to 65%).	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%).	Score 3

1.1.4 - Volunteering
Description: What percentage of people undertake volunteer work on a regular basis (at least once a year)?

A very small minority (less than 10%).	Score 0
A small minority (10% to 30%).	Score 1
A minority (31% to 50%).	Score 2
A majority (more than 50%).	Score 3

1.1.5 - Collective community action
Description: What percentage of people have participated in a collective community action within the last year (e.g. attended a community meeting, participated in a community-organised event or a collective effort to solve a community problem)?

A small minority (less than 30%).	Score 0
A minority (30% -50%).	Score 1
A majority (51% to 65%).	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%).	Score 3

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[24] This indicator is very popular among academics and is sometimes used as a single proxy for the strength of civil society (Welzel 1999)! However, available data on this indicator still has many shortcomings, particularly on a cross-national level (Morales Diez de Ulzurrun 2002). We consciously designed the indicator scores so that they are broad enough to yield a valid score as each of the four scores covers between 20-30 percentage points. We hereby avoid having to measure the exact percentage of CSO members among the population.

1.2 - Depth of citizen participation
Description: **How deep/meaningful is citizen participation in CS? How frequently/extensively do people engage in CS activities?**

1. 2.1 - Charitable giving
Description: How much (i.e. what percentage of personal income) do people who give to charity on a regular basis donate, on average, per year?

Less than 1%	Score 0
1% to 2%	Score 1
2.1% to 3%	Score 2
More than 3%	Score 3

1.2.2 - Volunteering
Description: How many hours per month, on average, do volunteers devote to volunteer work?

Less than 2 hours	Score 0
2 to 5 hours	Score 1
5.1 to 8 hours	Score 2
More than 8 hours.	Score 3

1.2.3 - CSO membership
Description: What percentage of CSO members belong to more than one CSO?

A small minority (less than 30%)	Score 0
A minority (30% to 50%)	Score 1
A majority (51% to 65%)	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%)	Score 3

1.3 - Diversity of civil society participants
Description: **How diverse/representative is the civil society arena? Do all social groups participate equitably in civil society? Are any groups dominant or excluded?**

1.3.1 - CSO membership
Description: To what extent do CSOs represent all significant social groups (e.g. women, rural dwellers, poor people, and minorities)?

Significant social groups are absent / excluded from CSOs.	Score 0
Significant social groups are largely absent from CSOs	Score 1
Significant social groups are under-represented in CSOs.	Score 2
CSOs equitably represent all social groups. No group is noticeably under-represented.	Score 3

1.3.2 - CSO leadership
Description: To what extent is there diversity in CSO leadership? To what extent does CSO leadership represent all significant social groups (e.g. women, rural dwellers, poor people, and minorities)?

Significant social groups are absent / excluded from CSO leadership roles.	Score 0
Significant social groups are largely absent from CSO leadership roles.	Score 1
Significant social groups are under-represented in CSO leadership roles.	Score 2
CSO leadership equitably represents all social groups. No group is noticeably under-represented.	Score 3

1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs
Description: How are CSOs distributed throughout the country?

CSOs are highly concentrated in the major urban centres.	Score 0
CSOs are largely concentrated in urban areas.	Score 1
CSOs are present in all but the most remote areas of the country.	Score 2
CSOs are present in all areas of the country.	Score 3

1.4. - Level of organisation
Description: **How well-organised is civil society? What kind of infrastructure exists for civil society?**

1.4.1 - Existence of CSO umbrella bodies
Description: What percentage of CSOs belong to a federation or umbrella body of related organisations?

A small minority (less than 30%)	Score 0
A minority (30% to 50%)	Score 1
A majority (51% to 70%)	Score 2
A large majority (more than 70%)	Score 3

1.4.2 - Effectiveness of CSO umbrella bodies
Description: How effective do CSO stakeholders judge existing federations or umbrella bodies to be in achieving their defined goals?

Completely ineffective (or non-existent).	Score 0
Largely ineffective.	Score 1
Somewhat effective.	Score 2
Effective.	Score 3

1.4.3 - Self-regulation
Description: Are there efforts among CSOs to self-regulate? How effective and enforceable are existing self-regulatory mechanisms? What percentage of CSOs abide by a collective code of conduct (or some other form of self-regulation)?

There are no efforts among CSOs to self-regulate.	Score 0
Preliminary efforts have been to self-regulate but only a small minority of CSOs are involved and impact is extremely limited.	Score 1
Some mechanisms for CSO self-regulation are in place but only some sectors of CSOs are involved and there is no effective method of enforcement. As a result, impact is limited.	Score 2
Mechanisms for CSO self-regulation are in place and function quite effectively. A discernible impact on CSO behaviour can be detected.	Score 3

1.4.4 - Support infrastructure
Description: What is the level of support infrastructure for civil society? How many civil society support organisations exist in the country? Are they effective?

There is no support infrastructure for civil society.	Score 0
There is very limited infrastructure for civil society.	Score 1
Support infrastructure exists for some sectors of civil society and is expanding.	Score 2
There is a well-developed support infrastructure for civil society.	Score 3

1.4.5 - International linkages
Description: What proportion of CSOs have international linkages (e.g. are members of international networks, participate in global events)?

Only a handful of "elite" CSOs have international linkages.	Score 0
A limited number of (mainly national-level) CSOs have international linkages.	Score 1
A moderate number of (mainly national-level) CSOs have international linkages.	Score 2

A significant number of CSOs from different sectors and different levels (grassroots to national) have international linkages.	Score 3

1.5 - Inter-relations
Description: **How strong / productive are relations among civil society actors?**
1.5.1 - Communication [25]
  Description: What is the extent of communication between CS actors?

Very little	Score 0
Limited	Score 1
Moderate	Score 2
Significant	Score 3

1.5.2 - Cooperation

Description: How much do CS actors cooperate with each other on issues of common concern? Can examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances/coalitions (around a specific issue or common concern) be identified?

CS actors do not cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. No examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances/coalitions can be identified / detected.	Score 0
It is very rare that CS actors cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Very few examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.	Score 1
CS actors on occasion cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Some examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.	Score 2
CS actors regularly cooperate with each other on issues of common concern. Numerous examples of cross-sectoral CSO alliances / coalitions can be identified / detected.	Score 3

1.6 - Resources
Description: **To what extent do CSOs have adequate resources to achieve their goals?**
1.6.1 - Financial resources
Description: How adequate is the level of financial resources for CSOs?

On average, CSOs suffer from a serious financial resource problem.	Score 0
On average, CSOs have inadequate financial resources to achieve their goals.	Score 1
On average, CSOs have most of the financial resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	Score 2
On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure financial resource base.	Score 3

1.6.2 - Human resources
Description: How adequate is the level of human resources for CSOs?

On average, CSOs suffer from a serious human resource problem.	Score 0
On average, CSOs have inadequate human resources to achieve their goals.	Score 1
On average, CSOs have most of the human resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	Score 2
On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure human resource base.	Score 3

1.6.3 - Technological and infrastructural resources
Description: How adequate is the level of technological and infrastructural resources for CSOs?

On average, CSOs suffer from a serious technological and infrastructural resource problem.	Score 0

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[25] Communication also includes information sharing between civil society actors.

On average, CSOs have inadequate technological and infrastructural resources to achieve their goals.	Score 1
On average, CSOs have most of the technological and infrastructural resources they require to achieve their defined goals.	Score 2
On average, CSOs have an adequate and secure technological and infrastructural resource base.	Score 3

2 - ENVIRONMENT [26]
2.1 - Political context
Description: **What is the political situation in the country and its impact on civil society?**

2.1.1 - Political rights
Description: How strong are the restrictions on citizens' political rights (e.g. to participate freely in political processes, elect political leaders through free and fair elections, freely organise in political parties)?

There are severe restrictions on the political rights of citizens. Citizens cannot participate in political processes.	Score 0
There are some restrictions on the political rights of citizens and their participation in political processes.	Score 1
Citizens are endowed with substantial political rights and meaningful opportunities for political participation. There are minor and isolated restrictions on the full freedom of citizens' political rights and their participation in political processes.	Score 2
People have the full freedom and choice to exercise their political rights and meaningfully participate in political processes.	Score 3

2.1.2 - Political competition
Description: What are the main characteristics of the party system in terms of number of parties, ideological spectrum, institutionalisation and party competition?

Single party system.	Score 0
Small number of parties based on personalism, clientelism or appealing to identity politics.	Score 1
Multiple parties, but weakly institutionalised and / or lacking ideological distinction.	Score 2
Robust, multi-party competition with well-institutionalised and ideologically diverse parties.	Score 3

2.1.3 - Rule of law
Description: To what extent is the rule of law entrenched in the country?

There is general disregard for the law by citizens and the state.	Score 0
There is low confidence in and frequent violations of the law by citizens and the state.	Score 1
There is a moderate level of confidence in the law. Violations of the law by citizens and the state are not uncommon.	Score 2
Society is governed by fair and predictable rules, which are generally abided by.	Score 3

2.1.4 - Corruption
Description: What is the level of perceived corruption in the public sector?

High	Score 0
Substantial	Score 1

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[26] For most of the indicators, secondary data sources are available for a broad range of countries. For each indicator, the scores indicate how to translate the original secondary data into the 4-point scale of the CSI scoring matrix.

Moderate	Score 2
Low	Score 3

2.1.5 - State effectiveness

Description: To what extent is the state able to fulfil its defined functions?

The state bureaucracy has collapsed or is entirely ineffective (e.g. due to political, economic or social crisis).	Score 0
The capacity of the state bureaucracy is extremely limited.	Score 1
State bureaucracy is functional but perceived as incompetent and / or non-responsive.	Score 2
State bureaucracy is fully functional and perceived to work in the public's interests.	Score 3

2.1.6 - Decentralisation

Description: To what extent is government expenditure devolved to sub-national authorities?

Sub-national share of government expenditure is less than 20.0%.	Score 0
Sub-national share of government expenditure is between 20.0% and 34.9%.	Score 1
Sub-national share of government expenditure is between 35.0% than 49.9%.	Score 2
Sub-national share of government expenditure is more than 49.9%.	Score 3

2.2 - Basic freedoms & rights

Description: **To what extent are basic freedoms ensured by law and in practice?**

2.2.1 - Civil liberties

Description: To what extent are civil liberties (e.g. freedom of expression, association, assembly) ensured by law and in practice?

Civil liberties are systematically violated.	Score 0
There are frequent violations of civil liberties.	Score 1
There are isolated or occasional violations of civil liberties.	Score 2
Civil liberties are fully ensured by law and in practice.	Score 3

2.2.2 - Information rights

Description: To what extent is public access to information guaranteed by law? How accessible are government documents to the public?

No laws guarantee information rights. Citizen access to government documents is extremely limited.	Score 0
Citizen access to government documents is limited but expanding.	Score 1
Legislation regarding public access to information is in place, but in practice, it is difficult to obtain government documents.	Score 2
Government documents are broadly and easily accessible to the public.	Score 3

2.2.3 - Press freedoms

Description: To what extent are press freedoms ensured by law and in practice?

Press freedoms are systematically violated.	Score 0
There are frequent violations of press freedoms.	Score 1
There are isolated violations of press freedoms.	Score 2
Freedom of the press is fully ensured by law and in practice.	Score 3

2.3 - Socio-economic context [27]

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[27] This sub-dimension/indicator is not broken up into individual indicators to facilitate and simplify scoring. The sub-dimension/indicator consists of 8 socio-economic conditions which are of importance to civil society. The scores for this indicator are designed in such a way that they indicate how many socio-economic obstacles are there for civil society (max: 8;

Description: **What is the socio-economic situation in the country and its impact on civil society?**

2.3.1 - Socio-economic context
Description: How much do socio-economic conditions in the country represent a barrier to the effective functioning of civil society?

Social & economic conditions represent a serious barrier to the effective functioning of civil society. More than five of the following conditions are present: 1. Widespread poverty (e.g. more than 40% of people live on $2 per day) 2. Civil war (armed conflict in last 5 years) 3. Severe ethnic and/or religious conflict 4. Severe economic crisis (e.g. external debt is more than GNP) 5. Severe social crisis (over last 2 years) 6. Severe socio-economic inequities (Gini coefficient > 0.4) 7. Pervasive adult illiteracy (over 40%) 8. Lack of IT infrastructure (i.e. less than 5 hosts per 10.000 inhabitants)	Score 0
Social & economic conditions significantly limit the effective functioning of civil society. Three, four or five of the conditions indicated are present.	Score 1
Social & economic conditions somewhat limit the effective functioning of civil society. One or two of the conditions indicated are present.	Score 2
Social & economic conditions do not represent a barrier to the effective functioning of civil society. None of the conditions indicated is present.	Score 3

2.4 - Socio-cultural context
Description: **To what extent are socio-cultural norms and attitudes conducive or detrimental to civil society?**

2.4.1 - Trust
Description: How much do members of society trust one another?

Relationships among members of society are characterised by mistrust (e.g. less than 10% of people score on the World Value Survey (WVS) trust indicator).	Score 0
There is widespread mistrust among members of society. (e.g. 10% to 30% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).	Score 1
There is a moderate level of trust among members of society. (e.g. 31% to 50% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).	Score 2
There is a high level of trust among members of society (e.g. more than 50% of people score on the WVS trust indicator).	Score 3

2.4.2 - Tolerance
Description: How tolerant are members of society?

Society is characterised by widespread intolerance (e.g. average score on WVS-derived tolerance indicator is 3.0 or higher).	Score 0
Society is characterised by a low level of tolerance (e.g. indicator between 2.0 and 2.9).	Score 1
Society is characterised by a moderate level of tolerance (e.g. indicator between 1.0 and 1.9).	Score 2
Society is characterised by a high level of tolerance (e.g. indicator less than 1.0).	Score 3

min: 0). The task for the NAG scoring meeting is to simply verify the number of obstacles (as identified by the secondary data) and assign the score accordingly.

2.4.3 - Public spiritedness [28]

Description: How strong is the sense of public spiritedness among members of society?

Very low level of public spiritedness in society (e.g. average score on WVS-derived public spiritedness indicator is more than 3.5)	Score 0
Low level of public spiritedness (e.g. indicator between 2.6 and 3.5)	Score 1
Moderate level of public spiritedness (e.g. indicator between 1.5 and 2.5)	Score 2
High level of public spiritedness. (e.g. indicator less than 1.5)	Score 3

2.5 - Legal environment

Description: **To what extent is the existing legal environment enabling or disabling to civil society?**

2.5.1 - CSO registration [29]

Description: How supportive is the CSO registration process? Is the process (1) simple, (2) quick, (3) inexpensive, (4) Following legal provisions (5) consistently applied?

The CSO registration process is not supportive at all. Four or five of the quality characteristics are absent.	Score 0
The CSO registration is not very supportive Two or three quality characteristics are absent.	Score 1
The CSO registration process can be judged as relatively supportive. One quality characteristic is absent.	Score 2
The CSO registration process is supportive. None of the quality characteristics is absent.	Score 3

2.5.2 - Allowable advocacy activities

Description: To what extent are CSOs free to engage in advocacy / criticise government?

CSOs are not allowed to engage in advocacy or criticise the government.	Score 0
There are excessive and / or vaguely defined constraints on advocacy activities.	Score 1
Constraints on CSOs' advocacy activities are minimal and clearly defined, such as prohibitions on political campaigning.	Score 2
CSOs are permitted to freely engage in advocacy and criticism of government.	Score 3

2.5.3 - Tax laws favourable to CSOs

Description: How favourable is the tax system to CSOs? How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that are eligible for tax exemptions, if any? How significant are these exemptions?

The tax system impedes CSOs. No tax exemption or preference of any kind is available for CSOs.	Score 0
The tax system is burdensome to CSOs. Tax exemptions or preferences are available only for a narrow range of CSOs (e.g. humanitarian organisations) or for limited sources of income (e.g., grants or donations).	Score 1
The tax system contains some incentives favouring CSOs. Only a narrow range of CSOs is excluded from tax exemptions or preferences and/or exemptions or preferences are available from some taxes and some activities.	Score 2
The tax system provides favourable treatment for CSOs. Exemptions or preferences are available from a range of taxes and for a range of activities, limited only in appropriate circumstances.	Score 3

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[28] The score is derived by averaging the means for the three variables (1. claiming government benefits, 2. avoiding a fare on public transport, 3. cheating on taxes).

[29] This indicator combines a number of individual quality characteristics of the registration, namely whether the registration is (1) simple, (2) quick, (3) inexpensive, (4) fairly applied and (5) consistently applied. The process of using these five 'Yes/No'-variables for the scoring of the CSO registration indicator by the NAG follows the process outlined for sub-dimension 3. The indicator scores are defined by how many of these five quality characteristics are existent/absent.

2.5.3. Tax benefits for philanthropy
Description: How broadly available are tax deductions or credits, or other tax benefits, to encourage individual and corporate giving?

No tax benefits are available (to individuals or corporations) for charitable giving.	Score 0
Tax benefits are available for a very limited set of purposes or types of organisations.	Score 1
Tax benefits are available for a fairly broad set of purposes or types of organisations.	Score 2
Significant tax benefits are available for a broad set of purposes or types of organisations.	Score 3

2.6 - State-civil society relations
Description: **What is the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the state?**
2.6.1 - Autonomy
Description: To what extent can civil society exist and function independently of the state? To what extent are CSOs free to operate without excessive government interference? Is government oversight reasonably designed and limited to protect legitimate public interests?

The state controls civil society.	Score 0
CSOs are subject to frequent unwarranted interference in their operations.	Score 1
The state accepts the existence of an independent civil society but CSOs are subject to occasional unwarranted government interference.	Score 2
CSOs operate freely. They are subject only to reasonable oversight linked to clear and legitimate public interests.	Score 3

2.6.2 - Dialogue
Description: To what extent does the state dialogue with civil society? How inclusive and institutionalized are the terms and rules of engagement, if they exist?

There is no meaningful dialogue between civil society and the state.	Score 0
The state only seeks to dialogue with a small sub-set of CSOs on an ad hoc basis.	Score 1
The state dialogues with a relatively broad range of CSOs but on a largely ad hoc basis.	Score 2
Mechanisms are in place to facilitate systematic dialogue between the state and a broad and diverse range of CSOs.	Score 3

2.6.3 - Cooperation / support
Description: How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that receive state resources (in the form of grants, contracts, etc.)?

The level of state resources channelled through CSOs is insignificant.	Score 0
Only a very limited range of CSOs receives state resources.	Score 1
A moderate range of CSOs receives state resources.	Score 2
The state channels significant resources to a large range of CSOs.	Score 3

2.7 - Private sector-civil society relations
Description: **What is the nature and quality of relations between civil society and the private sector?**
2.7.1 - Private sector attitude
Description: What is the general attitude of the private sector towards civil society actors?

Generally hostile	Score 0
Generally indifferent	Score 1

Generally positive	Score 2
Generally supportive	Score 3

2.7.2 - Corporate social responsibility
Description: How developed are notions and actions of corporate social responsibility?

Major companies show no concern about the social and environmental impacts of their operations.	Score 0
Major companies pay lip service to notions of corporate social responsibility. However, in their operations they frequently disregard negative social and environmental impacts.	Score 1
Major companies are beginning to take the potential negative social and environmental impacts of their operations into account.	Score 2
Major companies take effective measures to protect against negative social and environmental impacts.	Score 3

2.7.3 - Corporate philanthropy [30]
Description: How narrow/broad is the range of CSOs that receive support from the private sector?

Corporate philanthropy is insignificant.	Score 0
Only a very limited range of CSOs receives funding from the private sector.	Score 1
A moderate range of CSOs receives funding from the private sector.	Score 2
The private sector channels resources to a large range of CSOs.	Score 3

3 - VALUES
3.1 - Democracy
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote democracy?**
3.1.1 - Democratic practices within CSOs
Description: To what extent do CSOs practice internal democracy? How much control do members have over decision-making? Are leaders selected through democratic elections?

A large majority (i.e. more than 75%) of CSOs do not practice internal democracy (e.g. members have little / no control over decision-making, CSOs are characterised by patronage, nepotism).	Score 0
A majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 50%) do not practice internal democracy (e.g. members have little/no control over decision-making, CSOs are characterised by patronage, nepotism).	Score 1
A majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 50%) practice internal democracy (e.g. members have significant control over decision-making; leaders are selected through democratic elections).	Score 2
A large majority of CSOs (i.e. more than 75%) practice internal democracy (e.g. members have significant control over decision-making; leaders are selected through democratic elections).	Score 3

3.1.2 - CS actions to promote democracy
Description: How much does CS actively promote democracy at a societal level?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public	Score 2

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[30] The NAG's task in scoring the indicator is to assess the significance of corporate support to civil society. Here, the score descriptions focus on two elements: (1) the overall size of corporate support to civil society, (2) the range of CSOs supported by the corporate sector. Please note that both elements are combined in the indicator score descriptions.

visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking	
CS is a driving force in promoting a democratic society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

3.2 – Transparency
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote transparency?**
3.2.1 - Corruption within civil society
Description: How widespread is corruption within CS?

Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are very frequent.	Score 0
Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are frequent.	Score 1
There are occasional instances of corrupt behaviour within CS.	Score 2
Instances of corrupt behaviour within CS are very rare.	Score 3

3.2.2 - Financial transparency of CSOs
Description: How many CSOs are financially transparent? What percentage of CSOs make their financial accounts publicly available?

A small minority of CSOs (less than 30%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	Score 0
A minority of CSOs (30% -50%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	Score 1
A small majority of CSOs (51% -65%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	Score 2
A large majority of CSOs (more than 65%) make their financial accounts publicly available.	Score 3

3.2.3 - CS actions to promote transparency
Description: How much does CS actively promote government and corporate transparency?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and/or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in demanding government and corporate transparency. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

3.3 - Tolerance
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors and organisations practice and promote tolerance?**
3.3.1 Tolerance within the CS arena
Description: To what extent is CS a tolerant arena?

CS is dominated by intolerant forces. The expression of only a narrow sub-set of views is tolerated.	Score 0
Significant forces within civil society do not tolerate others' views without encountering protest from civil society at large.	Score 1
There are some intolerant forces within civil society, but they are isolated from civil society at large.	Score 2
Civil society is an open arena where the expression of *all* viewpoints is actively encouraged. Intolerant behaviour are strongly denounced by civil society at large.	Score 3

3.3.2 - CS actions to promote tolerance
Description: How much does CS actively promote tolerance at a societal level?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0

Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and/or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in promoting a tolerant society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

3.4 - Non-violence
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote non-violence?**
3.4.1 - Non-violence within the CS arena
Description: How widespread is the use of violent means (such as damage to property or personal violence) among CS actors to express their interests in the public sphere?

Significant mass-based groups within CS use violence as the primary means of expressing their interests.	Score 0
Some isolated groups within CS regularly use violence to express their interests without encountering protest from civil society at large.	Score 1
Some isolated groups within CS occasionally resort to violent actions, but are broadly denounced by CS at large.	Score 2
There is a high level of consensus within CS regarding the principle of non-violence. Acts of violence by CS actors are extremely rare and strongly denounced.	Score 3

3.4.2 - CS actions to promote non-violence and peace
Description: How much does CS actively promote a non-violent society? For example, how much does civil society support the non-violent resolution of social conflicts and peace? Address issues of violence against women, child abuse, violence among youths etc.?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions actually contribute to societal violence.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in promoting a non-violent society. CS actions in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility	Score 3

3.5 - Gender equity
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote gender equity?**
3.5.1 - Gender equity within the CS arena
Description: To what extent is civil society a gender equitable arena?

Women are excluded from civil society leadership roles.	Score 0
Women are largely absent from civil society leadership roles.	Score 1
Women are under-represented in civil society leadership positions.	Score 2
Women are equitably represented as leaders and members of CS.	Score 3

3.5.2 - Gender equitable practices within CSOs
Description: How much do CSOs practice gender equity? What percentage of CSOs with paid employees have policies in place to ensure gender equity?

A small minority (less than 20%).	Score 0
A minority (20%-50%).	Score 1
A small majority (51% - 65%).	Score 2
A large majority (more than 65%).	Score 3

3.5.3 - CS actions to promote gender equity
Description: How much does CS actively promote gender equity at the societal level?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions actually contribute to gender inequity.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in promoting a gender equitable society. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

3.6 - Poverty eradication
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors promote poverty eradication?**
3.6.1 - CS actions to eradicate poverty
Description: To what extent does CS actively seek to eradicate poverty?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions serve to sustain existing economic inequities.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in the struggle to eradicate poverty. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

3.7 - Environmental sustainability
Description: **To what extent do civil society actors practice and promote environmental sustainability?**

3.7.1 - CS actions to sustain the environment
Description: How much does CS actively seek to sustain the environment?

No active role. No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected. Some CS actions serve to reinforce unsustainable practices.	Score 0
Only a few CS activities in this area can be detected. Their visibility is low and these issues are not attributed much importance by CS as a whole.	Score 1
A number of CS activities in this area can be detected. Broad-based support and / or public visibility of such initiatives, however, are lacking.	Score 2
CS is a driving force in protecting the environment. CS activities in this area enjoy broad-based support and / or strong public visibility.	Score 3

4 - IMPACT
4.1 - Influencing public policy [31]
Description: **How active and successful is civil society in influencing public policy?**
4.1.1 - 4.1.2 - Human Rights & Social Policy Impact Case Studies
Description: How active and successful is civil society in influencing public policy?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can	Score 3

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[31] For a detailed description on the data sources and analysis of this sub-dimension, please refer to Section 3 of Part D.3 of the toolkit.

be detected.	

4.1.3 - Civil Society's Impact on National Budgeting process Case Study
Description: How active and successful is civil society in influencing the overall national budgeting process?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and focused only on specific budget components [32].	Score 1
Civil society is active in the overall budgeting process, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role in the overall budgeting process. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.2 - Holding state & private corporations accountable
Description: **How active and successful is civil society in holding the state and private corporations accountable**?
4.2.1 - Holding state accountable
Description: How active and successful is civil society in monitoring state performance and holding the state accountable?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.2.2 - Holding private corporations accountable
Description: How active and successful is civil society in holding private corporations accountable?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.3 - Responding to social interests
Description: **How much are civil society actors responding to social interests?**
4.3.1 - Responsiveness
Description: How effectively do civil society actors respond to priority social concerns?

Civil society actors are out of touch with the crucial concerns of the population.	Score 0
There are frequent examples of crucial social concerns that did not find a voice among existing civil society actors.	Score 1
There are isolated examples of crucial social concerns that did not find a voice among existing civil society actors.	Score 2
Civil society actors are very effective in taking up the crucial concerns of the population.	Score 3

4.3.2 - Public Trust
Description: What percentage of the population has trust in civil society actors?

A small minority (< 25%).	Score 0

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[32] The term "specific budget component" refers to a single issue or sub-section of the budget, such as the defence budget or welfare grants. Higher scores are assigned for those civil society activities, which provide an analysis, input and advocacy work on the *overall* budget.

A large minority (25% - 50%).	Score 1
A small majority (51% – 75%).	Score 2
A large majority (> 75%).	Score 3

4.4 - Empowering citizens
Description: **How active and successful is civil society in empowering citizens, especially traditionally marginalised groups, to shape decisions that affect their lives?**

4.4.1 - Informing/ educating citizens
Description: How active and successful is civil society in informing and educating citizens on public issues?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.4.2 - Building capacity for collective action
Description: How active and successful is civil society in building the capacity of people to organise themselves, mobilise resources and work together to solve common problems?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.4.3 - Empowering marginalised people
Description: How active and successful is civil society in empowering marginalised people?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.4.4 - Empowering women
Description: How active and successful is civil society in empowering women, i.e. to give them real choice and control over their lives?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.4.5 - Building social capital [33]

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[33] To score this indicator, we make use of the three measures of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness (see sub-dimension socio-cultural norms in ENVIRONMENT dimension).:
1) Compute the three measures for two sub-groups of the population: (1) CSO members and (2) non-CSO members.
2) Compare each measure's score for the two sub-groups and establish which sub-group has the better score (i.e. indicating higher trust, tolerance and public spiritedness). If the score for CSO members is better than for non-CSO members, it indicates that civil society is contributing to the production of civil society. If the score is worse, it indicates that the involvement in CSOs is making it more unlikely for citizens to generate norms of social capital.
3) Please note that for some of the three indicators, civil society might add to, for others, it might diminish social capital. For the scoring of the indicator the overall picture is important.

Description: To what extent does civil society build social capital among its members? How do levels of trust, tolerance and public spiritedness of members of CS compare to those of non-members?

Civil society diminishes the stock of social capital in society.	Score 0
Civil society does not contribute to building social capital in society.	Score 1
Civil society does contribute moderately to building social capital in society.	Score 2
Civil Society does contribute strongly to building social capital in society.	Score 3

4.4.6 - Supporting livelihoods
Description: How active and successful is civil society in creating / supporting employment and/or income-generating opportunities (especially for poor people and women)?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.5 - Meeting societal needs
Description: **How active and successful is civil society in meeting societal needs, especially those of poor people and other marginalised groups?**
4.5.1 - Lobbying for state service provision
Description: How active and successful is civil society in lobbying the government to meet pressing societal needs?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.5.2 - Meeting pressing societal needs directly
Description: How active and successful is civil society in directly meeting pressing societal needs (through service delivery or the promotion of self-help initiatives)?

No CS activity of any consequence in this area can be detected.	Score 0
CS activity in this area is very limited and there is no discernible impact.	Score 1
Civil society is active in this area, but impact is limited.	Score 2
Civil society plays an important role. Examples of significant success / impact can be detected.	Score 3

4.5.3 - Meeting needs of marginalised groups
Description: To what extent are CSOs more or less effective than the state in delivering services to marginalised groups?

CSOs are less effective than the state.	Score 0
CSOs are as effective as the state.	Score 1
CSOs are slightly more effective than the state.	Score 2
CSOs are significantly more effective than the state.	Score 3

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