

CIVICUS Civil Society Index

A Summary of the Fiji CSI Project Evaluation

Background: Purpose and Objective

This evaluation provides CIVICUS and Fiji Council of Civil Services (FCOSS), the CSI country partner in Fiji with an assessment of the implementation of the Civil Society Index project. It is hoped that the evaluation will be used to generate lessons that will inform current and future phases of the project as well as the final global evaluation undertaken by CIVICUS. It is also expected that FCOSS will gain out of this evaluation through a process of self-reflection as well as gauging any important lessons learned. The evaluation might also help to develop strategies for future civil society strengthening initiatives.

The evaluation attempted to assess the outputs and outcomes of the project as developed by FCOSS and CIVICUS. Besides, it also assessed the project against other key criteria, such as relevance, validity, participation, capacity building, CIVICUS assistance, and sustainability, effective use of project resources, unintended changes and early impacts.

The evaluation included a mix of self-assessment surveys by the project partners as well as their evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of the project. The report was shared with the country partner and a final phone call was organised to discuss the evaluation and next steps. This document presents a brief summary of the key findings.

Key Findings

Project Outputs

A body of knowledge on the state of civil society and civil society strengthening practices at national level.

According to the FCOSS, this output has been mostly achieved.

Shared understanding of the state of civil society among a broad range of stakeholders

For the NCO, this output has been mostly achieved.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

This output merited a mostly achieved rating from the FCOSS.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society

For the NCO, this output has been mostly achieved.

Outcomes

Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders

For the NCO, this outcome has been fairly achieved. The action agenda that was agreed and identified in the CSI National Workshop have been fairly implemented.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development

The NCO reported that this outcome has been mostly achieved.

Increased receptiveness/openness of civil society by external stakeholders

This outcome has been mostly achieved.

Project Relevance

How relevant is the project for NAG, civil society, the FCOSS and other stakeholders in the country? The CSI project, based on the evaluation, has been mostly relevant to the work of the NCO.

Project Validity

- a) **Secondary data review.** NCO gave this indicator a fairly accurate rating.
- b) **Social Forces Analysis.** The NCO gave this indicator a fairly accurate rating.
- c) **Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations.** The NCO gave a mostly and fairly accurate rating because “the stakeholder consultations involved a wide range of organisations involved in different sectors of the economy and society located in different parts of the country.” The NCO member further commented that “the consultation of stakeholders to gather views/perceptions additional to those gathered through the questionnaire guided survey was not as widespread as desired due to travel difficulties and therefore the omission of isolated rural communities and information on traditional communal structures.”
- d) **Media review.** The NCO gave this indicator a fairly accurate rating.
- e) **Fact finding studies** (policy impact, corporate social responsibility). The NCO gave this indicator a fairly accurate rating.
- f) **NAG scoring exercise.** The NCO gave between fairly and mostly accurate ratings. An NCO member explained that “the choice of the National Advisory Group was representative of main NGOs.”

Capacity Building

With regard to capacities or skills acquired by the NCO team members during the CSI project’s implementation, an NCO member indicated that the training and facilitation skills of the staff were “sharpened.” The staff did not acquire additional skills in conducting research as they hired experienced researchers while convening/networking is the usual function of the FCOSS, thus, doing some of the CSI activities did not really affect some of their skills.

Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance and overall implementation

According to the NCO, they were somewhat satisfied with the assistance provided by CIVICUS.

With regard to systems and procedures, one member of the NCO said that it is somewhat satisfactory. According to an NCO member, “CIVICUS changed the template several times, which made it more complicated for the NCO.”

While one member of the NCO gave a fairly satisfactory rating to the guidance received from the toolkit. The same member reported that the support provided by CIVICUS for their fundraising activities was “too little, too late.”

Based on the perspective of a CIVICUS member, “the preparation of the final report was a very long procedure and communication during that time was sporadic, thus leaving the CSP with a lot of question marks as regards the process.”

Another observation expressed by a CIVICUS member is that “the NCO complained about the lengthy process of the report finalisation. They wanted to finish the report in their own time and did not see the valuable part of having CSI proofread as well as edit the final report.”

Project Resources

Financial Resources

Based on the evaluation, fundraising has been the major challenge, which delayed the project. An NCO member believed that there should be more funding to conduct the rest of CSI activities and involve more stakeholders.

Human Resources

A CIVICUS member explained that “the person I had contact with (PC) was very nice and made a good impression in terms of being able to handle project. Only problem was communication – very sporadic.”

Time

The general assessment of the NCO is that the time allocated in implementing the activities is somewhat adequate, although more time should be spent in facilitating more interactive activities with the stakeholders.

Conclusion:

Completing the CSI project has been a challenge for both the NCO in Fiji and the CIVICUS team. At some point, communication had been very sporadic which caused further delay to the project. However, the results of the evaluation suggested that both parties were made aware of each other’s shortcomings and agreed that there are aspects of the methodology and other project components that need to be improved for the next phase.