CIVICUS Civil Society Index Project

Summary of Germany Evaluation Report

**Background: Purpose and Objective**

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide CIVICUS and the Maecenata Institute with an assessment of the implementation of the Civil Society Index project in Germany. The findings of 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 hoped that Maecenata Institute will also gain out of this evaluation through the process of self reflection as well as gauging any important lessons learned.

The specific overall objectives of the evaluation is to assess the project’s success against the original outcomes and outputs set forth in the planning phase by Maecenata Institute. Besides the outputs and outcomes, the evaluation has assessed the project against other criteria, including relevance, validity, participation, capacity building, CIVICUS assistance, sustainability, project resources and early signs of impact.

**Key Findings**

*Project Outputs*

A body of knowledge on the state of civil society

According to the NCO this output was endowed with the highest priority and was mostly been achieved. Overall the NCO and CIVICUS disagree in their assessment of the Country Report; Maecenata Institute indicated complete satisfaction with the document, while CIVICUS was only somewhat satisfied.
Shared understanding on the state of civil society among a broad range of stakeholders
This output perceived by the NCO as having the lowest priority is stated to be mostly achieved. The NCO considers that it is however too early to say whether shared understanding on the state of civil society among a broad range of stakeholders was generated.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society
According to the NCO this output was somewhat achieved. The rationale is that it is still too early to be able to assessed.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society
This output has been somewhat achieved. The consultative activities within the project mostly helped to provide a space for civil society and stakeholders to debate and share information on issues concerning civil society in Germany. According to the Maecenata Institute these consultations have also resulted in cooperation between stakeholders beyond the CSI project. This is however not necessarily causal of the CSI project as the selected stakeholders have already had a history of cooperation. It is also noted that the term civil society has been increasing in importance in Germany with both Gerhard Schroeder and Angela Merkel mentioning the term in their election debates and campaigns.

Project Outcomes
Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders
The NCO considers this high priority outcome as somewhat achieved. They however are of the opinion that it is still much too early to assess whether there has been an increase in knowledge-based actions by civil society stakeholders. It is to be noted that according to CIVICUS that the potential of framing the research in order to affect policy was not fully utilized, nor were the participatory aspects of the CSI, e.g. convening stakeholders in Regional Stakeholder Consultations; summoning diverse stakeholders for a National Workshop. In this sense the actual objective for Maecenata Institute to implement the CSI is not very clear.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development
This outcome was assessed as somewhat achieved. It is considered too early to be fully assessed.

Increased openness to civil society by external stakeholders (eg. Government, donors, business
According to the NCO, this outcome has also been fairly achieved. It is considered too early to be fully assessed.

Other Criteria
Project Relevance
The project was considered to be completely relevant to the work of the Maecenata Institute. According to the NCO, the project is only fairly relevant in the perception of other CSOs for the strengthening of civil society in Germany. The project is also only
considered to be somewhat relevant for external stakeholders, such as the government, the media, donors, etc.

Project Validity
In general terms, the NCO exercised criticism over the methodology of the CSI, and in particular the indicators. In their view the indicators, the semantic validity and the measuring instrument (Reimer 2004) were not entirely clear. “Empirical validity might be questionable if it is aimed at measuring the state of civil society instead of measuring the estimation by civil society actors concerning the state of civil society”. In the case of Germany two National Advisory Groups were convened and scored the indicators separately, registering slightly different scores for the structure dimension. A further challenge the NCO registered during the NAG scoring meeting was that definition of indicators and what exactly is to be evaluated. The scores themselves were also considered problematic as in Maecenata Institute’s view, they were not definitive enough.

Participation
The participation within the project occurred mostly through the meetings of the SACs (NAGs). The SAC members were very involved and discussed political goals and it was productive. The country report was also widely disseminated and presented to several stakeholders e.g. Federal Network of CSOs while the Project Coordinator has also given lectures at the Hamburg University on the topic.

Capacity Building
Maecenata Institute does not perceive that any capacities were built during the implementation of the project as they were deemed to be already existent prior to the CSI’s implementation

Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance
CIVICUS’ assistance was overall assessed as fairly satisfactory, including the systems and procedures in place and the CSPs assistance. The toolkit was considered mostly satisfactory in terms of the guidance it provided.

Sustainability/ Replicability
The NCO suggests that once the project methodology is reviewed the CSI should be implemented again in Germany. This would however depend on available funds and a strong counterpart. At this stage Maecenata Institute would most likely not coordinate a next phase of the CSI implementation.

Project Resources
Financial and human resources were considered as mostly satisfactory by the NCO. It was sensed by CIVICUS that the project coordinator lacked the support from the rest of the NCO in terms of strategizing about the specific purpose of the CSI in the German context. It was considered by CIVICUS that the CSE (same as project coordinator) could have given the final report a stronger “practice-oriented/ policy-oriented interpretation of recommendations”.

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Short/Long Term Impact
No impacts registered as of yet.