CIVICUS Civil Society Index
A Summary of the Ghanaian CSI Project Evaluation

Background: Purpose and Objective

This evaluation provides CIVICUS and the Ghana Association of Private Voluntary Organisations in Development (GAPVOD), the CSI country partner in Ghana 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 GAPVOD will gain out of this evaluation through the 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 GAPVOD 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.

This output, was evaluated by both GAPVOD and CIVICUS as completely achieved because GAPVOD was able to generate a report that ‘provides a lot of information about civil society in Ghana.’ Overall, both CIVICUS and GAPVOD are mostly satisfied with the quality of the country report. For GAPVOD, the country report completely provides comprehensive and accurate information on the state of civil society in Ghana because it was the first time that such a ‘complete’ assessment has been undertaken. ‘The fact that the CSI looks at the ‘uncivil’ aspects of civil society, makes it really comprehensive (GAPVOD). The report was also rated as completely relevant to organisations that work to strengthen the civil society in Ghana. ‘The structure dimension…gives enough information about the weaknesses inherent in Ghanaian civil society and also useful suggestions about what needs to be done to provide some healing.’ (GAPVOD).

Shared understanding of the state of civil society among a broad range of stakeholders
This output was assessed by GAPVOD as fairly achieved because ‘the process was still ongoing in Ghana.’ GAPVOP hoped that by the time the publication is finally launched, they would be able to achieve a complete understanding of the state of civil society in Ghana.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

The evaluation reveals that this output was somewhat achieved because the action-agendas have not been followed up as it was still too early and they were yet to complete other project activities by the time of the evaluation.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society

According to GAPVOD, this output was completely achieved. The CSI processes provided forums for practitioners and academics to share relevant ideas and experiences about civil society. There were many consultations and networking opportunities between different stakeholders created in the process of CSI implementation and these consultations resulted into cooperation between them. Examples include the various stakeholder consultations, NAG meetings and the national workshop.

Outcomes

Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders

GAPVOD evaluated this outcome as fairly achieved even though the process was still underway in Ghana. However, there are as yet, no examples to show that stakeholders (governments, donors, researchers, media etc.) were making use of the CSI findings in to acquire information on civil society. GAPVOD explained that they had not been able to follow-up effectively, because they are still concentrating their efforts to getting the report done. However, there were high expectations that ‘there would be numerous examples of actors’ referring to the CSI in justifying certain proposed policies and actions in the future and they already noted that, ‘the UNDP was in the process of establishing a Civil Society Resource Centre equipped with ICT and other facilities for use by CSOs.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development

GAPVOD cannot rate the outcome of this outcome. GAPVOD cannot as yet, provide examples to show that the CSI project contributed to an (increased) voice of CSOs in governance and development

Increased receptivity of civil society by external stakeholders

GAPVOD assessed this outcome as not at all achieved. GAPVOD explained that they were yet to record any sign to show that the CSO project contributed to greater openness to external stakeholders.

Project Relevance
How relevant is the project for NAG, civil society, the GAPVOD and other stakeholders in the country?

GAPVOD evaluated the project as completely relevant to their work because their ‘primary aim is to facilitate qualitative growth of civil society and its contribution to the development of the country. Towards this end, CSI proved to be a very useful and timely tool.’ The project was also evaluated as completely relevant to civil society strengthening in Ghana. GAPVOD held that ‘all CSOs, academics, experts and practitioners consulted during the implementation of the CSI saw the project not only as relevant, but very timely for the strengthening of civil society in Ghana.’

Project Validity

a) Secondary data review was evaluated by both CIVICUS and GAPVOD as mostly able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Ghana.

b) Social Forces Analysis at 1st NAG meeting was evaluated as somewhat (GAPVOD), and mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Ghana. For the NCO, the ‘SFA was too much based on the views of NAG members and their understanding of the situation and they could be wrong in some cases.’

c) Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations were evaluated as completely (GAPVOD), and fairly to mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

d) Community Survey was evaluated as fairly to mostly (CIVICUS) and mostly to completely (GAPVOD) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

e) Media review was evaluated as somewhat to fairly (GAPVOD), and mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

f) Fact finding studies (policy impact, corporate social responsibility) were evaluated as somewhat (GAPVOD), and fairly to mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

g) NAG scoring exercise. Both GAPVOD and CIVICUS assessed the NAG scoring exercise as mostly able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

h) National Workshop was seen as fairly to mostly (CIVICUS) and fairly (GAPVOD) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Ghana.

Project Participation

According to GAPVOD, a wide range of participatory methods were used during the CSI implementation process.

Capacity Building

According to GAPVOD, they were able to gain capacities in research and other skills specifically in secondary data gathering, data analysis & interpretation, and report writing. They also gained skills in training and facilitation.
**Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance and overall implementation**

According to GAPVOD, CIVICUS by and large provided complete and adequate support in the entire project implementation. In their words, the NCO, in addition to the support provided for all NCOs, they received fund raising support. GAPVOD is also mostly satisfied with the systems and procedures put in place for the assistance of NCOs in the implementation of the project. The NCO was also completely satisfied with the toolkit as well as with the CSP support and fund raising for the project. To them, fund raising was the area of support found to be particularly helpful.

CIVICUS on the other hand was mostly satisfied with the overall implementation undertaken by the NCO. CIVICUS noted that the NCO did a good job in the implementation and included various stakeholders. CIVICUS is fairly satisfied with the systems and procedures put in place by the NCOs in the implementation of the project.

**Sustainability/Replicability**

The NCO held that given a chance, and with available funding, they would implement CSI again in Ghana after a year. The CSI has very much informed current and future programmes of the NCO. 'We intend to build and strengthen capacities in areas that the CSI found to be weak in the Ghanaian CSOs' (GAPVOD).

**Project Resources**

Financial Resources

According to GAPVOD they had fairly sufficient financial resources to successfully implement the project. However, the actual costs were in many cases higher than as estimated.

Human Resources

GAPVOD rated the human resources available to successfully implement the project as fairly adequate while CIVICUS felt the NCO had mostly adequate staff. CIVICUS is mostly satisfied with the work done by the project coordinator as well as by the participatory researcher. Both GAPVOD and CIVICUS are fairly satisfied with the work undertaken by the civil society expert (CSE). CIVICUS is mostly satisfied with the work done by the PR while GAPVOD was fairly satisfied with the work undertaken by the PR.

Time

GAPVOD assessed the time available for the implementation of the project as completely sufficient even though they did not meet the timelines, it was however clear to them that the project could not go beyond a certain time period. CIVICUS on the other hand evaluated the time allocated for the implementation of the project as mostly sufficient, 'given the pace and trajectory of the Ghana team from early on. However, the illness suffered by the CSE did throw this timeline into a stand still.'
Short/Long Term Impact

Unintended changes
According to the NCO, the UNDP was in the process of establishing a Civil Society Resource Centre equipped with ICT and other facilities for use by CSOs. Even though the establishment of the Centre was not directly connected to the CSI, it is important to note that the Centre will be used to build the capacities of CSOs based on the identified weaknesses of CS and the various recommendations made by CSI. GAPVOD will play a leading role in the running of the Resource Centre.

Conclusion
Even though the implementation is nearing completion and not all outcomes and outputs could be evaluated generally, most output and outcomes besides relevance received a mostly fair assessment from both CIVICUS and the NCO. The CSI implementation in Ghana although challenging for want of resources is anticipated to yield to greater benefits for the civil society in Ghana. It would be interesting to make a follow-up on the proposed action agenda in the future.