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

Background: Purpose and Objective

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide CIVICUS and Centro Hondureño de Promocion Para el Desarrollo Comunitario (CEHPRODEC) with an assessment of the implementation of the Civil Society Index (CSI) project in Honduras. 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 CEHPRODEC will also gain out of this evaluation through the process of self reflection as well as gauging any important lessons learned.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

Overall: To assess the project’s success against the original outcomes and outputs set forth in the planning phase by CEHPRODEC and CIVICUS. It should be noted that many outcomes will only become visible in the future and therefore will be evaluated in more depth at a later date. Therefore, in this evaluation, planned outcomes have been assessed against any relevant preliminary changes taking place due to the project.

Project Outputs

A body of knowledge on the state of civil society and civil society strengthening practices

According to the CEHPRODEC this output has been mostly achieved. The NCO explained that the discussions held during the CSI process have allowed them to create an important body of knowledge on civil society in Honduras. However, the most important outcome of this process is that the discussions will not stopped with the CSI, as they have more questions than answers.

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

This output was a second priority for the NCO. For CEHPRODEC, this output has been mostly achieved. They held that the CSI process resulted in further knowledge and understanding about the state of civil society, but that there is still a lot that needs to be understood and researched, since this initial step is relatively broad in scope.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

According to CEHPRODEC, this output was completely achieved. Two immediate strategies were developed for strengthening civil society. First, some international NGOs have begun disseminating the CSI findings to various areas of the country. Second, as a result of the CSI, CEHPRODEC is beginning to do research on CSOs transparency issues, as part of a collective project undertaken by seven other Latin America countries.
Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society

According to CEHPRODEC, this output has been mostly achieved. The NCO held that spaces to share information were created during the NAG and stakeholder consultations. At the time of writing this evaluation, the NCO was not sure if these discussions had continued after the CSI process.

Outcomes

The NCO did not rank the priority of their outcomes, however they did comment on some of the outcomes.

1. Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders:

According to CEHPRODEC this outcome was mostly achieved. The NCO recognized that civil society directors are united in their goals both in terms of research and action, and that these shared goals and activities have generated the general acceptance of the CSI project in Honduras. CEHPRODEC has been visited and interviewed by researchers, both national and international, regarding the state of civil society, and have also been invited to present at different forums regarding the promotion of education, values, and democracy in Honduras and Honduran civil society. However, the NCO also recognized that in all cases it is too early to know whether this outcome will continue to be achieved after the report is published. Additionally, the NCO noted that the action agenda agreed upon in the National Workshop has been fairly achieved. The NCO noted that it was difficult to develop a concrete clear action agenda during the National Workshop.

2. Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development:

In the opinion of CEHPRODEC this output was fairly achieved. However, the NCO noted that it was difficult to evaluate this.

3. Increased openness to civil society by external stakeholders (e.g. government, donors, business):

This output was somewhat achieve, although the NCO felt that it is too early to evaluate the full results of this outcome.

Project Relevance

Relevance of the CSI to the work of the NCO
CEHPRODEC evaluated the project as completely relevant to their work.

Relevance of the CSI to civil society strengthening in Ecuador
The evaluation found the project to be completely relevant to civil society strengthening in Ecuador. FE held that “that the CSI is a powerful tool for long term planning and defining strategies. However, since the country report is not yet published, it is not possible to assess how relevant CSOs will perceive the CSI in strengthening civil society.
Relevance to external stakeholders
According to the NCO, this was evaluated as fairly relevant.

Project Validity

Overall, the NCO held that ‘in terms of gathering new data (through the CSI methodology), it was good, but not excellent because the surveys could have been better and more broadly distributed; the CSR study needs to be examined again, as it is not very thorough. But the other data gathering activities were excellent.’ The following is a summary of the assessment of various methodologies and processes used to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Honduras

1. **Secondary data review** was evaluated by CEHPRODEC as mostly able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Honduras. For CIVICUS, the secondary data review was fairly able to generate relevant and accurate data on civil society in Honduras.

2. **Social Forces Analysis at 1st NAG meeting** was evaluated by the NCO as between somewhat to mostly to completely able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Honduras.

3. **Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations** were evaluated by the NCO as between fairly to completely able to generate accurate information on the state of civil society in Honduras. On the other hand CIVICUS evaluated the Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations as mostly able to achieve its goals.

4. **Community Survey** was evaluated as completely and mostly (CEHPRODEC) and mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate information on the state of civil society in Honduras.

5. **Fact finding studies (policy impact, corporate social responsibility)** were evaluated by both CEHPRODEC as mostly and somewhat generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Honduras. Meanwhile, CIVICUS evaluated it this as mostly effective.

6. **NAG scoring exercise**. According to the NCO, the NAG scoring exercise was mostly to completely able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Honduras. CIVICUS evaluated this as mostly effective in generating data.

7. **National Workshop** was evaluated by the NCO as fairly, somewhat, and completely able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Honduras. Meanwhile CIVICUS evaluated this as completely effective.

Project Participation

According to the CEHPRODEC, all participatory methods included in the CSI toolkit were included. The only exception was the Social Forces Analysis Map because there was not enough time to meet with NAG and include it in the final submission.

The NCO observed that the Regional Stakeholder Consultations (RSCs) and Community Survey worked best. The RSC was particularly successful and it involved a 2-3 day meeting with the participants. On the other hand, the NCO also noted that the NAG meetings did not go as well as planned. According to the NCO, the NAG meetings
‘should have been more participatory’ and therefore did not yield the expected results.

**Capacity Building**

According to CEPRODEC, they were able to gain capacities in various research skills, such as secondary data gathering, participatory research methods, quantitative survey research methods, data analysis and interpretation, as well as report writing. They also gained skills in training and facilitation, and in convening and networking.

However, the NCO held that there should be more facilitation training provided by CIVICUS so that they are better equipped to handle contradictory or opposing statements by the participants and to manage the meetings and workshops more effectively.

**Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance and overall implementation**

CEPRODEC is mostly satisfied with the overall assistance provided by CIVICUS. The NCO also noted that the later part of CIVICUS’ assistance was very vigorous and productive. However, during this period the NCO would have also benefited from additional funding, as there were very tight budget for the last phase of activities, particularly the National Workshop.

The NCO was also mostly satisfied with the systems and procedures put in place for the assistance of NCOs in the implementation of the project. In this regard, the NCO noted that it would have been better if there were fewer changes during the process.

CEPRODEC was also mostly satisfied with the guidance received from the CSI toolkit. The NCO was somewhat satisfied with CIVICUS support on fund raising for the project. However, the NCO held that ‘CIVICUS support in this area was very poor’.

**Sustainability/Replicability**

The NCO held that they wished to implement CSI again in Honduras in two year’s time. The NCO also noted that the CSI project has informed their current programme activities, although they have not observed any major changes as of yet.

**Project Resources**

**Financial Resources**

CEPRODEC assessed the financial resources available to them to successfully implement the project as fairly adequate. The NCO also held that the resources were very limited and that it ended up using its own resources and relying on volunteers to complete the CSI project. The NCO also noted that they were unable to stay within the budgeted costs.

**Human Resources**
CEHPRODEC rated the human resources available to successfully implement the project as mostly adequate. They however noted that specialized resources are scarce in Honduras.

CIVICUS is mostly satisfied with the human resources available for the project. Moreover, CIVICUS noted that ‘the NCO had a very competent IT person which made processes, involving databases, very easy and fluid for CIVICUS since the data would have been input and interpreted correctly (from SPSS and Access)’.

Both CEHPRODEC and CIVICUS are fairly satisfied by the civil society expert. The NCO held that the civil society expert was not contracted throughout the whole process due to the lack of funds and the relatively high fee charged by the civil society expert. Therefore, the time that the civil society expert spent with the team was insufficient. CIVICUS also observed that ‘the writing style was rather complex and convoluted and made the review process of the Country Report rather difficult’. CIVICUS is mostly satisfied with the Project Coordinator who was more responsive during the end of the project.

Time
Both CIVICUS and CEHPRODEC assessed the time available for the implementation of the project as mostly sufficient. The NCO held that ‘the time was sufficient, but this was subject to the way that the funding was dispersed. There was also a lot of pressure from CIVICUS to finish the project near the end’.

Conclusion:
The NCO and CIVICUS are mostly satisfied with the CSI process in Honduras. While CEHPRODEC noted the difficulties in fundraising for the project and working with the timelines for the CSI, they also recognized the importance of the CSI process, and that the consultations and participation that were initiated during the CSI process will continue after the project official ends. The NCO also noted that the diversity of the population and the broad scope of the CSI process made it difficult to capture the true essence of civil society, but at least the CSI process and outcomes are a step in the right direction. The majority of the research methods were implemented and yield positive results, and two concrete strategies were developed for implementation by civil society in Honduras, including information dissemination and transparency issues research. Some of the restrictions experienced by the NCO were related to budgetary constraints, both in terms of human resources and organizing activities related to the CSI process. CIVICUS was mostly pleased and satisfied with the team in Honduras and the systems set up by the team, particularly towards the end of the CSI process.