

CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI)

A Summary of the Jamaica CSI Project Evaluation

Background: Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide CIVICUS and Association of Development Agencies (ADA), the CSI National Coordinating Organisation (NCO) with an assessment of the implementation of the Civil Society Index project in Jamaica. 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 ADA will also 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 outcomes and outputs the project as developed by ADA and CIVICUS. Besides, it also assessed the project against other key criteria, such as relevance, validity, participation, CIVICUS assistance, sustainability, the 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 has been mostly achieved, though ADA has concerns over their ability to effectively disseminate the report due to lack of funds. For the NCO, the Report mostly provides comprehensive, accurate, and relevant information on the state of civil society in Jamaica. CIVICUS on the other hand rated the report as somewhat providing comprehensive information, noting that in their opinion, ‘the amount and credibility of the data is rather weak’ although the Report is good generally.

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

This output was assessed by ADA as mostly achieved. This assessment was based on the fact that most CSOs got a chance to learn more about each other, and through that, a common sense of mission was felt. Indeed, it was felt that some of the participating organizations were unaware of the history of CSOs in the country, something they learnt in the process.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society developed

ADA evaluated this output as mostly achieved.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society within participating countries as well as cross-nationally

This output was assessed by ADA as mostly achieved. ADA noted that ‘this was the first time that most CSOs said that they had interfaced with so many diverse groups in a single sitting to discuss and analyse CSO issues.’

Project Outcomes

Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders

According to ADA, this outcome has been fairly achieved. They did note, however, that the report has so far only been shared with CSI participants but not yet with any external parties. Once it has been published by CIVICUS, ADA will release the report. They also noted that the action agenda identified and agreed upon during the CSI National Workshop has not yet been implemented.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development

ADA assessed this outcome as not at all achieved. No comments were provided.

Increased receptivity of civil society by external stakeholders

This outcome was evaluated as not at all achieved. No comments were provided

Project Relevance

According to the NCO, the project was mostly relevant to their work. ADA noted that being ‘one of the oldest CSOs in Jamaica focusing on development ...and sits on a number of public sector and international development donors committees and boards [...]’ the release of the report would enhance their ‘reputation as a reliable source of information on CSOs in Jamaica.’

ADA held that the project was perceived by other CSOs as mostly relevant to the work of civil society strengthening. However, the NCO indicated that even ‘although CSOs said the project was relevant most believed that it will not change significantly the attitude or response from government and the private sector.’

Project Validity

The evaluation reflected that the project provides a somewhat accurate assessment and description of Jamaican civil society. There were challenges surrounding time (the data

was collected in 2004 and may now be irrelevant or at least out of date) and methodology.

- a) **Secondary data review** was evaluated as mostly (ADA), and somewhat (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate data/information on the state of the civil society in Jamaica. CIVICUS noted that there were few resources reviewed.
- b) **Social Forces Analysis at 1st NAG meeting** was assessed as having been fairly to mostly (ADA) and fairly (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate assessment of the state of the civil society in Jamaica. CIVICUS stated that considering that it was done in 2004, it might be outdated by now.
- c) **Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations** were evaluated as between fairly to mostly (ADA) and somewhat (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Jamaica. CIVICUS was of the view that that few stakeholders were interviewed.
- d) **Community Survey** was evaluated as between fairly (ADA) and somewhat (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate data/information about the state of the civil society in Jamaica.
- e) **Media review:** Both CIVICUS and ADA evaluated Media Review as mostly able to generate an accurate assessment on the state of civil society in Jamaica.
- f) **Fact finding studies (policy impact, corporate social responsibility):** These studies were assessed by the NCO as being between mostly able to generate accurate information and data on the state of civil society in Jamaica.
- g) **NAG scoring exercise** was seen as being fairly to mostly (ADA) and not at all (CIVICUS) able to generate data/ information about the state of the civil society in Jamaica.
- h) **National Workshop:** This was assessed by ADA as fairly to mostly able to generate data/ information about the state of the civil society in Jamaica.
- i) **Country Report:** ADA evaluated the country report as between mostly able to generate data and information about the state of the civil society in Jamaica.

Project Participation

According to ADA, several participatory approaches were employed during the various stages of the project implementation. However, not all participatory methods worked out well. The NCO noted that there were some misunderstandings between the CSP and them during the implementation process. This was occasioned by a natural disaster in Jamaica during the implementation that delayed the process resulting in the said misunderstanding.

CIVICUS Assistance

Overall, the NCO was not at all satisfied with the CSP support because of ‘changes in personnel were a major factor as some were not supportive...’ Thanks were extended, however, to ‘Finn’s support and in the last stages support from Beniam.’

In CIVICUS’ view, they are somewhat satisfied with the overall implementation undertaken by the ADA. CIVICUS acknowledged the problems related to staff changes, both within the ADA and CIVICUS, as contributing to the problems encountered during the project, as well as acknowledging the problems the CSO and CIVICUS faced in terms

of effective communication and a mutual understanding of methodology and deadlines. There were also concerns expressed over the process undertaken to collect the data, as well as the quality of the data gathered.

Sustainability/Replicability

ADA is planning to implement the CSI again in the future.

Project Resources

Financial resources:

The financial resources available to ADA were rated to be not at all adequate. ADA was unable to convince the private and public sectors to invest in the project, and the project did not stay within budgeted costs.

Human Resources

In terms of human resources, ADA assessed their human resources as being mostly sufficient to successfully implement the project. The CIVICUS CSP, on the other hand, is not at all satisfied with the human resources made available for the project.

Time:

ADA evaluated the time allocated for the project as mostly sufficient. ADA however noted that unforeseen delays did occur due to natural disasters that occurred in the country during project implementation. CIVICUS expressed concern that deadlines were not adhered to.

Short/ Long Term Impacts

According to ADA, ‘it has been business as usual for us as conducting surveys of this nature is the norm for ADA. The report has not been released to external parties so we are unable to comment on changes within media, government and the private sector.’ Therefore, the impacts have not yet been assessed.

Conclusion:

In general, the findings of the evaluation unfortunately speak to a variety of problems encountered by both ADA and CIVICUS in implementing the CSI project in Jamaica. It is encouraging, however, that it is felt that the project should be replicated in the country in 2010, and CIVICUS hopes that a more constructive and beneficial relationship can be established at that time.