CIVICUS Civil Society Index Project

Poland Evaluation Report

**Background: Purpose and Objective**

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide CIVICUS and KLON/JAWOR with an assessment of the implementation of the Civil Society Index (CSI) project in Poland. 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 KLON/JAWOR will also gain out of this evaluation through the process of self reflection as well as gauging any important lessons learned.

The overall objective of the evaluation was to assess the project’s success against the original outcomes and outputs set forth in the planning phase by KLON/JAWOR. 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. 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, and early impacts.

**Key Findings**

**Project Outputs**

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

According to the NCO this output has been mostly achieved, however it was noted that organizations such as trade unions and professional organizations could have been featured more prominently in the report. Despite the fact that no community survey was implemented, CIVICUS indicated being satisfied with the country report. This output indicates KLON/JAWOR’s first priority.

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

For KLON/JAWOR, this output was only somewhat achieved. It also represents their second priority. This output received a low ranking because, according to the NCO, the participatory part was less developed than the research part. For example, instead of implementing regional stakeholder interviews the NCO did internet panelling instead. Despite the low ranking, one NCO member indicated that “we are going to work on promotion of the results of CSI to widen the knowledge and understanding of CS among a broad range of stakeholders.”

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

This output, along with the first output (a body of knowledge on the state of civil society and civil society strengthening practices), shares KLON’s first priority. KLON/JAWOR indicated that this output was completely achieved, stating that the conclusions and recommendations given in the report were very comprehensive.
Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society
KLON did not rank this according to priority; however, the NCO evaluation indicated that forums for sharing knowledge on civil society were only fairly achieved. The NCO evaluation indicated that to achieve this output completely KLON will have to work on promoting the CSI internet exposition, which is an online forum for sharing knowledge on civil society. The NCO also pointed out that consultations resulted in cooperation between stakeholders beyond the CSI project. One NCO member wrote that they now cooperate with some of the NAG members in other activities such as participation in the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS). Additionally, the NCO organized a conference to promote the CSI report together with Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Project Outcomes
Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders
The NCO was unable to rank the outcomes according to priority because at the time of the evaluation the report had only been out for two weeks. When asked to what extent had the action agenda that was agreed and identified in the CSI National Workshop been implemented, the NCO pointed out that there was no agreement for an agenda at the national workshop. Instead, KLON has already planned further implementation and development of the CSI project and has already submitted a two-year proposal for activities.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development
The NCO indicated that this outcome was mostly achieved. It was noted that the CSI will be used as an indicator in Poland’s national development plan for 2007 through 2013.

Increased openness to civil society by external stakeholders (e.g. Government, donors, business)
The NCO evaluation showed that this outcome was only fairly achieved. KLON/JAWOR commented that it is very difficult to assess this Outcome at this early stage, although it will be also difficult establish causality to the project if a potential increase of openness would occur.

Assessment of other criteria

Project Relevance
According to the NCO evaluation, the project was only fairly relevant to its work. It should be noted that this rating is from the NCO, not the NAG, and represents the view of only one NCO member.

The NCO evaluation also indicated that CSOs perceive the project for civil society strengthening as being fairly relevant. As one evaluator mentioned, it may be “too early to assess” because “civil society in the sense of access to research, data and analysis is already quite developed but the consultative component was not so strong in the Polish CSI implementation.”
Project Validity
According to CIVICUS, one of the biggest problems was the strong focus on the NGO sector and lack of consultative parts of the project. Since no community survey was implemented and data from the regular Giving & Volunteering Survey was used, the match between this data and some indicator questions was weak. Also, the online panel, which was implemented instead of the RSC, proved to be good in collecting quantitative data. However, it lacks the qualitative depth of discussions, which the regional stakeholder consultations could have provided. As a result, the final report is based on the views of the NCO and lacks the input that consultations would have provided.

Project Participation
According to the KLON/JAWOR, a wide range of participatory methods were used during the CSI project including the implementation of an online panel and ranking and scoring questionnaires. KLON/JAWOR indicated that the online panel worked very well.

Capacity Building
The evaluation assessed whether any specific skills were gained by team members of the KLON/JAWOR as a result of or in the course of implementing the CSI project. According to KLON/JAWOR, skills were gained in the area of quantitative survey research methods, data analysis and interpretation, and report writing. One NCO member stated that they had experience with quantitative research, so it was not necessarily that any new skills were gained but rather an opportunity for them to use and improve the skills they already had. Additionally, it was mentioned that the NCO had the chance to practice training and facilitation skills during the NAG meetings as well as trainings for students who implemented the media monitoring aspect of the project.

Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance
According to evaluations, KLON/JAWOR was completely satisfied with the overall support provided to it by CIVICUS. As well, KLON/JAWOR expressed complete satisfaction with the systems and procedures put in place by CIVICUS for assistance, and complete satisfaction with the guidance received from the CSI toolkit. KLON/JAWOR was also completely satisfied with the support provided by CIVICUS with regard to fundraising, including support for development of proposals and identifying funding sources. Finally, the KLON/JAWOR indicated complete satisfaction with the Country Support Person and their assistance with the project. The NCO commented that the support they received was “very competent and motivating, easy, very nice and open.”

CIVICUS reported being mostly satisfied with the overall implementation undertaken by the NCO. As one CIVICUS member indicated “In my view, a broader consultative approach would have given the study more prominence and impact within civil society and other stakeholder communities.”

CIVICUS reported being overall mostly satisfied with the implementation of the project by KLON. As mentioned previously, however, the division of labour within KLON was
not clear and led to some delay and confusion. KLON/JAWOR also indicated being satisfied with the implementation of the project and offered praise for the CIVICUS team for their strong support and continued motivation for completing the project.

**Sustainability/Replicability**

The NCO indicated that they plan to implement the CSI again in the future. According to one NCO member, “We would like to develop our internet CSI and create ongoing, comprehensive and interactive repository of date on civil society in Poland. The report is displayed in internet not as a pdf file but as a set of sites ordered according to indicators logic with possibility to comment and add new pieces of data to each sub-dimension. On one hand we think it is needed; but on the other hand we already have tools and access to that kind of database.” The NCO is also considering repeating the scoring process, but a time frame has not yet been decided (“maybe annually but not in all indicators”).

**Project Resources**

According to the NCO, the financial resources to undertake the project were only somewhat adequate. As mentioned the NCO, “We had money for staff working for the research project at the KLON/JAWOR Association but that left only a very small amount of money for implementation of the CSI.” This had a negative impact on the actual implementation of the CSI. The NCO also felt that human resources were only somewhat adequate for the project. As mentioned in the evaluation, “This was a similar situation as in the financial resources case. There was a research team (3 people) but none of us was working exclusively on CSI.” Overall CIVICUS indicated that the human resources provided by the NCO were mostly adequate.

**Short/Long Term Impact**

None to date

**Conclusion**

The project implementation in Poland can be described as generally positive. It can be highlighted that the use of the internet for both dissemination but also the research itself was very innovative. It is still to be seen what impacts the project can effect in the Polish context.