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

Background: Purpose and Objective

This evaluation provides CIVICUS and the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), the CSI country partner in Turkey 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 TUSEV 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 TUSEV 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, the first in priority for the TUSEV, was evaluated by as mostly (TUSEV) and completely (CIVICUS) achieved. For TUSEV, the country report mostly provides comprehensive and accurate assessment on the state of civil society in Turkey. The NCO noted the lack of secondary data and the challenge of representation for all CSO types as reasons for this rating. In addition, the sample sizes for the RSCs and the community surveys were relatively small to completely generate a picture that reflected the bigger CS sector in Turkey. CIVICUS concurred with the NCO and held that ‘much of the information in the country focused on NGOs (particularly progressive ones) which somewhat limits the comprehensiveness of the report.’

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

While all outputs of the CSI are certain to have important implications for civil society in Turkey, TUSEV felt that this particular one is closely linked to output 1 – producing a body of knowledge on the state of civil society – and that it would naturally happen once the report is disseminated.
For TUSEV, this output has been mostly achieved because ‘the process of conducting the CSI project i.e. its ‘journey’ did produce a shared understanding on the state of civil society among a broad range of stakeholders especially in the discussion around civil society and the definition, and also helped generate consensus on some of the key challenges facing the sector.’ The report has also generated interested from TUSEV trustees, the government and private sector representatives, universities, major print and visual media organisations (a total of 11 articles have been published in the newspapers and there as been a spot on the evening news broadcast of a major TV station) and the civil society sector in general.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

This particular output, the second in priority for TUSEV is very parallel to TÜSEV’s mission of strengthening the nonprofit sector in Turkey in terms of its legal, fiscal and operational infrastructure. While recognizing the shortcomings of representation of various CSOs, the NCOs held that the report identifies weaknesses and provides a list of recommendations and the action plans created during the national forum provides good inputs for the development of future strategies for the strengthening of the sector. As such, TUSEV evaluated this output as mostly achieved. For TUSEV, these action plans need to be taken a step further and be developed into strategies for moving forward. This will be a next step based on feedback after dissemination and discussion with different stakeholder groups has been done.’ In addition, the CSI study revealed that certain strategies could have a domino effect and address more than a single weakness in the sector.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society

The CSI during the implementation phase has been a vehicle, and a forum for sharing knowledge on civil society. According to the NCO, 'the CSI journey was valuable in bringing together different actors from various sectors to discuss civil society. In this space, much information exchange and networking also took place, which was important in addressing one of the CSI studies major limitations about civil society in Turkey’ an as such this output was as important as the other three outputs. Yet, once it is completed and disseminated, it is no longer serving this function. This lack of sustainability in this area is the reason this output was ranked fourth in TUSEV’s priority areas. It should be noted that the outputs stated here are all important priorities that seem to be closely interlinked to TUSEV and that ranking them is not very feasible for this reason.

Outcomes

The NCO did not evaluate any of the outcomes. They held that is was too soon to tell and as such did not have any basis for answering the set of questions on outcomes. ‘Even though we have started the dissemination phase…, it remains too soon to detect any discernable impact. It would be better to evaluate impact at the end of 2007, once the study has been shared with the government and private sector representatives, universities, major print and visual media organs and the civil society sector. We could then see if and how the study is being used by academicians, whether it has led to any
policy changes on the public sectors’ side and how the civil society sector has reacted to its portrayal in the study outcomes.’(TUSEV)

**Project Relevance**

*How relevant is the project for NAG, civil society, the TUSEV and other stakeholders in the country?*

The project was seen as completely relevant for the work of TUSEV, the NAG members the civil society, and all other stakeholders. These different actors work in various ways.

**Project Validity**

a) **Secondary data review** was evaluated as somewhat to mostly (TUSEV), and mostly to completely (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Turkey.

b) **Social Forces Analysis at 1st NAG meeting** was evaluated as fairly to completely (TUSEV) able to generate data/information on the state of the civil society in Turkey.

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

d) **Community Survey** was not done in Turkey.

e) **Media review** was evaluated as mostly (TUSEV) and mostly to completely (CIVICUS) able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Turkey.

f) **Fact finding studies (policy impact, corporate social responsibility)** were evaluated by both TUSEV and CIVICUS as mostly able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Turkey.

   g) **NAG scoring exercise** was assessed by both CIVICUS and TUSEV as fairly to completely able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Turkey.

h) **National Workshop** was evaluated by all parties as mostly to completely able to generate data/information about the state of the civil society in Turkey.

**Project Participation**

According to the TUSEV, a wide range of participatory methods that included surveys and Regional stakeholder meetings, focus group discussions, NAG, scoring and the CSO forum were used during the CSI implementation process. They further held that all these methods worked well and according to plans except for the social forces analysis in the first NAG meeting that went a bit off target and there was not enough time for the same. The National Workshop was also noted to have been partially problematic and even though it did accomplish its goals and a set of action plans to strengthen the sector were developed, the participants had difficulty absorbing the rich data and complex methodology CSI entailed. The group was also so diverse that their views on civil society differed dramatically.

**Capacity Building**
According to TUSEV, the their CSI team gained capacities in research skills such as secondary data gathering, participatory research methods, quantitative survey research methods, data analysis & interpretation, and report writing. They also gained skills in training and facilitation and in convening and networking.

**Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance and overall implementation**

According to TUSEV, CIVICUS by and large provided complete and adequate support in the entire project implementation process albeit ‘the process of the country report writing proved to be over-regulated and at times cumbersome.’ The NCO specifically noted that the CSP was very helpful and as such were completely satisfied with the support. TUSEV is also completely satisfied with the systems and procedures put in place for the assistance of NCOs in the implementation of the project. The NCO was also mostly satisfied with the guidance received from the CSI toolkit. TUSEV was also fairly satisfied with CIVICUS support on fund raising for the project because even 'Turkey was not on the map for many donor which CIVICUS worked with, they did make an effort, where applicable, to help.'

CIVICUS is completely satisfied with the overall implementation undertaken by the NCO. CIVICUS noted that 'the TUSEV team was responsive, proactive and consulted throughout the implementation of the project. They had a good division of labour and a dedicated project manager who was committed and produced a high quality CSI project in Turkey.' Fund raising, RSCs, NAG, Media review, scoring meeting, National Workshop and the Country report writing, were evaluated as some of the areas that were carried out very well by the NCO. Moreover, CIVICUS held that it was ‘impressed to see how strategic the NCO was, in seeking to use the CSI project and the country report as a means to promote the agenda of strengthening civil society in Turkey. Most other NCOs could learn from this.'

**Sustainability/Replicability**

TUSEV is planning to implement the CSI again in about two year’s time with more attention to customizing it to the Turkish situation. The CSI has very much informed current and future programmes of the NCO. They held that even when they were still in the process of finalizing the publication, it certainly had already informed the NGO law reform work and the NCOs focus on promoting resource mobilization and philanthropy. This NCO position was echoed by all the NAG members.

**Project Resources**

**Financial Resources**

According to TUSEV they mostly had sufficient financial resources to successfully implement the project. They were able to stay within the budgeted costs.

**Human Resources**

Both TUSEV and CIVICUS assessed TUSEV human resources as being mostly sufficient to successfully implement the project. CIVICUS is completely satisfied with the work done by the commitment ad enthusiasm of project coordinator. She was always
ready with monthly progress reports and for CIVICUS monthly calls and also thought creatively about the project and about potential add-on activities such as a stand-alone media review project.

Both CIVICUS and the NCO were mostly satisfied with the work done by the PR and the CSE. However, CIVICUS noted that the CSE writing style was not the most concise.

Time
TUSEV evaluated the time allocated for the project as fairly sufficient. They supported this assessment with the fact that they implemented the project in one year instead of two and this was hectic for them. CIVICUS on the other hand felt that the time was completely sufficient for them to satisfactorily implement the project.

Short/Long Term Impact

Changes within the NCO:
- Capacity and experience in conducting research project
- Visibility of TUSEV and better understanding of CS at local/ regional level

Changes within the NCO partner organisations:
- Capacity and experience in research on civil society
- Partner organizations that worked on the CSI were exposed to international study and to a new methodology and analytical framework for assessing CS.

Changes within the Media:
- Not as yet but the report has generated interested from major print and visual media organisations (a total of 11 articles have been published in the newspapers and there as been a spot on the evening news broadcast of a major TV station) and the civil society sector in general.

Changes within other institutions: (Please specify)
- Use of CSI frameworks and study in academic environments/ classes
- Created a CSI website which serves to increase awareness and the study of outcomes

Conclusion:

The findings of the evaluation are mainly positive. Despite the civil society in Turkey lacking a certain ‘self-consciousness’ as a sector, the CSI was able to bring different stakeholders to identify relevant sector-wide recommendations on how to strengthen CS. That the NCO and other CSOs in Turkey have been able to strategically utilise the CSI country report as a means to promote the agenda of strengthening civil society in Turkey is a great learning that many other NCOs could take from Turkey. Moreover, the study being the first of its kind in Turkey, and coming at a time when many changes are expected from the ongoing negotiations for Turkey’s accession process into the EU, offers a great potential to assume a guiding role in future studies on the sector.