CIVICUS Civil Society Index

A Summary of the Uganda CSI Project Evaluation

Background: Purpose and Objective

This evaluation provides CIVICUS and the Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), the CSI country partner in Uganda 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 DENIVA will gain out of this evaluation through a 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 DENIVA 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 DENIVA, was evaluated by both CIVICUS and DENIVA as completely achieved. For both DENIVA and CIVICUS, the country report somewhat to mostly provides comprehensive and accurate information on the state of civil society in Uganda. The report included various surveys including international ones that beefed up the report's credibility, is well analyzed and structured. Even though it is a little long, it covers a great deal of information in succinct indicator text albeit, a little biased towards NGOs.

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

This output was assessed by DENIVA as mostly achieved. However, they noted that the report has not yet been widely disseminated but they hope to create awareness that will attempt to achieve this.

A set of strategies for strengthening civil society

DENIVA evaluated this output as somewhat achieved. DENIVA noted that so far, only 'action points that will be developed further into action plans have been done.' They

continued to state that as hindsight, the national workshop should have led to the elaboration of an action plan, but it did not as most time was mostly spent on validating results. Nonetheless, already, a Quality Assurance Certification as a standard to strengthen CSO accountability, legitimacy and transparency has launched and DENIVA is in the process of implementing it. Other action plans are yet to be implemented.

Forums for sharing knowledge on civil society

This output was assessed by DENIVA as fairly achieved. The NCO noted that a spirit of reflecting on the CS Sector is slowly emerging in Uganda as a result of the CSI implementation. There were many consultations in the process of CSI implementation between different stakeholders and these consultations resulted into cooperation between them. The consultations further provided for collective forums of discussing issues that specifically pertain to the sector. This hardly happens even within the individual organisations. CSO Leaders have agreed to hold an annual leaders meeting to share knowledge and also reflect on the current status of the civil society.

Outcomes

Increase in knowledge based actions by civil society stakeholders

DENIVA evaluated this outcome as mostly achieved. They go on to explain that 'a lot of information generated by CSI has been extremely relevant in providing the CSOs with an opportunity to assess the sector, reflecting on their own experiences, knowledge and available information. The information from this project can be used as a basis for other attempts to strengthen the sector like the CSO Minimum Agenda, and the Quality Certification Mechanism.

Already, several stakeholders especially donors have shown a keen interest in the Ugandan report and are using it to inform their strategic directions. The report is yet to be shared with government, but it is hoped that it will be shared after it is published and the number of users will increase. Internally, DENIVA has already quoted it in different forums and presentations.

Increased collective voice of civil society in governance and development

DENIVA assessed this outcome as fairly achieved because 'many CSOs especially at the regional level agreed that there is a need to organise together to be able to have a collective voice on major issues that affect not only the society but the CS in particular.' CSI implementation coincided with other developments that affected the CS in Uganda. This included the enactment of the NGO ACT in April 2006. As a result, CSO leaders met to develop a common agenda in meeting the challenges of this ACT on some sections of the CS sector. However, mobilisation on the same is yet to be done up to the lower levels.

Increased receptivity of civil society by external stakeholders

This outcome was evaluated as fairly achieved. DENIVA explained that even though CSOs can not fully claim increased openness to civil society by external stakeholders (e.g. Government, donors, and business) is a result of the CSI, because the space has

always been availed by government and donors, there were opportunities for the strengthening of the relationships between CS and external stakeholders.

Project Relevance

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

The project was seen as completely relevant for DENIVA and the NAG members. DENIVA held that 'being a national network organisation, they are also responsible for generating new information for members of the civil society. As such, CSI has been a very important tool in enhancing the organisation's work.' The NAG members on the other hand held that the CSI enabled CSOs to agree on a broad definition of Civil Society, provided an opportunity to reflect on Civil Society in terms of Structure, Value, Environment and Impact of their work, and also enabled them to re-examine their involvement and relevance to the target groups they serve.

Project Validity

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

b) Social Forces Analysis was not implemented in Uganda but it was noted by the NCO that 'it would have been useful.'

c) Regional Stakeholder Questionnaire & Consultations were evaluated as between somewhat to fairly (DENIVA) and fairly to mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate information on the state of CS in Uganda.

d) Community Survey was evaluated as somewhat to fairly (DENIVA) and mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate data/information on the state of the civil society in Uganda.

e) Media review was evaluated as fairly to not at all (DENIVA) and mostly (CIVICUS) able to generate accurate and relevant information on the state of the civil society in Uganda.

f) Fact finding studies (policy impact, corporate social responsibility) was evaluated as not all and fairly (by both DENIVA and CIVICUS) able to generate data/ information about the state of the civil society in Uganda.

g) NAG scoring exercise was assessed as between somewhat to mostly (DENIVA) and fairly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/ information about the state of the civil society in Uganda.

h) National Workshop was evaluated as somewhat (DENIVA) and fairly (CIVICUS) able to generate data/ information about the state of the civil society in Uganda.

Project Participation

According to DENIVA, a wide range of participatory methods were used during the CSI implementation process and included consultations, debates, questionnaires administering, and round table discussions. Consultations, questionnaires administering, and round table discussions worked well.

Capacity Building

According to DENIVA they were able to gain capacities in research and other skills such as the moderating, consultation and facilitation skills.

Evaluation of CIVICUS Assistance and overall implementation

According to DENIVA, CIVICUS by and large provided complete and adequate support in the entire project implementation because 'CIVICUS was always very prompt to response to queries. As such, DENIVA is mostly satisfied with the systems and procedures put in place for the assistance of NCOs in the implementation of the project especially because the CSPs and other contact persons were easily reachable. The tool kit completely offered guidance as it clearly spelt out what needed to be done for the project implementation. DENIVA is also completely satisfied with CIVICUS support on fundraising for the project as they supported most of the work from their own budget. CIVICUS is mostly satisfied with the overall implementation undertaken by the NCO as well as with the NCO team and the systems and procedures they put in place to implement the project.

Sustainability/Replicability

DENIVA and the NAG members were in agreement on the need to implement the CSI again in the future although they differed on the timing of re-implementation. Moreover, CSI has informed current and future programme activities of DENIVA as they are also working on improving the CSO operating environment as informed by the CSI project findings.

Project Resources

Financial Resources

According to DENIVA they had somewhat sufficient financial resources to successfully implement the project. The project operated below the required costs for most of the time.

Human Resources

DENIVA rated the human resources available to successfully implement the project as somewhat adequate. They held that CSI was an additional responsibility to the daily work of the Coordinator and this had a limit to uninterrupted time for the coordinator to concentrate on the CSI. CIVICUS found the human resources available to the NCO as mostly sufficient. CIVICUS is satisfied with the work done by all members of the NIT in Uganda

Time

DENIVA assessed the time available for the implementation of the project as completely sufficient. The reason for this was that there was 'enough time to finalise the studies. CIVICUS on the other hand evaluated are completely satisfied with the time allocated for the implementation of the project. However, there were issues at various points of drafting the report, based primarily on Ugandan elections and delay in receiving primary data, that made the time line very tight or difficult to adhere to'.

Short/Long Term Impact

Unintended changes

The information generated in the CSI report has been used widely in the recently concluded workshop for NGO Leaders and representatives "reflections meeting" to draft an agenda for the CSOs in Uganda. Many have referred to the report as providing a 'one stop information' on the state of the CS in the country'

Changes within the NCO

- CSI has generated a great deal of information for policy process. This has strengthened DENIVA's role as a network organisation.
- The CSI has been streamlined and included in the strategic plan of DENIVA 2006-2007

Changes within partner organisation

- Many CSOs are calling to request a copy of the CSI report denoting a growing interest in the report findings.
- Improved knowledge on CS and actual weaknesses that exist in the sector.

Changes within Donors/ Funders

- Donors are calling to request a copy of the report and are showing a growing interest in it. Some donors have already requested for partnership to disseminate the findings and promise to participate in the next phase of implementation

Changes within the Media

- No changes have been recorded from the media yet. However, the development of a strategy to relate with the media is in progress. This is meant to have a series of CSI findings disseminated through various media houses at national and regional levels.

Changes within the government

- No changes have been recorded within the government yet but there is hope that there will be as the NAG representative from government agreed that 'the CSI findings provides a wide range of information that was hitherto, lacking in many government planning structures' (DENIVA). This would possibly strengthen CS-government relations.
- It is important to note that the use of the CSI report by the Prime Minister's office in the process of developing CS policy will be possible

Conclusion:

In general, the findings of the evaluation are largely positive with respect to most aspects. There are strong recommendations to continue implementing the CSI in Uganda as a way to monitor anticipated changes in the civil society in Uganda as a result of the findings of the current phase informing directions on strengthening the civil society. The relevance of the project was also considered quite high given the interest the project has generated among the different stakeholders in Uganda and beyond. It is also interesting to note that given the interest the project and the report has generated, DENIVA is planning on disseminating the report to make it accessible and available not only to 'elites' but to the general population by translating it into 5 different local languages (English, Ateso, Luganda, Luo and Runyaktara).