



# 2021/22 ANNUAL REPORT



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# YEAR IN REVIEW

Board Chair & Secretary-General



Dylan Mathews

“AS AN ALLIANCE OF PROGRESSIVE, RIGHTS-ORIENTED CIVIL SOCIETY, OUR MISSION AT CIVICUS IS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE’S STRUGGLES FOR JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY AROUND THE WORLD.”

The past year has been one of conflict and strife for many, but also one of tremendous collective resistance and solidarity. As highlighted by our 2022 State of Civil Society Report, each regressive trend has been met with a countertrend of constructive civic action. Even as the impacts of COVID-19 related disruptions remain with us whether through impediments on civic freedoms or changes in civil society funding patterns, time and again civil society has mobilised against human rights violations, impunity, corruption and the denial of democracy, and has worked to push back against anti-rights groups. Even in inhospitable contexts, civil society has continued to demand the rights of women, LGBTQI+ people, migrants and other excluded groups. It has risen against authoritarianism, coalesced against the advances of extremism and helped sustain democratic freedoms. It has urged climate action, contributed to sustainable solutions and organised to try to prevent conflicts, while rolling up its sleeves to

help people experiencing the worse impacts of conflict and climate change in the here and now. As an alliance of progressive, rights-oriented civil society, our mission at CIVICUS is to support people’s struggles for justice, equality and sustainability around the world. When Afghans faced an uncertain future following the Taliban’s takeover and when the people of Ukraine were exposed to danger by an illegal war, we formed broad cross-organisational taskforces to help support civil society’s response. Thanks to the CIVICUS Monitor, our research tool tracking the state of civic space around the world, we have identified hotspots and clusters of restrictions and repressive tactics, sounded the alarm and focused our advocacy efforts. As rising fuel and food costs started triggering protests everywhere, even in countries with highly restricted civic space where protests are rare and face severe repression, we published guidance to protect rights – the Know Your Rights: Protest Guidebook and Phonebook, produced through the Vuka! Coalition for Civic Action. >>



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## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

“ AROUND  
THE WORLD,  
WE HAVE  
WITNESSED THE  
EMERGENCE OF  
A NEW CADRE OF  
YOUNG, FEMINIST  
POLITICAL  
LEADERS  
COMMITTED TO  
SOCIAL JUSTICE  
AND CLIMATE  
ACTION.

We also strengthened our tracking capacity by sharpening the CIVICUS Monitor’s indicator on freedom of peaceful assembly and have produced in-depth, timely coverage of protest movements through interviews and articles published on CIVICUS Lens, our new, frequently updated commentary and analysis initiative.

In times of civic space crackdown and democratic regression, we have continued to stand in solidarity with civil society activists fighting back. We expanded the reach of the Stand As My Witness campaign, which profiles imprisoned civil society leaders and advocates for their release.

We promoted a grassroots solidarity revolution to transform and decolonise resourcing practices and relationships. Through broad consultation, we rethought our Solidarity Fund to make our processes

more accessible and inclusive, so we can support those who are making the most impact and need it the most. We also urged funders to unlock and better target resources to create enabling conditions for civil society and reach those leading struggles on the ground who are facing the brunt of violence and discrimination.

Around the world, we have witnessed the emergence of a new cadre of young, feminist political leaders committed to social justice and climate action. Many of today’s movements centre on a new generation who are exercising their civic freedoms for the first time. The significant breakthroughs achieved so far led us to strengthen our focus on youth: in the past year, our Youth Action Lab brought together a group of young activists to work collectively to make their movements more resilient and sustainable. >>





WE HAVE CONTINUED CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CIVIL SOCIETY CHANGEMAKERS TO CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER IN THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL LEARNING, EXCHANGE AND SOLIDARITY.

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The year, marked by a war with global implications, brought abundant evidence that the current international governance system is highly inadequate when it comes to preventing conflict, holding powerful human rights abusers to account and protecting people's lives and rights. While campaigning for democratisation and accountability in international governance institutions, we have continued to engage productively in every available space for civil society within multilateral institutions – notably the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) – and other intergovernmental coalitions and multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Community of Democracies, Open Government Partnership and World Benchmarking Alliance. We have continued creating opportunities for civil society changemakers to connect with each other in the spirit of mutual learning, exchange and solidarity. We have done so through the CIVICUS Online Community, which has

expanded and diversified exponentially along with our membership. We also progressed on several institutional strengthening projects including our racial justice action plan, learning and development framework, and resourcing and sustainability strategy, and adopted a new Strategic Plan for 2022-2027.

The world as it stands today is characterised by a fierce backlash against universal human rights amid the lingering effects of a debilitating pandemic. But civil society is resisting, offering support, fighting back and winning victories.

Board Chair of CIVICUS

**Dylan Matthews**

Chief Executive Officer  
at Peace Direct

Secretary General of CIVICUS

**Lysa John**



# CROSS-ORGANISATIONAL TASKFORCES

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## **SOLIDARITY WITH AFGHANISTAN AND UKRAINE**

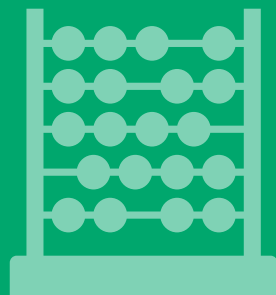
CIVICUS responded to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine as an organisation and as part of networks such as Vuka! and Innovation for Change (I4C).

To focus our advocacy efforts, we placed Afghanistan on the CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, which spotlights countries experiencing serious and rapid declines of civic freedoms. Following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, alongside more than 390 civil society groups and coalitions we sent a letter to the Australian government calling for international solidarity with human rights defenders (HRDs) at risk. In response, the Australian government committed to prioritising the visa applications of persecuted women from Afghanistan, then moved on to providing permanent protection to Afghans staying in Australia on temporary visas. The I4C South Asia Hub also reacted quickly and offered two physical safe spaces in Pakistan to Afghan activists at risk. More than 1,400 have used them so far. The I4C South Asia hub also worked with Facebook, Google and Twitter to get activists' sensitive online data removed.

Similarly, when Russia invaded Ukraine, CIVICUS members co-signed a letter of solidarity with Ukrainian members. The letter was shared with diplomats in Geneva and in several countries around the world. Collective efforts by civil society and its allies led to an overwhelming vote at the UN to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council. The letter was also used to advocate with the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe to trigger its Moscow Mechanism and assess the humanitarian and human rights impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Subsequent conversations with members of the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund consortium resulted in emergency assistance grants provided to 12 civil society organisations (CSOs) providing assistance to the people of Ukraine.

To respond to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, Vuka! convened hundreds of civil society organisations, philanthropic groups and UN stakeholders to develop joint strategies to advance protection and resourcing needs of civil society in Afghanistan, needs of HRDs in exile; evacuation support, international advocacy and civic space monitoring.

# YEAR IN NUMBERS



Civic space ratings for  
**197**  
COUNTRIES AND  
TERRITORIES

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**20+**

countries received **URGENT ADVOCACY SUPPORT**, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Eswatini, Ghana, Myanmar and Ukraine

**150**

interviews with civil society activists, leaders and experts featured in **110 CIVICUS LENS**



**FIVE**

**SUSTAINED CAMPAIGNS** concerning the release of human rights defenders, resourcing for grassroots and freedom of assembly and association



**24**

country submissions to **UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**ARTICLES** providing timely analysis of civil society issues and trends

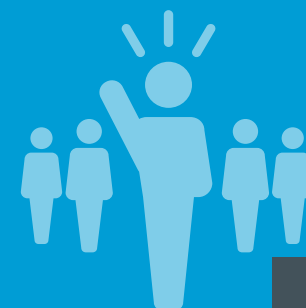


**10,000+**

**PEOPLE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OUR ONLINE EVENTS**



**1,000+**  
**DIFFERENT MEDIA OUTLETS**  
cited content from CIVICUS





# MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

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We are a growing global alliance of more than 13,000 members in 175 countries, working together to strengthen people's power and expand civic and democratic space. We strive to promote excluded voices, particularly from the global south. We were founded in 1993, and since 2002 we have been proudly headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with staff distributed around the world and hubs connecting with key UN bodies in New York and Geneva. In 2016, youth became a strategic priority for CIVICUS. By the end of the 2017-2022 strategic period, CIVICUS had secured US\$3 million for programming targeted at those under 30 years old, and 43 per cent of new individual CIVICUS members in 2021-2022 were under 30. Targeted youth engagement opportunities have motivated many young changemakers to join our alliance, become active in it and recommend it to their friends, so the number of young active members continues to grow.

## BOARD ELECTIONS

The CIVICUS board election process concluded on 24 April 2022, when the Board Nominations Committee verified the results. Eight new members were elected out of 34 complete nominations and began their three-year terms on 1 July. The current board has 13 members and is chaired by Dylan Mathews, who also

doubles as chair of its Executive Committee and is deputised by Sonia Kwami. The new board is representative of the diversity of the CIVICUS membership: its members come from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, 10 out of 13 are women, and it includes individual activists and members of grassroots groups as well as representatives of well-known national and international CSOs.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Another important governance moment was the virtual CIVICUS Annual General Meeting (AGM) which took place December 2021. More than 260 members attended the virtual meeting, which was a significant increase from around 60 members the previous year. Contributing to that increase was holding the AGM on the new Online Community which allowed for direct invites and active participation in the sessions. The overarching theme was Dynamic Accountability in Practice. Eight sessions were held including feedback on the Annual Constituency Survey, updates on the strategic amendment process, presentation of an enhanced CIVICUS code of conduct and a report on how membership fees have been distributed through the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund. The Code of Conduct session where we discussed our collective identity as an Alliance and set the basis for good governance and respectful collaboration was most attended.



# PROGRESS AGAINST STRATEGIC GOALS

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THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS HAVE HELPED US  
ACHIEVE OUR STRATEGIC GOALS DURING THE  
PERIOD BETWEEN 1 JULY 2021 AND 30 JUNE 2022.





# GOAL 1:

## DEFENDING CIVIC FREEDOMS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

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This year we launched our groundbreaking civil society commentary initiative, CIVICUS Lens, which analyses global events, emerging trends and civil society action throughout the year. We strengthened the methodology of the CIVICUS Monitor to enable us to better assess civic space conditions and freedom of peaceful assembly in particular. Our advocacy efforts focused on freeing imprisoned HRDs, highlighting gaps in implementation of international human rights norms on civic space and creating practical resources to support our members in protecting and advancing civic space.

### PRIORITY RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Our knowledge offerings drew upon inputs from diverse civil society voices, particularly those of people from excluded communities, with a view to advancing rights from a global south perspective. In addition, we monitored the trajectory of civil society mobilisations and actions around the world, anticipated impending restrictions and used this information and knowledge to power our campaigning efforts.

#### 2022 STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT

Since its launch in 2011, the annual State of Civil Society Report has analysed how contemporary events and

trends impact civil society and how civil society responds to the major issues and problems of the day. The 2022 State of Civil Society Report offers a snapshot of a world characterised by crisis and volatility, where regressive forces are mobilising a fierce backlash, but where dogged civil society mobilisation is still winning vital battles. This 11th edition of the annual report focused on five contemporary political themes: demands for socioeconomic justice and equality, democratic flux and regression, progress and pushback in challenging exclusion and claiming rights, environmental and climate action, and the failings of global governance and civil society ideas for its reform.





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## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



### ELEVATING OUR RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS CAPABILITIES

CIVICUS launched the CIVICUS Lens in January 2022. With multiple posts a week, it provides an in-depth civil society viewpoint on global events including commentary on geo-political developments from a human rights and social justice perspective.

### CIVICUS LENS:

#### TIMELY ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL EVENTS

Starting in January 2022, our coverage of civil society action took a new form as we launched CIVICUS Lens, an online platform providing timely coverage of issues, events and trends from a civil society perspective, drawing from in-depth interviews and consultations with civil society activists, leaders and experts. By June 2022, CIVICUS Lens had published 110 articles and 150

interviews, many of which were made available in French, Portuguese and Spanish. CIVICUS Lens expanded its readership by repackaging information into visuals, sharing selected content through a monthly newsletter, and distributing content among key stakeholders in civil society and the international community through a partnership with Inter Press Service.

## CIVICUS MONITOR:

### AN AUTHORITATIVE RESOURCE ON CIVIC FREEDOMS

The CIVICUS Monitor is a research tool that provides quantitative and qualitative data on the state of civil society and the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression in 197 countries and territories. Data is generated through collaboration with more than 20 civil society research partners and input from independent human rights evaluations. Based on this up-to-date information on indicators of the state of civic freedoms, countries are rated as having open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed or closed civic space.

The latest edition of the CIVICUS Monitor's annual report, *People Power Under Attack*, was published in December 2021. It included statistics on the top violations of civic freedoms, with the civic space ratings of 13 countries downgraded. Over the past year, data from the CIVICUS Monitor was referenced by numerous governments and featured in over 1,000 media outlets and academic journals, including Al Jazeera, El País, Reuters, The Economist and The Guardian. As country updates from the CIVICUS Monitor were recognised as an official news source by Google, country updates now automatically appear in the 'news' tab of Google search services.



MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ALISTAIR CARMICHAEL USED THIS RESEARCH [CIVICUS MONITOR'S] TO RAISE CONCERNS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ABOUT THE ONGOING DECLINE IN CIVIC FREEDOMS, FORCING A DISCUSSION OF THE CONTROVERSIAL BILL.

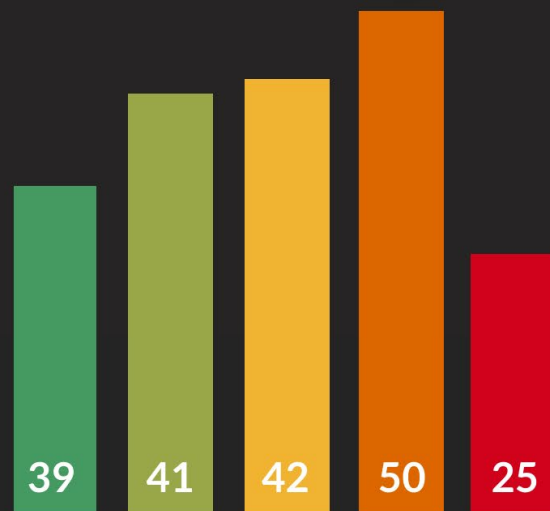
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## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

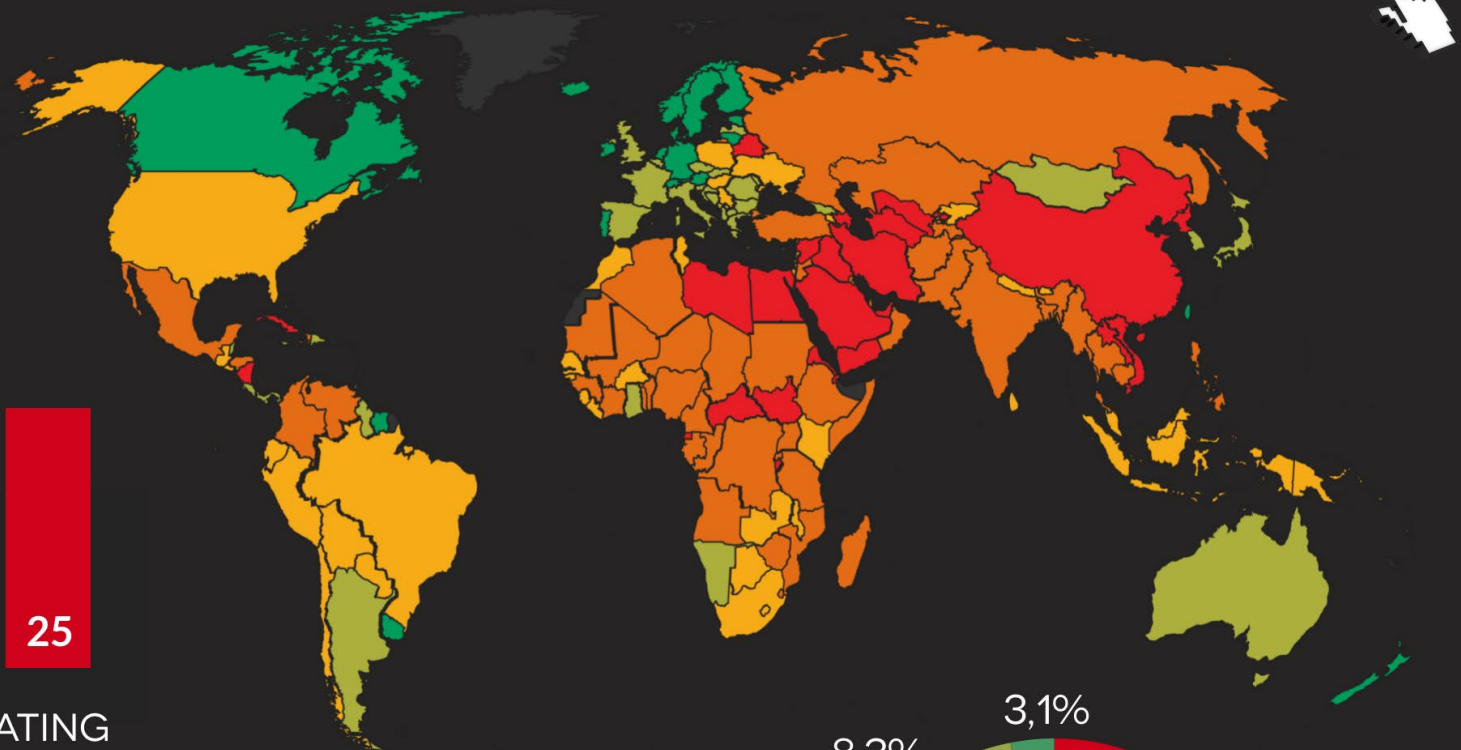
**CIVICUS MONITOR:** FINDINGS SUPPORT RESISTANCE TO RESTRICTIVE BILL ON FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

CIVICUS and partners including Bond UK, Friends of the Earth and Liberty undertook joint research and advocacy in response to a proposed bill to grant the police wide powers to curb the right of peaceful assembly in the UK. A country report on the UK's human rights record was submitted to the UK's Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council and the UK was placed on the CIVICUS Monitor's Watchlist, which spotlights countries experiencing serious and rapid declines of civic freedoms. Member of parliament Alistair Carmichael used this research to raise concerns in the House of Commons about the ongoing decline in civic freedoms, forcing a discussion of the controversial bill. Although the bill was passed into law, it didn't go unnoticed, and the partnerships established against it remained alive and ready to face new concerning initiatives under way.

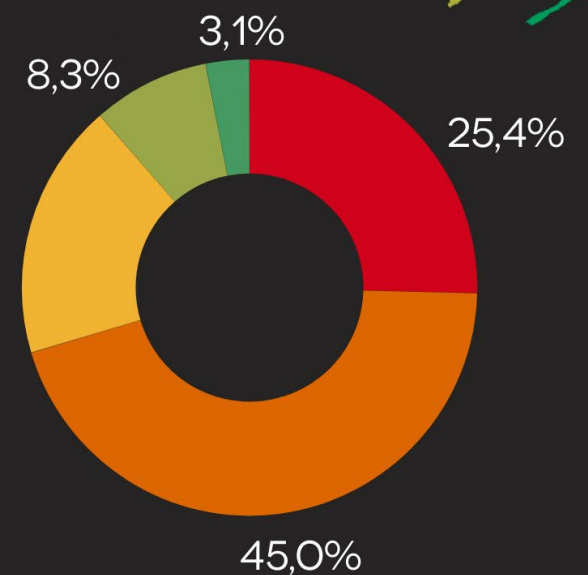




TOTAL COUNTRIES BY RATING



## 2022 CIVICUS MONITOR GLOBAL DATA



% OF GLOBAL POPULATION BY RATING



“CIVICUS  
TEAMS MADE  
24 SUBMISSIONS  
TO THE UN’S  
UNIVERSAL  
PERIODIC REVIEW  
PROCESS,  
HIGHLIGHTING  
CONCERNS  
ABOUT THE  
STATE OF CIVIC  
FREEDOMS AND  
THE SAFETY  
OF HRDS IN 24  
COUNTRIES.

## PRIORITY ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

We advocated locally and globally for those facing the brunt of repression, exclusion and discrimination. We amplified the voices of people working on the frontlines of economic, political and social transformation while leveraging our access at a range of forums to enable their direct engagement in decision-making.

### RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT CIVIC SPACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE UN

CIVICUS teams made 24 submissions to the UN’s Universal Periodic Review process, highlighting concerns about the state of civic freedoms and the safety of HRDs in 24 countries. We helped CIVICUS members raise issues directly at the UN Human Rights Council through formal statements, as in the case of Venezuela, and through briefings, as in the case of Myanmar. We supported a Human Rights Council resolution on peaceful assembly and

association that highlighted restrictions on access to funding as an existential threat to civil society. We gave critical feedback to the UN Secretary General’s Our Common Agenda report. We held events on resourcing, peaceful assembly in crisis contexts, and equity and inclusion of minority groups. In June 2022, we engaged for the first time with the Human Rights Committee, the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In particular, we raised concerns about the misuse of surveillance technology to undermine digital privacy and about the repurposing of counter-terror and security measures to quash fundamental freedoms. We submitted a report on China that highlighted our concerns about the situation of civic space and the safety of HRDs in Hong Kong. This submission highlighted the gap between current practices and China’s international obligations on civic freedoms.

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Mandeep Tiwana, Chief Programmes Officer of CIVICUS, speaking at the Civil Society Townhall organised by the President of the UN General Assembly in November 2021.

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# CONSORTIUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA (CHARM)

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“MANY CAMP ATTENDEES HAVE SINCE GAINED GOVERNMENT POSITIONS AND SEVERAL MALE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DIALOGUES WENT ON TO NOMINATE WOMEN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE.



## CHARM-AFRICA: PROTECTING CIVIL SOCIETY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA FREEDOMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Since October 2019, CIVICUS has been the coordinating member of the Consortium for Human Rights and Media Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM), and this year we have also provided financial and non-financial support to national and regional partners to engage in advocacy at regional and international human rights mechanisms, including the AU and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the UN Human Rights Council and the Economic Community of West African States.

For example, CIVICUS partnered with Manna Development Agency, a CSO that advocates for women's rights and representation in South Sudan and Uganda. We supported

their training camp, which promotes female political leadership and creates dialogue with state parliamentarians and local leaders. Many camp attendees have since gained government positions and several male participants in the dialogues went on to nominate women for public office. More balanced gender representation is already positively impacting on women's daily lives and improving inheritance rights to land in Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan. By supporting locally led actions such as this, we ensure that the people who better understand the issues and are most affected by them are the ones who lead initiatives and determine their priorities.





HODA ABDEL MONEIM



KHURRAM PARVEZ



CHOW HANG TUNG



KAMIRA NAIT SID



KENIA HERNANDEZ



BAKIDE MABUZZA AND MTHANDENI DUBE



MARÍA ESPERANZA SÁNCHEZ GARCÍA



BUZURGMIEHR YOROV

TATSIANA LASICA  
VALENTIN STEFANOVICH  
VLADZ LABKOVICH  
LEONID SUDALENKA  
ALES BIALYATSKI  
MARFA RABKOVA  
ANDREI CHAPYK

VIASNA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS



ABDULHADI AL-KHAWAJA



MEDARDO MAIRENA &amp; PEDRO MENA



NASRIN-SOTOUDEH



AHMED MANSOUR

# STAND AS MY WITNESS

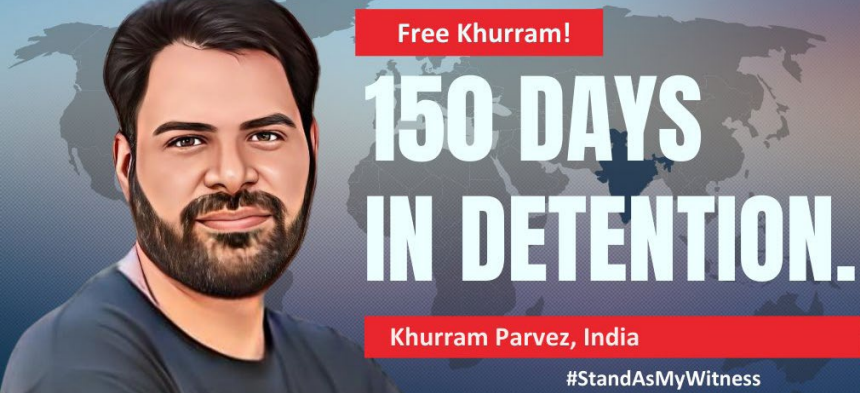
## ADD YOUR VOICE. TAKE ACTION AND CALL FOR THEIR RELEASE.

### #STANDASMYWITNESS: CAMPAIGNS FOR THE RELEASE OF JAILED ACTIVISTS

On 18 July, Nelson Mandela Day, in 2020, CIVICUS launched the #StandAsMyWitness campaign to advocate for the release of HRDs behind bars. Like Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison in South Africa, thousands of activists around the world are persecuted for advocating for human rights and held in jail, often following unfair trials.

The #StandAsMyWitness campaign builds partnerships with local, regional and international actors to engage in joint advocacy and amplify the voices calling for the release of a particular HRD. CIVICUS has established partnerships with organisations including Club de Madrid, Global Citizen and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights. >>





In addition, the campaign has garnered support from several embassies, including those of Denmark, the Netherlands and the USA, especially in Latin America. Through new local partnerships with organisations such as the Foundation for Social and Economic Justice in Eswatini and Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, this year 11 HRDs were added to the campaign, bringing the number of HRDs currently featured to 22.

We work closely with the family members, colleagues and lawyers of the profiled HRDs, who keep the campaign team updated with relevant dates, events and advocacy

opportunities. We follow a consistent media strategy that includes giving awards to HRDs to draw attention to them. But we have found that overall, the most crucial factor accounting for success is ongoing, sustained and collaborative action.

This approach has resulted in the release of 20 HRDs – nine of them in the past year alone. Sudha Bharadwaj, a defender of Indigenous rights in India, was released on bail following a 60th birthday campaign for her release, and the eight imprisoned defenders of the Guapinol river in Honduras were released following a review of their cases by the Supreme Court.





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# INSPIRATION

## CIVIL SOCIETY TRIUMPH:

### GUAPINOL DEFENDERS RELEASED

Eight HRDs were released after the Honduran Supreme Court ruled that their constitutional rights had been violated. Ewer Alexander Cedillo Cruz, José Abelino Cedillo Cantarero, José Daniel Márquez, Kelvin Alejandro Romero Martínez, Porfirio Sorto Cedillo, Orbin Nahuan Hernández, Arnol Javier Alemán and Jeremías Martínez, all members of the Committee for the Defence of Common and Public Assets, were held in pretrial detention since 2019, after being arrested for protesting against mining activities that threatened the safety and livelihood of thousands of people. To help set them free, CIVICUS complemented the work of human rights lawyers and legal organisations with targeted advocacy and large-scale campaigns. We featured them on the #StandAsMyWitness campaign while also helping amplify other campaigns for their release.



“ TO HELP SET THEM FREE, CIVICUS COMPLEMENTED THE WORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS AND LEGAL ORGANISATIONS WITH TARGETED ADVOCACY AND LARGE-SCALE CAMPAIGNS.





# #STAND AS MY WITNESS



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## ACTIVISTS STILL IN JAIL



Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja



Ahmed Mansour



Bacede Mabuza



Mthandeni Dube



Buzurgmehr Yorov



Chow Hang Tung



Hoda Abdel Moneim



Kamira Nait Sid



Kenia Hernandez



Khurram Parvez



María Esperanza  
Sánchez García



Medardo Mairena



Pedro Mena



Nasrin Sotoudeh



Obert Masaraure

## FREED ACTIVISTS



Asya Tulesova



Halidou Mounkaila



Loujain Al-Hathloul



Maikoul Zodi



Moudi Moussa



Teresita Naul



Professor Muhammad  
Ismail



Sudha Bharadwaj



Zakaria Hannache



Four journalists of Iwacu Press Group



Guapinol Water Defenders



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## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

### VUKA!:

#### FOSTERING JOINT ACTION FOR CIVIC SPACE

Since 2017, CIVICUS has coordinated Vuka!, a global coalition of over 250 civil society groups with a 19-member Steering Group working to regain civic space. The coalition has five thematic action groups, including on narratives, litigation and rapid response. Under its auspices, over 1,000 HRDs and civil society groups have come together to develop joint strategies to address acute and entrenched restrictions on civic space in 40 countries, leading to more sophisticated and coordinated responses to emergency situations and long-term civic space deficits.

Vuka! has hosted dialogues to identify gaps in existing protection and promotion models. Among other issues, the team has examined ways of supporting

protest movements and climate defenders, countering stigmatisation and criminalisation of foreign funding, and nurturing civil society staff wellbeing. Vuka! collectively developed targeted recommendations to advance normative standards, policies and practices. Alongside CIVICUS, Vuka! worked to socialise legal norms around the right to protest and help the United Nations' integrated Civil Society Organizations System to protect protesters. Through the Vuka! Protest Support Phonebook, protesters and their allies can find support from nearly 30 international and regional CSOs. The Know Your Protest Rights Brief translates the Human Rights Committee's General Comment No. 37, an 18-page legal document on the right to protest, into a visually appealing six-page document conveying practical knowledge in simplified language.



UNDER ITS AUSPICES, OVER 1,000 HRDS AND CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS HAVE COME TOGETHER TO DEVELOP JOINT STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ACUTE AND ENTRENCHED RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIC SPACE IN 40 COUNTRIES, LEADING TO MORE SOPHISTICATED AND COORDINATED RESPONSES TO EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND LONG-TERM CIVIC SPACE DEFICITS.



## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

### Do you have the right to monitor a protest? **Yes!**

- Journalists, human rights defenders, election monitors and others involved in monitoring or reporting on assemblies may not be prohibited from, or unduly limited in, exercising their functions, including monitoring the actions of law enforcement officials.
- They must not face reprisals or other harassment, and their equipment must not be confiscated or damaged.

### IS THE PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF AN ASSEMBLY COVERED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW? **Yes!**

- Participants or organisers must be allowed to mobilise resources; plan; disseminate information about an upcoming event; prepare for and travel to the event; communicate between participants leading up to and during the assembly; broadcast the assembly or broadcast from it; and leave the assembly afterwards.

### Does your right to assemble apply to the online space? **Yes!**

- Associated activities that happen online or otherwise rely upon digital services are also protected.
- The state must not block or hinder internet connectivity in relation to peaceful assemblies. The same applies to geotargeted or technology-specific interference with connectivity or access to content.
- States should ensure that the activities of internet service providers and intermediaries do not unduly restrict assemblies or the privacy of assembly participants.



### CAN YOU EXPRESS PROPAGANDA FOR WAR OR NATIONAL, RACIAL OR RELIGIOUS HATRED THAT CONSTITUTES INCITEMENT TO DISCRIMINATION, HOSTILITY OR VIOLENCE? **No!**

- Peaceful assemblies may not be used for propaganda for war or for advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.
- As far as possible, action should be taken in such cases against the individual perpetrators, rather than against the assembly as a whole.

### Can you bring equipment to assemblies? **Yes!**

- Flags, uniforms, signs and banners are to be regarded as legitimate forms of expression that should not be restricted.
- Participants should be left to determine whether they want to use equipment such as posters, megaphones, musical instruments or other technical means, such as projection equipment, to convey their message.
- Assemblies may entail the temporary erection of structures, including sound systems, to reach their audience or otherwise achieve their purpose.

### CAN THE AUTHORITIES MAKE YOU COVER THEIR COSTS? **No!**

- Requirements for participants or organisers either to arrange for or to contribute towards the costs of policing or security, medical assistance or cleaning, or other public services associated with peaceful assemblies, are generally not compatible with international law.





## CHARM-AFRICA:

A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PLATFORM FOR COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY  
Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some of the countries with the worst civic space conditions in the world. As key agents of democracy, media and rights-based CSOs are often the first to encounter restrictions. Along with journalists, HRDs and protest leaders, women and those advocating for women's rights, labour rights, sexual rights and environmental rights are among the most affected. The Consortium for Human Rights and Media Development in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM-Africa) works collectively to protect democratic space and build resilience among civil society and independent media in this volatile region.

CIVICUS has been both a member and the coordinator of CHARM-Africa since October 2019. Over time, collaboration among partners has increased thanks to the integration of co-design and co-facilitation methodologies in programme planning and implementation, the development of relationships and growing awareness of each partner's expertise and strengths. New partners continue to bring new energy and ideas: for example, newcomer Magamba Network's successful digital mobilisation campaigns inspired other consortium partners to test this approach.



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## CRISIS RESPONSE FUND:

### EMERGENCY RESOURCING CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE

Offered by CIVICUS as part of the Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund since 2011, the Crisis Response Fund provides urgent funding to civil society actors facing restrictions on the freedoms of association or assembly to conduct advocacy activities (advocacy grants) or support their resilience (resiliency grants). This year 16 grants of US\$10,000 on average were given, with an increased number going to prioritised groups that included feminist and Indigenous organisations. Using these grants, partners have influenced policies and attitudes towards the freedoms of peaceful assembly and association. They provided psychosocial support, conducted digital and physical security audits and training, developed strategies and organised multi-stakeholder advocacy meetings and civil society training, among other activities. Next year, the Fund will explore ways to provide more sustained support to HRDs and CSOs.



ACCORDING TO OUR RESEARCH, THE TOP VIOLATION OF CIVIC RIGHTS IN THE PAST YEAR WAS THE DETENTION OF PROTESTERS.

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## **FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY:** STRENGTHENING COLLECTIVE ACTION

According to our research, the top violation of civic rights in the past year was the detention of protesters. We therefore worked to strengthen both our monitoring and advocacy efforts to fight this trend and expand the freedom of peaceful assembly (FoPA). The CIVICUS Monitor's methodology was updated to sharpen the FoPA indicator, and CIVICUS Lens has provided extensive analysis of protest movements. We expanded our work to influence, inform and socialise international legal norms and standards on FoPA, and participated in strategic litigation related to the arbitrary detention and abuse of protesters. The latest season of the CIVICUS Voices podcast focused on FoPA and #StandAsMyWitness featured several protesters facing judicial persecution.

We drew from our diverse and innovative networks to learn how to enhance our role in the broader ecosystem of actors working on FoPA. Through the FoPA Global Resource Hub, we facilitated convening spaces to connect technical partners, regional platforms and movements on a range of issues related to FoPA. We worked with regional platforms to document strategic approaches to strengthen national protection mechanisms. We supported the development of a directory of resources for protest movements and a toolbox of alternative models of financial support. We also worked with partners to identify innovative local solutions that can be transferred to other regions, such as the intersectional and transfeminist approach to the right to protest.





# GOAL 2:

## STRENGTHENING THE POWER OF PEOPLE TO ORGANISE, MOBILISE AND TAKE ACTION

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We validated new ways to support activists and organisations through improved funding and non-financial support mechanisms and by establishing better relationships with multiple stakeholders. We also supported local civil society's advocacy efforts to call for and catalyse long-term reforms in civil society resourcing. We improved our understanding of how civil society activism can be sustained and supported both online and offline, while also launching our first-ever peer-to-peer online and secure networking platform.

### PRIORITY INITIATIVES

#### **ONLINE COMMUNITY:** INCREASING PEER LINKAGES

For several years, CIVICUS members have asked to connect directly with one another for mutual learning, exchange and solidarity. After an extensive co-design process, we launched the new CIVICUS Online Community. We verified and opened up participation to more than 600 members, created regional and thematic groups, enabled spaces for self-paced and instructional learning, and held community-building and networking sessions. One year on, we are starting to see several changes:

- Strategy replication: Seeing that partners and members were trying to develop similar solutions for the similar

problems their constituencies faced, we sourced and shared best practices regarding human-centred design, user experience research, community building and management, digital security and diversity and inclusion.

- Adoption of research outcomes: Members are using the platform to access CIVICUS's research outcomes. The CIVICUS Online Community is among the top five sites driving traffic to the CIVICUS Monitor.
- Continuous engagement and mobilisation: The CIVICUS Online Community consistently disseminates calls to solidary action, campaigns and consultations. >>



IT'S BEEN ONE YEAR SINCE WE LAUNCHED, AND WE ARE STARTING TO SEE THE IMPACT. AMONG OTHER ACTIVITIES, WE VERIFIED AND ONBOARDED 600+ MEMBERS, CREATED REGIONAL AND THEMATIC GROUPS, ENABLED SPACES FOR SELF-PACED AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING, AND HELD COMMUNITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING SESSIONS.

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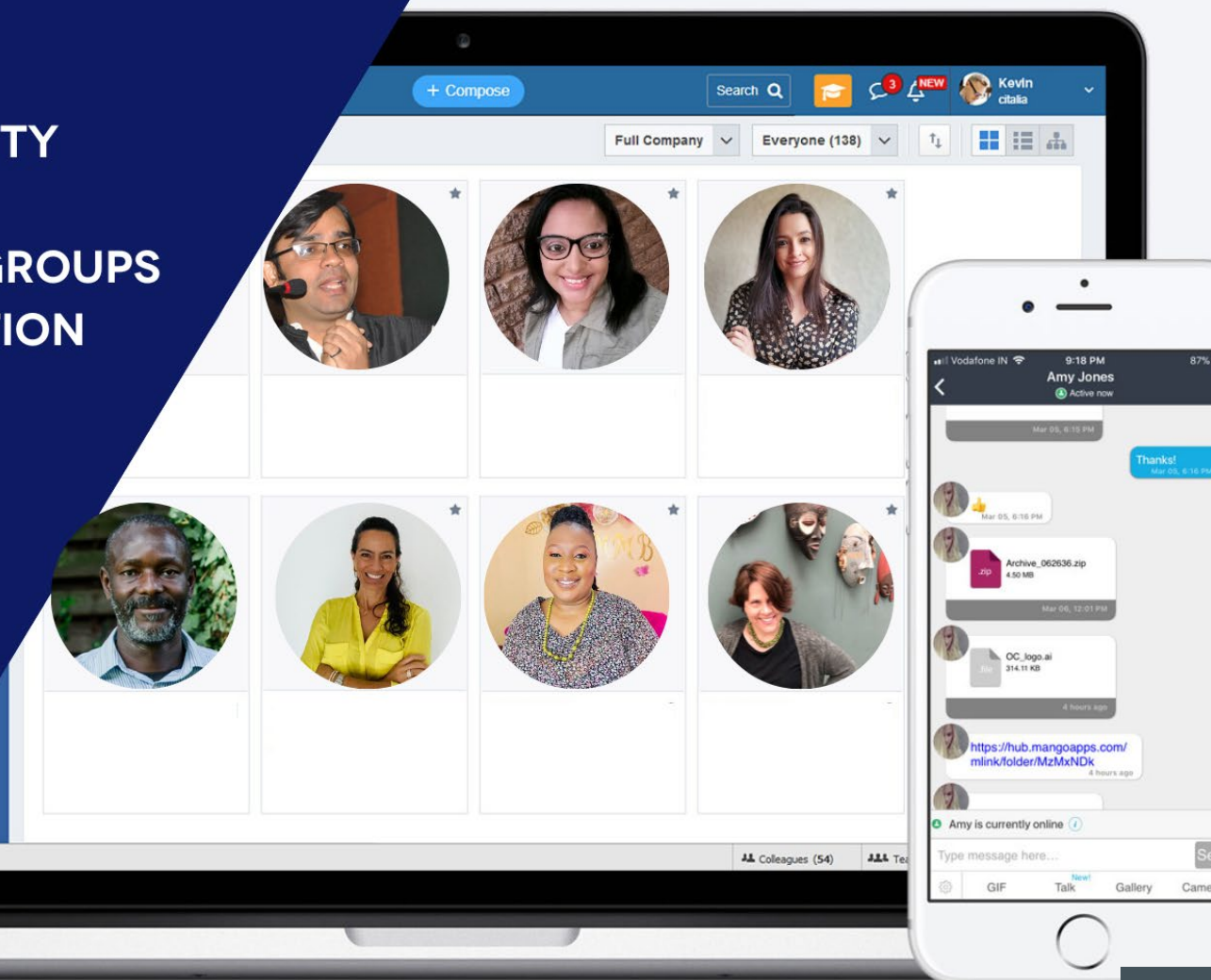
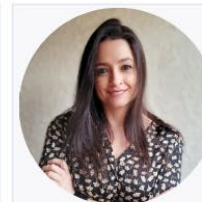
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## 600+ ON THE ONLINE COMMUNITY

- REGIONAL & THEMATIC GROUPS
- CAMPAIGN COLLABORATION
- NETWORKING SESSIONS
- JOINT ADVOCACY
- ONLINE LEARNING
- SHARE STORIES





“ A KEY  
LESSON  
WAS THAT  
PRIORITIES NEED  
TO BE ADAPTABLE  
AND SHOULD  
BE GUIDED  
BY CONTEXT,  
ORGANISATIONAL  
PRIORITIES  
AND SHIFTING  
REALITIES.

## **REBUILDING FOR GOOD:** LEARNING FROM THE PANDEMIC

In June 2020, CIVICUS, the Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) and the Charities Aid Foundation published Rebuilding for Good, a practical guide for governments and other stakeholders wishing to sustain and strengthen civil society as part of COVID-19 rebuilding and recovery efforts. To move from theory to practice, in the past year, three AGNA members in Argentina, Barbados and Ghana received subgrants to hold consultations with members, government officials, private companies and other stakeholders using the Rebuilding for Good framework and methodology. Subgrantees shared their reflections with the wider AGNA community

at a webinar in February 2022. A key lesson was that priorities need to be adaptable and should be guided by context, organisational priorities and shifting realities. Another important reflection was that a powerful and inspiring narrative that articulates the contributions of a fully enabled civil society would reinforce advocacy for more robust and effective civil society support with other stakeholders. With this in mind, CIVICUS will support AGNA members to co-create a unifying vision and narrative and adapt and pilot it in their respective contexts. More than 15 AGNA members have expressed interest in taking part in this project.

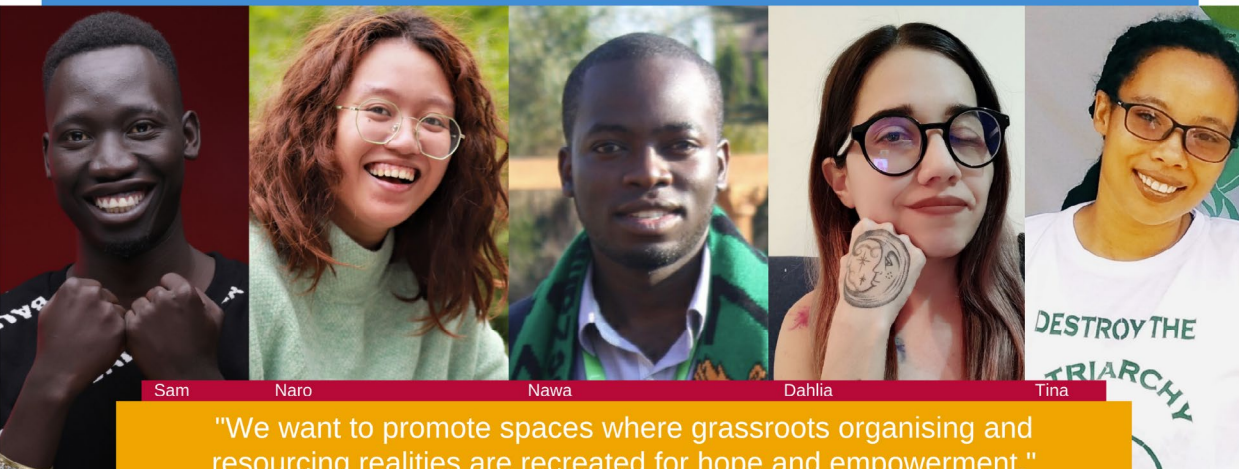


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MEET THE

## GRASSROOTS CHANGEMAKERS



Sam

Naro

Nawa

Dahlia

Tina

"We want to promote spaces where grassroots organising and resourcing realities are recreated for hope and empowerment."

## GRASSROOTS SOLIDARITY REVOLUTION:

## IMPROVING RESOURCING FOR FRONTLINE CHANGE-SEEKERS

CIVICUS' civil society resourcing workstream continues to use the alliance's networks, visibility and credibility with various stakeholders to advocate for more and better resources for civil society around the world, and especially for smaller, informal and change-seeking groups at the frontlines of change and resistance. The Grassroots Solidarity Revolution campaign has provided grassroots activists a space to strengthen their understanding of the international funding system for civil society, develop skills and confidence to engage with national and international donors and enablers, and build their own narrative to advocate for their resourcing needs. The activists who co-created the campaign, known as the Grassroots Changemakers, viewed the experience as empowering and rated it with a 100 Net Promoter Score, showing how they found this experience highly valuable and empowering.

“ I HAVE BECOME MORE CONFIDENT ON ISSUES RELATING TO ADVOCACY FOR GRASSROOTS RESOURCING. I AM ALSO ABLE TO SPEAK WITH AUTHORITY AND TO MAKE DECISIONS ON WHAT TO LET GO OF WITH FUNDERS. I FEEL MY ADVOCACY HAS GONE GLOBAL NOW BECAUSE OF THIS CAMPAIGN.

AMUEL SEBIT, TALENT INITIATIVE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH SUDAN  
YOUTH: ADVANCING MEANINGFUL

**DONORS**  
Are you really supporting  
grassroots activists?







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## YOUTH:

### ADVANCING MEANINGFUL INCLUSION AND STRENGTHENING YOUTH POWER

Since 2016, CIVICUS Youth (CIVICUS members under 30 years of age) has connected young social changemakers from grassroots groups and non-registered collectives and individual activists working in restricted civic space, giving them tools to grow as civil society innovators and fostering meaningful inclusion.

CIVICUS Youth has long tested approaches to resourcing youth activism and documented learnings to influence the funding ecosystem. It has demonstrated the importance of trust-based, flexible and equitable partnerships between young people and traditional philanthropic organisations. Both challenges and learnings were compiled in the Youth Playbook.

In the past year, CIVICUS Youth documented good practices to address the challenges mapped in the playbook through projects like the CIVICUS Youth Action

Lab and research initiatives coordinated through the CIVICUS Youth Action Team. It found practices such as compensation, community-led reporting, interactive and inclusive convening and participatory youth-led research are all useful ways to create meaningful inclusive spaces for young people.

This has inspired change in the funding ecosystem. CIVICUS has established compensation for the participation of grassroots members in CIVICUS activities, and some donors have also changed their compensation practices. Global Fund for Children, for example, said the preview of CIVICUS Youth's upcoming publication, "Recommended Framework for Volunteerism and Compensation for Young People," inspired them to start providing stipends to their youth volunteers and develop an organisational compensation policy.



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# DONOR FINDER

Curated list of progressive donors supporting activists, civil society organisations and small, informal civil society groups

## DONOR FINDER AND BUILDING RESPONSES TOGETHER: MAKING FUNDING MORE RELEVANT AND ACCESSIBLE

CSOs and activists around the world face countless barriers to accessing information on relevant donors and funding opportunities. That is why in 2021 CIVICUS created the Donor Finder. Designed based on feedback from grassroots activists, the resource has been a greatly appreciated and sought out publication because it provides a curated list of progressive donors and enablers offering funding and non-financial resources to civil society, including small and informal groups and individual activists. It offers complete profiles of donors that have agreed to be listed, organised by region, and helps users identify donors aligned with specific areas of work and needs. It is available in English, French and Spanish and is democratising access to information about



fundors and funding opportunities. Over the past year, we worked to expand and update it. The Building Responses Together collective is a collaboration platform co-designed and piloted in 2019 by a diverse group of rapid response mechanisms that analysed the challenges in the rapid response support ecosystem. Its aim is to enhance the speed, access, responsiveness, reach and complementarity of the support available. >>

# INSPIRATION

# Are you a funder supporting civil society's brave work?

This is your opportunity to be featured in our growing directory of progressive donors, the Donor Finder!

Email us at [csresourcing@civicus.org](mailto:csresourcing@civicus.org) if you want to be part of it.



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It does so by facilitating secure partner verification, referring partners to the most appropriate mechanism to address immediate threats, supporting partners with match-funding for impactful work that requires additional resources and avoiding duplication and double-funding. Going forward, the intention is to use the platform to identify and build joint initiatives to respond to emergencies in a proactive and cohesive way and to leverage

strategic joint advocacy around issues of common interest. CIVICUS led the initial stages of co-designing and prototyping, but the testing phase of the pilot is now being overseen by a steering group of three elected member organisations with a dedicated coordinator recruited by Global Focus, an association of Danish NGOs and host of the Claim Your Space rapid response mechanism for civil society and human rights defenders at risk.

CIVICUS LED THE INITIAL STAGES OF CO-DESIGNING AND PROTOTYPING, BUT THE TESTING PHASE OF THE PILOT IS NOW OVERSEEN BY A STEERING GROUP FROM THREE ELECTED MEMBER ORGANISATIONS WITH A DEDICATED COORDINATOR RECRUITED BY GLOBAL FOCUS.





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## SOLIDARITY FUND: SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY BOTH CIVIC SPACE RESTRICTIONS AND STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION

A central tenet of membership in the CIVICUS alliance is belonging to a global movement of activists standing in solidarity with one another. In this spirit, the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF) facilitates member-led and member-resourced support to members that struggle to access the resources they need, due to civic space restrictions, their organising characteristics or simply because of who they are and the powers they challenge. The Fund was launched in

2019 and has provided financial support to 44 members to date. This year it provided core or initiative-based funding to eight members from Afghanistan, Colombia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe, who developed activities ranging from ethical hackerism and activism to increasing access to opportunities and rights by young people, women, trans people, immigrant communities and people with disabilities. >>

OUR GRANTEE'S  
PROGRESS IS  
NOT LINEAR AND  
THAT OFTEN  
THEIR JOURNEY  
IS MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN  
ANY EXPECTED  
OUTCOME.



### WHAT IS THE CIVICUS SOLIDARITY FUND?

The CSF is a member-led and member-resourced fund that aims to promote civil society diversity and resilience and seeks to provide meaningful resources and support to members in need through flexible grants.



# LESSON





**CIVICUS**

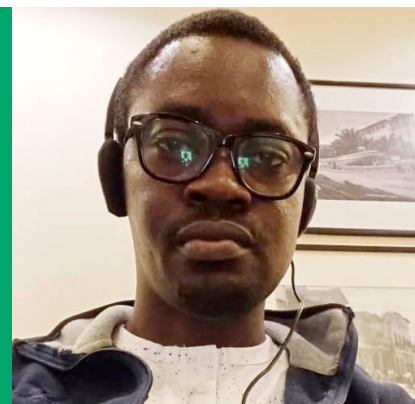
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Last year, we asked our members about the costs and barriers they face when applying to the CSF. We learned much about trust, power dynamics, cultures of competition and accountability practices. In response, we made the grant application process more accessible and straightforward and established new reporting requirements and monitoring methods that acknowledge that our grantees' progress is not linear and that

often their journey is more important than any expected outcome. Our efforts saw a reduction in the gender gap of applicants and a rise in applications from constituency-led groups. As it provided mentorship to strengthen resource mobilisation capacities and opportunities for grantees to connect, learn, share and build relationships, the Fund also became a community.



THE NETWORKING, IDEA SHARING, AND BIMONTHLY CHECK-INS AIDED OUR WORK AS AN ORGANISATION TO LEARN CLEARLY FROM WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING AND TO ALSO BENEFIT FROM VALIDATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING ON RESOURCE MOBILISATION. GRANTEE-MEMBER FROM NIGERIA



IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE FUNDING WAS NOT ONLY FINANCIAL BUT ALSO CONSIDERED THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THEIR GRANTEE-MEMBERS. I LOVED HOW I FOUND A GROUP OF GREAT FRIENDS, AND I ADMIRE THEIR WORK. THE CSF TEAM WAS ALSO SO SUPPORTIVE AND CARING, I DIDN'T FEEL ABANDONED DURING THIS TIME. GRANTEE-MEMBER FROM IRAN.



# GOAL 3:

EMPOWERING A MORE ACCOUNTABLE,  
INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY

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We supported civil society to become more accountable, effective and innovative by encouraging collaboration among our alliance members and partners. CIVICUS outputs and services were developed in partnership with experts within the alliance, with a focus on smaller, less formal groups and movements in the global south. We saw the results of seven years of a sustained co-creation journey with Innovation for Change (I4C), increased autonomy, collective action and impact. We also realised the articulation of a digital strategy that builds power to take effective action for enhancing civic space by responding to digital opportunities and threats as an alliance.



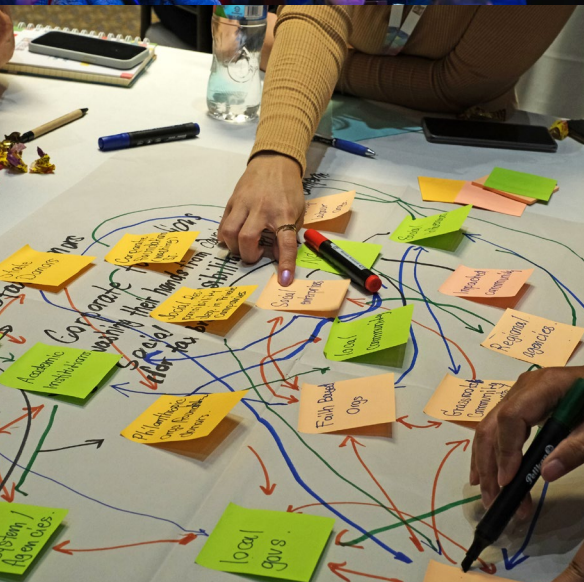
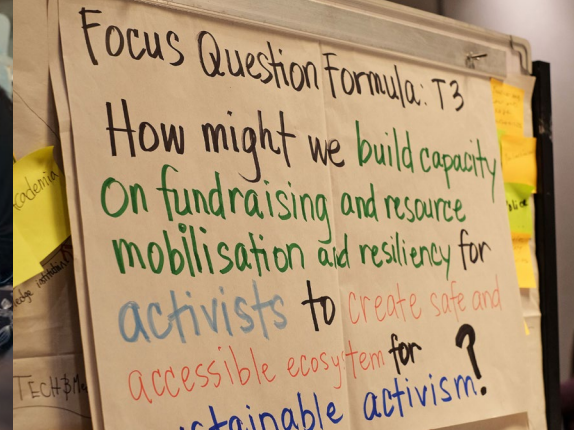
## INNOVATION FOR CHANGE (I4C): STRENGTHENING REGIONAL RESPONSES

Initiated in 2015 through a global co-creation process, I4C provides physical and online spaces through regional hubs in Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific and South Asia. These come together into an interconnected global network of people and organisations working collectively to protect and expand civic space.

As many governments used COVID-19 as an excuse to curb dissent and silence critics, I4C adapted its co-design methodology to an online format and used it to support civil society interventions to prevent excluded groups experiencing

further marginalisation. Key outcomes included: the use of open-source tools to document and monitor human rights violations, including the right to peaceful assembly and digital rights; the use of digital security chatbots to counter disinformation; and the use of inclusive programming to increase access to information, including Vietnam's first-ever sign language news programme. Innovation and persistence through the pandemic further entrenched civil society's role as a safety net for the most vulnerable. The I4C COVID-19 response included more than 100 activities and reached more than 100,000 people in over 40 countries.









THANK YOU FOR THIS FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE, IT'S ALWAYS GREAT TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE LIKEMINDED PEOPLE SOMEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD.  
FACILITATOR OF THE DIALOGUE

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### **I4C: REALISING LOCALLY-LED AND SUSTAINABLE CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

This year saw yet another milestone in the evolution of the I4C network, which successfully transitioned from significant reliance on CIVICUS's operational and technical support to self-regulation and self-sustainability. The CIVICUS I4C team supported the hubs through this process by developing and institutionalising policies to strengthen the network's operations and credibility while still providing space for the hubs to advance specific areas of work. This was the culmination of a facilitated co-creation journey in which local actors defined their priorities and how they wanted to collaborate to expand civic space on their own terms. Now CIVICUS is transitioning too: from guiding and incubating to being an ally for a network and a series of regional hubs that operate autonomously.

### **CREATIVE ACTIVISM AND RESILIENCE: COLLECTIVE LEARNING TOWARDS EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

In November 2022, CIVICUS organised a Creative Activism workshop for its Spanish-speaking members from Latin America and the Caribbean. Its goal was to offer new and creative ways of engaging stakeholders and making advocacy efforts more impactful and effective. We also facilitated spaces for peer learning and sharing about resilience. Discussion was facilitated by CIVICUS members who shared stories of resilience to inform and inspire their peers. These spaces contributed to a sense of community.





*Innovation Awards winner Together! uses music and technology to create an interactive and immersive experience to challenge negative stereotypes in Ethiopia about the capabilities of people with visual impairments.*



## INNOVATION AWARDS:

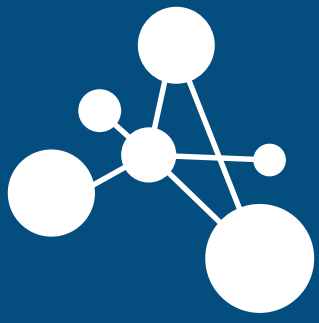
### CELEBRATING LOCAL LEADERS ADVANCING PEOPLE POWER

The 2021 Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards honoured the power of people to demand change for a more just, inclusive and sustainable world. Through a public open call, submissions were accepted for innovative work for people power, human rights and social justice. After receiving an impressive 5,334 endorsements during the public support campaign for finalists, an external committee of civil society leaders and activists with thematic expertise reviewed and selected seven winners. We learned a lot from the Innovation Awards – from how to use activism to capture people’s hearts and create positive narratives to change people’s minds, to how to open up spaces and amplify voices that

have been excluded or silenced by fear of terrorism, violence and repression. We learned that practising self and collective care is vital to keep us going as individuals and to make our activism sustainable in the long term. We also learned that initiatives like the Innovation Awards provide greater visibility and recognition for local civil society and its impact. Recognition by CIVICUS signals positively to other international organisations and funders: winners of the Innovation Awards were approached more by international organisations and funders and found themselves considered for new opportunities to receive funding, speak at conferences and participate in other awards and competitions.



*Innovation Awards winner Let’s Walk Uganda is a grassroots LGBTQI+ movement whose community members designed an app called KuchuCare to facilitate access to vital health services while circumventing discrimination at healthcare facilities.*



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“ HIGH  
DEMAND

LED TO THE  
CREATION OF THE  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
ACCELERATOR  
COURSE.  
HOSTED ON THE  
CIVICUS ONLINE  
COMMUNITY  
PLATFORM,  
THIS COURSE IS  
THE LARGEST  
ONLINE TRAINING  
ACTIVITY CIVICUS  
HAS EVER HELD,  
WITH HUNDREDS  
OF PARTICIPANTS  
ACTIVELY  
ENGAGING IN  
BOTH ENGLISH  
AND FRENCH.

### **RESILIENT ROOTS:**

#### SCALING PILOT INITIATIVES TO CORE PROGRAMMES AND NETWORKS

The Resilient Roots pilot project was initiated in 2017 to help CSOs enhance accountability to the communities they exist to serve and support, by better communicating who they are and what they do (giving account), listening to feedback and organising dialogues about how to improve (taking account), and allowing more direct influence over their strategies and decision making (being held to account). The initiative has included in-depth learning journeys with 15 national partners, along with internal work to improve CIVICUS's own accountability to our members, partners and staff.

In 2021-2022, Resilient Roots engaged with diverse member communities, including youth and grassroots organisations, to understand how accountability works in their contexts and be able to better support them. High demand

led to the creation of the Accountability Accelerator course. Hosted on the CIVICUS Online Community platform, this course is the largest online training activity CIVICUS has ever held, with hundreds of participants actively engaging in both English and French. Several participants have since shared examples of how they have used the knowledge acquired back at their organisations – including the MenEngage Alliance, which implemented new accountability standards.

This year also saw the successful transition of Resilient Roots as a pilot project to a fully integrated approach – that of constituency accountability – reflected in CIVICUS' core policies and practices, including as one of the three pillars of the new CIVICUS membership learning experience.



AS A PRELIMINARY  
STEP FOR  
DEFINING  
OUR DIGITAL  
STRATEGY, WE  
HAVE ANALYSED  
THE DIGITAL  
ECOSYSTEM  
OUR MEMBERS  
INHABIT.



## **DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS STRATEGY:** BUILDING POWER FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

The ongoing digital transformation provides both new tools for repression and new opportunities for activism. The exercise of digital rights and the use of digital technologies to expand civic and democratic freedoms, both offline and online, has therefore become a priority for CIVICUS.

As a preliminary step for defining our digital strategy, we have analysed the digital ecosystem our members inhabit. Desk research, in-depth interviews with members, partners and staff, and hundreds of

survey responses helped us better understand the digital contexts, experiences, needs and priorities of the alliance. This was an important step to understand what is enabling and what is inhibiting our members to build power and take effective action and how we should respond. We are now working on the basis of the research findings and recommendations to identify a cohort of members and partners willing to help us further develop our digital strategy and co-design accompanying activities to deliver it.

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# GOAL 4:

## BUILDING A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE ORGANISATION

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We continued to improve CIVICUS' systems and processes to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and function in both a streamlined and holistic way to allow us to be a credible, trustworthy and accountable organisation to all our stakeholders. The institutional focus of the final year of the Strategic Plan was primarily dedicated to concluding the Strategy Amendment Process that began in 2020, resulting in the approval of our refreshed Strategic Plan in April 2022.

The amendment process also allowed us to make progress on mid-term strategy review recommendations, including a revised theory of change, development of a Programme Quality Initiative framework, uptake of the Online Community and continually strengthening policies and procedures. We were also able to make progress on our human resources workplan on nurturing talent and promoting a work culture to ensure equity through updated policies and procedures in the post-COVID-19 context.

### **AMENDED STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027**

CIVICUS updated its strategy during this reporting period. The strategy development process focused on enhancing our ability to transform (having a stronger focus on driving

systems change), reform (ensuring our work is informed by the principles of rights and justice) and be informed (expanding our mechanisms for co-creation and bottom-up approaches). We looked at our successes and challenges to date against the developments in civic space across the last 10 years. In addition to reflecting on the past and present, we used existing foresight analysis from members, partners and stakeholders about what the future might hold and how our strategy could remain relevant in different scenarios. The refreshed plan is expected to strengthen our contribution to change, actively focusing on contemporary challenges that we face and engaging more effectively with opportunities to strengthen and amplify civil society's interventions and outcomes. >>



OUR NEW STRATEGY HAS A SINGLE GOAL STATEMENT: TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND CIVIC ACTION FOR EXPANDED CIVIC AND DEMOCRATIC SPACE.

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Generate timely knowledge and analyses

2

Coordinate targeted advocacy

3

Contribute to stronger emergency and sustained support ecosystems

4

Strengthen public discourse and reinforce narratives

5

Building counter-power with most affected groups

## OUR 5 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The new strategy has several novel features. We now have a single goal statement: to strengthen civil society and civic action for expanded civic and democratic space. The goal reflects our emphasis on actions that are not just about defending but also improving civic and democratic freedoms through a combination of influencing, organising and solidarity interventions. There is an explicit focus on working with and for groups affected by the combined impact of civic space restrictions and structural forms of discrimination, which is integrated across the revised strategy. This implies

a greater emphasis on solidarity and alliance building across all levels of our work, including within the membership, and a stronger understanding of civic and democratic freedom issues through a social justice lens. Additionally, we have a clearer articulation of our contributions to long-term, systemic change as captured in four outcome statements that connect and consolidate the impact of our work across all levels. Our core objectives will be the basis for a comprehensive framework to measure results and communicate lessons from our progress more effectively.



## PROGRESSING OUR COMMITMENTS TO GENDER AND RACIAL JUSTICE

CIVICUS is committed to creating a work environment that is characterised by mutual trust and respect, where the values, behaviours and practices in the organisation affirm and support the inclusion of all its staff, members and partners as it pursues its mission. As part of a racial justice review, a series of conversations were held with staff and board members in 2020 and 2021 to agree on system-wide changes that needed to be pursued in alignment with our values and mission. During this period, an action plan to address the priorities that emerged from these conversations was adopted, including time-bound steps to improve processes related

to recruitment, pay parity and career progression. This work is in progress with the foundation laid for the journey towards racial justice.

As part of this objective, the position of an Equity and Engagement Officer was appointed in this period. Efforts to develop our understanding of intersectional outcomes related to diversity, inclusion and equity outcomes are also captured in our annual reports to Accountable Now, which are reviewed by an independent panel that also makes recommendations for improvement.

As part of our commitment to gender and racial justice, CIVICUS signed up for the Fair Share commitment in >>

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AS PART OF THIS OBJECTIVE, THE POSITION OF AN EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER WAS APPOINTED IN THIS PERIOD.

March 2019. During the year in review, CIVICUS again reached the top 10 organisations in the Fair Share Monitor, ranking seventh out of 61 organisations that shared their data. In terms of the practical challenges looking forward, our interpretation of and engagement with the Fair Share commitment will need to become more nuanced to integrate and make progress on other essential dimensions of diversity and inclusion. This includes reflecting on how we can be more explicit about the inclusion of women from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and proactively adopt policies and practices that encourage non-binary notions of gender in our workplaces.

CIVICUS' remuneration policy, approved in March 2021, was fully implemented over the reporting period. We are now focusing on the development of a composite learning and development framework. The purpose of the framework is to unlock leadership at all levels and grow talent across the organisation, while also advancing our gender and racial justice commitments. Core components of this framework include a revised performance management system, succession planning and talent management processes to strengthen the capabilities and capacities of all staff for them to contribute more effectively to CIVICUS' vision and mission.





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## **STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

CIVICUS introduced several new systems and further integrated existing systems to improve our ability to deliver on our project activities and CIVICUS' objectives. For example, various MicroSoft Teams Bots and Smartsheet Dashboards were developed to improve internal communication of processes. In addition, ContractWorks, a platform offering secure e-signature and document management capabilities, reduced the completion time for signing contracts to under three days on average, where turnaround time used to be around two weeks, with significant manual intervention required. ContractWorks also adds additional security to the management of signatures and improves the audit trail of agreements and other signed documents. These processes also allowed us to strengthen our sub-granting process by simplifying the process for partners, reducing delays between signatures and reducing manual capacity required to handle agreements.

## **PROGRESS AGAINST ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITMENTS**

In addition to the accountability objectives advanced through the Resilient Roots initiative, CIVICUS is a member of Accountable Now and reports annually against their 12 accountability commitments. Based on our last substantive report and feedback from the Accountable Now independent review panel, this year we committed to make progress in three key areas:

### **RAISING AWARENESS OF OUR INTERNAL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

Throughout this year we have continued to socialise a range of formal and informal feedback mechanisms with staff to ensure that the issues raised are captured and processed more systematically. We have raised staff awareness about existing frameworks and policies to address grievances by running a series of staff workshops on sexual harassment, grievance policy and procedure, contract management awareness and sensitivity, negotiation and mediation. In addition, we have reviewed our grievance policy to incorporate mediation steps. Line managers have been upskilled to resolve grievances without escalating them to the human resource team. Existing platforms such as the Operation Management Forum, People and Organisation quarterly convenings and monthly staff meetings have also been more actively used to raise, discuss and address feedback. >>



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We will continue to roll out training on sensitivity and conflict resolution by inviting external experts into the organisation to transfer learning, hosting brown bag staff cultural awareness sessions, incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion issues in all staff meetings, and reviewing the representation of cross-organisational platforms and making them more reflective of our membership, thus reducing culture-related grievances shared with line managers and the human resources team.

#### UPDATING OUR INTEGRATED RESULTS FRAMEWORK TO BETTER DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS AGAINST OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Inspired by the CIVICUS revised Strategic Plan 2022-2027, our accompanying integrated results framework (IRF) raises our ambition of understanding and articulating our contribution to systemic change and shifts our focus to better help us ultimately measure our success based on how all aspects of our work enable the public and policy-makers to trust and reinforce civil society's work and impact. The IRF will help us measure and monitor progress against our strategic objectives,

based on evidence and feedback from our stakeholders, and capture evidence of observable change in relation to our long-term outcomes. Another key IRF component provides for a robust process of membership and stakeholder engagement on our strategic progress to ensure continued opportunities to enhance civil society strategy and impact across the alliance. The IRF provides an opportunity to hold ourselves accountable to our stakeholders and will also help us to tell our collective narrative of change for external outreach and engagement. It will become an important tool to communicate what we are doing and why we are doing it. The IRF is currently in development and due to be finalised in December 2022.

#### MAINSTREAMING RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES TO MINIMISE NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON STAKEHOLDERS

As outlined in the CIVICUS Risk Policy and Framework, risk identification and management at CIVICUS takes a bottom-up approach where teams identify and classify risks associated with the delivery of their work and put mitigation strategies in place. Of particular concern is how we are managing risks >>



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that could negatively impact our various stakeholders. We have a range of examples of how teams have identified and managed risks on behalf of our key constituents:

- Stakeholder engagement practices have been adopted to mitigate risks associated with mental health and wellbeing through regular one-on-one check-ins and spaces for community building and peer support for grassroots and youth activists.
- Strict protocols around communications and information sharing have been developed and deployed when working with high-risk individuals and organisations in restrictive contexts whose safety could be compromised by visibly working on human rights issues or with an international organisation such as CIVICUS.

- The Data and Digital Security Group is working with teams across the organisation to understand how they engage with, use and store stakeholders' personal data to ensure compliance with data privacy policies and to sense-check if there are sufficient measures in place to meet our duty of care in terms of data security and protection.

In the next year, we will continue to work with teams to improve our understanding of the different kinds of risk our stakeholders face when engaging with us and create organisational awareness of tools and tactics for mitigating these risks. We also aim to develop comprehensive guidelines for understanding and addressing risk to stakeholders that will be embedded in institutional processes and frameworks to ensure that systematic usage, reflection and updates occur.



IN THE NEXT YEAR, WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH TEAMS TO IMPROVE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF RISK OUR STAKEHOLDERS FACE WHEN ENGAGING WITH US AND CREATE ORGANISATIONAL AWARENESS OF TOOLS AND TACTICS FOR MITIGATING THESE RISKS.





# ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES

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## Updating organisational policies and procedures in a post-COVID world

Over the last two years, our Duty of Care team has sought various ways of supporting staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we prepare to move back to the adjusted new normal, we continue discussions around which provisions we can mainstream and incorporate more substantively into our adjusted ways of working. For example, staff are eager to retain some of the flexibility that the COVID-19 era has introduced into the workspace.

Our Conditions of Employment aim to ensure that flexible work arrangements are articulated in an institutional document that can be applied consistently. Further to the completion of the Return to Office Guidelines and Vaccination Policy, the Duty of Care team took measures to enable a safe return to CIVICUS headquarters in April 2022 for approximately 15 colleagues. The Duty of Care team also rolled out an updated process for in-country events in April 2022, supported by appropriate guidelines and assessments.

### DATA SECURITY

With recommendations from a data security audit in 2018, and the establishment of a data security working group in 2020, CIVICUS has continued to be proactive in securing the data of its members, partners and staff. The information

and technology (IT) team, together with a dedicated cross-organisational working group, focused on improving the reliability of our digital platforms and compliance with new privacy laws internationally and in South Africa. In May 2022, we completed this task of achieving 100 percent two factor authentication on all our mandatory CIVICUS IT platforms. Complementing this measure has been an emphasis on building a more integrated ecosystem of IT platforms, which has helped improve productivity and reduce the duplication of data across different areas of work. In the past year, we also initiated a process to develop a data security framework to assess the organisation's data protection practices and compliance with data security regulations, including the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation and South Africa's Protection of Personal Information Act. >>



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### **ITERATING ANNUAL PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING**

We used our annual planning, review and reflection processes to start aligning to our refreshed Strategic Plan, aligning our work to the new strategic objectives and theory of change. In addition to the development of the IRF, we have also launched an in-house monitoring and evaluation system to drive an intentional practice of learning and accountability. The revised system seeks to enhance our ability to capture and reflect on outcomes more systematically on an ongoing basis.

### **FINANCIAL AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

In the past year, we increased our capacity by hiring a Finance Manager based in the USA. This additional staff member enabled the finance team to provide better support to

colleagues in all geographical regions regardless of time zone. In addition, the increased capacity allowed the finance team to refine their ways of working and maintain a healthy working environment. CIVICUS also continued to strengthen and refine finance and compliance procedures and introduce proactive solutions to manage risk. This included enhancements for tracking our financial engagements with service providers, partners and others with whom we enter into financial relationships. New procedures surrounding changes in banking information were developed and we continued to review our risk list, which helps us monitor performance and factor past experiences into the identification of partners and services providers. The finance team also developed a new reporting platform to provide financial data to budget holders in a more timely and efficient manner.



NEW PROCEDURES SURROUNDING CHANGES IN BANKING INFORMATION WERE DEVELOPED, AND WE CONTINUED TO REVIEW OUR RISK LIST, WHICH HELPS US MONITOR PERFORMANCE AND FACTOR PAST EXPERIENCES INTO THE IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNERS AND SERVICES PROVIDERS.



# RESOURCING AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

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During the year in review, CIVICUS carried out a resourcing and sustainability review with staff and board members to reflect on our resource mobilisation activities over the previous strategic period for learning and accountability purposes.

At the beginning of the previous strategic period, we set ourselves the following targets: (i) to increase core/unrestricted funding to 60 per cent of total income, (ii) to ensure that no single donor makes up more than 25 per cent of our total income, (iii) to diversify our funding portfolio, both by securing new donors and introducing new sources of funding, (iv) to double our membership income and (v) to sub-grant at least 20 per cent of our income and increase the number of first-time recipients to 50 per cent.

In terms of progress towards these targets, we maintained a significant proportion of core funding, while also having a fairly healthy spread in terms of single donor exposure. We increased our sub-granting capacities and abilities to reach and support individual activists and smaller, less formal groups and movements.

We also improved our systems and processes for donor outreach and donor management through a series of pilot initiatives undertaken by the senior leadership team with consultancy support.

However, we did not manage to meet our ambitions in terms of finding new donors and new sources of funding, in part because we needed to prioritise stability and relationships with our core funding base in a period when the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruption. Despite this setback, feedback indicated that our principles and values-based approach to resource mobilisation that prioritised an alliance-wide, collaborative approach was appreciated by members, partners and supporters, and positioned CIVICUS to advance its diversification agenda in the new strategic period. For example, in the next financial year, we have invested in testing and learning >>





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related to income generation and individual giving through the I4C network and CIVICUS Solidarity Fund. We have also introduced learning partnerships with funders interested in understanding how to strengthen civil society and expand civic and democratic space. Finally, we have initiated an alliance-wide consultation and design process for programmes led by diverse local civil society actors in the global south that we hope will encourage pooled donor funds and greater collaboration across the civil society support ecosystem.

### **DONOR COORDINATION**

In 2013, CIVICUS adopted Donor Coordination Guidelines that outline how we will work with our donor partners for improved coordination and effectiveness, including common management requirements and annual donor coordination group meetings. CIVICUS is committed to ensuring that donors are fully informed of planned activities and are kept abreast of how various sources of funding contribute to organisational objectives and results, and our core supporters are committed to reviewing, harmonising and coordinating CIVICUS grant-making requirements

and donor activities. In addition, CIVICUS utilises the donor coordination group as a platform to advocate for more predictable and flexible support and democratic and direct grant-making for civil society at large, often engaging members of the donor coordination group in our civil society resourcing multi-stakeholder dialogues. Our donor coordination group was noted as a best practice by Accountable Now.

On 22 February 2022, we held our annual donor coordination and review meeting where we discussed key trends and how they informed organisational priorities, while also sharing related programme outcomes. In addition, we shared our work related to institutional strengthening, key updates related to the strategy amendment process and an in-depth presentation of CIVICUS' financial outlook. Also, during the year in review, we worked closely with donor coordination group members through special initiatives like the Diplomats and Defenders dialogues, emergency responses in Afghanistan and Ukraine and on key programmatic and influencing agendas related to freedom of peaceful assembly, locally-led development and tech for democracy. >>



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## **FORWARDING OF FUNDS**

CIVICUS total grant income for 1 July 2021- 30 June 2022 was US\$8,176,470 and US\$1,975,246 was awarded to subgrantees. Key programmes that utilised the forwarding of funds as a primary instrument in delivery included:

NUMBER OF GRANTS	PROGRAMME	TOTAL AMOUNT DISBURSED
11	CONSORTIUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA FREEDOMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	US\$678,401
50	CIVICUS MONITOR	US\$357,540
19	CRISIS RESPONSE FUND	US\$277,015
13	FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY	US\$178,200
17	STRENGTHENING 21ST CENTURY CITIZEN ACTION	US\$97,000
13	AFFINITY GROUP FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	US\$75,294

In addition, designated funding from membership fees and the sale of CIVICUS House was distributed to eight members through the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund, while seven local partners received financial awards of US\$5,000 each through the 2021 Nelson Mandela-Graça Machel Innovation Awards.



# SUBGRANTS

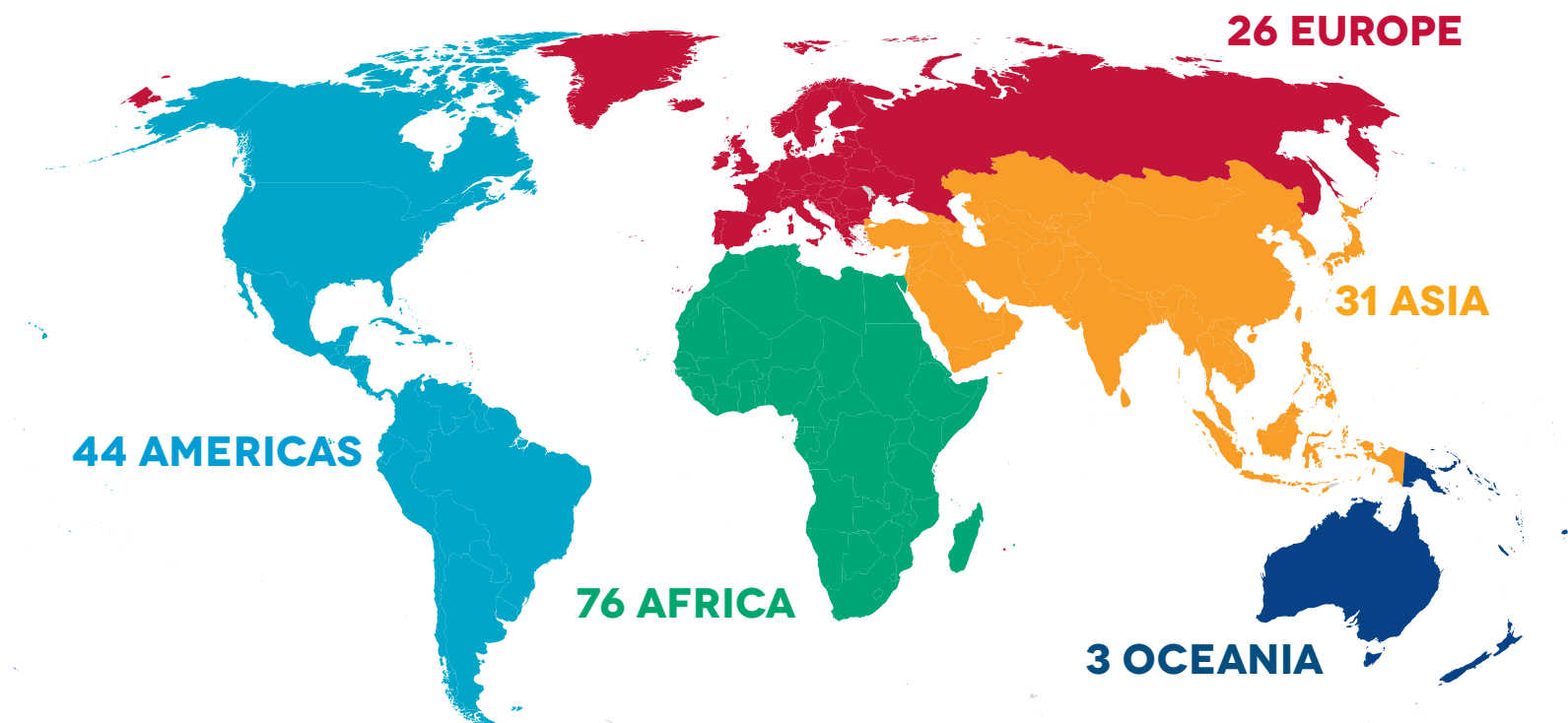
**135 PARTNERS IN 63 COUNTRIES, 180 SUBGRANTS**  
DISTRIBUTED ACROSS ALL REGIONS, INCLUDING:

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Approximately **24%** of CIVICUS's total grant income in 2021- 22 was passed on to CIVICUS members and partners, mostly in the global south.



Protect and promote civic freedoms and democratic values **US\$770,073**

Strengthening the power of people to mobilise, organise and take action **US\$489,694**

Enhancing civil society accountability, innovation and effectiveness **US\$715,479**

# CIVICUS SUPPORTERS

We believe that a stable relationship with our donors remains critical to CIVICUS' financial security. In 2021-22, we engaged donors through regular donor coordination group meetings, bilateral meetings and exchanges, representation in donor events and strategic collaboration on thematic and country-specific initiatives.

## 2021-22 DONORS



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation



Danish International Development Agency



European Commission



Ford Foundation



Freedom House



Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands



Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation



Open Society Foundations



Swedish International Development  
Cooperation Agency

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## CIVICUS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

## TOP 5 FUNDERS



Swedish International  
Development Cooperation Agency  
US\$4,489,302

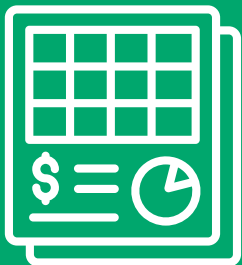
Ford Foundation  
US\$4,088,016

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
US\$2,406,574

Open Society Foundations  
US\$1,252,315

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark  
US\$1,213,755





# FINANCIALS

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## TOTAL INCOME: US\$8,591,824

Donor income:  
**US\$8,176,470**

Membership income:  
**US\$61,790**

Increase/(Decrease) from previous year:  
**US\$(2,687,728)**

## TOTAL EXPENDITURE: US\$8,546,288

Goal 1 (Defend) programmes:  
**US\$3,422,024**

Goal 2 (Strengthen) programmes:  
**US\$1,679,254**

Goal 3 (Innovate) programmes:  
**US\$1,946,636**

## BOARD RESERVE: US\$1,387,452

# THE ALLIANCE

CIVICUS is a membership alliance dedicated to strengthening civil society and citizen action throughout the world. CIVICUS total membership grew by 5% during 2021-22 to 13,419 members in 175 countries.

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AMERICAS

2,011

EUROPE

1,198

AFRICA

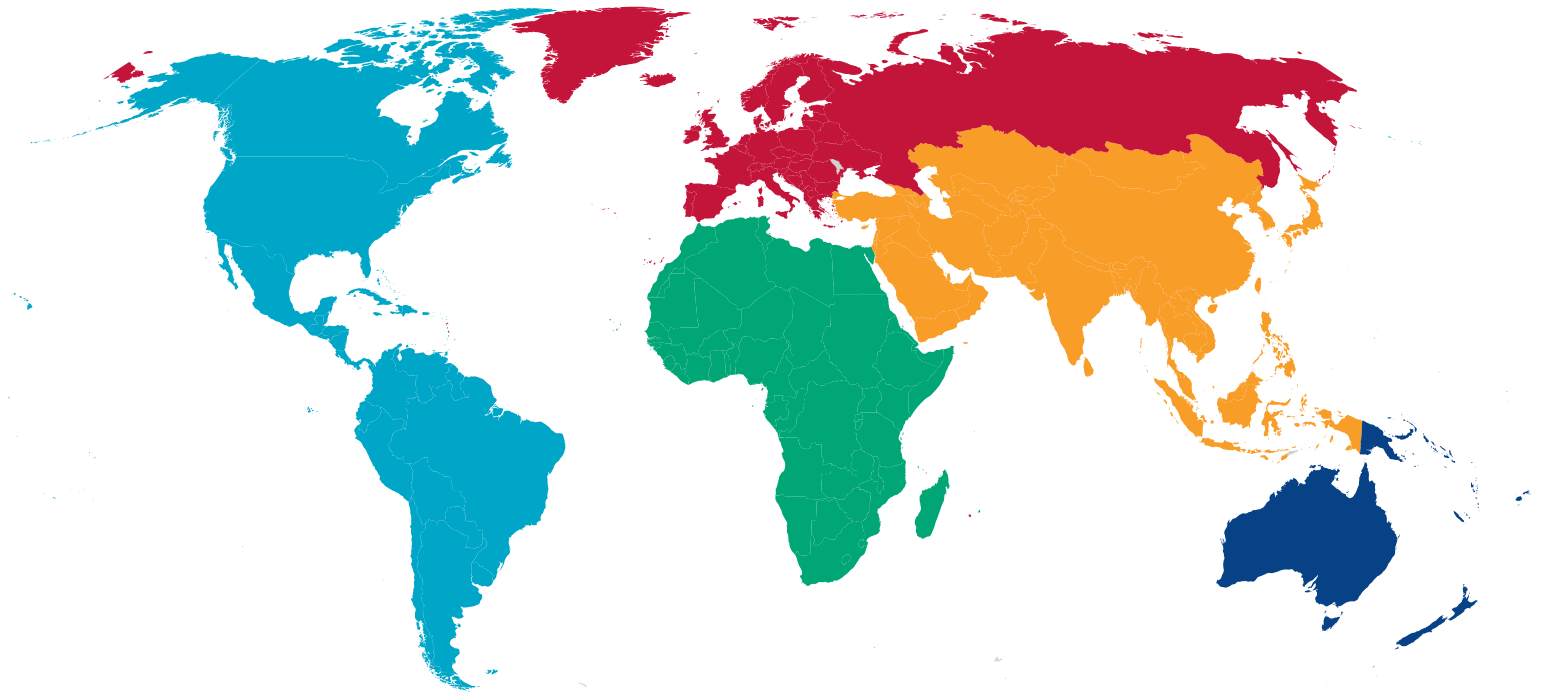
7,623

ASIA

2,242

OCEANIA

322



**252** VOTING  
MEMBERS



**4,510**  
ORGANISATIONS



**8,908**  
INDIVIDUALS



**175**  
COUNTRIES



**3,439** YOUTH  
(18–30 YEARS  
OF AGE)



**70+  
STAFF**



**15+  
LANGUAGES**

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**BASED IN  
20+ COUNTRIES**



**35+ BASED IN  
SOUTH AFRICA**



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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The CIVICUS Board of Directors leads the alliance and is elected from the membership by members. The 13-member board has a majority of women with members coming from six regions and representing a broad range of civil society and thematic interests.

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**Patricia Lerner**  
United States of America



**Ekenia Chifamba**  
Zimbabwe



**Sarah Rose**  
Britain



**Dylan Mathews**  
Britain



**Patricia Tatis**  
United States of America



**Omaid Sharifi**  
Turkey



**Cristina Palabay**  
Philippines



**Vandita Morarka**  
India



**Stellah Bosire**  
Kenya



**Sonia Kwami**  
Ghana



**Mario Roset**  
Argentina



**Ana Addobbati**  
Brazil



**Irene Petras**  
Zimbabwe





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SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION	TITLE	BOARD OFFICE	BOARD COMMITTEE
Addobbati	Ana	Women Friendly, Social Good Brasil	Executive Director	Member	Operations
Bosire	Stellah	Center for Health Systems and Gender Africa	Co-Executive Director and Co-Founder	Member	Membership
Chifamba	Ekenia	Shamwari Yemwanasikana (SYS)	Founding Director	Member	Membership
Kwami	Sonia	The One Campaign	Africa Campaigns Director	Vice Chair/ Chair Governance Committee	Governance
Lerner	Patricia	Greenpeace International	Senior Political Advisor	Treasurer/ Chair Operations Committee	Operations
Mathews	Dylan	Peace Direct – UK	Chief Executive Officer	Board Chair/ Chair Executive Committee	Executive
Morarka	Vandita	One Future Collective	Chief Executive Officer	Member	Membership
Palabay	Cristina	Karapatan Alliance Philippines	Secretary General	Member	Membership
Petras	Irene	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL)	Senior Legal Advisor – Sub-Saharan Africa Program	Member	Governance
Rose	Sarah	UK National Union of Students	Social Change Strategist, Campaigner and Evaluator	Member	Governance
Roset	Mario	Civic House, Wingu, Donar Online, Kubadili	Chief Executive Officer – Civic House	Member	Operations
Sharifi	Omaid	ArtLords and Wartists	Curator Artist, Co-Founder and President	Member	Operations
Tatis	Patricia	Techo	Chief Financial Officer	Member	Operations

# CONTACT US

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