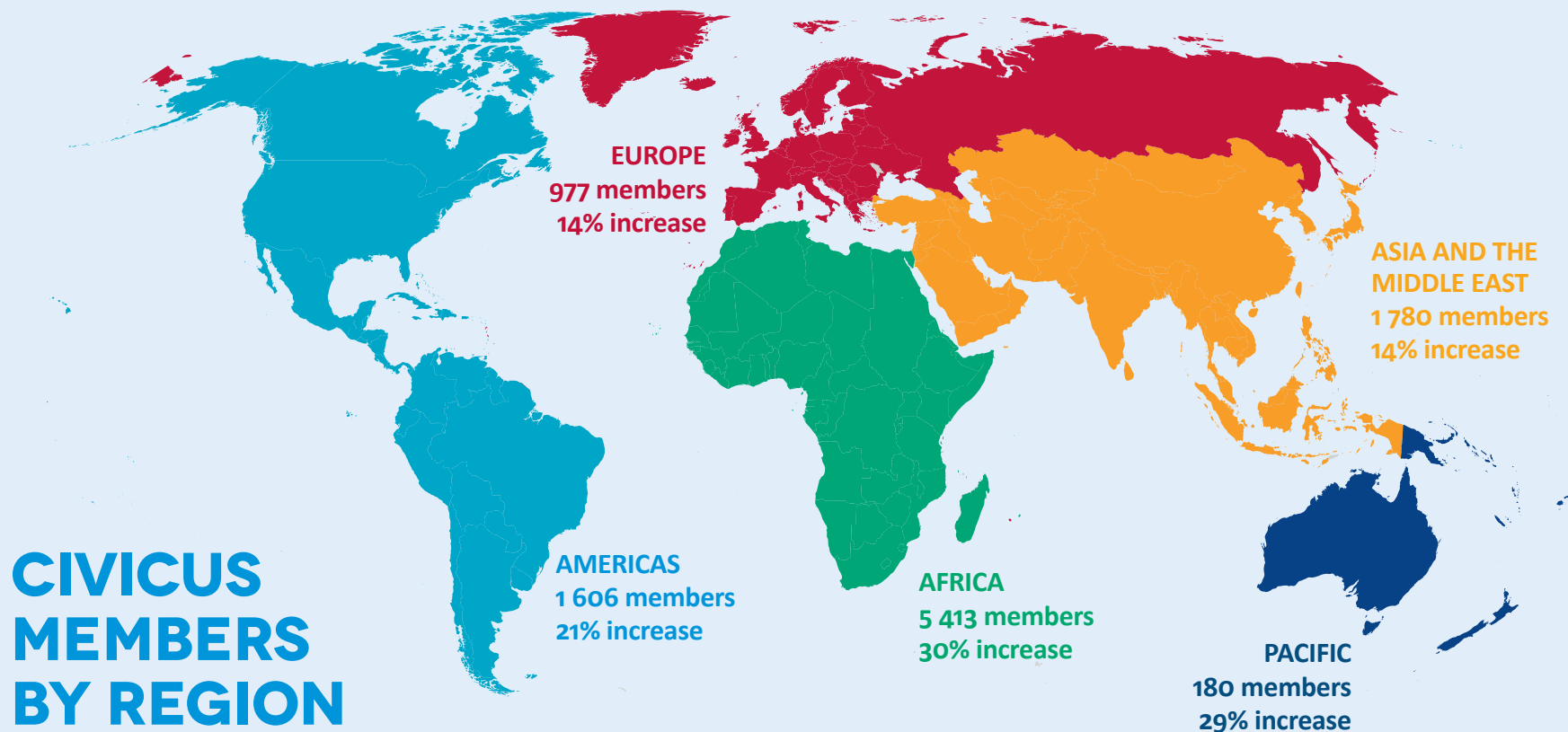




ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

WHO WE ARE

CIVICUS IS A MEMBERSHIP ALLIANCE DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY AND CITIZEN ACTION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. CIVICUS' TOTAL MEMBERSHIP GREW 25 PER CENT DURING 2019/2020 TO 9,938 MEMBERS, INCLUDING:



195 VOTING MEMBERS



3 194 ORGANISATIONS



6 408 INDIVIDUALS



175 COUNTRIES



24% UNDER 30



TABLE OF CONTENTS

YEAR IN REVIEW: MESSAGES FROM CIVICUS LEADERSHIP	2
WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED	7
GOAL 1: Defending civic freedoms and democratic values.	8
GOAL 2: GOAL 2: Strengthening the power of people to organise, mobilise and take action	13
GOAL 3: Empowering a more accountable, innovative and effective civil society	18
GOAL 4: Building a Fit-For-Purpose Organisation	22
PRACTISING DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY	25
LESSONS (BEING) LEARNED	27
CIVICUS SUPPORTERS	31
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	33

YEAR IN REVIEW: MESSAGES FROM CIVICUS LEADERSHIP



RIISING TO TODAY'S GLOBAL CHALLENGES

A Word from the Chair – Julia Sánchez

In June 2020, which marks the end of our financial year for 2019-20, it was becoming clear that the world we work and live in would be forever changed. For all who strive to achieve CIVICUS's vision of a worldwide community of inspired, informed, committed citizens confronting the challenges facing humanity, things became harder.

Those fortunate to have access to the technology shifted activism online, but members widely reported diminishing resources and funding crunches, while restrictions on civic space and threats to democracy continued to flourish. Amid all this, it was clear that our alliance is just as important today as when it was founded over 25 years go.

It heartens me that this year's Annual Report shows that, together, we are up to the challenges ahead. There is strength in numbers, and CIVICUS's total membership **grew 25 per cent from the previous year** to just under 10,000 members. Our diversity is part of our strength, and I am proud that the 14-member board is composed of a majority of women, represents six continents and includes a broad range of civil society personnel working across a multitude of issues.

Midway through CIVICUS's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, the alliance **took time to listen, reflect, discuss and plan** how to stay relevant, be more accountable and best connect and collaborate for change. The [mid-term strategy review](#) resulted in 18 key recommendations. Our annual constituency survey, as well as a member survey to better understand impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, were key to assessing how the secretariat is doing and connecting with members to learn more about their stories of impact. The secretariat's new Accountability Framework is another step on the **journey towards being more accountable**.

Thought leadership and research on civic space continues to be a CIVICUS cornerstone in these uncertain times. We significantly **increased our media presence** in the last year, and quickly mobilised thinking around civil society in the context of COVID-19, as well as visioning a different, more equitable post-pandemic future. Both before and after the pandemic became our new reality, we have worked on **building public trust and support for civil society**, notably by refocusing what we learned during the Resilient Roots pilot project to more inward-facing reflection, as well as experimenting with how we use positive messaging.

I take pride in the fact that CIVICUS is continually learning and adapting.

We've **embraced the power of radical collaboration** and recognised the need to bridge gaps between social movements and a diversity of non-traditional actors. We've also learned that sometimes the secretariat needs to 'get out of the way', so are developing mechanisms for more member-to-member communication and emphasising member-driven initiatives with members in the decision-making seat.

None of the impact presented in this year's report would have been possible without the ongoing support and belief in our work from our members, supporters, donors and allies. Our gratitude goes out to them.

I am deeply proud of the role that CIVICUS has played, and will continue to play, in this complicated world. It is with great honour – and gratitude – that I submit the 2019/2020 CIVICUS Annual Report.

“WE’VE EMBRACED
THE POWER
OF RADICAL
COLLABORATION
AND RECOGNISED
THE NEED TO BRIDGE
GAPS BETWEEN
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS
AND A DIVERSITY OF
NON-TRADITIONAL
ACTORS.”

YEAR IN REVIEW:

MESSAGES FROM CIVICUS LEADERSHIP



CHALLENGED, HOPEFUL AND INSPIRED

Message from the Secretary General – Lysa John

It's been a daunting year for many of us, both personally and professionally. Yet I continue being hopeful and inspired. The extraordinary activists and organisations that make up the CIVICUS alliance are **daring to organise and mobilise in new and creative ways**, pushing back against threats to democracy, and raising their voices for change.

The advances made by CIVICUS this year are both internal – building better systems and ways of working, and external – building the reach of the organisation and engaging our members and partners in new and impactful ways.

Our research and advocacy work go hand in hand, and we've been working on more connected activities. The [CIVICUS Monitor](#), a cutting-edge participatory research platform in partnership with over 20 regional research organisations, continues to provide **reliable, up-to-date data on the global state of civic freedoms**. The need is clear: the annual [People Power Under Attack](#) report, which analyses CIVICUS Monitor ratings, received unprecedented media coverage, showing a 300 per cent increase over the previous year.

We realised we need to work sharper, so set out to better understand CIVICUS's added value and prioritise activities. We are committed to learning as an alliance and **experimenting with new ways of working** – including testing new approaches to common challenges, such as new sources and forces of people power, innovative models for citizen action and fit-for-purpose organisational models for different contexts and phases of organisational growth.

Over the past year, CIVICUS continued to deepen understanding about how best to **support more direct and democratic resourcing** to reach smaller, spontaneous civil society formations on the frontlines of social change. We reflected on how to approach [civil Society resourcing interventions](#), carried out participatory research and analysis and published consultation-based publications: the Playbook for Resourcing Youth-led Groups and Movements and report on [Shifting Power and Resources to Grassroots Movements](#).

We **invested in various diversity and inclusion initiatives** to respond to research highlighting identity as a key indicator of civic space restrictions. The [Diversity & Inclusion Group for Networking and Action \(DIGNA\)](#) continued to grow as a robust community of practice with now more than 1,200 members.

There is an old saying that ‘a system shortens the road to a goal’. Over the past year we conducted **several systems audits and internal process reviews** that resulted in improvements to human resource policies, financial management and sub-granting systems, communication planning, risk management, information and knowledge management systems and CRM upgrades and data security protocols.

The impact presented in this year’s report is only possible through the close and trusted relationships and hard work of all those who make up the alliance – secretariat staff, board, members, partners, allies and friends. Thank you for all we have achieved together in last year.

It is with great pride that I submit this year’s Annual Report to our members.

“THE IMPACT PRESENTED IN THIS YEAR’S REPORT IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH THE CLOSE AND TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS AND HARD WORK OF ALL THOSE WHO MAKE UP THE ALLIANCE – SECRETARIAT STAFF, BOARD, MEMBERS, PARTNERS, ALLIES AND FRIENDS. THANK YOU FOR ALL WE HAVE ACHIEVED TOGETHER IN LAST YEAR.”



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

As outlined in CIVICUS's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, we work to strengthen citizen action and civil society toward a more just, inclusive and sustainable world. Our work is guided by three strategic goals, which reflect our belief that people-powered and collective action is at the centre of transformative change.

13
**RESTRICTIVE
INITIATIVES**

were defeated with
CIVICUS's support – 10
of which involved the
release of human rights
defenders



141
COUNTRIES

where CIVICUS has
supported or worked
with partners engaging
in civic space activities

9 938
MEMBERS

around the world that
CIVICUS worked with to
strengthen their efforts
to defend and enable
civic space



20
**RESEARCH
PRODUCTS
AND REPORTS**

published by CIVICUS
– plus 204 published
media outputs, including
articles, blogs and
interviews



48 154
FACEBOOK FANS



21 600
TWITTER FOLLOWERS



600 000
PAGE VIEWS

GOAL 1:

DEFENDING CIVIC FREEDOMS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

“I AM SURE THAT THE REPORT WILL HELP ALL HUMANITARIAN WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE AND SINCERITY OF CSOS.”

– HEAD OF A CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION (CSO) IN PAKISTAN

PROVIDING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

In 2019/2020, CIVICUS researched and shared analysis of a growing threat to civic space, in the form of anti-rights groups, documenting how non-state groups opposed to human rights are positioning themselves in the civil society arena, growing more confident and connected and winning profile and influence. The research included interviews with 40 civil society activists, leaders and experts, 10 civil society dialogues involving over 400 civil society practitioners and a survey of CIVICUS members, drawing 903 valid responses from 115 countries. The [final report](#), published in English, French and Spanish, set out 10 key steps civil society can take to fight back. Participants in an African regional consultation held in Johannesburg in February 2020 stated that the research had helped them to understand the nature of the threat posed and tactics used by anti-rights groups, and ways of responding.

Over 50 civil society personnel and stakeholders contributed to the ninth edition of CIVICUS’s flagship annual State of Civil Society Report, published in May 2020 in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Presented at a time when reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic had placed much of normal life on hold, the report made a call for pandemic responses and post-pandemic strategies to respect civic rights and democratic freedoms, rethink economies, reach excluded people first, renew international cooperation and respond to the climate crisis. The report also had a special focus on the game-changing climate mobilisations of 2019.

ADVOCATING FOR CIVIC FREEDOMS AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

On 27 July 2020, the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee issued General Comment No. 37, the Committee's first comprehensive guidance on the right to peaceful assembly. The Comment sets forth progressive principles and standards on a range of important issues relating to protests and gatherings.

During 2019/2020, the Civic Space Initiative (CSI) consortium, which includes Article 19, CIVICUS, International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law and World Movement for Democracy, played an important role in ensuring that the Comment addressed key issues, including online assemblies, internet shutdowns, LGBTQI+ rights and peaceful protest, the policing of peaceful assemblies, notification and authorisation requirements, funding for civil society and the surveillance and monitoring of assemblies. To provide the Committee with the perspectives of local stakeholders CSI partners organised regional consultations on the draft General Comment in Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Johannesburg and Mexico City between September 2019 and February 2020.

These consultations convened leaders of protest movements, human rights defenders, activists and civil society representatives, together with Committee members in some cases. Participants reviewed the draft General Comment, providing suggested revisions and identifying key issues and gaps to be addressed in the Comment based on local experience. For example, as a result of the Africa convening, the General Comment was strengthened by their recommendation to specifically mention girls, women and LGBTQI+ people as vulnerable groups whose protection should be enhanced.





PROTECTING AND PROMOTING CIVIC SPACE

The CIVICUS Monitor is the alliance's groundbreaking research collaboration conducted with 21 research partners worldwide who monitor and report on civic space developments in close to real time. Data from the CIVICUS Monitor shows that the space for activism has reduced: only three per cent of the world's population now live in countries with open civic space.

The CIVICUS Monitor is increasingly being used to hold decision-makers accountable by activists and CSOs and has become an authoritative resource on civic space. There were 248,335 unique visitors to the CIVICUS Monitor in 2019/2020. In addition, the contributions of

research partners informed the 2019 report, *People Power Under Attack*, published in English, French and Spanish

In August 2019, the CIVICUS Monitor team and its partners held their fourth global meeting in Accra, Ghana, to reflect on the development of the project to date, identify new opportunities and connect with one another. One of the participants said, "I am immensely grateful that I was given this opportunity. We too have our own share of stories to tell in Oceania. We have a lot of unreported cases [of civic space restrictions]. I would like to see the Monitor become recognised as a platform where people can raise their voices, a space where journalists can go to verify information. [I believe] that we have the right tool and the right set of people to drive this forward."

MOBILISING SOLIDARITY FOR CIVIL SOCIETY UNDER ATTACK

Work to foster international solidarity faced a difficult climate in 2019/2020, with many states and multilateral institutions becoming less inclined to speak out against the persecution of civil society activists and organisations in other countries. In this context, civil society's efforts became even more crucial. CIVICUS members and partners reached out to the secretariat about increased restrictions on civic space, the promulgation of restrictive legislation affecting civil society, rights violations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and increased human rights abuses around elections and referendums.

In response, the secretariat engaged in joint campaigns with members and partners on civic space restrictions. As part of this, CIVICUS worked with CSOs across the globe to advocate for the release of human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience, who faced particular risk during the pandemic, and stepped up its engagement with diplomats and states. These efforts were reflected in the release of a number of imprisoned human rights defenders in 2019/2020. CIVICUS consistently campaigned for the release of Bahraini human rights defender Nabeel Rajab, who was freed from prison in June 2020. Following his release, he commented, "Thank you CIVICUS for everything you've done for me and are doing for civil society everywhere around the world. I know that several of you have been tireless advocates for my release and have contributed to efforts to document the conditions of my detention and raise awareness about my case. I am in good health and looking forward to the next International Civil Society Week."

In recognition of the important role that human rights defenders play in holding governments to account, ensuring states respect international human rights laws and tackling environmental degradation and inequalities, CIVICUS worked with civil society coalitions at the regional and international level on joint campaigns, provided training to enhance the capacity of community groups and grassroots organisations and supported protests and public mobilisations in several countries. In March 2020, CIVICUS coordinated and supported campaigns and protests in 16 countries as part of the Global Strike on the rights of women. Cumulatively the protests brought together more than 3,000 protesters; the protest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was widely covered on national TV.





GOAL 2: STRENGTHENING THE POWER OF PEOPLE TO ORGANISE, MOBILISE AND TAKE ACTION

“COVID-19
CHANGED THE
THINKING ON
ACCOUNTABILITY
AND HIGHLIGHTED
ITS IMPORTANCE IN
DETERMINING THE
BEST WAY TO DEAL
WITH UNFORESEEN
CIRCUMSTANCES.”

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND THEIR ORGANISATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Global Learning Exchange (GLE) is an annual opportunity to explore a key issue affecting civil society with a broad range of CIVICUS members and partners, drawing on the collective knowledge, skills and resources of the alliance. In 2020, the GLE focused on legitimacy, transparency and accountability (LTA) in response to a global trend of declining trust in civil society. The event aimed to support CSOs in fostering a culture of accountability and transparency, improving their working relationship with constituents and enhancing trust with their stakeholders.

Originally planned as a physical convening in Quito, Ecuador, the GLE was re-envisioned as a series of virtual events, bringing organisations and individuals together to learn, share and enhance their LTA policies and practices. The programme was designed for both those new to LTA and those with existing policies and practices. Five participant-led online activities were offered, in English, French and Spanish, on: i) introduction to LTA, ii) practical LTA tools, iii) due diligence and self-assessment tools, iv) diversity and inclusion in LTA and v) LTA in national and regional Agenda 2030 platforms. These online activities identified different CSO LTA support needs, evaluated the effectiveness of different LTA support approaches, shared stories and engaged new partners.

As a participant from the Nigerian Network of NGOs observed, “COVID-19 changed the thinking on accountability and highlighted its importance in determining the best way to deal with unforeseen circumstances and adjusting to the new normal.”



EXPLORING HOW TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN PEOPLE POWER

Even in difficult conditions of restricted civic space, there was a rapid and vital civil society response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil society met needs, defended rights and forged new paths for civic action. The pandemic reinforced the value of civil society and the need to enable and partner with different expressions of people power, across a diverse range of civil society forms and responses

In response to these changed times, in April 2020, [International Civil Society Week](#) launched a series of virtual events, the first phase of an 18-month journey with civil society activists, groups and movements,

alongside donors, friends and supporters, to co-create solutions that support and sustain people power at a time when it is needed most. [ICSW/virtual](#) consisted of seven events, 39 presenters, over 500 participants, a multitude of shared videos making powerful statements and an online gallery of [ArtActivism](#). It provided a moment of social solidarity in a time of physical distancing.

In the words of one speaker at ICSW/virtual 4, “This event made me feel more connected to people than I have during the pandemic.”

HOW DATA AND RESEARCH SPARKS ADVOCACY AND PEOPLE POWER?



COLLABORATING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AS DRIVERS OF CITIZEN ACTION

2019/2020 marked the continuation of a journey of understanding the needs and realities of youth-led activist groups in the global south. The [Playbook for Resourcing Youth-Led Groups and Movements](#) captured first-hand the struggles young activists face related to underpaid or voluntary work, overburdensome reporting requirements, agenda setting by some donors and miscommunications and misunderstandings of context. One of the stories featured [two young female musicians](#) from Colombia who resourced their community work by putting on concerts around South America.



As part of its efforts to learn and test better ways to support youth-led activism, CIVICUS convened a group of nine young grassroots changemakers from Africa, Asia, Central America, the Caribbean and the Middle East who [collaborated to co-design](#) a virtual social lab for under-resourced youth protest leaders, Indigenous and gender rights activists, activists and storytellers. The group adopted design thinking methodology, a horizontal governance structure and a virtual team culture to successfully deliver the [Youth Action Lab 2020](#) prototype, which also built on the learnings of the first youth-led resourcing mechanism that CIVICUS launched, the [Goalkeepers Youth Action Accelerator](#). Co-design team members self-reported growth in their teamwork, communications, research and project management skills.



RESOURCING CIVIL SOCIETY ON THE FRONTLINES OF CHANGE

COVID-19 and #BlackLivesMatter magnified already-known challenges, shed light on the changes needed to resource grassroots groups and movements around the world meaningfully and created momentum to reinforce and amplify CIVICUS's messages to international donors and enablers. These included: embracing more flexible, accessible, responsive funding and support; investing in the sustainability of civil society groups in the global south; testing and learning from new trust-based models that engage local partners directly through co-creation and participatory processes; and reflecting on their role in perpetuating a legacy based on racism and colonialism. With the pandemic-induced financial crisis threatening to erase important parts of civil society, CIVICUS's efforts shifted to promoting the recovery and long-term sustainability of civil society.

CIVICUS [documented](#) how COVID-19 has affected the ability of over 125 members from more than 50 countries to mobilise resources, and published two open letters to donors, complemented by targeted outreach, calling for [more flexibility, certainty and stability](#) to support the resilience of grantee partners and for much-needed [support to local organisations](#) in the global south. Both letters had significant resonance within the funding community and with our constituents; 60 per cent of surveyed members reported finding them useful in negotiations with donors and other enablers. Priscilla Nyaaba from Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana said, "The recommendations to donors in these letters gave us the courage to include certain requests including the purchase of personal protective equipment for staff when we had the opportunity to send a budget amendment to our donors, which was approved."



GOAL 3: EMPOWERING A MORE ACCOUNTABLE, INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY

“IT IS THE GREATEST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED IN MY LIFE AND IN THE LIFE OF MY ORGANISATION. IT CHANGED ME PERSONALLY, BUILT MY CAPACITY, INCREASED MY NETWORK, GREW MY VOICE AND ACCELERATED MY IMPACT.” – KETURAH SHAMMAH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GIRLS EDUCATION MISSION INTERNATIONAL

PUTTING PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In 2019, the *SPEAK!* campaign focused on bringing people together across lines of division. The campaign was led by a cohort of *SPEAK!* Champions – 39 community activists in 25 countries – who organised their own *SPEAK!* events and supported others to convene events. The distributed campaign model engaged more than 150 organisations that hosted 179 events in 55 countries, attended by more than 10,000 people, and reached over 2 million people on Twitter. Event topics included climate justice, inclusion, access to community health services, gender and peace and integrity.

Keturah Shammah, Executive Director of Girls Education Mission International, was a 2019 *SPEAK!* Champion for Nigeria. Because of *SPEAK!*, she reported greater credibility and support from local community members, increased media coverage, 28 new volunteers, engagement with the Minister of Information of Nigeria and the successful launch of the #IAMPOSSIBLE campaign against gender violence.



IMAGINING NEW MODELS FOR CITIZEN ACTION

The [Innovation for Change \(I4C\)](#) network continued to work to create an ecosystem for effective and impactful collaboration and change, while fostering a culture of experimentation that encourages new, more effective models for citizen action. For example, the [I4C Central Asia Hub](#) and its member organisation the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) developed a [Digital Transparency Index](#) to monitor the digital transparency of government organisations in Mongolia, which will be replicated in Tajikistan. IRIM Executive Director Batsugar Tsedendamba said, “This index is a powerful tool because in a region where civic space is narrowing, it puts power back into the hands of ordinary citizens, giving them access to crucial data through which they can effectively monitor and use to hold their governments accountable, changing their daily lives.” When monitoring the digital transparency of government websites began in 2010, rates hovered at just above 17 per cent. A decade later, this has tripled to over 52 per cent, highlighting the impact of civil society efforts to promote government transparency.

Another example of how the network has embraced new approaches to encourage citizen engagement was the I4C Innovation Working Group’s adaptation of its Design Thinking for Civil Society tools for low-tech and low-resource settings. The revised methodology was more inclusive and accessible for civil society personnel and groups struggling to balance online and offline engagement methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. It allowed I4C members and partners to collaborate from across regional hubs in Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Caucasus and the Pacific and enabled the development of solutions to enhance the accountability and transparency of government responses to the pandemic.



“IT HAS BEEN EYE-OPENING IN HOW IT MADE ORGANISATIONS LOOK INSIDE AND EXPLORE THEIR OWN POTENTIAL. VERY FEW PROGRAMMES I KNOW HAVE BEEN DESIGNED OR HAD THE EFFECT TO DO THIS FOR ORGANISATIONS. I THINK THE PROGRAMME WILL HAVE A LONG-LASTING IMPACT ON THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED.”

– BILJANA SPASOVSKA,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
BALKAN CIVIL SOCIETY
DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

CIVICUS continued to invest in [diversity and inclusion](#) initiatives to respond to its research that highlights identity as a key indicator of civic space restrictions, with people from excluded groups more at risk of restrictions to their fundamental freedoms.

The [Diversity & Inclusion Group for Networking and Action \(DIGNA\)](#) launched in July 2019 after a year-long co-design process and in 2019/2020 grew to more than 1,500 members. With representation across regions and thematic intersections, the DIGNA advisory group has facilitated peer learning, including regional conversations, a webinar on [Domestic Violence during COVID-19](#), and a research piece, ‘[Holding the Mirror up to Ourselves: Diversity and Inclusion Practices and Trends in Civil Society Organisations](#)’.

September 2019, the Diversity and Inclusion Pilot Programme was initiated to test innovative and practical approaches to inclusion for civil society. The programme aimed to accompany participants on a learning journey, identifying common diversity and inclusion issues across CSOs and learning about the challenges faced by these organisations. Each of the participating organisations received support to improve policies and cultural practices around leadership, sexual harassment policies, complaint mechanisms, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), gender sensitisation and accessibility, among other key aspects of diversity and inclusion important to organisational development. As a result of their engagement in the programme, participants reported that they felt better equipped to support their constituents and stakeholders through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.





BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST AND SUPPORT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Resilient Roots set out to test whether CSOs that are more accountable to their primary constituents – the communities they exist to serve and support – are more resilient to closing civic space. To do this, Accountable Now, CIVICUS, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo and Keystone Accountability worked with 14 national partners of varying size, focus, location and approach, to help them design and implement year-long pilot projects to increase organisational responsiveness, respect and trust with their communities. While the results differed for each partner organisation, Resilient Roots demonstrated that there is indeed a connection between building public support and trust, and the ability of an organisation to navigate both perceived and directly experienced restrictions to their freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression.

One partner, a rapidly growing watchdog organisation exposing human rights violations, was able to introduce novel ways of engaging its primary constituents that allowed it to retain a large proportion of its new audience. By generating not only new interest but also greater trust with its supporters, it received increased donations that enhanced its financial security, and overall reported feeling more confident in its ability to push back against state-sanctioned repression. Another partner organisation, focused on child rights and the prevention of violence against children, explained that because of their newly developed use of community theatre to discuss sensitive topics in an inclusive manner, they now feel empowered to respond to threats “with greater security since our target population feels more part of our organisation.”

GOAL 4:

BUILDING A FIT-FOR-PURPOSE ORGANISATION

In the past year, we continued to engage in institutional strengthening aimed at making CIVICUS a fit-for-purpose organisation by enhancing our effectiveness and efficiency, while also focusing on resilience. Progress against our desired outcomes is outlined below:



1 CIVICUS IS CONSIDERED A CREDIBLE, TRUSTWORTHY AND ACCOUNTABLE ORGANISATION BY ALL OUR STAKEHOLDERS.

In addition to programme-specific feedback loops, CIVICUS introduced an online feedback form in 2018. In the past year, we received 23 individual submissions and were able to resolve 70 per cent of the issues raised, which ranged from partner selection to advocacy positions. We also carried out the CIVICUS annual constituency survey, which yielded 726 responses. This was a significant increase (60 per cent) compared to 2018, in part reflecting an increase in the number of members. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) remained average (42), with a number of respondents indicating that they were too new to the alliance to provide a strong opinion about their membership experience.



2 INCREASED ABILITY OF CIVICUS TO BE EVIDENCE-BASED AND DATA-DRIVEN TO ALLOW FOR ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT AND EXECUTION OF OUR PROGRAMMES.

Using a developmental evaluation approach, CIVICUS identified 111 outcome stories during 2019/2020, compared to 26 in 2018/2019. This included 42 policy changes linked to CIVICUS's research and advocacy. The increase in data capturing is due in large part to greater staff adoption (at 45 per cent, up from 38 per cent in 2018/2019) of the DevResults monitoring and evaluation platform, indicating growing M&E ownership across staff. CIVICUS has also adopted new board reporting guidelines in 2019/2020 to support the board in strategic decision-making. In addition, CIVICUS launched an M&E Toolkit for the alliance and wider civil society to enhance the generation and use of data beyond the CIVICUS secretariat.



3 INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF CIVICUS'S UNIQUE VALUE TO MEMBERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY BY UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF STAKEHOLDERS AND IMPACT OF OUR APPROACHES AND THEORY OF CHANGE.

The annual constituency survey was a significant data point that informed the mid-term strategy review and annual planning and budgeting exercises. The Resilient Roots project, which pioneered the use of NPS data at CIVICUS, has helped other teams and programmes to adopt the tool as a critical data source. In addition, co-design approaches initially developed through I4C have been mainstreamed across the secretariat and resulted in new member-led initiatives during 2019/2020, including the Youth Action Lab and the Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Africa (CHARM).



4 GREATER LEVELS OF INTEGRATION OF OUR SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES ACROSS PROGRAMMES AND OPERATIONS, SUPPORTED BY A COLLABORATIVE AND PRINCIPLE-BASED ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE.

CIVICUS continued to make progress on the recommendations resulting from several systems audits and internal reviews of human resources processes and policies, financial management and sub-granting systems, communication planning, risk management, information and knowledge management systems, CRM upgrades and data security protocols. Many of these recommendations were supported through one or more of 110 cross-cluster collaborations in 2019/2020. In addition, a cross-functional COVID-19 Task Team coordinated CIVICUS's response to the pandemic, ensuring that the secretariat fulfilled its duty of care, continued to deliver on mission-critical work and supported the resilience of the alliance through crisis. Another key driver of collaboration was the co-creation of an action plan in response to the mid-term strategy review, as reflected in the outcomes of the 2020/2021 annual planning process.





PRACTISING DYNAMIC ACCOUNTABILITY

CIVICUS's [accountability framework](#) is underpinned by our commitment to listen to all our stakeholders, take action and give them feedback. Achievements that highlighted its operationalisation this year included:

- We held our second [Global Accountability Week](#) in October 2019, celebrating positive narratives on CSO accountability in five languages and launching the Affinity Group of National Associations (AGNA) [good practice platform](#) on LTA policies and practices.
- We launched our [M&E toolkit](#), designed to follow CIVICUS's [Developmental Evaluation Framework](#).
- We launched the [DIGNA platform](#), with a rotating advisory group, providing a space for activists to work together to strengthen an inclusive and diverse civil society.
- We took our [annual constituency survey](#) one step further and fully integrated what we heard from our members into our [annual planning process](#) and used this to help us prioritise activities.
- We continued to act on feedback received through [CIVICUS's online feedback mechanism](#), and as a result, are taking steps to revise our sub-granting mechanism and refine our Code of Conduct.
- Our [mid-term strategy review](#) helped us to take stock of where we are in relation to progress against our strategy. With the support of key stakeholders outside the CIVICUS secretariat, we identified 18 recommendations and continue to publish progress against these through a range of channels.

For more accountability information (including our 2019 Accountability Report to Accountable Now), please visit our [accountability web page](#) and complete our feedback form so we can continue the conversation.





LESSONS (BEING) LEARNED



**UNDERSTANDING OUR
ADDED VALUE AND
PRIORITISING OUR
ACTIVITIES AND FOCUS.**

It is important to identify where the unique combination of skills and capacities the alliance brings can be applied to make a difference, and then create structures to facilitate and scale this.



**EMBRACING THE
POWER OF RADICAL
COLLABORATION.**

After extensive testing, co-design methodology should be adopted as CIVICUS's standard programme design approach to encourage joint ownership and stronger relationships with key stakeholders.



**BRIDGING THE GAP
BETWEEN CSOS AND
SOCIAL MOVEMENTS.**

There is a clear need to focus on bringing social movements and a diversity of people and groups into the alliance as key constituents and allies in protecting and defending civic space and promoting civil society solutions.



**LEARNING AS AN
ALLIANCE.**

It is necessary to look beyond operational efficiencies within the secretariat and contribute to learning in civil society as a whole by convening members to share our collective knowledge, tools and resources.



SHIFTING POWER AND DECISION- MAKING.

Member-driven initiatives that engage members in decision-making are proving to have better results in terms of ownership of outcomes and strategic engagement with content.



PRACTISING PEOPLE-CENTRED ACCOUNTABILITY.

Primary constituent accountability initiatives improve our ability to listen to and understand members' contexts and design and adapt programmes and engagement opportunities accordingly.



FACILITATING MEMBER-TO-MEMBER COMMUNICATION.

There is a clear demand from the alliance to create mechanisms that will allow members to connect with each other directly and draw on the collective skills and expertise of the alliance.



ADOPTING NEW WAYS OF WORKING.

The move to remote working and online convening seen under the COVID-19 pandemic requires new coordination and facilitation approaches that support coordination and build trust and solidarity.

CIVICUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



THE **CIVICUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS** LEADS THE ALLIANCE AND IS ELECTED FROM THE MEMBERSHIP BY MEMBERS. THE 14-MEMBER BOARD IS MAJORITY WOMEN, WITH MEMBERS COMING FROM SIX CONTINENTS AND REPRESENTING A BROAD RANGE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THEMATIC INTERESTS.

CIVICUS SUPPORTERS

GOVERNMENTS



Danish International Development Agency



European Commission



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands



Norwegian Agency for Development
Cooperation



Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency

FOUNDATIONS

BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation



Charles Stewart Mott Foundation



Ford Foundation



Open Society Foundations

OTHER



Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund



Netherlands Organisation for
Scientific Research

TOP 5 FUNDERS IN 2019/20

1

Swedish International
Development Agency:
US\$2,581,766

2

Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, the Netherlands:
US\$2,025,364

3

Ford Foundation:
US\$1,149,360


4

Bill & Melinda
Gates Foundation:
US\$1,029,597

5

European Commission:
US\$782,406

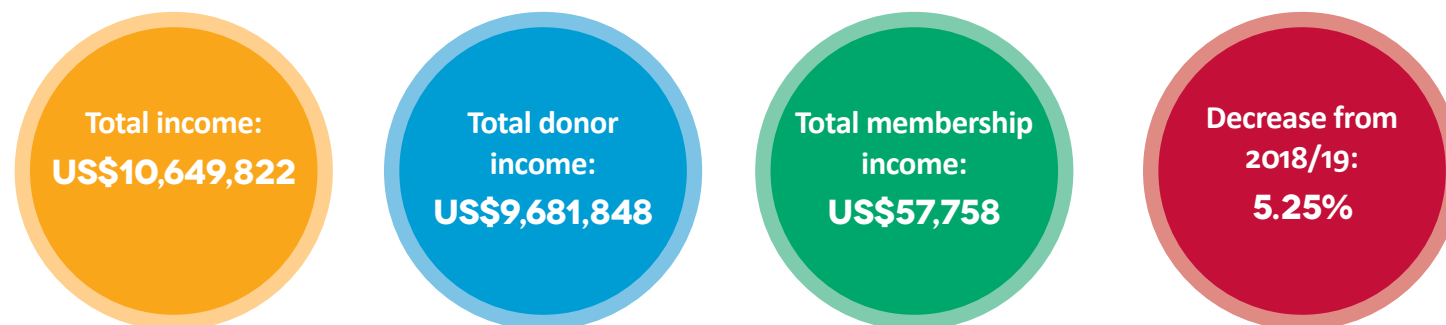
**PROJECT
FUNDING 40% VS
CORE SUPPORT
60%**



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CIVICUS' financial position is on solid footing.

The aggregate audited financial statements for 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 reflect:



TOTAL EXPENDITURE: US\$10,503,758



EXPENDITURE BY
STRATEGIC GOAL:

GOAL 1:
US\$2,624,559 (25%)

GOAL 2:
US\$3,057,528 (29%)

GOAL 3:
US\$2,509,439 (24%)

GOAL 4:
US\$2,312,232 (22%)



SUBGRANTS TO
MEMBERS
AND PARTNERS:
US\$1,810,828
(17% TOTAL
EXPENDITURE)



DECREASE
FROM
2018/19:
5.32%

CONTACT US



civicus.org



info@civicus.org



/CIVICUS



@CIVICUSalliance

HEADQUARTERS

25 Owl Street, 6th Floor
Johannesburg,
South Africa,
2092

Tel: +27 (0)11 833 5959

Fax: +27 (0)11 833 7997

UN HUB: GENEVA

11 Avenue de la Paix
Geneva
Switzerland
CH-1202

Tel: +41 (0)22 733 3435

UN HUB: NEW YORK

205 East 42nd Street, 17th Floor
New York, New York
United States
10017