

CIVICUS SOLIDARITY FUND CONVERSATIONS

SECURITY WALL, PAKISTAN



Tell us a little bit about your organisation/activism and what kind of support was requested from the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF)?

I have been working as social entrepreneur since the early school days and my area of focus is digital security activism to help vulnerable communities protect themselves on the cyber space. Most people where I live are not well informed about their rights on the digital sphere and cyber space, especially Human Rights defenders', Journalists, Protestors, and Transgenders. These have resulted in these groups being the main targets of Government surveillance, hacking attempts, phone hacking, and online harassment.

Our goal as Security Wall is to inform these vulnerable communities in Pakistan and later at an international level to know their rights and be informed about cyber security. However, due to the lack of financial support when it comes to funding, we were unable to do this. When CIVICUS call for proposal was launched we were excited and happy as this was the opportunity Security Wall was looking for. We sent our application and thankfully it was successful.

If you could summarize in one sentence what was most significant, in terms of learnings, from receiving funding (CSF and in general), what would that sentence be?

The CSF team treated us like family members and interacted with us as a team always. I loved the energy and connection we are receiving during our bi-weekly meetings.

Other than the financial support, has being part of the CSF been helpful in any way?

Yes, whenever we made any request to the CSF team, they always managed to provide it to us or help us somehow. The CSF team was also a brilliant part of the whole process, they communicated and helped us a lot. This has allowed us to bluntly speak and communicate our needs truly without fear.

What did you enjoy the most and the least from being part of the CSF? How can the CSF improve their engagement with future applicants/grantee-members?

I enjoyed our bi-weekly meetings where we used the space to share the problems we are facing and how we can better tackle them. This has motivated me by seeing how other colleagues are playing an important role in improving access to human rights in their countries.

It would be helpful to partner with international and local organisations for further collaboration and cooperation. CIVICUS could engage other organisations who want to collaborate with our goals and support us building partnerships. This could improve our results and also help us learn from one another.

How is your organisation's experience in mobilising resources?

Our organisation learned a lot about resources mobilisation through the opportunities shared via email, the meetings, and learning from our fellow grantee-members' achievements. The highlight of our learning experience has been the mentorship and capacity building sessions that are helping us build our funding models, which offered a space to learn more about how we can be sustainable when mobilising resources and keep working on our goal.

What types of resources (financial and non-financial) are most important to your activism/organisation?

As a digital organisation, I think that the non-financial resources we need the most is more partnerships to join our efforts to help vulnerable communities as together we can effectively bring about change and raise awareness about cyber security. Partnerships is also something that can bring collaboration, and mutual learning. Additionally, continuing sharing experiences with other civil society fellows is beneficial for our organisation as we learn a lot from these sessions. Such spaces can be a start to keep fellows in touch and learn from experiences of other activists and organisations.

What would be your advice to donors to facilitate access to resources for small and/or informal organisations?

Funds are essential to help resource our everyday activities and the funds CIVICUS provided was essential to help making vulnerable communities more aware of cyber security and they are now able to share these learnings with their fellow community members. Improving access to resources also vary from organisation to organisation and their goal. As Security Wall, we are still working towards our goal by searching for partners who can help us to reach our goal in the long term.

1. Meeting in person at the end of the grant period to reflect and share the learnings would help a lot grantee-members and give them an extra dose of energy. This could be a networking idea where we would learn from each other.
2. Collaboration and raising awareness together with local partners and their networks could work greatly to help improving civic space challenges and finding solutions. This can be done through different local initiatives to bring on board new ambassadors and new ideas to solve global problems.

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