

# CIVICUS SOLIDARITY FUND INTERVIEWS:

## VIJANA CORPS, UGANDA



### Tell us a little bit about your organisation and the support you requested from the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF)

Vijana Corps is a Ugandan based, youth-focused organization working to realize an enlightened, empowered and productive youth. We work towards engendering a culture that empowers and creates room for active participation of youth in order to achieve social justice and equitable development in Uganda.

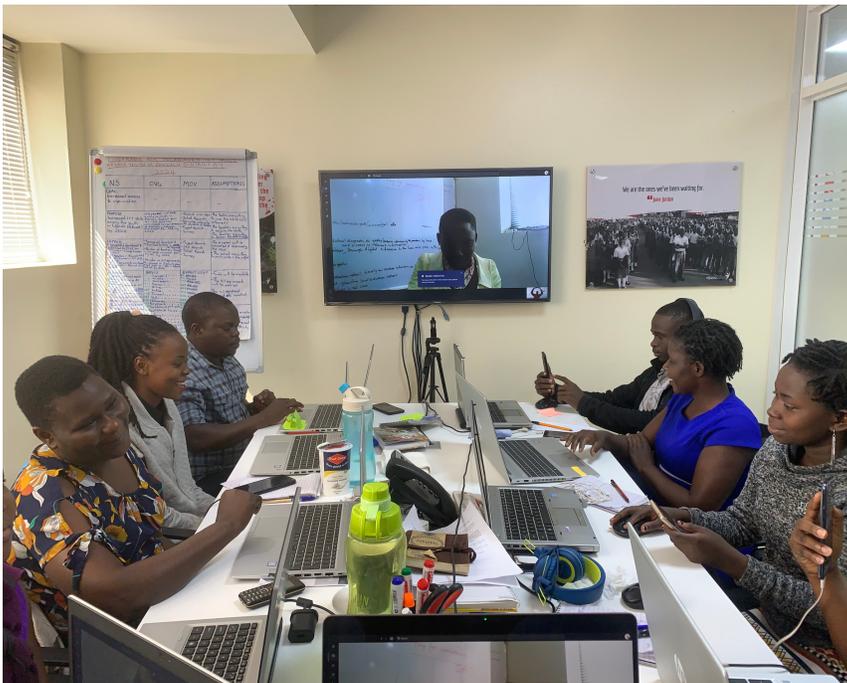
In 2020, Vijana Corps was awarded USD 10,000 in general operating support. The grant would help to complete and equip two youth hubs in Pakwach and Mukono making them ready to serve 6000 youth annually, the development of a five year strategy, fundraising and evaluation plan and to strengthen organization and staff capacity towards its strategy.

### How was your organisation's experience mobilising resources?

In addition to donations and grants received, Vijana Corps raises funds locally through sales of some of our products and services, for example we have a huge support for books and other literacy materials from our US based partner who ships to us a container of books every year to support our literacy program. We have found a way to turn into money the materials we are not able to use in our program. These kind of resources supplement our administrative overheads.

## What was the most important change that you have observed as a result of being awarded the CSF?

The grant enabled us to complete and equip the Mukono and Pakwach Youth Hubs with equipment and furniture. It helped us improve the physical and digital security at the youth hubs. These spaces are now used for participatory leadership workshops, for human centred design that accommodates rapid prototyping of social and business solutions for community problems. Each youth hub houses a small field office of 5 to 7 staff comprising mainly of Program Assistants responsible for planning and implementation of projects. It is expected that a total of 6000 youth will become repeat beneficiaries of community-based corps for active youth engagement in each of the three pillars of Vijana's core programming which are Digital and Media literacy, Livelihood and entrepreneurship and Participatory leadership. The two centers will also benefit other youth groups and associations in these districts through training, public debates and other open engagements.



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

Yes, it has, we were able to collaborate with other CIVICUS grantees and build partnerships and relationships that were beneficial in terms of implementation and innovation in the prevalence of the pandemic and the volatile political environment pre-elections. We received technical support and advice on numerous occasions. We were also able to benefit from trainings such as the Digital Security Training in which we received genuine Microsoft donations from Tech Soup.

## What could have made the experience better?

We recommend that CIVICUS visits some of these initiatives and sees first-hand what is happening on ground. We also recommend that CIVICUS is clear about the reporting procedures from the beginning to enable the grantees to be organised in how they report.

## Any advice for future applicants?

We would advise future applicants to be innovative; design projects that do not follow the traditional patterns. They should not be afraid of thinking in unconventional terms. We also would advise them to be trust-worthy and accountable once they have received the funds and to do more with the funding.

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