



Report AGNA peer-learning on CSO accountability
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4 topics of discussions were tackled during the peer-learning on CSO accountability:

- presentation by CIVICUS of its new Guide to CSOs' self-regulation, which led to presentations and a reflection on CEMEFI and JACO own self-regulation initiatives;
- discussion on the working relationship between the CIVICUS Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability (LTA) programme and the AGNA LTA working group;
- presentation of the CSO Partnership for Effective Development in preparation of the CSO Forum and the High Level Meeting on Effective Development Cooperation the following days; and
- review of a survey on programmes' impact assessment from the AGNA working group on Impact Assessment.

1/ CIVICUS Self-regulation guide and AGNA Members' initiatives

The CIVICUS staff member presented the new CIVICUS guide to CSOs' self-regulation, the result of a 15 month research conducted with partners and members, among which AGNA members. The guide was published on Wednesday 16 April 2014 and it is intended to provide support to CIVICUS members and in particular to national associations, in their self-regulatory efforts and towards CSO's effectiveness in general. The power point presentation is available upon request.

Both CEMEFI and JACO have self-regulation initiatives, which they presented in turn. Both were asked to highlight positive outcomes and challenges.

- CEMEFI organises a light certification scheme in Mexico, which is based on ten institutional and transparency standards. Their primary standards are about the "what" more than the "how". They have 3 levels of accreditation and they provide a seal of certification to the accredited organisations. The accreditation fee is linked to CEMEFI membership fee. And another good practice is that they promote the indicators and the certification scheme through regional partners, which increase their outreach potential. Those regional partners (also members of CEMEFI) get a percentage of the fees perceived.

One of their current problems is outreaching some specific provinces where they don't have members or regional partners. Another issue is that once the organisation is accredited,

there is no formal compliance mechanism and organisations don't need to reapply to get certified after some years. The question is also how to incite already accredited organisations to seek a renewal. Based on the CIVICUS self-regulation research, one possible solution that was suggested to CEMEFI is to add the year and change the colour of the seal every year. This can indeed encourage organisations to re-apply regularly to the accreditation scheme especially if and when an organisation wants to publicise its certification. Last but not least, they need to promote the accreditation scheme to other stakeholders to increase its overall legitimacy and outreach.

- JACO has an information service, NOPODAS, which seeks to enhance Japanese CSO's transparency through the publication of key data. They have also developed a code of ethics and many different templates for their members to use on different policies, codes, by-laws, articles of incorporation, visions statements and so on. Those templates allow for different levels of complexity and can be used by a wide range of NGOs. They promote them through workshops, online devices and also via JACO consultation services.

NOPODAS is based on the Guidestar system, and is constituted in addition to a governmental database. The difference between those two databases is that NOPODAS allows for distinction, comparison and evaluation when the official one doesn't. NGOs are invited to upload themselves their specific information through online editing tools. The intention is for NOPODAS to be used as a community site but it hasn't been easy so far. Only 2000 organisations have submitted their information. The system is also linked to a donation scheme. The major issue is to get organisations and in particular smaller organisations to submit and update their data. There are already different levels of requirements, which are then displayed on the website. But it seems the question of capacities is crucial for the buy-in of the system and the availability of information/easiness of compiling and analysing the data. The question of incentives is also very important here – getting a seal system could maybe increase the visibility of the scheme. They have the government support, and so could potentially outreach to the 30 000 organisations listed in the governmental database. Clearly here JACO needs to clearly identify and promote what NOPODAS can provide more than what the governmental database does. Publicising more their code of ethics in addition to NOPODAS is their priority.

2/ AGNA LTA working group and CIVICUS LTA programme

The CIVICUS staff member presented the CIVICUS LTA action points for 2014. CIVICUS doesn't have funding currently to run a LTA programme but is still keen to facilitate a community of practice around LTA issues. The self-regulation guide was presented as a key resource in those efforts. CIVICUS therefore will disseminate the guide to relevant partners and promote it when needed throughout the year. The LTA resources centre will also be updated and fundraising efforts will be intensified.

Specific linkages between the LTA programme and AGNA could be on promoting and using the guide at the national level, adding more resources to the resources centre and seeking funding at the national level in partnerships with AGNA members to address specific challenges of each context/member. Originally, the idea of a CIVICUS self-regulation guide came up from discussions and requests from the LTA AGNA working group, and consultations and workshops have been organised to get AGNA members' feedback and experiences on the question. Now that the guide is

finalised, further case studies could be added to this research through the LTA resources centre. Both CEMEFI and JACO would be keen to be interviewed and have their case studies uploaded to the LTA resources centre.

No further comments were made on the CIVICUS proposition on how to link CIVICUS work on LTA and the AGNA working group. From a CIVICUS perspective, the difficulty regarding self-regulation initiatives is that it is quite a technical topic and requires the involvement of many different stakeholders. Often CIVICUS is in contact with the director of the AGNA member organisation and not with the officers in charge of those initiatives. Though there is interest on the question, the issue being that complex, one meeting or one peer-learning doesn't necessarily provide the space for in-depth discussions. Work should be done at the national level and interest from specific AGNA members on fundraising together for a national long-term project needs to be correctly assessed.

3/ Presentation of the CSO Partnership for Effective Development (CPDE)

Addys Then Marte is the CPDE representative for the Carribean region, while Zuhra Hakimova is for Central Asia. They presented the 8 Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and the role of the CPDE regarding the GPEDC notably. CPDE elections and new representatives as well as a work plan for 2014 were in discussions at the same time in Mexico City, therefore updates on those processes were provided.

Possible linkages between CPDE and AGNA could be thought. For example, the CPDE WG on CSO Development Effectiveness will be researching and organising national consultations to come up with Accountability charters at the national level to further enhance the Istanbul Principles throughout 2014. AGNA members could get involved in those consultations and at least represent their self-regulation initiatives and network. In addition, national platform between national associations and governments could also be sought regarding development effectiveness and the national monitoring of the Busan commitments.

4/ Survey on programmes' impact assessment for national associations

Yoshiharu Shiraishi is currently leading the work of the AGNA working group on impact assessment. He submitted a first draft of the survey on impact assessment of national associations' programmes that this WG has been developing in the last months. Specific feedback has been provided by all participants. A final draft is to be circulated to all AGNA members for feedback.

The survey draft is available upon request.

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