



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK**
Danida

STUDY ON DANISH SUPPORT TO INFORMALLY ORGANISED CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CBG	Community Base Group
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CISU	Civil Society in Development
CIVICUS	Global alliance of civil society organisations and activists
DCA	DanChurchAid
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EED	European Endowment for Democracy
ELK	Evaluation, Learning & Quality (MFA)
FAMOC	Fonds d'Appui aux Moteurs du Changement (Mali)
FRU	(Forvaltning og Rådgivning vedrørende Udviklings samarbejdet)
HCE	Humanitarian, Civil Society & Emergencies (MFA)
HQ	Head Quarter
ICS	Informal Civil Society
IMS	International Media Services
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SCD	Save the Children Denmark
SM	Social Movements
SPA	Strategic Partnership agreement (with MFA)
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic activism including traditional community led advocacy work, community-level networks, protest movements, individual activists, online campaigners etc. is on the rise and new forms of civic activism have been and is still taking shape. The evolving and increasing civic activism is challenging the conventional and mainstream support modalities.

The objective of this study is to inform considerations and provide recommendations concerning the potential for enhancing Danish support to informally organised civil society actors and social movements in developing countries.

This study has not identified a universal approach or panacea for how best to support informal civil society (ICS) and social movements (SM). On the contrary, the study finds that diversity and sometimes opposing well-founded considerations and thus difficult balances are part of developing and strengthening the support for ICS and SM. And the study leans towards seeing this even as a potentially constructive driver in this endeavour.

The definition of informal civil society and social movements or civic activism is being perceived and approached differently by different Danish partners as well as donors, but also with some common features. The diversity on a degree of common ground should, however, be seen as a strength and an opportunity, allowing the Danish actors and donors to pursue the new and emerging civic activism relative to their own contexts, support modalities and capacities. The opportunities for working with informal actors are many and lessons learned and benefits continue to be harvested.

The study notes that the Danish development support to ICS and SM is generally provided through intermediary and formal channels such as Danish CSOs, pool funds, networks etc. which are guided by formality and mainstream funding mechanisms. Danish support modalities, including e.g., the Strategic Partnership agreements (SPA), CISU and other pool funds are, however, by the Danish partners interviewed perceived to be sufficiently flexible and open for Danish actors to pursue and support informal actors and movements. However, contextual challenges, risks and compliance rules and procedures are perceived to be hampering factors and issues for further learning and development of good practices. Hence, there is a need for the MFA and its civil society

partners, including SPA partners, CISU and CISU members to continue finding new ways of adapting and adjusting its support and funding modalities to the space of informal actors and civic activism.

Some people interviewed argued that Danish civil society partners are too risk averse partly due to Danish MFA and other donor's funding and compliance modalities, but partly also due to their own internal priorities, policies and compliance systems. The most critical people interviewed argue that Danish partners have become too much mainstream project management units rather than operating as activist civil society organisations. Naturally, this statement is open for discussion as well as further assessment of how the Danish partners see and define themselves. However, this discussion is important in relation to pursuing new and adjusted opportunities and ways of working with informal actors and social movements.

Overall, there is an appetite among civil society partners to pursue better and more flexible formats and models for supporting and funding informal actors and social movements in a more adaptive management framework (e.g., SPA and CISU pool funds). Annual consultations and meetings between MFA and Danish Strategic Partners (SPA) as well as between CISU and its Grant Holders are seen by the Danish partners as suitable opportunities to enhance the dialogue and to commence a more tailored process of mutual learning and adaptation to the new and emerging opportunities arising from informal actors and social movements.

Similarly, the donors interviewed have expressed an appetite to do it differently and better. Therefore, in order to strengthen the dialogue and collaboration between donors (and ICS) and to enhance the flexibility of aid modalities, the study suggests that MFA take the lead to facilitate a more structured dialogue between donors, e.g., the Nordic countries, Nordic+ and potentially in the OECD DAC and the EU. MFA and Nordic+ have the potential to engage in direct discussion with ICS and SM in order to understand how their needs and rationale are different from formal CSOs.

To facilitate the above process the Study also suggests establishing an internal MFA cross-cutting project group (e.g., HCE, ELK and FRU) with an initial aim to identify suitable ways forward to pursue opportunities and benefits of working with informal actors and social movements. The working group could also look at the challenges and impeding factors identified in this study. Finally, the working group could take the lead on addressing the following more specific recommendations which have emerged from this study:

R1: MFA further develop and explore existing and new ways of supporting ICS and SM taking point of departure in the diversity

of its current civil society support and further clarify and utilise comparative advantages of different types of channels, modalities and partnerships. MFA engage its Danish, international and local civil society partners, including informal actors and social movements in this work.

R2: The MFA supports its partners to invest in their development of more robust risk management mechanisms and mitigation strategies for support to informal actors and movement as an illustration of MFA willingness to support the calculated and substantiated risk appetite of its civil society partners working with ICS and SM.

R3: MFA engage with its Danish, international and local civil society partners including with informal actors and social movements in this work to develop principles for sharing of critical risks associated with planned support to informal actors.

R4: MFA clarifies and potentially further develop its approach to if, when and how increased HQ and CO costs that may be associated with working with ICS and SM are justifiable, e.g., directly linked to planning and implementation, mentoring and safeguarding of staff and informal actors, interventions in politically sensitive (high risk) environments, taking into account Value for Money and localisation considerations.

R5: MFA engages with Danish, international and local civil society, including informal actors and social movements, and other donors as well as supports its civil society partners to enhance innovation and learning on dealing with ICS and SM. This could be achieved e.g., through the innovation funds integrated into partnership agreements and by engaging in joint learning, including through the development of good practices and evidence, e.g., concerning dealing with informality, results and impact, risk mitigation and new partnerships.

1. OBJECTIVE AND APPROACH

This study was commissioned by the Office for Evaluation, Learning and Quality (ELK), Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The Terms of Reference are included in Annex A.

The study was authored by Jørgen Skytte Jensen (lead) and Malte Warburg during April to June 2021 and was managed by Mads Wegner Hove (ELK). Anders Haue Korsbak from the Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HCE) and Anders Stuhr Svensson from the Department for Financial Management and Support (FRU) supported the study. The study and its recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the MFA.

The study greatly benefited from conversations with and research from a broad range of people and organisations, including from other development agencies, civil society partners and MFA colleagues (see Annex B), and extends its thanks to all that shared their time and insights. The study includes a number of text boxes with quotes and inputs received from people interviewed. These quotes and inputs have been put in context by the authors. Needless to say that any mistakes or shortcomings are solely the responsibility of the authors.

Civil society around the world is in flux. Civic activism ranging from protest movements to community-level groups and forums, online campaigns by individual activists etc. is on the rise and new forms of civic activism have been and is still taking shape. The debate is even growing over how much these new and more dynamic forms of civic activism are displacing the influence wielded by traditional, professional, advocacy-based NGOs.¹

The debate is, however, not new. In the foreword of the MFA Policy on Support to Civil Society (2014) the former minister for development, Mogens Jensen, highlighted that:

“Denmark remains committed to supporting an independent, diverse civil society through a wide range of cooperation modalities. This includes support to traditional civil society associations as well as new emerging civil society actors. Danish support to civil society will be

1 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2017), [Global Activism in Flux](#).

adapted to the reality on the ground and will include support to innovative modalities” (p.1).

This statement on the need for innovation arose from the evaluation of the strategy from 2008, which gave three core recommendations, of which one was; “Support Danish civil society organisations to develop innovative, effective partnerships with Southern civil society organisations that reflect the changing dynamics of civil society in developing countries” (p.1).

Elaborating on this, the 2014 policy describes how: “More informal and transitory forms of organisation and expression challenge not only Governments, but also development partners and traditional forms of collaboration with civil society actors. INGOs and local civil society actors need to learn, listen and participate in such social networks acknowledging that they are not always the first movers in new social manifestations where new social media and ICT play a prominent role. An important role for INGOs can be to facilitate the sharing of experience among new social movements and between them and other actors without hijacking the agenda” (p.11).

Further, the policy states that in choosing partners efforts must be made to: “Cooperate with informal movements with the determination, ability and popular legitimacy to influence decision-making processes, as well as with formal organisations/movements representing marginalized groups” (p.19).

In 2017, the SPA application requirements were not explicit on Informal Civil Society (ICS) and Social Movements (SM). The application assessment criteria requested the applicants to: present a proposed partnership engagement that contributes to the development of a strong, independent, vocal and diverse civil society in the global South through meaningful, equal and mutually committing partnerships.² Regardless, this study shows that many SPA partners are to some extent working with ICS, whereas fewer are working with SMs. Similarly, CISU members and grant holders are with varying degrees working with ICM and/or SM.

In March 2021, the invitation to Expression of Interest for the new SPA 2022-2025 requested the applicants to provide their: approach to and relevant track record of working with partner organisations at various levels, authorities and other drivers of change, including non-formalized actors, such as community-based networks, local committees, social movements, women and youth groups.³ The study finds this positive for

2 SPA Information Note, Annex 3 – Eligibility and Assessment Criteria, Criteria 9.

3 SPA 2021 EOI Assessment Annex B (Partnership).

the reflection on and stimulation of support to ICS and SM and consider it relevant that the coming steps in the SPA 2022-2025 process continues this approach.

Finally, it can be argued that support for ICS and SM is an end in itself, and that this type of support is necessary if one wants to support a strong, diverse and independent civil society. In light of this, the Danish CSOs and the MFA should be prepared to use the necessary resources, i.e., time invested, vis-a-vis the potential impact.

The overall objective of this study is to inform considerations and provide recommendations concerning the potential for enhancing Danish support to informally organised civil society actors and social movements in developing countries.

The study aims to give a broad view of Denmark's approach to supporting Informal civil Society (ICS) and Social Movements (SM).

In order to provide the recommendations, the following key assessment points were prepared during the inception phase, guiding the study and subsequently addressed in this study:

- How are ICS and SM defined and understood in practice?
- What are the opportunities, benefits and potential development outcomes from supporting ICS and SM?
- Which partnership approaches apply best to ICS and SM?
- How do we create increased flexibility, agility and adaptive management for the partnerships?
- What are the obligations of ICS and SM?
- How to manage accountability requirements according to MFA policies and guidelines?
- What are the risks and how best to manage risks?

The Team of consultants commenced the assignment with a search for relevant literature and key background documents. Based on a brief desk review the Team of consultants prepared an Inception Note describing the scope of work and the approach for the study.

The Team of consultants participated in an MFA and Global Focus workshop on localisation and local partnerships with existing Danish civil society strategic partners. The Team of consultants contacted a selection of present Danish Strategic Partners (MFA SPA 2018-2021 partners) and in first instance requested the partners to reflect in writing on how they define ICS and SM, what the main opportunities are and what the main

challenges are working with ICM and SM. In addition, the partners were encouraged to forward existing cases describing their engagement and work with ICM and SM.

The Team of consultants met (virtually) with representatives of CISU who provided their views and focus on ICS and SM relative to CISU members and grant holders. CISU also facilitated contact to some of their grant holders. The grant holders were encouraged to forward in writing their inputs to how they define ICM and SM in their programmes and what they see as key opportunities and challenges. Some grant holders also forwarded short case material.

Based on the responses from the Danish partners the Team of consultants conducted semi-structured (virtual) interviews with a selection of SPA partners. Interviews were semi-structured in order to allow for new reflections and lessons learned vis-à-vis the written cases and inputs.

Further, the Team of consultants met (virtually) with a number of donor agencies (Sida, Norad, EC, Dutch and Irish MFAs), three Danish embassies (Mali, Bangladesh and Burkina Faso) and other actors such as CIVICUS and Global Focus.

Finally, the Team of consultants met (virtually) with representatives of HCE, ELK and FRU at MFA. These meetings, including a final debriefing meeting were used to discuss key findings and preliminary recommendations from the study. Annex B includes the list of people consulted.

The following Chapter 2 provides a discussion on what the informal civil society and social movements are? – how it is understood and defined in practice? – and what are the key development opportunities? Chapter 3 includes a summary of Danish partners, donors and other actors' lessons learned and what they perceive to be the main impeding factors for the support to ICS and SM. Text boxes with extracts on engagements with ICM and SM received from the consulted Danish partners are included in the various chapters. More elaborated examples of Danish actors' practices and engagements with ICS and SM are included in Annex C.

The Team of consultants would like to thank all Danish partners, the donor agencies, CISU, Global Focus and CIVICUS for their contributions and inputs to this study. Although the study is based on inputs from the mentioned actors, the analysis, findings and recommendations are prepared by the Team of consultants and therefore not necessarily shared by the Danish MFA or other partners. It is, however, the hope of the Team of consultants that the recommendations will be considered and further used in the process of enhancing Danish support to informally organised civil society actors and social movements in developing countries.

2. CHARACTERISTICS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Part of the literature review and consultation with Danish partners and other donor agencies focused on how informal civil society and social movements is being defined and whether there is a common way of categorising informal actors and social movements. Similarly, the Team of consultants discussed with the actors what the development opportunities and benefits are working with ICS and SM.

Thus, the present chapter touches on the 'what': Definitions from the literature and perceptions by actors on what ICS and SM are, the 'how': Innovative organisational forms and ways of supporting ICS and SM, as described by actors and in the literature, and the 'why': The potential development opportunities.

2.1 What is informal civil society and social movements?

There is not a clear commonly agreed definition of ICS and SM, neither in the literature nor from the interviews. However, while there are differences in what different actors highlight, there are also common elements and characteristics that have emerged from the discussions, e.g., many actors mention the lack of a bank account, because that is a very real barrier for formal CSOs or donors for them to support ICS and SM.

A key learning is that it will be beneficial to distinguish the conceptualization of ICS and SM as MFA continues its work. Though there are overlaps between the two categories, the study describe some the key differences in the following sections. Also, it seems that the understanding of ICS and SM found in reports or interviews is influenced by the specific interest or policy focus of each actor.

The Danish MFA Policy on Support to Civil Society (2014) defines civil society as:

“the arena between the state, the market and the family/household in which people can debate and take individual and collective action to promote change or issues of shared interest. This includes civil society in all its forms – civil society organisations (CSOs), community based organisations, community groups, trade unions, business associations, cooperatives, faith-based organisations, informal groups (without boards and formal constitutions), social movements, including online

activists, academia, think tanks, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and media.”

The policy highlights that “Civil society is fluid and dynamic; people come together physically and virtually to promote change on a wide range of issues and people move from one issue or topic to another and then back again.”

Based on the literature, but also informed by the interviews and cases provided by the Danish actors, the following four types of organisational categories have been identified.

Informal civil society is a catch-all term and can be difficult to define. However, the most straight-forward characteristic is that these are organisations or groups that are not formally registered and do not have a bank account. Some might have a Board, while others have chosen to organise their leadership in a different manner. Informal groups exist in both rural and urban areas.

They can be community-based groups tied to a village or neighbourhood, but they can also be groups working on a cause that transcends location, e.g., a group working on anti-racism or an informal online group citizen-journalists working to uncover state corruption. From a donor or NGO perspective these would often be identified as a “target group” rather than a partner.

Community Groups: Civil society includes a broad spectrum of formal and less formal (secular and religious) organisations, institutions, and coalitions. In our understanding, civil society includes a school club in Uganda, a Parent-Teacher Association in South Sudan, a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in Sudan, a church group in Ethiopia, a group of pineapple growers in Tanzania and an advocacy group in Yemen. It also includes more formalised NGOs. These formal and informal organisations represent their members and their communities, and work towards furthering their rights, needs and interests. *ADRA – Extracts from Partnership Strategy 2021*

The term “informal civil society” has a certain negation built into it, as it is defined by the absence of the formal. This indicates a donor or NGO perspective, which might not be the most productive when engaging in direct dialogue with these groups and activists. In light of this, we will also use the term new civic activism when describing the innovations and new forms of organising that is becoming evident in recent years.

Social movements are generally taken to involve sustained collective action rooted in dense informal base networks and collective identities, while employing a range of tactics on a repeated basis⁴. Social movements are typically associated with more actors that work in an alliance or network, thus representing more than just one community or group. Thus, a social movement can also be described as a broad campaign, often consisting of several actors.

Movements: When young artists meet at the local music studio, they also use this time to explore how their lyrics can make a change. And when young artists mobilise radio stations, art galleries, music studios and other artist to take part in large events such as music festivals and online activist campaigns, we are starting to see a movement taking place – A movement whereby a lot of different actors informally starts to work towards the same overall goal and vision. Thus, we define the informal civil society, as the spaces in which young people meet, talk, organise and engage in change. And we understand a social movement as a group of individuals and organisations informally working together towards a shared purpose. *DreamTown, CISU grant holder*

Social movements differ in size and form of organisation, but they all arise from a more or less spontaneous gathering of people that are not defined by rules and procedures, but simply share a common vision for society. Thus, they are usually more loosely structured and less professionalized than NGOs⁵. Conceptually, social movements are a narrower category than informal civil society.

Some social movements are formally organised, while others are not. Some are registered, have a bank account and a formalized leadership or board. Others have none of those and will resist such developments, since it might jeopardize their work and mission. The political nature of social movements is often the reason – cited by Danish CSOs or in-country partners – for not supporting them, since it might involve reputational risk, and potentially risk of arrest or state violence.

Protest movements are often grouped together with social movements, but there are differences. The word “protest” can be defined in many ways and can refer to both online and offline protest. However, a broad definition can be established by drawing on three related areas:

4 Youngs (2019), Civic Activism Unleashed: New Hope or False Dawn for Democracy?

5 Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement>.

the right to assembly, the use of non-violent action, as well as a focus on the physical protest.

Activists: Working with the HRDC leaders was a different ball game compared to the 'normal' partnerships. They organise via social media; they do not have a heavy internal governance structure, board meetings and written (delayed) minutes. The direct relation between DCA and the leaders was based on mutual trust and accountability. Mobilisation for demonstrations was very fast and done via SoMe and trusted media networks. Outreach was across all major cities in Malawi. *DanChurchAid – Malawi case*

Against this background, the organisation CIVICUS proposes this definition: "Persistent physical assemblies that can be sustained over time and that use non-violent acts in their attempts to achieve social or political change that differ from conventional political attitudes or practices."⁶ Unlike most social movements, protest movements sometimes do not have clear leaders or precisely formulated goals⁷.

NGOs: Non-governmental organisation, a clearly defined organisation that seeks to achieve social or political goals but is not directly controlled by a government. Activities may include human rights, consumer protection, environmentalism, health, or development. NGOs can work on one or more levels; local, regional, national, or international⁸.

If, why, when and how informal civil society actors and social movements matter and contribute to change is a field of academic and policy research in itself.

2.2 How social movements and informal civil society matter

In his seminal academic work⁹, David S. Meyer, argues that it is not very helpful to consider activists as either heroes or cranks or to credit them for social change or simply dismiss their efforts. Meyer points to the complexities of how movements contribute to change. He argues that it is often difficult to ascertain the difference made by movements

6 CIVICUS (2017) [Keeping Up the Pressure: Enhancing the Sustainability of Protest Movements](#).

7 Youngs (2019), *Civic Activism Unleashed: New Hope or False Dawn for Democracy?*

8 Wikipedia, <https://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/NGO>.

9 Meyer (2003), *How Social Movements Matter*.

and activists, because they often fail to attain their immediate goals but contribute to lasting change in political debates, government institutions and wider culture; because the forces that mobilize people are not the same responsible for social change; and because movements rarely achieve all their demands and thus often question their own influence.

Consequently, Meyers points out that it is often difficult detective work to determine movements and activists contribution to change. If, why, when and how informal civil society actors and social movements matter and contribute to change is a field of academic and policy research in itself. Nonetheless, Meyer finds that research supports three key areas where movements contribute to creating change, which are influencing public policy, influencing public institutions and influencing the activists themselves¹⁰.

- **Public policy:** By uniting, however loosely, a broad range of groups and individuals, and taking action, social movements can influence public policy, at least by bringing attention to their issues. Newspaper stories about a demonstration pique political, journalistic and public interest in the demonstrators' concerns. By bringing scrutiny to a contested policy, activists can promote alternative thinking.
- **Public institutions:** Social movements can alter not only the substance of policy, but also how policy is made. It is not uncommon for governments to create new institutions, such as departments and agencies, in response to activists' demands.
- **Political activists:** Social movements also change the people who participate in them, educating as well as mobilizing activists, and thereby promoting ongoing awareness and action that extends beyond the boundaries of one movement or campaign. By politicizing communities, connecting people, and promoting personal loyalties, social movements build the infrastructure not only of subsequent movements, but of a democratic society more generally.

If and how social movements contribute to change in a given context and how and to what degree this can be measured or assessed is of course influenced by the given context. It is for example likely to be more difficult in autocratic or autocratising contexts, e.g., for movement to successfully push more democratic new or existing institutions. This is important to consider in relation to literature and experience from contexts that are more democratic.

More recently and policy oriented, CIVICUS in its State of Civil Society 2020 describes the people's mobilisations and successes in demanding democracy, urge fairer economic policies, challenge inequalities, call for

¹⁰ Meyer (2003), How Social Movements Matter.

more accountable global governance and insist on urgent action on the climate crisis. The report points to how civic action has played significant roles in political and societal changes in a number of countries around the world¹¹. CIVICUS also points to the importance of civil society in responding to COVID-19¹², while Brechenmacher, Carothers and Youngs from Carnegie emphasize the importance of communities coming together to cope with the COVID-19 crisis and that this reinforces towards localized, informal civic activism, already underway in many places.¹³

The trends and cases¹⁴ and described in the present study also illustrate the potential of working with informal actors, while at the same time highlighting some of the barriers.

2.3 The rise of new civic activism – a global megatrend

The size and frequency of mass protests and mobilisations around the world is unprecedented and thus surpass historical epochs of mass protest and mobilisation, such as the late 1960s and late 1980s, according to The Economist¹⁵ and Freedom House.¹⁶ Research show that the mass political protests that have captured the world's attention over the last few years are part of a development that extends over the past decade and affects all regions of the world.¹⁷ The root causes of these global protests suggest that they will continue and probably increase in 2021 and beyond. While each protest must be understood in its unique context, the most common causes of protest are ineffective governance and corruption.¹⁸

11 CIVICUS (2020), [State of Civil Society Report](#).

12 CIVICUS (2020), [Solidarity in the time of COVID-19: Civil Society responses to the pandemic](#).

13 Brechenmacher, Carothers and Youngs (2020), [Civil Society and the Coronavirus: Dynamism Despite Disruption](#), Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

14 See case on page 23 and in examples of practice in Annex B.

15 The Economist (2020), [Political Protests Have Become More Widespread and More Frequent](#).

16 Freedom House (2020), [Freedom in the World 2020, A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy](#).

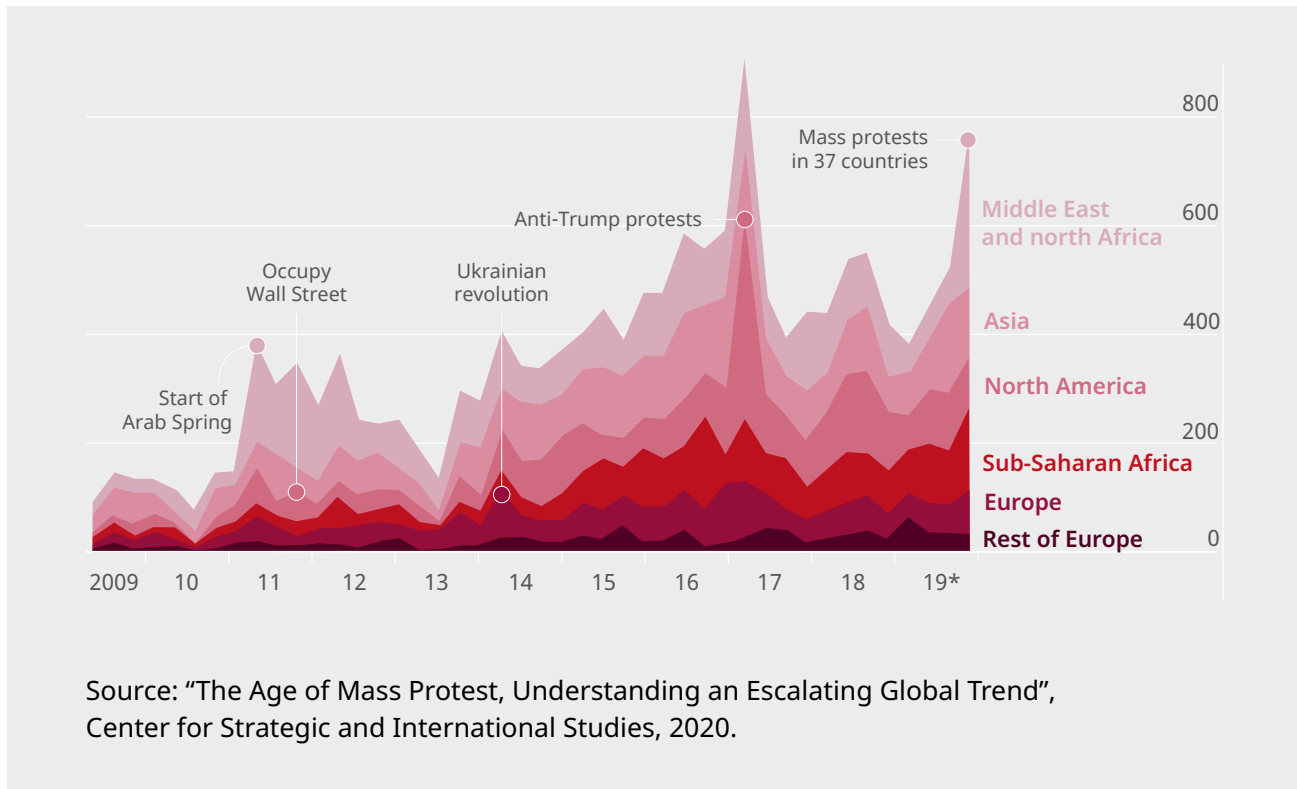
17 The Economist (2020), [Political Protests Have Become More Widespread and More Frequent](#).

18 FreedomHouse (2020), [Freedom in the World 2020, A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy](#).

WHAT IS IT AND WHAT ARE THE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES?

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies¹⁹ finds that the number of protests increased globally with an annual average of 11.5% between 2009 and 2019, although there were significant differences within regions and from year to year. Seen in this broader context, the events during, for example, the Arab Spring were not an isolated phenomenon, but rather a particularly acute manifestation of a rising global megatrend.²⁰

THE AGE OF MASS PROTEST, UNDERSTANDING AN ESCALATING GLOBAL TREND



A particularly noteworthy trend is the long-term increase of protests in sub-Saharan Africa of an overwhelming increase, estimated 746% between 2009 and 2019, according to the same report from The Centre for Strategic and International Studies. Protests in the region thus increased by 23.8% each year – more than double the global average of 11.5%. The number of events peaked in 2019 with significant protest movements in Sudan, South Africa, Zimbabwe, South Sudan and

19 Center for Strategic and International Studies (2020), The Age of Mass Protests.

20 The Economist (2020), Political Protests Have Become More Widespread and More Frequent.

Ethiopia. These do not include the protests in Uganda, Malawi, etc., since these happened after 2019.²¹

The Arab Spring in 2010-2012 marked a global high, but the region continues to be characterized by very high levels of civil unrest. Between 2009 and 2019, protests increased by 290.5%. In 2019, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Azerbaijan were marked by mass protests according to the report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Along the same lines, research from the Swedish Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) in their 2020 annual report "Autocratisation Surges – Resistance Grows"²², finds that pro-democracy mass mobilization has reached an all-time high in 2019, higher than during the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Arab Spring, and that the share of countries with substantial pro-democracy mass protests surged from 27% in 2009 to 44% in 2019. According to V-Dem, "the unprecedented degree of mobilization for democracy in light of deepening autocratisation is a sign of hope. While pro-autocracy rulers attempt to constrain the scope for civil society, millions of citizens demonstrate their commitment to democracy."²³

2.4 Innovative organisational forms and rethinking civil society

The emergent civic activism is not just about these more high-profile protests but is also reflected in an increasingly dense network of civic organisation.

In India, women's groups at the village level are fighting against sexual harassment and caste discrimination. In Malawi, youth organise to make their voice heard in collective campaigns. In Uganda, local environmental organisations are organising citizens to fight against mining

21 Center for Strategic and International Studies, [The Age of Mass Protests](#), 2020. About the data: Data originally comes from the [GDELT Project](#) (Global Database of Events, Language, and Tone). The graph thus shows the increase in the number of protests, not the size of the protests. Data from GDELT is based on news reporting, so countries with limited press freedom or weak local press coverage or where protests are so common that it is not a news story are probably underrepresented. Data only show demonstrations against governments, not other types of demonstrations, e.g., against companies.

22 Varieties of Democracy (2020), [Autocratization Surges – Resistance Grows](#).

23 Ibid, p. 21.

companies.²⁴ And from a completely different ideological point of view, nationalist and anti-democratic movements are growing in all regions.²⁵

According to the International Centre for Civil Society (ICSC), there is now a much wider range of different civic organisations than before. The director of ICSC writes that "the old world of classical associational participation and formal structures is being replaced by new types of popular engagement."²⁶ Citizens' new ways of engaging are so different and widespread today that a rethinking of civil society is required.²⁷ More formal organisations are often perceived to not represent the full spectrum of civil society.

These changes have not happened all at once. In the 1990s and early 2000s, it was the professional advocacy NGOs that fought for a well-known menu of rights issues that was most prominent. Today, younger activists refer to that form of NGO-based activism and formal advocacy as the "old" civil society.²⁸ The change is not an absolute break from one form of activism to a completely new form. Various forms of civil activism have coexisted and have been evolving over long periods of time.

It is thus a more fluid, informal and community-oriented activism that is emerging around the world. The new activism is as much about culture and the values of society as it is about more classic advocacy.²⁹ Informal groups, particularly those in urban areas, are often in the nexus between art, culture and on-line activism.

Implications for future civil society support

In "Global Civic Activism in Flux" Carnegie Endowment points to a number of themes relevant to the future of civil society support³⁰:

- While there is a global wave of new protests and innovative citizen movements, many civic struggles are increasingly rooted in specific national issues.
- New and older forms of civic activism coexist and intertwine in a variety of ways.

24 Global Human Rights (2020), [Six Activists Leading the Way in 2020](#).

25 Youngs (2019), [Civic Activism Unleashed: New Hope or False Dawn for Democracy?](#)

26 International Civil Society Centre (2013), [Riding the Wave - Rather Than Being Swept Away](#).

27 Ibid.

28 Open Global Rights (2016), [The Old World of Civic Participation Is Being Replaced](#).

29 Youngs (2019), [New Civic Activism, New Dawn or False Hope for Democracy?](#)

30 Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2017), [Global Activism in Flux](#).

- Some new activism is highly political and confrontational; some is very practical and pragmatic about trying to circumvent the shortcomings of mainstream politics.
- New civic activism includes groups espousing an increasingly wide range of ideological positions.
- While the new activism has been effective on some specific issues, it is mostly struggling to hold at bay resurgent authoritarian and illiberal government responses.

In order to facilitate the new civic activism, donors and NGOs face the challenge of drawing a clearer line between being politically engaged and being politically one-sided. The report from Carnegie points out that while donors need to be careful to retain their formal political neutrality, by not engaging positively with the new activists they are in fact adopting a political position by omission – one that loads the dice against the emerging civic activism and its new types of substantive agendas.³¹

CIVICUS argues that donors still need to “recalibrate attitudes to risk and be brave enough to invest in new organisations and ideas ... [and] accept that investing in potential can be as worthwhile as investing in a more traditional NGO organisation that guarantees quantifiable results.”³²

Channels and partners are changing and becoming more diverse

As a response to these new developments, an arch type of four levels of civil society support is changing and becoming more diverse. From the interviews and desk research, the study observed the following:

- At level 2 (Northern national CSOs) the study sees new (international) platforms and organisations that focus specifically on democracy, HRDs and SM.
- At level 3 (in-country partners) some partners are being replaced by new (youth) organisations or direct support mechanisms.
- At level 4 an increasing number of informal groups and social movements are emerging, but are not fully being served by the traditional aid modalities.

31 Ibid.

32 CIVICUS (2015), State of Civil Society.



2.5 Development opportunities and ways of supporting

Democracy is under threat and civic space is increasingly being limited, as described in the Global State of Democracy Report 2020 and V-Dem’s annual reports. Parallel with this intensifying autocratisation, data shows a growing popular demand for democracy. The rising numbers of pro-democracy protests mentioned earlier indicate that those living in repressive regimes are continuing to fight for rights and freedoms.

The opportunities and potential development outcomes from supporting ICS and SM is closely connected to these interconnected trends: There is an increasing and urgent need for supporting ICS and SM due to the repression. And there is a great opportunity to collaborate with the new and old actors emerging as a response to this repression. In short, there is both an obligation to support and a momentum for influence tied to the rise in civil mobilizations.

Three areas of opportunity: Youth, Digitalization and Pro-democracy mobilization

The interviews and the cases provided by the Danish actors for this study points to the opportunities associated with supporting ICS, particularly SMs that focus on strengthening democracy. They generally focus on the importance of youth and how digitization is changing the way that organisations and citizens are communicating and collaborating.

The literature study supplements and confirms these observations. The report “The Age of Mass Protest – Understanding an Escalating Global Trend” from the Center for Strategic and International Studies highlights six root causes and enablers that are pushing the rise of civic mobilizations.

Combining the data from interviews and cases with the literature review, this study highlights three interconnected areas of opportunity: 1) The role of youth in ICS and SM and 2) Digital connectiveness as an amplifier of informal voices, and 3) How shrinking civic space makes informal actors even more important.

1) The role of youth in democracy work

As exemplified by the above case, the study wants to highlight the role of youth in democracy work, which we assess to hold particular potential when discussing the opportunities connected to ICS and SM.

The MFA Policy on Support to Civil Society (2014) also underlines this connection between youth, democracy, the role of social movements and social media:

“New media, including social media, and social movements are increasingly playing the role of CSOs in representing communities, especially in middle-income countries. Populations currently under the age of 30 will be the dominant force in many developing countries in the coming years. INGOs and local civil society actors do not always have a lot of ‘street credit’ in certain environments. New and social media present an opportunity for civil society actors to engage with younger ‘wired’ generations wanting to make their imprint on the society in which they live.

This quote indirectly hints at a generational gap between formal CSOs dominated by an older generation and a new generation of youth, which is increasingly forming their own ways of organising.

CASE: YOUTH4PARLIAMENT (Y4P) IN ZAMBIA AND MS-ACTIONAID: ENHANCING PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND YOUTH REPRESENTATION THROUGH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Y4P is a Zambian grassroots social movement, which increases youth participation in the electoral process by supporting voter registration, challenging corruption, and pressuring parties to endorse youth/women candidates. Y4P’s non-partisan and ‘not handling money’ approach generates them wide support and recruitment of committed activists. Y4P received the Africa Youth Award 2020. Y4P has taken itself from a scattered youth group practising spontaneous community organising in Lusaka region to a structured, sustainable social movement of over 60,000 grassroots —

community organisers and mobilizers (young politicians, parliamentarians, youth activists) across all 10 provinces in Zambia. AA Zambia and its Global Platform – together with AA Denmark – has supported Y4P in this work.

Y4P facilitated a Social Contract between leaders and youth of eight major parties to endorse youth candidates in five constituencies in 10 Zambian provinces with min. 50% of seats for young women. The power that Y4P had allowed them to pressure parties to sign, but the battle continues as parties try to intimidate and bribe the members.

Social movements are not registered organisations to sign an agreement with, and Y4P refuses to accept money from AADK. Hence AADK supports Y4P without risking their integrity through an agreement with AAZ and having the GP provide the resources they need. Additionally, AADK rapid response fund allowed Y4P leaders to shelter in safety when they were threatened with arrests and beatings.

2) Digital connectivity is empowering and amplifying informal voices

As of 2019, 4 billion people – more than half of the planet – are now connected to the internet, more than doubling from the 1.5 billion connected in 2009. That connectivity is likely the greatest critical enabler for new civic mobilization, both in relation to local community groups and more visible protests. Social media and virtual discussion boards clearly serve as concentrated hubs for proliferating grievances, discussing alternatives to the status quo, broadening support by connecting networks of aggrieved people, and ultimately spurring more engagement. This was confirmed by interviews with IMS, DCA and MS-ActionAid. In spite of this many formal CSOs are lacking behind in adopting these new technologies and would need to upgrade their knowledge in order to be efficient partners in this regard. A point which is highlighted in the report “Diversify, Adapt and Innovate”³³ from the International Center for Civil Society. It also important to be aware of and take into account and address the risks as well as the inequalities associated with digital developments for ICS and SM. The recent Danish Strategy for tech diplomacy, which includes a focus on democracy, provides direction and impetus for work on democracy, civic space and digital development.

33 International Civil Society Centre (2018), [Diversify, Adapt and Innovate](#).

3) Limited civic space makes informal actors more important

As formal CSOs in the global South are experiencing an increasingly limited civic space, it will become more important to establish relations with more informal groups. This has been confirmed in various reports, including the Global State of Democracy from International IDEA and the annual report from the European Endowment for Democracy, which also includes a series of cases that illustrate this point.

In some countries, the governments abuse the legal mechanism for registering CSOs as a means of impeding the creation and operation of such organisations. At the same time, already formalized CSOs are also required to renew their legal recognition periodically. Such restrictions can make the CSOs a frail entity as they depend on the government.

A report from CIVICUS on the role of civil society during the COVID-19 pandemic³⁴ highlights how informal actors were a source of vital support, advice and information and a driver of sustained mobilisation, creativity and innovation.³⁵

Ways of supporting

In order to strengthen the role of ICS and SM and pursue the agendas and areas described above, it requires Danish CSOs and the MFA to expand and develop existing and new ways of supporting. There are already significant experiences to build on. From the interviews with Danish CSOs and the literature review we have identified five overall categories of support:

Solidarity and lobbying	Funding	Capacity dev.	Spaces and convening	Documentation
Statements of formal support	Rapid response mechanisms	Training in organising and leadership	Offering own NGO office spaces	Reporting on human rights abuses
Pushing own donor-country governments to show support	Seed funds	Training in campaigning and advocacy	Conferences	Sharing tactics and strategies (online materials)
Using the UN system	Core support	Training in human rights laws and conventions etc.	Activist hubs (Global Platforms, Ukraine Youth House)	Delivering to media outlets etc.
Other displays of support and attention.	Flexible funding, e.g., to individuals		Virtual spaces (Vuka!)	
	Payment for specific activities, transport, equipment, materials etc.			

34 IDEA (2019), [Global State of Democracy](#).

35 CIVICUS (2020), [Solidarity in the time of COVID-19: Civil Society responses to the pandemic](#).

Currently the focus of Danish CSOs is more on capacity development (workshops, coaching, online materials), documentation (reports on human rights abuses) and short-term funding (rapid-response mechanisms) than other types of support. There are also examples of creating spaces and convening activists, for example ActionAid Denmark's Global Platforms and the Youth House in Ukraine where activists and youth can gather to exchange ideas and receive training. Networking as a way of organising and collaborating will become increasingly important for civil society actors. There are areas within all five categories that can be developed further.

Diversity in support to ICM and SM: Vibrant civil society is pushing back against human rights abuses and working to hold state authorities and other non-state actors accountable. For support to HRDs to be effective, holistic strategies are required. These include: capacity building, legal, policy and institutional framework strengthening; provision of both emergency and preventive interventions; support for policy and legal reform advocacy efforts; peer-to-peer network building; physical accompaniment; trainings on risk analysis and security planning; self-care and wellbeing; digital and physical security measures; and emergency funds for HRDs at risk.

DanChurchAid support to Human Rights Defenders in Malawi during the general elections in 2019 and 2020. Extract from Risks Assessment Report (2020)

Developing more strategic support options

Richard Youngs from Carnegie Endowment for Peace highlights four key areas of work that international CSOs and donors should focus on³⁶:

1) **Help to bring the issues advocated by the new civic activism into the national and international public space.**

For this, international CSOs and donors must back activism on a wider range of substantive issues. In a report from CIVICUS³⁷ leaders of social movements in three different countries argues that international CSOs, foreign states and UN bodies are not showing adequate support for and solidarity with their democratic movements, which are important for the sustainability of social movements.

36 Youngs (2019), *New Civic Activism, False Hope or New Dawn*.

37 CIVICUS (2017) *Keeping Up the Pressure: Enhancing the Sustainability of Protest Movements*.

2) Help to ensure that new movements' authentic base within grassroots constituencies is maintained.

The grassroots focus is generally seen as civic movements' strong point, but there are cases where, as they gain a higher political profile, these movements gradually neglect the bases from which their legitimacy first grew. NGOs and donors could offer programs to prevent this from happening.

3) Strengthen the quality of leadership among the new groups by supporting capacity-building initiatives, e.g., mentorship programs for new civic leaders.

This kind of initiative might include facilitating regional connectivity between movement leaders in different countries. International actors could help build networks and strengthen intermediaries through convening meetings and joint planning sessions to strengthen overall movement alliances.

4) International support could also help to even out the spikes of turbulence associated with the new civic activism.

There are examples where the new civic activism makes dramatic advances but then fails to hold the ground won, which can also lead to political and economic backlash that leaves its aims even further from being realized, as described in e.g., the report: "After Protest: Pathways Beyond Mass Mobilization"³⁸. International actors could support constructive use of mobilizations and development of create a politics that is fully participatory without being self-destructively chaotic.

To summarize this chapter – and to highlight what is “new” about the rising civic activism, the study points to the following aspects:

- The volume and size of movements is on the rise
- Populations' increasing awareness on inequality and human rights
- New generation of (informed/educated) youth
- New digital generation with new digital (ICT) opportunities (platforms, spaces, mobilization etc.)
- Enhanced donor coordination and acknowledgement of ICS and SM in development programming
- Increasing donor focus on need for some degree of flexibility

38 Carnegie Endowment for Peace (2019), [After Protest: Pathways Beyond Mass Mobilization](#).

Based on this, the study recommends that:

R1: MFA further develop and explore existing and new ways of supporting ICS and SM taking point of departure in the diversity of its current civil society support and further clarify and utilise comparative advantages of different types of channels, modalities and partnerships. MFA engage its Danish, international and local civil society partners, including informal actors and social movements in this work.

3. LESSONS LEARNED

Chapter 3 provides an overview of how Danish partners and donors are collaborating and supporting informal actors. The inputs and lessons learned have been provided through interviews supported by case stories and written feedback from the Danish partners.

Understanding the context, providing proper risk assessment, addressing compliance requirements, tailoring learning, applying responsive management and having the vision are factors providing both opportunities and challenges for Danish partners and donors working with ICS and SM. The following summaries the main experiences and lessons learned of the organisations and people interviewed.

3.1 Context

Every country is different and country contexts changes. Shrinking civic space, fragility, security, political turmoil on the one hand and general poverty, social and economic development challenges etc. on the other, are all factors fostering new movements and groups of informal actors who informally and sometimes unconventionally address emerging crises, injustice, violations and other factors challenging human rights, sustainable development or the livelihood of citizens. Therefore, context is critical and determining factor for how and with whom Danish partners and donors are engaging with and include in their development and humanitarian programmes and approaches. As described above the ICS and SM comprise a very diverse set of groups and actors who act and operate differently relative to country and context.

Context is crucial in determining the range and profile of partners. While in some settings new social movements present new opportunities for partnership, in other places increasingly restrictive legal and regulatory environments limit our options.
Save the Children Denmark Partnership Principles (2015)

3.2 Partnership approaches

In some cases, the informality challenges mainstream aid modalities and management approaches as these are not directly designed to support

and facilitate the outcome potential and need for rapid response. Dilemmas are identified in relation to e.g., the actual costs for Danish and their local formal partners supporting informal actors and the aim to transfer a high ratio of funds to South vis-à-vis that money transfers to informal actors is not always the answer. The following discuss some of the main lessons learned, challenges and obstacles for supporting ICS and SM.

New ways of partnerships. We have a strong wish to explore new ways of working in partnership together with both our present and potential partners in response to global changes. We are keen to test non-traditional ways of partnership with Southern actors where we look into new, more flexible and potentially also more risky relations. This could for example be through support to social movements with very loose structures or handing over larger responsibilities for the entire programme management to Southern partners. *DanChurchAid Partnership Policy (2014)*

Traditional Danish partners are relatively slow in building new relationships. According to still preliminary data from the ongoing INTRAC³⁹ Evaluation of Danish support to civil society, Danish partners often rely on partners with whom they have had a relatively long partnership. Further, the preliminary evaluation results show that these local partners or local offices of INGO federations often do not have relationships or network with newly emerged social movements or youth groups. Further analysis on why this is the case must await the evaluation report from INTRAC. However, some people interviewed argued that this might be due to a too closed system where INGOs and their local partners are reluctant or do not see the value add of pursuing sharing of available financial resources, and thereby maintaining a relatively closed circuit on flow of funds which might hamper the pursuit of new development opportunities and outcomes. Other people argue, as discussed below that transfers of funds is not necessarily the right solution or best way of supporting ICS and SM. To answer the question, the study finds that there is a need to generate more learning and to develop good practices.

Money is not always the answer. The interviews and cases collected shows that many informal actors and SM need financing in order to pay for general expenses such as: transport, food, venue, campaign materials, etc. For some actors e.g., Human Right Defenders, it might also be relevant to receive some salary compensation to sustain livelihoods and focus of the intervention or movement. However, both the interviews

39 Interview with INTRAC Evaluation Team members. Information still to be specified and validated in the Evaluation Report (due in Dec. 2021).

and the literature show that transfer of funds to ICS and SM is often not the most important or best way forward. Somehow, there is a more important need for coaching and strategic support ICS and SM, while at the same time being recognized as legitimate partners. Transfer of funds to ICS and SM can also entail risk of corruption and a loss of integrity. In practice, it also appears to be challenging for informal actors to actually receive and absorb large amount of funding, partly due to compliance rules and procedures, but also because of time constraints. Compliance and funds management is time consuming. Time taken away from the intervention and movement.

Do no harm principle. We have to remember the principle of ‘do no harm’ – especially when providing funding to groups which have started from a volunteer basis. While funding can allow them to do more, it can also create inequalities among the group, or have other negative side effects, and so that’s another reason why donor organisations need to be able to have the capacity and resources to look into how the group works, understand the power dynamics (including in terms of gender equality), understand what funding can give a much-needed ‘boost’ – or ultimately result in infighting and collapse, in the worst-case scenario. In other words, a strong investment in the assessment phase is imperative, as well as coaching, risk-management, shared understanding of risk, through to a careful assessment of what financial reporting is needed – and much more. *Quote: EED*

A key challenge in addressing funds between Danish partners and formal local partners to informal actors and movements is linked to the issues of risks and compliance, but also the culture of Danish partners relative to providing core funding outside their own “closed” funding circuit.

Informal partners require more time, human resources and management. Many Danish partners find it very resource intensive for DK HQ staff as well as for own Country Office or partner staff, to coach, mentor and safeguard local partners’ support or own support to ICS and SM. Due to the informality and maybe unconventional or limited mainstreaming of informal actors and SM more time is needed to prepare and design, coach and facilitate, monitor and manage adaptively of sometimes relatively small number of individuals and sometime only one or two. In registered hours and accounting terms these hours appear relatively costly. See also section on Compliance below. A key question is how (fast) local partnerships with strong local ownership can be established e.g., to lower the costs of the funding Danish partner and its country office. Overall, there is a need for finding the right mix based on proper and upfront Value for Money (VfM) assessments and approaches to ensure (faster) local ownership and empowerment.

Enhanced learning of approaches and documentation of VfM in relation to support to ICS and SM is required.

Human resources cost. One dilemma with the support to informal actors and movements including directly via our country offices is that it counts as self-implementation when we report, while we would like it to count as direct funding to partners, cf. our Grand Bargain and C-4-C commitments. *Quote: Danish SPA partner*

Working in alliances. Some of the Danish partners interviewed argue that there is a need to build stronger alliances between embassies, Danish partners and local formal partners to avoid a rather compartmentalised or silo implementation approach. These alliances could be country focused where all relevant actors work alongside a common country specific Theory of Change (TOC) and not only by all the individual INGO or local partners' TOCs as it is today. Working in alliances, whether donor alliances, alliances between the Danish partners and embassies, etc. will require additional resources and funding. Danish embassies do not have sufficient time or resources to facilitate the coordination although in some countries e.g., Uganda (Democratic Governance Facility⁴⁰) and Mali (FAMOC) there are funds management units who potentially could contribute to a country specific coordination role, but many of the diplomatic and more sensitive issues do require embassy engagement. MFA could consider providing funding for better country coordinated interventions allowing for a context determined approach to supporting informal actors and social movements. The Danish focus on Doing Development Differently⁴¹ with focus on holistic and adaptive programming and with Country Strategic Frameworks⁴² can provide impetus for enhancing alliances, including in relation to supporting ICS and SM.

3.3 Risks

Risks is mentioned as one of the key challenges hampering Danish partners support to and engagement with informal actors and movements. This is particular critical in the segments of ICS and SM working with e.g., political and human rights issues in fragile countries and countries with deteriorating situation for democracy, human rights and civic space. Working with these informal actors and movements require greater risk appetite and enhanced risk management approaches. The study finds

40 Although, the DGF is not directly focusing on informal civil society.

41 Guidance Note for Adaptive Management.

42 Guidelines for Country Strategic Frameworks, Programmes and Projects.

that among the Danish partners interviewed there is different degrees of risk appetite, especially as regards to financial risks, and a general acknowledgment of insufficient risk management mechanisms. Risks associated with more general poverty, social and economic development are less and easier to mitigate and manage.

Institutional risks comprise e.g., Danish partners' and their national formal partners' risks of losing their legal status and rights to operate. Institutional risks are also reputational risks and risk of affiliation, which goes both ways. ICS and SMs are complex to understand e.g., with regard to who they are, whom they represent, where they are or will be going. Thereby, the Danish civil society partners and their formal partners have to operate in a less definable and understandable context where risks there are enhanced risks that partners turn out to develop views of values incompatible with Danish support and/or interventions and activities get out of control, take political turns, result in unexpected outcomes. In worst cases this risk can put the Danish engagement and their formal partners in situations of affiliation which are contrary to the objectives and/or politically sensitive and damaging, to e.g., reputation and/or future opportunities to operate in a particular country.

Informal actors and social movements receiving support from formal actors, whether national or Danish partners, also need to consider their affiliation and reputation especially in countries using accusations of international infiltration as a means of suppression.

Risk factors. GDPR, money laundering prevention, procurement, auditing and anti-terror screening are examples where there is great risk and where Danish organisations and MFA together must find an acceptable system. *Quote: SPA partner*

Safety risks and duty of care for own staff, formal national partners' staff and for informal actors is challenging Danish partners engagement and approaches to support ICS and SM. Naturally, the more political and opportunistic the engagement is the higher the safety risks are. Hence, the obligation of duty of care (for all) becomes a hampering factor for how far the Danish partner can go. Danish partners are conscious and take the responsibility seriously, which then challenge the opportunity to pursue and support high risk interventions.

Duty of care. Social movements are often the biggest change makers, but also exposed to great danger. Our support must in no way be able to put them in further danger, as well as our employees in the countries. Security and protection are becoming absolutely essential. Likewise, proactive and secure media management is often necessary – and our employees in the country offices must be able to handle this. *Quote: Danish SPA partner*

Financial risks are obvious when transferring funds to informal actors with no legal registration and bank account. Who is representing the SM? – and what are the safeguards when transferring to an individual actor etc.? Financial risks are being taken seriously and often alternative solutions are identified where the support exclude actual transfers, but is kept to paying for activities, events, campaigns, materials, equipment etc. As discussed above transfers of funds is not necessarily what the informal actors and SMs wants, so in these instances the risks are more associated with the outcomes of the supported activities, events, campaigns etc. As discussed below there are examples and lessons learnt on transfers of funds to individuals from MFA and embassies implemented programmes.

In Sida's CIVSAM agreements with Swedish Strategic Partner Organisations they have included a paragraph⁴³ enabling them to request financial risk-sharing with Sida.

Sharing of risks. In addition to what is stated in the General Terms and Conditions Article 16 on breach of contract, the following applies to Sida's decision to ask for recovery of funds ("tilbagebetaling") from a Partner Organisation: When the recovery concerns an Implementing Party that Sida deems to be an exposed civil society organisation or informal actor, special consideration shall be given to what measures the Partner has taken in relation to the Implementing Party in order to prevent breach of contract and recover any incorrectly used funds from the Implementing Party." *Sida CIVSAM Agreement. (Translated from Swedish).*

43 "13.4 1" I tillag till vad som anges i allmänna villkor artikel 16 om aftals brutt galler folgende ved sidas beslut om att stilla aterkrav fran samarbetspart. nar aterkravet galler en genomforandepart som sida bedomer vara utsatt civil samhallasorganisation eller infomell aktör, ska særskilt beaktas vilka åtgärder samarbetsparten har vidtagit i forhallande till genomforandeparten i syfte att forebygga avtalsbrott och återvinna eventuella felaktigt använda medel från genomforanparten. Sida 2020.

Institutional and safety risks are hard to share between MFA and a Danish partner whereas financial risks is an area where shared risks could be assessed and agreed. It would require robust risk assessment and a solid risk management framework, which in most cases would require very detailed appreciation of the context, and the opportunity to follow i.e., monitoring the informal actors in their process towards change. Further, fast mitigation measures of emerging negative impact of the engagement, support and investment would be necessary.

Risk management systems and mechanisms need to be tailored to address fast and critical negative impact of support provided to informal actors and risk mitigation strategies need to be able to detect if the supported informal actor or movement continues to be a legitimate partner sharing the similar values to the Danish and their formal partners. DCA has developed a risk assessment framework for a particular support project for human rights defenders in Malawi and there might be other good examples, but overall the Study finds that more knowledge and development of risk management mechanisms for support to informal actors and social movements is needed.

Risks management needs to be more upfront and explicit, with rapid due diligence response mechanism and mitigation strategies for financial risks. Support to ICS and SM should build this into existing risk management. Civil society partners that work with ICS and SM and has a high degree of risk appetite, should be supported to invest their risk management in this area and to integrate it into their existing risk management. This should include that they are well prepared for different scenarios and has prepared options than can be applied and adapted in challenging situations.

In certain situations, mitigation strategies, could be considered to include alternative ways of reporting on results and activities. For example, CISU is allowing small grant holders to report their results through short videos. In certain circumstances, alternative ways of documenting expenses that comply with MFA guidelines and requirements can also be considered. The use of encrypted messaging service sending one-to-one and group messages, which can include files, voice notes, images and videos, can be further considered for further exploration as one potential way of facilitating.

The study acknowledge that these alternative ways will require that partners and if they are to potentially clarify and manage alternative strategies and methods for documentation that comply with MFA guidelines and requirements.

Furthermore, there is a need to operate with rapid political risk assessment and mitigation planning (institutional risks) and rapid safety assessment and planning for all (own staff, partner staff, informal

actors). The rapid political risk assessment should be able to mitigate potential risk of support to or affiliation with illegitimate informal actors who are not necessarily sharing the same values as the Danish development corporation and their formal partners. For example, EED is making use of pre-selected national consultants who supports the screening and assessment of potentially sensitive actors and activities.

Danish partners should primarily use the official channels i.e., annual strategic and programmatic negotiations with MFA (and CISU and pool funds) to strategic justification discuss risk appetite and risk management, including alternative and more flexible ways of reporting both results and expenditures that are in accordance with MFA guidelines and requirements. The discussion should include strategic justification of planned support to ICS and SM with a clear risk management and safeguarding plan (potential financial, political and safety risks).

The study recommends that:

R2: The MFA supports its partners to invest in their development of more robust risk management mechanisms and mitigation strategies for support to informal actors and movement as an illustration of MFA willingness to support the calculated and substantiated risk appetite of its civil society partners working with ICS and SM.

R3: MFA engage with its Danish, international and local civil society partners including with informal actors and social movements in this work to develop principles for sharing of critical risks associated with planned support to informal actors.

This could include development of clauses (like Sida) e.g., allowing for breaches of contract linked to support to strategic engagements with ICS and SM or similar.

3.4 Compliance

In the discussions with Danish partners the many and increasing number of compliance rules and procedures is considered a significant hampering factor for the support to ICS and SM. Compliance with financial management and reporting is singled out as the most critical factor.

Large number of compliance requirements. Compliance in financial management and reporting, anti-corruption, duty of care, safety, code of conduct, PSEAH, CHS, C4C, Grand Bargain etc. (the list is long) is already challenging Danish partners support to the formal civil society (in time and management), hence also hampering a rapid and responsive approach to working with informal actors and social movements.

Similarly, people interviewed argue that the compliance with results management and documentation requirements is even more difficult when working with informal actors and social movements.

Danish partners' own compliance rules and procedures. Danish partners acknowledge that MFA is often not necessarily the reason why they themselves are not working with social movements or directly with informal civil society groups. They find that it is often their own compliance systems or the systems of their in-country partners', which stands in the way of establishing relationships and partnerships with these new actors.

We are challenged to maintain our current compliance regime.

Our financial, management and reporting system is built on the fact that we support established, registered (legal) organisations where there is an organisation similar to ours including policies, guidelines, formats and procedures. The social movements often do not have this, and they cannot be relevant or operate quickly if they were to 'copy' us and other INGOs/NGOs. *Quote: SPA partner*

MFA rules and procedures, as well as CISU's and other Pool Funds rule and procedures are by people interviewed perceived to be relatively flexible and open for Danish partners to find ways in which also informal actors and social movements can be supported. However, the same compliance issues as mentioned above are hampering the opportunity to work with informal actors and social movements on their terms. The request for results documentation is resource intensive when working with informality and more unconventional actors. Traditional monitoring tools and methods have shortcomings, but outcome harvesting is seen as a more suitable method to capture some of the immediate outcomes of the support to informal actors. There is, however, a need to continue developing new methods and approach on how to capture outcomes of interventions from informal actors and social movements.

Several people interviewed asked the question whether it is possible or not, and if possible – to support individuals with funding from MFA and/or CISU. MFA rules and procedures are not saying that Danish partners or their formal partners in countries of cooperation cannot support individuals with funds from MFA or CISU. On the contrary, MFA is implementing programmes where, although, small amounts of funds are transferred to individuals. FAMOC in Mali, MFA scholarships and funding from the Information Pool of Funds (Oplysningspuljen) are examples where MFA provide funding to individuals.

In case of FAMOC⁴⁴ it has shown to be resource intensive to support individuals and the risk management is requiring additional attention.

There is a real risk that a movement will become an NGO and that the partnership with us will push them in that direction. The whole administrative set-up (CISU) is also pushing in that direction. We have also experienced that the administrative set-up is too rigid in regard to e.g., the option of using airline tickets to establish network meetings between informal actors and movements. The grants system justifies this in the negative climate impact. We believe that this problem is very limited relative to the impact of the potential changes of the movements in human rights protection, climate action etc. These movements are often up against some of the world's largest companies, whose climate footprint is the size of an African country. *Quote: Danish NGO, grant holder and member of CISU*

The compliance around what and how much time is registered as DK HQ or country office cost vis-à-vis activities implemented in countries of cooperation is by many seen as a hampering factor. The Study notes that new accounting rules have been prepared with new cost categorise. These need to be tested also relative to how they apply to Danish partners support to informal actors and social movements and how they might provide a framework for capturing and acknowledging the HQ and local staff resources going into supporting informal civil society and social movements. The support to ICS and SM is still relatively small compared to the total turn-over of Danish civil society actors and their projects and programmes. However, the trend outlined in Chapter 2 indicates that in terms of focus, time and resources, the support will most likely increase in the coming years. Therefore, there is a need to continue the discussion on what is required from a Danish HQ and CO – what can be addressed by formal partners in the countries? – how should different person hours invested be accounted (direct activity costs, transfers to local partners, programme supporting costs) and how to provide a reasonable assessment of Value for Money given often extended risks, uncertainty and less predictable outcomes?

44 The programme runs from 2017-2022. So far 35-40 individuals have received funds.

Support to individuals. We are facilitating and supporting the training of young individuals. Programmatically, we do not face any particular restrictions in relation to guidelines and requirements. They accommodate well for working with a bottom-up community approach. A general challenge is, however, the possibility to fund contribution from DK HQ staff. Working directly with smaller CSOs, there is a large need for supporting the development of participatory design methods, training curriculum for volunteers etc. which can be challenging to find the resources for within the programme grant. *Quote: CISU Grant Holder*

The study recommends that:

R4: MFA clarifies and potentially further develop its approach to if, when and how increased HQ and CO costs that may be associated with working with ICS and SM are justifiable, e.g., directly linked to planning and implementation, mentoring and safeguarding of staff and informal actors, interventions in politically sensitive (high risk) environments, taking into account Value for Money and localisation considerations.

Funding through e.g., the existing (SPA) innovation funds has shown suitable for the encouragement to pursue and develop new forms of partnerships. Similarly, there might be a need for this kind of flexible funding to ensure Danish partners opportunity to develop, mentor and support new forms of partnerships with informal actors.

3.5 Learning and best practices

Among all donors, Danish civil society partners, MFA, CISU and other people interviewed there is a great appetite to move forward in the learning and good practice agenda. There is common acknowledgement of the need to develop e.g., better partnership approaches, ways of empowering informal actors, risk management mechanisms and better tailored compliance rules and procedures.

For the Danish partners, Global Focus and CISU are suitable platforms for further investigation, documentation and facilitation of learning. CIVICUS and similar platforms are considered valuable sources of information and knowledge, which can be tapped into to further qualify the dialogue.

MFA is seen as a key enabler of the learning, but it is similarly a responsibility of the Danish partners themselves to pursue common understand, approaches and learning on how to support particular informal actors and social movements in each of the countries or contexts of operation.

Danish partners also need to learn how to adapt to the logic and rationale of the informal and unconventional, and carefully consider not to mainstream what might have bigger opportunity to create lasting impacts through its informality vis-à-vis being formalised.

For MFA, other donors interested and engaged in this area, e.g., Sida, Norad, Dutch and Irish MFAs, are relevant sounding boards and partners relative to the agendas. As mentioned above Sida is opening up for a shared risk approach with its strategic partners. Similarly, the EU and the EED have important relevant experiences and competencies to engage with, draw on and learn from. EED is for example working in challenging contexts with management of documentation of results and expenditures in flexible and alternative ways in compliance with relevant regulations as well as with local experts and consultants during the screening of informal partners and with managing risk, safety and security.

Limited time and resources with these donor agencies to pursue stronger donor coordination seem to be the biggest challenge. More and better donor coordinated approaches, especially among like-minded donors, will enhance mutual learning, but similar strengthening harmonization of donor compliance and risk management procedures, which will allow the formal civil society actors to utilise their risk appetite and capacities to strengthen the support to informal actors.

The study recommends that:

R5: MFA engages with Danish, international and local civil society, including informal actors and social movements, and other donors as well as supports its civil society partners to enhance innovation and learning on dealing with ICS and SM. This could be achieved e.g., through the innovation funds integrated into partnership agreements and by engaging in joint learning, including through the development of good practices and evidence, e.g., concerning dealing with informality, results and impact, risk mitigation and new partnerships.

Learning could include e.g.: – understanding what it is? – what is new in civic activism, high-risk vis-a-vis low-risk segments of the informal actors, partners vs. target groups/beneficiaries; and how to govern informality ensuring that it doesn't hamper the logic, rationale and opportunities of informality, but find ways to adapt a different logic into existing operations and modalities (e.g., bilateral programmes, SPA and CISU/ Pool Funds).

Enhancing learning could be coordinated with Global Focus and CISU with use of other knowledge centres such as CIVICUS, Sida, EED, etc.

ANNEXES

Annex A Terms of Reference

Study on Danish support to informally organised civil society and social movements in developing countries

The Consultant must perform the Services in accordance with the Client's requirements.

The Consultant must also perform the Services in accordance with the Consultant's description stated in Appendix 3C.

Background and context

Civil society engagement is fundamental to any democratic society. It is important in its own right as well as for the development of socially cohesive societies. Civil society contributes to change, innovation and community; it holds authorities accountable; increases reach and gives voice to people in the most vulnerable situations; it facilitates knowledge and networks; and delivers services where states are unable or unwilling to do so, e.g. in fragile contexts. Civil society is thus key to protecting and promoting human rights and to achieving the sustainable development goals and the principle of leaving no-one behind.

In many countries around the world, including in many developing countries, civic space is shrinking and there is increased pressure on human rights and democracy. At the same time, there is an increase in pro-democracy mobilization and popular engagement for climate, social, gender and economic justice. Social movements and young people, with the use of digital tools, online platforms and social media, often drive this mobilisation and engagement. Meanwhile, it must be recognised and addressed that not all civil society actors share values of democracy, human rights and sustainable development – some are even working actively against these.

Denmark acknowledges the value of a strong, diverse civil society and supports its central role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Many parts of the Danish civil society contribute to translating a broad Danish popular involvement in international humanitarian action and development cooperation into meaningful results. The strategy includes a specific focus on civic space and support to the advocacy role and capacity of civil society in developing countries.

Danish support to civil society is based on a broad understanding of “civil society”: i.e. the space between the state, the market and the family/household, where people can debate and take individual and collective steps to create change or engage in issues of common interest. It includes all forms of civil society organisations as well as social movements and informally organised civil society, e.g. without boards and statutes. Furthermore, Danish civil society support emphasises that social movements and informally organised civil society have important roles to play.

The Danish support to civil society has been evaluated several times. The most recent evaluation from 2013 finds that “Danida support must be able to identify and support new emerging civic actors. It needs to avoid ‘institutionalising’ its partner profile – by supporting today’s civil society actors on the basis of yesterday’s performance rather than investing in tomorrow’s drivers for change”. Currently, a new evaluation of the Danish civil society support is ongoing with the objectives: 1) to capture outcome level results in selected thematic areas of development and humanitarian assistance implemented in the global south by CSOs funded by Danish ODA and 2) to stimulate learning based on evidence of achieved results to improve the quality of the Danish Government’s support to civil society. The evaluation will be completed by December 2021. Denmark is also currently preparing a new strategy for its development cooperation and humanitarian action, as well as updating its approach to civil society support, including the through strategic partnership agreements with civil society organisations.

Purpose

There is an interest to explore how Denmark’s approach to civil society can better support informal civil society and social movements, potentially including an increased flexibility, recognising that this requires consideration with regards to obligations, risk management, accountability etc. It is therefore timely to learn from the experience with civil society support to informally organised civil society and social movements under the current policy framework as well as selected other likeminded donors approach in order to inform considerations on possible updates.

Objective

The objective of the study is to inform considerations and provide recommendations concerning the potential for enhancing Danish support to informally organised civil society actors and movements in developing countries.

Scope of work

The scope of the work shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Describe and analyse Danish support to informally organised civil society actors across different channels and modalities, including through partnerships with Danish civil society organisations, and how this contributes to a vibrant and diverse civil society and other Danish objectives;
- Identify and assess facilitating factors and good practices in Danish support to informally organised civil society actors;
- Identify and assess hampering factors and lessons learned from Danish support to informally organised civil society actors, including the potential points to pay attention to as well as pitfalls regarding the support to such actors;
- Describe approach among selected other relevant donors to support informally organised civil society actors and identify learning opportunities for Danish support.
- Discuss and provide recommendations for how Danish support to informally organised civil society actors can be enhanced, including through partnerships with Danish civil society organisations.

Deliverables (output)

- Inception note/report –description of the detailed approach and outline by the consultant(s) in achieving the objective – by 13 April 2021.
- Draft report – by 7 May 2021.
- Final report – by 19 May 2021.
- Virtual meeting presentation – date to be decided.

Timing

The commencement date is 7 April 2021 and the completion date is 31 May.

Methodology

The method of work shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Desk review of relevant materials related to Danish civil society support in particular to informally organised civil society actors?, including but not limited to legal and regulatory, strategy/policy

documents, guidelines (administrative, financial etc.), results/ progress reports.

- Desk review of relevant materials related to other selected donors' civil society support in particular to informally organised civil society;
- Identification and deeper analysis of 2-3 cases of good practices and 2-3 cases of lessons learned related to Danish support to informally organised civil society actors and analyse factors that facilitated this support;
- Interviews with MFA staff, civil society partners, including informally organised partners, and other donor agencies;
- Participation in up to two possible relevant Danish MFA workshops/ consultations/brownbags, e.g. on localisation and partnerships in Danish civil society support and/or civic space and/or social movements.
- Meetings with MFA and possible interaction with a team of consultants conducting an evaluation of the Danish civil society support.

Qualifications and Competence of Staff

1-2 external consultant(s) is required for this assignment with an estimated maximum of total 26 working days during April-May. The external consultant(s) shall be an expert(s) on support to civil society in developing countries with the following qualifications:

- Relevant education in political and/or social science, law, development or other relevant field.
- Minimum of 10 years of relevant policy and programme experience with support to civil society in developing countries and updated knowledge on global trends and debates on civil society support;
- Experience and in-depth knowledge of trends concerning informally organised civil society and social movements in general and donor approaches to supporting this in particular.
- Demonstrated skills in conducting research and analysis and providing evidence-based strategic advice.
- Experience and in-depth knowledge of Denmark's international development cooperation in general and support to civil society in particular, including concerning Aid Management Guidelines, Financial Guidelines etc.
- Fluency in English is a required. Ability to read and understand Danish is an added advantage.

If there will be more than one consultant, one of the consultants shall be external team leader who will hold the contract with the MFA and have the overall responsibility for delivery by the external consultants. The consultants are expected to divide the roles and the working days evenly between them as relevant for the respective areas of expertise, but adjustments can be made as relevant.

Estimated budget and level of effort

There is a maximum total budget of 215,000 DKK for the assignment. This shall include all costs including, but not limited to:

- 26 working days for 1-2 expert(s) on support to civil society organisations in developing countries.
- Reimbursable cost such as printing of materials and, communication cost, procurement of materials needed etc.
- Audit.

Management

The consultant team leader is responsible for delivery of the outputs required. The study will be conducted under the leadership of a Danish MFA contact person Mads Wegner Hove (madhov@um.dk) from the Evaluation, Learning and Quality Department (ELK) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who will certify delivery of outputs. The contact person will participate in interviews, missions and meetings as considered relevant by the contact person. The contact person and a Danish MFA expert reference group will also provide technical guidance. Anders Haue Korsbak from the Department for Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Engagement (HCE) and Anders Stuhr Svensson from the Department for Financial Management and Support (FRU) will support the study. Other MFA colleagues will be involved as relevant, including through at relevant meetings and by providing written comments to draft reports.

Background documents

Relevant documents will be uploaded in Share files MFA Denmark.

Annex B List of people consulted

MFA

FRU

- Anders Stuhr Svensson

HCE

- Thomas Nikolaj Hansen
- Marie Bechgaard Madsen
- Marianne Vestergård
- Anders Haue Korsbak
- Anders B. Karlsen
- Mille Fjeldsted
- Kirstine Primdal Sutton

ELK

- Nanna Hvidt
- Marina Buch Kristensen

MENA

- Mogens Blom

SPA partners

ADRA

- Helene Elleman Jensen
- Asthon Mandrup

Danmission

- Andreas Dybkjær-Andersson

DanChurchAid

- Steffen Rasmussen
- Fie Lauritsen
- Nils Carstensen

MS ActionAid

- Søren Warburg
- Anne Louise Carstens
- Peter Tindborg

IMS

- Jesper Højberg
- Lars Bestle
- Emilie Lehmann-Jacobsen
- Gulnara Akhundova
- Esben Harboe
- Michael Irving Jensen
- Virginie Jouan
- Rashweat Mukundu
- Andreas Reventlow

OxfamIBIS

- Morten Bisgaard
- Katja Levin

Red Barnet

- Signe Atim Allimadi
- Koba Tchegoun (Mali)

CISU

- Jeef Bech
- Mette Kjærtinge

Globalt Fokus

- Peter Christiansen
- Sara Brandt

CIVICUS

- Tor Hodenfield
- Clara Bosco

Donors

Sida

- Karin Ericsson
- Viveka Carlestam

NORAD

- Hildegunn Tobiassen

Dutch MFA

- Ronald Siebes

Irish MFA

- Orla Mcbreen

EIDHR

- Samantha Chaitkin

European Endowment for Democracy

- Alexandra Kirkby

Danish embassies

Mali

- Lars Olaf Søvn Dahl Petersen

Burkina Faso

- André Gertz Sonnichsen

Bangladesh

- Lise Abildgaard Sørensen
- Montarin Mahal Aminuzzaman

Other Danish partners who contributed to the study

- Masanga Outreach
- DreamTown
- GAME
- Global Aktion
- Danish Refugee Council

Annex C Examples of Practices

CASE 1: ADRA – ACTION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Extracts from ADRA's Partnership Strategy Document (2021) and ADRA's SPA EOI 2021 (ASC)

ADRA partnership approach and definition

In our understanding, civil society includes e.g. a school club in Uganda, a Parent-Teacher Association in South Sudan, a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in Sudan, a church group in Ethiopia, a group of pineapple growers in Tanzania and an advocacy group in Yemen. It also includes more formalised NGOs such as the Adventist church in Ethiopia or an umbrella organisation of CSOs in Uganda. These formal and informal organisations represent their members and their communities, and work towards furthering their rights, needs and interests.

Our approach to strengthening the informal civil society

Strengthening local civil society is more than working in formalised partnerships. It also means supporting informal (community-based) groups to advocate for their human rights (e.g., the right to education, the right to health, the right to freedom from hunger). Our HRBA is a way of addressing root causes and structural issues of marginalisation, vulnerability and poverty, which also provides the basis for a stronger set of claims by those affected by humanitarian crises: as rights-holders rather than as beneficiaries of charity. We believe that empowering civil society groups to claim their rights through non-confrontational advocacy (consistent with our faith-based values, promoting peace and reconciliation) is the most sustainable and dignified way of supporting people in need. The groups do not need to be formal or registered, but can – as mentioned above – be VSLA's, Farmer Market School groups, church groups, PTA's or others.

The Action for Social Change (ASC) (extract)

The overall vision for the ASC programme has been to empower Community Based Groups (CBGs) to become dynamic actors in social, political and economic development processes locally and nationally.

The programme was initially conceived in 2009-10 and further developed in 2015 through a participatory Theory of Change process with close collaboration between ADRA DK and ADRA partners. Throughout the past decade, the programme was rolled out in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, DR Congo and South Sudan. Since 2018, the ASC programme has been implemented in Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda and designed with five cross-cutting Change Areas, including 13 indicators common for all ASC countries. The programme focuses on furthering the rights of marginalised people through citizen-centred advocacy combined with a livelihoods component utilising Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and agriculture-based approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, Farmer Market Schools or RIPAT. The primary emphasis of the programme is on the empowerment and capacity development of communities to claim their rights, building on existing structures, such as women's groups, school associations, health clubs or farmers groups. Whilst working with community mobilisation and empowerment, the ASC programme is also enhancing duty-bearers' capacity and willingness to respond to claims raised by citizens. Finally, the programme seeks to improve the implementation of local and national legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect citizens' rights.

Local CBOs and CBGs such as women's groups, school associations, health clubs, farmers' groups or VSLA groups are at the core of the programming, and they are as part of the ASC programme enabled —

to engage in citizen-centred advocacy. Thus, the paramount idea behind the programme is that these very local actors will decide the advocacy strategy and advocate for the services or rights that they prioritise (with the support of the ADRA partner and in turn of ADRA DK). Moreover, the ASC programme also works with local authorities as well as religious and traditional leaders to enhance their capacities and understanding of their roles and duties when facing citizens. In Uganda, Malawi and Burundi for instance, sub-county officials have participated in the identification of community groups and the training included in the programme.

In some of the areas where the ASC programme has been implemented, the situation has been fragile and marred by extreme poverty with almost no organised civil society and little presence of duty bearers. This has led ADRA DK to use a nexus approach and to have a long-term perspective on achieving development results and changes on rights issues.

While the ASC programme has successfully used a number of citizen-centred advocacy methods, such as community meetings, participation in local planning processes and radio programmes, the toolbox of approaches could have benefited from additional tools, such as the community scorecard method, social audits, public expenditure tracking, etc.

CASE 2: SAVE THE CHILDREN – BUILDING CHILD RIGHTS YOUTH COALITIONS AND NETWORKS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE-EAST.

Save the Children Denmark / SCD is a rights-based organisation and Child Rights Programming is our approach. At the very core of this approach is children and young people's participation. SCD strives to be transformative in our approach to participation. This means we increasingly want to work with child/youth-led organisations in the South where children and young people not only participate and are consulted, but where they are actually in the driver's seat making the strategic decisions themselves.

The regional Danida funded programmes in Horn of Africa (HoA) and Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), implemented from 2018-2021, focus on creating strong and independent youth-led Child Rights advocates operating in a context with a substantial youth bulge whose rights to learning, protection and participation are significantly threatened by humanitarian and natural disasters.

In the HoA regional programme, SCD has established partnerships with regional Civil Society Organisations (CSOs); as well as supported the establishment of a regional youth network called the Horn of Africa Youth Network (HoAYN). The HoAYN has a membership of national youth-led and youth-focused CSOs in ten countries in East and Horn of Africa. Through collaboration and joint advocacy, the Network has been able to promote youth participation and engagement and influenced the decisions of governments and regional child and youth rights accountability mechanisms including organs of the African Union (AU), the East African Community and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Some examples of key results achieved include: The establishment of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth Rights; The development of the draft IGAD Strategy; Advocacy leading to the criminalization of female genital mutilation in Sudan; Partnership with the Youth Division of the African Union on the Implementation of the AU's Youth Initiative dubbed "One Million by 2021"; Engaged youth directly and —

through the member organisations at country level to harvest youth voices and priorities and channelled them through the Civil Society Forum to the African Union Organs; Popularization of the African Youth Charter and African Union Agenda 2063; Sensitization of youth on COVID-19 and mobilization of youth to be engaged in COVID-19 response initiatives by different governments.

SCD has also with Danida support since 2018 been implementing the regional Al Bawsala programme in the MENA region. The programme works with youth-led organisation to reach out to the most marginalised groups of young people and to partner with the hard to reach in order to amplify their voices, to protect and support their participation in influencing key policies that affect their lives.

Youth have highlighted how the Al Bawsala programme offered them opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of their communities and to organise themselves and transform into more advocacy-focused groups. In Yemen, the programme offered youth a platform for advocating for their voices and participation in Yemen's peace-building efforts which quickly gained attention from other national platforms and international organisations, like 'Yemen Peace Forum' and 'Search for Common Ground', as they realized the potential opportunity this platform had in empowering youth's voices towards achieving peace building.

Save the Children Denmark's value add to the partners in this programme lies in particular within SCD's partnership approach. SCD supports the partners efforts to strengthen their own organisation capacities on their terms, which means providing support to the partners long-term strategic objectives of

becoming independent and strong child rights advocates. This means their capacity to influence policy makers and stakeholders at different levels as well as their capacity to mobilise, establish and coordinate youth networks, to learn from each other, and to independently raise funds.

The HoA and MENA regional programmes are based on years of learning from past programmes and approaches. Working with children and youth to become strong, viable and independent child rights advocates has long been an area of focus for SCD. In the previous Danida Framework Agreement, Child Rights Governance was one of the key priority themes and during this program cycle several programmes tested new innovative and transformative approaches for child participation. It is such experiences that has laid the ground for the support to youth-led organisations working in HoA and MENA.

SCD has also for several years been leading the work on partnerships and localization in the greater SC. What was initially a focus on creating long-term strategic partnerships has over the recent years morphed into a more transformative leadership on the localization agenda, including transferring power and resources increasingly to the South. This is amongst other things visible in the ambition to increasingly work with youth-led organisations on their terms. The approaches to working with youth-led networks and coalitions across the triple nexus in the HoA and MENA regional programmes will inform the strategic direction and programming of SCD in the coming strategy period and in the next SPA.

CASE 3: DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (DRC) – SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS AT REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVEL

The Civil Society Networks Platform (‘the Platform’) has emerged as a civil society-owned initiative that has enabled disparate transnational (diaspora) civil society networks spread across Europe, Turkey and North America to come together for exchange, sharing information and building consensus. DRC’s Diaspora Program has played a role that has been both crucial and discrete in the Platform’s establishment, illustrating how an INGO can provide vital support to a national civil society apex organisation without compromising its independence. This outcome meets both the Platform’s expectations of ownership and autonomy, and DRC’s mandate for enabling diaspora populations to participate in supporting durable solutions to displacement for themselves and/or their communities. Members of the Platform feel pride and ownership over the network, grateful for DRC’s role as facilitator and broker at critical junctures in the emergence of the Platform, and a mutual recognition of that role being a temporary one as the network strives towards become a self-reliant sustainable entity.

In parallel, in support of a coordinated voice for regional refugee-led organisations and the displaced populations they represent, DRC through its active engagement and hosting of an INGO platform focussed on durable solutions, the Durable Solutions Platform (DSP), used an “incubator” approach to support the establishment of a visible, credible regional civil society forum in the Middle East. Incubation allowed DRC to play a mentoring role in the Forum’s internal governance and operations, establishing procedures and reinforcing norms. Support also included seconding a Coordinator to the forum founding members, with a planned and gradual hand over of the coordination role to a Forum member hosting organisation. DRC through the DSP used its regional presence and credibility to foster the establishment of a regional forum that could become recognised as a credible, legitimate voice for displaced across the region. DRC’s role in supporting the Forum also includes facilitating access to regional and international opportunities to participate in advocacy to shape policy dialogue on durable solutions.

The creation of the Platform – consisting of eight network members – has contributed to an important outcome, that of transforming diaspora from a disparate to a networked civil society. The Platform has created a space for dialogue and exchange between civil society from across Europe, Turkey, and North America. Through their exchange and coordination on this platform the networks have reached consensus on shared advocacy priorities and have developed and disseminated to EU and UN decision makers three topical documents on refugee return, detainment, and civilian protection. As a result of the incubator/mentoring approach – supporting the establishment of the Civil Society Forum and its governing structures, the forum is gaining legitimacy within civil society and the international community. The Forum has produced three policy papers (Covid-19; Displacement; civil society exclusion in humanitarian response) and played a leading role in one interagency advocacy initiative towards international policy processes, which produced a written submission on Durable Solutions, signed off by more than 70 civil society organisations. As a mark of the Forum’s acceptance within civil society, one of the larger regional NGO networks, representing 167 organisations, has invited the Forum to lead its working group on refugees and the displaced. The Forum also co-authored an international publication on displaced voices, representing its many members alongside numerous leading INGOs, which has been a sign of its acceptance within the international NGO community.

This case study highlights what a partner led approach to supporting civil society in the Global South looks like in DRC. The establishment of these networks and platforms has in large part been locally led, with ownership belonging to the network members. DRC’s role has been to strengthen or build on this —

existing ownership and leadership to promote the agency of these local civil society entities. Identifying opportunities to support existing networks or to support the establishment of a network with planned phased handover, has yielded a high degree of self-accountability and legitimacy for these networks. Both in terms of the rights holders they represent and within their civil society community. Engaging with civil society is central to DRC's work in promoting and facilitating durable solutions to displacement and closely aligned with the principles outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). The involvement of civil society actors is critical in designing and implementing, appropriate and accessible responses to protracted displacement and helps ensure ownership among those we intend to assist and protect.

Institutional enabling factors include minimizing partnering bureaucratic processes where possible; brokering relationships across civil society and with external stakeholders; lending credibility through an incubator approach; investing in dedicated resources – staffing, financial, technical. Capacity development has been critical component to DRC's partnership approach with these networks. DRC's approach to capacity development support includes supporting partner led decision making on capacity needs and offering long term and diversified capacity support interventions. Learning from this case study captures some change in capacities to date. The Civil Society Network Platform networks highlighted their improved networking capacities, which enabled them to contribute to an amplified, coherent civil society voice, with coordinated positions on key issues. The Forum noted their more effective engagement in decision-making fora related to durable solutions. This was in part enabled by the Forum's advocacy strategic planning process, based on analysis of priority legal frameworks, combined with technical support from DRC/DSP on conducting research and advocacy planning.

CASE 4: GLOBAL AKTION – LA VIA CAMPESINA – A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

La Via Campesina (LVC) is an international social movement of peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless people, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers. LVC unites and gives voice to some of the most vulnerable peoples worldwide. Since LVC International was formed in 1993, it has grown into one of the largest and most significant transnational social movements in the world, representing around 200 million farmers around the globe. It has achieved status as an important actor in international food and agricultural debates and is now recognized as an influential movement by UN institutions such as FAO and the UN Human Rights Council. LVC was also the movement to introduce the concept of Food Sovereignty at the World Food Summit in 1996 that has now grown into an internationally recognized term used by many movements and organisations other than LVC.

LVC is an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent of political or economic affiliations. LVC was formed at a time when agricultural policies and agribusiness were becoming increasingly globalized affecting the livelihood and voices of small-scale farmers. As a response to this, the principal objective of LVC has been and continuously is, to develop solidarity and unity among small farmer organisations in order to promote gender parity and social justice in fair economic relations. Their main foci are: Preservation of land, water, seeds and other natural resources; food sovereignty; transition to agroecology and sustainable agricultural production based on small and medium-sized producers. LVC defends peasant, family farm production, people's food sovereignty, decentralized food production and supply chains. Recognizing the interconnectedness between these agenda items and the climate crisis, —

LVC and its member organisations have become increasingly involved in discussions aimed at achieving climate justice, which recognizes that the causes and impacts of climate change are social and economic, and therefore must value the needs of those most affected, while holding the largest GHG emitters and those causing environmental damage responsible.

Structure of LVC International: LVC is comprised of 164 member organisations from 73 countries from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. The member countries are divided into nine functioning regions, which are the most important articulation for member organisations. LVC is, at its core, a grassroots movement and the legitimacy of the organisation comes from the many farmers' organisations at a local and national level. The LVC therefore works through a bottom-up and decentralized structure, where each of the nine regions are comprised of a number of democratically structured member organisations, and within all the regions there is a regional secretariat. The nine regions in LVC are Southern and Eastern Africa, West and Central Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia, Europe, South America, Caribbean, Central America, and North America. LVC is in the process of forming a tenth region; the Middle-East and North Africa.

LVC also has an International Operational Secretariat (IOS). The IOS rotates according to the collective decision by the International Conference. Since 2014, the IOS secretariat is based at ZIMSOFF in Harare, Zimbabwe. It has previously been located in Belgium (1993-1996), Honduras (1997-2004) and in Indonesia (2005-2013).

Target Group and Participants

The primary target group is comprised of key personnel in the nine LVC SEAf member organisations who are responsible for advocacy activities and knowledge sharing and dissemination. These have been identified as the advocacy officers, communications officers, and extension officers of each of the member organisations. The advocacy- and communication officers were chosen as they have the most impact on the capacity of LVC SEAf to conduct advocacy work as well as communication between the member organisations. The extension officers are responsible for constituent outreach and training (e.g., in agroecology methods) within constituencies, providing them with influence on and ability in collecting and disseminating knowledge to and from the constituents. The reason this intervention targets extension officers is because they are the primary connection between small-scale farmers and the regional movement by spreading knowledge developed in the intervention. These key personnel are chosen evenly from the nine current organisations in eight different SEAf countries, providing important links across the whole region to ensure that common struggles in the region are united. Because of the decentralised structure encouraged in LVC, the target group holds an important role in growing the organisation, as well as forming alliances, fundraising, advocating and mobilising around key issues. The constituents, who make up the secondary target group, as they are either selected by the political leaderships of their respective organisations – who in turn are elected by and thereby responsible towards the constituents – or are themselves elected members.

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