

REPORT PSO

Workshop

**How to Strengthen Civil
Society Organisation in
Fragile States**

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1. Introduction

There is an important role for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to play in fragile states. Due to capacity deficits at the government level civil society is deeply involved in service delivery. CSOs contribute to other areas such as peace building, human security and democratisation. There is a general consensus that CSOs need support to contribute to reducing fragility. A key issue is how to strengthen CSOs to enable them to address fragility. This was the theme of the workshop “ How to Strengthen Civil Society Organisations”, which was organised by PSO on the 19th of September 2008 in Zoetermeer, the Netherlands. The workshop was attended by 29 participants from NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands.

The basic question of the workshop was to what extent methodologies for development of civil society organisations that work in a ‘regular’ context are applicable to a fragile environment, characterised by a society fragmented by conflict. What adjustments and adaptations have to be made in order to use these methodologies in an instable and insecure environment?

1.1 Set-up of the Workshop

The basic question of the workshop was addressed by introducing two methodologies used in ‘regular’ context. These two methodologies were:

1 The Civil Society Index, a participatory needs assessment and action planning tool for Civil Society (CSI methodology), developed by CIVICUS

2 The Integrated Organisational Model, (IOM Methodology) developed by the Management of Foundation. MDF.

Both methodologies were introduced at the workshop. Each introduction was followed by group discussions in which the methodology was linked to the practice in fragile states and its potential applications for the participating organisations. Next, the application in fragile states was illustrated for CSI methodology in the case of Afghanistan and for the IOM methodology in the Democratic Republic of Congo. At the end of the workshops the strengths and weaknesses of the CSI and IOM methodologies were discussed as well as the potential for the application of methodologies in other fragile settings.

1.2 Different Purposes for the Methodologies

The CSI and IOM methodologies have different purposes. CSI is for Civil Society at large. Its aim is to obtain more knowledge about Civil Society and its role in order to increase the capacity and commitment of civil society stakeholders to develop civil society. IOM is intended for the analysis of one or more specific civil society organisations or networks. In this case the context (actors and factors) is seen in relation of a specific (group) of organisations. CSI takes a view from a distance on the strength of civil society, while IOM looks at civil society organisations from inside, relating to specific organisational challenges and or specific issues and problems..

1.2.1 Relation with the April 4 workshop on capacity development in fragile environments

Henk Tukker in his introduction explained the relationship between this workshop and the other workshops in this series, and presented a few highlights from the previous workshop. This is the second of three workshops organised by PSO in the Learning Trajectory Capacity Development in Fragile Environment. In the first workshop held on the 4th April 2008, the role of civil society in fragile states and the dilemma's, issues and direction for capacity development were discussed. At the first workshop Georg Frerks of Utrecht and Wageningen University stated that CSOs can address state fragility by recapturing humanitarian space, re-establishing civil society itself and contributing to human rights, political freedom, peace building, conflict resolution, localised human security, social services and development. Derick Brinkerhoff from RTI International elaborated on capacity development in fragile states. Brinkerhoff's view is that "much of what can be applied in "regular" states can be applied in fragile states as well" was the starting point of this second workshop. The main difference is the time pressure from donors, government and the population for obtaining short-term results. Other major differences in fragile states are the hyper politicized environments and the limited capacity to build on. For more details please refer to

<http://www.pso.nl/files/Report%20PSO%20Workshop%20Capacity%20Development%20Fragile%20Environments1.pdf>

Opmerking [r1]: Kunnen we hier direct naar het document linken en niet naar het algemene website adres?

2. METHODOLOGIES

2.1 Presentation of the Civil Society Index

Hans van Oosten introduced the The Civil Society Index (CSI) methodology developed by CIVICUS. CIVICUS defines civil society as the "arena outside the family, the state and the market where people associate (mobilisation, constituency) to advance common interests".

CSI is a methodology for action research to generate and share useful and relevant knowledge on the state of civil society and its role in society at large. It is participatory and empowering, aimed at increasing the capacity and commitment of civil society stakeholders to strengthen civil society, and to enhance linkages among stakeholders. CIVICUS assesses Civil Society on four dimensions:

1. the structure of civil society; the participation of citizens, the level of organisation, the coordination among organisations and the resources CSOs have available.
2. the external environment in which civil society exists and functions; e.g. the political context, freedoms and rights (freedom of expression), socio-economic and socio-cultural context.

3. the values practiced and promoted in the civil society arena; the practice of CSOs, and the extent to which CSOs promote values such as democracy, transparency, tolerance, gender equity, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability.
4. the impact of activities pursued by civil society actors.; how active and successful is civil society in influencing public policy, holding the government and private corporations accountable, responding to social needs and in empowering communities?

The four dimensions are presented graphically in a diamond, which makes it possible to present the state of civil society in a country or area at a glance.

The CSI implementation process in steps;

- Identification of national index team and national advisory group. In Afghanistan, there was a research team of six organisations. In the national advisory group there can be representatives of the government, donors, private enterprises, etc. It is important to get them together.
- Secondary data is reviewed and synthesised in an overview report. There is an amazing amount of information on civil society in each country.
- Training of national index teams.
- Primary research, stakeholders consultations (not only at the national level but also the lower levels), use of questionnaire and group meetings, community surveys, media review, etc.
- Data analysis and scoring of the four dimensions.
- National workshop
- Civil Society reports

The knowledge obtained and the process can contribute to outputs such as identifying key priority areas, jointly agreed on by a broad range of civil society stakeholders.

Hans applied CSI in Afghanistan and in the DRC. In both countries the methodology was adjusted and, according to Hans, the CSI always has to be adjusted and adapted to specific contexts.

2.3 Outcome group discussion CIVICUS

In each group, one of the four dimensions of CSI were discussed; Structure, Environment, Value or Impact. Use was made of the CSI Indicator Scoring Matrix and applied to a fragile state. The groups were divided by country; Afghanistan, Colombia, DRC, Sri Lanka and Sudan. The outcome was:

- The boundaries have to be defined. Is it the country or provinces?
- What is civil society and what not? Civil society has to be defined.
- Who participates? Who is included in scoring?
- The method suggests objectivity, but it is subjective, which is not necessarily a weakness.
- How to deal with religion and ethnicity, etc.

- Does it analyse conflict sufficiently.
- There are “western” concepts in the methodology, to what extent are these universal?
- It is largely an analytical instrument and doesn’t provide concrete tools to deal with capacity development. Does it link to policy and strategies for capacity development?

2.2.2 Presentation CIVICUS Applied; The Afghanistan Case; A research to the functioning of Civil Society in the province of Kandahar and Uruzgan

Hans van Oosten presented the study “Enhanced Community Capacity for Peace Building and Development, a research to the functioning of Civil Society in the province of Kandahar and Uruzgan in Afghanistan” . This study made use of the CSI methodology.

It is important to do conflict mapping before starting the research based on the CSI. Six INGOs were involved. Use was made of secondary data. It was interesting to see the historical trend; first the Russian intervention, then Taliban, then the Americans. Civil Society changed over these periods. An advisory group was formed in each of the two provinces. The religious uluma’s faced problems. Mosque communities are part of civil society, but they do not want to be exposed to civil society. The leaders could be killed, if they did.

Civil society is not only NGOs. The CSI methodology is much wider; there are religious groups, women groups and CSOs. These organisations form the dynamics of civil society and not the NGOs. The NGOs in Afghanistan are social enterprises, no more than that. Dutch NGOs have a constituency, but the NGOs in developing countries are often social enterprises, caused by the way the Dutch NGOs work.

All organisations were approached for a self-assessment, in total 72. An in-depth analysis of women’s organisations, federations, cooperatives, etc. was made. IOM type of methods was used to assess the way they were organised. Use was made of different lists of registration of CSOs.

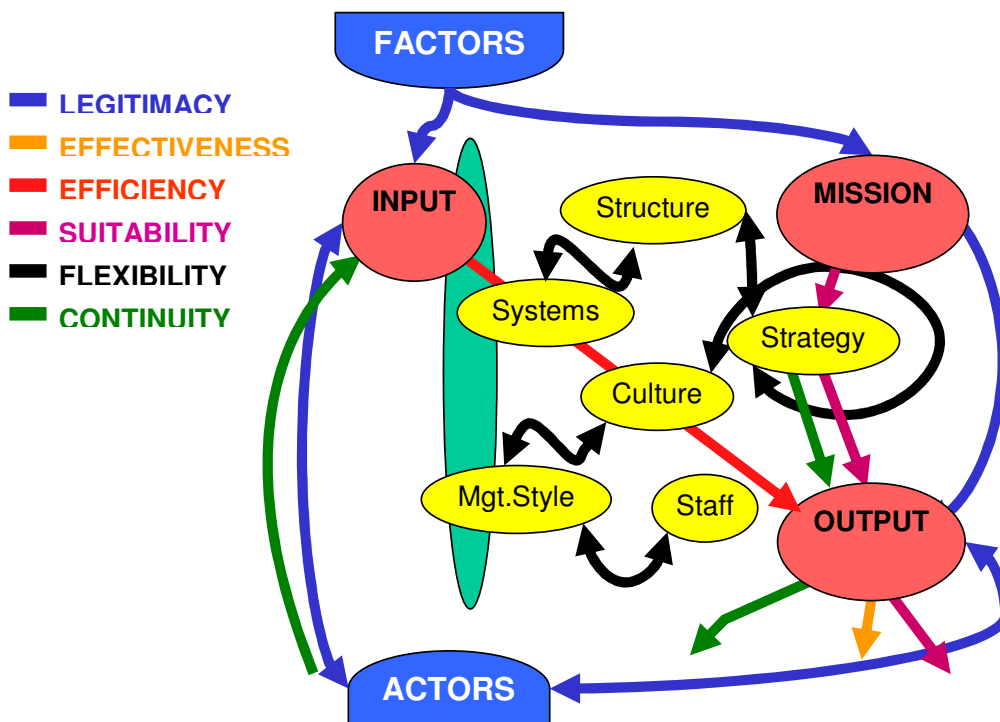
The application process of CIVICUS enhanced the discussion on Civil Society among the groups involved. Hans advised the six INGOs involved in the study to open a civil society capacity building office in Southern Afghanistan. Why? To ensure that not only NGOs are focussed, but also teachers associations, women’s organisations, etc. Also Hans advised strengthening religious and traditional tribal organisations like Ulema’s and Shura’s.

The study was well received and considered useful as a source of information on civil society. The recommendations were not followed and it was decided to support federations of international NGO’s.

2.2 Presentation of the Integrated Organisational Model

Frans van Gerwen presented IOM using the graph below. IOM has been inspired from the McKinsey 7s model. MDF has used IOM in many organisations for 25 years and claims that it always works. It begins with those elements of the organisations that are visible from the outsiders viewpoint. Every organisation has a mission, either explicitly written down or in the heads of the staff. All organisations have outputs for their client/beneficiaries and need inputs, e.g. money or staff. As a second step, the organisation's environment is divided into factors (culture, social, politics) and actors (like other organisations). Actors can be influenced relatively easy and together can change factors, but direct influence on factors is in principle very limited (but the influence of factors on organisations can be huge). Analytical concepts for the internal organisation are strategy, structure, systems, staff, culture and management style. In a fragile state the issue of legitimacy deals with being morally legitimate, but not necessary being legal. It gives justification of existence, e.g. the apartheid movement in South Africa in the past.

Criteria in the IOM



2.2.1 Outcome group discussion

The possible use of IOM was discussed in groups divided by country: Afghanistan, Colombia, DRC, Sri Lanka and Sudan. The outcome was:

- IOM can be applied to CSOs in fragile environments.

- IOM seems easier to apply to formal organisations than to informal grass-root organisations.
- It does not help in analysing the fragility of the state.
- The environment changes frequently in fragile states. IOM insufficiently addresses these frequent changes.
- There should be a distinction between short-term and long-term outputs in fragile states settings.
- Factors are often donor driven in fragile states.
- The concept of fragile states needs to be defined. Whether for example Colombia is one is questionable.
- IOM analyses risks insufficiently.

2.2.2 Presentation IOM applied; the Congo Case; assessing the organisational capability of CRONGD EP.

Nana Rombout of MDF in Central Africa presented a case in which IOM methodology was applied in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an unquestionable fragile state. The case describes CRONGD, an NGO network organisation in DRC. CRONGD faces many challenges and requested MDF to analyse their capacity, and set strategies to strengthen their organisation. Rombout's presentation was based on the paper prepared for this workshop (Annex I).

3. OUTCOME FINAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Final discussion

CSI and IOM are potentially useful methodologies which can be used in fragile environments. CSI is a methodology which is more time consuming. It will provide information and knowledge that is valuable to several organisations. Like in the Afghanistan Civil Society study, it is best applied by several organisations, including local civil society organisations. IOM is a practical tool that can be applied to many organisations. Both methodologies require adaptation to use in fragile environments.

Both methodologies can be complementary. The outcome of CSI can be used for analysing the context of an individual organisation applying IOM. In the other way round, the IOM applied to one organisation can feed the CSI for others.

The methodologies are particularly useful in certain specific contexts. It would be useful to have guidelines on when and how to apply these methodologies in each specific context and which preconditions have to be met to ensure proper use..

There are other methodologies which can be useful for CSO capacity strengthening. For fragile environments, for example, these are the conflict mapping and partnership analysis.

CSI and IOM assume a relatively stable environment. However, fragile environments are very dynamic and have many actors. CSI and IOM would have to be repeated more frequently in a fragile environments. In order to obtain such information with relatively limited time and effort, the use of quick self-assessment tools can be useful. Both CSI and IOM can be adapted for such a use..

In fragile environments, it is important to distinguish between short-term and long-term time frames. Scenario planning and analysis could be an option.

3.2 Conclusion

IOM and CSI are both methodologies that can be useful for strengthening civil society organisations in fragile states. For capacity building purposes, other approaches can be equally valuable such as partner analyses or conflict mapping. All methodologies need proper adjustment and adaptation to fragile environments. The most outstanding issues are:

- The fast changing context requires methodologies which are quick and can be regularly up-dated.
- There is a need to differentiate between short and long-term time frames.

There is a need to further fine-tune the methodologies for strengthening civil society organisations in fragile environments.

Annexes

Annex I : Congo Case, Assessing the capabilities of CRONGD EP

Annex II: The Integrated Organisational Model

Annex III Power point presentation Introduction of the Programme

Annex IV Power point presentation CIVICUS

Annex V Power point presentation Afghanistan Case

Annex VI Power point presentation IOM

Annex VII Power point presentation Congo Case

Annex VIII Outcome group discussions

Annex IX Programme

Annex X List of participants