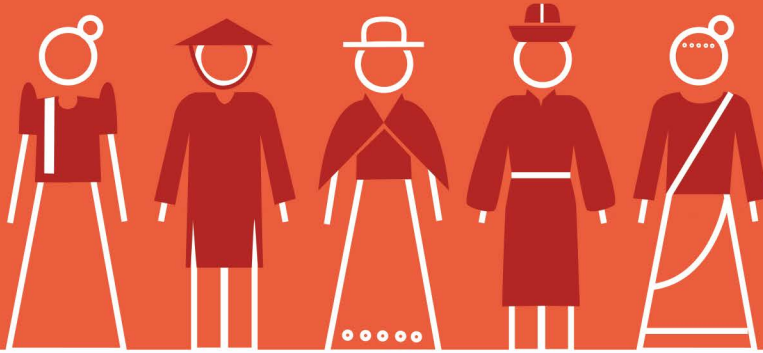


# Case Studies on the Implementation of Civil Society Organizations' Commitments in the Nairobi Outcome Document



**CSO Partnership**   
for Development Effectiveness



## Case Studies on Civil Society Organisations' Commitments in the Nairobi Outcome Document

**CSOPartnership**   
for **Development Effectiveness**



**ASIA-PACIFIC RESEARCH NETWORK**

*People-centered research for effective development work*

*Case Studies on Civil Society Organisations' Commitments in the Nairobi Outcome Document*

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## Introduction

Much effort has been put into the promotion and implementation of CSO Development Effectiveness principles among civil society since the adoption of the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness in 2010 and 2011 respectively. The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) in particular implements capacity building programs with its members at country, regional, and sectoral levels to reach out to more CSOs and enable them to apply the Istanbul Principles in their development work and improve their accountability. It also conducts advocacy at country, regional, and global levels, putting forward CSOs' commitment to the Istanbul Principles and the recognition of CSOs as development actors in their own right as stated in the Busan Partnership Document, to assert enabling environment for CSOs and their meaningful participation in decision making spaces. CSOs' initiatives to implement the Istanbul Principles are well documented in the casebook *Journey from Istanbul: Evidence on the Implementation of the CSO DE Principles* and by the compilation of action researches in *Istanbul Five Years After: Evidencing Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Accountability*<sup>1</sup>.

Although much has been achieved within eight years since the adoption of the Principles, challenges have also remained persistent. In his synthesis report for the *Istanbul Five Years After*, Brian Tomlinson (2016) notes that the evidence in the action researches on shrinking and closing civic spaces, disabling legal and regulatory environment, limited access to resources, and policies limiting options for CSO development effectiveness, support the findings of CPDE's monitoring on the Indicator 2 of the GPEDC commitments. Speakers and participants that attended the global gathering in Bangkok to commemorate the 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the endorsement of the Istanbul Principles further supported these findings during panel and plenary discussions. CSOs from the Global South and conflict areas experience the worst cases as they are not only barred from participating in development processes, but are also targets of rights violations such as threats, killings, and enforced disappearances. In contrast, the role being given to the private sector, especially big corporations, in development is steadily growing and expanding without accountability mechanisms to keep them in check, and without regard for their past actions leading to unsustainable development.

The changing development landscape offers new challenges for effective development cooperation and CSOs' development effectiveness. The Agenda 2030 (A2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) chart the new development agenda and are shaping development cooperation to deliver sustainable development amidst economic and environmental crises. The 2nd High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC HLM2), held in November 2016 in Nairobi, served as an important reminder for

1 CPDE. (2016). *Istanbul Five Years After: Evidencing Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Accountability*. Retrieved from <http://cso.csopartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ISTANBUL-5.pdf>

governments, CSOs, and for all other development stakeholders to uphold long-standing commitments on effective development cooperation in the implementation of the A2030.

During the HLM2, CSOs worked hard throughout the negotiation process, pushing forward the CSO Key Asks which contained CSO demands for effective development cooperation (EDC) in the implementation of the A2030. The outcome of the negotiations is the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD) wherein CPDE welcomed the upholding of previous commitments on effective development cooperation made in Paris (2005), Accra (2008), and Busan (2011). As development actors in their own right, CSOs also made several commitments in the NOD that reflect their commitment to the Istanbul Principles. This compilation of five cases from CPDE members documents efforts in implementing commitments made by CSOs in the NOD within a year after its adoption. These cases are meant to complement the global monitoring that will be done by CPDE during the upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> monitoring round in 2018.

## CSO Commitments in the Nairobi Outcome Document

The Nairobi Outcome Document or the NOD<sup>2</sup> is the outcome document of the second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 28 November-1 December 2016. It was endorsed by the participants of the meeting which included Heads of States and Governments; ministers and high representatives of developing and developed countries; as well as heads of multilateral and bilateral development agencies, financial and regional development institutions; parliaments; local governments; representatives of the business sector; civil society; trade unions and philanthropy.<sup>3</sup> The document contains the priorities and goals for development cooperation to support the achievement of the A2030 by strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17).

In the NOD, the importance of CSOs in sustainable development and in leaving no-one behind, and also their being development actors in their own right, were recognised by development actors. As mentioned earlier, among the achievements of the NOD is the upholding of previous commitments on effective development cooperation by the stakeholders. These include (a) renewing commitment to inclusive partnerships, and protecting the integrity of effective development cooperation, (b) ensuring accountability of all development actors, (c) reversing the trend of shrinking civic space and providing "an enabling environment for civil society", and (d) reaffirming commitment to the Istanbul Principles. However, CPDE notes that there are several weak areas of the document. These include the use of 'inclusive' instead of 'democratic ownership'; limiting CSOs' work within the confines of 'national priorities' in some areas; and the disproportionate promotion of the private sector's role in development against their accountability and without consideration of their previous deleterious impacts on human rights and the environment specially in developing countries.

In the NOD, stakeholder groups articulated differentiated commitments to effective development cooperation according to the four shared effectiveness principles of country ownership, results, inclusiveness and transparency and accountability. CSOs too, made their commitments in the NOD. These commitments are rooted in the adherence to the Istanbul Principles.

2 GPEDC.(2016). Nairobi Outcome Document. Retrieved from <http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Global-Partnership-Nairobi-Outcome-Documents-FINAL-1-December-2016.pdf>

3 CPDE. (2017). 6 Things CSOs Need to Know About the Nairobi Outcome Document.

## **For Principle 1, Ownership of Development Priorities by Partner Countries Receiving Support, CSOs commit to**

- a. Adhere to the Istanbul Principles as relevant to ensuring country-level ownership of their initiatives, including participation, empowerment and the pursuit of equitable partnerships
- b. Accelerate efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women through development programmes grounded in country priorities
- c. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights; and promote and practice development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experience, while supporting women's efforts to realise their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process
- d. Support the empowerment and inclusive participation of people to expand their democratic ownership over policies and development initiatives that affect their lives, with an emphasis on the poor and marginalised

## **For Principle 2, Focus on Results, civil society partners commit to be guided by national results frameworks in the execution of their work. CSOs will:**

- a. Develop and implement priorities and approaches that promote environmental sustainability for present and future generations, including urgent responses to climate crises, with specific attention to the socio-economic, cultural and indigenous conditions for ecological integrity and justice
- b. Enhance the ways they learn from their experience, from other CSOs and development actors, integrating evidence from development practice and results, including the knowledge and wisdom of local and indigenous communities, strengthening innovation and their vision for the future they would like to see

## **For Principle 3, Inclusive Partnerships, CSOs commit to contribute to development of policy space and an enabling environment for the formation and operation of civil society organisations, to ensure their full participation in development processes at all levels. CSOs commit to**

- a. Adhere to the Istanbul Principles which incorporate the Busan Principles as an expression of mutual accountability with other relevant stakeholders in the Global Partnership
- b. Be guided by the country-led results frameworks as relevant to their work as independent development partners in their own right
- c. Develop and implement strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people
- d. Demonstrate a sustained organisational commitment to transparency, mutual accountability, and integrity in their internal operations



- e. Realise sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalised populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.

## For Principle 4, Transparency and Accountability, CSOs commit to

- a. Transparent relationships, freely and as equal partners, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship
- b. Take proactive actions to improve and be fully accountable for development practices

These commitments are very important because they are concrete contributions of CSOs to making development effective, and furthermore, they are an assertion that CSOs are independent development actors in their own right. In a global context of persistent crises wherein governments claim worsening economic conditions, neglect their accountabilities to people, and give a bigger role to the private sector in development, these commitments are important tools for CSOs to remind development actors, especially governments, donors, and the private sector, about the pledges that they made, and that they have to fulfill as duty bearers.

## Monitoring of NOD Commitments

The CPDE CSO DE WG launched this research initiative to provide evidence on how CSOs are implementing their commitments as stated in the NOD. This initiative complements the actions by CPDE members involved in the country-level monitoring of Indicator 2 of GPEDC commitments on enabling environment for CSOs.

The five case studies were done by CPDE members in Bolivia ( La Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social/UNITAS), Kyrgyzstan (Forum of Women's NGO's of Kyrgyzstan/FWNGO), Philippines (Council for People's Development and Governance/CPDG), Vietnam (Research Center for Management and Sustainable Development/MSD), and Zimbabwe (National Association of Youth Organisations/NAYO). These case studies illustrate both the actions implemented by these organisations and their partners in line with the NOD commitments, as well as the facilitating factors and challenges they encountered.

The research by UNITAS provides a detailed account of how many projects its members and partners implemented following the Istanbul Principles and how its *Program Urbano* facilitated dialogue among CSOs, and also between the CSOs, the State, and the private sector to assert citizen's collective rights. FWNGO presents in its study how it is building a multistakeholder partnership (MSP) for the effective implementation of the Goal 5 of the A2030 in the National Plan of Action on women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. CPDG narrates how each NOD principle is incorporated not only in its actions and in the projects of its members, but also in their solidarity support to other civil society organisations. MSD describes how it formulated and implemented its organisational strategy in line with the NOD and the A2030 to advance its *Inspiring CSOs Program* in continuing implementing development effectiveness, especially Istanbul Principles 4, 5, and 6; and promoting equitable partnerships (IP number 6 and SDG 17). Lastly, the research by NAYO narrates how the NOD

commitments were incorporated in the organisation's capacity building and advocacy for the youth in Zimbabwe.

It is worth noting that these CSOs are umbrella organisations/platforms which unite CSOs at country level on various issues, including effective development cooperation. As such, the impact of their actions often extends to their membership which operate both at national and grassroots levels.

## Awareness-raising and Socialisation of IPs and NOD Commitments

The organisations conducted awareness-raising and socialisation of the Istanbul Principles in the context of the NOD commitments and the A2030 among their members and partners. NAYO organised a national youth meeting on the domestication of the NOD. Youth from diverse sectors participated and gave inputs on how these principles and commitments will be incorporated in their operations and advocacy for youth inclusion in policy making on the National Economic Blueprint, National Investment Policy, Special Economic Zones, and the SDGs implementation. Materials on the IPs and the NOD from CPDE were used to guide the youth organisations. UNITAS conducted nine (9) different capacity-building courses on Istanbul Principles and the NOD, one (1) national and six (6) local exchange workshops, and training of trainers.

A few months after the HLM2, the CPDG organised a training workshop entitled *Revisiting Istanbul Principles and its Relevance to Philippine CSOs*. The workshop was attended by CSOs involved in development work across the country. The participants expressed their commitment to the IPs and commitments made at the NOD and affirmed that these principles have been "at the heart of their work" even before they were formalised in 2010. FWNGO developed training modules for women's organisations and conducted a series of training webinars that helped in building the capacity of 20 women's organisations on Agenda 2030 commitments on women's rights and gender equality, and increased awareness on NOD commitments.

## Incorporating the Istanbul Principles and NOD Commitments in their Initiatives

Aside from raising awareness among CSOs, the organisations also made sure the the IPs and the NOD commitments are incorporated in their initiatives. In the Philippines for example, CPDG members who worked with disaster victims have set up processes and mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in their internal operations. OFFERS-Panay ensured not only accountability to their donors, but also to their constituents by conducting ground investigations, creating inter-municipality and island-wide monitoring teams, and making community members identify the projects and take part in the project implementation from planning to monitoring and even reporting. They also conducted province-wide assessments to reflect internally and form collective guidelines on how CSOs should engage with donors in order to avoid conflicts among themselves and ensure transparency and mutual accountability. As CPDG and its members continues to engage government agencies overseeing Official Development Assistance (ODA) to advocate for effective development cooperation and democratic participation of the people in development, they also continue to work with other CSOs that are struggling against policies and projects that lead to harmful development such as land grabs, militarisation of communities to give way for 'development' projects, etc.

In Zimbabwe, the CSO Reference Group of which NAYO is part of is promoting the creation of spaces for participation in influencing policy at the local and national levels which contribute to the empowerment of local CSOs and fosters national ownership of the SDGs by advocating inclusion and participation of diverse actors at civil society level and also at the national level in influencing processes of the government. In addition, they supported the petition to make the youth eligible for public office in order to help influence policy.

In designing the *Programa Urbano*, UNITAS took into consideration the implementation of the NOD Principles 3 and Istanbul Principles 1, 2, 3. The program aims to encourage organised political action by citizens to take rights-based approaches in safeguarding their interests vis-a-vis the State and private sector. UNITAS diagnosed the specific circumstances (issues, power dynamics, gender relations, etc.) of their member CSOs through an active and equitable engagement of stakeholders. The empowerment of these and other organisations also involved training processes to strengthen their institutional capacity and their ability implement rights strategies.

In promoting the MSP, FWNGO supported NOD commitments on gender equality and inclusive participation by organising several meetings with leaders of more than 30 women's organisations to discuss the proposed multistakeholder partnership for women's rights (MSP) wherein women-leaders expressed their support to advocate for the MSP and interest to take part in the multistakeholders' dialogue on women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan in the framework of the nationalisation of A2030.

Meanwhile, MSD's organisational strategy for 2016-2020 promoted the NOD commitments and IPs in its practice by strengthening the self-regulation system for CSOs for transparency and accountability, creating professional learning and sharing platforms for CSOs using ICT, promoting equitable partnerships for enabling environment between CSOs', government, development partners/donors, and doing evidence-based policy advocacy for enabling environment for local CSOs. In one of its initiatives to foster equitable partnerships, MSD developed the Code of Partnership between local CSOs and aid partners which includes a system of checklists designed for local CSOs and aid partners to do self-check when entering a partnership to help them adapt with the Code of Partnership. This Code of Partnership was released in early 2017 with the consensus and commitment of 100 local CSOs and aid partners in Vietnam.

These are but snapshots of the initiatives that these CSOs have taken to keep their commitments to the Istanbul Principles and the NOD. Their researches offer much more in terms of initiatives and also insights in implementing the NOD commitments.

## Challenges in Implementing the NOD Commitments

CSOs experienced various challenges in implementing commitments to the NOD. Common to all of the organisation is the lack of enabling environment. In Vietnam, CSOs are operating without a specific legal framework and thus, MSD and member organisations are currently advocating for a better Law on Associations and other related laws and policies on CSOs. In addition, MSD also cooperated with the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (NPA) in educating government leaders of Vietnam on CSOs and their roles in the development process.

Slow-uptake and low political will among government officials concerning CSO initiatives, to outright distrust and unwillingness to cooperate with CSOs have been experienced by FWNGO, UNITAS, and NAYO. According to NAYO, the political unrest in Zimbabwe resulted in state actors constantly being moved across ministries, adversely affecting the advocacy and partnership building with the ministries. NAYO also recognises the added value of engaging parliament in influencing the implementation of the SDGs. However, there is a tendency for CSOs' work with the SDGs to become depoliticised as the SDGs fall in work areas not regarded as causing a threat to the government, and as such, allowed to proceed with minimal interference.

For FWNGO, they had more robust dialogues with members of the parliament than with the officials leading pertinent ministries. According to UNITAS, relations with central government representatives vary depending on the unit, but also because engagements tend to be limited and the Government's response not always is positive. UNITAS cites instances when dialogues have been limited to CSOs politically-aligned with the government, and also allegations that government authorities systematically rejected some CSO contributions because they are different the government's perspective. Meanwhile, MSD cites imbalance of power between local CSOs and government, aid partners, and private sector as a challenge in building equitable partnerships. This should be addressed by seeking a mechanism for promoting open space for discussion among partners.

Reactions of funders can also be a challenge in implementing NOD commitments. For example, when CPDG member OFFERS-Panay first proposed hiring community members to implement parts of its data gathering and accountability mechanism, their donors initially rejected the idea until they were won over by the assertion of the organisation to do so. For FWNGO, the lack of understanding of the NOD itself by development partners including funders is not well addressed and the work needs more funding and support than what is available now.

Meanwhile, CPDG reveals that its members are still subjected to harassment and threats because of their work. For example, the Philippine government released a document wherein Beverly Longid, co-chair of the CPDE and coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), and 600 other individuals and civil society leaders were accused of being terrorists. The CSO community collectively came to defense of Longid and many other activists who were included in the list, and denounced the move to further shrink the democratic space given to CSOs in Philippine society.

These findings by the organisations further corroborate the earlier findings of similar studies saying that globally, spaces for CSOs are shrinking and closing down, with CSOs from the Global South facing criminalisation and threats to their safety and lives.

## Conclusion

These five studies cannot present a global picture of what CSOs are doing to implement their commitments in the NOD. However, these studies provide ideas and insights on what is happening at country level which can help fellow CSOs, policy makers, and researchers compare experiences and perhaps, help them formulate their own actions.

CSOs in different global regions are taking initiatives to uphold and strengthen previous commitments on CSO development effectiveness in the context of delivering the A2030. However, the success of these initiatives will be arrested in a global context of shrinking, and even closing down of democratic spaces, criminalising and threats to the lives of CSO-workers. The trend of disabling environment for CSOs must be reversed if the challenge of achieving genuine sustainable development and leaving no-one behind is to be truly addressed.

# Implementing CSO Commitments of the Nairobi Outcome Document: Case Study Bolivia

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## Introduction

*La Unión Nacional de Instituciones para el Trabajo de Acción Social* (UNITAS) is a network that unites 22 Bolivian Civil Society organizations (CSOs), including Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, non-profit entities, and religious institutions. With over 40 years of service, the network's commitment with the country's development is implemented through a series of programs and projects whose objectives are: (1) to empower social movements and organizations by promoting their engagement in the different development dimensions and strengthening the exercise of their rights and entirely improving their living conditions; (2) to reinforce their effectiveness as development actors by facilitating strategic coordination and dialogue with the State and international cooperation actors; and (3) to promote an enabling environment for CSOs' work that guarantees adequate conditions to contribute to development, human rights, gender equality, and democracy.

UNITAS Network's vast experience in promoting CSO effectiveness served as an important benchmark to monitor and review the impacts of commitments to the Istanbul Principles and their subsequent reaffirmation in the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD). The purpose of this case study is to capture the progress, results, and challenges faced by the Network (*Red* in Spanish) and its partners when implementing the NOD by CSOs in the Bolivian context.

## CSOs and Development Goals

Despite Bolivia's considerable economic growth in the last decade<sup>1</sup> and some inspiring results concerning the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup>, official statistics show the dramatic continuation of negative social contexts that reinforce the urgent need for effective action towards commitments agreed upon under NOD concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030 (A2030). For instance, in 2015, 17% of the population lived in extreme poverty and 38% in moderate poverty. Forty-six percent of the rural population did not have access to health care services, only 25% had drinking water connection to their homes, and 48% still used firewood to cook, Infant mortality rates were the highest registered in the region, with 44 deaths of children under one year of age per 1,000 live births and 56 deaths of children under five years of age per thousand live births. Maternal deaths reached 150 for every 100,000 live births. Chronic malnutrition prevalence in children

1 According to World Bank (2018), Bolivia's annual GDP percentage growth registered the following figures since 2006: 4.7% (2006), 4.5% (2007), 6.1% (2008), 3.35% (2009), 4.1% (2010), 5.2% (2011), 5.1% (2012), 6.7% (2013), 5.4% (2014), 4.8% (2015) and 4.2% (2016).

2 Some achievements have been registered, for instance, on extreme poverty issues (rate reduction from 41% in 1996 to 17% in 2014), primary education universalization (literacy rate of 100% and primary school completion rate of 90%) and the fight against endemic diseases (AIDS rate descending to 116 cases per million inhabitants and 2 Malaria cases per thousand inhabitants) (UDAPE, CIMDM 2015).



under three years of age reached 18% of registered cases (UDAPE, 2015). Meanwhile, salaried female workers earned an average of 615 Bolivianos less than their male counterparts (National Statistics Institute, INE in Spanish, 2015).

The lack of public access to official data in other relevant social indicators currently hinder the review of the Bolivian situation concerning the implementation of SDGs

and A2030<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, the work carried out by some CSOs and international bodies allow us to gather important data from the State. For instance, the *Reporte Estadístico Violencia Contra las Mujeres del Centro de Información y Desarrollo de la Mujer (CIDEM)*, was for many years one of the only sources, if not the only one, with systematized information on recorded violence complaints disaggregated by sex in the country's nine department capitals and in El Alto City. The gender violence-specific survey, "*Encuesta de Prevalencia y Características de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres 2016. Outcomes*" recently published by the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency and by the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)*, shows that in the private sphere, 393,370 women suffered some sort of violence perpetrated by their lover, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend, which represents 51.9% of the total 757,408 single women aged 15 and above at the national level. The survey carried out in 2016 with women aged 15 years and above or more allows more representative data at the national level, in urban and rural areas, and at the departmental level. The results of the survey are very important in providing timely data since the last data on violence against women released by the *Encuesta Nacional de Demografía y Salud (INESAD)* was published in 2008. Unfortunately, the database gathered through the *Encuesta de Prevalencia y Características de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres de 2016*, is not available at INE's website. Independent researchers cannot use these data to have a better understanding of violence, its traits and, its determinants.

Both the Network and its partners try to develop their advocacy work in this complex landscape full of development inequities and issues. The document *Construyendo una cultura de Rendición de Cuentas: Informe Colectivo 2016* published by UNITAS (2017) gathered and systematized many of these experiences. Projects such as *Orientación para la Mujer Joven* by the NGO *Promoción de la Mujer de Tarija (PROMUTAR)*, that shelters and advises vulnerable women in an institutional shelter, and *Venciendo a la Violencia Sexual Contra la Niñez y la Adolescencia* by *Casa de la Mujer*, seek to promote the respect and fulfillment of women's, girls', and adolescent's individual and collective rights (SDG 5). On the other hand, thanks to *Fundación Acción Cultural Loyola (ACLO)*, amongst others, drinking water and agro-livestock production systems were introduced in the Azari community in Chuquiassa. On the

3 In mid-2016, the Instituto Nacional de Estadística de Bolivia (INE), organized a trans-sectorial workshop on the creation of statistical indicators to keep track of developments within the Economic and Social Development Plan 2016 – 2020 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Sadly, their website still does not have information about most of the 231 SDG indicators.

other hand, the *Instituto de Investigación y Capacitación Campesina* (IICCA) gave support by building and equipping a communal greenhouse in Yunchara, Tarija. These projects are intended to ensure food security and access to adequate livelihoods with fair transactions for recipient communities (SDG 2 and SDG 6). On the other hand, the *Centro de Estudios Regionales para el Desarrollo* CERDET gave technical and legal support in the titling process and achievement of legal status of the Indigenous Communal Land (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*, TCO, in Spanish) of Weenhayek (five hectares of native forest). The CSO *Investigación Social y Asesoramiento Legal en Potosí* implemented a project intended to mitigate the environmental impacts of mining on Ayllu Qorqa indigenous people communities (SDG 6, SDG 13 and SDG 15).

In 2016, UNITAS and 20 of its partner associations developed and implemented 153 programs and projects, with a total budget of USD17 Million. They generated impacts at the local, departmental, and national levels, but were mainly focused on rural areas. An evaluation of the implementation and outcomes of these activities against commitments to the Istanbul Principles shows that most of these projects focused on Principle 1: Respect and promotion of human rights and social justice. To a lesser extent, 19 of the projects were focused on Principle 5: Practice transparency and accountability. This evaluation highlights the importance of strengthening CSO commitments on practices that give more visibility to their actions and greater access to information by the general public, both on financial statements and institutional outcomes and practices.

**Table 1: Number of projects linked to the fulfillment of Istanbul Principles**

Istanbul Principles	Number of Projects
Human rights and social justice	115
Empowerment, ownership and participation	86
Environmental sustainability	75
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	68
Positive and sustainable rights	52
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	34
Knowledge-sharing and creation	32
Transparency and accountability	19
<b>Total general</b>	<b>481</b>

Source: Compiled by authors based on the database *Construyendo una cultura de Rendición de Cuentas: Informe Colectivo 2016*.

It should be noted that each program/project not only complied with at least one of the Principles, but also that 85% of the CSOs oriented their actions and outcomes based on fulfilling more than one Principle (overall, each project was able to comply with three Principles). Furthermore, due to their work line characteristics, organizational structure, and territorial action areas, some partner organizations such as *Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario* (CEDLA), *Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social* (CEJIS), *Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado* (CIPCA), and *Instituto Politécnico "Tomás Katari"* (IPTK), as well as the UNITAS Network, achieved all development effectiveness criteria listed in the Istanbul Principles in their projects in 2016. In the same way, organizations such as ACLO, *Fundación Social Uramanta*, *Centro de Investigación y*



*Apoyo Campesino* (CIAC), and *Servicios Múltiples de Tecnologías Apropriadas* (SEMTA), implemented projects complying with six or seven of these Principles. Meanwhile, *Casa de la Mujer*, ISALP, and Radio Pío XII, due to their specific line of action, focused on Principles one to three.

**Table 2: Number of projects linked to the fulfillment of Istanbul Principles by implementing institution**

Institution	Number of Projects
<b>ACLO</b>	<b>38</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	4
Positive and sustainable rights	8
Knowledge-sharing and creation	6
Human rights and social justice	6
Empowerment, ownership and participation	6
Environmental sustainability	7
Transparency and accountability	1
<b>CEDLA</b>	<b>27</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	4
Positive and sustainable rights	1
Knowledge-sharing and creation	2
Human rights and social justice	5
Empowerment, ownership and participation	5
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	4
Environmental sustainability	1
Transparency and accountability	5
<b>CEJIS</b>	<b>46</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	4
Positive and sustainable rights	8
Knowledge-sharing and creation	3
Human rights and social justice	10
Empowerment, ownership and participation	10
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	3
Environmental sustainability	7
Transparency and accountability	1
<b>CIPCA - Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado</b>	<b>73</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	7
Positive and sustainable rights	4
Knowledge-sharing and creation	3
Human rights and social justice	17

Empowerment, ownership and participation	12
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	12
Environmental sustainability	17
Transparency and accountability	1
<b>IPTK - Instituto Politécnico Tomás Katari</b>	<b>75</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	1
Positive and sustainable rights	19
Knowledge-sharing and creation	5
Human rights and social justice	15
Empowerment, ownership and participation	12
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	13
Environmental sustainability	8
Transparency and accountability	1
<b>UNITAS</b>	<b>32</b>
Partnerships built upon fairness and solidarity	5
Positive and sustainable rights	1
Knowledge-sharing and creation	2
Human rights and social justice	6
Empowerment, ownership and participation	6
Gender equality and women's and girls' rights	6
Environmental sustainability	3
Transparency and accountability	3

*Source: Compiled by authors based on the database "Construyendo una cultura de Rendición de Cuentas: Informe Colectivo 2016.*

## Implementation of NOD Commitments

UNITAS' Programa Urbano aims to encourage organized political action by citizens (social organizations, unions, women's groups, etc.), so that, based on their collective rights, they are able to safeguard their interests vis-à-vis the State and other entities (such as companies) with clear advantages. The program is closely linked to the fulfillment of Istanbul Principles 1, 2, and 3; and to the NOD Principle 3 on Inclusive Partnerships wherein CSOs committed to contribute to the development of policy space and an enabling environment for the formation and operation of civil society organizations, to ensure their full participation in development processes at all levels and their guidelines.

A diagnosis of specific circumstances (issues, power dynamics, gender relations, etc.) of twelve organizations was carried out with an active and equitable engagement of stakeholders to make assistance commitments and to draft response plans (program's direct beneficiaries amount to 819 people: 450 men 369 women). Empowerment of these and other organizations also involved their engagement in the training processes to strengthen their institutional capacity and their ability to develop enforceability of rights strategies.

Generally speaking, two positive outcomes were achieved: influence on the development of public policy proposals and their implementation, and direct impact on the quality of life of beneficiaries. For instance, in 2016, through the participation of women from urban and rural organizations, the inclusion of the protection of female members of social organizations into the Law Against Political Harassment through Supreme Decree 2935 was achieved. Along this same line, officials and authorities from seven municipalities were engaged to raise awareness on issues concerning human rights, rights of women and persons with disabilities, and joint participatory development with social organizations on SDG-related projects.

On the other hand, assistance was given in a claim made by three social organizations/unions for the effective fulfillment of their labor rights. All those cases received favorable responses from the State. Thanks to Sentence No. 183/16 of July 2016, *Sindicato de Aseo Urbano de Cobija* (a local union) achieved the inclusion in the municipality's payroll of its workers and a commitment to pay night hours. Under Constitutional Judgement No. 0173/2016-52, the labor rights of the Secretary of Relations of the union *Sindicato de Trtrabajadores de la Embotelladora* NUDELPA (a Coca-Cola company), were restored after having unfairly been discharged from his duties. Finally, after an arbitration process with the Municipal Government of La Paz, the *Consejo Ciudadano de Personas con Discapacidad* (representing people with disabilities) achieved adequate space and equipment to carry out its activities. The organisation also achieved with the Municipal Government of Cobija the elimination of architectural barriers to ensure proper access in streets and public and educational buildings. All these are meaningful contributions for more inclusive cities.

These outcomes would not be possible without the establishment of equitable and inclusive inter-institutional partnerships among stakeholders. On the one hand, result-systematization by Network's CSOs shows an interesting cooperation framework with international cooperation agencies, philanthropic institutions and public bodies (mainly local governments but also public institutions from foreign countries). Specifically, 93 entities acting as donors of projects implemented in 2016 were recorded.

It is worth noting that there is growing engagement of the private sector (donor companies were registered such as *Cervecería Boliviana Nacional* and New England Biolabs or banks such as ECOFUTURO) as a new development cooperation ally. It was noted that in the past years that the private sector did not have a significant role in the work of UNITAS' CSOs.

CSOs-donors mediation is carried out at the local, national, and international levels, depending on project's scope of action. Regarding relations of institutions that partner with the State, there is a key link with local governments to carry out collaborative projects. This local development ownership can be seen particularly in agribusiness development projects (infrastructure, technical capacity building, etc.) linked to food sovereignty. Projects were department governments engage, such as coordination with specific units and social management services, are also common. On the contrary, relations with national government are more difficult. However, work has been developed with some specific ministries and their units.

Many donor institutions committed to more than one project. OXFAM, for instance, collaborated in over ten projects and Manos Unidas in nine. On the other hand, in 28 out of 153 projects, three or more donors partnered to implement a specific project, showing how important joint efforts can be for development. A list with donors participating in more than one project is presented below.

**Table 3: Donor institutions based on financed projects**

Donor Institution	Participation in Projects
UNITAS	15
OXFAM	10
Manos Unidas	9
CAFOD	8
DIAKONIA	8
MISEREOR	7
Broederlijk Denle	5
Christian Aid	4
Ayuda en Acción	4
Bosques del Mundo	3
Pan para el Mundo	3
PLAN INTERNACIONAL	3
Secours Catolique Caritas France	3
TAU FUNDAZIOA	3
DKA Austria	3
PROSALUS	3
Diputación GIPUZKOA	3
Embajada Real de Dinamarca	3

*Source: Compiled by authors based on the database Construyendo una cultura de Rendición de Cuentas: Informe Colectivo 2016.*

The Network's longstanding working tradition was key to establish and strengthen partnerships with several social organizations, focusing on an active, inclusive, and equitable engagement in development projects. In this sense, the highest participation rate was that of indigenous organizations, peasant organizations, and women's groups (65%); unions and youth organizations (50%); neighborhood organizations (40%); guilds and children organizations (15%); and grassroots territorial organizations and mining organizations (10%) (UNITAS, 2017).

It is estimated that over 200,000 direct recipients and over 2.5 million indirect recipients (ibid.) benefited from programs, projects, and actions by partner institutions and UNITAS. The main target groups were women, youth and adolescents, peasants, indigenous peoples and small producers.

In order to thoroughly and responsibly evaluate the actions and outcomes of CSO's work in Bolivia, it seems appropriate to consider citizens' feedback. UNITAS in 2016 organized a perception study on the role and effectiveness of CSO work in Bolivia, including an Opinion Report and two Perception Studies by two external survey companies. Results from these consultations are quite positive. When asked about their perception of CSOs' quality of work in Bolivia, 83% of respondents consider it to be "good" (73%) and "very good" (10%); 8% considered it "bad"; and only 2% "very bad". Following the same thread of thought, 77%

of participants “very much agree” or “somehow agree” with the idea that CSOs contribute to country’s development. According to the survey participants, the main contributions of CSOs are “productive economic development”, “social services” and “housing, water and sanitation”. “The poorest” were identified as main beneficiaries. Finally, 63% of the population responded that they trust CSOs’ work, despite recognizing (58%) that CSO work is hindered by current government policies, since they consider their relation is not positive (74%).

## CSO Enabling Environment in Bolivia

One of the main challenges identified by various CSOs operating in Bolivia is the lack of promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs’ work by the national Government. Within the framework of “The Second Monitoring Round of Busan commitments”, UNITAS (2016b) was commissioned to prepare a National Civil Society Consultation on Indicator 2 (enabling environment), named *Entorno y participación de la sociedad civil en el desarrollo*. Information gathered in this official document consisting of an online survey and an onsite consultation following the globally-agreed standard methodology were submitted to the Secretariat of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness. Challenges faced by CSOs were outlined by 80 national CSO representatives.<sup>44</sup> The different question modules both in online and onsite surveys, covered issues concerning multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces, an evaluation of CSOs’ work, donor-CSO relations, and impacts of CSO regulatory and legal framework.

Survey participants raised series of concerns on the recognition of CSOs and national authorities’ obstacles to the work carried out by many CSOs. Something that also deserves attention is the fact that, despite invitations and their confirmation of attendance, representatives from the Ministry of Development Planning (National Coordination unit) were not seen in the Consultation events.



Regarding content, while participants agreed that the Government consults CSOs to design, implement, and supervise national development policies (“always” 2.7% “sometimes” 68.5%), this recognition is limited in scope. On the one hand, despite having norms requiring social inclusion and social control when public bodies draft, implement, and review public policies (State’s Political Constitution and Law no. 241), these consultations are usually selective, since many times only those akin to the National Government or even those organizations with an outspoken politically-aligned militancy are considered, thus closing democratic spaces, reducing CSOs’ role as

4 Online Survey participants represented the following organizations: 72% representing NGOs and Foundations; 9% CSO national networks; 9% women’s organizations; 3% indigenous organizations; 1,3% academic institutions; among others (UNITAS 2016b).

independent development actor. It is not a surprise that high-level authorities openly oppose consultation processes, reducing the value of CSO engagement in public development policy formulation and implementation. On the other hand, working groups identified that there are no institutionalized spaces including CSO engagement in these processes. When sectoral or specific consultations take place, these are seldom translated into final public policies. Furthermore, there were allegations that authorities systematically rejected some CSO suggestions because they differed from Government's official standpoint, perceiving them as "liars" and accused of "defending interest away from national ones".

Participants also criticized CSOs' limited access to government information. Although there is a regulatory requirement (CPE) to free access to information by the general public, many of these repositories lack updated, relevant, and impartial information. Furthermore, institutional channels to request for information involve an endless chain of steps that delay the process. The existence of a law that includes "strategic" information, such as natural resources exploitation areas, in its definition of "State secrets" was an emerging concern in discussions, since participants claim that this law seriously threatens the right to access to information.



While the CPE recognizes freedom of association (85% of participants agreed that -in the *de jure* sphere, but not *de facto*- CSO liberties are recognized and respected), this freedom was violated with the enactment of Law No. 251 concerning granting of legal status, since it subordinates CSO institutional autonomy to Government's guidelines for sectorial policies<sup>5</sup>. In fact, CSO are obliged to align their own bylaws to the National Development Plan (and sectorial policies when working on more than one department). Some of the Network's partner organizations working with national organizations experienced various obstacles and unjustified delays when renewing their legal status. The fact that organizations affected are always those openly critical of State policies or those who consider that these State policies hinder national development or contravene human rights does not seem coincidental. Political pressure is not limited to the granting of legal status granting or renewal when an organisation is critical of the State, it also includes direct or indirect harassment, going from overt insults or threats (broadcasted in official speeches and through the media) to pressuring donors so that they stop financing these organizations, among others.

Participants also identified a current cooperation crisis, not only due to decreases in financing as a result of new priorities and positive evaluation of the national economy, but also because of high level of competitiveness required from CSOs and the consideration that cooperation intervention related to the promotion of CSO enabling environment is limited because it needs to respond to an agenda required by the Bolivian State (National Development Plan).

5 In light of explicit infringements of constitutionally-recognized rights by Law 351, the Ombudsman brought an action challenging the constitutionality of this law to the Plurinational Constitutional Court (TCP in Spanish). The TCP, however, ruled in favor of this Law and its Supreme Decree.

These challenges are difficult to face, not only because relations with central government representatives vary depending on the unit, but also because engagements tend to be limited and the Government's response not always is positive. The reluctance to cooperate with some CSOs, and even neglecting and discrediting their work and outcomes creates an unfavorable environment, disrupts and duplicates efforts, degenerates into strongly asymmetrical relations, and consequently, weakens the potential achievement of positive development outcomes. Nevertheless, as discussed above, not all relations were negative. Engagements and work coordinated with other government levels, particularly with municipalities, are great examples of the added value that designing additional actions and convergent practices among stakeholders can have on national development.

Challenges identified when implementing NOD commitments are not just due to CSO external factors. In several reviews, both in the aforementioned Survey and in a project conducted by UNITAS and the European Union<sup>6</sup>, it was found that some CSO experience issues when implementing agreements due to varying levels of unfamiliarity with contents.

As the online survey for the Second Monitoring Round on Enabling Environment shows for instance, 40% of respondents that answered the seventh question (19% abstained) declared that they did not know if CSOs (or the CSO where they worked) implemented activities or initiatives related to the Istanbul Principles. Furthermore, another 25% answered that "they are not implemented due to unfamiliarity with these Principles" and 8% that "they are not applied due to challenges experienced during implementation". This leaves little scope for effective action, namely, 25% consider that these Principles "are applied by NGOs" and 2% that "CSOs implement, are familiar with and widely use these Principles".

**Table 4: CSO development effectiveness principles implementation (Istanbul Principles), online survey**

Answer options	Percentage
Yes, they are applied and CSOs know them and use them	1.6%
Yes, NGOs apply them	25.0%
They are not applied due to lack of knowledge	25.0%
They are not applied due to implementation challenges	7.8%
They are not known	40.6%
Answered questions	81%
Unanswered questions	19%

Source: Survey Apoyo a la Participación de las OSC en la Segunda Ronda de Monitoreo de la GPEDC-Bolivia.

<sup>6</sup> The project cited is "Sumando voces, multiplicando acciones: las OSC como actoras en el desarrollo y políticas – Bolivia" and, in its exploratory phase, it gathers opinions of 80 CSO representatives, mainly NGOs, on their work and challenges they face. It is underway.



Onsite survey responses helped to clarify this situation. While some participants consider that there are key examples where Istanbul Principles are implemented (a good experience with the Ombudsman and the union confederation *Confederacion Sindical Unica de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* were cited), they also think that effective implementation can be relative.

Some of the issues identified are the obligation to implement strategic development alignments imposed by the Government, as well the decreasing cooperation funds which hinders the sustainability of development programs and projects. Discussions during the onsite event revealed that there is a partial lack of knowledge of the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness. Participants, however, showed an interest in implementing these guidelines and thus promoting and raising the standards of their work.

The base line evaluation of Project *Sumando Voces*, shows similar results. While 74% stated that they were familiar with the Istanbul Principles, knowledge and practical implementation to some extent varies across respondents. As to the details of each Principle, respondents consider, for instance, that, while their organizations have enough capacities, albeit partial (47%), to establish measurable indicators on development effectiveness based on international human rights standards (Principle 1.5), they also stress the importance of having some training in this area (31%). On the other hand, the need for improvement on their accountability and transparency work was acknowledged in so far as respondents consider (47%) that they have enough capacities, albeit partial, to provide accessible information to their organizations (Principle 5.3) but that capacity-building on this would be crucial (19%). These considerations are replicated, to a greater or lesser extent, in the rest of Principles, yet with tendency to more positive responses. In other words, most of respondents agree that their organizations have enough capacity, albeit partial, to include the Istanbul Principles in their practices. A significant percentage, however, stresses the need for greater capacity-building practices.

In view of this situation, UNITAS took up the challenge to improve the socialization and implementation of the Istanbul Principles, the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness, and CSO commitments under NOD. In fact, UNITAS Network has been working







on promotion and capacity-building trainings and workshops related to these Principles, not only with its partners but also with other national CSOs.

In 2017, nine different capacity-building courses were organized on Istanbul Principles for specific CSO networks. The following organizations participated in the capacity-building courses: *Asociación de Instituciones de Promoción y Educación (AIPE)*, *Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos de Bolivia (APDH)* and its nine affiliates, a specific workshop with *Asamblea por los Derechos Humanos de Oruro*, *Liga de Defensa del Medio Ambiente (LIDEMA)*, *Red Tic Bolivia*, two workshops (self-regulation system elaboration and capacity-building training on Istanbul Principles) with *Red de Participación Ciudadana y Control Social (PCCS)*, and a two workshop-cycle with *Red Fe y Alegría*.

One national and six local 4-day capacity-building courses were conducted to foster exchanges between CSOs working on the same territorial context. The national workshop included the participation of sixteen UNITAS partner institutions, while the rest were held in Santa Cruz (17 participants: five from UNITAS Network, six NGOs, two indigenous organizations and four others from different backgrounds), in Cochabamba (18 institutions: four from Red UNITAS, four CSO networks, three religious institutions, two NGOs, two organizations from different backgrounds, one youth organisation, one OTB and one municipal government), in Tarija (19 institutions: eight from different backgrounds, five from UNITAS Network, four NGOs, one municipal government and one CSO network), in La Paz (24 institutions: ten NGOs, five from Red UNITAS, three organizations from different background, two women's organizations, one indigenous organisation, one youth organisation, one guild organisation and one CSO network), in Chuquisaca and Potosí (23 institutions: eleven NGOs, four from Red UNITAS, four from different background, one CSO network, one international NGO, one youth organisation and one municipal government, and in Trinidad (13 institutions: four indigenous organizations, two from Red UNITAS, two CSO networks, two NGOs, one international NGO and one religious organisation).

With a view to promote the implementation of the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness, the workshops and trainings involved a series of activities aimed at facilitators of each institution. Overall, methodology consisted of:

- Analyzing the environment where CSOs operate (working groups and presentations in the plenary), namely, institutional context (CSO-partner relations), social context (beneficiaries-social organizations relations) and political context (relations with the State).

- Conceptualization, historical overview, Istanbul Principles analysis and specific guidelines.
- Istanbul Principles practical implementation analysis, both at the State level (relations and cooperation issues, breach of agreements) and its implications on CSOs' and network's institutional life (external and internal factors acknowledgement, which have positive and negative impacts when internalizing the Istanbul Principles).
- Action planning for IP implementation.

Results from these workshops allow us to identify a growing interest among CSO facilitators in integrating these Principles into their day-to-day practices, in order not only to raise the standards of their work but also to potentially improve their relations with other partners, beneficiaries, and the State.

## Conclusions

In closing, results from the study allow us to reflect upon the following lessons and recommendations:

1. **The importance of incorporating the IPs into CSO work in the country.** For instance, accountability focused on the creation of a transparency and accountability culture in the country makes possible outcome value and qualification as well as identification of issues requiring greater efforts. Embracing and adopting the Istanbul Principles as benchmark framework for CSOs to become true development actors is an effective way to strengthen and foster their legitimacy when acting socially or politically.
2. **CSOs must be aware of and transparent in relation to their internal constraints when implementing NOD agreements.** Partial or total lack of knowledge or an inadequate ownership of the Principles could hinder development effectiveness. In fact, IP and NOD promotion through various tools, such as workshops and trainings, revealed the importance of a better understanding for CSOs. This is based not only on the expectation of improving their management practices but also on the possibility of increasing their negotiation capacity with several bodies and donor institutions and with the State.
3. **Inter-institutional partnership creation and consolidation with other stakeholders, mainly the beneficiaries, is vital to development effectiveness.** As borne out by various cases, collaborative work fosters and sustains outcomes. In several fora and events, country CSO members identified as one of their main weaknesses the lack of inter-institutional coordination. This creates a lack of harmonization of their actions, even in common working lines, duplicating their efforts, and reducing the intended impact. Isolationism and institutional jealousy are obstacles to development.
4. **Donor institutions and bodies must better ensure sustainability of CSO work and positive results achieved.** Declining funding and greater number of conditions for allocating financing are not the only problems resulting from this relationship. Development actors should also contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs. Several CSO members indicated that their cooperation intervention has been restricted. This is because, on the one hand, cooperation responds to a source country agenda and, on the other hand, their work has to comply with national government requirements, hindering their ability to mediate for CSOs. Cooperation

agencies and bodies must promote an open dialogue not only with their CSO counterparts but also with the State.

5. **State actions, particularly those from the National Government, have a great impact on CSO's capacity to promote development effectiveness.** Local, regional, and national governments should act in compliance with international agreements enshrined in the NOD, particularly in terms of recognizing and promoting, as well as not restricting, CSO work as key development actors. All these examples, and claims raised, show that a lack of acknowledgment of CSO work by the State hinders joint efforts and poisons the atmosphere for future engagements. Governments should not make any distinctions between organizations based on political affinity. They should promote dialogue channels and a democratic critical discussion that benefit national development.

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# Building a MultiStakeholder Partnership on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Kyrgyzstan

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## Introduction

In Kyrgyzstan, the State and other development partners are neither widely discussing nor reviewing development effectiveness. They are also not monitoring the implementation of the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD). The lack of transparency and accountability in development cooperation is characterized by the absence of proper systems for follow-up and review (including mutual accountability), putting more focus on the quantity instead of the quality of cooperation, and the dearth of ownership of the country's development agenda by civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's organizations. Although they remain committed to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 at country level, CSOs and women's organizations are generally left out in the ongoing creation of the new national sustainable development strategy, including development financing strategies, as part of the domestication of the Agenda 2030 (A2030) in Kyrgyzstan,

Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan (FWNGO) is engaged in the advocacy for effective development cooperation in Kyrgyzstan for many years. Towards the latter part of 2017, FWNGO, with support from the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), piloted its advocacy for a multistakeholder partnership (MSP) in the effective implementation of Goal 5 of Agenda 2030 in the National Plan of Action on women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. The MSP aims to institutionalize the participation of women's organizations in addressing issues in development cooperation such as non-inclusion, failure to address women's rights and gender concerns, lack of accountability, policy incoherence, and weak coordination between development partners.

As a member of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), FWNGO actively participated in the process of pushing CSO key asks to be reflected in the NOD during the 2016 High Level Meeting (HLM) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in Nairobi. The MSP initiated by FWNGO is accelerating the implementation of the CSO NOD commitments on inclusive partnerships, ensuring accountability of all development actors, reversing the trend of shrinking civic space and providing "an enabling environment for civil society". Moreover, it contributes towards the fulfillment of CSO NOD commitments on women's rights and gender equality as formulated in the NOD Article 16. "We recognize that women's and girls' rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are both stand-alone goals and a cross-cutting issue to achieving sustainable development. We will accelerate efforts to achieve these aims by deepening multistakeholder partnerships and tracking resource allocations for these endeavors; strengthening capacity for gender-responsive budgeting and planning; and increasing the participation of women's organizations in partnerships for development".

This case study presents how FWNGO's initiative contributes towards the implementation of CSOs' commitments in the NOD, particularly, in the areas of ensuring inclusive partnerships,

accountability of all development actors, and an enabling environment for civil society, promoting women's rights and gender equality, which also reflect CSOs' commitments to the Istanbul Principles. The first part of this case study will review the focus and objectives of type of the MSP initiated by FWNGO, as well as its relevance to the A2030. It will highlight involved partners and will show how NOD commitments mentioned above were implemented by the partners. In the second part of the case study, attention will be paid to facilitating factors and challenges in the implementation of NOD commitments, and to the lessons gained in this process.

## Focus and Objectives of the Multistakeholder Partnership and its Relevance to the A2030

In 2017, FWNGO started its work on addressing the lack of accountability, inclusive partnerships, and policy incoherence in the area of women's rights and gender equality based on development partners' commitments to the NOD through an advocacy towards a multi stakeholder partnership.

In Kyrgyzstan, there are already at least two groups at the national level that work on women's rights and gender equality with participation of various development partners, they are the Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG) under the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and the Gender Thematic Group under the United Nations (UN). Their work is quite valuable as they have already introduced the practice and recognition of the importance of joint work. However, these are separate groups that are failing to effectively coordinate all interested parties in planning, implementation and review of the National Action Plan (NAP) on women's rights and gender equality in the country. Therefore, there a need for a joint, transparent, and accountable and inclusive multistakeholders partnership mechanism.

The general goal of the MSP is to strengthen country ownership, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of the Parliament, state bodies and all other development partners in the area of gender equality and women's rights in implementing the A2030 through setting up a coherent coordination mechanism between all development partners for the planning, implementation, and review of the SDG Goal 5 in Kyrgyzstan. The MSP aims to increase and strengthen the involvement of women and their organizations in the processes of decision-making of the Parliament and state bodies; strengthen transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of all bodies to the country needs of women; and increase information dissemination to CSOs and people about the status of the realization of the State's commitments in the area of gender equality and women's rights. One of the concrete targets of the MSP is to support the full inclusion of the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment as a standalone goal in the National Sustainable Development Strategy, with focus on gender equality and women's rights as a strategic crosscutting parameter of sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan. The MSP will directly involve Parliament, key state bodies, local authorities, Official Development Aid (ODA) and other aid providers, private sector, and civil society organizations.

Among the features of the MSP that strengthen mutual accountability among stakeholders is the introduction of regular ministerial meeting on joint and mutual accountability on

the concrete direction of development in Kyrgyzstan. This space provided by the MSP will strengthen the accountability of partners for decisions taken in the area of gender equality and women's rights and at the same time, will increase trust in the State.

The discussions held by the MSP will help State bodies to better understand various dimensions of gender equality and women's rights by opening communications between partners. For example, a highly needed reform in the Ministry of Finance for gender budgeting must be conducted through joint work and cooperation of several ministries, the Parliament, and women's organizations. In another case, a legal norm may be introduced for the private sector for them to support an enabling environment for the development of women's organizations. Through the MSP, the Parliament will be able to introduce changes in legislation in a manner which facilitates collective decision-making by partners. Local self-governance bodies, local authorities (LA) will improve their local development plans. Local action plans for sustainable development will be effectively addressing women's rights and gender equality needs. Conversely, LAs will be able to bring in to national level discussions and decision-making local needs and strategies.

CSOs on the other hand will get significant support for their work for women and local communities. The MSP will also strengthen partnership relations (e.g. close cooperation with local authorities), increase participation of local organizations in decision-making, and planning processes at community levels, and widen the sphere of activities for social interests. Engagement of CSOs will move from criticism to constructive involvement. For civil society, the MSP will provide concrete opportunities to submit recommendations and increase its effectiveness as well. Many parameters of gender equality and women's rights will be better realized by the State with the help from women's organizations. Women and their organizations at national and local levels will play significant roles in the success of the implementation and review of A2030 if they are effectively engaged from the beginning of the national implementation. This also provides new educational opportunities for other partners in the area of engaging CSOs.

Joint analysis and discussion of actions held by the MSP will help partners see the holistic picture of the status of progress, understand the challenges, and make necessary changes into their own work schemes and plans in coordination with each other. The practice of targeted coordination will help in the timely addressing of issues, achieving results, and increase efficiency.

The MSP can also facilitate the generation of regular, timely, and accurate progress reports on the implementation of A2030, particularly in the area of women's rights and gender equality, which will contribute towards better performance on the implementation of commitments. Existing forms of reporting will be enriched by new data related to gender equality and women's rights. Accuracy of the data and analyses in the report will be verified by all stakeholders, which will include ODA providers and all other country donors to understand Kyrgyzstan women's rights and gender equality needs. ODA providers and all other country donors will use and be guided by the NAP on women's rights and gender equality in their processes of gender sensitization of their aid. Participation in MSP will help them be accountable for the implementation of their gender equality policies.

## Implementation of CSO NOD Commitments

FWNGO's advocacy towards creating an MSP on women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan is a significant contribution both to the implementation of the A2030, as well as to the delivery of CSO commitments in the NOD, particularly on addressing gender equality in ensuring ownership of development priorities by partner countries receiving support; promoting inclusive partnerships; ensuring accountability of all development actors; and reversing the trend of shrinking civic space and providing "an enabling environment for civil society". By creating a space for participation, the MSP is contributing to the strengthening of enabling environment for civil society. Overall, FWNGO's advocacy for the MSP is guided by the eight (8) Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness (see Box 1).

The MSP addresses the need for women's rights and gender equality by advocating for the implementation of State obligations on women's rights and the institutionalization of participation of women's organizations through setting up a formal multistakeholders partnership agreement with high involvement of women's organizations in decision-making by the Parliament and governmental agencies. The MSP strengthens inclusiveness for CSOs and women's rights organizations in the implementation, follow-up, and review of the SDGs at country level.

For the creation of the practice of systematic, transparent, and regular mechanism of accountability, the MSP provides unified and agreed forms and timelines of data submission by each partner with analysis of success, failures, and recommendations on follow up action to solve challenges. However, it is important to note that the MSP will be successful if it is based on the principle of equal but differentiated responsibilities and if it is led by the State.

In order to ensure inclusive participation, adherence to women's rights and gender equality commitments, and mutual accountability, the MSP will have: 1) regular information exchange, 2) regular meetings with reports from each partners on the status of the progress of their work based on the State's matrix of the national program on achieving gender equality and women's rights, 3) inclusion of representative of all partners into all process of discussion and decision-making on issues of partnership, 4) joint discussions of all received recommendations, 5) joint statements and joint review of the process and status of implementation of the State's obligations, 6) communication on monitoring including access to all partners to the Parliamentary information and data, and 7) inclusion of women's groups, LA into all commissions on the drafting of interim and final reports. Details of schedules, themes, and

### Box 1. Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness

1. Respect and promote human rights and social justice.
2. Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls' rights.
3. Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation.
4. Promote environmental sustainability.
5. Practice transparency and accountability.
6. Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity.
7. Create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning.
8. Commit to realizing positive sustainable change.



internal communications will be discussed and agreed jointly. The statutes and bylaws of the multistakeholder partnership will be discussed at joint meetings with clarifications on the roles, responsibilities, and rights of each partner. Setting up a website for the multistakeholders partnership is also recommended.

Ideally, the multistakeholder partnership agreement will include the following aspects: a) setting up a goal; in our case, our goal of partnership as strengthening cooperation between various bodies in order to reach mutual support in various needed reforms, understanding each other's challenges and contribution to implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's rights; b) clear formulation of links to national SDG documents; c) theme of partnership (e.g. reaching gender equality and women's rights, clear formulation of roles and responsibilities of partners); d) identification of each partner's tasks based on the State matrix of action on gender equality and women's rights; e) status of recommendations from the MSP; f) mechanisms for both internal and external communications; g) a paragraph on transparency and access to information; h) formulation of the accountability framework details; and i) a clear formulation of institutional space for CSOs.

Currently FWNGO is still at the stage of discussing the first draft of the concept of the MSP with key development partners. During the discussions, the work of the MSP was put in the direction of analyzing major national strategic documents and programs related to sustainable development and women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan. These include, documents related to the A2030 and Global Partnership Initiatives; various documents with clear formulations of the State's and other stakeholders' commitments to gender equality, women's rights, and multistakeholder partnership approach; and documents that showed reasons for the failure of implementation of previous national programs on women's rights and gender equality. The work was aimed to identify the rationale for the development and advocacy for the multistakeholder partnership approach with valuable references from reviewed documents.

FWNGO also held several meetings with State officials, country donors, CSOs, and local authorities, except private sector. Meetings with the private sector are now in process of discussion. FWNGO hoped that these meeting would be a good way to facilitate better understanding and willingness by different stakeholders to start discussions and support advocacy for the MSP on women's rights and gender equality. This was an essential part of the project and these meetings helped to convince some state officials and other stakeholders on the value of the MSP. The important discussion and informal approval of the initiative in the Parliamentary Committee Meeting was a good sign of a will to use the multistakeholder partnership on women's rights and gender equality. One member of the National Parliament who assisted in the formulation of the concept supported the MSP through a communication during the meeting of the Kyrgyz Republic Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues, Education, Science, Culture, and Healthcare. This resulted in the informal support/adoption of the MSP on women's rights and gender equality in that meeting.

Several meetings were conducted with leaders of more than 30 women's organizations to discuss the MSP and the proposed MSP agreement. Women-leaders expressed their support to advocate for the MSP, and they all agreed that it should lead to the institutionalization of women's organizations in the MSP. Women leaders also expressed an interest to take part in the multistakeholders' dialogue on women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan in the framework of the nationalization of A2030.



FWNGO addressed the need for women's movements to better understand what NOD commitments by are holding trainings on the NOD and the MSP. FWNGO developed training modules for women's organizations and conducted a series of training webinars. These helped in building the capacity of 20 women's organizations on Agenda 2030 commitments on women's rights and gender equality, and increased awareness on NOD commitments. Kyrgyzstan women's organizations now know and support the MSP initiative after these meetings. The organization of a multistakeholders' dialogue on NOD commitments and Agenda 2030 in February 2018 discussed and identify ways to move forward with the MSP. Representatives of various development partners set up a Working Group and agreed a work schedule for the details of the MSP multistakeholders partnership.

## Facilitating Factors and Challenges in Implementing the NOD Commitments

FWNGO's MSP initiative was challenged by several factors.

External challenges include 1) reluctance of the government and donors to set up such multistakeholder partnership, 2) lack of understanding by development partners of the multistakeholder partnership approach, 3) fast turn over in decision-making positions of governmental bodies, 4) lack of understanding of the NOD itself by development partners, 6) lack of commitment to enabling environment for CSOs on behalf of development partners, 7) lack of institutional involvement of national and local private sector in the sustainable development discussions, and 8) a trend of shrinking civic space for civil society.

Among the internal challenges that FWNGO encountered were 1) lack of funding for its work on advocating for the institutionalization of CSOs in SDG-related processes in the country, and 2) CSOs' lack of understanding of the roles of women's organizations in multistakeholder partnerships.

The MSP will be successful if there is an active participation of CSOs, women's groups, local authorities, Parliament, ODA providers in Kyrgyzstan and other donors, as well as private sector. Despite officially committing to the NOD at the global level, ODA providers are reluctant to implement them in Kyrgyzstan. Only a few were more or less responsive to the Forum's communications. This is a negative sign of a lack of linkages between the levels of work of ODA providers.

Another challenge encountered by the MSP initiative is the differing levels of understanding and willingness by different stakeholders, that led to reluctance to start discussions and advocacy for the MSP. The most active in participating were members of the Parliament, women's groups, and local authorities. Less active but still expressing their interest were state officials from the Ministries. The MSP concept that was presented and accepted by the Parliamentary Committee and by partners that took part in the multistakeholders meeting is expanding, deepening, and operationalizing the democratic ownership of development policies and processes through increasing women's ownership and ensuring women's organizations' role and space as development partners in the A2030 processes in Kyrgyzstan.

Challenges in increasing participation in the formulation of the MSP were addressed by intensive communication and presentation of the MSP concept to the Ministries and the Parliament and visiting offices of ODA providers. The lack of understanding of the NOD itself by development partners is not well addressed and this needs more funding and support than what is available now. More work is needed to effectively engage the private sector.

Big discussions in women's movements resulted in the pro-active support from one women's organization, NGO "DIA", a provincial member of FWNGO. Its director, Avazkan Ormonova presented the MSP concept at two important meetings in Bishkek--the Kyrgyzstan Human Rights Council meeting and the National Parliamentary Hearing in January 2018. As a result, the Parliament added the MSP concept into its plan of action. NGO "DIA", is planning to apply the MSP concept in the Osh province of Kyrgyzstan at provincial level.

All actions related to the implementation of the MSP are about strengthening the space for CSO participation, advocate for accountability on full inclusion of the goal on gender equality and women's empowerment as a standalone goal of sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan, and for the inclusion of gender equality and women's rights as a strategic crosscutting parameter of sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan. Below are some practical recommendations that can be adopted in setting up the MSP:

- Strong cooperation and support is needed from civil society organisations in the country.
- Joint Kyrgyzstan women's movement position on the multistakeholders partnership on women's rights and gender equality (MSP on WR&GE).
- Different stakeholders should come up with a joint understanding on the form of the MSP on WR&GE.
- Informational brochure on the MSP on WR&GE should be made available available for the public.
- Kyrgyzstan case on the MSP on WR&GE should be discussed and shared to receive valuable feedback from various countries.

## Conclusion

CSOs in Kyrgyzstan have expressed their reaffirmation of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness as the basis for the commitments to the NOD. The MSP is among CSOs' actions that contribute towards this reaffirmation as it contributes towards the effectiveness of CSO themselves and promotes enabling environment for CSOs in the country. Multistakeholder partnership is one of the major trends towards the implementation of national sustainable development plans as cooperation between civil society and state bodies have positive impacts on sustainable development. However, CSO need, among others, institutionalized spaces for participation in decision making and improved access to information in order for their participation in MSPs to be effective. Moreover, the MSP needs

to be State-led and democratically owned with full and equal but differentiated participation of all development partners.

The MSP concept that is now being tested in the area of women's rights and gender equality in Kyrgyzstan will contribute to advocacy for the institutionalization of CSO participation and efforts towards increasing mutual accountability. This work contributes to the strengthening of country ownership of development and may be used by various groups to strengthen space and roles for CSOs.

# Building Inclusive CSO Partnerships Towards Development Effectiveness in the Philippines

## Council for People's Development and Governance

Programme on Women's Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (PWESCR)

### Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A2030), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 2015, recognizes that "eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development." A2030 reaffirmed UN member states' commitment to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as pushed for more effective development cooperation between and among state and non-state actors at all levels in the pursuit of these goals.

The Philippines, though a country rich in natural and human resources with its population of over 100 million, remains a largely underdeveloped country. After gaining formal independence from Spanish and United States (US) colonialism, the Philippines has been unable to develop its national industries and agriculture and exercise genuine national independence, especially in economic policymaking. The Philippine economy is kept largely afloat by remittances from Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who are driven to work in industrialized countries abroad because of the lack of opportunities brought about by underdevelopment at home. According to 2018 estimates by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), 21.6 percent of the Philippine population live below the official poverty line—the third poorest in Southeast Asia, next to Myanmar and Laos.

The Philippine government's development framework rests mostly on the implementation of neoliberal policies that were first hoisted on the country in the 1980s by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). The IMF-WB used Official Development Assistance (ODA) to impose conditionalities that led to accelerated market liberalization, privatization, and deregulation of key industries, as well as the implementation of big-ticket "development" projects that increased the country's debt burden. These policies and projects opened up the country's natural resources to private sector utilization which left entire communities out of the development process and even displaced.

Today, the Philippines remains a large recipient of foreign assistance from bilateral donors led by the US and Japan, and multilateral donors such as the WB and the ADB. According to the WB, the Philippines received USD 286,850,000 of net ODA in 2016, or grants by official agencies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), multilateral institutions, and non-DAC countries. The current administration of Pres. Rodrigo Duterte is depending on foreign aid to bankroll projects set within the framework of "Ambisyon Natin 2040" or the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) for 2017-2022.

However, most of these projects are designed to primarily support private profits, through big-ticket public-private partnerships (PPP). Foreign donors and government bureaucrats are almost exclusively involved in the planning and implementation of these PPPs, leaving out

of the process local communities and even national-level Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), who often end up criticizing these projects for their adverse impacts on communities other sustainability issues. For instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are heavily involved in designing power, water, and flood control projects. These projects have created profitable opportunities for US and Japanese firms as well as big local partner firms at the expense of the taxpaying public. Corruption issues have also consistently hounded foreign aid-assisted projects.

Throughout the past decades, Philippine CSOs have worked hard to push for international development cooperation that is about genuine and sustainable development and will uplift the lives of millions of impoverished Filipinos. While the global foreign aid system remains flawed, efforts to ensure that it addresses extreme poverty and inequality are being undertaken by non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) in the Philippines, which are at the forefront of making development work inclusive and effective. However, many CSOs are also concerned about the increasingly shrinking democratic space for a CSO enabling environment under the current administration, dimming the prospects of their effectiveness in development work.

## History of the CPDG

The Council for People's Development and Governance (CPDG) is a broad and diverse national network of NGOs and POs engaged in development work in the Philippines. The CPDG and its network members are active throughout the country and span different sectors and areas of endeavors such as poverty alleviation, democratic and corruption-free governance, environmental protection and preservation, gender equality and empowerment of women, aid effectiveness, protection of children's rights and welfare and community-based disaster risk reduction.

The CPDG works as a national platform to advocate and work for more space for civil society participation in the country's development programs. It draws in the active participation of marginalized communities of women, rural farm workers, rural families, workers, urban slum dwellers, and indigenous peoples in development issues that impact their lives.

Its national network members are:

- Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines (CEC-Philippines)
- National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)
- Council for Health and Development (CHD)
- Community Medicine Foundation (COMMED)
- Samahan ng mga Nagtataguyod ng Agham at Teknolohiya para sa Sambayanan (AGHAM or Advocates of Science and Technology for the People)
- Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (EMJP)
- KALIKASAN-People's Network for the Environment (KALIKASAN-PNE)
- Center for Women's Resources (CWR)
- Ecumenical Mission for Peace and Development (EMPD)
- Urban Poor Resource Center (UPRC)
- Philippine Network for Food Sovereignty Programs, Inc. (FNFSPP)
- Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR)

The CPDG also works with several regional and provincial level network members:

- Visayas Primary Health Care Services in Cebu and Bohol provinces
- Center for People's Resources and Services (CPRS) in the Negros provinces
- Panay Alternative Trading Center (PATC)
- Center for Relief Rehabilitation, Education and Development-Panay (CRRED-Panay)
- Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc., (MISFI)
- INPEACE-Mindanao
- Bread for Emergency Rehabilitation Assistance and Development (BREAD)
- KADAIT-Western Mindanao
- Panday Bulig-Northern Mindanao
- KADUAMI Regional Development Center-Cordillera
- Cordillera Center for People's Resources and Development
- Ilocos Region Development Center (IRDC)
- Center for Development Programs in the Cordillera (CPDC)
- Rural Missionaries of the Philippines- Northern Mindanao sub region (RMP-NM)
- Organic Farming Field Experimental and Resource Station (OFFERS-Panay)
- Fair Trade Foundation Panay (FTFP)
- Integrated Programs for Indigenous Peoples in Southern Tagalog (IPIP-ST)
- Southern Tagalog People's Response Network (STPRN)
- Panay Center for People's Development (PCPD)
- Aklan Peoples Tabang Resource Center (APTRC)
- Tabang Bikol Movement 2017, Inc. The CPDG was organized in 2008 to bring together development NGOs supporting underserved marginalized sectors. Its goal is to bring the voices of a broad range of actors in reforming development cooperation in the Philippines. The CPDG helps its network partners in conceptualizing and developing community-based projects, and facilitates resource mobilization. It also provides consultancy services on impact assessments, project reviews, and impact monitoring.

The CPDG co-convenes the AidWatch Philippines, a network of over 160 CSOs in 60 provinces all over the country. Together, the CDPG and AidWatch engaged the government and its development partners on various issues on aid and development. In various platforms, they raised critical issues on the global aid system such as the persistence of conditionalities and tied aid, illegitimate debt; "development" projects that are linked to human rights violations, displacement of communities, and environmental destruction; aid imbued with graft and corruption; and continued servicing of onerous ODA debt. The CPDG and AidWatch asserted that for aid to be truly developmental, governments and donors must reform the aid system through:

1. removal of policy conditionalities and tied aid;
2. increase grant aid particularly for rural development, social services, gender, human rights, and the environment (including climate change);
3. greater transparency and accountability in negotiation, design, and implementation of aid programs and projects;
4. greater public participation and accountability to recipient and donor country citizens; and
5. a clearer national policy on CSO involvement in the ODA system especially on mechanisms and procedures for meaningful participation.

In preparation for the 2008 Accra High Level Meeting on Aid Effectiveness of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development- Development Assistance Center (OECD-DAC), the CPDG and AidWatch spearheaded various consultations and multi-stakeholder dialogues on CSOs and aid effectiveness in the Philippines. These engagements enhanced Philippine CSO positions and interventions on democratic ownership of development and the role of CSOs. In Accra, the CDPG brought critical issues surrounding development and aid effectiveness into the global discourse. Over-all, the CPDG contributed to donors and governments' recognition of and commitment to greater engagement with CSOs as development actors in their own right as realized in paragraph 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action.

In 2009, the CPDG published a book on CSO best practices, *Enhancing Democracy and Development Effectiveness: The Civil Society Organizations' Way*. Supported by Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, the book documented how Philippine CSOs have been at the forefront of promoting people's rights and gender equality, democratic ownership and equitable partnerships, environmental sustainability, solidarity, knowledge and mutual learning in their programs, which are part of the values enshrined in the Istanbul Principles on CSO Development Effectiveness.

Through the Open Forum on CSO Development Effectiveness, the CPDG led the country CSO consultations in 2010, contributing to the pivotal shift of discourse from aid effectiveness to effective development cooperation. The CPDG promoted the international recognition of the Istanbul Principles and championed its promotion in the Philippines.

The focus on effective development cooperation as a means to achieve sustainable development has propelled the subsequent work of CPDG. In significant platforms, it has demanded the genuine inclusion of civil society in development cooperation and the capacity development of all major local stakeholders as appropriate and according to relative importance and potential in each stage of the aid process. It has pushed for systems that will improve access to information and workflows among and between major stakeholders, especially in the process of parliamentary approval and oversight of development aid.

The CPDG has also contributed to the advancement of CSO capacity building as part of building CSO development effectiveness. In various multistakeholder forums, the CPDG asserted for CSO independence and the need for long-term stability and capacity to engage. Noting how long-term issues need long-term solutions, while strategic problems need "strategic" funding, the CDPG criticized conservative donors' tendency to veer away from more certain national or local partners and the direct and indirect influence of donor frameworks and policies on domestic CSO agendas. It has also carefully studied the current legal environment for CSOs, and noted the unevenness and difficulties with regards to registration, legalization and formalization of CSOs, which limit their capacity to engage. The CPDG has consistently advocated an enabling legal and political environment for CSOs to become more effective development actors and partners.

## How the CPDG has implemented CSO commitments to the Nairobi Outcome Document

As a network, the CPDG has participated actively in the process of crafting, enriching, and adhering to the Istanbul Principles among CSOs engaged in development work in the

Philippines. It participated in the 2nd High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (HLM2), held in November 2016 in Nairobi, and along with other CSOs welcomed the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD). The NOD is an important commitment of all development stakeholders to uphold long-standing commitments on effective development cooperation towards the realization of the SDGs. It furthers the approach of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which defines donor-recipient relationships as one wherein all stakeholders are equal and interdependent partners in development.

The CPDG is among the CSO networks that adheres to the NOD, particularly in renewing commitments to inclusive partnerships, ensuring accountability of all development actors, reversing the trend of shrinking civic space, and reaffirming commitment to the Istanbul Principles.

CSOs, through the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), have committed to contribute towards the realization of four Principles outlined in the NOD: 1) Ownership of Development Priorities by Partner Countries Receiving Support; 2) Focus on Results; 3) Inclusive Partnerships; and 4) Transparency and Accountability.

Following the principle of Inclusive Partnerships means that CSOs are committed to contribute to the development of policy space and an enabling environment for the formation and operation of CSOs, and to ensure their full participation in development processes at all levels. Towards this end, the CPDG and its network members in the Philippines has delivered through the actions below.

### **A. Adherence to the Istanbul Principles as an expression of mutual accountability with other relevant stakeholders in the Global Partnership.**

Within a few months of the NOD agreement, the CPDG organized a training workshop entitled *Revisiting Istanbul Principles and its Relevance to Philippine CSOs*. Held in Diliman, Quezon City on 20-21, March 2017, the workshop was attended by CSOs involved in development work across the country. Commitments to the NOD were discussed and upheld by CPDG members.

In the workshop, CPDG member CSOs affirmed that they have long been promoting the Istanbul Principles, and that these principles have been “at the heart of their work” even before they were formalized in 2010. Philippine CSOs are active in supporting struggles for people’s empowerment, specifically, for land and agrarian reform by farmer organizations; education for all by youth and student organizations; and women’s rights and gender equality by women’s organizations (Principles 3 and 2).

Environmental sustainability (Principle 4) is promoted not just by environmental CSOs, but also faith-based groups and rural-based alliances working with marginalized communities, such as that of indigenous peoples affected by environmentally-destructive “development” projects. They also work on sustainable agriculture, protection and nurture of forests and watersheds, and climate change mitigation.

A case in point is how CSOs and people’s organizations (Cordillera Center for People’s Resources and Development and the multisectoral group Cordillera People’s Alliance) based



in the resource-rich mountainous region of Northern Philippines, work together to support indigenous peoples in their struggle against foreign development aid-financed dam projects. These include the Ambuklao Dam, the Pantabangan dam (which submerged towns of the Alta and Bugkalot tribes), and the San Roque Dam (which displaced the Ibaloi and Kankanaey tribes in the Cordillera). Mega dams, which are part of the government's development plan, cause dislocation of indigenous peoples and flood entire communities in their operations.

Environmental and science groups AGHAM and KALIKASAN provide technical support to struggles against mega dams. They are actively lobbying against the Laiban Dam (New Centennial Water Source). Deemed as a solution to the country's water insecurity, the dam will flood 9,700 hectares of watershed area in the Sierra Madre mountain range and will cause the displacement of thousands of indigenous Dumagat peoples. The project recently secured a P10.85-billion allocation from Chinese investments as part of the Duterte administration's 'Build, Build, Build' program.

Human rights and social justice (Principle 1) are at the core of the work of human rights and other development CSOs, which also push for socio-economic reforms as a means of ending various armed conflicts that lead to human rights violations in the Philippines. Many CPDG member organizations are active in peace-building efforts, advocating for peace talks and respect for existing human rights instruments such as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) mobilizes church people to work for peace and human rights, holding various public fora on the need for peace talks and encouraging all parties in armed conflicts to respect human rights and go back to the negotiating table.

Democratic ownership and participation (Principle 3) is also pushed by CSOs that are at the forefront of safeguarding the electoral process and resisting electoral fraud, and exposing bureaucratic corruption in the government.

Sharing knowledge and mutual learning (Principle 7), meanwhile, is promoted by the formation of supporting umbrella organizations, national federations, ad hoc campaign formations, and parliamentary lobby groups. There are also monthly coordination meetings and issue analyses by CSOs and people's organizations.

Realizing positive sustainable change (Principle 8) is exemplified by Panay Alternative Trading Center's (PATC) production of fair trade products through mills owned by around 500 people, mostly women, from marginalized farming communities in the province of Panay. Founded on principles similar to that of the Istanbul Principles, namely, partnership, human dialogue, good working conditions, environment friendly, and fair trade advocacy, the PATC has developed a market for sustainably produced muscovado sugar and banana chips in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Belgium, Japan, and South Korea. The initiative has not only provided a sustainable source of livelihood but also education, training, partnerships for development, and democratic ownership of production equipment.

In pursuing equitable partnerships and solidarity (Principle 6) with donors, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Region has the most advanced practice. RMP-NMR goes beyond the donor-recipient relationship by asserting certain conditions that are beneficial to the country's development. For instance, the European Union (EU) allows them to purchase locally-made equipment instead of imported ones. They also asserted more equitable terms of partnerships with donors such as Relief International (RI) and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). Through solidarity work with donors,

they pushed for governments of developed countries to pressure the Philippine government to honor its commitments to international human rights instruments.

## **B. Being guided by the country-led results frameworks as relevant to their work as independent development partners in their own right.**

The CPDG continues to engage government ODA oversight agencies such as the National Economic and Development Agency (NEDA), Commission on Audit (COA), the Philippine Congress, as well as other major development partners. It issues statements and participates in dialogues and multistakeholder forums.

The CPDE, an open platform that unites CSOs across the world on the issue of development effectiveness, has encouraged CSOs to develop country compacts. A Country Compact is a CSO agreement that is negotiated among development stakeholders who pledge to implement all commitments made on the issue of development effectiveness. It is a time-bound multistakeholder agreement that aims to:

- Create a mutually agreed framework of understanding for increased and more effective development efforts at the national level;
- Address and follow up on challenges that continue to hamper the full realization of effective development cooperation; and
- Serve as a national level mechanism to follow up on development effectiveness commitments of all stakeholders.

Last 15-16, March 2018, the CPDG, in cooperation with the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), held a *CSO Consultation on Developing a Philippine Development Effectiveness Compact*. Around 50 CSO representatives attended the consultation held in Quezon City.

The NAPC, a government agency which draws up and recommends anti-poverty programs to the Office of the President, provides an important space for CSOs to engage in development issues. Recently, the NAPC Secretariat launched its proposed anti-poverty framework in the book, *Reforming Philippine Anti-Poverty Policy*, which argues for a "pro-poor development policy" anchored on, among others, "democratic governance based on people's democratic participation." It provides that the structural transformation of the economy necessary for poverty eradication will fundamentally lie on building a "constituency of change," including CSOs and non-state actors. Further, the framework suggests that development cooperation should be aligned with a strategic national policy for the development of Filipino industry.

As a result of the consultation, a Unity Statement and Proposed CSO Compact was created. In the Country Compact, the CSO representatives agreed to bring forward commitments to effective development cooperation. They agreed to "*join the global call for a new development cooperation system built not just in reforming aid delivery and management but more importantly ensuring development effectiveness in recipient countries like the Philippines.*" They also agreed that "*the Philippines must strive to establish a development cooperation framework with development partners that resolve power in country relationships through mutual accountability, elimination of tied and donor-imposed conditionalities, increase aid transparency and predictability and the eventual elimination of dependency on foreign aid and technologies and external markets.*"

The following are the CSOs recommendations to the Philippine government and its development partners:

1. *Stop militarising development of the people.* There is a call for development agencies do their job without the interference of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).
2. *Fully evaluate and deepen the GPEDC commitments through ensuring reforms based on democratic ownership.* This includes a call for accountability mechanisms to ensure that ODA and development programs reflect the interest and truly benefit the people and are free from corruption.
3. *Strengthen Development Effectiveness through development cooperation practices that promote human rights and focus on the eradication of poverty and inequality.*
4. *Affirm and ensure the meaningful participation of the full diversity of CSOs in the Philippines as independent development actors in their own right in development cooperation processes.* This includes the enactment of an enabling law that will create an equitable and inclusive multistakeholder forum for policy dialogue. This also includes ensuring basic enabling mechanisms for CSOs that are in line with international human rights guarantees, including freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding, and the state's duty to protect its people.
5. *Promote an equitable and just development cooperation architecture that is inclusive, rights-based and democratic.* There is a call for support to the CSO Country Compact for Development Effectiveness in the Philippines.

### **C. Developing and implementing strategies, activities and practices that promote individual and collective human rights, including the right to development with dignity, decent work, social justice and equity for all people.**

CSOs collectively defend and provide support for human rights defenders who are under attack, or are facing harassment and threats from government forces. For instance, Beverly Longid, co-chair of the CPDE and coordinator of Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation (IPMSDL), was a victim of "terrorist tagging." On 21, February 2018, the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a petition seeking to declare the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA) as terrorist organizations after the government cancelled peace negotiations with the groups. It included, however, 600 individuals including civil society leaders such as Longid. The CSO community collectively came to defense of Longid and many other activists who were included in the list, and denounced the move to further shrink the democratic space given to CSOs in Philippine society.

As a strategy, the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) is monitoring the World Bank-funded Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program, the government's dole-out program that encompasses millions of poor families. The Philippine government treats the CCT as part of its development plan and a crucial aspect of poverty alleviation. However, a study by CWR reveals that the CCT Program, while providing a measure of temporary relief, actually disempowers communities, particularly women. The program is found to encourage

dependency and discourages them from asserting collective rights such as the right to decent work and social services. It is also being used to prevent women's participation in politics (e.g. community members are warned against joining mass actions or they will be delisted; CCT distribution is being used by corrupt politicians for patronage politics). The CWR engages concerned government agencies involved in the CCT programs, such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in bringing forward the concerns of community women regarding the program and its implementation.

CPDG member organizations also have a strategic approach to disaster preparedness and response, asserting the right to development with dignity of disaster victims. Organizations such as the NCCP, Center for Relief Rehabilitation, Education and Development-Panay, Bread for Emergency Rehabilitation Assistance and Development (BREAD), Aklan Peoples Tabang Resource Center (APTRC), Southern Tagalog People's Response Network (STPRN), and Tabang Bikol not only focus on providing relief and emergency assistance to disaster victims, but work for a more development-oriented disaster response.

For example, the NCCP held a conference that gathered victims of Typhoon Haiyan in Eastern Visayas. The conference assessed the development initiatives spearheaded by various stakeholders after the typhoon, and challenged the government to address the roots of the people's vulnerability to natural disasters. The NCCP, through the ACT Alliance, is active in people-led rehabilitation of Haiyan-stricken communities, e.g. harnessing people's participation in the actual design and rebuilding of their homes, as opposed to government-led rehabilitation efforts wherein victims are forced into substandard housing units that are far from livelihood opportunities.

Tabang Bikol Movement 2017 Inc., formed right after Typhoon Niña, maximizes the potential of advocacy and leadership for development-oriented disaster response. Tabang Bikol formed CSO-Local Government Unit (CSO-LGU) partnerships in several provinces in the Bicol region. It also established the People's Organization of Disaster Survivors (PODIS), which ensure the sustainability of relief and rehabilitation efforts through partnerships with professionals, experts, and local businesses. PODIS also designs people-centered development plans, which Tabang Bikol then lobbies to LGUs. The Regional Development Council (RDC) in Bicol was led to adopt a development strategy for resilient and sustainable communities in Bicol.

#### **D. Demonstrating a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, mutual accountability, and integrity in their internal operations.**

CSOs who worked with disaster victims in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan in Eastern, Central, and Western Visayas have set up processes and mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in their internal operations. There was a deluge of funds and assistance from international NGOs and donors, and many CSOs were made to handle huge funds and implement projects on a large scale.

To ensure accountability to their constituents, CPDG member organization OFFERS-Panay conducted ground investigations, made sure of the primacy of communities' needs, and that community members identify the projects and take part in the project implementation, from planning to monitoring and even reporting. Initially, the donor didn't approve of hiring community members for the project, but OFFERS-Panay, holding fast to the principle that CSOs are equal development partners with donors, asserted this initiative.

OFFERS-Panay also created inter-municipality and island-wide monitoring teams as a way to consolidate their operations. Project monitoring teams, moreover, were not confined to monitoring relief and rehabilitation efforts, but also organized communities and trained members to engage with LGUs and government agencies, in exacting accountability not only for relief goods but also other short-term deliverables, and in opposing policies that do not lead to real development, such as the “no-build zone” and its associated land grabs. CSOs in the province also conducted province-wide assessments to reflect internally and form collective guidelines on how CSOs should engage with donors in order to avoid conflicts among themselves and ensure transparency and mutual accountability.

**E. Realizing sustainable outcomes and impacts of their development actions, focusing on results and conditions for lasting change for people, with special emphasis on poor and marginalized populations, ensuring an enduring legacy for present and future generations.**

Member CSOs of the CPDG work closely with people’s organizations that take steps to concretely improve the conditions of marginalized populations.

For instance, CSOs such as the Center for People’s Resources and Services in the Negros provinces actively support the “bungkalan” or cultivation program of sugar workers. The Negros provinces are among the largest bastions of feudalism in the country, with vast tracts of land owned by sugar barons. Many of these lands, however, have been subjected to land distribution under the government’s agrarian reform program, and yet remain in the hands of landlords. Sugar workers, most of whom earn “slave wages” or less than USD 2 per day, have occupied idle sugarcane fields and cultivated these fields into collectively-owned vegetable and rice farms. CSOs provide technical and solidarity support for these farmers’ initiative, based on their own development needs and have an impact on how future generations of farmers will live. These cultivation campaigns are also being done in other *haciendas* in the regions of Southern Tagalog (coconut plantations in Bondoc Peninsula) and Central Luzon (sugarcane Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac City), and are being supported by CSOs. CSOs, for instance, facilitated the procurement of farm equipment from the Department of Agriculture, provided legal advice on land issues, and held trainings on sustainable farming, seed exchange, among others.

The Urban Poor Resource Center (UPRC) also provides support to the movement of the homeless poor to occupy idle housing projects in the province of Bulacan. The “Occupy Pabahay” movement, which started on March 2017, created an organized and self-sustaining community of urban poor dwellers who chose to forcibly claim their right to housing, after years of waiting for government action. This development initiative was supported by CSOs because it demonstrated that marginalized populations can realize concrete gains by asserting their rights collectively. To date, the urban poor dwellers continue to work with CSOs in planning the sustainability of their communities, particularly in ensuring basic social services such as access to potable water and electricity, health, and education. CSOs also provide support through in-depth researches on housing and urban development. They also contributed in lobbying efforts to allow the homeless to avail idle government housing units. Among the triumphs of this campaign is the signing of Joint Resolution 2 on May 2018, which approved the congressional resolution to award unoccupied housing units to qualified beneficiaries. The resolution gave the homeless poor a legal basis for their occupation and their assertion to the right to housing.

Meanwhile, CPDG member Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI) is among the network of alternative schools set-up by indigenous peoples, educators, and interfaith groups for the Lumad, or the indigenous peoples in Mindanao. The Lumad consists of many diverse ethno-linguistic groups dwelling in their ancestral lands in mountainous regions. The Lumad, which for decades have suffered from lack of basic social services, have set up their own schools run by volunteer educators. Although some schools are supported by international donors and other development partners facilitated by CSOs, the Lumad community schools in general have achieved sustainability through the active involvement of the communities where the schools are built. These schools have allowed hundreds of Lumad children to finish formal education that otherwise would not have been available to them. Literacy and education is closely tied to the Lumad struggle to defend their ancestral lands. Previously, landgrabbers from the lowlands offered them paltry sums and made them to sign documents they couldn't understand in exchange for their land. A network of more than a hundred Lumad schools across Mindanao also serve as bastions of indigenous culture, and have achieved the most among initiatives that strive to create lasting impact among marginalized and vulnerable populations.

## Challenges to implementing development cooperation commitments

Even as the CPDG has committed to fulfill its development effective roles, the network finds its full participation in the development process increasingly at risk under the current administration. More and more, the situation under the Duterte administration has challenged prospects for building an enabling environment and a more democratic policy space for independent development actors.

For one, the administration launched the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, which upheld policies viewed as detrimental to real inclusivity — much to the disappointment of CSOs that campaigned for the new PDP to center on genuine people-led development.

At the heart of the PDP is the facilitation of greater infrastructure through the 'Build, Build, Build' program. The total funding requirement for the PDP, including government's grand infrastructure program was reportedly at USD 167 billion, wherein 15 percent will supposedly be financed by official development assistance (ODA).

China has been reported to be one of the major lenders of the administration's infrastructure plan, through the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China. It will reportedly provide up to USD 50 billion in ODA financing and commercial tied loans, excluding possible funding from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Japan, a long-time ODA source, is also a possible financier of development projects under the Duterte administration. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is studying the possibility that it will finance major railway, water, and power projects in the country, which will amount to over P470 billion.

CSOs have voiced concerns over what conditions will result for the Duterte administration over such large financing from these two sources. As economic managers keep the public and even Congress in the dark on the possible loan conditions, CSOs are concerned that the administration might be leading the country into a debt crisis. Already, the administration has amassed a total of USD 133 billion in public debt in just over two years, increasing the country's debt burden.



Aside from the problems of policy conditionalities and tied aid, CPDG members and partners also fear that with the entry of new players like China, issues on transparency and accountability may continue and possibly worsen.

Moreover the projects under the PDP are framed under the public-private partnership program (PPP), which are primarily designed to provide profit guarantees to corporations

using public funds. Criticized for its anti-development nature, PPP projects contribute little to sustainable economic growth and often violate social and environmental standards.

Foreign donors and government economic managers take a major role in the planning and implementation of these PPPs, and leave out the crucial participation of local communities and CSOs. In the process, it removes an important measure in examining how these projects fulfill or hinder the rights of affected communities and the larger public.

Oftentimes, local communities and national CSOs end up calling to put a stop to these projects due to the adverse effects on the communities, or demanding that their rights are respected. In doing so, communities face harassment and repression from state forces — police, military, and paramilitary groups. The state's attacks on resisting communities, members of grassroots organizations, and CSO groups endanger the enabling environment for these actors to actively participate in development work.

## Deteriorating democratic space for Philippine civil society

Civil society in the Philippines faces numerous barriers in the fulfilling their mandates and roles as independent development actors, especially as their limited access to resources restrict their physical and technical capacity to deeply engage in effective development cooperation. These hindrances are made more challenging by the increasingly repressive environment for CSO community under the current administration.

The international community, including the United Nations, has expressed serious concerns over the systematic violations of human rights in the Philippines, including numerous extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests, surveillance, intimidation, and vilification of human rights defenders and advocates.

When the Duterte administration signed a proclamation declaring the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) a terrorist organization, it further emboldened state forces to label many people's organizations and advocates as terrorists and to justify greater military operations in communities where CSOs and local partners are active. Previously, the administration declared an all-out war policy against the Philippine revolutionary movement and imposed Martial Law in Mindanao — adding to the already-constricted space for CSOs and people's organizations.

The human rights situation poses a serious challenge for civil society and grassroots organizations in the Philippines. CPDG members and partners raised concern on how this climate further undermines their capacity to address development issues in the national and local level and uphold the rights and interests of marginalized sectors.

The restrictive environment for civil society however has not deterred CPDG members from voicing their dissent and pursuing their development work. In 2017, the network decided to implement a sustained campaign against the vilification, harassment, and red-tagging of civil society actors. CSOs have collaborated with a broad and diverse network of people's organizations and advocates to call for a stop on state attacks and rights violations.

CPDG members and partners, for instance, are active in campaigning against military presence and harassment in Lumad community schools, many of which are being run by CPDG partner MISFI. They denounced the inclusion of civil society leaders including CPDE co-chair Beverly Longid in the DOJ list of so-called terrorists and called for the resumption of the peace process.

## Lessons in implementing NOD commitments

Amid the multiple obstacles faced by the CPDG in fulfilling their commitments to effective development cooperation, the network is challenged to be more consolidated, establish deeper roots in communities, and develop a variety of creative arenas of struggle in the national and local levels.

As a network, the CPDG has recognized a very important lesson as independent development actors : That working closely with grassroots organizations to support their struggles for empowerment and participation is crucial to ensuring that commitments to the NOD are realized. This is a key principle that guides the network in upholding multi-stakeholder partnerships with governments, the business sector, and other development partners.

Working closely with the grassroots means actively supporting the assertion of communities for land reform, sustainable agriculture, decent work, decent homes, education, gender equality, human rights and social justice, disaster preparedness and climate justice, and good governance, among others.

A close partnership and active involvement with the struggles of grassroots organizations enables CPDG members to put primacy in the needs of the communities. As discussed in the earlier section, network members recognize the importance of the community's active participation in development projects. Hence, CPDG members are not confined in merely implementing projects, but are deeply involved in ground investigations, organizing, assessing and capacitating community members in asserting their rights and legitimate demands.

In the country level, the deep working relations with communities is also the premise that guides the CPDG in engaging with the national government. The CPDG draws in the active participation of communities and marginalized sectors in policy dialogues at the national level. The network continues to work for more space for civil society to affect policy changes and ensure that Philippine government agencies implement more coherent and sustainable development programs.



After launching the CSO consultation for the Philippine Development Effectiveness Compact (Country Compact) with the NAPC on March 2018, the CPDG immediately conducted outreach activities to other stakeholders and held meetings with government delegates. The network has also made initial steps in reaching out to other stakeholders including local business groups, social enterprises as well as provincial government officials. It will continue holding intensive sectoral and island-wide consultations that will lead up to a national multi-stakeholder consultation by the end of 2018.

The CPDG's action for a Country Compact, by providing members the spaces and capacity to engage in effective development cooperation and build broad alliances, has set the stage in formalizing venues for coordination and consultation among CSOs and non-state actors. The action for a Country Compact has also moved the network towards the direction of greater consolidation as the leading CSO national platform in engaging the wide CSO community and other development actors in the Philippines.

In the process, the nationwide action for a Country Compact has contributed in protecting the enabling environment for CSO development effectiveness in the national level. CPDG expects that this effort would create mechanisms for different development actors, including the government, in strengthening effective development cooperation practices that would promote human rights and focus on the eradication of poverty and inequality in the Philippines.

# Inspiring CSOs - Strategies for Inclusive Partnership for Local CSOs in Vietnam

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## LOCAL CONTEXT

### Background of Vietnam

The socialist republic of Vietnam is a one-party state ruled by the Communist Party of Vietnam. It is located on the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia (MOFA, 2014a). The population of Vietnam in early 2014 is nearly 90.5 million (GSO, 2014).

After the war against United States of America (USA) ended in 1975, Vietnam was an extremely poor country. The 'Doi Moi' (reform) policy in 1986 marked an important milestone in the new stage of development when Vietnam opened its market economy to foreign investment with the aim of reforming the national economy as well as reducing poverty. Since then, economic growth has remained relatively high with average annual growth rates of between 6% and 8% in 2017 and 7.38% in the first quarter of 2018.

Vietnam is recognised as a success story of poverty reduction. It has transformed from one of the poorest countries in the world to a lower middle-income country within a quarter of a century (WB, 2015). Today, only 3% of people are living in extreme poverty compared to 50 percent in the early 1990s (using the 1.90 US dollars 2011 PPP line) (ibid.). In terms of multidimensional poverty, between 2010 and 2011, 6.4% of the population were multi-dimensionally poor while an additional 8.7% were near multidimensional poverty (UNDP 2014). Vietnam was ranked 121 out of 187 countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index in 2013 with its GNI (based on 2011 PPP) per capita in 2013 reaching 4,892 US dollars (ibid.).

Vietnam has integrated deeply and broadly into the global trade system since it joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2006, etc. It is also a member of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) which was created during the 4th High Level Forum in Busan in 2011. Vietnam therefore, also committed to the Busan Outcome Document (BOD) in 2011 and then the Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD) in 2016. It also committed to achieve the Agenda 2030 (A2030) through developing the national framework and action plan to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2017.

### CSOs in Vietnam

#### *General context*

The 'Doi Moi' reforms of 1986 marked the emergence of Vietnamese CSOs, particularly in the 1990s when there has been a large number of new Vietnamese Non-Governmental Organisations (VNGOs) established (ADB, 2011; Taylor et al., 2012; Bui, 2013; Hannah, 2007). Up to now, according to the Ministry of Interior, there are about 500 at the state level; 4,000 organizations at the provincial level; 10,000 district and commune organizations; 1,800 non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) including non-state scientific, environmental, healthcare and educational organizations; 150 occupation associations; and over 900 international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) operating in Vietnam. There are over 500 associations in Hanoi, nearly 600 in Ho Chi Minh, and 445 in Da Nang (“Saigon Economics Times”, 23/07/2015). Moreover, an international research estimated that over 140,000 community-based organizations (CBOs) are operating in Vietnam without a specific legal framework (Carl Thayer, 2009).

“Civil society” has various meanings and refers to different groups such as voluntary organisations, associations, community-based groups, and primarily NGOs without acquiring political power (Mohan, 2002; Van Rooy, 2002). In this research, civil society organizations include both INGO and Vietnamese CSOs except for mass organizations. The term ‘NGO’ can be used synonymously with the term ‘CSO’.

Being used and mentioned in different ways, there is no official definition of CSOs as well as recognised types of CSOs in official legal documents. Among CSOs and scholars, the term “CSO” is commonly understood as an organization voluntarily founded by citizens and do not belong to the State mechanism. It is organized and run based on the principles of voluntarism, independence and democracy, self-financing, and self-responsibility. A CSO operates under the law and works for the development purposes and not for profit.

According to CIVICUS (2013), Vietnam is one of the ten countries that have the worst governance environments for civil society. The state inhibits the political involvement of CSOs which leads to instability in society, especially in Vietnam where only the Communist Party leads the state and society (Salemink 2006). In 2015 – 2016, the SDGs and A2030 as well as the NOD pressured the Vietnamese government to create a more open environment and to recognize the role of CSOs as partners in the country. To reflect the commitment to A2030, in 2017, the government also issued the National Plan to implement the SDGs, including Goal 17 which recognizes CSOs as partners in implementing the A2030. This is an opportunity for local CSOs to play their role and contribute more effectively to the development process. It also presents an opportunity for CSOs to do advocacy at the global level. However, the current national environment for CSOs is shrinking progressively as a result of concrete instructions on restricting the development of civil society and the cancellation of the bill on the Law on Associations in late 2016 (Trang Hoang, 2018). This severely affects the both the establishment of CSOs and fundraising for sustainability.

### *Local CSOs, Istanbul Principles, the NOD and the A2030*

CSOs in Vietnam, represented by the elected national coordinator of the Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD), have been engaging in processes related to development effectiveness since 2009 and have significantly contributed in the process of developing the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and the International Framework for Development Effectiveness. VCOs consider the application of the Istanbul Principles and Development Effectiveness Framework as a good option/opportunity to follow, apply, and grow in an effective and sustainable manner. These can be considered as powerful tools for CSOs to support the development of self-reliance and cooperation with other development actors.

After eight years of adopting the Istanbul Principles, CSOs in Vietnam have achieved progress in turning these principles into practice. Their achievement in implementing the Istanbul Principles, especially in promoting Principle number 5 – Promoting Transparency and Accountability, was documented as a successful case in the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness' (CPDE) Action Research publication on "Istanbul Principles 5 Years After: Evidencing Civil Society Development Effectiveness and Accountability" (CPDE, 2015). Continuing with the commitment to Istanbul Principles, especially in the context of implementing the A2030 and NOD commitments in 2016, local CSOs in Vietnam led by MSD, have strengthened their efforts with the upgraded challenging mission of 1) reaffirming commitment to the Istanbul Principles and 2) promoting commitment to inclusive partnership between local CSOs and other stakeholders belonging to the national government, donors, and private partners.

## CSO Pathway – Story of Inspiring CSOs Program in Vietnam

### Inspiring CSOs Strategy and Approaches

#### *From 2010 – 2015*

Management and Sustainable Development Institute (MSD) is a local NGO established in 2008 with the mission of taking efforts to enable environment for the development of civil society sector and to promote the rights of marginalised groups, especially children, youth, women and people with disabilities. MSD has coordinated CSOs in Vietnam in engaging processes related to development effectiveness since 2010 through its various programs and projects.

After the adoption of the Busan Partnership Document (BPD), the Istanbul Principles, and the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness, the Inspiring CSOs became a major program of MSD with the purpose of building the capacity of local CSOs for implementing the Istanbul Principles and advocating for enabling environment for local CSOs. Its strategic areas of focus include (i) CSOE – Empowering CSO Development Effectiveness (promoting Istanbul principle number 5 and 7) and (ii) CSOA – leading CSO advocacy for enabling environment. In the period of 2010 – 2015, after five (5) years of commitment and implementing the Istanbul Principles, the efforts of promoting CSO Development Effectiveness in Vietnam has been recognized by multi-stakeholders, both at the national and international levels with many achievements.

At the national level, the project reached and built the capacity of more than 300 CSOs throughout the country. Out of the 300 CSOs, 87 were coached to reach a better level of performance and 40 organisations were certified as CSOs with good practice on transparency and accountability. Twelve (12) CSOs were recognized and awarded per annum from 2014 to 2016 as CSOs with best practice on transparency and accountability. The model of capacity building and awarding CSOs is recognized by multi-stakeholders, including donors and local authority. Many donors are using the certification program as the trusted independent system for CSOs when they would like to provide financial support or capacity building. Currently, local authorities belonging to the NGO Department and the Ministry of Home Affairs are discussing the possible replication of the model

for their operations. At the international level, the model has been chosen by CPDE as one of the nine (9) best cases of local CSOs promoting development effectiveness.

### *From 2016 - Present*

After reviewing the five years of implementation of the Istanbul Principles, VCSOs identified the following strategic recommendations to advance achievements, continue filling in the competency gaps of CSOs in adhering to development effectiveness, and to promote enabling environment:

- Principle 5 on promoting transparency and accountability was applied quite effectively by Vietnamese CSOs. Its effects should be widely promoted to facilitate increased participation from more CSOs. The model of promoting, certificating, and recognizing CSO accountability is very effective as a self-regulation and self-development tool for CSOs. In the next step, the model should be widened and or transferred to other stakeholders, especially to the local authority to better recognise CSOs and promote CSO enabling environment.
- Through promoting principle 5, local CSOs have started networking with each other for mutual learning and sharing of knowledge (Principle number 7). This outcome should be advanced in a more professional and effective mechanism so that more and more CSOs can benefit from and contribute to the process for sustainability.
- While advocating for enabling environment, CSOs should consider not only their capacity, power, and relationship with the government, but also with other development partners and the private sector to promote equitable partnership (Principle number 6). This is also supports the NOD and SDG 17.
- To advocate for the enabling environment, more advocacy efforts on CSO power, space, and relationship with the government should be conducted.

After the adoption of the NOD and A2030, MSD developed its new strategy for 2016 - 2020 to advance the Inspiring CSOs program in (1) continuing implementing development effectiveness, especially principles 4, 5, and 6; (2) promoting equitable partnership (IP number 6 and SDG 17) and advocacy for enabling environment through:

- Continue promoting CSOs' principle 5 of practicing transparency and accountability with greater impact by strengthening the self-regulation system.
- Creating professional learning and sharing platforms for CSOs through establishing the CSO UP platform, an online learning platform of CSOs and for CSOs to generate knowledge for mutual learning; and the Online Community of Practice for CSOs. Through these platforms, learning, knowledge-sharing and networking are strengthened and promoted. Using advanced ICT, an increasing number of CSOs and social workers, especially those outside the cities, can be reached and can be given the opportunity to learn and share their knowledge in a fast, effective, and efficient manner.

- Promoting CSOs' partnership with government, development partners/donors, and private sector to not only enhance CSOs' financial sustainability, but also to promote equitable partnerships for enabling environment.
- Doing evidence-based policy advocacy for enabling environment for local CSOs.

An integrated approach is crucial for promoting CSOs as independent and accountable development actors. A number of methods would be applied in implementation of the project:

- **Power cube** (<http://www.powercube.net>) is a tool used for analysing power relationships among CSOs and/or between CSOs with development partners/donors, and the government. Power, hereby, is seen in three dimensions: level, form, and space (IDS 2011[i]). "'Form' refers to the ways in which power manifests itself, including its visible, hidden, and invisible forms. The 'space' dimension of the cube refers to the potential arenas for participation and action, including what we call closed, invited, and claimed spaces. The 'level' dimension of the cube refers to the differing layers of decision-making and authority held on a vertical scale, including the local, national and global" (IDS 2011, p. 8). This tool also helps to position CSOs in Vietnam in general, to identify the appropriate strategies in working with different stakeholders, particularly the private sector and international donors, in order to promote equitable partnerships.
- **Organisational Development Methodology of Inspiring Culture (ODIC)** focuses on two approaches: (i) developing leadership and inspiring to create change, and (ii) building learning organizations. In MSD's view, the highest level of competency of an organisation is inspiring culture. When competency becomes behaviour and value - a culture of the organization, it will inspire the members, partners, and stakeholders of the organization to move towards development effectiveness. ODIC was applied throughout MSD's intervention projects and in an Irish Aid-funded project. This method was recognised and received high marks in the evaluation by CSOs. MSD will continue applying and popularising this method because of its effectiveness.
- **Partnership approach** is a complex process focusing on creating a room for the development of VCOSOs with their own rights and promoting engagement with private sector and donors. For MSD, partnership approach is mainly based on transparency and accountability between parties with consideration of the power imbalance in different relationships. In this action, MSD promotes a community of practice for fostering CSOs' culture in practicing good governance, transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, VCOSOs also hold other stakeholders accountable to them and to the citizens.
- **Participatory approach** in the capacity building program of MSD emphasizes the experience of participants embedded in the emancipatory theory. This approach is a process in which participants by themselves give their needs and evaluate their learning. In other words, participants at the center of the process of 'praxis'--theory and action aiming at social change or change in power relation. The approach helps participants think critically, gain self-esteem, realize the situation by themselves, and then challenge the status quo. Through the capacity building program, MSD encourages VCOSOs to take action to demand their rights. Moreover, MSD is a Vietnamese CSO, not an outsider,

hence, its capacity building program is interpreted as a 'power within', wherein CSOs share and learn from each other. At the action level, participatory approach is seen as a CSO-centred intervention created by a local CSO for and with VCSOs.

## Strategy Implementation and Some Featured Initiatives from 2016 to mid-2018

### *CSOs Promoting Istanbul Principles with CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness*

The Inspiring CSOs program promoted the implementation of Istanbul Principles 4, 5, and 6 with the following components:

- **TAP Coach.** The Transparency and Accountability Practice (TAP) Coach is a five-month coaching program on promoting Istanbul Principles 4 and 5. Through the program, selected CSOs are helped with (1) determining their organization's TAP level and coaching to advance their TAP level; and (2) connecting with other local CSOs in a community of practice for mutual learning and sharing. The capacity building package is tailored according to the needs of each organization. TAP Coach also coordinates participating CSOs in a knowledge hub wherein they contribute their knowledge and learning with each other. In 2016 - 2017, 25 local CSOs have participated in the TAP Coach. These organizations received trainings on organizational development strategy, partnership development and branding, communication, and fundraising.
- **TAP Cert.** The Certificate on TAP is a program to assess and provide certification to organizations who practice Transparency and Accountability. MSD provides a TAP Cert package which includes an organizational assessment, technical advisory, a certificate, and member care within two (2) years after the certificate is issued. This is a professional support package for capacity building, which is worth \$1,000 per consulting organization, including field-consultation and on-demand training. In 2016 - 2017, 56 organizations have reached Level 1 on TAP practice, and qualified for TAP Cert certification.
- **Best TAP.** The program to recognise the Organisations with Best TAP aims to select the most remarkable representatives among the organisations who received TAP Cert. From 2014 to 2016, Best TAP honored 30 excellent models in Transparency and Accountability. In 2017, in a new phase of the project, Best TAP focused on honoring CSOs' initiative partnership models for development effectiveness. This aims to seek, honor, and spread ideas and practices on forming and developing partnerships between CSOs and government agencies, private sector, and among CSOs. Each model/initiative promoting CSOs' partnership for development effectiveness is an attempt to achieve the SDGs and contribute to the development of Vietnam. Ten (10) CSOs was recognised as best models of partnership with other CSOs, government, and private sector in 2017. Some publications also indicate that these partnership models are being replicated by different stakeholders.
- **CSO partnership** - The book *Models of Value Increasing and Inspiration*<sup>1</sup> is a compilation of 10 stories of CSOs in building partnerships with other CSOs, state agencies, and enterprises to increase the value and impact of their products/social services that are devoted to community, therefore contributing to the socioeconomic growth in Vietnam. These models reflect the spirit of independence, self-reliance, and self-governance of

1 The book can be found here at: <http://msdvietnam.org/casebook-cso-partnership-2017-value-added-inspiring-models/>

CSOs to increase the efficiency of their operations, supply effective and sustainable social services, and bring about long-term values, which benefit the stakeholders and community beyond the scope of a single program or project. These models also clearly affirm the importance of CSOs' partnership for prosperity and sustainable development in the spirit of the GPEDC. The role of CSOs is promoted to attain a key partnership in binding other partnerships for development to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 17 which is devoted to developing partnerships that are transparent, accountable, and promote sustainable development.

### *CSO Partnership with Different Stakeholders*

'Partnership' is a term which evokes much sensitivity with its implicit connotations of sharing and trust (Bailey & Dolan, 2011). While 'aid' and 'grant' may refer to a more unequal aid relationship, the term 'partnership' suggests equality, respect, reciprocity and ownership (Gutierrez, 2008).

To seek accountable and equitable partnerships (Istanbul Principle 6) and support the implementation of SDG 17 which aims to "strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development", Below are the practices that Inspiring CSOs implemented to connect local CSOs with different partners of government, development partners/donors, and private sector at different levels.

- **Starting with better knowledge.** In 2015-2017, a lot of misunderstandings and miscommunication among CSOs and the government which contributed to the shrinking space in Vietnam. To address this situation, Inspiring CSOs supported lobbying efforts for a better legal framework by advocating for the Law on Associations and other related laws and policies. Inspiring CSOs also cooperated with the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (NPA) in educating government leaders of Vietnam on CSOs and their roles in the development process. This supports the long-term strategy of nurturing potential leaders with better knowledge on CSOs and are willing to support and cooperate with CSOs in the development process. After two (2) years of cooperation with the NPA, Inspiring CSOs has provided education to over 300 government officers. Seventy percent (70%) of the participants said that they will support local CSOs while working in their provinces and areas.

On another note, Inspiring CSOs produced a lot of researches on the environment of local CSOs and their contributions as evidence for advocacy. Annual dialogues are organized to create the opportunity for local CSOs to discuss with different government leaders. The recent research of Inspiring CSOs titled "CSO Role and Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals" which follows up the dialogue on the same topic conducted on 10, May 2018 shows CSOs' roles with real cases of contributing to SDGs. The report was considered by the government and included in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) report of the Vietnam that will be submit to the United Nations in July 2018. Inspiring CSOs also intend to produce a review of Goal 17 to submit to the United Nations. Dialogues with the Vietnamese government both at the national level and in New York (global level) for promoting CSOs' roles in partnerships for development will be conducted.

- **Taking Trends, Leading Changes** is the message of Inspiring CSOs to connect local CSOs with the private sector. While "Creating Shared Value" (CSV) is the new trendy



strategic solution for businesses to create their sustainable competitive advantage and allow them to shift from CSR, Inspiring CSOs strategically use CSV as a foundation for the connection and partnership between local CSOs and the private sector. It also helps the private sector to implement its role in the SDGs with the support of CSOs. To do it, the program cooperated with some members of the Chamber of Commerce of Vietnam and other countries (such as KoCham, EuroCham, CanCham, etc.) to provide training on CSV for their members and connect them with local CSOs as partners. To increase the confidence and trust of the private sector with local CSOs, CSOs need TAP Cert to exhibit their accountability with the private sector. Thirty (30) CSOs and businesses joined the "Creating Trend, Leading Changes" to pilot the cooperation for development.

- **Accountable and Equitable Partnership is Essential** is the way Inspiring CSOs approached relationships with international aid partners in Vietnam. While most local CSOs rely on international aid, the imbalance in the power relationship of local CSOs and international aid partners is considerable. The universality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is enshrined in the NOD. This means that the donor-recipient relationships of the past have been replaced by approaches that view all stakeholders as equal and interdependent partners in development. The Global Partnership champions this approach and seeks to maximise the effectiveness and impact of all forms of cooperation for development. To support promoting equitable partnerships, Inspiring CSOs developed the Code of Partnership between local CSOs and aid partners. It also established a mechanism for accountable dialogue between two (2) parties. The Code of Partnership was released in early 2017 with the consensus and commitment of 100 local CSOs and aid partners in Vietnam. It included a system of checklists designed for local CSOs and aid partners to do self-check when entering a partnership to help them adapt with the Code of Partnership.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned for Promoting CSO Partnership

The challenges faced by local CSOs in asserting their right as independent development partners and in contributing to SDGs was summarized in a study by MSD in early 2018 in the table below (Nguyen Toan Tinh, 2018).

Below are the major lessons learned from the many challenges faced by CSOs:

- The imbalance of power between local CSOs and government, aid partners, and private sector should be considered in a partnership. It is important to seek a mechanism for promoting open space for discussion among partners.
- There are different approaches among different partners. While almost all CSOs apply the rights-based approach, the government may apply the state management approach and the private sector may apply the profit-driven approach. It is really important to come up with a shared vision and value, and find the ways to narrow the gaps of the approaches applied by the different partners.
- The capacity of CSOs in partnerships should be improved.

## The Way Forward

Below are some ways forward in promoting inclusive partnerships in Vietnam:

- Capacity building is vital for growing CSOs in Vietnam. While building partnerships is new and challenging, local CSOs, government, private sector, and aid partners need capacity development,--not only training but also coaching and mentoring to achieve a long-term partnership.
- 
- Partnerships should be expanded. CSOs in Vietnam are increasingly inclined to expand partnerships with all stakeholders, especially businesses, donors, and also other CSOs. In particular, partnerships with businesses is a new form. Skills improvement and innovation in sharing knowledge are needed from both sides. Promoting diverse and effective partnerships include the following elements: (1) Connectivity activities (Workshops, Collaborative Events), (2) Code of Conduct, (3) Establishing working groups (by sector, locality, target beneficiaries group, etc.), and (4) Encouraging and honoring best practice models and the most active and effective partners.
- 
- A triangular partnership between CSOs, government, and private sector in implementing SDGs will maximize the strengths of each party.

For the next steps, resources are considered as a concern and important factor for the development and coordination of organizations. However, the context of state governance and funding challenges pose serious limits. As a result, further activities, to meet the needs and performance of CSOs, could be the next option for the program. In particular, the program seeks to build a comprehensive solution for connecting, using effectively, fostering engagement, and partnership between the parties, based on a shared information platform, assessment, capacity building support, and partnering.

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# Zimbabwe Case Study on Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD) and Istanbul Principles (IPs)

National Association of Youth Organization

## Introduction

The Nairobi Outcome Document (NOD) is the outcome of the second High Level Meeting (HLM2) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). It contributes to the strengthening civil society organisations' role and capacity in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 (A2030). Development actors including CSOs have enshrined their commitments to contribute towards effective development cooperation in the NOD. The document recognises the importance of civil society in sustainable development and in leaving no one behind; in engaging with governments to uphold their commitments; and in being development actors in their own right. The Istanbul Principles (IPs) are given mention and emphasis in the NOD which gives impetus to civil society to prove and enhance their accountability and effectiveness.

This study looks at two interlinked CSO partnerships in Zimbabwe: the Zimbabwe CSO Reference Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the National Youth Working Group on Development Effectiveness. These two CSO partnerships provide space for local CSOs to uphold the NOD and pursue the Istanbul Principles through their work on effective development cooperation and A2030. Both CSO partnership platforms have a focus on A2030. The study explores how these CSO partnerships have contributed to people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation, and respect and promotion of human rights and social justice, which are part of CSOs' commitments in the NOD. The study also goes further to explore how the youth are working on driving the youth specific-commitments made in the NOD, fusing these with the IPs. A critical reflection is given on the performance of these partnerships with recommendations being offered to strengthen the work of CSOs on driving the IPs and NOD commitments to an array of development actors.

## Working Towards NOD Commitments

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched in 2015 by the United Nations (UN) acknowledges CSOs potential to bring about transformative change given the scope and reach of their work. In response to the new development agenda set by world leaders, local CSOs in Zimbabwe in the spirit of leaving no one behind and realising the need for integrated action to eliminate poverty created the Zimbabwe CSO Reference Group on Sustainable Development Goals (CSO Reference Group on the SDGs). This is composed of CSO apex bodies and leading organisations working on various development interventions to eradicate poverty and is representative of different thematic groups such as labor, the private sector, the elderly, and marginalised groups which include youth, women, and persons with disability. On its launch in March 2017, the CSO Reference Group leaders acknowledged that there is, "a need for partnerships across sectors and through the formation of the Reference Group, CSOs are committed to be a strategic partner for government towards 2030 to ensure delivery on all of the goals despite government prioritising only 11 out of the 17 goals. The key objectives of the CSO Reference Group on the SDGs are

- To provide a platform for CSOs to engage in a coordinated manner in critical dialogue and contribution towards the SDGs
- To share knowledge of achieving poverty eradication by promoting the implementation of the A2030
- To promote innovative approaches and initiatives for advancing poverty eradication at the local, national, regional and global levels with the view to promote shared solutions to the global challenge of “shared prosperity”

The National Youth Working Group on Development Effectiveness (NYDE) is an open CSO platform that brings together youth organisations to engage on issues concerning effective development cooperation. It was created in 2015 following a national training by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) Youth Sector. At the core of its work is the realisation that development effectiveness cannot be realised if the youth are treated as passive actors or largely invisible. The ultimate aim of NYDE is to develop youth as partners and leaders in development based on youth having agency; that is, the capacity to act; and having skills and the ability to change their own lives. The NYDE provides a platform for youth to engage the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), combining policy advocacy and engagement, social accountability, innovative youth solutions to poverty, and sustained dialogue that positions youth as actors and initiators in development.

The open platform has a membership of 54 youth groups representing the private sector, civil society, labor, and special interest groups such as young persons with disabilities, among others. Apart from advancing A2030, the open platform engages the processes of the Global Partnership for Effective development Cooperation (GPEDC) – chief among these the second High Level Meeting (HLM2) which gave birth to the Nairobi Outcome Document. Specifically, the objectives of the open platform are: to strengthen youth participation and collaboration on development cooperation and effectiveness at national level, empower the youth to play a watchdog role in the A2030, and create a platform for sustained youth engagement on development effectiveness at the national level.

Following the holding of the HLM2, the NYPDE organised a national youth meeting on the domestication of the NOD. Youth from diverse sectors participated in the meeting and this provided the entry point for youth CSOs to begin framing how they would work on the IPs and NOD commitments, including those that are related to government as governments had made a strong commitment concerning the youth. From this process, youth actors prioritised to work on three key Istanbul areas which included:

- Focus on peoples empowerment, democratic ownership and participation;
- Embodying gender equality and equity while promoting women and girls rights; and
- Respect and promote human rights and social justice.

These principles are included in the CSO commitments in the NOD, under principles one and three. Youth actors created a national action plan to advance the realisation and mainstreaming of the IPs in their work, and more specifically, in their thrust to influence policy. The IP on empowerment, democratic ownership, and participation were prioritised in this plan. This was informed by the context in Zimbabwe where the youth make 67.7% of the population, with the majority of these disempowered, marginalised from processes, not represented in decision-making processes and bodies, and largely with no voice over matters concerning them. The NYDE was thus tasked to facilitate for processes that would enable the

youth to influence policy and development initiatives. Youth CSOs received training on the IPs using CSO toolkits. These training facilitated the commitment from youth CSOs to create and implement organisational plans that would strengthen adherence to the IPs.

The NYDE through the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) lobbied for youth inclusion and participated in the nationwide consultations to develop four key policies with a bearing on the empowerment of youth. These included the National Economic Blueprint – ZIMASSET, the National Investment Policy, Special Economic Zones, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This enabled the youth to influence the formation of these policies at the provincial and national levels. Youth CSOs were able to create strategic linkages with government line ministries which enabled engagement. Through NYDE youth CSOs began crafting policy positions and papers and shared these with diverse actors as part of their efforts to influence policy.

The NYDE organised a National Level Multi-Stakeholder Meeting wherein youth CSOs working on development issues interfaced with development partners, think tanks, the private sector, and government line ministries among others in seeking to create a space for the youth to share their views on the country's current context regarding development cooperation. The government has been reluctant in creating institutionalised spaces for engagement with regards to issues of



effective development cooperation. The NYDE, building on this meeting, periodically invites diverse actors to sit in some of its sessions as part of the process to influence government and to expedite this process to allow for the participation of diverse actors.

Working in collaboration with other CSOs, the NYDE platform petitioned the Parliament of Zimbabwe for the eligibility of youth for public office. This was important for youth empowerment because of the increasing marginalisation of the youth, despite existing provisions in the constitution for youth participation, and the A2030 calling on more youth to provide leadership and influence processes. The youth within the constitution have rights to participate in politics and enter into public office. Yet, certain provisions within the constitution also place limitations on these rights which actually infringe on the rights of the youth. This analysis emerged from the platform's increasing use of the Human Rights based Approach (HRBA) in its work. Whilst the outcomes of this process are yet to materialise with the country set to go for national elections, the platform is keen to go further and approach the constitutional court in advancing this plea. It is important to note that one of the gains for the youth in the NOD were the commitments made by governments regarding the youth. The youth are placing pressure on the government towards the realisation of its commitments in the NOD with regards to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and youth, ensuring that children and youth live free from violence, exploitation and harm in order

to develop their full capabilities; strengthen capacity and create the space and necessary mechanisms for the meaningful participation of children and youth in the implementation and the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda at the local, national and international level; and promote productive capacities of the youth; expand economic and social opportunities for the generation of decent work. The NYDE sits in the National Technical Committee created by the parent Ministry working on SDGs in the country, where it is shaping and influencing government's work on the SDGs. This has enabled the youth CSO platform to participate actively in matters relating to the SDGs.

The Zimbabwe CSO Reference Group on the SDGs is playing a critical role in ensuring that within the context of the SDGs, there is inclusion and participation of diverse actors at civil society level and also at the national level in influencing processes. This is especially critical given that the government is still putting in place the modalities for the implementation of the SDGs at the national level.

The reference group is thus creating spaces for participation in influencing policy at the local and national levels which contribute to the empowerment of local CSOs and fosters national ownership of the SDGs. The reference group organised a national level workshop on the popularisation and localisation of the SDGs. This allowed CSO actors and their respective constituencies to provide inputs on setting the targets for the country to enable measuring of progress. These were collected and submitted to the government. The voices of women and persons with disabilities were critical in this process, given that the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were not inclusive in nature.

The space for local CSOs in the policy making and influencing programs of a large scale such as the SDGs is very limited in Zimbabwe, yet the clarion call for inclusivity in the implementation of the SDGs strengthened the impetus of CSOs to explore this space. The reference group organised a National Consultation Conference to influence the Voluntary National Report (VNR) for Zimbabwe which was to be presented at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The conference featured key presentations from the government, various UN agencies, and the lead consultant contracted by the government to develop the country's VNR report. A key feature of this conference was the break-out sessions wherein CSOs' key messages to the HLPF were formulated in an inclusive and participatory manner with the youth, women, persons with disabilities, churches, workers, children, NGOs, and social movements convening separately. The key messages were shared with the government and UN agencies. It is important to note that whilst these elaborate efforts were made to ensure participation and ownership by CSOs, the government was not fully receptive of the submissions of CSOs as evidenced in the absence of reference to CSOs' inputs in the final VNR document.

At civil society level, the reference group set up a technical working committee which is composed of experts from the focal organisations within the reference group. This facilitate enhanced participation as it is at this level that both local and national actions are planned. Mutual accountability is improved among CSOs within the platform as the diverse organisations leverage on the collective power to mobilise their diverse constituencies. Following the HLPF, the reference group organised a feedback meeting with local CSOs and a special session with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the SDGs to share their views on the HLPF and also emerging issues. Through this engagement with Parliament, the reference group is now pushing the government to make specific budget allocations for the implementation of the SDGs and for policy reforms that will contribute to an enabling environment for CSOs to effectively undertake work on SDGs and create sustained spaces for interface between CSOs and the Parliament on the SDGs. Such initiatives by the reference group have strengthened

the stake of CSOs in issues concerning the SDGs and provided a solid ground on which to hold the government to account.

## Facilitating Factors and Challenges

The CSO partnerships in the study have been able to make progress in implementing the NOD commitments on account of different factors albeit working in a restrictive environment that remains fluid in nature. The CSO reference group is composed of national apex bodies that have structures at the community level and already established relations with different government line ministries based on their individual work. This facilitated easy access to both government and communities in ensuring that the processes are driven by locals. The concept of accountability aided the reference group's work – internally there is a lot of back and forth processes before actions are implemented jointly and this is later reflected externally through the HLPF feedback meeting with local CSOs and the special session with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on SDGs. The reference group was able to connect local level actions with global processes, in this case the HLPF, and this gives credibility on the part of the reference group in future engagements with government. It is important to note that on the sidelines of the HLPF, there were strong engagements with government officials working with focal ministries on the SDGs.

There has been a lot of focus within the country on socio-economic rights which is based on the constitution of Zimbabwe. Most of the SDGs fall within this ambit and work within these areas is not regarded as causing a threat to the government, and as such, allowed to proceed with minimal interference. The engagement of Parliament which plays a key role in setting policies and is representative of the diverse political parties in the country depoliticises the work of the reference group.

The NYDE platform which is a youth CSO platform presents a unique dynamic in the study. The facilitating factors for the levels of engagement that have been realised so far are embedded in the platform's ability to associate with powerful and reputable local apex organisations such as NAYO and NANGO that provide access to different policy arenas which the youth in turn influence. The development of the platform's work has been organic in nature, demonstrating the primacy of the youth and importance of allowing the youth to take leadership on issues. The component of capacity strengthening is crucial among youth CSOs as most organisations lack expertise. The continuing capacity strengthening within the platform is sustaining its critical work around giving voice to the youth within the country. Lastly, another key facilitating factor is the NOD itself, which makes specific reference to the youth and sees governments making three key commitments that are key in advancing the agenda of the youth. There is thus impetus to engage the government and follow through the processes captured within the NOD.

As referenced earlier, CSOs within the country continue to work under restrictive environments. Zimbabwean CSOs are subjected to a whole spectrum of repressive legislation, executive action, administration, police procedure, extra-legal dispute resolution, and case law limiting their full engagement and participation on development effectiveness. Despite a new enabling constitution that has empowered CSOs in the supreme law, the government has continued to use old laws that violate the current constitution to curtail the work of CSOs. Such laws include the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), and the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act. CSO representatives continue to



face arrest, harassment, restrictions to operations, and increased police surveillance in their interventions. The NYDE platform was denied police clearance to stage an organised march by the youth to submit the petitions collected from the country's 10 provinces on youth eligibility for public office. This adversely affected the campaign which had generated a lot of interest and hype, killing the agency of youth actors to demand collectively for the realisation of these rights.

The country has been experiencing turbulence and political instability as a result of the infighting within the ruling party and ultimately led to a soft coup by the military that removed the President. This adversely affected critical policy engagements as state actors were constantly moved across ministries which meant CSOs have to repeatedly build new relations. While CSOs in both partnerships made elaborate attempts to engage the government and influence its policies, there remains limited political will on the part of the government to seriously take up the submissions of CSOs especially with regards to policies. Resource constraints for both partnerships had an adverse effect on the scope and reach of their interventions with regards to working on the NOD commitments. Lastly, there is little appreciation among non-state actors on the role of CSOs in development and the importance of processes such as the HLM2 in shaping the development agenda.

CSOs working in Zimbabwe have become accustomed to the restrictive environment and in this regard, have invested in some strategies to enable engagement even in instances where the government prohibits the actions of CSOs. The NYDE platform successfully penetrated rural communities in the process of collecting signatures from local youth on the premise of working with locally trusted youth organisations/focal points within communities as opposed to foreign entities in the community seeking approvals to undertake this exercise. Both initiatives sought to make policy making more inclusive. The NYDE platform was pushing for youth representation in public office while the CSO reference group was pushing for an improved enabling environment for CSOs. Such sustained actions despite the reluctance of the government over time galvanise CSOs more and more and can force the government to give in or renege on certain positions. Both CSO partnerships were collaborative in nature and involved diverse actors. This enabled sustained engagement on policy issues as a single actor.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The experiences of the two CSO partnerships within the study provide some critical lessons in the implementation of the NOD commitments. There is an urgent need for CSOs to increasingly work collaboratively to leverage on resources, reach, and competitive edge especially when working in restrictive environments as is the case for the CSOs in the study. Both CSO partnerships had diverse CSOs jointly pursuing a common goal, with each CSO placing something on the table to drive towards the realisation of the common goal. CSOs must strengthen their efforts to popularise their work and advocacy. Most of the critical development issues do not receive visibility in the media and the public. CSOs must explore existing opportunities such as community barazas<sup>1</sup> where more information on the SDGs, accountability, and other development issues can be raised. Inclusive development requires partners to take discussions from conferences and simplify the content in the form of summarised fliers, and pictorials that can be utilised across varied audiences.

1 Public meeting places

The focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership, and participation enable CSOs to drive a people-oriented development agenda that achieved more developmental gains as opposed to when CSOs go at it alone. For instance, the NYDE platform could have chosen to create a policy paper to influence the various processes that were unveiled through NANGO. Rather, it chose to collaborate with other CSOs to ensure that even at the provincial levels, the youth were mobilised and given prior information to enable their informed participation. Given the varying contexts, CSOs need to commit themselves to an elaborate civil society process that will facilitate the domestication of the NOD as it has many elements from which CSOs can tap into. In the case of the NYDE, this was the starting point for youth actors – this enabled youth actors to establish areas of convergence with their own country constitution and laws.

HRBA is critical in shaping the implementation of the NOD commitments as it allows CSOs to uphold the rights of citizens and communities as they plan their interventions. This brings into focus the relationship of the duty bearers and rights holders. At the local level, this is critical in building the agency of the local people to claim their rights from their governments. CSOs must continually seek to engage the government despite their lack of political will to drive reforms. This enables CSOs to hold the government to account on development issues. Lastly, based on both CSO partnerships in the study, in furthering the NOD commitments at national level, CSOs must seek to engage their Parliaments.

There is an urgent need to create a better environment for the implementation of the NOD commitments. In light of this, the study proposes the following recommendations which are actor-specific:

## Civil Society Organisations

- Strengthen advocacy and lobby at the country level for governments to uphold the commitment to create an enabling environment for CSOs.
- Create platforms for solidarity and exchange to strengthen the efforts of actors at country level on the implementation of the NOD commitments at country and regional levels.
- Conduct multistakeholder processes to domesticate the NOD commitments and IPs in the work of local CSOs.

### CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)

- Utilise the various policy platforms at regional and global level to put to task the GPEDC and governments to honor commitments in the NOD, especially those that have a direct bearing to the effectiveness of CSOs.
- Strengthen the capacity of CSO partners on the IPs and on policy influencing.
- Establish connections between country level work and regional and global processes with regards to the progress on the implementation of the NOD commitments and IPs.

### Donors

- Increase support (both financial and technical) for CSOs at country level to work towards influencing the improvement of the CSO enabling environment,
- Commit more financial contributions on driving the NOD commitments and IPs.
- Promote learning and sharing at the regional and global levels for CSO actors on the implementation of the NOD commitments and IPs.

## Other development partners

- Urgent need for CSOs to strike partnerships with the private sector in implementing the IPs and NOD commitments especially to address the financing gap.
- Increase the interest and participation of the private sector in the processes of GPEDC which are shaping the development trajectory.
- Conduct knowledge and experience sharing between CSOs and the private sector to build a common narrative on effective development cooperation.

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## List of Abbreviations

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HLM2	Second High Level Meeting
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IPs	Istanbul Principles
NAYO	National Association of Youth Organisations
NANGO	National Association of Non Governmental Organisations
NOD	Nairobi Outcome document
NYDE	National Youth-Working-Group on Development Effectiveness
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VNR	Voluntary National Report
UN	United Nations



## Case Studies on the Implementation of Civil Society Organisations' Commitments in the Nairobi Outcome Document

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It has been eight years since civil society from around the world adopted the Istanbul Principles and significant progress has been achieved in turning these principles into practice. Since 2012, the work to promote and advocate for CSO development effectiveness has been taken up by the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). The work to develop capacities of CSOs, and monitor progress on the implementation of the Istanbul Principles, has been important. Nonetheless, challenges continue to hinder the full realization of the Principles, including at the national and local levels, both in the enabling environment for CSOs and in creating opportunities for CSOs to reflect on and improve their own practices.