



**CIVICUS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
2017-2022**

DRAFT FOR COMMENT

March 2017

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A note on this draft:

Please note that this is a draft and at this point we are seeking substantive feedback on content and style.

The final document will be designed in a visually engaging way and will be professionally edited.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am honoured to be writing this foreword to CIVICUS' Strategic Priorities for 2017-2022 as the Chair of the CIVICUS Board of Directors. I have been involved with CIVICUS for many years, and it is with great pleasure and pride that I continue my journey with CIVICUS as it embarks on this next important phase in its history.

As we enter this next strategic period, we face massive global challenges as a people and as a planet. Despite this, I'm optimistic about our world and our collective future. This is because in the face of these challenges, I see so many inspiring examples of citizens and civil society fighting for and contributing to a more just, open, sustainable and equal world.

CIVICUS exists to strengthen and support citizens and civil society as they take this action. We are first and foremost a membership alliance and serving our diverse membership, that crosses geographic, thematic and organisational boundaries, is at the heart of who we are and what we do. In formulating these strategic priorities, we have listened carefully to thousands of members and partners across the world, who have shared with us their needs, aspirations and advice. We hope the strategic direction we set here excites, supports and mobilises them. Our membership is the key source of our strength.

As we launch these new strategic priorities, we are fortunate to find ourselves in a position of strength at CIVICUS. With a stable financial base, a committed and diverse board, a broad and growing membership and a talented secretariat team, we are poised to be bold and brave. We will continue much of the important work strengthening, convening and advocating for civil society that we have done for over two decades. But we also have the opportunity to tackle new issues, try new approaches and forge new partnerships to bolster the impact of civil society and citizen action. As we work to promote transparency, accountability, inclusivity and diversity in the world, we will also embed these values in our operations at CIVICUS and in our work with civil society and other partners. As we work to promote a just, open, sustainable and equal world we will work to ensure a just, open, sustainable and equal CIVICUS alliance.

We believe that when people and their organisations come together as engaged and empowered citizens, we can change the world. Our job at CIVICUS is to support citizens and civil society be that change. I invite you to join us on this journey.

In solidarity,

Anabel Cruz
Chair, CIVICUS Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

In my time at CIVICUS, I have had the privilege of meeting some of the most inspiring citizen activists: the amazing team at Wingu who created [Caminos de la Villa](#) to map and demand action on the state of public services in some of Buenos Aires' poorest neighbourhoods, the [Pacific Climate Warriors](#) who rose peacefully and powerfully to protect their islands from climate change, the [#EventItUp](#) team at Oxfam who found a way to shine a light on the extreme and vulgar inequality that plagues our world.

We at the CIVICUS secretariat have the humble honour of serving these and millions of others in civil society who are working towards a more just, open, sustainable and equal world. As we have consulted our members and partners in drawing up our Strategic Priorities for 2017 to 2022, we also recognise our responsibility to use our precious resources – financial and non-financial – as effectively as possible to serve civil society.

These five years present some urgent challenges and opportunities. We have to reverse the worrying reversals of civic freedoms urgently before they become the new normal. We have to build a new economic system before inequality and insecurity tear our societies apart. We have to promote a new, progressive internationalism in the face of a retreat into nationalism and populism. The changes we make now are likely to make or break our chances of achieving the vision embodied in Agenda 2030.

I hope this plan shows that CIVICUS is not just committed to strengthening civil society for the sake of it; we see citizen action at the heart of addressing these challenges. And, as we mark our 25th anniversary in 2018, we also enter a critical period in our organisational history. Thanks to our donor partners, we hope we have a stable foundation on which to build a confident and coherent programme of work over these five years. We will strive to do what we have done over the last quarter century better, but also work in new ways and with new partners to maximise our impact.

I write this foreword at a time of big global challenges for civil society and for the world, but it is also a time when I know that our members and partners have some big responses. Our job over the next five years is to connect, amplify and scale these responses – serving the likes of Wingu, Pacific Climate Warriors and #EventItUp, and the next generation of citizen activists.

Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah
Secretary-General, CIVICUS

WHO WE ARE

Our vision, mission and membership

CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

We are a membership alliance, with members in more than 175 countries and the majority of our membership in the global south. Our growing membership transcends sectoral, thematic and geographic divides and is open to both individuals and organisations. Our definition of civil society is broad and inclusive, including non-government organisations, activists, civil society networks, protest and social movements, voluntary bodies, campaigning organisations, charities, faith-based groups, trade unions and philanthropic foundations. Uniquely, our purpose is to strengthen civil society and citizen action writ large. CIVICUS was established in 1993, and since 2002 has been proudly headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, with additional hubs across the globe.

Our vision: A worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

Our mission: To strengthen civil society and citizen action throughout the world.

Our identity and unique contribution to change

Our strong presence in the global south and our diverse and global membership are central to our identity. We are known for our clear mandate on promoting civil society and defending civic space, and our commitment to inclusive, progressive and democratic values. We are seen as a trusted broker and convener, a thought leader on trends in and affecting civil society, an amplifier of civil society voices, particularly at the global level, and an incubator and supporter of ambitious strategies to improve civil society's effectiveness and inclusivity. We have the legitimacy and credibility to speak up for civil society when the occasion demands it, but more often seek to open spaces for activists and their organisations to speak truth to power themselves. We stand in solidarity with civil society colleagues who face reprisals for their work and beliefs. We believe that when people and their organisations come together as engaged and empowered citizens, we can change the world. People power has built nations, stopped wars, alleviated suffering, ended dictatorships, liberated the oppressed, protected the planet and enshrined equality for all. Given the challenges we face globally and collectively, we believe that we need citizens and civil society to work in solidarity now more than ever. We believe that together, we can be the change.

Our work is underpinned by a set of values that we believe in and courageously defend. It is guided by a set of principles that serve as our compass.¹

¹¹ These values and principles, and our identity and unique contribution to change, likely need to be streamlined as currently repetitive.

Our Values

CIVICUS' work is underpinned by these values:

- **Justice and Equality** - CIVICUS believes in the equality and dignity of every person. All people should be free to exercise their rights as citizens, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Reciprocity** - CIVICUS exists to ensure that people treat one another with the respect with which they themselves wish to be treated. Civil society cannot thrive without mutual respect.
- **Knowledge** - CIVICUS recognises that to increase its global awareness of civil society and before it can assist or take action, it needs to form alliances with other concerned bodies to increase its influence and knowledge.
- **Vision** - CIVICUS is realistic about conflict in today's world, but remains optimistic that most people, organisations, governments and businesses will work together for the benefit of all.
- **Principled Courage** - CIVICUS will always promote justice, and pledges to act in a manner that honours the principles of democratic civil society.

NB: These have been CIVICUS' values for some time. This is the unedited version that is on the CIVICUS website: <http://www.civicus.org/index.php/who-we-are>

Our Principles

CIVICUS' work is guided by these principles:

- We stand for a **strong and independent civil society**.
- We **work as an alliance** in everything we do.
- We **challenge power with principled courage**.
- We are grounded in the **global south**.
- We understand the **universal and inter-related nature** of the world's most pressing challenges.
- We are guided by **inclusive, progressive and democratic values**.
- We are champions of **accountability, diversity and inclusion**.

NB: This is a new set of principles that draws on feedback from the consultation process, including from the Board, membership and secretariat staff. Principles from last Strategic Plan on p. 13 here: <http://civicus.org/images/stories/CIVICUS%20SPs.English.Final.pdf>

The Diversity of the CIVICUS Alliance

[Graphics to be inserted that illustrate the diversity of CIVICUS' membership]

Options include: gender/women's rights focus; size of organisation; organisational type; geographic reach; geographic location; expertise; language.

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

We live in a time of profound threats to people and planet on multiple fronts. In reaching out to our members and partners to shape CIVICUS' next strategic priorities, we heard people's deep concerns about entrenched injustices and inequalities, aggressive crackdowns on fundamental human rights, a rapidly changing climate and the rising wave of populism, nationalism and isolationism. We also heard about the exciting and effective ways that people are organising and mobilising to drive transformative change. Among those committed to human rights, social justice and sustainable development, there is broad recognition that now is the time for coming together as global citizens and civil society to work in solidarity to build a more just, equal and sustainable world for everyone.

CIVICUS STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022: Consultation Highlights

CIVICUS is listening

CIVICUS listened to thousands of stakeholders through surveys, consultations, collaborations and conversations to get their views on what CIVICUS' strategic priorities for 2017-2022 should be.

We listened to CIVICUS members, local, national, regional and international civil society organisations and networks, social movements, activists, voluntary bodies, charities, philanthropic organisations, international organisations and governments.

We spoke to people in 28 countries in all regions of the world.

What are the greatest CHALLENGES facing humanity?

- Crackdowns on human rights and civic freedoms
- Rise of populist politics and threats to progressive values
- Worsening conditions for peace and security globally
- Crisis of democracy
- Climate change
- Inequality and poverty

What can CIVIL SOCIETY do to address these challenges?

- UNITE**: Work in solidarity for causes we believe in
- DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY**: Hold decision makers to account for commitments
- ADVOCATE**: Work to influence policy and gain public support
- MOBILISE**: Support citizen action and participation
- INNOVATE**: Experiment and innovate to drive transformative change
- WALK THE TALK**: Be transparent, accountable, inclusive and diverse organisations and movements and tackle power imbalances within civil society

How can CIVICUS best support civil society?

- Strengthen civil society **CAPACITY** and **RESILIENCE**
- CONNECT** civil society with each other and with others in ways that transcend issues, geographies and organisational models
- Provide **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** on trends in and affecting civil society
- Mobilise **RESOURCES** for civil society
- INSPIRE** and **ENERGISE** global movements of civil society and citizens
- ADVOCATE** to promote and protect civil society
- AMPLIFY** civil society voices at the global level, particularly the perspectives of the most marginalised
- INCUBATE** new ideas and approaches to bolster civil society's impact

Threats to people and planet

Market fundamentalism is creating deeply unequal, unstable and unsustainable societies. Blinkered focus on economic growth is resulting in eye-watering levels of inequality, leaving poor people pushed further to the margins of society and many middle-income people feeling that they are being left behind, while the richest one per cent amass ever increasing wealth and power. Compounding this precariousness is a perception of the state withdrawing from its obligations to meet basic needs, leaving the provision of services to the market. These patterns of inequality and exclusion are not only unjust, they also fuel anger that leads to social unrest. We need a new global economy that works for all people and protects our planet. But governments will not act to tackle inequality and climate change until mass social mobilisation demands they do. A growing tide of peaceful protest can challenge the notion that inequality is an acceptable global social norm and climate change is a non-urgent, or worse, non-existent, threat. This movement needs to hold governments to account on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Beyond this, civil society must take action itself and actively devise, propose and implement alternate, more sustainable ways of doing things and build support for these approaches until governments have no choice but to act.

Global emergency on civic space

We face a global emergency on civic space. States are becoming increasingly intolerant of dissent and seeking to suppress it by intimidating their citizens. These attacks on civil society speaking truth to power are emanating from autocratic political leaders, unaccountable government agencies, criminal elements linked to large companies, religious and ideological extremists and terrorist groups. Restrictions come most strongly when civil society exposes high levels of corruption, probes the power of political and economic elites or unearths abuses by security forces. Spikes in attacks on civil society are also experienced around elections, particularly in countries with long-established leaders. A range of tactics are used to suppress freedoms, including rules restricting the formation, funding and operation of CSOs, harsh penalties for protest including arbitrary detentions, biased judicial proceedings to prevent activists and organisations from carrying out their mandates, the imposition of travel restrictions, the vilification of civil society, through verbal attacks and hate speech and the use of force, including physical attacks and assassinations. The restriction of online freedom of expression, including the targeting of social media commentators, the use of surveillance and blocking content, is now a marked trend. The trend is clear and stark: civil society is under increasing threat around the world.

Crisis of democracy

Around the world, democratic principles are under threat and progressive movements are on the back foot. Economic inequality, the rapid rate of social change and the perceived distance of political elites is driving citizen anger and political polarisation. In many countries, people are seizing the opportunity offered by elections and referendums to express their discontent with the political status quo and support populist leaders and parties espousing a narrow vision of nationalism tinged with xenophobia. They are opposed to internationalism, the rule of law and human rights. These political shifts have negative repercussions for civil society: populist political leaders ride waves of dissatisfaction to win power, but are intolerant of alternate points of view, and civil society is attacked when it is associated with progressive values. The case needs to be made again – even in long-established democracies – that a healthy and open civic space is critical for bridging political differences, providing opportunities for people to air their grievances, expressing democratic dissent and articulating solutions.

An unresponsive global governance system

An international governance system that is accessible to a select few offers little possibility to address citizens' concerns. The current arrangements of international governance are not open and transparent. Citizen engagement is often tokenistic and far outweighed by private sector influence.

Just as states that go through the formal motions of democracy without addressing inequality and exclusion have fallen into discredit, international governance institutions with limited scope for people's participation risk becoming irrelevant. The challenge for international institutions is that they are seen to be doing little to foster positive change that concerns people – the widening gap between the rich and poor, chronic violence and insecurity, the climate change crisis – or worse, that in promoting market-oriented policies, they can be identified as contributing to these problems.

We need to re-design global governance to put people at the centre. As the world's most pressing problems are acknowledged to cross national borders, the international level of decision making matters now more than ever. Global institutions need to draw on the ideas and experience of people as they work to solve these global problems, as well as offer a source of protection and support for people who are being repressed or excluded at the national level.

New opportunities to drive transformative social change

Despite these challenges, citizens and civil society remain engaged in driving transformative social change. Indeed, in the face of these challenges, we have witnessed a thirst for citizen participation never seen before. Many tried and tested tactics of connecting, networking and mobilising are still proving effective, but as new progressive coalitions, alliances and forms of organising emerge, we also see new tactics and strategies come into play. Technology offers huge opportunities for organising solidarity movements; technology can enable global coordination, enhance reach and amplify voices.

There is much work to be done to bridge gaps between traditional CSOs and new social movements. In many cases, these groups do not know how to relate to each other and in some cases there is mutual distrust: established CSOs may see protest movements as flash-in-the-pan, and activists see CSOs as too bureaucratic and institutionalised to make effective change. We believe there is value to be unlocked from bringing different types of progressive civil society actors together, to learn from each other and ultimately, collaborate and cooperate to drive change.

The private sector is an increasingly important economic decision maker and political influencer. Large, transnational corporations can have major impacts on human rights and civic space. Issues such land-grabbing, large-scale corporate tax avoidance and worsening employment standards are increasingly fuelling citizen anger. We need new relationships between civil society and the private sector that encompass partnership and hybrid working, but also critical engagement, including civil society initiatives to make the private sector more accountable. When civil society partners with the private sector, it must retain its ability to advocate for improved corporate practice. Partnerships must be rooted in principles of equality and respect and unlock the distinct advantages of business and civil society to address profound contemporary challenges.

Walking the talk in civil society

Civil society faces critical internal challenges that affect its credibility and legitimacy. In too many cases, civil society does not 'walk the talk' when it comes to transparency, accountability, inclusion and diversity, or is accountable to donors rather than citizens, and this impacts the levels of public trust in these organisations and movements. Massive power imbalances also exist in civil society when it

comes to resources, access to influence and profile – between large and small, urban and rural and global north and global south, and between formal and less formal forms of civil society. In many instances, gaps in power and money are widening rather than narrowing. Civil society needs to tackle these internal challenges in concrete and serious ways, and model the behaviour we expect of others.

OUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

Over the next five years, we will be guided by five strategic priorities. Collectively, these priorities will help us achieve our mission of strengthening civil society and citizen action throughout the world.

Strategic Goal 1: Defend fundamental civic freedoms and civil society rights

We will continue to defend the fundamental civic freedoms of association, assembly and expression in all countries, particularly when they are under threat. We will do this by providing emergency and sustained support and solidarity to activists, movements and organisations that are targeted for their activism or operating in oppressive contexts. We will continue to track civic space trends globally and seek to better understand when, how and why civic space crises occur and the most effective ways to respond. We will incubate and share ways of creating early warning systems on civic space crackdowns, and tools for supporting the safety of activists under attack. We will continue to advocate

for enabling civic space conditions and work through coalitions to ensure that civic freedoms and civil society rights get the attention they deserve on the national, regional global agendas.

Evidence of impact:

- *By 2022, there will be an improvement in civic space in countries where civic freedoms are under attack and improved recognition and protection of civic freedoms and civil society rights at the national, regional and global levels.*

Strategic Goal 2: Support the renewal of democratic values and strengthen participatory democracy at every level

We will create momentum in civil society to renew democratic values and strengthen participatory democracy from the local to the global level. We will work to ensure that citizens have the opportunity and tools to participate fully, effectively and creatively in the decision-making processes that affect them. We will work to bridge the majoritarian impulses of electoral democracy with the inclusive strands of constitutional democracy which seek to accommodate dissent and minority voices. We will support citizens and civil society to monitor progress and hold governments accountable for commitments they have made nationally and internationally, including international human rights frameworks, the SDGs and the Paris Climate Change Agreement. We will work to ensure citizens and civil society can influence global governance reform processes, demand spaces for citizens to advise decision makers and push new and reformed global institutions to be genuinely responsive to people's needs. We will demand that global institutions are inclusive, transparent, accountable and promote diversity. We will work hard to support groups that are often excluded from global processes to have the opportunity and capacity to make their voices heard. At all levels, but particularly at the global level, we will support citizens to challenge instances of excessive private sector influence.

Our Strategic Goals, 2017-2022

1. Defend fundamental civic freedoms and civil society rights.
2. Support the renewal of democratic values and strengthen participatory democracy at every level.
3. Help civil society actors become more effective, innovative and inclusive agents for positive change.
4. Build solidarity across civil society, especially in support of progressive internationalism.
5. Work with other change-seekers to build a more just, open, sustainable and equal world.

Evidence of impact:

- *By 2022, more citizens will be participating effectively in democratic and governance processes at all levels.*

Strategic Goal 3: Support civil society actors to become more effective, innovative and inclusive agents for positive change

We will work to support civil society to become more effective, innovative and inclusive agents of change, encouraging collaboration between and the engagement of our diverse alliance. We will continue to provide opportunities for civil society to maximise their capacity in networked and sustainable ways, creating opportunities for shared learning in ways that transcend issues, geographies and organisational models. We will promote and advocate for the institutional architecture that supports and sustains civil society, including civil society coalitions, umbrella bodies and civil society networks, and invest in finding ways to make that architecture more agile, responsive, coordinated and effective. We will support, test and share innovative ideas, strategies and technologies that help position civil society at the cutting edge of social transformation. We will explore new funding and operational models that shift more resources to the advocacy, accountability and human rights functions of global south civil society, who are often on the frontline of transformative social change. We will encourage new and diverse sources of funding to support civil society. We will make particular effort to channel resources and opportunities to people and organisations that are often excluded from social, economic and political processes, offering them solidarity as they take action to drive the positive change they want to see in the world. We will challenge ourselves, and ask our alliance and civil society as a whole, to reflect on our own diversity and to take real steps to be truly inclusive agents of change.

Evidence of impact:

- *By 2022, civil society organisations and movements have greater capacity to deliver their mandates, are experimenting more often, are taking calculated risks, and are more inclusive in the ways they organise themselves and their work.*

Strategic Goal 4: Build solidarity across civil society, especially in support of progressive internationalism

We will build solidarity across and within civil society, especially in support of progressive internationalism. We will work in solidarity with organisations, coalitions and movements seeking to counter populist trends, and work hard to ensure the civic space to engage on these issues is safe, open and free. We will also work with others to develop and amplify a compelling counter-narrative to isolationist and populist politics and to promote equality, justice, global citizenship and inclusion. We will ensure that civil society is equipped with a convincing explanation of why, in the 21st century, civil society is an essential part of healthy and successful societies. Part of this will involve reflecting on how we listen to ordinary people so that we make sure the work of civil society builds on and catalyses the daily struggles of communities all over the world.

Evidence of impact:

- *By 2022, civil society better equipped to demonstrate its importance for a thriving society and counter populist politics and discourse in a collective and cohesive way.*

Strategic Goal 5: Work with other change-seekers to build a more just, open, sustainable and equal world

We will work to build a more just, open, sustainable and equal world. We will do this in partnership with other change-seeking activists, movements and organisations to develop coalitions, campaigns and tools to tackle inequality, drive action on climate change and realise the SDGs and Agenda 2030. We will invest in making global agendas relevant to local actors, and bringing local voices to global fora. We will leverage our convening power to help coordinate civil society across sectors and thematic issues, and in doing so break down silos and enhance cooperation and more joined-up, ambitious approaches. To address these defining challenges of our time, we will work in participatory and inclusive ways, look to and learn from those who have the most impact, and not be afraid to experiment.

Evidence of impact:

- *By 2022, civil society has effectively demanded and contributed to global action to tackle inequality, fight climate change and realise Agenda 2030.*

HOW WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE

How we will work

We will draw on over 20 years of experience as an alliance to deliver our strategic priorities. We will continue doing much of what we have done well over the last two decades. But to meet our ambitions, this will not be enough. We will need to work in different ways, with different partners, in new spaces.

Here is how CIVICUS will deliver our strategic priorities.

- **We will generate knowledge and analysis.** CIVICUS will be the global thought leader on citizen action, civil society and civic space, conducting cutting-edge research and offering expert analysis on trends in and affecting citizen action and civil society. We will share our research and analysis in creative and impactful ways. We will develop inspiring and progressive narratives that promote civil society and support the mobilisation of progressive global movements of civil society and citizens.
- **We will connect civil society with each other, and with others.** CIVICUS will facilitate connections and solidarity across civil society and between civil society and other stakeholders, particularly through our membership alliance. We will convene across themes, issues, geographies and organisational models. The connections we facilitate will offer opportunities for mutual learning, partnerships and collective action. We will experiment and innovate in the way we connect and convene, leveraging 21st century technology and approaches, and share what we learn to help enhance the impact of other civil society alliances and networks.
- **We will support civil society develop its capacity.** CIVICUS will offer civil society tools and opportunities to learn and act. We will continue to facilitate opportunities for face-to-face collaboration and learning, but also seek to do this in ways that harness technology and encourage practical, real-world application. We will advocate for more and better financial resources to flow to civil society, particularly in the global south, to strengthen its capacity, effectiveness and resilience.
- **We will advocate and amplify.** CIVICUS will lobby to highlight, protect and defend civil society and civic space. We will amplify civil society voices and bring local struggles to global fora, with a focus on global south perspectives and the voices of those that who are typically not heard. We will campaign in coalitions and partnerships in participatory, inclusive and innovative ways to drive transformative change. We will work to bring civil society stories and successes to the broader public.
- **We will innovate and incubate.** CIVICUS will bring innovation, experimentation and technology to the work of civil society to enhance its impact. We will incubate and test new ideas and approaches, learn from them and share these with the world. We will mobilise resources to scale approaches that work.
- **We will practise what we preach.** We will engender a learning culture across the CIVICUS secretariat and alliance. We will take practical measures to promote diversity, inclusion, transparency, accountability and sustainability in everything we do, sharing innovative thinking and best practice as we model the behaviour we expect of others. We will seek to foster partnerships and practices that reduce duplication and leverage collective resources to ensure the effective use of resources and bolster civil society impact.

▪

Who we will work with

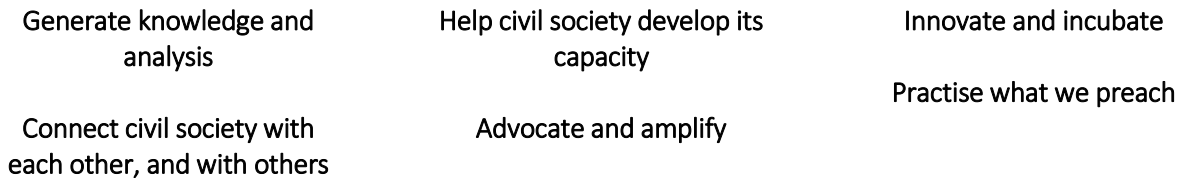
Acknowledging that we exist to defend, strengthen and stand for civil society, as well as the importance of working with other actors who are engaged in and critical to the social transformation we want to see, in the next strategic period we will invest working with the following groups in particular.

- **CIVICUS alliance member:** Our top priority will continue to be to work with and through our growing membership.
- **Civil society platforms, networks and coalitions.** Civil society infrastructure, including platforms, networks and coalitions that bring together civil society, are vital to civil society resilience. As an alliance ourselves, we will work with others to identify ways to enhance the effectiveness and impact of these efforts.
- **Emerging civil society actors.** We need to work more purposefully with and learn from activists, protest and social movements, new, fluid and less formal organisations and online and youth-driven platforms and campaigns focussed on social transformation.
- **A new generation of civil society leaders, especially from the global south.** We will strive to support a new generation of civil society leaders who have the skills, networks and instincts required to lead civil society, and the world, in the 21st century. We will invest in nurturing this new generation of leaders, who will come from a range of types of civil society organisations, networks and movements, and invest particularly in a diverse cadre of leaders from the global south.
- **Media looking to promote stories on civic space, citizen action and civil society.** We will engage with traditional and digital media to work together to promote citizen action, civic space and civil society. This will involve investing in media relations, communications and technology in ways we have not before.
- **International organisations seeking to engage citizens and civil society in genuine ways.** We will work with international organisations who are seeking to engage citizens and civil society in genuine ways. We will also advocate for new international organisations, and international organisations undergoing reform, to offer genuine space for citizen and civil society engagement and influence.
- **Private sector actors committed to addressing the world's most pressing challenges.** Where we can establish partnerships of equality, honesty and respect, we will work with the private sector to address the world's most pressing challenges. We will seek to engage with a spectrum of private sector actors, from small social enterprises and socially-responsive business to big business.
- **Governments at all levels looking for new ways to engage citizen action and civil society.** We will work with governments at all levels looking for new ways to engage with and be informed by citizens and civil society.
- **Traditional and new donors.** We will work with traditional donors to advocate for partnerships that see more resources flow to civil society in the global south, as well as partnerships that support the sustainability, resilience, independence and diversity of civil society. We will also work with new donors, who can diversify and bring new energy and perspectives to the resourcing of civil society.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

What we will do

Driven by global context, our identity and niche and the needs and aspirations of our members and partners, CIVICUS will:



Change we will support

These efforts will support these changes:

1. **Improved civic space** in countries where civic freedoms are under attack and **improved recognition and protection of civic freedoms and civil society rights** at the national, regional and global levels.
2. More **citizens participating effectively in democratic and governance processes** at all levels.
3. Civil society organisations and movements who have **greater capacity to deliver their mandates**, are **experimenting more often**, are **taking calculated risks**, and are **more inclusive** in the ways they organise themselves and their work.
4. Civil society better equipped to **demonstrate its importance for a thriving society** and **counter populist politics** and discourse in a collective and cohesive way.
5. Civil society has effectively **demanding and contributed to global action to tackle inequality, fight climate change and realise Agenda 2030**.



Our impact

These changes contribute to **stronger civil society and citizen action throughout the world** (our mission) and ultimately, a **worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenging facing humanity** (our vision).

HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR SUCCESS

To improve our capacity to understand our impact, CIVICUS will invest in a new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework that will help us evaluate and learn from our work over the next strategic period. This framework will enable us to document, understand and learn from our successes, but also from our failures. It will give us robust and useable data and evidence that can help us identify where we are contributing to social transformation, and where we need to do things differently. Through this framework, we will be able to truly understand and prove the impact of CIVICUS and communicate this in ways that resonate with our constituents and with the world.

Our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework will:

- Be fit-for-purpose for CIVICUS as a **change-seeking organisation**.
- Integrate **feedback loops and learning** into our programming to make it more iterative and participatory, put the people we serve at the centre and respond more quickly when changes need to be made.
- Collect multiple sources of information to understand our impact. This will include **citizen-generated data** from the communities our alliance serves. We will also seek to capture evidence of impact that we present in narratives that captures the difference that our work is making to the **lives of real people**.