CIVICUS

ASSEMBLÉE MONDIALE
10-12 SEPTEMBRE/SEPTEMBER 2011
WORLD ASSEMBLY
MONTRÉAL

ACTING TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD

Civil society and global decision making: Doing it better

10! ANNIVERSARY ANNIVERSAIRE ANIVERSARIO

The 10th edition of the CIVICUS World Assembly took place at the Palais des Congrès in Montreal on 10-12 September 2011 under the theme "Civil society and global decision making: doing it better". It brought together over 800 representatives from civil society, donors, governments and businesses from all over the world under the theme. The event was preceded by the 2011 CIVICUS Youth Assembly on 8 September, which aimed at preparing young people's participation in the main event.

At a time when global crises pose mounting threats and global governance often appears dysfunctional, the challenges and opportunities for civil society to influence decision making are immense. Ensuring that local voices can be heard on a global scale was one of the major themes of the 2011 CIVICUS World Assembly. In the hunt to 'do it better', civil society used the event to start to make progress in breaking down silos between different sectors and across themes, regions and languages in order to improve their collective work towards building a more just world.

The 2011 World Assembly provided occasion to focus attention on common challenges facing humanity which are interlinked and affect us all. As civil society faces both external and internal threats to its very existence, there is a growing appetite for collaboration to advance many agendas from Rio+20 to the Beyond 2015 post-MDG agenda. Working together across regions and sectors we can indeed create a better world.

Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General
CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

"Each track had separate activities but the main messages across the themes was that these issues are inter-related and that it is only by working across themes, regions and sectors that they will be tackled effectively."

Michel Venne, Executive Director
Institut du Nouveau Monde

Key lessons from the programme

Under the theme "Civil society and global decision-making: Doing it better," the World Assembly programme centred around four thematic tracks with key lessons becoming apparent during the discussions.

Development Effectiveness

As global political and economic crises converge, it is imperative that civil society be engaged in closing the gap between decision makers and affected people and communities. The role of civil society organisations as development actors in their own right is crucial to build a better life for those living on the margins. An enabling environment that puts civil society and the agenda for democratic and inclusive ownership at the forefront of key policy making forums is necessary to ensure development effectiveness.

Connecting People through Technology

Information and communication technology has created vast opportunities to create a virtual civic space. They can help to enable greater public debate, increase interaction and amplify the diverse voices of civil society. Yet, ICTs are also a tool that can be used for repression making activists vulnerable to targeting and persecution. Civil society needs to actively develop ICT strategies and work together to protect each other while leveraging the tools to build a more just world.

Civil society and global decision-making: Doing it better

Civil Society and Democratic Space

Pervasive shrinking of civil society and democratic space in all regions of the globe necessitates renewed focus on solidarity, networking and cooperation. Throughout 2011, citizens in countries as diverse as Tunisia, Egypt, Greece and the United States have been rising for their right to be heard. To challenge the massive onslaught on democratic freedoms and to protect human rights defenders, it is crucial for civil society to close the gap between formal and informal civil society and innovatively engage with a broader spectrum of people.

Climate Justice

Climate change is a human rights issue with huge economic, social and political impacts. Civil society across all sectors needs to make the struggle for climate justice a broad-based people's movement. Civil society needs to work together to ensure that governments meet the financial targets agreed at COP16 and that the control of the Global Climate Fund is democratic and transparent. We need to demand a global paradigm shift so that vulnerable communities can protect themselves from the impact of climate change.

Featuring plenary sessions, work sessions, networking opportunities and other interactive activities, the World Assembly programme across all four tracks focused on best practices and innovative ideas for inspiring greater inter-sector and international collaboration. Results of all activity sessions are compiled in reports that are available online: **www.civicusassembly.org/CIVICUSlive.php#reports**

2010-2011 Nelson Mandela - Graça Machel Innovation Awards

Two African women's projects initiated during the 2010 CIVICUS World Assembly were awarded an innovation award in 2011:

- "Freedom of Association" – a project of the New Woman Foundation of Egypt
- "Women's Health Rights and the Environment in Rural Cameroon" – a collaboration between the African Women's Education and Development Partnership Forum in Virginia, USA, and Free the Children based in Toronto, Canada

Expectations and satisfaction

According to the satisfaction survey , 93% of the participants are generally satisfied or very satisfied with the 2011 CIVICUS World Assembly.*

Their main expectations were:

- To get information about the focal issues and debate them (97%)
- To meet new people and extend their networks (93%)
- To meet experts and key players around a subject of personal and/or professional interest (92%)

93% of participants consider that the event met their expectations.

"Overall I consider this a worthwhile event and I believed that I gained some new perspectives from attending it."

2011 World Assembly delegate

Outcomes

1. Implementation of knowledge learned

79% of the participants consider that what they learned during the 2011 World Assembly will be useful to very useful for them to improve the activities of their organisations.

"I mostly had exchanges of expertise, ideas, creativity. Our discussions aimed at a better world."

2011 World Assembly delegate

2. Network reinforcement and development

81% of the participants consider that the 2011 World Assembly helped their collaborations with their existing partners and that it helped them create new partnerships.

"The WA was a great opportunity to get to know other CSOs and the people who make up our global community."

2011 World Assembly delegate

3. Learning concrete tools to improve citizen engagement

66% of the participants consider that they learned concrete tools to improve their citizen engagement.

4. Reinforcement of their capacity and confidence to influence public debates and decision-makers

70% of participants claim that their participation has reinforced their capacity and confidence to influence public debates and decision-makers.

5. Strengthening of links and collaborations across sectors

a. One donor roundtable

b. One private sector roundtable

c. 79% of the representatives of governments, donors and the private sector report increased understanding of the role and importance of civil society players in international development, and of how to better collaborate with them

d. 67% of participants from civil society report better understanding of the importance of collaborating with other sectors, and how to improve this collaboration

"It's a big agenda. I was happy to see that governments and private sector were present."

"It is good to see the efforts to have [other sectors] on the discussion panels. There seemed to be exchanges with them. It will not change everything, but it opens the door. "

2011 delegates from civil society

6. Impact on Canadian civil society

a. 49% of participants from Canada

b. 78% of Canadian participants believe that the 2011 World Assembly will have an impact on their involvement in Canadian and international development

"Thanks to this event, my involvement has increased by opening doors and bringing new ideas."

"It is very interesting to host such an international conference to discuss outside our own prism."

Canadian delegates

* An online satisfaction survey was carried out after the 2011 World Assembly to assess the short, medium and long term outcomes of the event. Sent out in French and English to 623 participants, 200 survey responses (32%) were received and a further 15 phone interviews were conducted.

Diversity at the CIVICUS World Assembly

814 participants from 93 countries

51% women

25% from developing countries

59% from the Francophonie

14% from Europe

11% from Asia and Oceania

57% from North America

11% from Africa

3% from Latin America

20% 30 and younger

Youth integration

A Youth mentoring programme enabled direct interactions between the World Assembly speakers and the young delegates

Delegates and speakers represented all sectors
(NGOs, coalitions, businesses, trade unions, media, academics, donors, governments, etc.)

Simultaneous interpretation in French, Spanish and English in all plenary sessions, 6 activity sessions and 2 Youth Assembly discussions

ENGLISH
FRANÇAIS
ESPAÑOL

Whisper translation or simultaneous translation into French, Spanish and/or English in 23 activity sessions

78% of participants are satisfied with the diversity of the 2011 World Assembly. 60% of participants from the Francophonie and from Latin America believe that they contributed to the World Assembly discussions and feel more informed about the role and impact of civil society in international development. However, stronger efforts need to be made to increase the diversity of delegates and speakers in terms of regions, sectors and languages. Further efforts and targeted fundraising will also be pursued in 2012 to continue improving youth participation.

Final list of participants: www.civicusassembly.org/images/FinalParticipantList7Oct2011.pdf

Connectivity

Interactive Format

All sessions aimed at maximising the discussions and interactions with the audience, through various innovative facilitation techniques.

Network Hub

- 1 Commonwealth meeting
- 1 Francophone meeting
- 7 Regional meetings
- 1 assisted networking activity

The CIVICUS website (www.civicus.org) is integrating additional tools to enhance the interactivity and connectivity among CIVICUS members and partners. Check it out soon!

Synergies

- 11 side events organised parallel to the World Assembly
  - Thematic workshop on Sustainable Development
    BetterAid Coalition Group
  - Meeting of the Multi-stakeholder Task Team on CSOs Effectiveness and Enabling Environment
  - Workshop on corporate social responsibility and community-company relations in the mining, oil and gas sector
    The Office of the Extractive Sector/ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Counsellor for the Government of Canada
  - How can NGOs take advantage of the newly evolving Internet?
    Public Interest Registry
  - Securely Exchanging Information through Technology
    Development Research Center
  - *Pecha Kucha* of 10 Québec youth initiatives
    Youth Assembly Steering Committee
  - Taking the temperature: towards new forms of civil society self-assessment
    Civil Society Index - CIVICUS / Institut du Nouveau Monde
  - Global Civil Society Advocacy Forum Annual Meeting
    IANGO (International Advocacy NGOs) - CIVICUS
  - AGNA (Affinity Group of National Associations) Annual General Meeting
    AGNA - CIVICUS
  - CIVICUS Members Meeting
    CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
  - CIVICUS Youth Assembly Strategizing Session
    CIVICUS Youth Assembly Steering Committee
- 20 exhibitors present at the Citizen Café
- 10 Montreal-based community organisations present at the Pre-conference City Tour

CIVICUS Live

4 plenary sessions streamed live in English and French

Over 50 interviews with speakers and delegates streamed live

2525 unique viewers on the English channel
www.livestream.com/civicuswa

96 unique viewers on the French channel
www.livestream.com/CivicusWA_fr

The Assembly ONLINE

13,442 unique visitors to the World Assembly website
www.civicusassembly.org

99 English blogs posts
citizenshift.org/blogs/civicus

17 Spanish blog posts
citizenshift.org/blogs/civicus

88 French blog posts
parolecitoyenne.org/blogs/assemblee-civicus

4802 tweets using #civWA

Photo gallery on Flickr
www.flickr.com/photos/civicus

Save the date

CIVICUS and the Institut du Nouveau Monde are pleased to invite you to the 2012 CIVICUS World Assembly. It will take place again in Montreal, Canada, on 5-7 September 2012. Updates will be posted on our website: **www.civicusassembly.org.**

The CIVICUS World Assembly blog will also remain active throughout the year. We invite you to visit us regularly at **www.civicus.org/blog** to share your opinions and your analyses of global issues that continue to trouble us…and to inspire us!

"NGOs should be involved in renegotiating the social contract, joining with states and markets to redefine what kind of society we want nationally and globally. The 2012 World Assembly might be just the place to get that started."

Ingrid Srinath, Secretary General, CIVICUS

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THANK YOU...

... to all CIVICUS and INM friends, members and partners

... to all 2011 CIVICUS World Assembly delegates, volunteers and local host committee

... to the 2011 World Assembly sponsors

Canadian International Development Agency
Agence canadienne de développement international
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.org
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CIVICUS
World Alliance for Citizen Participation

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of civil society working to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened. CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is based on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society. CIVICUS seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary people and it gives expression to the enormous creative energy of the burgeoning sector of civil society.

INSTITUT DU NOUVEAU MONDE

Institut du Nouveau Monde (INM) is a non-partisan organisation dedicated to stimulating public participation and fresh ideas in Quebec. It seeks to promote social justice and inclusion, in the spirit of respecting democratic values, openness and innovation. Through its activities, INM proposes a structured and deliberative approach based on the guiding principles of "inform", "debate" and "propose". INM strives to encourage public participation and contributes to developing citizen skills, strengthening social ties and supporting democratic institutions.