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THE STATE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RWANDA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX RWANDA REPORT



March 2011

FOREWORD

The concept of civil society came into existence for Rwanda NGOs around 1989-1990. It was related to changes that took place in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. In 1990, this was further addressed in the then French President François Mitterrand's speech at La Baule. In this speech, talking about the fall of communism and the ending of the cold war, Mitterrand appealed to the African governments which had historical ties to France to immediately begin a similar democratisation process in their political systems to those underway in Eastern Europe, and warned that otherwise they would suffer the consequences of economic and political sanctions by the international community.

After Mitterrand's declaration, the targeted governments organised a series of national conferences during which civil society played a key role in defining the democratisation process.

As the democratisation process swept across Africa, Rwanda was not left watching. The government, which had previously dominated discourse, was surprised to see civil society sensitising the public to rise up and fight for their rights. This was, indeed, the beginning of civil society activism in Rwanda. For example, Rwandan civil society started to advocate for the return of the Rwandese who had been stateless since 1959 and lived in foreign countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This was coupled with the fact that those still within the country had been gagged by the oppressive regime.

Under these circumstances Rwandan civil society was hunted down resulting in loss of life, especially during the period of 1990 to the 1994 genocide.

These occurrences provoked action by the Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (CCOAIB) to carry out research in order to find out the position of civil society in Rwanda in so far as its structure, the environment in which it operates, the impact of its interventions and the values for which it stands are concerned.

Dativa Mukeshimana
Chairperson,
Board of Directors, CCOAIB

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We are very grateful to CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, for selecting and bestowing confidence upon CCOAIB in order to conduct research on the current state of civil society in Rwanda. We would also like to immensely thank CIVICUS staff who worked with us (Natalie Akstein, Amy Bartlett, Yosi Echeverry Burckhardt, Andrew Firmin, Mark Nowotny and Julia Sestier) for their unreserved technical support.

Further, we are also greatly indebted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for its financial support, without which this research would not have been possible.

Several other people who represented their institutions in the National Advisory Group (NAG) (see Appendix for a list of names) are also highly appreciated for their invaluable contributions in terms of time and other resources towards the successful completion of this research. We acknowledge the great role played by our Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Rwanda Private Sector Federation (RPSF) in the NAG.

The Board of Directors and Management of CCOAIB wish to congratulate all of the staff who worked tirelessly throughout for the success of this initiative. Their contribution in this endeavour is a broader contribution to the Rwandan community, and in particular something we believe will go a long way in strengthening Rwandan civil society.

Lastly, we want to thank all those who took time out of their schedules to respond to the various surveys and other exercises that were conducted during this research. Let us all hope that change is soon coming to civil society.

Kigali, 2010

Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (CCOAIB)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of contents	4
List of figures and tables	6
List of acronyms	7
Executive summary	8
Introduction	10
I. Civil Society Index and approach	10
1. Project background	11
2. Project approach	11
3. Project methodology	13
II. Civil society in Rwanda	16
1. Historical overview of civil society in Rwanda	16
2. Overview of the concept of civil society in Rwanda	17
3. Key distinguishing features of the country context	18
III. Analysis of civil society in Rwanda	20
1. Structure of civil society organisations	20
1.1/1.2 Breadth and depth of people's participation	20
1.3 Diversity of civil society participation	22
1.4 Level of organisation	24
1.5 Inter-relations	26
1.6 Resources	27
2. Civil society's external environment	28
2.1 Political context	28
2.2 Basic freedoms and rights	29
2.3 Socio-economic context	29

2.4 Socio-cultural context	29
2.5 Legal environment	29
2.6 State-civil society relations	31
2.7 Private sector-civil society relations	31
3 Civil society values	33
3.1 Democracy	33
3.2 Transparency	34
3.3/3.4 Tolerance and Non-violence	35
3.5 Gender equity	36
3.6 Poverty eradication	36
3.7 Environmental sustainability	37
4 Civil society impact	37
4.1 Influencing public policy	38
4.2 Holding state and private sector accountable	38
4.3/4.5 Responding to social interests and meeting societal needs	39
4.4 Empowering citizens	41
IV. Strengths and Weaknesses of Rwandan civil society	43
V. Recommendations	43
VI. Conclusions	44
Appendices	46
1 List of National Action Group members	46
2 National Acting Group scoring indicator matrix	47
Bibliography	51

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Civil Society Diamond for Rwanda	8
Figure 2: Civil Society Diamond	13
Figure 3: Sub-dimension scores in Structure Dimension	20
Figure 4: Sub-dimension scores in Environment Dimension	28
Figure 5: Sub-dimension scores in Values Dimension	33
Figure 6: Sub-dimension Scores in Civil Society Impact Dimension	38
Table 1: Geographical distribution of respondents	14
Table 2: Volunteering	21
Table 3: Collective community action	21
Table 4: The level of membership of social groups within civil society	22
Table 5: The level of participation of social groups as leaders of CSOs	23
Table 6: CSO geographical distribution	23
Table 7: CSO activities	24
Table 8: CSO membership of umbrella bodies	25
Table 9: Effectiveness of umbrella bodies	25
Table 10: CSOs support infrastructure	26
Table 11: Level of communication among CSOs	26
Table 12: Cross-sectoral cooperation	26
Table 13: Socio-cultural norms (public spiritedness)	29
Table 14: CSO registration	30
Table 15: State-civil society relations	31
Table 16: Private sector-civil society relations	31
Table 17: Corporate social responsibility	32
Table 18: Civil society role in democracy promotion	33
Table 19: Civil society role in government transparency	34
Table 20: Corruption within civil society	35
Table 21: Civil society role in tolerance promotion	35
Table 22: Civil society role in gender equity promotion	36
Table 23: Civil society role in poverty eradication	36
Table 24: Civil society role in environmental protection	37
Table 25: Civil society role in state accountability	38
Table 26: Civil society role in corporate accountability	39
Table 27: Civil society role in meeting societal needs	39
Table 28: Public trust	40
Table 29: Civil society role in public information activities	41
Table 30: Civil society role in community capacity-building	42

ACRONYMS

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
BCR	Banque Commerciale du Rwanda
CBO	Community-based organisation
CCOAIB	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base
CESTRAR	Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda
CLADHO	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme
CS	Civil society
CSI	Civil Society Index
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GCB	Community User Committees
GOR	Government of Rwanda
ICNL AND NED	International Centre for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL) and World Movement for Democracy Secretariat at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRDP	Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix (Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace)
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
LNGO	Local non-governmental organisation
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs
MRND	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National Pour le Développement
NAG	CSI National Advisory Group
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Committee
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal approach
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WGI	World Governance Indicators

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) report examines the state of civil society in Rwanda. The report begins with a description of the project approach and the methodology used in conducting the research, which ran from May 2008 to July 2010. The research methodology examines civil society from the point of view of four dimensions, using both quantitative and qualitative data sources. The qualitative data came from National Advisory Group meetings, regional stakeholder consultations and case studies. The quantitative data came from primary research generated by questionnaires and interviews with informants.

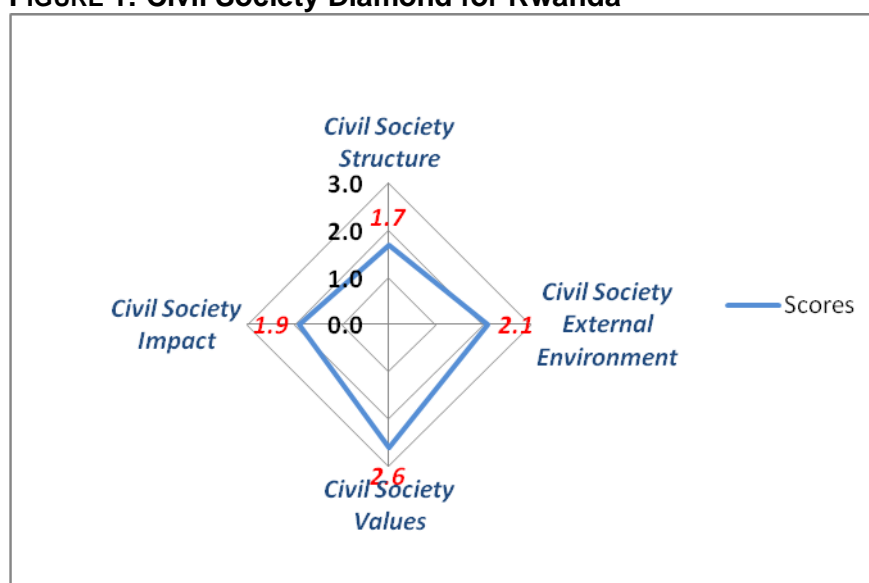
Following the presentation of the research methodology there is a historical overview of civil society in Rwanda. Here we discuss the state of the civil society in three epochs namely: pre-colonial Rwanda, post-colonial up to 1994 and post-genocide.

The third section of the report presents the main findings of this research. Here an in-depth analysis of the quantitative data is provided in which we use the CIVICUS CSI matrix as a guide to present the four dimensions: Structure of Civil Society Organisations, Civil Society's External Environment, Civil Society Values and Civil Society's Impact. We critically analysed each score in an effort to interpret the data.

This report is not a presentation of criticism for its own sake, and therefore it concludes by examining both the strengths and weaknesses of civil society at a holistic level, and by providing a set of recommendations that can assist in improving the sector. These conclusions and recommendations are all based on insights drawn from qualitative data inputs obtained from National Advisory Group meetings, regional stakeholder consultations, a review of existing literature produced by and about civil society and interviews with key informants.

The study findings of the four dimensions are graphically presented in the Civil Society Index Diamond for Rwanda, which shows the predominance of the civil society values dimension in relation to the other dimensions.

FIGURE 1: Civil Society Diamond for Rwanda



Civil society structure

As far as civil society structure is concerned, the study came up with a number of indicators pointing to the breadth of citizen participation, charitable giving, volunteering, collective community action, civil society activities, civil society membership and civil society geographical distribution. Generally, within this dimension are diverse situations ranging from weak to strong, but those that reveal weaknesses are dominant. Only charitable giving and collective community action appear to be strong. On the other hand, weaknesses prevail in citizens' participation in non-partisan action, volunteering, membership of umbrella bodies, geographical distribution (which is skewed towards major cities), and civil society activities that affect citizens' daily lives.

Civil society external environment

Generally, civil society's external working environment in Rwanda is conducive. Indeed the study reveals more strengths than weaknesses in this area. As a matter of fact, indicators such as civil society registration, restrictions on civil society restriction, dialogue between state and civil society, public trust and public spiritedness were reported to be positive. On the other hand, collaboration between the civil and the private sectors, and corporate social responsibility, are areas where the working environment is not conducive.

Civil society values

On the whole, Rwandan civil society values are relatively positive. In fact, the study reveals that civil society, to a large extent, nurtures and upholds positive values, such as anti-corruption, gender equity, poverty eradication, tolerance and democracy promotion. However, the study also reveals that Rwandan civil society has weak spots particularly around encouraging governmental transparency and environmental protection.

Civil society's impact

It is worth noting that Rwandan civil society's impact on community living conditions is minimal. Though there is some strength demonstrated in community capacity building, there are significant limits in the holding of state and corporations to account. Nevertheless, Rwandan civil society plays a moderate role in public information activities and meeting societal needs.

The dimension of civil society values takes the lead over the other three with a score of 2.6 out of 3. This is followed by civil society external environment at 2.1 and civil society impact at 1.9. Civil society structure at 1.7 emerges in Rwanda as the dimension with the greatest need for improvement, which it is suggested could be advanced by enhancing inter-relations, increasing resources and promoting the diversity of civil society participants.

INTRODUCTION

The Civil Society Index (CSI) is a participatory needs assessment and action planning tool for civil society around the world, with the aim of creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening initiatives. The Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (CCOAI, the Collaborative Council of Organisations Supporting Grassroots Initiatives), an umbrella organisation of Rwandan local NGOs in development, started a partnership with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation for conducting the research and demonstrating how CSOs participate in Rwanda's development. CCOAI felt it was well positioned to conduct the research because it has a national coverage and membership and wide experience in research. The project was carried out between 2008 and 2010 and this report presents its results.

Rwanda as an emerging democracy has seen a marked increase in organised forums and groups that could be categorised as civil society. Yet despite the increasing role of civil society in development and democratisation, there is a crucial lack of knowledge about the characteristics, roles and impact of civil society towards positive social change. This knowledge is fundamental in informing the strategies and activities of the national and international community in advancing sustainable development, good governance, democracy and human rights. This then calls for a deliberate move towards creating independent civil society that, along with government, will strengthen good governance and sustainable development.

The study examines values, structure, working environment and the impact of civil society. Findings from the study are then used to suggest strategies for improving the quality and functioning of civil society work. It is a sincere hope for CCOAI, as the part of civil society that was selected by CIVICUS to spearhead the process of civil society self-assessment in Rwanda, that by first highlighting the current state of civil society CCOAI can develop strategies to strengthen its capacities in the four dimensions of the CSI.

The project intended to ensure inclusiveness of all sectors of civil society at the national, provincial, Kigali city and district levels, both in advisors to the process and the institutions taking part in the research.

The intention of this research was to find out the state of civil society in Rwanda in as far as its values, structures, working environment and impact are concerned, as stated above. However, each respondent gave his/her opinion according to how they individually viewed this state, independent of other respondents. This, therefore, does not imply that any particular score represents the views of civil society or indeed the Rwandan public as a whole. They reflect the subjective views of those involved in the process at the time the research was conducted.

I. THE CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in governance and development around the world. In most countries, however, knowledge about the state and shape of civil society is limited. Moreover, opportunities for civil society stakeholders to come together to collectively discuss, reflect and act on the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities also remain limited.

The Civil Society Index (CSI), a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims

at creating a knowledge base and momentum for strengthening civil society. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, CSOs at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS). The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics, and the public at large.

The following key steps in CSI implementation take place at the country level:

1. **Assessment:** CSI uses an innovative mix of participatory research methods, data sources, and case studies to comprehensively assess the state of civil society.
2. **Collective reflection:** implementation involves structured dialogue among diverse civil society stakeholders that enables the identification of civil society's specific strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Joint action:** the actors involved use a participatory and consultative process to develop and implement a concrete action agenda to strengthen civil society in a country.

The following sections provide a background of the CSI, its key principles and approaches, as well as a snapshot of the methodology used in the generation of this report in Rwanda.

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The CSI first emerged as a concept over a decade ago as a follow-up to the 1997 *New Civic Atlas* publication by CIVICUS, which contained profiles of civil society in 60 countries around the world (Heinrich and Naidoo, 2001). The first version of the CSI methodology, developed by CIVICUS with the help of Professor Helmut Anheier, was unveiled in 1999. An initial pilot of the tool was carried out in 2000 in 13 countries.¹ The pilot implementation process and results were evaluated. This evaluation informed a revision of the methodology. Subsequently, CIVICUS successfully implemented the first complete phase of the CSI between 2003 and 2006 in 53 countries worldwide. This implementation directly involved more than 7,000 civil society stakeholders (Heinrich, 2008).

Between 2008 and 2010 a special additional phase of the project, of which this report is one output, was held in four African countries, with the support of UNDP Africa, in Guinea, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania. This was followed by a second full phase of a revised CSI, held in 41 countries globally.

2. PROJECT APPROACH

The CSI marries assessment and evidence with reflection and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks which have greatly influenced the implementation that this report is based upon include the following:

¹ The pilot countries were Belarus, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Indonesia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay, and Wales.

Inclusiveness: The CSI framework strives to incorporate a variety of theoretical viewpoints, as well as being inclusive in terms of civil society indicators, actors and processes included in the project.

Universality: Since the CSI is a global project, its methodology seeks to accommodate national variations in context and concepts within its framework.

Comparability: The CSI aims not to rank, but to comparatively measure different aspects of civil society worldwide. Possibility for comparisons exists both between different countries or regions within one phase of CSI implementation and between phases.

Versatility: The CSI is specifically designed to achieve an appropriate balance between international comparability and national flexibility in the implementation of the project.

Dialogue: One of the key elements of the CSI is its participatory approach, involving a wide range of stakeholders who collectively own and run the project in their respective countries.

Capacity development: Country partners are firstly trained on the CSI methodology. After the training, partners are supported throughout the implementation cycle by the CSI team at CIVICUS. Partners participating in the project also gain substantial skills in research, training and facilitation in implementing the CSI in-country.

Networking: The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including cross-sectoral levels.

Change: The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to action-oriented goals.

The CSI uses a comprehensive project implementation approach and a wide range of research methods. At the core of the CSI lies a broad and encompassing definition of civil society, which informs the overall project implementation process. To assess the state of civil society in a given country, this particular CSI methodology examines the four key dimensions described above, with each of these four dimensions composed of a set of sub-dimensions, which are in turn made up of a set of individual indicators, 76 in all, on which data are gathered through a survey of the general population group, surveys with CSO representatives and an analysis of secondary data, which are then discussed by the National Action Group (NAG) and given a score on a scale of 0 to 3, where 3 is the best possible score. The research and assessment findings are discussed at a gathering of key stakeholders, whose task is to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations on key priority actions to strengthen civil society.

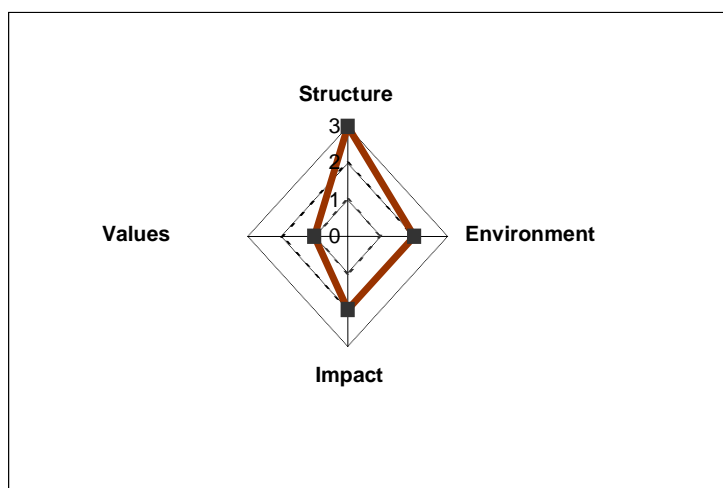
With the above mentioned foundations, the CSI methodology uses a combination of participatory and scientific research methods to generate an assessment of the state of civil society at the national level. The CSI measures the following core dimensions:

- The **structure** of civil society (e.g. number of members, extent of giving and volunteering, number and features of umbrella organisations and civil society infrastructure, human and financial resources);
- The external **environment** in which civil society exists and functions (e.g. legislative, political, cultural and economic context, relationship between civil society and the state as well as the private sector);
- The **values** practiced and promoted within the civil society arena (e.g. democracy, tolerance or protection of the environment); and

- The **impact** of activities pursued by civil society actors (e.g. public policy impact, empowerment of people, meeting societal needs).

To visually present the scores of the four main dimensions, the CSI uses the Civil Society Diamond (see figure 2 for an example).² The Civil Society Diamond, with its four axes, visually summarises the strengths and weaknesses of civil society. CIVICUS notes that since it captures the essence of the state of civil society across its key dimensions, the Civil Society Diamond can provide a useful starting point for interpretations and discussions about what civil society looks like in a given country.

FIGURE 2: Civil Society Diamond



3. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The CSI project called on CCOAIB specifically and Rwandan CSOs in general to co-operate on the process and their inputs and have full representative participation of civil society based at the provincial, Kigali city and district level. To achieve this, the following activities were undertaken during the project:

- National Advisory Group meetings;
- Regional stakeholder consultations;
- Primary research;
- Secondary research;
- Preparation and scoring of CSI data;
- Analysis of data
- National workshop, for research validation;
- Finalising reports and undertaking evaluation.

The criteria for the selection of respondents from the study population

In order to select respondents from stakeholders, we applied the purposive sampling technique. Besides this technique, random sampling was used to select individuals from the community, utilising existing CSO lists at the district level.

Geographical distribution of the respondents

² The Civil Society Diamond was developed for CIVICUS by Helmut Anheier.

Four provinces and Kigali city were considered to ensure the study would be representative. These were:

- Kigali city
- Western Province
- Eastern Province
- Northern Province
- Southern Province

At the district level, the following districts were randomly selected in each province and Kigali city:

TABLE 2: Geographical distribution of respondents

Districts	Provinces / Kigali city
Gasabo Nyarugenge Kicukiro	Kigali city
Bugesera Gatsibo Rwamagana	Eastern Province
Karongi Nyabihu Rusizi	Western Province
Burera Gicumbi Musanze	Northern Province
Gisagara Nyamagabe Nyanza	Southern Province

Data collection techniques and data analysis

The CSI process used the following techniques of data collection in an effort to comprehensively cover the scope and parameters of the research:

- Review of existing information
- Regional stakeholder consultations
- Community survey
- Interviews with key informants

Review of existing information

The research team reviewed secondary data sources which included reports and publications on activities of civil society in general and Rwandan civil society in particular which culminated in a preliminary report giving an overview of the status of civil society in Rwanda.

Regional civil society stakeholder consultations

Regional consultations were held in five provinces with 24 participants each, totalling 120 participants. Out of these 78 (65%) responded to the regional stakeholders' consultation

questionnaire. This coverage, however, is low relative to the Community Survey, due to the fact that most of this sample are CSO employees who had limited time to respond.

Representatives of the different clusters of civil society identified by CCOAIB were invited to participate in the forums that formed focus group discussions.

Community survey

Random sampling was applied in identifying districts to be included in the research as mentioned above. Out of the 30 districts, 15 districts were sampled to participate in the community survey. Before starting the data collection process, interviewers were trained on the research objectives, questionnaire content, data collection process and interview techniques, quality control and timeframe. This phase was important as it enabled the supervising team and the specialists to test the questionnaire and showed the problems that might arise at the time of the survey, which could then be solved before the data collection phase began. The study sample aimed to offer geopolitical representation and was carried out in 15 districts randomly selected out of the 30 in Rwanda; that is three districts in each province and Kigali city. Case study investigations were carried out with regional stakeholders and at the community level. For feasibility reasons our sample was 1,500 people countrywide, that is 300 per province / Kigali city or 100 per district. Of 1,500 targeted population, 1,479 (98.6%) responded to the questions.

Interviews with key informants

Interviews were held with people from UNDP, IRDP and Transparency Rwanda as well as university lecturers to generate more data and authenticate the analysis from review of existing information. Discussions were based on the following issues:

- State accountability
- Civil society impact on corporate social responsibility
- Democracy promotion
- Tolerance and conflict resolution
- Gender equity and empowerment of women
- Poverty eradication
- Environment protection

Data analysis

It is important to note that this study offers predominantly a primary quantitative data analysis. In addition a qualitative data analysis made it possible for the researchers to analyse the open-ended survey questions. These include questions such as those posed to stakeholders during focus group discussions and interviews of key informants.

II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN RWANDA

1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RWANDA

Pre-colonial Rwanda was characterised by a highly organised monarchical leadership. Rwanda became part of German East Africa in 1899. Following Germany's defeat in the First World War, Rwanda came under the control of Belgium. Until the 1950s, Belgian colonial rule was characterised by a highly authoritarian and centralised administrative structure. However, the Catholic Church, which emerged as a 'state within a state', exercised power and influence which rivalled that of the colonial administration.³ Furthermore, the absence of democratic institutions (e.g., civil rights, elections, and representative government institutions) and the absence of civil society and associational life outside of religious institutions, gave rise to successive repressive regimes.⁴

The growing demands throughout the continent for self-governance and independence pressured the Belgians to open up the political system by permitting Rwandans to participate in non-partisan local elections and then to organise political parties in 1959. Although reflecting a certain measure of democratisation, these developments exacerbated ethnic divisions, rivalries and conflict. Civil society associations became highly politicised and provided a broad organisational base for ethnically based political parties. The Hutu political parties equated majority rule with Hutu rule and portrayed themselves as social revolutionaries seeking to throw off the monarchical regime led by the Tutsi.⁵

As a consequence of the above divisive politics, a series of massacres took place in late 1959, which provoked the flight of tens of thousands of Tutsis. When independence came in 1962, Grégoire Kayibanda, the head of MDR-Parmehutu, took power. Kayibanda was closely identified with the Catholic Church hierarchy based in Kabgayi and had been the secretary-general of TRAFIRO, the largest cooperative in Rwanda. An attempted invasion by Tutsi exiles in 1963 failed and was followed by more massacres of Tutsis remaining. Kayibanda, who favoured the Hutu elite from the centre of Rwanda, established a highly repressive one-party state that did little to develop civil society.

In 1973, a military coup led by Juvénal Habyarimana, a northern Hutu, overthrew the Kayibanda regime and established a one-party regime dominated by the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND). Habyarimana promoted the rapid organisation and expansion of agricultural cooperatives and pre-cooperatives under the banner of development. Donors poured large amounts of resources into Rwanda and hailed its dense network of vibrant grassroots associations, despite the fact that these associations were highly dependent upon and tightly controlled by the state.

The density of associational life did little to contribute to the development of a democratic society. On the contrary, Habyarimana's regime favoured northern Hutus in setting up a regional and ethnic quota system that restricted the access of Tutsis and southern Hutus to higher education, government posts, and employment in the private sector. Under pressure from the West and within Rwanda, Habyarimana took steps towards political liberalisation (1990-1994) by allowing the return of political parties and the creation of Rwanda's first human rights associations.

The October 1990 invasion of Rwanda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) hardened the regime's attitude towards the Tutsi population and moderate Hutus, and prepared the way for

³ Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/nordic/book5/pb025c.html>.

⁴ CCOAIB, *Société civile rwandaise. Problèmes et perspectives*, Kigali, 2003.

⁵ Journal of Humanitarian Assistance, <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/nordic/book5/pb025c.html>.

the 1994 genocide. By 1992, extremists had organised the Hutu militia, Interahamwe, and had begun to intensify hate campaigns directed against the Tutsis and alleged Hutu traitors. Peace negotiations between the government and the RPF led to the August 1992 Arusha Agreement in which both parties agreed to end hostilities and to establish a national unity coalition government. However, Habyarimana moved slowly to implement the agreement. The shooting down of the plane carrying Habyarimana and the president of Burundi in April 1994 was followed by a carefully planned and executed massacre of the Tutsi population, moderate Hutus, and a small number of religious officials and human rights activists who had spoken out against the genocide. The rapid military defeat of the extremist Hutu regime by the RPF in 1994 was accompanied by the flight of two million ethnic Hutus into Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Tanzania and the return of most of the Tutsi exiles to Rwanda. A government of national unity dominated by the RPF was set up that pledged to advance peace and reconciliation and to move Rwanda towards democracy.

The new government also appealed to all Rwandans to return home. In 1996, most of the Hutus who had fled returned. Incursions led by Hutu rebels based in DRC fostered an atmosphere of insecurity in the western part of Rwanda in 1997, but they were repelled by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) which drove out the rebels and pursued them into DRC. Since 1998, the RPF government has enjoyed a certain measure of success in rehabilitating the infrastructure destroyed by the war, resettling returning populations, introducing decentralised local government structures, and working for peace and reconciliation along non-ethnic lines.

The post genocide period was characterised by an influx of CSOs, dominated mainly by international NGOs, although there was also a slow emergence of local associations which participated in the alleviation of the then social and economic crisis. Notably there was an emergence of dynamic women's groups and associations in all sectors of civil society, particularly at the national and regional levels. Women's groups have been particularly active in supporting the Gacaca⁶ justice initiatives; lobbying for assistance and justice for widows, orphans, and other vulnerable groups in Rwandan society; and providing credit for women's associations engaged in economic activities. The government has acknowledged the importance of women in Rwandan society and, through the Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion, has shown strong support for women's groups and associations.

Although the government is closely controlling the management of decentralisation, it has become increasingly clear that its recent decentralisation policies are providing a legal framework for greater local participation in decision-making. The government has recently passed legislation providing for the transfer of many powers from the central government to local government authorities.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RWANDA

Theorists of democracy often regard civil society as a counterweight to the state and a vehicle for articulating the concerns and defending the interests of different sectors of the population vis-à-vis the state. Many maintain that a strong and autonomous civil society is necessary for the functioning of a healthy democracy.⁷

In his analysis of Rwandan civil society before the genocide, Peter Uvin (Uvin 1999) challenges the assumption that the existence of a dense network of diverse associations labelled civil society necessarily contributes to democracy, pluralism, and efficiency. Although Rwanda had a reputation among donors as having a highly developed and vital civil

⁶ Gacaca is an informal traditional judicial system practised in Rwanda from the pre-colonial period.

⁷ CCOAIB (2003), *Société civile Rwandaise: problèmes et perspectives*, Kigali.

society, its civil society did nothing to stop the genocide. Uvin argues that the conditions for a 'true' civil society, (i.e. one that is based on democratic values, is not dependent upon the state, and which enjoys a certain degree of freedom and political and social space) did not exist in Rwanda.

Uvin lists five components of civil society operating in Rwanda before the 1994 genocide:

- Cooperatives
- Peasant associations
- Tontines⁸ and informal associations
- Foreign and local NGOs
- Churches

Post genocide civil society is regarded as being more complex and having more components than the five categories listed above. It also includes media, trade unions, women and youth groups, human rights organisations and, some would argue, aspects of the private sector. On the other hand, while recognising the involvement of international NGOs in Rwanda's associational life, this assessment does not consider international NGOs to be a component of Rwandan domestic civil society.

One striking aspect of civil society organisations in Rwanda is the tendency of most national-level associations within a given sector to join a larger umbrella group. The CCOAIB has 38 member organisations; including several women's organisations and the Centrale Syndicate des Travailleurs du Rwanda (CESTRAR) (trade unions and private sector associations also have their own umbrella groups). Umbrella groups also encompass different organisations within non-economic civil society sectors, including Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe, the Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme (CLADHO), which is the main umbrella group for five human rights member organisations, and the Maison de la Presse, a group of various media associations.

Since 1980, civil society in Rwanda has seen the blossoming of NGOs and the emergence of various professional associations. At the same time this has given rise to fundamental questions about the role of civil society and the extent to which it is helpful to the population it purports to speak for, represent and assist. As part of the CSI project the members and leaders of those associations therefore organised many debates on the definition, nature and role of civil society.

The present Rwandan civil society involves mainly local and international NGOs and different charities affiliated to different religious organisations. Many associations and cooperatives and other social groups do not regard themselves as part of civil society, and it is therefore necessary to sensitise them to see themselves as active participants in civil society. Rwandan civil society has recently organised itself into the Rwandan Civil Society Platform, which comprises 15 umbrella groups, and arrangements are underway to decentralise civil society structures to match administrative decentralised entities. This will facilitate advocacy, lobbying and monitoring of government actions.

3. KEY DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY CONTEXT

As far as civil society in the Rwanda context is concerned, it can be said that there is an enabling environment for Rwandan civil society to function properly. Rwanda has made significant progress towards achieving constitutional democracy and government

⁸ A micro-finance pooling system, notably practised in West Africa.

effectiveness, and seeks to foster principles of respect for human rights consistent with those advanced by the UN. There are also several instruments that are intended to shape the nature of political competition by enabling a sharing of power between larger and smaller parties, and promoting inclusive rather than adversarial politics.⁹ Currently, civil society also features prominently in districts' development activities in the form of Joint Action Development Forum (JADF). With respect to policy formulation and analysis the government has constituted the Rwanda Economic and Social Development Council (RESC), comprising both public and private sectors and CSOs, including faith-based organisations, with the object of critically analysing policies before they can be passed by the cabinet.

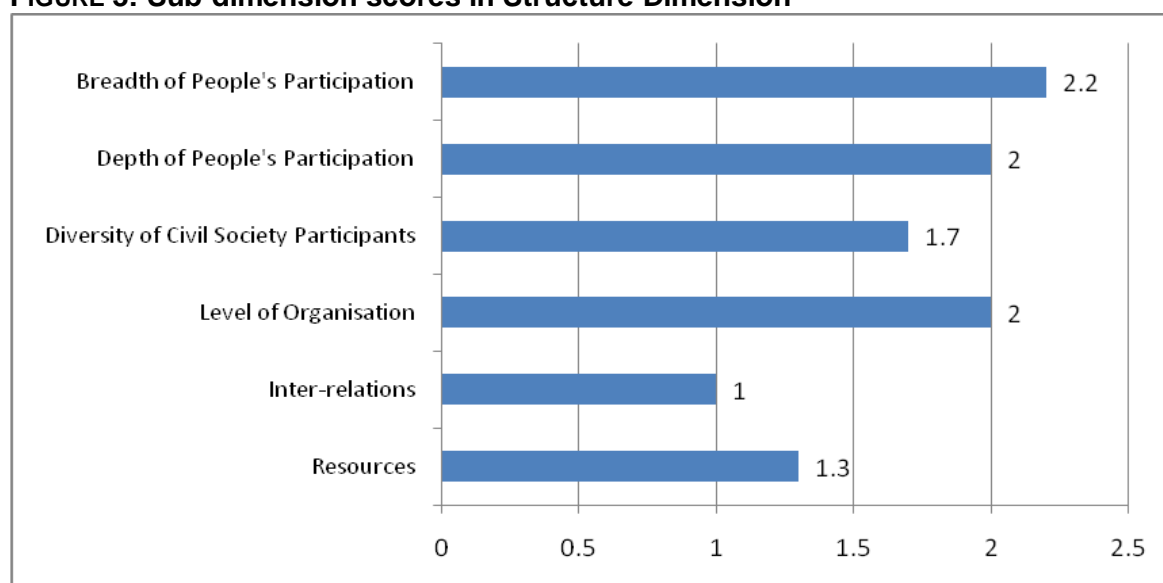
⁹ Rwanda Political Parties Forum, which determines how political power is shared.

III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN RWANDA

1. STRUCTURE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

This section evaluates the structure of civil society in Rwanda in terms of breadth and depth of citizen participation, level of organisation and resources. The score for this section is 1.7 out of 3, indicating that the structure of civil society in Rwanda is relatively strong. Figure 3 presents a summary of the sub-dimension scores for the structure dimension, followed by some of the most significant findings of this section. The data here is drawn largely from the regional focus groups of CSO representatives, and the community survey of a sample of the general population.

FIGURE 3: Sub-dimension scores in Structure Dimension



In general, according to findings from primary data sources and the national action group (NAG) scoring results, Rwandan participation in non-partisan political action is relatively strong. Collective community action and charitable giving emerge as the strongest areas, whereas volunteering appears to be weak. Nevertheless, CSO membership and non-partisan political action are reported to be quite strong.

Further, a secondary data review indicates that a vast public opinion poll on social cohesion carried out in 2006 by the Commission of National Unity and Reconciliation and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) showed that 12% of heads of household are involved in social organisations in the areas of health, education, drinking water and culture.¹⁰

1.1/1.2 Breadth and depth of people's participation

a. Charitable giving

Findings reveal that 84.8% of respondents in the community survey, a large majority, donate to charity.

However, these findings do not conform with those from the study on sustainability of Rwandan civil society carried out by IRC in 2008, which shows that the revenue provided by

¹⁰ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 24.

economic activities of CSOs, (92% of which pursue income generating activities) is very low, with less than 12% of the family income of CSO members donated for charitable activities.¹¹ This discrepancy may be due to the fact that the donations as indicated from this secondary source are expressed only in monetary terms, whereas the donations identified in the CSI survey may include both monetary donations and those made in kind, which would presumably increase the reported percentage of charitable activities by the general population.

b. Volunteering

In the community survey only 21.4% of respondents say that voluntary work is undertaken by the Rwandan population. The percentage of people undertaking voluntary work on a regular basis in Rwanda is low.

TABLE 2: Volunteering

Volunteering	Frequency	%
Yes	317	21.4
No	1,162	78.6
Total	1,479	100

The community survey findings are corroborated by the 2008 IRC study on civil society sustainability, which revealed that not enough qualified CSO members are volunteering to fill existing gaps in human resources. However, no mention is made in this on the percentage of people who do volunteering on regular basis.¹²

c. Collective community action

With regard to collective community action, defined as attending a community meeting, participating in a community-organised event or taking part in a collective effort to solve a community problem or advance a community interest, a large majority of community survey respondents (80.1%) indicate that collective community action is undertaken. These include respondents who say they participated in collective community action one, several and many times.

TABLE 3: Collective community action

Participated in community action	Frequency	%
No	295	19.9
One	103	7
Several	523	35.4
Many	558	37.8
Total	1,479	100

These findings are confirmed by the 2008 National Unity and Reconciliation Committee (NURC) survey which reports that 91% of respondents agreed that “citizens take part in decision-making on problems concerning them.” This may be due to the fact that all district development plans employ the participatory rural appraisal approach (PRA) in their development, and the Rwandan tradition of community work (Umuganda),¹³ done monthly on

¹¹ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 58

¹² IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 34

¹³ ‘Umuganda’ – community service: the last Saturday of every month between 7 AM and 12 PM everything in Rwanda stops. Or at least all the restaurants keep closed, markets do not operate and public and private

the last Saturday of month), through both of which citizens participate regularly in community activities.¹⁴

However, findings from the same source show that only 47% of respondents reported actually having attended a community meeting recently, while 23% of them are involved in an elected administrative body. Further, the survey highlighted that it is unclear how voluntary involvement in public decision-making is, since half of all respondents agreed with the statement that “if the coordinator does not force people to act, nothing will be done in the sector.”

1.3 Diversity of civil society participation

a. Civil society membership

As can be seen in the table below, derived from participants in the regional CSO consultations, civil society participation tends to involve almost all social groups, albeit not equitably. As far as distribution of CSOs is concerned, only some social groups appear to be active in different parts of Rwanda.

TABLE 4: The level of membership of social groups within civil society

Social groups	Absent/excluded (%)	Severely underrepresented (%)	Somewhat underrepresented (%)	Equitably represented (%)
Women	1.3	-	36.8	61.8
Rural population	1.4	12.9	25.7	60
Poor people	18.3	6.7	35	40
Upper class/elite	13.8	13.8	27.6	44.8

60% and 61.8% of the participants in the regional consultations say that rural populations and women are equitably represented in civil society as members while 40% and 44.8% indicate the same with regard to poor people and the elite respectively. However, 12.9% of the respondents affirm the rural population is severely underrepresented in as far as membership of CSOs is concerned.

A secondary data source indicates that only 4.6% of women reported being active within community user committees (GCB) compared to 8.7% of men.¹⁵ But women are more likely to be members of prayer groups (30%) than men (24%). In charitable organisations, women are less likely to be members (5.8%) compared to men (8.8%).

The same source indicates that CSOs are concentrated in urban areas, as are the upper class/elite, where women represent 48% of CSO membership and hold at least two of the high-level positions in 22% of organisations. Considering both sources, it is worth noting that

transportation is limited. The reason for this is that the entire country is supposed to take part in umuganda – community service. This includes digging ditches, sweeping the grounds, making compost, building houses, clearing land, or any other activity that is helping the country becoming better. Some people use this day to have a sleep-in, but at least in the countryside, every family has to have a representative in the umuganda in the village.

¹⁴ NURC (2008) Social Cohesion in Rwanda, An Opinion Survey Results 2005-2007, p3. See also IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 33

¹⁵ Dr L Boerstra (2008) situation analysis of civil society interventions in HIV/AIDS response – Rwanda, GTZ, p.5. See also IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 27

women are well represented as members of civil society in general, but less represented in urban areas.

b. Civil society leadership

On the question of CSO leadership and gender, 50% of respondents from the regional stakeholder consultations (Table 5) say that women are somewhat underrepresented while 37.1% indicate they are equitably represented. However, a substantial majority of respondents (41.4%) state that the rural population is severely underrepresented in civil society leadership. Further, 20.3% of respondents say that poor people are severely underrepresented in civil society leadership positions.

TABLE 5: The level of participation of social groups as leaders of CSOs

Social groups	Absent/excluded (%)	Severely underrepresented (%)	Somewhat underrepresented (%)	Equitably represented (%)
Women	1.4	11.4	50.0	37.1
Rural population	1.7	41.4	25.9	31.0
Poor people	18.8	20.3	25.0	35.9
Upper class/elite	15.1	11.3	30.2	43.4

The secondary data tells us that some categories of vulnerable persons, such as survivors and widows of the genocide, formed distinct CSOs themselves. These groups are part of civil society, even though they are not considered at the local level as CSOs of the same type as others, given their national presence and support they receive from the government.¹⁶

Women are another marginalised social group. Nevertheless, another source shows that this group holds positions of responsibility in approximately 91% of CSOs. This percentage decreases to 89% for all CSOs established before 1994. It should also be noted that 13% of CSOs are exclusively female, in comparison with 4% that are exclusively male.¹⁷ This dominance of women in leadership positions post 1994 may be interpreted as a result of the national policy of gender mainstreaming.

c. Civil society geographical distribution

CSOs in Rwanda are concentrated in major cities, according to the majority of respondents (56.8%) in the regional stakeholder consultations.

TABLE 6: CSO geographical distribution

Areas of CSO distribution	%
Largely concentrated in major cities	56.8
Largely limited to urban areas	14.9
Present in all except the most remote areas of the country	23
Present in all, even the most remote areas of the country	5.4

Based other research carried out by IRC in 2008, CSOs geographical distribution stands as follows: Kigali has 7.8% of CSO members, the East 23.1%, the North 21.5%, the South

¹⁶ Dr L Boerstra (2008) situation analysis of civil society interventions in HIV/AIDS response – Rwanda , GTZ, p.5. See also NURC (2008) Social Cohesion in Rwanda, An Opinion Survey Results 2005-2007, p25

¹⁷ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, pp 5, 25

24.2% and the West 23.4%.¹⁸ This should be distinguished from the findings shown in table 6, as this source highlights location of individual membership of CSOs rather than organisational distribution. The concentration of CSOs in Kigali and other major cities can be seen as largely due to the availability of the necessary social infrastructure that enables them to fulfil their mission.

1.4 Level of organisation

a. CSO level of activity

The CSI findings reveal that civil society in Rwanda is organised in such a way that there is a diversity of interventions. With respect to the level of CSOs activities, there are those that operate at grassroots levels, such as at the district and provincial levels, and those that operate only at a national level. This largely depends on resources available to individual CSOs and the relevant field of intervention.

Table 7 below sets out the findings from regional stakeholder consultations on CSO activity levels.

TABLE 7: CSO activities

Issues	Mentioned	Not mentioned
Informed people about an important issue (e.g. government election, HIV/AIDS)	94.3	5.7
Helped community to come together around a specific problem	83.8	6.2
Specifically helped poor people in the community to improve their lives	85.8	14.2
Directly solved a specific problem/addressed a specific need (e.g. building a well)	83.6	16.4
Helped community members to set up income-generating activities	82.4	17.6
Specifically helped women in the community to improve their lives	78.4	21.6

Other sources, which include USAID, NURC and IRC, point out that CSOs' activities in engaging citizens in issues that affect their lives are generally weak. Rather, the local administration takes the initiative to mobilise the population on matters that concern them. According to these sources the situation of CSOs in this matter is indicated by the following:

- CSOs have been invited to participate in many workshops and seminars on good governance in Rwanda;
- Local CSOs need to be mobilised and take the opportunity which is offered by the draft law on local NGOs to participate more actively in the process of public policy and decision-making;
- An ongoing challenge to current decentralisation efforts is the minimal level of civil society involvement at the lowest levels of government (district, sector and cell level).¹⁹ There are relatively few local-level organisations outside of the churches, and information and citizen skills are lacking at the lowest levels of government. As citizens are not aware of how to engage the administration they tend to be mobilised

¹⁸ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 25

¹⁹ Cell level is the administrative unit immediately above the village level.

by the administrative structures rather than making the state respond to their participation;

- Civil society participates in some democratic actions, including in its role as observers of parliamentary and presidential elections. However, outside of the elections, civil society is not seen as the champion of promoting democracy at the local level.²⁰

However, it is noted that women in Rwanda's civil society have developed a three-pronged mechanism for coordinating their advocacy, represented by Pro-Femmes, the executive branch (Ministry of Gender and Women in Development), and the legislative branch (Forum of Women Parliamentarians).

An example of the effectiveness of this mechanism is the process the Rwandan women's movement initiated around the ratification of the new constitution. To elicit concerns, interests and suggestions regarding a new constitution, Pro-Femmes held consultations with its member NGOs and women at the grassroots level. They then met with representatives of the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to report members' concerns. Together the three sectors contributed to a policy paper that recommended specific actions to make the constitution gender-sensitive and increase women's representation in government, which was submitted to the Constitutional Commission. Once the draft constitution sufficiently reflected their interests, Pro-Femmes engaged in a mobilisation campaign to encourage women to support the adoption of the document in the countrywide referendum.

b. CSOs participation in umbrella bodies and their effectiveness

With regard to CSO participation in umbrella bodies, 40.4% of participants in regional stakeholder consultations say that between 40 and 60% of the CSOs are members of umbrella bodies.

TABLE 8: CSO membership of umbrella bodies

Extent of membership	%
Less than 20%	12.3
Between 20 and 40%	26.3
Between 40 and 60%	40.4
More than 60%	21.1

Whilst the majority of respondents affirm that most CSOs in Rwanda belong to umbrella organisations, other sources indicate that CSOs have not tried systematically to work together as part of civil society, neither to advocate towards local authorities, nor to build links with private sector partners. Some endeavours have been made, but they lack adequate organisation and support.²¹

Further, 56.1% of regional stakeholder respondents affirm that umbrella bodies are generally effective.

TABLE 9: Effectiveness of umbrella bodies

State of effectiveness	%
Completely ineffective	—
Largely ineffective	—

²⁰ USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, p 34. See also NURC (2008) Social Cohesion in Rwanda, An Opinion Survey Results 2005-2007, p23 and IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 45

²¹ IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 59

Mixed	43.9
Generally effective	56.1

Research carried out by Boerstra in 2008 states that about 37% of CSO have established one or more partnerships with other stakeholders, most often with another organisation. For community-based organisations (CBOs), the rate is 36.5%, cooperatives 44%, and for local non-governmental organisations (LNGOs) 52%, which to a great extent corroborates the regional stakeholders' consultation data above. In general, 32% of CSOs have established some kind of partnership with another CSO.²²

However, the same research findings report that there is insufficient coordination and networking between umbrella coordination units and members.

c. CSO support infrastructure

According to findings from the regional stakeholder consultation, 82.8% of the respondents say that there exists moderate infrastructure which supports the functioning of CSOs in Rwanda.

TABLE 10: CSOs support infrastructure

Support infrastructure	%
No such infrastructure exists	1.7
Very limited infrastructure exists	8.6
Moderate infrastructure exists	82.8
Well-developed infrastructure exists	5.2

Some CSOs have their own office premises, and some also own training centres, health centres and micro hydro power generation plants, which enable them to serve their constituencies effectively.

1.5 Inter-relations

a. Level of communication among CSOs

Respondents from the regional stakeholder consultations show that the level of communication among the CSOs is moderate, while a small proportion (10.5%) say it is non-existent or insignificant.

TABLE 11: Level of communication among CSOs

Level of communication	%
Non-existent / insignificant	10.5
Limited	5.3
Moderate	73.7
Significant	10.5

However, research carried out by Boerstra in 2008 to some extent agrees with the minority of the respondents from the regional stakeholder consultations who say that communication among CSOs is non-existent or insignificant. Furthermore Boerstra argues that coordination among the numerous organisations of civil society remains a major concern, and that the

²² Dr L Boerstra (2008) situation analysis of civil society interventions in HIV/AIDS response – Rwanda, GTZ, p.5. See also R Mukamunana and P A Brynard (2005) The role of civil society organisations in policy making process in Rwanda, in *Journal of Public Administration*, Vol 40 no 4.1, University of Pretoria, p673, and IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 32.

most visible part of civil society is composed of organisations in the capital, which may have very little presence outside Kigali and may reflect more the interests of the intellectual classes and the elite than those of the masses of the population. The author further notes that links between national-level groups and local grassroots organisations remain insufficient in most sectors. Furthermore, coordination among the various sectors remains inadequate.²³

b. Cross-sectoral cooperation

55.2% of respondents from the regional stakeholder consultations say that some alliances, networks or coalitions on issues of common concern exist, while 37.9% of them affirm that there are very few cases of cross-sectoral cooperation.

TABLE 12: Cross-sectoral cooperation

Existence of alliances, networks or coalitions on issues of common concern?	%
None	3.4
Very few	37.9
Some	55.2
Numerous	3.4

The above findings are confirmed by the SIDA Country report of 2008, which argues that there is insufficient cooperation among NGOs. It is further argued in the same report that CSOs in Rwanda NGOs are weak in terms of working together and in manifesting themselves as an autonomous and as a collective watchdog, especially in defence of human rights.²⁴

1.6 Resources

The level of resources can be evaluated with reference to indicators such as human, financial, organisational and technological resources. Human and technological resources score better than organisational and financial resources, implying that the available human and technological resources may be underutilised.

However, according to one of the respondents from academia, “While civil society has meaningless financial resources they have to compete with very strong institutions in order to keep their workforce. The civil society human resources are unstable provided that whoever is seen as intellectually challenging is quickly picked-up or stolen by those who can offer better financial gains.”

Almost all informants consulted (9 out of 10) identified that Rwandan civil society has serious sustainability issues. While many associations are created as an opportunity to access funds, most civil society leaders are considered as unstable in their roles, as they tend to move around depending on where more money can be found.

Most of those who initiated associations have left CSOs for highly paid jobs, be it within international NGOs or in the government’s political positions, said one of the respondents.

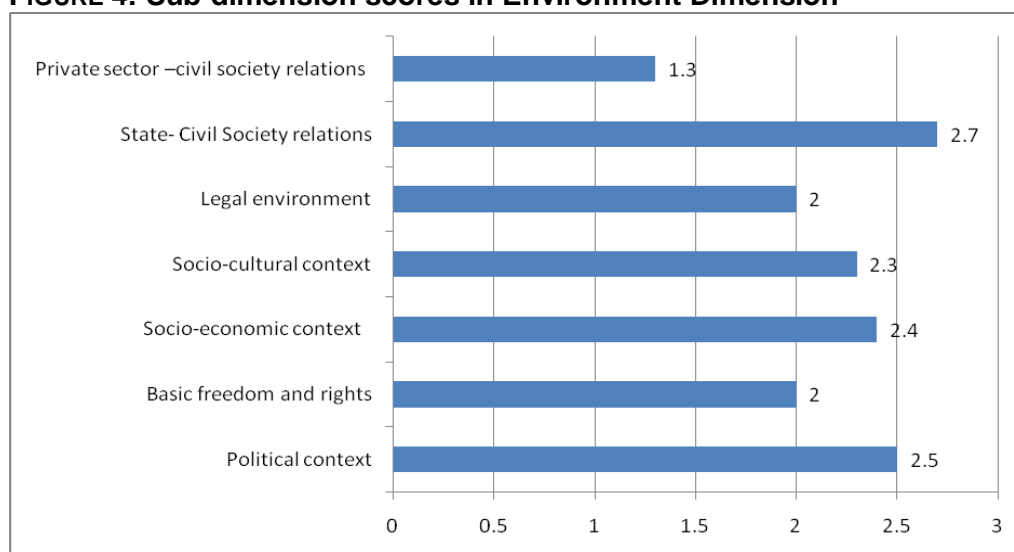
²³ Dr L Boerstra (2008) situation analysis of civil society interventions in HIV/AIDS response – Rwanda , GTZ, p.5.

²⁴ CCOAIB (2003), Société civile Rwandaise: problèmes et perspectives, Kigali. SIDA (2008), SIDA country report, Rwanda, p.14.

2 CIVIL SOCIETY'S EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

This section examines the political, social, economic, cultural and legal environment in which civil society functions. The average score for this dimension is 2.1 out of 3, indicating that the external environment of civil society in Rwanda is somewhat enabling. Figure 4 presents the scores for the seven sub-dimensions within the External Environment dimension. As well as the regional stakeholder consultations and community survey this section draws significantly from secondary data sources, which are then discussed and scored by the NAG.

FIGURE 4: Sub-dimension scores in Environment Dimension



2.1 Political context

According to secondary data,²⁵ Rwanda is making significant progress towards achieving constitutional democracy. Authorities took solid steps in establishing a sound legal framework (constitution, referendum and election); government seeks to foster principles of respect for human rights consistent with those advanced by the UN; local, legislative and presidential elections are held; and multiparty democracy has been restored. Rwanda's Basic Laws guarantee the right of association to all groups. The government is currently revising many old laws governing the organisation and functioning of civil society associations.

For the first time in Rwanda's history, local government will be run by officials elected by the population rather than those named by the state. However, local government's lack of financial resources reduces the possibility of implementing local development programmes. Local civil society will need to be mobilised to take advantage of the space opened up by the new laws and to participate more actively in local decision-making.

In addition, there are several instruments that are intended to shape the nature of political competition by enabling a sharing of power between larger and smaller parties, and promoting inclusive rather than adversarial politics. The political system in Rwanda is characterised more by consensus building and power sharing than adversarial competition.

²⁵ CSI Rwanda, Secondary Data Report on Environment Dimension about Political Rights.

Furthermore, there are improvements in rule of law and governance effectiveness, as reported by World Governance Indicators (WGI) in 2008 which states that respect shown by leaders for the rule of law is improved, and the government has shown a demonstrated commitment to reform in this area.

2.2 Basic freedoms and rights

Basic freedoms and rights exist and are recognised by law but occasionally violated. What this implies is that the sub-indicators in this area which include civil liberties, information rights and press freedoms also exist but are faced with the same violations.

2.3 Socio-economic context

The research found that the socio-economic context is somewhat enabling. According to the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey in Rwanda, carried out from 2005 to 2006, 56.9% of the population live beneath the poverty line. However, in so far as civil conflict is concerned, Rwanda has enjoyed relative peace in the past ten years.

2.4 Socio-cultural context

The research also found the socio-cultural context to be somewhat enabling. The government should be commended for its efforts in establishing the NURC, while the revival of traditional institutions such as the Gacaca courts to adjudicate genocide crimes can be considered important strategies for promoting national dialogue and general trust in society.

a. Socio-cultural norms (public spiritedness)

Generally, Rwandan society displays a high level of honesty, as indicated by table 12 below, drawn from the community survey, which shows that people display little zeal for such anti-social actions as avoiding paying for public transport, cheating on taxes and claiming government benefits to which they are not entitled.

TABLE 13: Socio-cultural norms (public spiritedness)

Response options – the action is acceptable...	Claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled	Avoiding to pay for public transport	Cheating on taxes if you have a chance
Always	17.4	5.6	3.9
Sometimes	32.7	8.9	7.2
Never	38.2	78	81.3
Don't know	7	3.6	3.4
Missing	4.6	3.9	4.2
Total	100	100	100

2.5 Legal environment

a. Legal restrictions on CSO advocacy

Data from regional stakeholder consultations indicate that 88.1% of the respondents believe that there are no restrictions by the government on civil society's advocacy activities. However, only 5.1% of the respondents say there are reasonable restrictions while 6.8% indicate there are unreasonable restrictions.

However, an assessment carried out by USAID on Rwanda Democracy and Governance in 2005 showed that civil society activists and others are expected to stay within tightly controlled bounds of discourse and that the government keeps a wary eye on the activities of independent civil society, and has largely re-integrated Rwandan Churches into the sphere of political control.

The assessment further indicates that civil society groups in Rwanda rarely take an active role in shaping government policy, even in areas of direct concern to them. At the same time, they often take on a role of helping to implement government initiatives, and remain highly dependent upon the government for authorisation, funding, and access to land and other resources.

Furthermore, the same source reiterates that the government has reacted harshly to challenges and criticism from civil society, and most groups have largely abdicated any sort of advocacy role, seeking instead to appease the authorities, and that many of those groups that do seek to retain their independence take a confrontational approach, which leads to conflict with the regime.

Encouragingly, however, a few groups have demonstrated an ability to retain their independence in the face of government pressure. Notably, among them are CCOAIB and Pro-Femmes, which have already been quite successful at taking on an advocacy role, and their actions could become a model for other groups.²⁶ This meshes with the findings from regional stakeholder consultations that the post genocide Rwanda regime encourages integrative and non-confrontational stances between government and development partners. However, restrictions encountered imply divergences from this.

b. CSOs registration

At the regional stakeholder consultations, 100% of the respondents said that CSO registration in Rwanda adheres to legal provisions, 95.8% say it is inexpensive, which enables small organisations to register, 89.1% indicate that registration procedures are consistently applied, such that favouritism and discrimination are avoided, while 60.5% say it is simple as it does not require any specific legal advice. However, only 31.9% say it is quick (less than two months to register).

TABLE 14: CSO registration

Procedures of registering CSOs	%
Quick - usually takes less than two months	31.9
Simple - applicants do not require specific legal advice	60.5
Inexpensive - does not make it impossible for small organisations to register	95.8
Following legal provisions - procedures do not violate the registration laws	100
Consistently applied - same procedures applied to all applicants (i.e. no favouritism or discrimination)	89.1

Whereas primary data indicates that there are no serious registration problems apart from the time it takes to register, according to a report issued by ICNL and WMD (2008), civil society work is hampered by the requirement of annual renewal of registration. Government is in the process of preparing a new legal framework, which, if passed, should allow NGOs to acquire permanent legal status, while still requiring annual reporting of accounts and work

²⁶ USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, p.35.

plans to the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC). Registered CSOs gain official status through a relatively simple registration procedure.²⁷

2.6 State-civil society relations

Regional stakeholder consultations tell us there is dialogue between state and civil society, albeit moderate and limited, as shown by 82.2% of the respondents.

TABLE 15: State-civil society relations

Degree of dialogue between state and civil society	%
Non-existent	2.7
Limited	24.7
Moderate	57.5
Extensive	15.1

Findings from secondary data corroborate the information given above. According to an assessment carried out by USAID in 2005, one of the roles of civil society platforms is to facilitate interactions between CSOs and the state.

However, some umbrellas have been hesitant to accept this model because of fears that they could lose autonomy by direct linkages with ministries. Instead, the report noted a pattern by which the state tends to use its economic power to hire the most capable and energetic civil society actors, thus weakening the ability of CSOs to pursue their goals independent of the state.

Rwandan civil society is young and still weak; it has not yet clearly defined its role as an actor in public policy-making. In general, Rwandan grassroots associations are passive *vis-à-vis* the state. In addition to limited engagement of civic associations in policy making, from the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (2002) it was argued that even when CSOs are invited to participate in policy debates, they lack alternative strategies that can challenge the government's vision. The problem of capacity might explain why CSOs are more reactive than proactive in dealing with state action.

CSOs need to build their advocacy and communication capacities so that they can establish permanent and fruitful dialogues with policy and decision-makers at all levels.²⁸ The fact that the Civil Society Platform has been put in place may be indicative of the willingness of the state to conduct dialogue through this channel. At the same time a balance needs to be struck between the desire to offer a single platform and unified voice, and for the need for the platform to represent and preserve the plurality and diversity of civil society, which is a value on its own right.

2.7 Private sector-civil society relations

The regional stakeholder consultations indicate that 57.1% of respondents feel the private sector is not concerned with CSO activities. However, 28.6% of respondents believe that the private sector attitude towards civil society is favourable.

²⁷ ICNL and WMD (2008), *Defending Civil Society, A Report of the World Movement for Democracy*, p 12. See also ICNL (2007), *The future of Civil society, An ICNL Annual Report*, p9; JGA Steering Committee (2008) *Rwanda Joint Governance Assessment report*, p. 41; IRC (2008), *The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society*, p 29.

²⁸ USAID (2005), *Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment*, Washington, pp.9; 36; 51. See also JGA Steering Committee (2008) *Rwanda Joint Governance Assessment report*, p. 40 and IRC (2008), *The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society*, p 65.

TABLE 16: Private sector-civil society relations

Private sector attitude towards civil society	%
Hostile	3.2
Suspicious	3.2
Indifferent	57.1
Favourable	28.6
Supportive	7.9

The information above corroborates the findings from secondary data sources which show that there is lack of coordination, such as joint planning and strategising, between civil society and private sector umbrellas. Situation analysis by Boerstra (2008) showed that civil society and private sector umbrella coordination units inadequately coordinate and support CSOs. This is confirmed by the fact that only 7.2% of CSOs have any kind of partnership with private sector actors.²⁹

a. Corporate social responsibility

The regional stakeholder consultations show that 59.7% of respondents say there is moderate and limited corporate social responsibility (CSR) by Rwandan companies, while 10.4% of them believe there is a significant level of CSR.

TABLE 17: Corporate social responsibility

Rating of CSR	%
Insignificant	26.9
Limited	38.8
Moderate	20.9
Significant	10.4

A report from the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in 2006 showed that CSR is a new concept in Rwanda. The report further highlights that Rwanda has put in place disparate laws and regulations to address the concerns of some of the stakeholders on the magnitude of CSR in Rwanda. In general, there is a lack of a legal and regulatory framework to deal systematically with corporate social responsibility. However, the Environmental Law addresses some aspects of corporations' responsibility. Some other aspects are addressed in specific regulations, for example, the issue of when a public entity is ceded to a private operator.³⁰

Findings from key informants corroborate the above, noting that the notion CSR is not yet well understood, but according to the Banque Commerciale du Rwanda (BCR) 2008 annual report, statistics show that about 18% of the business sector has attempted in one way or another to corporately participate or exceptionally commit to giving to the community. For example, in 2006 MTN Rwanda, the national branch of the global telecommunications company, launched an innovative new venture, Village Phone Rwanda, in Gashora (Bugesera District). Through its signature product, Tel'imbere, Village Phone Rwanda provided affordable telephone access in places where there was no access to public communications and where power supplies were either unreliable or nonexistent. Further, it is clear that several companies have already adopted new programmes that involve giving back to the community a certain percentage of their earnings.

²⁹ Dr L Boerstra (2008) situation analysis of civil society interventions in HIV/AIDS response – Rwanda, GTZ, p.5 Minaloc (2006), Making Decentralised Service Delivery Work in Rwanda. Putting the People at the Centre of Service Provision, p.xi. See also IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 43.

³⁰ USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, p 58. See also APRM (2006), Country review report of the Republic of Rwanda, Midrand pp92-96.

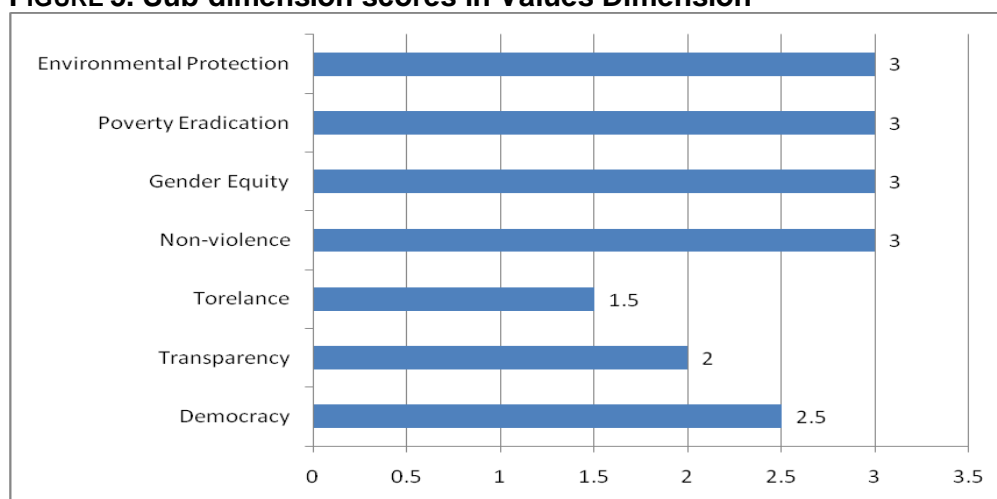
While it is perceived that customers feel more comfortable dealing with a company that shares with them, some companies look at the long-term benefits by improving people's lives so as to improve on the standard of living and make people better able to afford their services in future. Training has also influenced companies to practice CSR as companies have realised the importance of sharing profits with clients. With the current trend in CSR, customers are also becoming aware of its importance. This has prompted many companies to participate in CSR.

In fact some companies, such as BRALIRWA (Brasseries et Limonaderies du Rwanda, the largest brewer and soft drink manufacturer in Rwanda), MTN Rwanda, BAT Rwanda (British American Tobacco), BCR (Banque Commerciale du Rwanda) and CIMERWA (the leading Rwandan cement manufacturing company), are trying to establish CSR policies and strategies in collaboration with CSOs and are supporting community development initiatives, such as the above mentioned Gashora initiative.

3 CIVIL SOCIETY VALUES

The values dimension of the CSI study assesses to what degree values, such as democracy, environmental sustainability and gender equality, are practiced within CSOs and promoted by CSOs in society at large. The overall score for this dimension is 2.6, which demonstrates that the extent to which Rwandan civil society practices and promotes positive social values is close to being significant. Figure 5 summarises the sub-dimensions scores in the values dimension. The main primary data source here is the series of regional stakeholder consultations. It should however be pointed out that the high scores given to some of these values should call into question the accuracy and objectivity of civil society self-assessment, as discussed further in the relevant sections below.

FIGURE 5. Sub-dimension scores in Values Dimension



3.1 Democracy

a. Civil society role in democracy promotion

In the regional stakeholder consultations a majority of respondents, represented by 66.7%, believe that CSOs play a moderate role in democracy promotion in Rwanda.

TABLE 18: Civil society role in democracy promotion

Rating of civil society democracy promotion	%
Insignificant	10.6
Limited	18.2
Moderate	66.7
Significant	4.5

According to IRC (2008), civil society participates in some democratic actions, including in their role as observers of parliamentary and presidential elections. However, outside of the elections, civil society is not seen as the champion of promoting democracy at the local level.³¹ The report from IRC further highlights that local CSOs need to be mobilised and take the opportunity which is offered by the draft law on local NGOs to participate more actively in the process of public policy and decision-making.³²

Some level of civil society involvement can be seen at the decentralised institutions (district, sector and cell). However, citizens at lower levels of decentralisation are not aware of how to engage the administration, and thus they tend to be mobilised by the administrative structures rather than making the state respond to their participation.

Confirming the above, key informants say that democracy promotion for civil society in Rwanda is a very delicate topic. In fact, respondents from civil society believe that the international NGOs hold the economic survival of local civil society in their hands. These INGOs impose their policies and frameworks on local civil society and do not allow them the democratic latitude to make their own choices and orientation based on local needs. Thus local associations simply swallow ideas from western donors in order to keep the financial package that goes with this.

3.2 Transparency

a. Civil society role in government transparency

71.9% of respondents in the regional stakeholder consultations indicate that civil society's role in encouraging government transparency is moderate and limited.

TABLE 19: Civil society role in government transparency

Civil society role	%
Insignificant	14.1
Limited	34.4
Moderate	37.5
Significant	14.1

Opinions from key informants, including donors, research institutions and government representatives, are that Rwandan CSOs are threatened by their very weak relationship with the government and public sector in general.

In addition, according to Powley (2005), at present, the only active CSO that can challenge the government on transparency issues is Transparency Rwanda, a relatively new organisation that is just finding its feet. It has recently completed a study of Rwanda's

³¹ USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, p 34. See also NURC (2008) Social Cohesion in Rwanda, An Opinion Survey Results 2005-2007, p23 and IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 45.

³² IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 6.

national integrity system and has tabled a number of useful conclusions and recommendations.³³

b. Corruption within civil society

According to the majority of respondents from regional stakeholder consultations, 62.5%, corruption in civil society is very rare.

TABLE 20: Corruption within civil society

Rating of corruption in civil society	%
Very frequent	–
Frequent	–
Occasional	37.5
Very rare	62.5

In confirmation of the above, IRC (2008) stated that NGOs and CSO members are the best managers, compared to government institutions. In fact, the report highlights that in 50% of CSOs, membership is based on neighbourhood or professional links rather than family ties. This indicator can also be used as a further gauge of the level of transparency. Concerning CSO management methods involving member participation, 65% of CSO leaders claimed to have discussed at least once in the most recent year internal operations problems with their members. However, it is not certain that these discussions were very effective, given the lack of transparency and poor democratic management style of CSOs.³⁴

3.3/3.4 Tolerance and non-violence

According to findings from the regional stakeholder consultations, 47.9% of respondents indicate that civil society's role in tolerance promotion is significant and 37% of them say this role is moderate.

TABLE 21: Civil society role in tolerance promotion

Civil society role	%
Insignificant	-
Limited	15.1
Moderate	37
Significant	47.9

However, according to findings from IRC (2008) only 9% of CSOs have promoted tolerance.³⁵ This is clearly contrary to the above findings. Findings from key informants corroborate the IRC view in the sense that tolerance promotion is seen as the purview of government action through the Gacaca court and the NURC. In fact, among the projects undertaken by this commission are support for associations that promote justice and reconciliation. These, however, still depend on the commission's guidance. In addition to these organisations, a number of associations for genocide survivors are known for promotion of tolerance and reunification.

³³ E Powley (2005), *Rwanda: Women Hold Up Half the Parliament*, in J Ballington and A Karam (2005), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition*. IDEA, pp157-158.

³⁴ IRC (2008) *The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society*, p 46.

³⁵ IRC (2008) *The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society*, p 47.

The main difficulty concerns human values. CSOs should be the watchdogs and defenders of such values. However, moral values, as well as the ideals of peace and reconciliation, are in the view of the IRC report, neither prioritised nor practiced enough by Rwandan CSOs.³⁶

3.5 Gender equity

Qualifying somewhat the high subjective score this was given in the scoring, in the regional stakeholder consultations, 63.9% of respondents believe that civil society plays a significant role in gender equity promotion.

TABLE 22: Civil society role in gender equity promotion

Civil society role	%
Insignificant	5.6
Limited	12.5
Moderate	18.1
Significant	63.9

The findings above are confirmed by IRC (2008), which notes that the percentage of female members of CSOs was 48%, which represents 92% of what should be expected, given the share of women in the general population (52%), a positive figure. However, the survey shows that only 22% of CSOs have at least two women on their committee. When over 9,000 CSOs were asked to select their representatives for interview for this study, 34% of CSOs chose women.³⁷

CSOs have offered a very favourable environment for the development of women; through CSOs women are able to speak in public more readily, they have their own incomes, and they are often part of the decision-making authorities of CSOs. Empowerment of women is one of the most remarkable impacts of CSOs. CSOs have also offered a platform to criticise lack of efforts in family planning.³⁸

Another source, however, indicates that about 22% of CSOs claim to work to promote the role of women, while exclusively female organisations were 24%. In other areas (such as social affairs, family welfare, promotion of human values and economic development), female organisations do not set themselves apart.³⁹

According to informants' responses in the questionnaires, gender equity and women's empowerment are some of the few areas where Rwandan CSOs can be said to have been visibly active. Several women's associations and income generating activities via cooperatives are well known and have created networks, up to the level of national umbrellas.

3.6 Poverty eradication

Again calling into question the high score this received, in as far as civil society's role in poverty eradication is concerned, findings from regional stakeholder consultations show that 57.5% of respondents say that it is moderate. Nevertheless, 38.4% of them indicate that their role in poverty eradication is significant.

TABLE 23: Civil society role in poverty eradication

³⁶ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 47.

³⁷ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 55.

³⁸ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 55.

³⁹ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 48

Civil society role	%
Insignificant	1.4
Limited	2.7
Moderate	57.5
Significant	38.4

Research results confirm the above, noting that as Rwanda is thriving for economic development and poverty reduction, there are several organisations that are initiating income generating activities in a bid to alleviate poverty. However, even if CBOs working on income generating activities are very much seen at the grassroots level, the economic and social impact of each organisation is limited.

3.7 Environmental sustainability

Concerning civil society's role in environmental protection, findings of regional stakeholder consultations again challenge the high score awarded, as 63.4% respondents indicate that civil society's role is moderate or limited. However 28.2% of them state that civil society's role in protecting the environment is significant.

TABLE 24: Civil society role in environmental protection

Civil society role	%
Insignificant	8.5
Limited	29.6
Moderate	33.8
Significant	28.2

However, as reported by IRC (2008), 1% of CSOs claimed that protecting the environment was their main activity. Only 0.1% of CSOs were specifically set up for this activity. The report further notes that among the achievements which CSO leaders are proud of, a mere 1% relate to the environment, such as nursery gardens and planting of trees.⁴⁰

Similarly, research results show that even though environmental protection is considered as a very important issue for Rwanda, local CSOs are not doing enough yet in this sector. There is no mention of biodiversity, desertification, deforestation and harm reduction and prevention. No mention was made by respondents in consultations on what is the current involvement of civil society in protecting environment.

However, the government recently initiated a project on the Climate Change Adaptation (NBDF) to build capacity of CSOs on climate change adaptation as its primary objective. This project was implemented during six months from September 2009 to February 2010, with CSOs being the main beneficiaries. Activities varied from trainings, workshops, production and dissemination of information materials, and field studies on climate change adaptation initiatives and best practices.

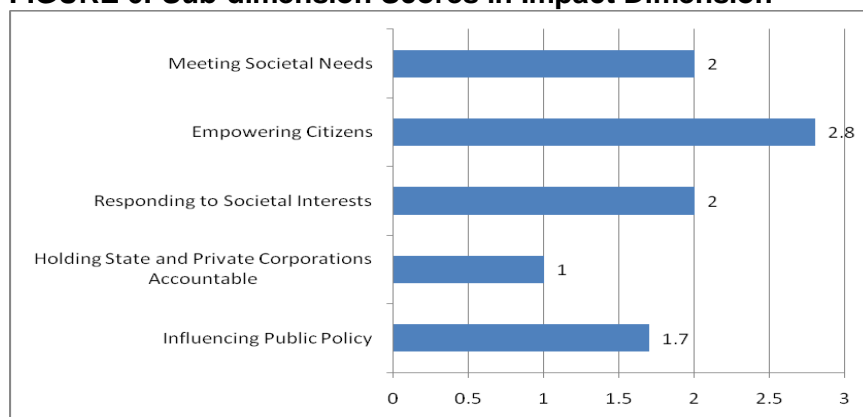
4 CIVIL SOCIETY IMPACT

The purpose of this section is to describe and analyse the extent to which civil society is active and successful in fulfilling some essential functions. It describes and analyses each of the sub-dimensions upon which the dimension score is based. These include: influencing public policy; holding state and private corporations accountable; empowering citizens; and meeting societal needs. The overall score for this dimension is 1.9, which reveals that the fulfilment of Rwandan civil society of these functions is moderate. This dimension draws from

⁴⁰ IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 49.

the community survey and regional stakeholder consultations. Figure IV summarises the sub-dimensions scores in the civil society's impact dimension.

FIGURE 6: Sub-dimension Scores in Impact Dimension



4.1 Influencing public policy

It was not easy to gauge to what degree local civil society is influencing public policy, despite some ongoing consultations between local civil society and the government about some issues including elections, land reforms, and decentralisation. From interviews of leaders of local CSOs, it was noted that 50% of CSOs believed the meeting they are having with local authorities allow them to influence the position and decisions of local authorities.⁴¹

4.2 Holding state and private sector accountable

a. Holding state accountable

53.6% of respondents from the regional stakeholder consultations indicate that civil society is quite active on state accountability. However, 28.6% of respondents say that civil society is not active at all in this sphere.

TABLE 25: Civil society role in state accountability

Civil society role	%
Not active at all	28.6
Active to a limited extent	14.3
Quite active	53.6
Very active	3.6

Results from other research challenges this finding by appearing to corroborate the views of the minority of the respondents above in arguing that Rwandan civil society is not perceived as an interlocutor with the state. The current situation is that the state is never challenged by CSOs. The majority of respondents believe that state accountability is more dependent on political will than on CSO action. According to the respondent from the donor community, “These organisations neither influence strategic orientations nor monitor policy implementation by government.”

However, while all the informants acknowledge the importance of partnership with civil society, significant obstacles block the realisation of a truly effective working relationship and forecasts for further progress. According to a respondent from the IRDP, “The success of

⁴¹ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 52

participatory approaches depends not only on the government's will but also on the civil society actors' ability to discuss and challenge the latter. Unfortunately, even when they are invited to stakeholder consultations, participants from civil society are often few and significantly outnumbered by donor and government representation."

b. Holding private corporations accountable

The majority of respondents from regional stakeholder consultations, 50.9%, believe that civil society is active to a limited extent on corporate accountability. As much as 32.7% indicate that CSOs are not active at all with regard to corporate accountability.

TABLE 26: Civil society role in corporate accountability

Civil society impact	%
Not active at all	32.7
Active to a limited extent	50.9
Quite active	7.3
Very active	9.1

The 2008 IRC report also indicates that Rwandan civil society has not yet succeeded in making the state and private corporations accountable, and it is unclear whether CSOs prioritise this, which supports the opinion given by 32.7% from regional stakeholder consultations. Few meetings are requested or organised by civil society actors to discuss with the government and private sector issues pertinent to the life of CSOs and the community as a whole.⁴²

4.3/4.5 Responding to social interests and meeting societal needs

a. Responsiveness

70% of respondents from regional stakeholder consultations indicate that civil society moderately plays its role in meeting societal needs.

TABLE 27: Civil society role in meeting societal needs

Civil society role	%
Limited	15.7
Moderate	70
Significant	14.3

The above findings are supported by the IRC (2008) report in which it is argued that 39% of CSO leaders interviewed maintained that their organisation had during the last two years carried out activities aimed at 'family welfare', such as the protection of widows, assaulted women, children heads of households, and families living with HIV/AIDS.

However, the same report noted that CSOs do not take care of the poorest or the weakest, such as beggars, children, drop-outs, homeless young people, orphans or widows.⁴³ Only 1.5% of CSOs have as a primary objective social protection. Less than 0.1% of CSOs were set up to help the sick and other vulnerable persons.

b. Public trust

⁴² IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 52.

⁴³ IRC (2008) The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 56.

Data from the community survey indicates that there is high level of public trust in the leader of the country, the government and the armed forces of Rwanda, shown respectively by 84.2%, 63.1% and 61.5%. Lower levels of public trust are enjoyed by CSOs, although they are at least placed ahead of political parties, the media and the corporate sector. Such low levels of trust can only inhibit civil society's ability to achieve impact.

TABLE 28: Public trust

Institutions	A great deal	Quite a lot	Not very much	None at all
Leader of the country	84.2	12.7	2.5	1.6
The government	63.1	33.0	3.4	0.5
The armed forces	61.5	33.9	3.2	0.4
The police	49.4	40.6	8.4	1.6
The churches (or the main other religious congregation)	30.2	45.3	20.1	4.4
Most well-known CSOs in the Rwanda	23.0	37.2	33.8	6.0
NGOs	20.5	43.6	29.4	6.5
Political parties in general	19.2	34.8	30.6	15.4
Television	17.6	43.5	32.3	6.6
Labour unions	17.4	38.9	35.6	8.1
The press	14.6	37.2	40.3	7.9
Major companies	12.2	38.1	38.6	11.1

It is, further, surprising to see that the population accords high trust in government institutions while they have little trust amongst themselves, as can be deduced from the secondary data below:⁴⁴

- A majority, 58%, agreed with the statement that it is naïve to trust others, while 39% disagreed;
- 63% disagreed with the statement that people do not easily work together to solve problems, while more than one third, 36%, of respondents agreed;
- Only slightly less than a third of respondents, 31%, indicated that the level of distrust at the cell level is such that it would impede development projects.

There seems to be a marked mistrust between the elite and the masses, with elites more likely to see ignorance, poverty, and intolerance of the masses as the source of social conflict and the masses viewing political manipulation by the elites as the key source of social disorder.

Gacaca has inbuilt mechanism to minimise this tendency and to build mutual trust within the population. Thus Gacaca helps to bring about the disclosure of the truth about what happened during the genocide. There is however widespread interpersonal distrust and continuing divisions between genocide survivors and those accused of or convicted for crimes of genocide.

⁴⁴ NURC (2008) Social Cohesion in Rwanda, An Opinion Survey Results 2005-2007, pp30-31. See also USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, p.6 and APRM (2006) Country review report of the Republic of Rwanda, Midrand 147.

4.4 Empowering citizens

a. Civil society level of activity in public information activities

Findings from regional stakeholder consultations, as represented by 88.4% of the respondents, indicate that civil society is active in public information activities to a reasonable or limited extent.

TABLE 29: Civil society role in public information activities

Civil society impact	%
Not active at all	—
Active to a limited extent	48.7
Quite active	39.7
Very active	11.5

The above findings are similar to those from interviewees arguing that public information from Rwandan civil society is limited.

For example, little public information on the budgetary process is forthcoming from CSOs. But there is a bigger issue here. CSO participation in the budgeting process in Rwanda is new. CSOs could be involved in the drafting stage, legislative stage, implementation stage, and auditing stage, for example through the Rwanda Economic and Social Development Council, which is constituted by representatives of the public sector, civil society and the private sector. Yet Rwandan CSOs have not yet been involved in these matters, implying that little effort can be made in transmitting information to the public, since CSOs themselves cannot access it.

Nevertheless, thanks to continued advocacy for involvement, in 2009 CCOAIB obtained clearance and received funding from German International Cooperation (GIZ) to start budget tracking. This is starting with retrospective tracking for 2008 and will continue in the coming years. As yet, this will be done only in the agriculture sector, given that this is a pilot project, with the hope that other sectors will be brought on board in the future.

Throughout the interviews, Rwandan CSOs recognised that they have limited impact on social policies. Examples were drawn from health and education, and land reform policies. When asked about the role of CSOs regarding the introduction of community health insurance and its orientations, or their role regarding the recently introduced nine-year basic education policy,⁴⁵ everyone acknowledged that CSOs were involved in the conception and elaboration of these policies but simply had to catch-up on the implementation. CSOs are less involved in information dissemination as they are not usually implicated in policy implementation.

b. Civil society level of activity in community capacity-building

On the whole, as can be deduced from regional stakeholder consultations findings, Rwandan civil society is involved in community capacity building. Nevertheless the majority of respondents, represented by 52%, say that this involvement is at a limited extent.

TABLE 30: Civil society role in community capacity-building

Civil society role	%
Active to a limited extent	52
Quite active	36

⁴⁵ This is a government policy that provides free primary education for the first nine years.

Very active	12
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Although the above data indicates that civil society is generally active in community capacity building, a report from IRC (2008) shows that this involvement mainly focuses on women's empowerment (see earlier discussion). The high score given for civil society's role in empowering citizens must, in the light of this and the above, be questioned.

IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF RWANDAN CIVIL SOCIETY

On the whole, one of Rwandan civil society's greatest strengths is that its values are relatively positive. Civil society, to a great extent, nurtures and upholds positive values such as anti-corruption practices, gender equity, poverty eradication, tolerance and democracy promotion.

However, this study also reveals that Rwandan civil society has weakness in playing its role in holding government to be transparent, ensuring environmental protection and influencing public policy.

On civil society's structure, taking a few examples, only charitable giving and collective community action appear to be strong. On the other hand, weaknesses prevail in citizen participation in non-political action, volunteering, membership of umbrella bodies, geographical distribution of civil society (which is mainly in major cities), and civil society activities that affect citizens' daily lives, found to be largely the purview of local administration. Retaining staff within the sector, and local independence in the face of foreign funding, are also challenges here.

The civil society external working environment in Rwanda is broadly conducive, with the study revealing more strengths than weaknesses in this area. Indicators such as civil society registration, civil society restriction, dialogue between state and civil society, public trust and public spiritedness are reported to be highly positive. On the other hand, collaboration between civil society and the private sector, and corporate social responsibility, are areas where the working environment is not conducive.

Civil society's impact is mostly still a weak area, both when it comes to the underdeveloped civil society watchdog role with regard to other sectors, particularly governments, and being seen to make a direct impact on meeting community needs. Civil society is hampered here by low levels of public trust.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, to maximise on areas of strength and address key identified weaknesses, the researchers recommend:

- Rwandan civil society should engage the state and partner with it to improve the quality of life of the community and engage more fully in activities that improve their lives. It should do this, for example, by strengthening its activities in the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) at local level, and engaging actively in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring at the national level. This would require more effective CSO networking and advocacy techniques, and greater financial capacity;
- To build positive collaboration with the private sector, Rwandan civil society should explore areas that are mutually beneficial, such as marketing strategies that can link the producers of raw materials through distribution to producers of consumable products and back to the consumers through a participatory market chain approach, that offers the capacity to carry out extensive outreach initiatives whereby non-profit CSOs network with the private sector organisations' forums.

CSOs should negotiate to bring on board the private sector federation and other not for profit business chambers because they promote the interests of their members and are therefore also part of civil society;

- To strengthen their voice in advocacy and lobbying, Rwandan CSOs should work together through advocacy and lobby forums to increase their collective voice. They should train in advocacy techniques so as to be fully equipped with the necessary skills to effectively undertake their advocacy role;
- Rwandan civil society should look for ways to minimise dependence on external donors. Overdependence on external funding makes them keep dancing to the tune of donors rather than carrying out activities aimed at fulfilling their mission. They should remain focused and specialise on their constituency needs. Besides carrying out their community service missions, they should be able to initiate some income generating activities, albeit while being aware of the criticisms they would expect this to provoke if they are seen to step away from their assumed non-profit role;
- Bearing in mind the weakness of Rwandan civil society with regard to holding the government accountable, civil society should negotiate with the government to enhance mechanisms through which CSOs can freely and confidently help their constituents to hold the government accountable;
- International partners of Rwandan CSOs should incorporate in their funding agendas support that can enable local NGOs to sustain themselves in the long-run by strengthening and diversifying the fundraising techniques of local CSOs.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

STRUCTURE OF CSOS

Generally, with regard to civil society structure in Rwanda, the breadth and depth of citizen participation in non-partisan political action scored the highest. This is because of high levels of collective community action and charitable giving. On the other hand, resources and interrelations scored poorly. The reasons for this apparently low score in this particular sub-dimension are that CSOs in Rwanda lack financial resources to support their effective functioning. It is also the case that communication and cooperation among Rwanda CSOs is insufficient.

CIVIL SOCIETY'S EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

On the whole, the study concludes that within the external CSOs working environment, in the cultural, socio-economic and political contexts, relations between the state and Rwanda CSOs are relatively healthy, given that a high majority of respondents stated that they are not restricted in carrying out their activities.

However, it may be pointed out that since the research questions were asked between May to August 2008, some views on this issue may have shifted.

CSOs need to build their advocacy and communication capacities so that they can establish permanent and fruitful dialogues with policy and decision-makers at all levels.⁴⁶ The fact that the Civil Society Platform has been put in place may be indicative of the willingness of the state to hold dialogue through this new channel, alongside existing channels.

However, relations between CSOs and the private sector are weak with perceptions of private sector being unsupportive of civil society.

CIVIL SOCIETY VALUES

As far as Rwandan CSO values are concerned, only the tolerance and transparency sub-dimensions score poorly relative to the rest. On the other hand, the other sub-dimensions are strongly scored as they indicate that Rwandan CSOs significantly promote positive social values. These include: non-violence, gender equity, poverty eradication and environmental protection. The reality that emerges from consultations is, however, more complex and nuanced, and the scores may reflect aspirations more than concrete achievements.

CIVIL SOCIETY IMPACT

Rwandan civil society's impact on community living conditions is minimal. The study reveals some strength in this area only in the area of community capacity building while showing limited resources in terms of skills, finances and materials, and limited capacities in holding the state and corporations accountable. Nevertheless, Rwandan civil society plays a moderate role in public information activities and meeting societal needs.

⁴⁶ USAID (2005), Rwanda Democracy and Governance Assessment, Washington, pp.9; 36; 51. See also JGA Steering Committee (2008) Rwanda Joint Governance Assessment report, p. 40 and IRC (2008), The report on the sustainability of Rwandan civil society, p 65.

APPENDICES

1. LIST OF NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Name	Organisation/Institution
1. GACINYA Faustin	Maison de la Presse
2. RUTAZANA Francine	ACORD Rwanda
3. MUGISHA Justin	Conseil National de la Jeunesse
4. KAREKEZI Thaddée	Plate Forme de la Société civile rwandaise
5. KANTARAMA Alice Verra	Fédération du Secteur Privé
6. MUKUNDIRICYO Goretti	Ministère de l'Administration Locale
7. MUREBWAYIRE Yvonne	Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe
8. HITAYEZU François	Action Aid Rwanda
10. MANZI Eric	Centrale Syndicale des Travailleur du Rwanda
11. RWIBASIRA Eugène	Rwanda Development Organisation
12. SENYABATERA Jean Bosco	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base
13. VUNINGOMA Faustin	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base
14. GATERA Maggy	United Nations Development Programme
15. NIBARERE Thérèse	World Bank
16. RURANGWA Sylvain	Association des Scout du Rwanda

2. NATIONAL ACTION GROUP SCORING INDICATOR MATRIX

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Total score</i>	<i>Sub-dimension name</i>	<i>Total for sub-dimension</i>	<i>Indicator name</i>	<i>Indicator</i>
1 Structure	1.7				
		1.1 Breadth of participation	2.2		
				1.1.1 Non- partisan political action	2.0
				1.1.2 Charitable giving	3.0
				1.1.3 CSO membership	2.0
				1.1.4 Volunteering	1.0
				1.1.5 Collective community action	3.0
		1.2 Depth of citizen participation	2.0		
				1.2.1 Charitable giving	3.0
				1.2.2 Volunteering	1.0
				1.2.3 CSO membership	2.0
		1.3 Diversity of civil society participants	1.7		
				1.3.1 CSO membership	2.0
				1.3.2 CSO Leadership	2.0
				1.3.3 Distribution of CSOs	1.0
		1.4 Level of organisation	2.0		
				1.4.1 Existence of CSO umbrella bodies	2.0
				1.4.2 Effectiveness of CSO SO umbrella bodies	2.0
				1.4.3 Self-regulation	2.0
				1.4.4 Support infrastructure	2.0
				1.4.5 International linkages	2.0
		1.5 Inter-relations	1.0		
				1.5.1 Communications	1.0
				1.5.2 Cooperation	1.0
		1.6 Resources	1.3		
				1.6.1 Financial resources	1.0
				1.6.2 Human resources	1.0

				1.6.3 Technological and infrastructural resources	2.0
2 Environment	2.0				
		2.1 Political context	2.5		
				2.1.1 Political rights	3.0
				2.1.2 Political competition	2.0
				2.1.3 Rule of law	2.0
				2.1.4 Corruption	2.0
				2.1.5 State effectiveness	3.0
				2.1.6 Decentralisation	3.0
		2.2 Basic freedoms and rights	1.3		
				2.2.1 Civil liberties	2.0
				2.2.2 Information rights	1.0
				2.2.3 Press freedoms	1.0
		2.3 Socio-economic context	2.0		
				2.3.1 Socio-economic barriers to civil society	2.0
		2.4 Socio-cultural context	2.3		
				2.4.1 Trust	3.0
				2.4.2 Tolerance	2.0
				2.4.3 Public spiritedness	2.0
		2.5 Legal environment	2.0		
				2.5.1 CSO registration	2.0
				2.5.2 Allowable advocacy activities	2.0
				2.5.3 Tax laws for CSOs	2.0
				2.5.4 Tax laws for philanthropy	2.0
		2.6 State-civil society relations	2.7		
				2.6.1 Autonomy	2.0
				2.6.2 Dialogue	3.0
				2.6.3 Cooperation/support	3.0

		2.7 Private sector-civil society relations	1.3		
				Private sector attitude to civil society	1.0
				Corporate social responsibility	1.0
				Corporate philanthropy	2.0
3 Values	2.6				
		3.1 Democracy	2.5		
				3.1.1 Democratic practices within CSOs	3.0
				3.1.2 Civil society actions to promote democracy	2.0
		3.2 Transparency	2.0		
				3.2.1 Corruption within civil society	2.0
				3.2.2 Financial transparency of CSOs	2.0
				3.2.3 Civil society actions to promote transparency	2.0
		3.3 Tolerance	1.5		
				3.3.1 Tolerance within the civil society arena	1.0
				3.3.2 Civil society actions to promote tolerance	2.0
		3.4 Non-violence	3.0		
				3.4.1 Non-violence within the civil society arena	3.0
				3.4.2 Civil society actions to promote non-violence and peace	3.0
		3.5 Gender equity	3.0		
				3.5.1 Gender equity within the civil society arena	3.0
				3.5.2 Gender equitable practices within CSOs	3.0
				3.5.3 Civil society actions to promote gender equity	3.0
		3.6 Poverty eradication	3.0		
				3.6.1 Civil society actions to eradicate poverty	3.0
		3.7 Environmental sustainability	3.0		
				3.7.1 Civil society actions to promote environmental sustainability	3.0
4 Impact	1.9				

		4.1 Influencing public policy	1.7		
				4.1.1 Civil society's impact on social policy issues	2.0
				4.1.2 Civil society's impact on key policy issue 1 – human rights policy	1.0
				4.1.3 Civil society's impact on key policy 2 – national budgeting process	2.0
		4.2 Holding state and private corporations accountable	1.0		
				4.2.1 Holding state accountable	2.0
				4.2.2 Holding private corporations accountable	0.0
		4.3 Responding to social interests	2.0		
				4.3.1 Responsiveness	2.0
				4.3.2 Public trust	2.0
		4.4 Empowering citizens	2.8		
				4.4.1 Informing/educating citizens	3.0
				4.4.2 Building capacity for collective action	3.0
				4.4.3 Empowering marginalised people	3.0
				4.4.4 Empowering women	3.0
				4.4.5 Building social capital	3.0
				4.4.6 Supporting livelihoods	2.0
		4.5 Meeting social needs	2.0		
				4.5.1 Lobbying for state services	2.0
				4.5.2 Meeting pressing social needs directly	3.0
				4.5.3 Meeting needs of marginalised groups	1.0

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