



Direct Support Phase II Report

DataShift Direct Support Phase II was conceived to be a scalable method of building the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to collect and use data towards progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Between July and December 2016, DataShift worked with eighteen organisations in four countries: Argentina, Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal to create and pilot training on using citizen-generated data (CGD) for campaigning towards implementing and monitoring the SDGs.

We tried many different approaches to the trainings including; a CGD Campaign Training manual translated and adapted for the country, workshops, an intense two-day camp with experts, financial assistance for CGD Campaigns, and structured support with an online DataShift consultant. All the approaches had their strengths and their weakness, however success in every case was mostly attributed to the **relationship** between the CSOs, DataShift and the training materials. Trust, communication and mutual beneficial incentives for the stakeholders allowed the projects to navigate the challenges until a satisfactory result was obtained. As a result, developing positive working relationships must be seen as a core part of successful capacity building efforts and should be central to our next iteration of direct support. Below, I will go into depth about how we have already adapted one training method – ***Online structured support with an DataShift CSO Capacity Builder*** – to include a focus on relationships.

In building relationships, we first had to recognise that CSOs have a real need for funding, both to develop their capacity and to continue operating. However, we also found that offering financial support to attend and collect data, made it difficult for CSOs to offer critical feedback. One way we have addressed this is to offer a targeted, two-week online training programme that increases CSO's capacity to generate and use data for campaigns. This method reduced the need for direct financial support in several ways and through this process we found that even small CSOs had the capacity to carry-out a small, targeted data collection to support an advocacy goal. The training had neither travel nor extended staff commitment costs. The content and delivery method of the trainings also built overall organisational capacity and provided several benefits including:

1. Increased project management capacity;
2. Increased credibility through demonstrated ability to apply training skills;
3. Improved networking abilities, including the DataShift Community;
4. Improved competitiveness for future funding opportunities;
5. Improved data security and responsible data practices; and
6. Development of remote collaboration and training skills.

Because the exercises are tailored to the CSO's current work and long-term goals, the CSO has a great incentive to fully engage in the process. The trainings are designed to be actionable, being directly applied to a specific, concurrent campaign, but the skills contained therein are valuable for improving overall organisational functions. The exercises have the CSOs actively creating



campaign plans, surveys, collecting and analysing data for a specific SMART campaign goal. The emphasis is placed on applying the training skills with the guidance of a DataShift CSO Capacity Builder. Data skills acquisition is a process, and foremost DataShift wants CSOs to have the desire, skills and reasons to continue learning beyond the initial training. Therefore, CSOs **learn data skills by working with real data on real projects.**

Another way to improve the relationship was to engage the CSOs that would benefit the most and provide clear expectations at the beginning of the direct support process. For these reasons, we have three assessments to determine whether the training is likely to be beneficial:

- 1) **Assess Training Fit** - The first step would be to determine whether the training can contribute to the organisation's goals. For this, we have developed a one-page Campaign Self-Assessment.
- 2) **Assess Staff Availability** – To successfully complete the training, it begins with the approval and support of a senior staff member who can assure us there are two junior staff that can dedicate 75% of their time to the training for the two weeks.
- 3) **Assess Virtual Training Capacity** – The final issue is to determine whether the CSO has access to a strong internet connection and if the staff's skills meet the basic requirements to carry-out the training.

DataShift focuses on training CSOs that have these minimum capabilities to best leverage its resources and provide scalable trainings. However, we intend for many of our resources to later be used by these organisations for training citizens and CSOs offline, helping to increase the scope and impact of the initial trainings to significantly larger audiences over time.

The training consists of an intensive two-week period of Skype calls with our DataShift consultant, watching short training videos, answering discussion questions, preparing a campaign plan, developing a SMART objective, creating a survey, piloting the survey, and addressing challenges that emerge with the guidance of the DataShift CSO Capacity Builder. At the conclusion of the short training, the organisations have reported that the process and tools have increased their ability and confidence to use data for action. CIVICUS-DataShift provides a written certificate of completion accompanied by a written qualitative evaluation of the process and work for the CSO.

If the CSO and DataShift believe further support would be beneficial, the initial two-week training can be complemented by an additional 20 hours of the consultant's support over four weeks including carrying out additional data collection, analysis or visualisation or focusing on searching and applying for grants. By validating the CSOs' ability to carry out a small, data-driven campaign and apply their learning, CSOs can use their increased internal capacity and credibility, as well as an expanded network, to better position themselves to complete more ambitious campaigns and projects. Additionally, they should be more competitive for seeking additional funding.



In conclusion, there are many ways to collect and use CGD as there are ways to train communities and CSOs on its use. However, through DataShift's pilot programmes, it has become clear that the relationships amongst stakeholders and between those engaged in the CGD process will be paramount in navigating the inevitable challenges to reaching successful outcomes.