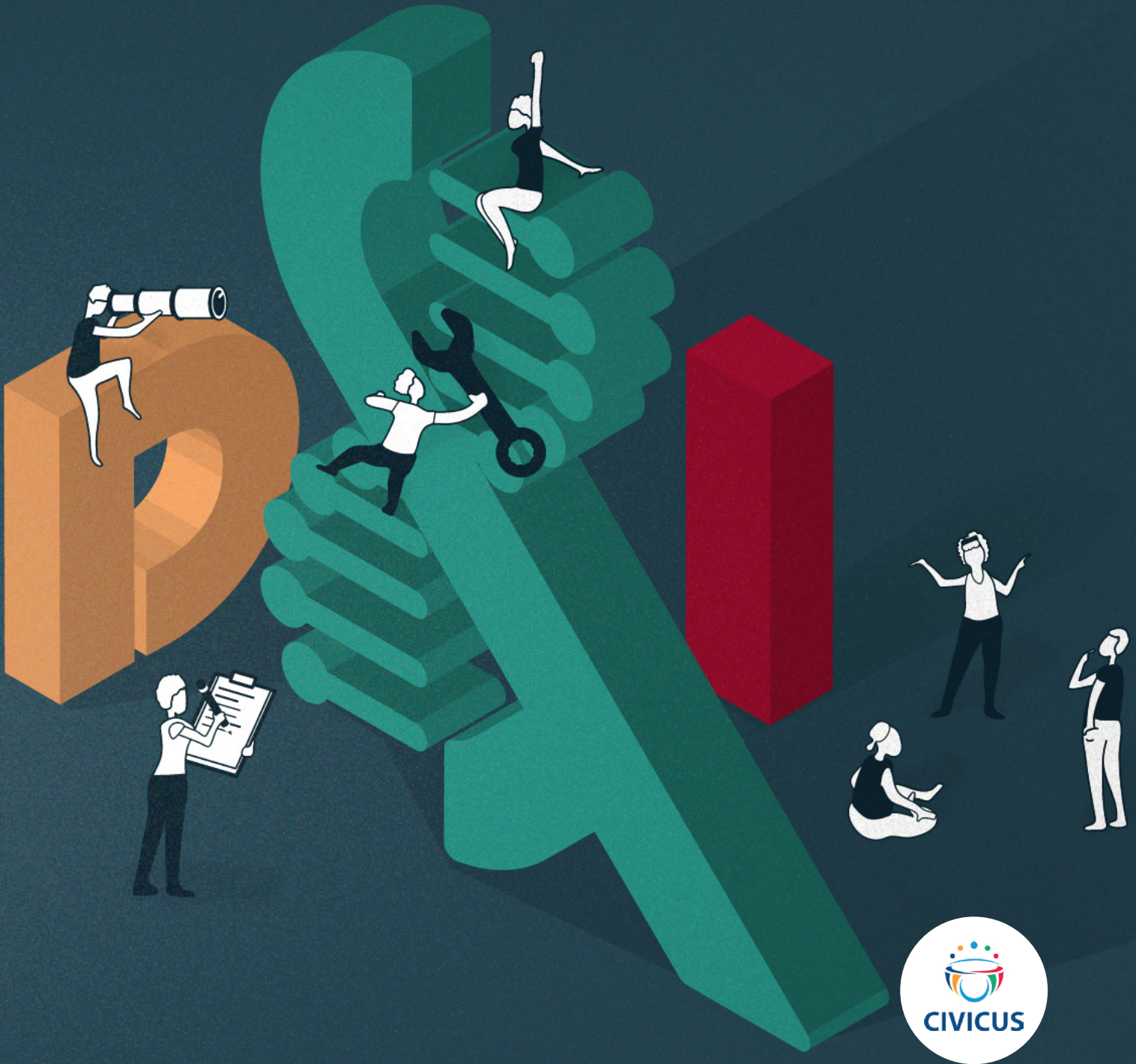


THE **D&I** DIARIES

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' JOURNEYS THROUGH
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

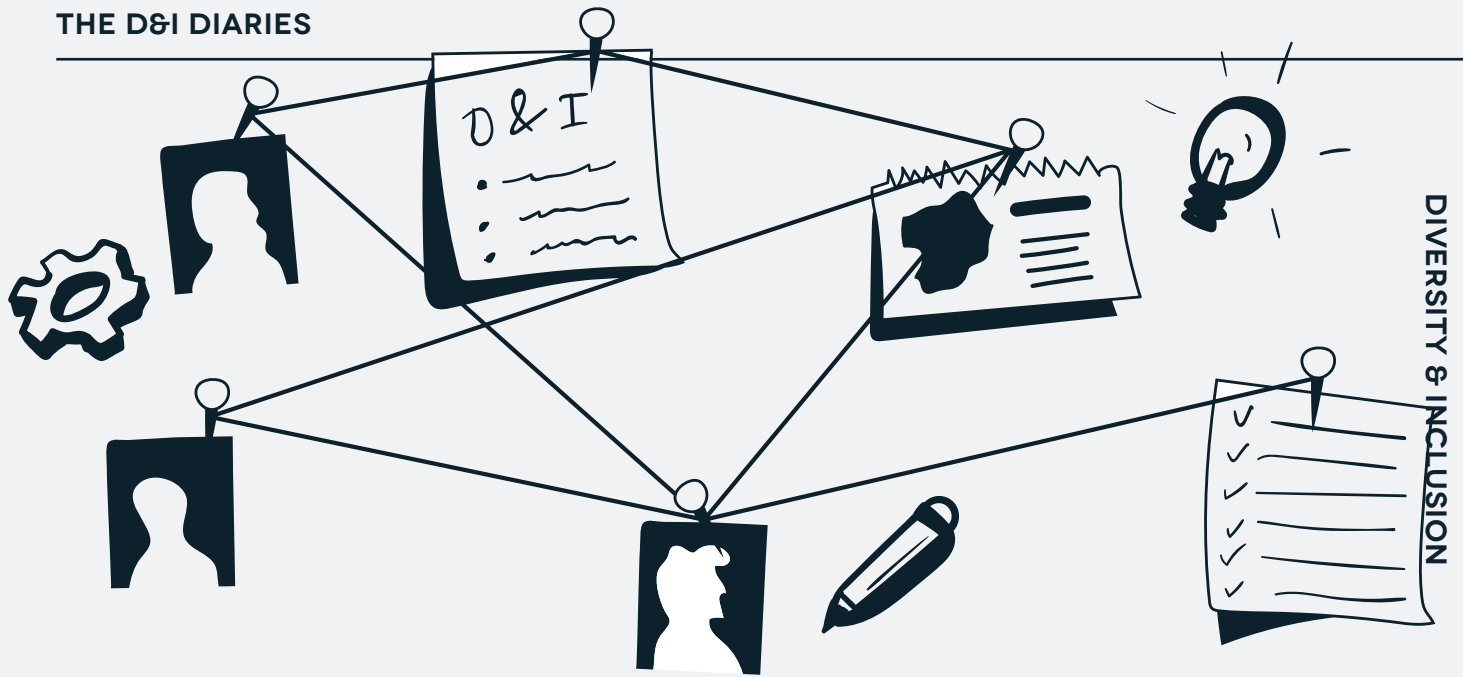


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INTRODUCTION



SETTING

THE SCENE

Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) has become a hot topic within civil society in recent years. Knowing there is no 'people power' without true principles of D&I, many in the sector are taking a step back to evaluate how this core principle is being integrated into operations and programmes.

Recent scandals in civil society have brought troubling questions into the public sphere about how strongly we adhere to our values in practice. These scandals show us how civil society mirrors society at large and often replicates the very systems of oppression (such as patriarchy, colonialism and heteronormativity) that it aims to dismantle.

We may have strong policies on paper, and claim to have consultative decision-making processes, but leadership styles and

organisational cultures often make it harder for people from excluded groups to make their voices heard and gain leadership roles. Civil society must lead by example. We need to experiment and model workplace D&I and change our leadership styles to do so. We need to learn from the horizontal leadership styles of contemporary social movements and feminist movements.

There is very little literature or case studies on the unique set-up of civil society organisations (CSOs) to use as practical examples when talking about D&I. In order to fill this gap, CIVICUS piloted a one-year programme with alliance members to test the implementation of diverse and inclusive practices and to assess their impact on overall organisational health.



DIVERSITY

Is about welcoming all of the dimensions that can be used to differentiate individuals and groups from one another.

INCLUSION

Is the proactive and mindful steps that we take to make sure diversity happens. It involves the ways in which we create environments where all kinds of people can thrive.

ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

Refers to the strength of an organisation given its policies and procedures, including how effectively those policies and procedures meaningfully encourage D&I.

THE D&I DIARIES

THE PROGRAMME'S OBJECTIVES WERE TO:


- 👉 Identify D&I challenges across a diverse group of CSOs
- 👉 Increase the D&I capacities of the pilot organisations
- 👉 Identify successes, challenges and learnings that can be captured and shared with the wider alliance

From over 400 applications received in response to an open call, a selection committee looked at the pilot cohort holistically. Shortlisting applications from each region, participants were chosen to comprise a diverse civil society cohort. The cohort had at least one organisation per region, Spanish- and French-speaking organisations, differences in size and operating models and were at different levels of experience in their D&I journeys.

THE EIGHT PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS ARE LISTED HERE:

Country / Region	Organisation
Bolivia	Centro de Estudios y apoyo Al desarrollo Local (CEADL)
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD - DRC)
Fiji	Rainbow Pride Foundation (RFP)
North Macedonia	Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)
Palestine	Palestinian Center for Communication and Development Strategies (PCCDS)
Philippines	Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD)
South Sudan	South Sudan Community Change Agency (SOSUCCA)
Uganda	Global Learning for Sustainability (GLS)

The following chapters set the scene of each of the pilot organisations, outline their unique activities and approaches to D&I and provide excerpts and testimonies from their experiences with the programme. The activities outlined in these chapters are by no means exhaustive. Instead, they are meant to serve as inspiration to other CSOs that would like to begin or continue in their D&I journeys.

 To learn more about the methodology of the D&I Pilot Programme, check out 'Annex 1' at the end of the booklet.

**PROGRAMME DISCLAIMER:****COVID-19**

The Pilot Programme was conceived through a co-design methodology that initially required face-to-face trainings, focus group discussions and in-person co-creation. The second phase of the programme began at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, so although most organisations had some face-to-face creation time, most of this phase had to be done online. CIVICUS tried to support this shift by providing an additional internet stipend and allowing some redirection of the initial sub-grant for COVID support, however a lot of potential impact was minimised

due to the difficulty in having these tough conversations online. Many organisations adapted and implemented innovative approaches to deal with the new digital divide, but the overall impact and objectives of this programme had to shift to take into account these new circumstances. While we have learned that inclusion is important no matter what and can be implemented as a lens to approach any type of programming, we are unsure how the results of this pilot would differ without COVID limitations.

ACRONYM

LIST

Acronym	Name/Explanation
BCSDN	Balkan Civil Society Development Network
CARRD	Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
CEADL	Centro de Estudios y Apoyo Al Desarrollo Local
CSOs	Civil society organisations
D&I	Diversity and inclusion
G@W	Gender at Work
GLS	Global Learning for Sustainability
HR	Human resources
HQ	Headquarters
LGBTQI+	LGBTQI+ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and other distinctions.
PCCDS	Palestinian Center for Communication and Development Strategies
RPF	Rainbow Pride Foundation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Social exclusion	Social exclusion happens when individuals are unable to participate in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their society.

Acronym	Name/Explanation
Social inclusion	Social inclusion means improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of people who are disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.
SOGIESC	<p>SOGIESC stands for sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics.</p> <p>Sexual orientation is an identity based on a person's sexual attraction to others and how that person's own gender corresponds to the gender of the people to whom that person is attracted. It also includes a person's capacity for profound emotional, affectional, intimate and sexual relations with individuals of a different gender, the same gender, or more than one gender.</p> <p>Gender identity is an individual's internal, deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither, or in-between. This sense may or may not match the individual's biological or legal sex.</p> <p>Gender expression consists of the ways in which gender is presented through actions, clothing, demeanour and more. It is a person's outward-facing self and how that self is interpreted by others based on gender norms.</p> <p>Sexual characteristics reveal how sex (sometimes called biological sex, anatomical sex, or physical sex) is comprised of things like genitals, chromosomes, hormones, body hair and more. However, sex is not gender.</p>
SOSUCCA	South Sudan Community Change Agency
YPARD - DRC	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development - Democratic Republic of the Congo



CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS Y APOYO AL DESARROLLO LOCAL

CEADL



BOLIVIA

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Obstructed



INSPIRING YOUTH'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

IN SHAPING BOLIVIA'S FUTURE

CEADL is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the deepening of democracy in Bolivia by strengthening youth, women and Indigenous Peoples' capacities for participation and advocacy in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

Even before the audit, CEADL had an exceptional D&I record. The organisation has achieved excellent progress across the four dimensions of the Gender at Work (G@W) model, including high amounts of D&I awareness among leadership and staff, gender parity at most levels of the organisation, some integration of gender mainstreaming in strategic planning, operations and programming and inclusive spaces for addressing D&I issues.

Like all organisations, CEADL still has work to do to continue their D&I journey. The progress made has been stalled by challenges arising from within each of the four areas

of the G@W model. At the individual and informal level, CEADL's Board of Directors and Assembly of Partners struggle with applying a gender perspective to their work. At the individual and formal level, a gender wage gap persists and no resources have been allocated toward gender mainstreaming initiatives. At the systemic and informal level, male staff reinforce patriarchal norms and limit women staff's voice and contributions within the organisation. Finally, at the systemic and formal level, gender mainstreaming has not been fully consolidated and operationalised across policies and practices, parental leave policies are outdated and sexual violence policies are absent.

All in all, CEADL is positioned to make impressive strides in its D&I journey. Implementing the recommendations suggested by the audit would make it a shining star in the D&I work of Bolivian and global civil society.

CEADL'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING

A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION



Strengthening Organisational Culture: After the audit, CEADL decided to create a Committee on Communication and Institutional Culture. The idea behind this committee is to improve the existing trust in the organisation among staff. As a part of this initiative, the organisation would like to host trainings for staff and volunteers and create campaigns to be implemented at all of its offices.



Promoting intergenerational interaction and skills exchange: CEADL has been working on promoting not only intergenerational interaction but also inclusiveness in decision-making processes. Mentorship initiatives that have opened the conversation around gender, decision-making capabilities and leadership have been implemented in the different offices across the country. Additionally, these conversations have been taken to the communities where these volunteers are working. During the pandemic, where digital technologies have been at the forefront it has become more apparent how we all have things to learn from each other.

**Increasing knowledge on sexual diversity, gender identity**

and human rights: CEADL only recently began working with LGBTQI+ organisations in Sucre and La Paz. On this front, there is a need for the organisation to increase knowledge on sexual diversity, youth empowerment, gender identity and human rights within the organisation and within the communities with which they work. As a result, CEADL made a call for four organisations' research and perspectives on LGBTQI+ rights, youth empowerment and feminist and environmentalist movements. CEADL plans to publish this research and take further steps to foster safe(r) spaces for promoting community participation and inclusion.

**Developing modules on deconstructing gender, masculinities**

and sexual diversity: These modules are being designed for the communities with which CEADL works. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the possibility of facilitating the trainings through an online platform is being considered. The plan is for three modules to introduce the concepts of gender, sexual diversities and human rights, deconstruct dominant understandings of sexualities and masculinities and explore a feminist approach to decision-making processes. Since CEADL began the process of incorporating a gender perspective into its work, there has been a clear shift in staff attitudes. As a result, CEADL is finding ways of scaling these modules up.



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“Young women staff and volunteers have brought a new strength and attitude to the organisation as result of a political positioning on gender equality and have opened spaces for addressing themes that were not on the organisation’s radar”.

STAFF MEMBER, CEADL



**HOW FOSTERING
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
PROMOTES ORGANISATIONAL &
INDIVIDUAL GROWTH**

One of CEADL's principles is to foster learning environments in order to promote individual growth and boost organisational productivity. Before the audit, CEADL was already contemplating bringing D&I to the forefront of the organisation. Once they completed the audit, their decision was only reinforced after they gained an awareness of concrete actions to deepen their commitment to D&I. As a result, CEADL decided to make D&I one pillar of its strategic goals.

A first step for CEADL was to hold a seminar, supported by one of CIVICUS' staff members, and to introduce CEADL's team to the best practices for CSOs contained in the report 'Holding the Mirror up to Ourselves'. All staff members, volunteers and interns participated in order to evaluate the policies, processes and practices that the organisation was committing to, identify the gaps in these measures and prioritise next steps for moving forward. One recurring topic was the necessity of providing staff with training and mentorship opportunities where they can develop action plans for ideating and building different passion projects.

Specifically, one staff member has been focused on including sign language as a translation language during virtual meetings. Traditionally, sign language in Bolivia has only been used as a part of official governmental translations. Now, CEADL, along with departamental associations advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities, is inviting these communities to participate in trainings and modules surrounding topics like human rights and advocacy, feminist leadership, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics and environmental activism. The purpose of these training sessions are to generate safe spaces, discuss best practices, cultivate networks and enrich conversations.

CEADL's training activities seek to foster awareness across all levels of the organisation in order to address unconscious bias and discrimination in the workplace and in local communities across Bolivia. These activities provide an opportunity for staff members to evaluate their attitudes and behaviours and promote long-lasting change within and outside of CEADL.



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

YPARD – DRC



**DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF
CONGO**

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Repressed



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR A VIBRANT & DYNAMIC COMMUNITY

YPARD is an international membership-based organisation established “by young professionals, for young professionals” in the pursuit of agricultural development. Specifically, YPARD - DRC seeks to mobilise young people working in the agricultural sector through the use of training sessions for capacity strengthening and social networking for sharing opportunities.

Despite the challenging political, social and economic context within which YPARD - DRC leadership and members work, the organisation has succeeded in bringing together a vibrant and dynamic community of young professionals. YPARD - DRC’s members report great satisfaction with the ample opportunities for networking, training and other professional development activities facilitated by the organisation.

Aside from these successes, YPARD - DRC has experienced many challenges on the D&I front. Despite its understanding of D&I as requiring

diverse regional, ethnic, religious, age and gender representation, the organisation did not have any internal policies or processes related to D&I or in general. Further, in the absence of the timely approval of legal documents by the Congolese government, YPARD - DRC was not legalised as an organisation and did not have its own office space. Finally, given these major challenges and a lack of gender parity, gender-based discrimination exists at the organisation and is informed by the patriarchal norms and values embedded in wider society.

In the end, the audit was a learning experience for YPARD - DRC. On top of illuminating the various challenges impacting its D&I journey, the audit revealed other operational issues affecting the organisation. YPARD - DRC has continued in its D&I journey by applying a critical eye to its work and seeking support from stakeholders, donors and partners.

YPARD – DRC'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING

A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION




Finding alternate means of communication and engagement:

YPARD - DRC developed and hosted several TV and radio shows to introduce the basic principles and concepts of D&I. These shows sought to deepen the organisation's relationship to the community and open discussions on the ways in which D&I could contribute to community development. Some of the themes addressed in these shows were alternative forms of leadership, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and inclusive practices for people with disabilities, among others. The shows were hosted in Kinshasa and six other main cities.




Facilitating workshops on women's leadership and empowerment:

A total of four workshops were conducted in four different cities: Kinshasa, Kwango, Kilwa and Kindu. Most of the workshops were online and covered different topics such as feminist and transformational leadership, women's empowerment, gender issues, civic participation and community development. Legal instruments for protecting women's rights were introduced, and discussions were had surrounding gender roles, financial education and agricultural entrepreneurship. After these four workshops, a WhatsApp group was created with a few participants to continue the conversations and strengthen the commitment of participants to the promotion of women's leadership and empowerment.



Using a survivor-focused approach: YPARD - DRC created policy on sexual harassment and gender-based violence. This policy includes steps for generating formal complaints and organisational procedures for addressing those complaints. The process also involved an external consultant who recommended the creation of a listening unit that would support survivors of gender-based violence. The organisation even ensured that staff were appropriately trained by hosting a workshop on harassment, sexual abuse and gender-based violence. This workshop focused on the topics of prevention, empowerment and support for survivors and ended with the teaching of a self-defense technique that would allow people to defend themselves.



Knowledge-sharing for D&I and organisational health: YPARD - DRC hosted a workshop, attended by twenty participants, on 14 March 2020 in Kinshasa. This workshop served as an introduction to the concept of D&I and encouraged participants to consider how D&I could be operationalised in the context of organisations like YPARD - DRC. More than helping to raise awareness of the importance of D&I, this workshop was a way for participants to take ownership of the policies, processes and practices affecting the health of their organisations. The learnings from this workshop were so significant that staff at YPARD - DRC were invited to share and bridge them with the experiences of enterprises operating in the DRC. These knowledge-sharing opportunities revealed how similar issues related to D&I are relevant and require attention in the private sector of the country. YPARD - DRC continues to foster sustainable knowledge-sharing spaces by hosting more of these types of workshops within the communities with which they work.



“

“As a bisexual, the awareness workshop on the Diversity and Inclusion Programme implemented by YPARD - DRC, allowed me to strengthen my self-confidence while knowing that I can contribute effectively, without prejudice and stereotypes of the health of the organisation in which I operate”.

ANONYMOUS, YPARD – DRC



CHALLENGING MISCONCEPTIONS SURROUNDING LGBTQI+ PEOPLE

YPARD – DRC

YPARD - DRC seeks to empower youth through agricultural programmes so that they can fully develop their skills and passions. However, due to cultural differences and exclusionary behaviours, there are certain communities within the country that have been historically marginalised. As a result, it has been more challenging for YPARD - DRC to offer these communities their services.

One such community is the LGBTQI+ community. Some people worry about acknowledging that LGBTQI+ communities exist and struggle to have honest conversations with them because, historically, these communities have been associated with witchcraft — a taboo in a very religious country like the DRC. Additionally, other people associate LGBTQI+ communities with disease, as the perception of close links between these communities and HIV has remained in their minds. These forms of discrimination, stigma and oppression, however, are social constructions, and YPARD - DRC has been active in addressing and deconstructing them.

To this end, YPARD - DRC decided to organise a meeting with three other local organisations that advocate for LGBTQI+ communities, namely, Si Jeunesses Savait, Jeunialissime and Elikya. In reaching out to these organisations, YPARD - DRC seeks to become an ally and collaborate on creating spaces for open and honest conversations that would help address the aforementioned social challenges.

YPARD - DRC hosted an online session with 32 of its youth volunteers and with four openly LGBTQI+ individuals and activists that work for other organisations. The LGBTQI+ guests were invited to speak about their experiences, deconstruct myths and facilitate honest conversations in a safe(r) space. They shared their past experiences of being subjected to stigmatisation, arbitrary arrests and constant mistreatment and harassment, including sexual and emotional abuse. The youth volunteers reflected on ways that they might have contributed to perpetuating this situation, and all had open conversations on how to start making conscious changes in their attitudes and behaviours.

YPARD - DRC

At the end of the session, youth volunteers felt like they understood the LGBTQI+ guests and, to the volunteers, their stories felt and became more real. Some volunteers even mentioned how LGBTQI+ folks “were actually normal people that just were romantically involved with people from their same sex”. In general, the reactions from volunteers suggested that several prejudices surrounding the lives of LGBTQI+ people were addressed and deconstructed. While acknowledging that this step is only the first in protecting and promoting LGBTQI+ rights in the DRC, it still signals huge progress for YPARD - DRC.

After some volunteers expressed the need to follow up on these conversations, a WhatsApp group was created. WhatsApp was chosen because, due to connectivity issues in the country, it is still the easiest way to continue the conversations, despite its digital security risks. Initially, this safe(r) space was used for informative reasons and discussion purposes. However, because relationships were being built over the app, the need to take these discussions a step further arose.

As a result, the YPARD - DRC team decided to find ways to take more action. They are now supporting an openly gay man not only with inputs on the lay of the agricultural landscape but also with farming materials for a cassava field located at the outskirts of Kinshasa. Similar to the session above, the fact that this step was taken in a societal context of historic and ongoing homophobia is an indication of significant progress for YPARD - DRC.

Finally, gender sensitisation workshops, consultations and conversations have helped to significantly shift the narrative at YPARD - DRC. Its team feels confident in wanting to make the organisation an LGBTQI+ ally and contribute to scaling up these spaces. In this way, YPARD - DRC is committed to finding ways to support other community members not only in their agricultural journeys, but more importantly, in fighting the stigmas and misconceptions affecting the lives of LGBTQI+ people in the DRC.



RAINBOW PRIDE FOUNDATION

RPF



FIJI

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Obstructed

PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS AND WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS & GENDER IDENTITIES & EXPRESSIONS



RPF is a private foundation based in the Fiji Islands. RPF works to protect and promote the rights and well-being of people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions (SOGIE), including members of LGBTQI+ communities, and to eliminate acts of discrimination and reduce disparities in development outcomes for these same communities.

RPF is known for its indispensable role in supporting LGBTQI+ communities in the central, western, northern and eastern divisions of the island. It is celebrated for its extensive networks of community members, its provision of on-the-ground services and its passionate leadership and staff.

At the same time, RPF experiences a significant number of substantial challenges impeding its work on the D&I front and its operation as a foundation.

These challenges are briefly elaborated as follows, and all of them are underscored by the lack of funding and resources available to the organisation. First, RPF's organisational structures, policies and processes are fragmented and piecemeal, as indicated by its leadership, its staff and the auditor. This gap has proven to be detrimental in the case of sexual harassment and HIV status disclosure policies, for example, where multiple conduct-related problems have surfaced. Second, RPF is aware of and ready to address the lack of Indo-Fijian representation in its leadership, staff and beneficiaries underrepresentation is also reported based on SOGIE identifiers and different disabilities. Third, huge disparities seem to exist in the allocation of resources and voice between the secretariat staff and the leaders of divisional chapters and district clusters at the organisation. Power tends to centralise in the secretariat staff, resulting in inadequate resourcing and decision-making capacity for chapter/cluster leads, frequent breakdowns of communication between them and limited accountability to their beneficiaries.

Overall, RPF is only beginning its D&I journey, and the road ahead certainly has a lot in store for the organisation. As such, it should slowly chip away at D&I work with the support of donors and partners in order to continue to provide essential services to LGBTQI+ communities in Fiji.

RPF'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING

A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION



Opening communication: The biggest driver of change for RPF was the fact that most of its staff felt that there was a huge gap in communication across its geographic clusters. Upon the completion of its audit, RPF's leadership immediately opened up different communication channels and rebranded geographic clusters as 'PRIDE Hubs.' With this completed rebranding and increased communication, interest among active members was renewed and cultivated. RPF now has a PRIDE Hub chatroom for the team leaders of the 15 Hubs, where leaders can share information to be further disseminated to their respective hubs or to the Secretariat.



From opening communication to opening dialogue: Communicating ideas and changes to all RPF staff was instrumental in ensuring that the principles of D&I were understood by everyone and were embedded in the policies, programmes and practices of the organisation. RPF is gradually becoming more inclusive and working not only with LGBTQ+ people with disabilities but also with other LGBTQ+ ethnicities including Fijians of Indian descent, which have been traditionally excluded in the country. Within RPF, it is now normal to have volunteers and beneficiaries who identify as LGBTQ+ Fijians with disabilities and LGBTQ+ Fijians of Indian descent, including those folks who identify as lesbian, bisexual or trans men. RPF is also slowly introducing this process to the satellite PRIDE Hubs so that they can similarly open their doors and reach out to the underrepresented groups within the organisation.



Developing policies and institutional knowledge: Due to the fact that many institutional knowledge processes were not recorded at RPF, staff did not know how its informal culture could be formalised. This matter was a large focus for RPF in undertaking this programme. With the help of hired external support, RPF updated or created over 20 policies including its Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, Complaints and Grievance Policy, Gender Policy and HIV Policy. Its HIV Policy, in particular, formalises non-discrimination against people who are HIV positive and explains how testing and resources can be accessed by staff and beneficiaries. Staff are currently being trained on the updated and new policies and processes. For example, staff participated in a two-day, face-to-face sexual harassment training conducted by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, an RPF partner. This training was attended by 25 people including board members, all staff and some PRIDE Hub team leaders from the greater Suva area. All participants demonstrated an increase in knowledge and understanding of what sexual harassment constitutes, the different forms that it takes and the support mechanisms that can be accessed from within RPF.



Promoting financial inclusion: RPF understands its budget limitations and strives for further resource mobilisation as a means of filling gaps in operations and programming. At the same time, the organisation has already begun integrating volunteer costs (e.x. costs for meals and travel) in its project budgets in order to ensure that volunteers receive some sort of compensation for their contributions to the work and growth of the organisation. Additionally, while working with LGBTQI+ communities with disabilities, RPF has also begun allocating some of its budget toward making its activities accessible. This step has already been a useful exercise in allocating project costs toward inclusion and stands as a specific item for targeted resource mobilisation in the future.



“

“What’s important is to make sure that we put as much work needed forward and move towards achieving societies where inclusivity should not be a task. It should be an encoded value that must remain permanent”.

ANONYMOUS, ‘WHAT’S CHANGED’ SURVEY, RPF



IDENTIFYING INTERSECTIONS IN LGBTQI+ COMMUNITIES

One of the key audit recommendations for RPF raised the fact that, even though their mandate serves excluded communities, its staff and beneficiaries did not make up a diverse representation of those communities in Fiji. As a result, RPF began a reflection process where they discussed the diverse intersections within LGBTQI+ communities and how the organisation could access and represent those communities that share their mandate. With the introduction of the PRIDE Hubs, different clusters were formed and organised based on thematic intersections. Because they were not limited by geographic location, these clusters could feed information to and from specific communities that the team leaders of the Hubs represent.

A number of Fijians of Indian descent (FID) have been approached to make up the FID PRIDE Hub and to actively contribute to the programmes of the organisation. This initiative was not easy, for it was difficult for RPF to encourage LGBTQI+ Fijians of Indian descent to engage with the organisation due to the real fear of being involuntarily outed or of being associated with an organisation that promotes LGBTQI+ rights. RPF was able to overcome these barriers by reaching out to those individuals who were already open about their sexuality and gender identity and who have large social networks. From there, a FID PRIDE Hub group chatroom was created, and currently, there are nine members. Strategies discussed in this chatroom include allocating specific seats to the FID community in RPF activities and encouraging all Hubs to actively invite and welcome the FID community into their Hubs. Other planned activities include hosting discussions on intersectionality, where members can discuss issues surrounding race, class, disability, rural/urban divides and other forms of inequalities and devise strategies on how the organisation can effectively address these issues.

Further, RPF has set up a PRIDE-ABLE Hub group chatroom made up of LGBTQI+ people with disabilities. This group has even conducted their first meeting, where eight members and allies attended an orientation session on the structures and systems of RPF. It also

discussed the main findings and recommendations from the audit, with a particular focus on the lack of representation of people with disabilities in its operations and programming. Interestingly, the first meeting of the group was held on the eve of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. To mark this day, the group created four short social media videos featuring LGBTQI+ folks with disabilities delivering their messages in sign language. These videos were shared on RPF's Facebook page, and they received more than 8000 views altogether. Additionally, as a result of the work of the PRIDE-ABLE group, budgetary adjustments were made to accommodate the needs of LGBTQI+ folks with disabilities participating in the activities of RPF. The group is now more engaged than ever and has been to the office a couple of times for conversations over kava. As a promising next step, RPF plans to have its staff and volunteers learn sign language to ensure that they can communicate openly and directly with deaf group members.



BALKAN CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

BCSDN



NORTH MACEDONIA

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Narrowed



PROMOTING FUNCTIONING & SUSTAINABLE

DEMOCRACIES IN THE BALKANS

BCSDN is comprised of fourteen CSOs from ten countries in South-Eastern Europe. The organisation occupies itself with empowering CSOs and advocating for enabling civic environments at national and regional levels. Its mission is to promote functioning and sustainable democracies in the Balkans.

BCSDN's network-based structure provides open spaces for discussion and deliberation across existing members and other organisations. Beyond that, the organisation experiences notable strengths on key D&I matters: Its staff are aware of and active in ameliorating language barriers, its internal bodies are often women-led and, while uncomfortable, anti- and positive discrimination is discussed for excluded groups like ethnic minorities.

At the same time, BCSDN struggles in operationalising and institutionalising D&I reforms across its policies, processes and culture. Namely, internal policies made only passing reference to D&I principles, and further, staff did not have knowledge of a

complaint mechanism contained within its Code of Conduct. Further, no D&I criteria were outlined in BCSDN's recruitment processes, the organisation instead opting for an approach based solely on merit. Outreach and engagement processes were similarly missing D&I measures. Finally, and importantly, the inability to easily translate D&I language from English alienates leadership and staff already disillusioned by inaccessible and problematic 'CSO language.'

All in all, alignment on D&I principles at BCSDN is more about leadership and staff having similar values and less about the deliberate policies, processes and culture of the organisation. While this alignment lays a promising foundation for the completion of future D&I reforms, BCSDN should be intentional about operationalising and institutionalising the recommendations suggested by the audit. In undertaking these reforms, the organisation can stand to become a D&I leader in the Balkans.

BCSDN'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING


A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION


**Ensuring equal opportunity through a new human resources (HR)**

policy: Developing a new HR policy was a priority for BCSDN. As it stands now, this new policy is supportive of D&I principles and provides a clear understanding of and fair opportunities for career advancement. Even more, all BCSDN staff had the opportunity to feed into the development of the policy. After the submission of the policy to the BCSDN Board, this body has furthered D&I discussions by raising the importance of the organisation's executive office nurturing a rewarding and inclusive workplace environment. As a result, the board has recommended the establishment of a salary system that will adequately reflect its commitment to being a fair, transparent and inclusive employer.

**Capturing organisational culture and values:**

The audit revealed that the working culture at BCSDN is very positive and that all staff are able to communicate and cooperate. BCSDN thus focused on capturing this positive work culture in the formal policies of the organisation, as both practices and policies are needed for sustainable D&I progress. Ensuring respect for D&I measures, preventing cases of harassment and promoting the value of non-discrimination has been made possible by linking BCSDN's Code of Conduct with its Rulebook on Working Relations. As such, adherence to its Code of Conduct has been introduced as part of its employment agreement through adding articles to the beginning of the Rulebook which stipulate equal legal force for the Code of Conduct as for the Rulebook. Based on the feedback collected from BCSDN staff, this change has allowed the organisation to entrench its current prioritisation of D&I by influencing its organisational values, ways of working and legal obligations.

 **Implementing value-based systems across the network:** As a regional network, BCSDN wanted to ensure that their inclusive values were being implemented across its membership. To this end, BCSDN announced that all of its member organisations need to have anti-discrimination policies in place in order to become part of its network. The organisation ensured that its Secretariat would provide support surrounding creating these frameworks for each member organisation. Additionally, BCSDN made sure that its Code of Conduct and complaints mechanism became accessible to its entire network and regional stakeholders. Following the feedback received from staff, the complaint mechanism was simplified and made less formal in order to respond adequately to the dynamics and needs of the organisation. A Code of Conduct Committee, with an external committee of stakeholders, was also proposed to hear complaints against the Code. This step is especially helpful to mitigate any conflicts of interest and to give the network access to the independent body.

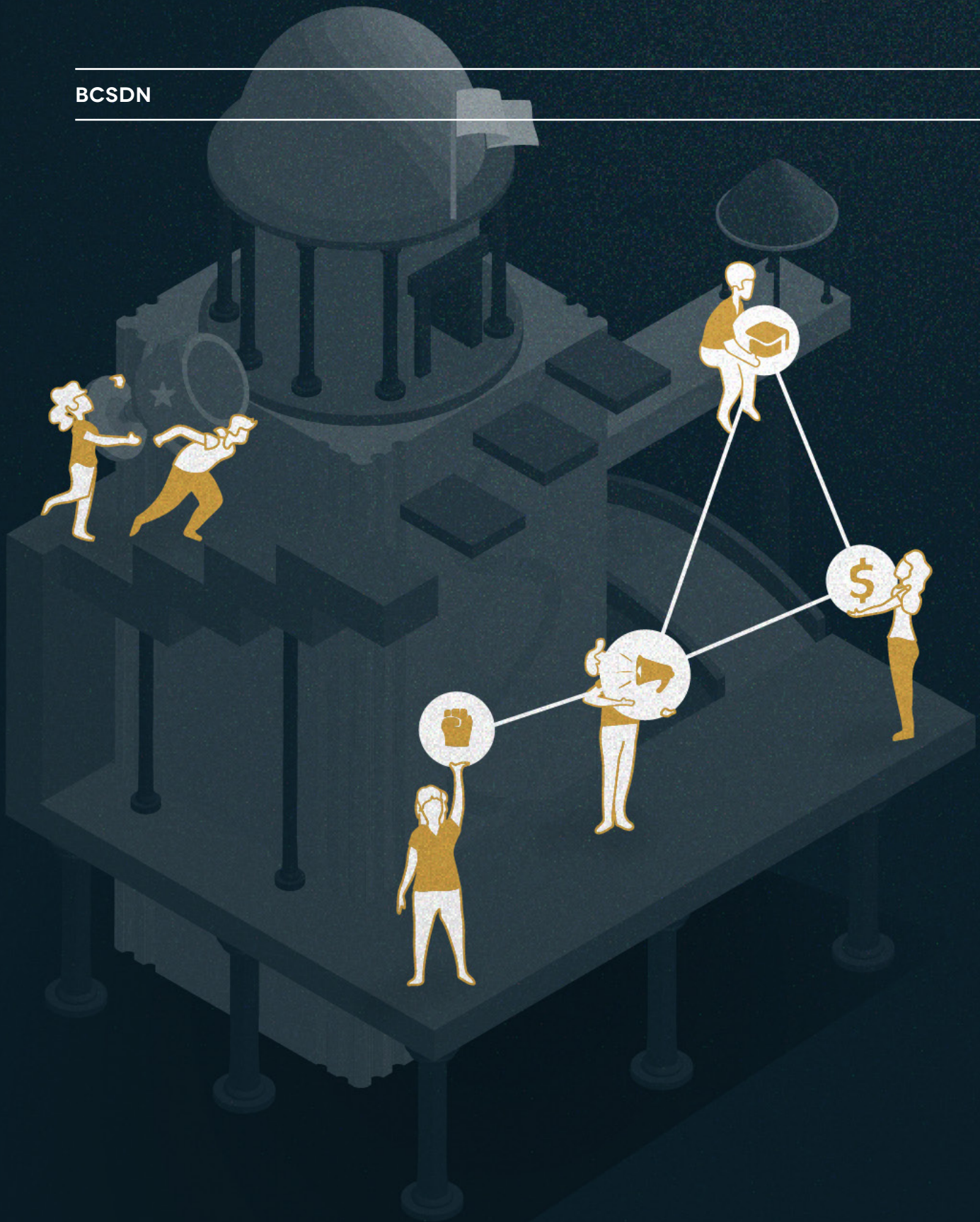
 **Reinforcing constituent-based accountability:** BCSDN continues to hear from its staff and the broader network when shaping D&I reforms. To this end, the findings and recommendations from the audit have provided valuable insight into its understanding of D&I and the expectations between its members, the network and its Executive Office. Following the audit, BCSDN identified the promotion of D&I as one of the thematic areas of intervention under its sub-granting scheme called the Regional Civil Society Development Hub. BCSDN will also organise capacity strengthening and training sessions for all sub-grantees of the Regional Hub in an attempt to promote and mainstream D&I among its wider stakeholders. By continuing to collaborate with relevant stakeholders and constituents, BCSDN ensures that its D&I work remains fluid and flexible.



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“It has been eye-opening in how it made organisations look inside and explore their own potential. Very few programmes I know have been designed or had the effect to do this for organisations. I think the programme will have a long-lasting impact on the organisations involved”.

BILJANA SPASOVSKA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BCSDN



BECOMING A REGIONAL LEADER IN D&I

BCSDN created and has been hosting a regional hub called the Regional Civil Society Development HUB (the HUB). The HUB's objectives are to strengthen civic space and foster civil society development by sharing knowledge and innovating techniques to support the advancement of civil society in the Western Balkans. Although the HUB is a regional centre, it aims to have global impact.

What is unique about the HUB is that it has been consciously created based on the principles of D&I. In fact, D&I is one of the main pillars of the HUB. BCSDN identified this pillar as a priority for the HUB given its recognition that excluded groups, such as women, LGBTQI+ folks, and young people, among others, are the ones commonly involved in and impacted by shrinking civic spaces and increasing civic space incidents.

To protect and promote the rights of excluded groups, the HUB serves various roles. First, it provides different types of grants to CSOs, enabling them to complete and expand their work. Relatedly, it systematically monitors civic environments as a means of ensuring that CSOs can continue to complete and expand their work. Finally, the HUB provides a platform for exchanging knowledge and best practices surrounding overcoming civic space restrictions and building vibrant, pluralistic and rights-based civic spaces.

As such, the HUB provides opportunities for CSOs to engage in capacity strengthening initiatives based on the principles of D&I and accountability. Trainings, mentoring activities and peer-to-peer learnings are made available in order to promote innovative uptakes such as exploring the collective power of different vulnerable groups. The goal of these initiatives is to support CSOs in finding solutions to civic space restrictions and, in the process, growing and transforming communities.

Through the tools and mechanisms developed and implemented at the HUB, BCSDN, as the leader of this centre, stands at the forefront of D&I work in the Balkans. Through this work, it is positioned to become a leader on D&I in the region, as its network-based structure and its capacity for collaboration allows it to disseminate and institutionalise these principles and practices within and outside of the HUB.



PALESTINIAN CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

PCCDS



PALESTINE

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Repressed



ENCOURAGING ECONOMIC & YOUTH

DEVELOPMENT IN PALESTINE

PCCDS is a small organisation working out of Hebron, Palestine. It was established in 2009 with the goals of protecting and promoting human rights and supporting and encouraging economic and youth development.

At PCCDS, D&I work is well underway. For example, the organisation has exceeded gender parity among its staff and members. Also, staff and members report being satisfied with its processes of developing and meeting planning, decision-making and policy-making goals, with all of these processes being undertaken in a participatory manner both internally and externally. Further, PCCDS' organisational culture is identified as comfortable, and its work-life balance as acceptable, according to the experiences of staff and members.

The main area in which PCCDS experiences gaps in its D&I journey is concerning its policies and processes. Policies exist at the organisation, but they are not very comprehensive and are only partially documented, especially in the case of human resources policies. Additionally, PCCDS experiences challenges with its office space. The space is too small, inaccessible and lacks emergency requirements and designated parking spots. These challenges reflect the fact that the organisation has little representation of excluded groups like people with disabilities. Finally, PCCDS' work in Palestine subjects it to barriers preventing its implementation of D&I reforms. Within this context, weak and fragmented legislation, limited institutional capacity, pressing community needs and low community expectations serve to deprioritise D&I reforms in favour of other work.

PCCDS'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING


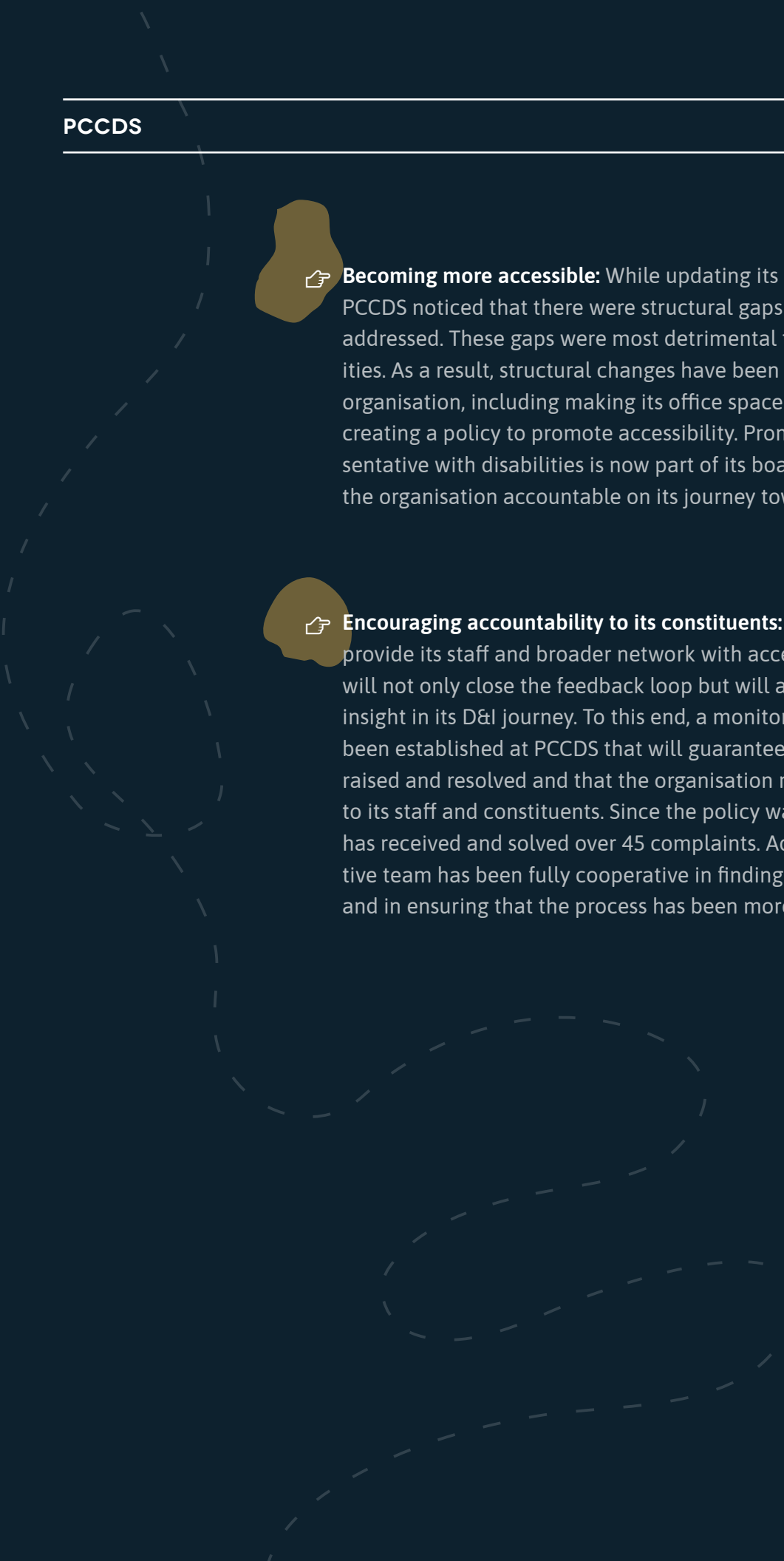
A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION




Updating D&I policies and processes: PCCDS drafted and instituted new D&I policies and processes that reflect its goals of becoming a more inclusive and more conscious organisation. The involvement of its staff and board in consultative workshops for learning and reflection has been an important step towards consolidating these policies and processes. In total, PCCDS has managed to finalise six different policy papers with an approval rate of over 75% among its board members.



Championing D&I values: Other CSOs in the Palestinian territories have been asking PCCDS for guidance on how to implement more diverse and inclusive policies, processes and practices within their own organisations. For PCCDS, introducing D&I concepts within the Palestinian civil society has been challenging at times. Backlash from constituents that feel that certain conversations go against what is considered the national culture has not only empowered Palestinian CSOs to start conversations around gender identity, but more importantly, has shifted some perceptions around the integration of people with diverse gender identities into Palestinian society. In an effort to address these challenges and capitalise on this momentum, PCCDS founded a network of 13 CSOs based in Hebron for guidance and support surrounding cultivating D&I values and formulating D&I policies, processes and practices.



Becoming more accessible: While updating its internal policies, PCCDS noticed that there were structural gaps that needed to be addressed. These gaps were most detrimental to people with disabilities. As a result, structural changes have been implemented at the organisation, including making its office space more accessible and creating a policy to promote accessibility. Promisingly, one representative with disabilities is now part of its board and helps to hold the organisation accountable on its journey toward inclusiveness.



Encouraging accountability to its constituents: PCCDS has worked to provide its staff and broader network with access to mechanisms that will not only close the feedback loop but will also provide valuable insight in its D&I journey. To this end, a monitoring committee has been established at PCCDS that will guarantee that complaints are raised and resolved and that the organisation remains accountable to its staff and constituents. Since the policy was introduced, PCCDS has received and solved over 45 complaints. Additionally, its executive team has been fully cooperative in finding immediate solutions and in ensuring that the process has been more than satisfactory.



BECOMING A D&I TRAILBLAZER IN THROUGH CREATING & OPERATIONALISING INTERNAL POLICIES

While PCCDS has taken many steps in its D&I journey, what stands out is its drafting of a series of internal policies meant to protect and promote the rights of excluded groups. After undergoing the audit, PCCDS embarked on a mission of policy creation and operationalisation. It drafted six policies in total, all of which seek to address the needs and experiences of women Palestinians, Palestinians with disabilities and LGBTQI+ Palestinians. These policies are comprised of one for including people with disabilities, another for including LGBTQI+ people, one for addressing sexual harassment, one for establishing a complaints system and one for ensuring the right to access information.

What is especially notable about PCCDS' internal policies is the process through which they were created and operationalised. PCCDS undertook a participatory process for creation and operationalisation, where they held an advisory workshop, performed a capacity-strengthening session, prepared and reviewed drafts, approved and integrated policies and, finally, encouraged employees to pledge to them. Interestingly, the organisation also consulted national and international human rights law as a source of guidance and inspiration for its own policies. For example, in its drafting of policies affecting women, it consulted the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Security Council's Resolution 1325, the Earth Summit's Agenda 21 and the recommendations generated at the Beijing Conference of 1995. The importance of and support for these policies at PCCDS is underscored by the fact that, when being passed in the General Assembly, all policies received a 75%-100% rate of approval. Even better, some policies have resulted in an increase in the representation of excluded groups at the organisation as well.

More than being received very well by its leadership, staff and members, PCCDS' internal policies caught the attention of the Palestinian media and government. As such, local media has extensively interviewed and reported on the policies, and the Ministry of the Interior has even adopted similar policies concerning the inclusion of people with disabilities and the right to access information. Further, other civil society organisations have expressed an interest in collaborating with and learning from PCCDS in regard to its internal policies. As a result, PCCDS is proud to consider itself a "school in diversity and inclusion" and has become a leader in D&I work in Palestine.



CENTER FOR AGRARIAN REFORMS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

CARRD



PHILIPPINES

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Repressed



BUILDING UPON PARTNERSHIPS

TO GROW IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

CARRD is a not-for-profit organisation supporting agrarian reform beneficiaries and small-scale farmers and their cooperatives in the Philippines. It is committed to improving the quality of life of beneficiaries, farmers and cooperatives by enabling them to access productive resources and make informed decisions.

At the start of the audit, CARRD staff, at its headquarters in Manila and in the field in Batangas, Capiz and Iloilo, had little awareness of the role of D&I in their operations and programming. While the organisation already had some D&I policies and practices in place, these measures were not mainstreamed or formalised, and as a result, gaps in safety, access and voice persisted for women,

youth, people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ folks. Additionally, certain conduct-related problems, problems that had been addressed in the past, resurfaced for CARRD. It seems as though the reforms instituted at the time were not sufficient and, as a result, a reassessment of the organisation was needed.

The necessity of an organisational reassessment exists amidst already promising signs for CARRD: a large number of staff and beneficiaries are women, people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ folks are welcomed and some internal policies protect staff. Taken together, staff willingness, existing measures and a relatively open organisational culture signals enormous potential for CARRD.

CARRD'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING


A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION




Prioritising gender sensitivity: Based on the audit and an internal needs assessment, CARRD prioritised gender sensitivity as a key driver of change for inclusive policies and practices. CARRD held a three-day D&I and gender sensitivity training for 12 staff members. A follow-up gender inputting and mentoring session was organised among core staff for advancing learning and developing new skill sets for mainstreaming gender in CARRD's work. A gender focal person was selected from the trained staff to lead in the completion of a gender audit exercise, where staff could conduct self-assessments of their and their colleagues' work in relation to D&I and gender. These assessments resulted in the development of a gender action plan for CARRD, further solidifying its intention to mainstream gender at the organisation and prioritise resource mobilisation to this end.



Breaking down geographic barriers: CARRD planned trainings and capacity strengthening activities for not only its staff but also for the farmer leaders and paralegal volunteers that they work closely with. Their goal was to ensure that the entire organisation implements inclusive practices. Due to logistical difficulties brought on by COVID-19, the planned trainings for the farmer leaders were not conducted. However, five of the trained staff members used their trainings to run 15 bilateral phone consultations with the farmer leaders and their beneficiaries. These bilateral sessions provided an opportunity to not only share the main lessons from the D&I and gender sensitivity trainings but also to ensure that input from the farmer leaders was recorded and counted in the development of inclusive policies, handbooks and practices.

 **Increasing communication and transparency:** 12 staff members underwent a one-day soft skills training on the topic of communication, as it was identified that many D&I issues were caused by gaps in communication across the organisation. The training focused on strengthening staff capacity to manage difficult conversations and work-related stresses, devising possible mechanisms to enhance feedback management and soliciting recommendations to improve staff well-being. As a result of this training, five online chat groups were created with the aim of quickly responding to the day-to-day challenges and issues of the board, staff, management, volunteers and partners. Additionally, a new feedbacking tool has been designed and integrated into the staff manual that will grade the responsiveness of management in promoting the welfare of staff.

 **Updating policies and processes:** There were few D&I policies in place at CARRD, and these documents have not been updated in over a decade. Some of the most important provisions in the policies are no longer reflective of the needs of the staff, and in the last 10 years, the organisation has been confronted with four cases related to the conduct and decorum of staff. Although there have been reforms instituted to address these issues and prevent their recurrence, staff believe that their involvement in assessing them, learning from them and reflecting these learnings in written manuals will reinforce their trust in the organisation given its goal of protecting their rights and privileges. Given this understanding, CARRD initiated a review of internal policies in which staff at all levels of the organisation participated. Further, once quarantine began, staff initiated 'writeshops' meant to incorporate new and modified provisions in staff and financial management manuals. This process was completed systematically, including documenting past experiences, organising inputting sessions, providing necessary trainings, hiring experts and consulting with the board to confirm the appropriateness of the policies.



Encouraging commitment from 'the top:' The Executive Director of CARRD, Joy Demaluan, expressed her commitment to the organisation's D&I journey. She made a point to identify next steps and manage expectations surrounding them:

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"Since I am not an expert on labor law, on human resource management and organisational development, facilitating discussion for the review of the internal written policies was quite a challenge for me. Before every session, I allotted considerable time to read related documents in anticipation of the questions that more likely will be raised by the staff members. Because of the volume of valid issues raised by the staff members, some of which still require careful assessment as it entails budget allotment, it's challenging to manage their expectations.

The most interesting thing I learned from this programme is that consciously providing venues for sharing and engaging of thoughts drives change. This kind of exercise encourages people to be more flexible in their thinking, be reflective of the things happening around them especially those that directly affect them and to act based on their reflection and giving one an opportunity to speak and be heard leads to recognition of oneself as part of solving a problem.

On a personal level, this whole programme is a self-discovery process of who I am as a leader, as an employee, as a colleague and as an agent of change in the community. Consequently, I learned to improve the way I do things, the way I relate with the people I work with and to be more open to the views and opinions of others – that theirs are as important as mine".

JOY DEMALUAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CARRD



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“One of the women farmer leaders came up with her story about how working at CARRD has helped her know more about this farming and hence she has become a ‘go-to’ person in her family for this topic. Her extended family and friends seek her support and discuss important matters with her on this topic. Until we spoke about this, she did not have this consciousness about the impact that her work has on her family and identity”.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PARTICIPANT, CARRD

**HOW PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES
ENHANCE TRUST, INCREASE
SUSTAINABILITY & RESULT IN
CHANGED ATTITUDES**

CARRD underwent a participatory process, including a final survey, to identify progress in its D&I journey.

Participatory processes may be challenging for organisations due to the complexity in their planning and the amount of resources that they require. Despite the challenges, these processes are key for organisations to build trust and acquire knowledge about necessary institutional adjustments.

CARRD started with a systematic review of its internal documentation. At the same time, it organised input sessions and provided trainings to encourage staff to feel comfortable in speaking out. Currently, CARRD is at the stage where the consultants have presented the findings from these reviews to its board in order to evaluate the new policies and make the final approvals.

When asked about the review process, Joy Demaluan, the Executive Director of CARRD, said that “people within the organisation particularly the staff members believed that involving them in making an overall assessment of these experiences and learning as well as reflecting these reforms in the written manuals will reinforce their trust that the organisation is serious about protecting our rights and privileges. The active participation only showed that most of us are ready to talk about our experiences and offer solutions”.

During the final stage of the review process, CARRD surveyed the staff members involved to assess the impact of its efforts. The findings reflect the organisation’s commitment to advocating for more inclusive practices that cater to its staff’s needs and experiences.

HERE ARE THE RESULTS:

- 👉 100% of respondents agreed that the process increased their understanding and familiarity of the issues that affect them as employees.
- 👉 88% of respondents claimed the process helped them to discover new sides of themselves and new ways of interaction with their peers, colleagues and/or project beneficiaries.
- 👉 100% of respondents said that they now have a deeper understanding of their rights, privileges and responsibilities within the organisation.
- 👉 88% of respondents feel that their rights and privileges are protected now.
- 👉 100% of respondents acknowledge that, by being involved in the process, they have contributed to the solutions.
- 👉 88% of respondents feel that communication in the organisation has improved. They feel more confident about reporting updates and raising concerns, especially when they are working in the field.
- 👉 63% of respondents observed improvements on how management is responding to their issues.



SOUTH SUDAN COMMUNITY CHANGE AGENCY

SOSUCCA



SOUTH SUDAN

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Closed



WORKING TOWARD SYSTEMIC & TRANSFORMA- TIONAL CHANGE

SOSUCCA is a youth-led national organisation based in South Sudan. It seeks to educate, empower and build the capacity of local communities by engaging in development projects. Its goal is to address the root causes of poverty and injustice and to transform these issues for positive change.

SOSUCCA's management, staff and board members are very much aware of the importance of D&I work in South Sudanese civil society. Where their operations and programming could use improvement, they express a strong desire and commitment to inspecting their impact and encouraging their transformation. A deliberative and cooperative decision-making culture, broad ethnic representation among staff, some opportunities for internal and external training and formal mechanisms for navigating trauma stand as promising examples of D&I reforms undertaken by the organisation.

Similar to other organisations working in 'closed' civic spaces, though, the inaccessibility of funding and the obstruction of operations and

programming are the chief obstacles hindering SOSUCCA in completing further D&I reforms. Additionally, violent conflict and patriarchal and homophobic norms lead to the following challenges for management and staff: women experience a lack of opportunities, a gendered division of labour and the marginalisation of their voices; internal representation and external service provision for older adults, people with disabilities and LGBTQI+ folks is limited; and policy protections for preventing all of these challenges remain piecemeal.

The case of SOSUCCA makes it clear that, while undertaking D&I work is an indispensable part of engaging in national and global civil society, completing it is a privilege within contexts of state repression, violent conflict and systemic oppression. SOSUCCA's management, staff and board members should be celebrated for continuing their D&I work, and in order to propel their efforts, donors and partners should make it a priority to support their D&I journey.

SOSUCCA'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING


A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION





Finding new ways to spread the message: SOSUCCA found that D&I conversations were not commonplace in South Sudan and wanted to ensure that dialogue was opened across sectors. Consequently, the organisation ran bi-weekly radio programmes at SAMA FM, which provided free air time for them once the discussions gained some ground. As a result of the discussions started by the programme, calls for CSOs to improve on D&I in their work skyrocketed. SOSUCCA staff have now been asked to facilitate trainings for other organisations to pass on what they have learned throughout the process.



Promoting equal access to training: SOSUCCA took steps to ensure that its staff were able to access D&I trainings. These trainings were made accessible to staff in their Juba office, but more than that, the executive director and training facilitator were able to travel to other locations, such as Yei and Mundri, to promote full participation in comfortable locations. This attention to accessibility ensured that staff across the country were at the same level in understanding D&I principles and could begin applying them to their work. This initiative led to a review of SOSUCCA's core values, where new values reflecting D&I principles were added. As a result, SOSUCCA's culture has shifted significantly, as staff are adapting to more inclusive practices and attitudes.

 **Becoming more accessible:** As SOSUCCA began to update its internal policies to promote inclusivity in staff protection and rights, it realised that it could also address structural gaps. Although upgrading office spaces and providing additional rooms are expensive for the organisation, it found a way to move its office to the ground floor of its existing building to be more accessible for persons with disabilities. Additionally, since some of the women staff members have child care responsibilities, SOSUCCA set up a private room for women to access when breastfeeding or pumping.

 **Centring people in SOSUCCA's narrative:** SOSUCCA has shifted the entire methodology of its work, opting for a people-centred approach now. This approach means that the organisation focuses on and appreciates each individual's contributions and perspectives to building projects and programmes, with human rights at the centre of the narrative. This shift has also improved staff attitudes, as staff now feel like they can own the process and take the lead in championing change in the organisation.

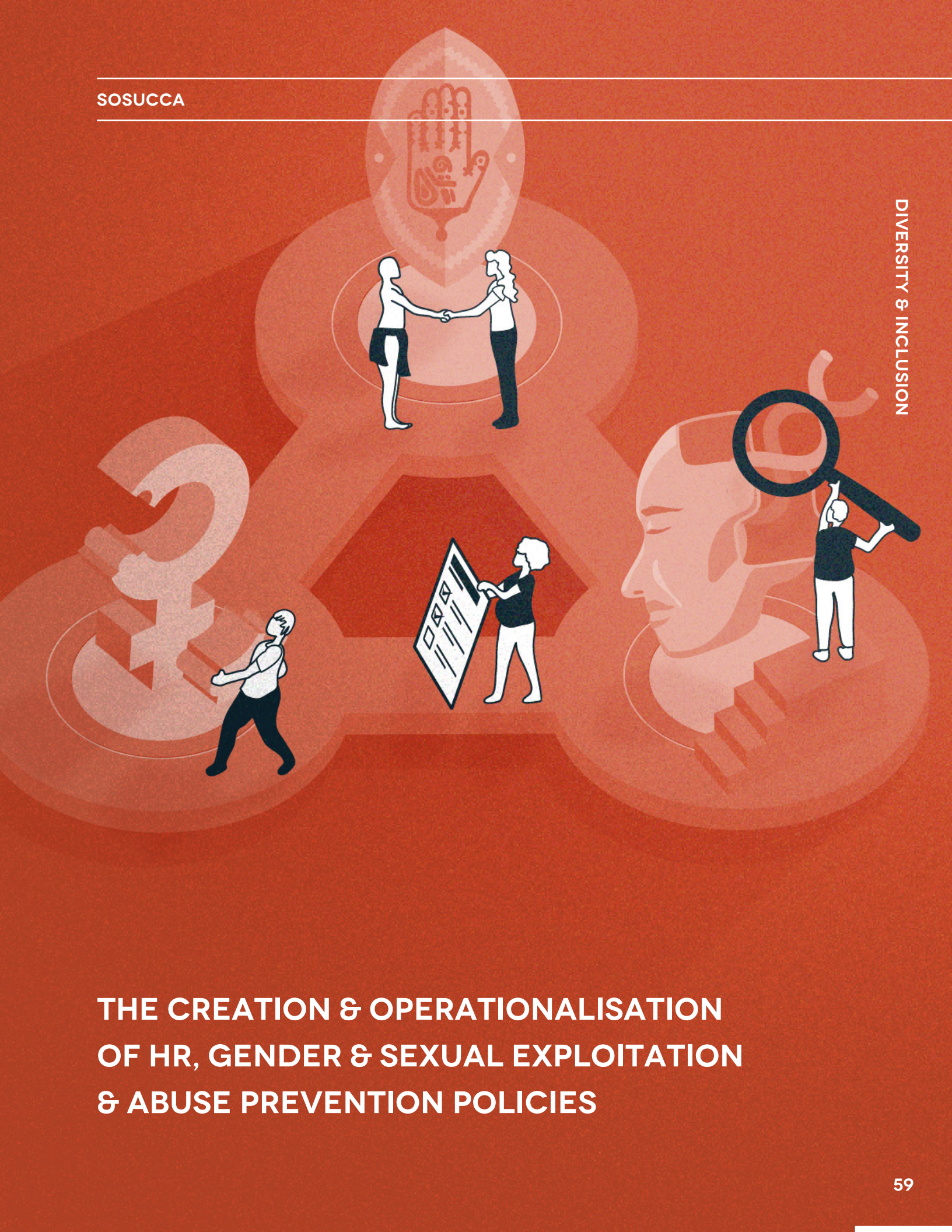
 **Designating an inclusion and integration officer:** SOSUCCA is trying to foster community building and engagement practices based on D&I principles that will enable the creation of safe(r) spaces where ethnic minorities can start having conversations around accountability, equity, recognition, access and trust.



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“Hiring a person from the Pari community, an ethnic vulnerable minority in the country, has contributed significantly to the fostering of D&I. It helps us as an institution to establish focal persons in the area and mobilise more volunteers in order to extend our programmes to those locations. Through this person we have been able to become more visible and start engaging with youth activists on peacebuilding initiatives. Before hiring this person, we did not have a way of establishing contact with this community. Now we have established trust and we have been able to minimise some of the tension that has been building up in the area. We now feel welcomed and feel we have added value not only by promoting a peaceful coexistence, but also by generating community engagement and appropriation of D&I activities”.

FESTO BALI CHRISTOPHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOSUCCA



THE CREATION & OPERATIONALISATION OF HR, GENDER & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

SOSUCCA has made strides in its D&I journey through its creation and operationalisation of three internal policies: an HR Policy, a Gender Policy and a Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy. Before its D&I audit, the organisation did not have any policies of this nature. However, after undertaking participatory consultations with leadership, staff and board members, SOSUCCA has drafted and disseminated these three policies within the organisation and has translated and applied them to its day-to-day work.

SOSUCCA's HR Policy outlines protocols and procedures surrounding recruitment and onboarding processes, payment, benefit and insurance schemes, staff development programmes, disciplinary measures, temporary appointments, employee welfare guarantees and general guidelines. Next, its Gender Policy outlines gender-sensitive and -inclusive principles and practices to be implemented and mainstreamed by leadership, staff and board members. Finally, its PSEA Policy defines protection and prevention obligations surrounding the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, contains a reporting mechanism for cases of exploitation and abuse and concludes with a declaration against exploitation and abuse to be signed by leadership, staff and board members.

SOSUCCA's progress in the area of internal policy is remarkable, for the organisation went from having no D&I policies to creating and operationalising three policies meant to protect staff and beneficiaries. These policies are significant for their grounding in human rights frameworks and for their ability to place the rights of excluded groups like women, children and LGBTQI+ folks at the centre of their provisions. For example, given the provisions of SOSUCCA's Gender Policy, the organisation now has a private room dedicated to breastfeeding and pumping. As a result, women staff members report feeling more comfortable because of the protective environment created by the policy and the resulting shift in attitudes and values of male colleagues and the entire organisation. In itself, this reform proves that women staff member's comfort is a priority for SOSUCCA and that D&I work is being taken seriously by its leadership, staff and board members.



GLOBAL LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

GLS



UGANDA

CIVICUS Monitor Rating:
Repressed



CENTERING THE CAPABILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

OF UGANDAN YOUTH AND WOMEN

As a youth, women-led organisation based in Uganda, GLS is dedicated to improving the health, social and economic well-being of young people through the use of peer education strategies like mentorship programmes, print and media materials, information and communications technology tools, arts-based activities, life skills trainings and Sustainable Development Goals dialogues. Through these strategies, it seeks to ensure that young people, and young women in particular, gain opportunities to acquire transferable skills, learn from one another and solve global challenges.

GLS' leadership, staff and volunteers are deeply committed to women and youth's empowerment and understand the importance of D&I work for their organisation's health. These values are reflected in the fact that the organisation is women-led, enjoys gender parity and encourages diverse ethnic representation. GLS also has high-level policies addressing discrimination, including specific policies against sexual harassment and child abuse, and staff are able to take advantage of flexible workdays.

For the most part, people with disabilities can access GLS' spaces, although these spaces do not meet legal accessibility requirements.

There are a few challenges, however, that are hindering GLS from undertaking further D&I reforms. The first is the limited resources available to the organisation. The minimal development of GLS' D&I policies and processes, including their lack of clarity and comprehensiveness, exists partly as a result of this challenge. GLS has also struggled with including LGBTQI+ Ugandans in its programming, as the organisation is influenced by the homophobic and transphobic norms embedded in broader society. Finally, the infancy of the organisation means that it has had limited capacity for D&I work, while a restrained legal environment gives it only partial control over its operations and infrastructure.

The commitment of GLS' leadership, staff and volunteers to gender and youth empowerment is worth recognising and will surely serve as fuel for the organisation continuing its D&I journey.

GLS'S JOURNEY TOWARD BECOMING

A MORE DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION



Undertaking individual work plans: Each member of the GLS staff team has identified how they can incorporate D&I into their specific stream of work (i.e. its monitoring and evaluation team is beginning to track inclusion indicators, its finance officers are looking about inclusive budgeting, etc.). This activity has helped to demonstrate that D&I is everyone's responsibility at the organisation.



Conducting engagement sessions with diverse groups of youth:

This activity was part of the staff mentorship programme at GLS, started to support youth in their leadership development and share lessons learned during capacity strengthening sessions in the communities served. As result, the GLS team has engaged with youth living with disabilities and their immediate families by sharing experiences on how the community perceives them and the challenges they face. In this way, GLS has helped to call for more inclusive and disability-friendly programmes. GLS has also included disability inclusion in their budgeting practices and have requested support from donors.



Developing a D&I policy: The entire GLS team, including staff, volunteers and board members, participated in a co-creation process with external support to develop an overarching D&I policy for the organisation. This policy covers sexual harassment protocols, complaints mechanisms and an overview of values and principles of GLS that are to be respected and upheld by all GLS stakeholders.



Testing innovative approaches: GLS also tried out innovative approaches to promote inclusivity in their work. One example of these approaches is maneuvering around low internet connectivity and convening a panel discussion on WhatsApp. Panelists were able to share their interventions using the app and, after interacting with each other, participants in the chat were also able to engage in the topic discussion. An additional example concerns disability inclusion. When convening events with disabled speakers, GLS realised that its budgets needed to be more flexible in order to provide appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities. This recognition led GLS to create a separate budget line for disability inclusion in their programming and are adding this line to their donor and fundraising requests as well.



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Applying for the programme came with scepticism because I did not know what diversity and inclusion would come with. It has now become an eye-opener for me as a leader to use my influence and feminist principles in modelling workplace values that are gender sensitive and inclusive. I have come to appreciate our diversity as people working in the same organisation and seeking to turn that diversity into strengths with which to infect our communities, stakeholders and other actors, with justice and fairness for all”.

HARRIET MUKAJAMBO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GLS



**PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY
THROUGH DISTRIBUTING A WEEKLY
NEWSLETTER**

After completing a training module, one important learning that GLS highlighted was the need to strengthen their engagement with the community and find ways to make information about their work more 'digestible' to this audience. As a result, GLS made the decision to create a monthly newsletter that would feature recent activities and opportunities for engaging with the organisation.



"One of the key questions explored in this module was whether we can have inclusion without accountability. It is through accountability that people are given power in our workplaces. It is also true that accountability allows us to reach the most vulnerable in our communities. In this module, we learn that listening and responding to feedback is an important element for improving accountability and building stronger, more inclusive relationships with our constituents and stakeholders."

HARRIET MUKAJAMBO,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GLS

Although the newsletter has made it possible for GLS to connect with more members, donors and volunteers, Uganda's limited internet infrastructure makes it harder to reach people in places where the connection is weak or non-existent. In order to ensure that vulnerable youth with limited bandwidth are able to access information about its work, GLS committed to printing physical pamphlets. The distribution of these pamphlets has also been a way through which they can interact more with their community and has helped to create new spaces for the community to discuss the issues championed by the organisation.

As a result, GLS' youth engagement has increased, especially from those living in foster homes. Thanks to the newsletter, youth feel that they are connected with people experiencing similar struggles and that there are spaces where they are validated and empowered. In turn, this sense of community provides the organisation with greater legitimacy.

GLS' monthly newsletter, therefore, not only provides the organisation with the information needed to increase the relevance of its services but also builds stronger ties and, ultimately, deeper trust with youth. So, while a newsletter may seem like a small step, it is exactly this sort of action that is paving the way towards a more accountable, legitimate and transparent sector.



CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR

CIVIL SOCIETY AT LARGE?

Although each of the eight partner organisations in the D&I Pilot Programme faced unique difficulties based on their local contexts, organisational size and staff make-up, there were many common challenges that affected organisations across the board. Some of these challenges could be found in the following areas:

👉 Appreciating and promoting the diversity of staff members and constituents

👉 Opening up communication and transparency at all levels

👉 Drafting and operationalising formal policies and processes

👉 Incorporating inclusive practices within all roles, whether operational or programmatic

👉 Ensuring a safe(r) and comfortable organisational culture

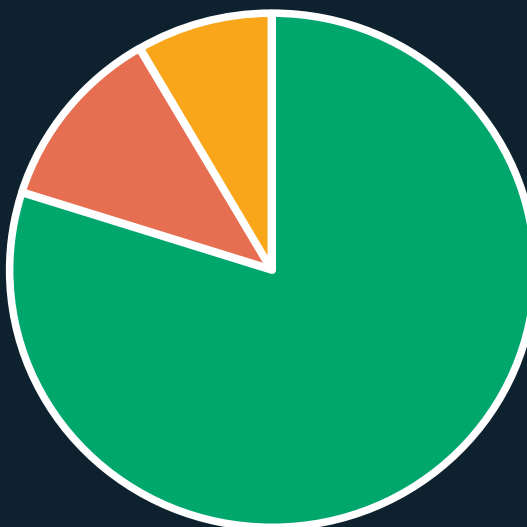
👉 Creating a shared understanding of D&I and ensuring/ that this understanding fits into local languages and contexts

👉 Being more accountable to their constituents and the organisation

CONCLUSIONS

IF YOU HAVE NOTICED CHANGES AT YOUR ORGANIZATION AROUND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THOSE CHANGES?**

- Positive
- Both positive & negative
- Not sure / too early to say
- Negative



When designing a D&I strategy, it is imperative for CSOs to contemplate the above challenges. In addition to them, though, there were many barriers to progress that should also be taken into account. Examples include unstable political and legal environments, existing workloads and limited compensated capacities, the necessity of operating within a global pandemic, overpromising leadership and underperforming mechanisms and potential internal or external backlash. For CSOs embarking on existing or new D&I journeys, it is important to complete risk management analyses in order to mitigate some of these issues before they occur.

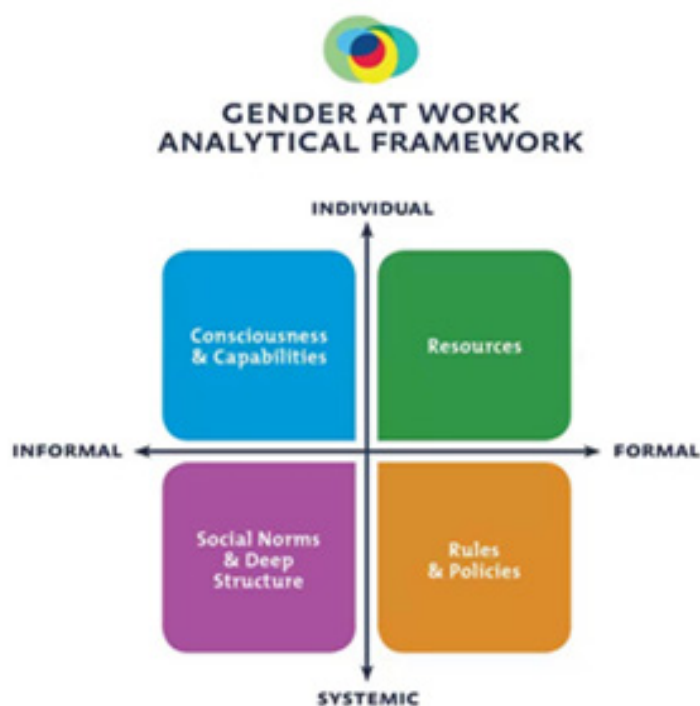
The Pilot Programme lasted for a total of one year, which all participants would agree was too short to see the impacts

of their work. Even so, a short survey was sent to the staff of each organisation that demonstrates the positive impact already felt on all levels of the organisations.

All participants agreed that, in order to become truly inclusive, civil society must practice what we preach by ensuring that everyone in their organisations know the role they play in contributing to a more inclusive sector and world.

If you wish to embark on a similar journey but are in need of that driver of change, fill out our D&I Diagnostic Tool. This tool will help you to assess where your organisation stands in its individual D&I journey.

ANNEXES



ANNEX 1

The D&I Pilot Programme was divided into two phases: the discovery phase (Phase 1) and the implementation and tracking phase (Phase 2).

ANNEXES


Phase 1: Discovery

CIVICUS matched each selected organisation with an external consultant to undergo a D&I audit. This consultant was based in the same region or sub-region as the pilot organisation so that they could speak the local language and understand the unique local contexts that the organisations are operating within. The audit was designed to be a stock-taking exercise. It sought to look at what the organisations already had in terms of D&I policies and practices and what glaring gaps need to be addressed by them.

In order to have comparable experiences adapted to local environments, the consultants agreed on a methodology for the audit exercise based on the [Gender at Work analytical framework](#). As can be seen in the image on the right, the audit explored four aspects - consciousness and capabilities, resources, social norms and deep structure and rules and policies - through the four domains of individual, systemic, formal and informal.

The consultants considered, for example, the existence and breadth of sexual harassment policies but also the power dynamics and social norms within the organisations. This exercise was completed through a desk review of policies, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and office visits. The interviews and focus group discussions featured not only staff but also board members, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Each organisation received a comprehensive report identifying what they were already doing well and suggesting recommendations on what they can improve, including advice on how they can approach the gaps. This report ended up being a huge driver of change for the organisations, as many leadership teams had no idea that some of these problems existed. Even if they were somewhat aware of the issues, they did not understand how much it was affecting their employees' well-being and ability to do their jobs.



Click the rubrik [link](#) and scroll down to see the exact template that the pilot organisations used. The participants filled out a chart based on each thematic area:

- **Sprout** - *What is your current situation?*
- **Seedling** - *What are quick wins that can be implemented now?*
- **Flowering** - *Where would you like to be in a few months?*
- **Bearing Fruit** - *What does success look like for you in this area? With resources and capacities, where would you like to be?*
- **Honeybees** - *How do you measure success? How are you going to share your progress with your constituents?*

Phase 2: Implementation and Tracking

In order to create an action plan that would serve as a guide for the organisations, each of them filled out a rubric based on the recommendations from the audit report, informal conversations with CIVICUS staff and internal discussions.

Once a final rubric action plan was agreed upon by all parties, participants began implementing the quick wins and changes across their organisations. Each organisation then received a sub-grant to begin putting resources behind their D&I commitments. They began implementing cross-organisation trainings on specific D&I areas, seeking external support for updating or formulating policies and setting up mechanisms to continue these efforts in the long-term. More detail on these activities can be found in the following chapters.

Phase 2 concluded with organisations feeling much more confident about their knowledge on D&I, while understanding how long this journey indeed is and how much work they still have to do. All of the organisations agreed to continue completing their work through a D&I lens.



THE **D&I** DIARIES

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' JOURNEYS THROUGH
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

