

# CIVICUS Solidarity Fund Learning Journey



CONCLUSION



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With the support of





## CIVICUS SOLIDARITY FUND LEARNING JOURNEY



Welcome to the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF) learning journey. The CSF is a member-led and member-resourced fund created in 2019 to provide flexible funds and support to CIVICUS members in the way our members need them. True to its guiding principles, the CSF is constantly trying to improve and better serve CIVICUS members. That's why in 2021 we decided to look inward, listen to our members, understand the costs and barriers they face when applying for our grants and try to make the fund more accessible to them.



On this site you will be able to come along on our journey! Click on the image to learn more about the CSF, check out the voices of our grantee-members who helped us improve the fund, see what transformations have taken place and explore everything we learned along the way.



## What is the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund?

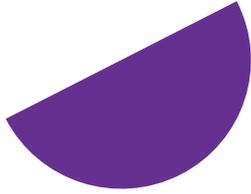
The CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF) is a solidarity mechanism founded in 2019 to promote civil society diversity and resilience by providing meaningful resources and support to CIVICUS members from across the globe through flexible grants. The CSF focuses on supporting small and even informal civil society groups on the frontlines of change, whose mission is critical to their communities. The CSF is led and resourced by CIVICUS members and provides support to approximately 10 individual activists, movements, organisations or groups per year.



As a solidarity mechanism that follows a participatory grantmaking approach, the CSF has a decision-making body, called the [Member Advisory Group \(MAG\)](#), composed of 10 CIVICUS members selected through an open call process. They are experienced individuals from diverse backgrounds and are leaders in their communities, movements, groups or sectors. The MAG is in charge of selecting the CSF grantee-members and plays a key role in strengthening the Fund by providing advice and strategic guidance on priorities and next steps to ensure a transparent, participatory and inclusive process.

Solidarity and collective action inform all aspects of the CSF's operations, sources of funding and decisions. Beyond only providing a financial contribution, the CSF is committed to creating the best conditions to strengthen our members' agency and impact.





## Learning from within



The CIVICUS Solidarity Fund (CSF) was conceptualised to be participatory and inclusive. However, we have learned that, unconsciously, our grant application process was not as accessible and inclusive as we desired. It was reproducing power dynamics and a culture of competition that did not follow all our guiding principles (solidarity, diversity and inclusion, complementarity, mission-alignment, transparency, power-sharing, independence, accountability, innovation, flexibility and learning).



Of course, we wanted to change that! So, we started looking inward to identify what was failing, what worked and how to improve. Between November 2020 and January 2021, our team held several conversations with previous applicants to understand their experience with the CSF application process, learn more about their experiences accessing resources and understand what costs and barriers were imposed on small and less formal organisations, groups and movements when applying for grants, CSF grants particularly.



With the help of a consultant, Naira Bonilla, we also did a literature review on best funding practices to support grassroots groups, activists, social movements and small and informal organisations.



Through this process, we learned much about trust, power dynamics, cultures of competition, and accountability practices. We identified the following areas of change that we needed to focus on to improve the CSF:



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- Transforming the grant application process into an inclusive, accessible and straightforward exercise.
  - Creating new reporting requirements and monitoring methods that acknowledge that our grantees' progress is not linear and that oftentimes their journey is more transformative than any expected outcome of their work.
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These findings guided the redesign of the CSF application, monitoring, reporting and learning processes.



## Member voices

The feedback from CSF grantee-members was crucial on this step of our journey. Check out part of the valuable insights and ideas they provided:

**"WE PREFER OFFLINE APPLICATIONS!  
IT IS EASIER TO WORK AS A TEAM ON  
OFFLINE FILES AND THIS REDUCES  
INTERNET COSTS AND  
CONNECTIVITY ISSUES."**



**"THINK ABOUT INCLUSIVITY FOR OLDER GENERATIONS THAT  
ARE NOT AS TECH-SAVVY AS YOUNGER ONES."**



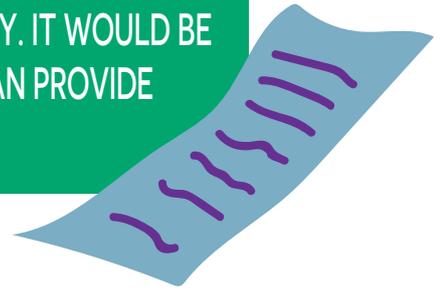
**"THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA CAN BE VERY CONFUSING.  
WE NEED CLEAR INFORMATION TO SAVE TIME AND RESOURCES."**



**"I DON'T THINK THAT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE POLITICAL OR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF OUR COUNTRIES OR  
REGIONS NECESSARILY MADE SENSE FOR ME. I DON'T THINK THAT'S A QUESTION FOR APPLICANTS TO ANSWER;  
THAT'S WORK THAT PEOPLE EVALUATING THE APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE DOING."**



"HAVING FEWER QUESTIONS IN AN APPLICATION FORM MAKES IT VERY HARD FOR US TO EXPLAIN A PROJECT OR AN ORGANISATION PROPERLY. IT WOULD BE IDEAL IF THE FORMS INCLUDED MORE QUESTIONS WHERE WE CAN PROVIDE SHORT ANSWERS, PERHAPS ONLY ADDING BULLET POINTS."



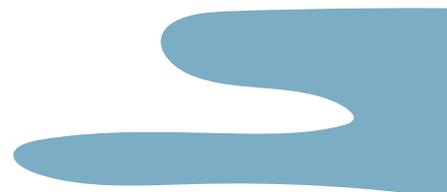
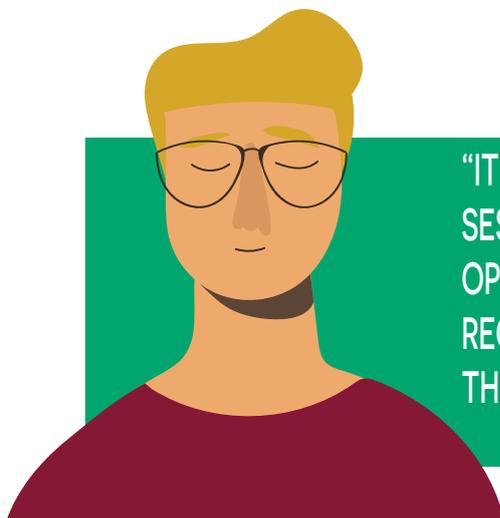
"GIVE US THE OPTION TO DECIDE IF WE WANT TO SEND THE APPLICATION IN VIDEO, AUDIO FILES OR TEXT FORMATS."



"AN APPLICATION CAN BE SHORT BUT NOT CLEAR, OTHERS CAN BE VERY EXTENSIVE BUT CLEAR. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE APPLICATION FORM ITSELF SHOWS THE APPLICANT WHAT THE FUNDING ORGANISATION IS LOOKING FOR. APPLICATIONS THAT ARE VERY GENERIC CAN INCREASE THE COSTS AND BARRIERS ON YOUNGER OR UNDER-RESOURCED ORGANISATIONS BECAUSE WE DO NOT HAVE EXPERIENCE ANSWERING VERY GENERIC QUESTIONS."



"IT WOULD BE AMAZING TO HAVE INFORMATION SESSIONS WHILE THE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS IS OPEN. THESE ARE IMPORTANT FOR APPLICANTS TO RECEIVE GUIDANCE AND SOLVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE APPLICATION FORM AND NEXT STEPS."





"RECEIVING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AFTER SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION WOULD BE BETTER THAN NOT RECEIVING FEEDBACK AT ALL. PLEASE, SAVE SOME TIME TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ABOUT OUR APPLICATIONS. WE ARE TOO INVOLVED IN OUR PROJECTS AND SOMETIMES MIGHT NOT KNOW IF WE ARE EXPLAINING THEM PROPERLY."



"GIVING FEEDBACK SHOULD BE A MANDATORY PRACTICE FOR DONORS SINCE APPLICANTS SPEND A LOT OF TIME WRITING PROPOSALS AND NEVER RECEIVE FEEDBACK."



"HOLD INFORMATION SESSIONS IN NON-UN LANGUAGES!"



"SHARE A GUIDING DOCUMENT ON HOW TO FILL OUT THE FUNDING PROPOSALS."



"WE DON'T HAVE SOMEONE DEDICATED TO WRITING FUNDING PROPOSALS. OUR TEAM SITS DOWN, SPLITS THE FORM, WRITES ANSWERS SEPARATELY, PUTS THEM TOGETHER, AND THEN WE DISAGREE OR AGREE AS A GROUP ON WHAT WAS WRITTEN. THAT IS WHY IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO COMPLETE A FORM: IT IS NOT BECAUSE A TEMPLATE IS COMPLICATED. WE CANNOT EMPLOY A FUNDRAISING OFFICER OR AN EXPERT TO DEVELOP PROPOSALS. THE PROGRAM MANAGER LEADS THE PROCESS, AND A GROUP OF STAFF IS SELECTED DEPENDING ON THE KNOWLEDGE THEY HAVE OF THAT PROPOSAL. YOU HAVE TO STOP WHATEVER YOU ARE DOING TO WRITE THE PROPOSAL, SO LOTS OF PEOPLE HAVE TO BRING IDEAS TOGETHER."





## The transformation

The conversations we held with previous applicants helped us understand what we needed to change, and where to start. This is what we changed in the CSF:

### Redesigned application process



We redesigned the CSF's application process to make it more inclusive, accessible and straightforward. To achieve this, the redesign followed two main guiding principles: 1) respect the time and resources invested by applicants, and 2) honour the relationships with our grantee-members.

The redesigned application process takes into consideration the power relations at play, limited financial and non-financial resources available to grassroots organisations, groups and movements, and has taken steps to start moving away from processes that propagate the culture of competition.



These are the specific improvements made to the application process:

### Created more specific, balanced and clearer eligibility criteria and requirements



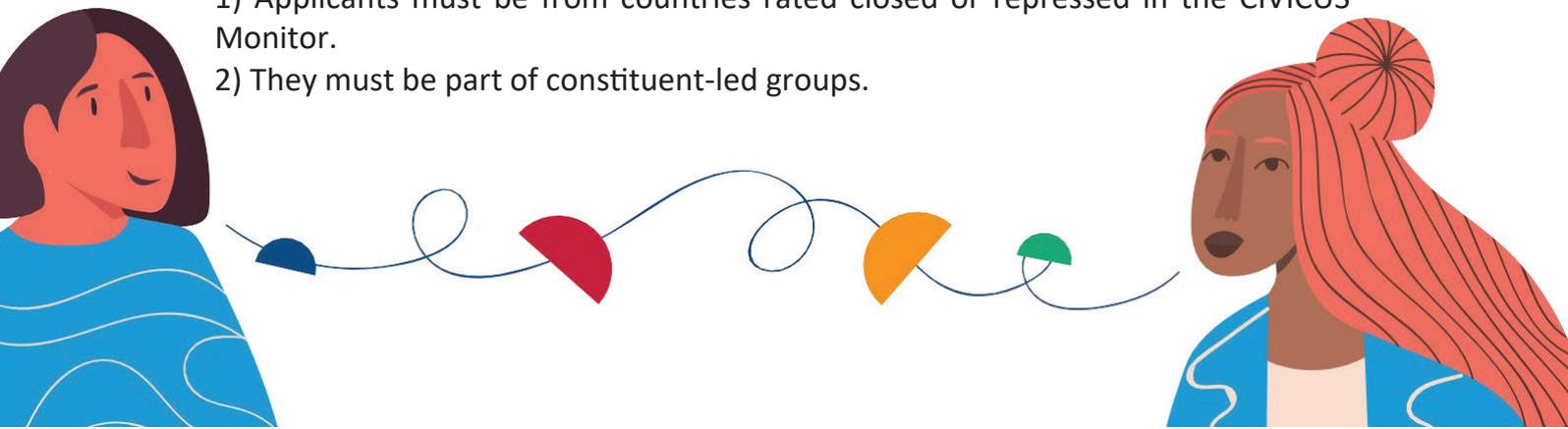
Consulted members highlighted that submitting grant proposals is very challenging because the eligibility criteria and application requirements were excessive, unreasonable, ambiguous and unclear. This makes them spend too much time and resources applying for grants and, what is worse, for grants that are not suited for them.

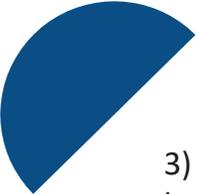
We changed the CSF eligibility criteria and the application requirements to make them more specific, moderate, comprehensible and clear. Our goal was to find a happy medium that respects the time and resources invested by applicants and aligns with our internal policies, systems and limited funding possibilities.

Together with the Member Advisory Group (MAG) we decided to further delimit the CSF eligibility criteria to focus on a very specific pool of civil society groups closely aligned with the mission of the Fund. These are the eligibility criteria of the fourth funding cycle, which will be updated every new cycle:



- 1) Applicants must be from countries rated closed or repressed in the CIVICUS Monitor.
- 2) They must be part of constituent-led groups.





3) Applicants must face difficulties in accessing funds because of government bans, bureaucratic and/or donor requirements, and be at serious risk of having to cease their activities due to a lack of resources.

And we defined only three application requirements:

- 1) Applicants should not have received a previous award from the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund.
- 2) Activities associated with the grant can be completed within 12 months.
- 3) Funding requests should be between US\$1,000 and US\$10,000.

## **Simplified the application form**



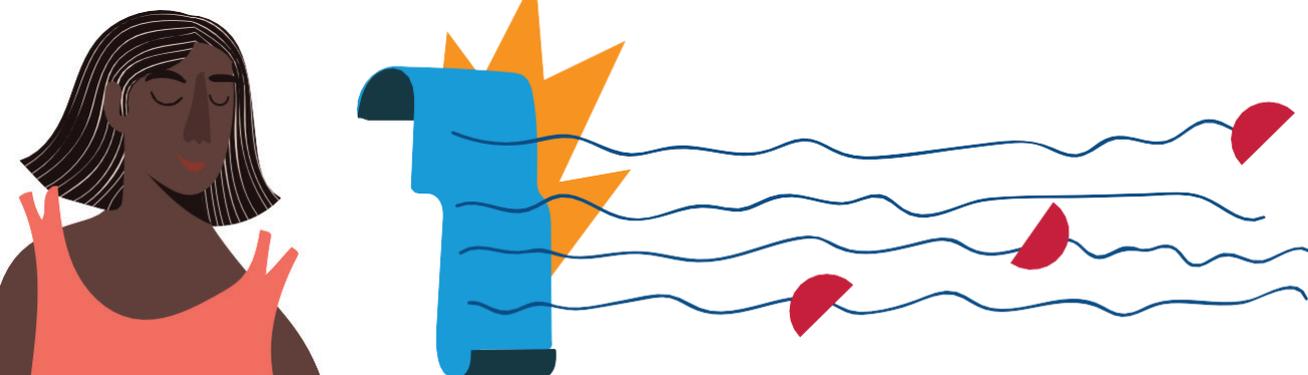
Excessively long and jargon-filled application forms are a huge burden for organisations, especially smaller ones, looking for resources. To improve the CSF accessibility it was important to reduce this burden on the organisations we want to support. Donors who genuinely want to support small and less formal grassroots groups, organisations and movements must be willing to take on most of the burden of the application and follow-up processes (e.g. reporting).



To simplify the CSF application form and related documentation, we were guided by two questions: do we need to know this information? And can we find this information elsewhere?

While we cannot deny the importance of asking certain questions as part of a selection process, we significantly reduced the number of questions and amount of information required. Three things were key to doing this:

- 1) We took the time to research the general contexts and realities of the applicants and gathered more information about them during the interviews with shortlisted candidates. While this made the selection process longer, it has allowed the MAG to start building a relationship with grantees long before their selection.
  - 2) Trust. We have learned that trusting the applicants' answers and lived experiences without asking for more information and proof of their work made our processes less burdensome for them.
  - 3) We encouraged applicants to provide feedback from their communities. Instead of asking applicants to gather and submit general information, we asked for and valued information about how their communities are involved in their work (e.g. identifying the problems and proposed solutions). This enabled applicants to focus on consulting with their communities and enhanced the quality of the applications received.
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Another crucial aspect of simplifying the application form was getting rid of jargon as far as possible, making the questions accessible and easy to understand to potential applicants.

*“Why do you need to know the full composition of our decision-making body? You are a fund focused on constituent-led groups, you explained what you understand by this term, you asked extensively if we are constituent-led. Why not trusting us when we say that we are?” – Previous CSF applicant*

## Provided support and guidance during the application process

We followed our members' advice and requests on providing information sessions and tools that would help applicants understand the application process and form. During our last funding cycle, applicants had access to the following resources (all of them provided in English, French and Spanish):

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- 1) An eligibility quiz to be taken before having access to the application form. This allowed interested applicants to check their eligibility before investing time and resources in submitting an application.
  - 2) A glossary with definitions of potentially tricky words, terms and expressions found in documents related to the CSF application process.
  - 3) Instructional videos.
  - 4) Stories, lessons learned and recommendations from past CSF grantee-members. A direct help line for applicants to solve questions about the process.
  - 5) The application form was available in both online and offline formats.

## Recognized people's time by providing compensation and feedback



CIVICUS members, previous applicants and current grantee-members were a powerful source of information throughout the process of making the CSF application process more accessible and inclusive. While it is a frequent practice to require this input as non-remunerated support, we realised that we had to make these interactions less extractive and honour people's time. We decided to compensate members who helped us by giving:

**Stipends:** The MAG was initially conceptualised as a volunteer body despite the amount of work it takes to be part of it. During this journey, we started providing stipends to MAG members. This is not only fair to compensate the support they provide, but it has also become an extraordinary way of strengthening relationships, building ownership of the CSF and its processes, and has enabled more diverse members to take up this role which otherwise





would remain a "privilege" for those who can afford to donate their time to something like this.

**Training:** After the conversations we held with past and current grantee-members and previous applicants to reflect on their experience with the application process and how to address their concerns and suggestions, we provided a training session on proposal writing, facilitated by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), as compensation for their time.



Members also highlighted how important it was to acknowledge the time invested by applicants by providing feedback on their applications. As it would be almost impossible for us, considering our capacity, to provide individualised feedback to each applicant, we organised a general feedback session for all 'unsuccessful' applicants. The session was led by the MAG and the CSF team to answer frequent questions from applicants and provide suggestions on how to improve their applications for future opportunities.

These new practices have strengthened our relationships with CIVICUS members and built the basis of our community of practice and learning.



## **Implemented friendlier monitoring, reporting, and learning processes**



The conversations we held with applicants and grantee-members also taught us about the importance of creating a community and building partnerships to strengthen internal capacities, amplify voices and brainstorm ways forward. We decided to improve our monitoring, reporting and learning processes in the following ways:

### ***Bi-weekly check-ins***

We wanted to use collaborative monitoring methods that determine, together with grantee-members outcomes, their value and how to measure them. We acknowledged that progress is not linear and often the journey is more transformative than any outcome. With these considerations, we now have 45-minute bi-weekly meetings with grantee-members. These provide a space for honest communication where we co-create their transformative journey, speak about the drivers for change for their work, and possible ways forward.

These check-ins allow us to monitor progress together, celebrate achievements and support grantee-members in any challenge they face.



### ***Reporting***

The bi-weekly meetings make us feel closer to the CSF grantee-members, learn about their achievements and challenges and collect stories. This has made it unnecessary to request narrative reports, therefore lessening their workload.





On the other hand, we are still trying to figure out how to make financial reporting less burdensome for grassroots groups and aligned to CIVICUS internal policies. The positive side is that, since the CSF provides solidarity funding, grantee-members can use the funds flexibly as they see fit, adapt their budget during the course of the grant if needed, ask for deadline extensions and, thanks to the honest communication and trust-based relationships we hold, they can ask for help if they have issues with supporting documentation for their financial reports.

### *Peer-learning and networking: building our community*

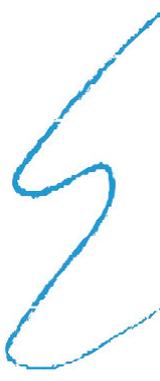


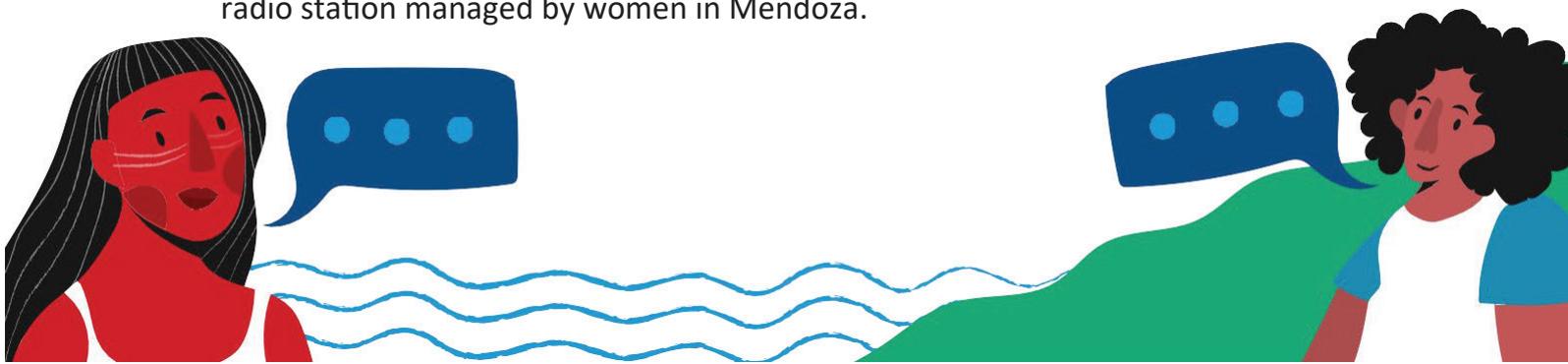
We created a community of practice and learning that is leveraging the power of solidarity, networking and knowledge sharing. In this space, grantee-members can share among themselves the brilliant work they do in their communities, as well as experiences, best practices, stories, learnings, and brainstorm solutions together.

The first step toward building this community was doing a skills assessment to understand the strengths and weaknesses in our community. We then connected grantee-members with relevant peers so that they could brainstorm through multiple channels, including Facebook, WhatsApp and the CIVICUS Online Community.

During this assessment we learned that activists often feel isolated and struggle to connect with the international community. This isolation negatively impacts their security, mental health and ability to find resources. Being part of a community provides a deep sense of solidarity and support! In this community we share their calls to action, accomplishments (either connected to the CSF grant or not), stories and activities with the CSF community and with the CIVICUS alliance. This allows them to build a supportive network, secure more grants and gain confidence.

This community of practice began in 2021, during the third funding cycle of the CSF, and was joined by:

- [Word Smash Poetry Movement](#), a vibrant artistic social movement from Zambia that empowers youth through poetry.
  - The social movement [#HazValerMiLibertad](#), organised by the [Centro de Derechos Humanos Zeferino Ladrillero](#) in Mexico, which successfully advocated for an amnesty law in the State of Mexico to release hundreds of unjustly imprisoned people.
  - [Fundación SIMAS](#), an organisation from Mendoza, Argentina, that, together with the women from the Indigenous community Huarpes, created the first online radio station managed by women in Mendoza.
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- [Vijana Corps](#), an organisation from Mukono, Uganda, that, in their own words, “are empowering the last-mile youth to be seen and heard.”
- [SHIAM – Youth Make the Future](#), an organisation from Ramallah, Palestine, that created the first digital platform to connect youth across the country.

Working closely together was a transformational journey. We built truly meaningful relationships among ourselves that made us redefine the meaning of “success”: relationships can be more successful than any other work outcome.

Read below about what we learned, celebrated and cried over together as part of this community:



**Zeferino Ladrillero** and #HazValerMiLibertad in less than a year were able to successfully advocate for an amnesty law in the State of Mexico, oversee its implementation and increase the number of people engaged in the campaign. They are extraordinary activists and organisers, able to build momentum, mobilise citizens online and offline, put hashtags on trending topics, organise massive protests and are constantly featured in news articles reporting their work and bold protests.




**Word Smash Poetry** built regional solidarity networks preparing themselves for the general elections in Zambia and for the threat of internet shutdowns. Social movements put solidarity as a core value, and for Word Smash Poetry solidarity means fighting against the competition culture imposed by grantmaking processes (including “participatory” ones.) Because of this, they create consortiums with other groups when applying for grants, building solidarity, connections and relationships as they promote a more open civic space in Zambia where civil society is active, strong, interconnected and supportive.




In 2020, **Vijana Corps** had their work equipment stolen, but they bounced back strongly thanks to their experience with alternative resourcing methods. For years, they have been selling used books, raising enough funds to cover the administrative costs of their entire organisation, and to focus on being sustainable and autonomous.



Fundación SIMAS is from a relatively small city in Mendoza, Argentina, more than 900 km away from the capital Buenos Aires. To them, being away from the capital represented fewer funding and partnership opportunities and less visibility. However, this allowed them to develop great communication and relationship building skills, which led them to be nominated as “influencers” of the CSF community of practice. They are extraordinary at building partnerships to support the communities they serve. For instance, they have successfully partnered with academia to acquire equipment and complement the support received through the CSF.




**SHIAM – YOUTH MAKE THE FUTURE** are experts in building relationships and strategic partnerships with the private sector. This approach reduces their direct and indirect project costs and creates sustainable interventions. They taught our communities about the transformative power of relationships in building alternative futures and reshaping the present. SHIAM partnered with “unusual suspects” to implement a digital platform and are great at brainstorming and re-thinking strategies to engage youth online.



## Learnings from our journey

*It's all about trust.*

### **Learning 1: Respecting applicants' time and resources is not about patronising.**

It is about providing sufficient information, being approachable and mindful of other people's experiences and capacities, empowering them to make informed decisions about whether they should apply for a grant or not and making their fundraising experience less exhausting and time-consuming. This allows civil society individuals and groups to focus on what really matters: serving their communities instead of investing excessive time in disproportionate grantmaking applications.

### **Learning 2: An eligibility quiz can also reduce the gender gap of applicants.**

Implementing an eligibility quiz seemed like an ideal pre-application exercise to save time for CSF applicants. This was the initial rationale for creating the quiz and it did serve its purpose: it saved time and resources for more than 70% of the applicants that we were unable to fund during the CSF's last funding cycle.

However, the quiz (and, of course, the eligibility criteria) produced an unexpected result: it played an important role in closing the gender gap of applicants. In 2020, seven out of ten CSF applicants were men (most of them leading groups working on women's rights). In 2021, most of our eligibility criteria focused on constituent-led groups and gave preference to groups most commonly involved in civic space incidents (as identified by the CIVICUS Monitor), which led to an increase in the number of women-led groups.



<sup>1</sup>This was identified by comparing the number of applicants that passed the eligibility quiz with the applicants that were not eligible.

### **Learning 3: Giving preference to groups rather than to thematic priorities increases the confidence of applicants.**

When redesigning the CSF eligibility criteria, we gave priority to funding civil society groups that are most involved in civic space incidents, instead of prioritising specific themes or areas of work we wanted to support. We learned that listing types of eligible groups and countries increased the confidence of applicants that often decide not to apply, either because they don't think they are included in the call, or because they are not willing to compromise their values by applying to grants that - in order to fit - might entail changing the essence of who they are.



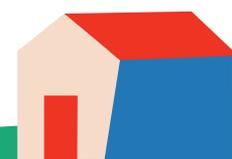
How will applicants know if donors consider Iran as part of MENA if they do not say so in their calls for proposals? During the selection process, one applicant from Iran mentioned that she would not apply for grants that list MENA as a target region because she is not sure if they consider Iran as being in the MENA region or not.

### **Learning 4: Easy, accessible and targeted information reduces the barriers and costs applicants face and, in turn, increases confidence and trust in the process.**

Our main goal during the redesign phase was to shift the costs and barriers from applicants to ourselves as much as possible. We created the eligibility quiz to help applicants easily identify the eligibility criteria; provided clear instructions in multiple formats and languages; used accessible and jargon-free language; and added a glossary. Those are all good ways to start, but the application form must also follow the same assumptions and be easy and accessible.

### **Open questions and open criteria increase the time applicants spend on the application, creating additional barriers when applying for grants.**

We learned that to reduce the costs and barriers for the applicants, the application form should contain clear and straightforward questions to help applicants structure their ideas while answering the questions. For example: if funders are expecting to receive applications from constituent-led groups that follow participatory decision-making in their processes, the application form should have targeted questions asking specifics about this. "How do you involve the communities you serve while designing your proposal? Share with us the decision-making process" was a good starting point for us, enabling applicants to share how participatory and accountable they are with their communities.





### **Learning 5: By honouring relationships we build solidarity**

Increasing visibility, offering trust, creating inclusive and safe spaces, cultivating communities, investing in capacity-building and providing monetary compensation are some ways to honour the relationships with our grantee-members. These value the person behind each activist and respect their unique contributions. Our main takeaway from this effort is that by honouring these relationships, we built authentic solidarity and trust, increased the sense of belonging and ownership within the CSF community and established meaningful relationships.



### **Learning 6: Ownership = accountability**

The ownership created from these relationships served as an accountability mechanism. The CSF became more transparent and shifted the decision-making power to the members that are actually in charge of the Fund, allowing our processes to be more flexible and responsive to the communities we serve.

### **Learning 7: Funds must manage grantees' expectations from the very beginning**



We realised how important it is to make sure that the organisations, groups and movements engaging with the CSF are aware of our limited funding possibilities, understand our internal bureaucracies and where/when these can affect them and know how we can support them despite these challenges. Being transparent about this from the beginning helped us build our relationship and smoothed the agreement signing and financial reporting procedures. Knowing our limitations also helped us find alternative ways of support for grantee-members, like offering access to networks, non-financial resources and collaboration.

### **Learning 8: If you want to support movements, your Fund must adapt to them, not the other way around**



Social movements are unique ecosystems. We learned that to support them in a way that honours their nature and true needs, our solidarity grants had to embrace the flexibility, adaptability and openness that movements need. This must be considered from the very beginning of the conceptualisation of the grant, as well as throughout the application and reporting processes. Grants should never compromise the agendas and values of social movements.

Donors who want to engage with social movements must adopt the right mindset and embrace the principles of solidarity, trust and collaboration throughout their engagement. They must be willing to become part of social movements, attend meetings, listen to their members and brainstorm and find solutions together.



## Learning 9: The power of creating a community

A key takeaway from this transformation journey is that, beyond funding, activists, organisations, groups and movements also need to be part of larger communities. They often feel isolated and are eager to have exchanges with activists from other regions and contexts. The new CSF community of practice had the power of fostering a sense of belonging among our grantee-members. It also built trust, relationships and supportive networks and helped our members increase their visibility, learn from each other and boost their confidence.



# Conclusion

By sharing the learning journey of the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund we hope to inspire other civil society donors and enablers who want to challenge and change mindsets and funding dynamics that do not nurture and truly support the brave work of grassroots activists, groups and communities. We invite you to reimagine more equitable, devolved, trust-based, accountable and creative ways to stand in solidarity with these groups and activists.

This journey showed us that unlearning old practices and learning new ones is not easy. It takes significant time, resources and many uncomfortable conversations. But it is possible!

To end this overview of our journey, we want to share our top three takeaways:

- Grassroots activists and small and less-formal organisations, groups and movements need flexible, core and sustained funding. This allows them to focus their work on what is important for the communities they serve.
- Beyond providing flexible funding, donors should change their mindsets and perceptions about time, accountability and decision-making. This change must be embodied in the application, selection, reporting and monitoring processes. Read about how we did it [here](#).
- Donors must invest in things that we cannot photograph and measure for written reports. Very often a “successful outcome” is the inclusive, transformative and participatory journey that leads to building more trust and meaningful relationships with grantees and between them and their peers and communities - and this is something we can't measure by standard quantitative means. Read about why this is important [here](#).

At the CSF, we are still learning and our work is constantly changing, evolving and transforming itself. What we know so far is that our present and future path must be inclusive, caring, participatory and respectful of the multitude of voices, stories and experiences of the individuals and groups leading social change and their communities.

