

# **Japanese Civil Society at a Crossroad**

CIVICUS Civil Society Index Report for Japan

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Center for Nonprofit Research and Information  
Osaka School of International Public Policy  
Osaka University

CIVICUS Civil Society Index  
An International Action-research Project  
Coordinated by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

## FOREWORD

In 2008, Japan participated in the CIVICUS Civil Society Index (CSI) project for the first time. I am grateful that we can share the first Japanese CSI report with all interested practitioners, researchers and stakeholders. It is now over 10 years since the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities (NPO Law) was enacted in 1998. The NPO Law dramatically made it easier for grassroots organisations to obtain corporate status as Specified Nonprofit Corporations (SNACs), and today there are more than 40,000 SNACs conducting all kinds of activities. Although civil society organisations (CSOs) have been in existence in Japan since the Seventh Century, the introduction of the NPO Law is a groundbreaking event for the country. SNACs are recognised as the first nonprofit corporations that require civic supervision and engagement while government supervision is kept to a minimum. The introduction of the NPO Law also contributed in spreading recognition of the civil society sector among the general public with the frequent use of terms such as ‘volunteer’ or ‘NPO’ in the media.

With the birth of SNACs, both researchers and practitioners have believed in the possibility of civil society to grow into the most influential sector in society to solve the mounting challenges that Japanese society has been facing, such as economic uncertainty and an ageing society. Ten years on, SNACs have grown in numbers. However, there are questions over their quality, effectiveness and civil participation. Also, many SNACs face difficulties such as financial and human resource management. Nevertheless, there are movements within civil society to overcome these problems and to improve its overall quality to advance the sector. Fortunately, the political climate towards CSOs today is favourable to encourage them to play more roles in society, and the government has started a detailed discussion for a taxation system and legal framework to enable better functioning of the sector.

Civil society is a large sector, and its boundaries with other sectors are unclear. This report strives to capture a snapshot of civil society in Japan between 2008 and 2010 as holistically as possible. However, with funding and research methodology limitations, the CSI diamond could not cover all aspects of civil society. Therefore, the main text was written in order to complement the aspects in which the CSI diamond was limited.

I sincerely hope that this report will be read and utilised by many researchers and practitioners to progress Japanese civil society. Additionally, as a comparative study, I believe that this report should benefit not only Japanese CSOs but also researchers or practitioners outside of Japan. In Japan, there are numerous numbers of published works and surveys focusing on civil society. Nevertheless, many of them are only written in Japanese, and therefore non-Japanese speakers have difficulty reading them and gaining a deeper understanding of Japanese civil society. This report utilised these works in order to deliver as much information as possible about Japanese civil society and increase understanding of Japanese civil society among non-Japanese speakers.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank CIVICUS and everyone who engaged in this project. I hope that we can continuously work together to progress civil society in Japan and beyond.

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The Civil Society Index Project was managed and coordinated by the members of the National Coordinating Organisation (NCO) with Naoto Yamauchi as director, Naoko Okuyama as researcher and Midori Matsushima as coordinator .

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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### **A**

AC · Advisory Committee

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### **B**

BCI · Basic Capabilities Index

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### **C**

CENPRI · Centre for Nonprofit Research  
and Information

CSI · Civil Society Index

CSO · Civil society organisation

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### **I**

INGO · International non governmental  
organisation

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### **J**

JANIC · Japan NGO Centre for  
International Cooperation

JFRA · Japan Fundraising Association

JGSS · Japanese General Social Surveys

JHCNP · Johns Hopkins Comparative  
Nonprofit Sector Project

JIGS · Japan Interest Group Survey

JRI · Japan Research Institute

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### **N**

NCO · National Coordination Organisation

NPO law · Law to Promote Specified  
Nonprofit Activities

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### **R**

RIETI · Research Institute of Economy,  
Trade and Industry

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### **S**

SNAC · Specified Nonprofit Activities  
Organisation

STULA · Survey on Time Use and Leisure  
Activities

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### **W**

WVS · World Values Survey



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Index (CSI) project is an action research project by and for civil society. It has been developed by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) for over a decade. The purpose of the project is not only to understand the current state of civil society in a country but also to strengthen that civil society. The CSI project is designed to enhance the capacity strengthening for civil society through the project implementation and to capture the state of civil society holistically within each country's context. The CSI project in Japan was conducted by the Centre for Nonprofit Research and Information at the Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University (CENPRI) between 2008 and 2010. Three surveys were used to construct the CSI diamond: questions from the World Values Survey (WVS) to capture individuals' social and political engagement, an Organisational Survey to understand the state of CSOs, and an External Survey to explore external stakeholders' perspectives towards civil society. In addition to those surveys, a literature survey, focus group discussions and tailored case studies were conducted to deepen the analysis from both qualitative and quantitative points of view.

The concept of civil society in Japan was only introduced in recent years, despite its existence since early history. In 1998, the Law to Promote Specified Nonprofit Activities (NPO law), the first law to promote civic activities with minimum government intervention, was enacted. With more than a decade passed since the establishment of the NPO Law, Japanese civil society sector is standing at a crossroad, which will determine whether it can become an influential sector to make society better or whether it will not be able to meet the growing expectations.

The purpose of this report is to present a snapshot of Japanese civil society. Although the quantitative indicators of the CSI diamond could not capture every aspect of Japanese civil society, and sometimes there were divergences between the results of some dimensions and the reality discussed in focus group meetings, together the quantitative and qualitative survey managed to present the current state of civil society in Japan. The visual display of the diamond was generated, based on 67 quantitative data sets gathered from the three surveys. Those data were aggregated into the five dimensions below:

**Civic Engagement:** An individual's extent, depth and the diversity of social and political engagement.

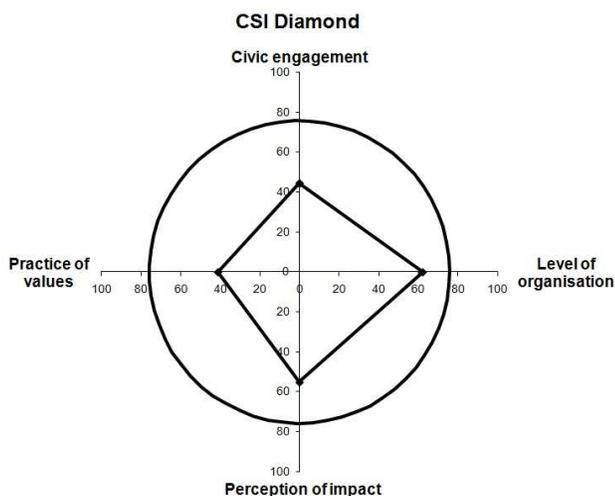
**Level of Organisation:** The degree of organisational development of CSOs.

**Practice of Values:** The extent to which civil society practises some core values.

**Perceived Impact:** The extent to which civil society impacts on the social and policy making arenas, according to internal and external perceptions.

**External Environment:** The social, political and economic context existing in society

FIGURE 1. CSI Diamond for Japan 2008-2010



The comparison of scores for each dimension with other countries participating in the CSI project revealed that Japanese civil society has high perceived impact, well established

organisations and a favourable environment for civil society. On the other hand, as weaknesses, it is found that Japanese CSOs do not perform well in practising core values. The qualitative survey also confirms that serious concerns for Japanese civil society within the Practice of Values dimension include poor working conditions for employees, and low awareness about environmental conservation. Despite the higher score, the Level of Organisation dimension requires attention to organisations' financial instability and the lack of sustainable human resources, according to the qualitative survey and secondary data. The extent and the depth of civic engagement are similar to the other countries, according to the diamond. However, looking into the details, it is revealed that political engagement is significantly low in Japan. As for the Perceived Impact dimension, the quantitative surveys to explore both internal and external perception showed that civil society has had an impact on creating a more humane society, yet there are underdeveloped evaluation systems for civil society in Japan which need to be improved. Finally, although the External Environment dimension scored remarkably high, there are concerns, such as low levels of trust, that should influence the level of association. Additionally, this dimension was pointed out as missing important issues, such as civil society education and a favourable taxation system.

Today, changes are already occurring within civil society, such as improving working conditions or introducing evaluation systems. However, civil society needs more understanding and participation from the general public. Therefore, it is recommended firstly that citizens be encouraged to realise the importance of civic engagement through the education system and, secondly, that more fundraising-friendly initiatives be introduced such as a taxation system favourable to people who make donations. This will raise the rate of civic participation, which will strengthen the level of organisation by contributing to sustainable financial and human resources. It will also enhance civic supervision of CSOs to practise core values and to evaluate civil society's impact. Hence, strengthening the external environment in this way will create a virtuous circle for the development of Japanese civil society. Those improvements cannot be made by civil society alone, and the joint efforts of civil society and external stakeholders are essential.

Although this study strived to capture Japanese civil society as holistically and as correctly as possible, there are some limitations to be mentioned, such as sample bias, lack of a developed theoretical background, issues left uncovered and imperfect measurement. Furthermore, giving autonomy for participating countries to define civil society as the CSI does entail a lack of universal definition of civil society. This makes international comparisons extremely challenging. Those limitations need to be understood in order to give a fair assessment for Japanese civil society.

## I. THE CIVIL SOCIETY INDEX PROJECT AND APPROACH

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

The Civil Society Index (CSI), a participatory action-research project assessing the state of civil society in countries around the world, contributes to redressing these limitations. It aims at creating a knowledge base and momentum for civil society strengthening. The CSI is initiated and implemented by, and for, civil society organisations at the country level, in partnership with CIVICUS. The CSI implementation actively involves and disseminates its findings to a broad range of stakeholders including civil society, government, the media, donors, academics and the public at large.

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

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

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

### I.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

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

Intent on continuing to improve the research-action orientation of the tool, CIVICUS worked with the Centre for Social Investment at the University of Heidelberg, as well as with partners and other stakeholders, to rigorously evaluate and revise the CSI methodology for a second time before the start of this current phase of the CSI. With this new and streamlined

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

methodology in place, CIVICUS launched the new phase of the CSI in 2008 and selected its country partners, including both previous and new implementers, from all over the globe to participate in the project. Table 1 below includes a list of implementing countries in the current phase of the CSI.

TABLE I. List of CSI implementing countries 2008-2011<sup>2</sup>

1. Albania	14. Ghana	28. Niger
2. Argentina	15. Italy	29. Philippines
3. Armenia	16. Japan	30. Russia
4. Bahrain	17. Jordan	31. Serbia
5. Belarus	18. Kazakhstan	32. Slovenia
6. Bulgaria	19. Kosovo	33. South Korea
7. Burkina Faso	20. Lebanon	34. Sudan
8. Chile	21. Liberia	35. Togo
9. Croatia	22. Macedonia	36. Turkey
10. Cyprus	23. Madagascar	37. Uganda
11. Djibouti	24. Mali	38. Ukraine
12. Democratic Republic of Congo	25. Malta	39. Uruguay
13. Georgia	26. Mexico	40. Venezuela
	27. Nicaragua	41. Zambia

## I.2. PROJECT APPROACH

The current CSI project approach continues to combine assessment and evidence with reflection and action. This approach provides an important reference point for all work carried out within the framework of the CSI. As such, the CSI does not produce knowledge for its own sake but instead seeks to directly apply the knowledge generated to stimulate strategies that enhance the effectiveness and role of civil society. With this in mind, the CSI's fundamental methodological bedrocks which have greatly influenced the implementation process of this report include the following:<sup>3</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Note that this list was accurate as of the publication of this Analytical Country Report, but may have changed slightly since publication due to countries being added or dropped during the implementation cycle.

<sup>3</sup> For in-depth explanations of these principles, please see Mati, Silva and Anderson (2010), *Assessing and Strengthening Civil Society Worldwide: An updated programme description of the CIVICUS Civil Society Index Phase 2008-2010*. CIVICUS, Johannesburg.

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

**Networking:** The participatory and inclusive nature of the different CSI tools (e.g. focus groups, the Advisory Committee, the National Workshops) should create new spaces where very diverse actors can discover synergies and forge new alliances, including at a cross-sectoral level. Some countries in the last phase have also participated in regional conferences to discuss the CSI findings as well as cross-national civil society issues.

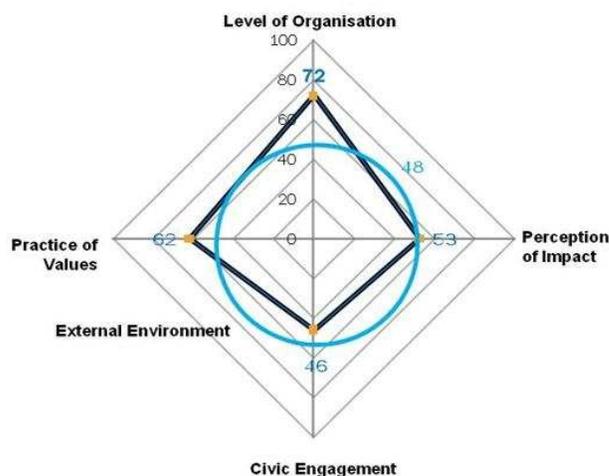
**Change:** The principal aim of the CSI is to generate information that is of practical use to civil society practitioners and other primary stakeholders. Therefore, the CSI framework seeks to identify aspects of civil society that can be changed and to generate information and knowledge relevant to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

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

- (1) Civic Engagement
- (2) Level of Organisation
- (3) Practice of Values
- (4) Perceived Impact
- (5) External Environment

These dimensions are illustrated visually through the Civil Society Diamond (see Figure I.2. below), which is one of the most essential and well-known components of the CSI project. To form the Civil Society Diamond, 67 quantitative indicators are aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions which are then assembled into the five final dimensions along a 0-100 percentage scale. The Diamond's size seeks to portray an empirical picture of the state of civil society, the conditions that support or inhibit civil society's development, as well as the consequences of civil society's activities for society at large. The context or environment is represented visually by a circle around the axes of the Civil Society Diamond, and is not regarded as part of the state of civil society but rather as something external that still remains a crucial element for its wellbeing.

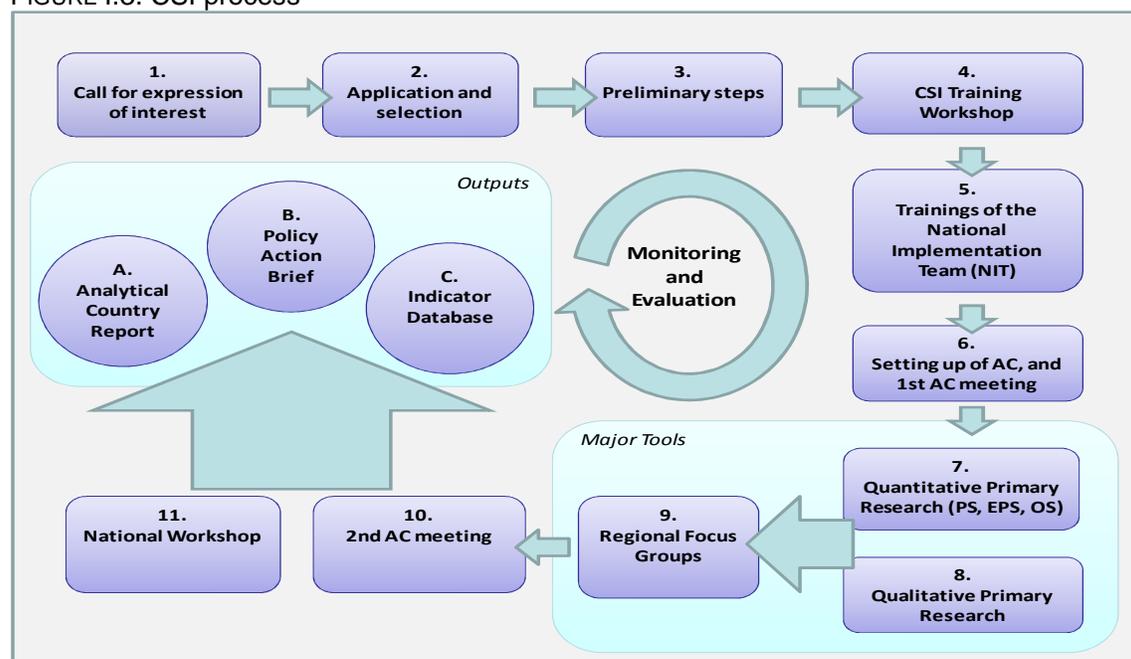
FIGURE I.2. The Civil Society Index Diamond



### I.3. CSI IMPLEMENTATION

There are several key CSI programme implementation activities as well as several structures involved, as summarised by the figure below:<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE I.3. CSI process



The major tools and elements of the CSI implementation at the national level include:

- Multiple surveys, including: (i) a **Population Survey**, gathering the views of citizens on civil society and gauging their involvement in groups and associations; (ii) an **Organisational Survey** measuring the meso-level of civil society and defining characteristics of CSOs; and (iii) an **External Perceptions Survey** aimed at measuring the perception that stakeholders, experts and policy makers in key sectors have of civil

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion on each of these steps in the process, please see Mati et al (cited in footnote 3).

society's impact. (CSI methodology permits that the Population Survey may be substituted by the equivalent questions from the World Values Survey if this is available, and this was done in Japan.)

- Tailored **case studies** which focus on issues of importance to the specific civil society in country context.
- **Advisory Committee** (AC) meetings made up of civil society experts to advise on the project and its implementation at the country level.
- Regional and thematic **focus groups** where civil society stakeholders reflect and share views on civil society's role in society.

Following this in-depth research and the extensive collection of information, the findings are presented and debated at a **National Workshop**, which brings together a large group of civil society and non-civil society stakeholders and allows interested parties to discuss and develop strategies for addressing identified priority issues.

This Analytical Country Report is one of the major outputs of the CSI implementation process in Japan and presents highlights from the research conducted, including summaries of civil society's strengths and weaknesses as well as recommendations for strengthening civil society in the country.

#### **I.4. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

Although this study has endeavoured to provide a comprehensive assessment of the state of Japanese civil society, there are several limitations to be recognised in reading this report.

Firstly, there are sample selection biases and the sample size is rather small to make a generalisation for some indicators created based on the Organisational Survey (OS) and External Survey (EPS). CIVICUS recommended face to face interviews for the OS and EPS but, due to budget and time constraints, questionnaires were distributed by post instead. For the OS there were 85 respondents, accounting for 25% of distributed questionnaires. As for the legal status of organisations, 75% of OS respondents were SNACs. SNACs are one organisation type among other nonprofit corporations. This is a newly established corporation type, characterised by civic organisations operating under citizen supervision. It must be noted that this high percentage of response from SNACs certainly affects the shape of the diamond, as it mostly reflects the characteristics and concerns of SNACs rather than the whole civil society sector. The Level of Organisation dimension is especially influenced by this sample bias as, particularly, lack of financial and human resources and lack of transparency are regarded as problems that SNACs face. As for the EPs, there were 27 respondents, and this affects the Perceived Impact dimension. In addition to the small sample size, most questions asked in the EPS are subjective. Hence, it is difficult to conclude that a score based on 27 respondents' answers definitely represents a wider external perspective. Also, the respondents who answered the questions are the ones with some degree of understanding of civil society, which also means that the external perception of people who are less familiar with civil society has not been reflected in the score.

Secondly, the diamond does not have a theoretical framework, hence the various indicators are not weighted.<sup>5</sup> At present, 67 quantitative indicators on the 0-100 percentage scale are simply aggregated into 28 sub-dimensions by taking averages. Those 28 sub-dimensions are categorised into five dimensions in the same fashion, with the averages of the sub-dimensions becoming the final scores.

Thirdly, there are some important issues not included in the CSI diamond indicator. Gaps that

<sup>5</sup> This was also mentioned as a difficulty of the methodology for the CSI project in general by Hoelscher (2010) at the ISTR Ninth International Conference.

should be noted in the case of Japan are that the Civic Engagement dimension does not include the measurement of individual and corporate donations, while the External Environment sub-dimension does not evaluate CSOs' partnership with government and for-profit corporations, and the legal frameworks for civil society.

Fourthly, since autonomy is given to decide which organisations will be regarded as CSOs under the country specific context, an international comparative study is extremely difficult. The definition of civil society provided by CIVICUS is rather vague: "*the arena, outside of the family, the state and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organisations and institutions to advance shared interests*" (CIVICUS 2008: 16). This can include various organisations such as terrorist groups because the definition does not specify 'interest' to be public interest. This definition can also include a range of organisations from uncountable numbers of grassroots organisations without any legal status to long-established large nonprofit corporations. Depending on the country's own categorisation of civil society, the shape of the diamond would change easily.

These limitations must be kept in mind when reading this report. The limitation of the visual presentation (the diamond) of civil society was complemented with the secondary data and qualitative surveys in this report. Therefore readers should note the detailed contents of the report rather than simply look at the shape of the diamond.

## II. CIVIL SOCIETY IN JAPAN

One of the characteristics of Japanese civil society is the late establishment of the concept of civil society despite its long existence (Tsujinaka, 2009:7). Tsujinaka (2009:4) states that the concept of civil society in Japan is not the same concept as used in the west. According to Yamaguchi (2004:25-26), the word 'civilians' was first used in the 1870s by Yukichi Fukuzawa to describe middle class people living in urban areas. However, from the late 19th Century to 1945, a discussion of civil society was rarely seen, and the Japanese translation of civil society (*shiminshakai*) only appeared after the Second World War (Garon, 2003:43). During the post-war era, the word was frequently used by liberal leftists in the discussion on global concerns raised in the post-socialist world. Nonetheless, it was only after 1995, following the Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake (1995), that the general public finally became familiar with the concept of 'civil society' (Tsujinaka 2009:6).

Today, there is a growing hope that civil society can solve the mounting problems facing modern Japanese society. The economic scale of the nonprofit sector has been increasing significantly and in 2004 the output value reached over JPY40 trillion (approx US\$45 billion), which is nearly double the amount it was in 1990 (Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, 2008:52). Nevertheless, there are concerns towards CSOs' sustainability and effectiveness.

### II.1. CONCEPT OF CIVIL SOCIETY

As mentioned above, the concept of civil society in Japan differs from the West. To conceptualise and operationalise civil society for the CSI project, the National Coordination Organisation (NCO) conducted literature surveys and Advisory Committee (AC) meetings.

Prior to the CSI project in Japan, there have been two major international comparative civil society studies in addition to a great amount of various national civil society research, since 1995 in particular: The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (JHCNP), and Japan Interest Group Survey (JIGS). The JHCNP tries to capture civil society by limiting the scope to the nonprofit sector only. In the research operation, civil society is defined as consisting of entities that must fit all of the following criteria (Salamon *et al.* 2004:9-10): (1) *It is*

*an organisation; (2) Its purpose is not-for-profit and it therefore does not distribute profits; (3) It is independent from the government; (4) It is self-governing; (5) It is voluntary.*

On the other hand, JIGS strived to cover organisations except for the government, for-profit organisation, and the family. Prior to the JIGS, Tsujinaka (2009:8) identified three characteristics of the concept of Japanese civil society. Firstly, Japanese civil society is formed around moral principles, and therefore this concept is an alternative ideal society challenging the nation state. Secondly, Japanese civil society is seen as weak and underdeveloped when civil society is defined according to the context of western culture, which tends to focus more on advocacy groups. On the other hand, Japanese civil society has a rich social capital cultivated through traditional associations or formal/informal networks. Thirdly, many comparative studies are western-centred, hence previous studies have not being able to capture Japanese civil society holistically. Based on the third perspective, the JIGS defined civil society as *“the function (activities) and space in which non-governmental actors work for public benefit/goods”* (translated by the author) (Tsujinaka, 2009:8).

In the CSI project, the types of CSOs to be included in the survey are suggested by CIVICUS, and modification was made by the AC members. Based on the types of CSOs suggested by CIVICUS, the AC members discussed and decided to include all of the suggested CSOs, except burial societies and political parties. This is because burial societies only exist in a small part of Japan and political parties are usually more close to the government and can thus not be considered as civil society in Japan according to the CIVICUS definition.

TABLE II.1. Types of CSOs included in the study

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Farmer/fisherman group or cooperative</li> <li>2. Traders or business association</li> <li>3. Professional association (such as doctors, teachers)</li> <li>4. Trade union or labour union</li> <li>5. Neighbourhood/village committee</li> <li>6. Religious or spiritual group</li> <li>7. Political group, movement or party</li> <li>8. Cultural group or association (e.g. arts, music, theatre, film)</li> <li>9. Co-operative, credit or savings group</li> <li>10. Education group (e.g. parent-teacher association, school committee)</li> <li>11. Health group / social service association (e.g. association for people with disabilities)</li> <li>12. Sports association</li> <li>13. Youth group</li> <li>14. Women’s group</li> <li>15. NGO / civic group / human rights organisation<br/>(e.g. Rotary Club, Red Cross, Amnesty International)</li> <li>16. Ethnic-based community group</li> <li>17. Environmental or conservation organisation</li> <li>18. Hobby organisation (e.g. stamp collecting club)</li> </ol> |
|--|

## II.2. HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Japan has a long and rich history of civil society activities that dates back to its early history, yet the recognition of the sector is very recent among the general public. Although some argue that there was virtually no civil society in pre-war Japan (Garon 2003:43), there were many indications that Japan had developed associations in the pre-war era (see Fukuda, 2006). The former point of view is probably due to the late establishment of the concept of

civil society in Japan as Tsujinaka (2009:4) points out. According to Imada (2006:3), there were already public benefit corporations in Seventh Century Japan. Until the Edo era (around 1600), religion greatly contributed to the development of civil society. From the Edo era and onwards, civic activities led by religious figures decreased due to government oppression, yet civic activities in general continued (Imada 2006: 3-5). The Edo era is also known for the development of social welfare, civic education and the emergence of neighbourhood organisations. Social welfare efforts focused on poverty and disaster relief. During the Edo era there were frequent city fires, which then brought about disaster relief activities or fire prevention activities by the public (Ouchi 2006: 3). Education was also dramatically developed by CSOs in the Edo era with notable examples being schools such as *Gansuido* and *Kaitokudo*. They were funded by donations and membership fees from civilians in Osaka city. Those who attended such private educational institutions were actively involved in establishing universities later in history (Imada 2006: 6-11). Neighbourhood organisations called *Yui*, *Kou*, *Za* and *Ren* were also developed during the Edo era. These associations have continued to exist until the present, particularly in the rural areas of Japan (Imada, 2006:11-16, see Fukuda, 2006).

In 1868, during the Meiji Restoration, Japan began its transformation into a modern society. A legal framework for public benefit corporations was put in place for the first time in 1868 as Article 34. Nevertheless, a public benefit corporation could only be established with the authorisation of the government, and the authorisation process was not clear. Additionally, when an application for such establishment was rejected, the organisation was not allowed to raise an objection. Hence, public benefit corporations were not totally independent from the government (Imada 2006:20). In 1889, the first constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech was signed in Japan. However, the country experienced two very distinct eras after 1918 until the end of the war. The dramatic development of CSOs came about under a period of rapid democratisation between 1918 and 1931, and experienced deterioration during the Second World War (Garon 2003: 51).

In 1947, the Japanese Constitution was introduced guaranteeing universal freedom of association and speech. Tsujinaka (2009:12-13) divides the history of Japanese civil society into four phases after the war: 1945-1957, 1958-1975, 1976-1996, and 1997 onwards. The first phase saw a massive increase in CSOs: labour unions, employers' associations and corporations in particular. In the late 1950s many had merged or scaled down in terms of membership numbers. In the second phase, the number of economic or professional associations increased rapidly. At the same time, many advocacy organisations were also established. During the third phase, government public spending decreased under administrative reforms. In the 1980s, the conservative shift and withdrawal of the state from some areas led to social movements fostering more collaboration with the government. Thus, the recognition of civil society by central government began to change. Although most CSOs by then were driven by economic interest or professional associations, CSOs' fields of activities were diversified in response to various social concerns arising at the time. The last phase, from 1997 to the present day, is characterised by a drastic increase in the number of Specified Nonprofit Activities Corporations (SNACs) after the enactment of the NPO law in 1998. However, overall membership of CSOs has decreased during this phase.

The event that influenced modern Japanese civil society was the Great Hanshin Awaji earthquake that occurred in 1995 and which took 6,434 people's lives and injured 43,792 people (Fire and Disaster Management Agency, 2006). Approximately 1.3 million volunteers joined the relief operations (Hyogo-ken chijkoushitsu-shoubousaika, 1997:304) and this event is noted as the Volunteer Revolution (see Honma and Deguchi, 1996). As much as this event showed great civic power, it also made it apparent that Japan had outdated laws and systems for civic activities. Legally established CSOs with tax benefits did not play much of a role in helping. On the other hand, grassroots organisations without any legal status contributed greatly (Honma, 1996:2). In 1998, the NPO law was enacted making it easier for

small grassroots organisations to gain legal status in response to the demand from the public after the earthquake.<sup>6</sup> The earthquake and the introduction of the law had a great impact on the public; the media began to use civil society related terms such as ‘volunteer’ or ‘NPO’ very frequently, and it led to an increase in the recognition of the civil society sector (Yamauchi, 2003:24). Since the introduction of the NPO law, SNACs have rapidly increased, reaching nearly 40,000 in number by the end of 2009 (Cabinet Office, 2009a). This is more than the number of long established CSOs such as social welfare organisations, private school corporations and relief and rehabilitation corporations (Ministry of Finance, 2010).<sup>7</sup>

The rapid establishment of SNACs also marks a distinctive change in the public regulation of CSOs. Prior to the establishment of SNACs, all CSOs needed to gain permission to operate and were supervised by the government through a complicated process. SNACs today can be authorised by the national or prefectural agencies through simple applications. In addition, the Cabinet office (2009b) clarifies that the NPO law respects the autonomy of SNACs and SNACs should be supervised by civilians through information disclosure. Hence the government has minimum intervention, unlike other CSOs.

What will be the future of Japanese civil society? Tsujinaka (2003:115) describes the patterns of growth of Japanese civil society as “gradual transition from developmentalism to pluralistic maturity.” Tsujinaka (2009:19) also believes that the mixture of the traditional and modern form of CSOs will activate civil society. Yamauchi (2006:342) addresses the state of civil society as a period of transition, from evaluating the number of organisations to evaluating the quality of organisation. Today, the expectation towards civil society is greater than ever, and judgements are somewhat in favour of civil society. However, civil society also faces a number of problems such as financial instability and lack of human capital. In order to grow stronger, CSOs are required to make an effort to create progressive civil society as well as to gain more understanding and more support from other sectors.

### II.3. MAPPING OF CIVIL SOCIETY

This section presents a diagram of society in Japan in order to see the relationship between civil society and other sectors, based on discussions held in the AC.

FIGURE II.3.1 shows the relationships between civil society and other sectors within Japanese society (the size of each circle of sectors shows the power of each sector: bigger is stronger). As mentioned in the previous section, Japanese society has been ruled by a strong state, and the concept of civil society was established recently. The advocacy role of civil society is weaker than the service provider role (the type of arrows from civil society to other sectors presents its differences in strength: black bold means stronger roles and dots mean weaker roles). Also, CSOs are very much dependent on subsidies from the government as well as corporate donations rather than volunteers and donations from the public (dotted arrow from family to civil society means small scale donations from the public to civil society).

Additionally, the distance between the name of each corporation and other sectors in the map shows the closeness of their relationship. Some types of CSOs, such as (ex) public benefit corporations<sup>8</sup> and social public promotion corporations, are heavily interfered with by the

<sup>6</sup> Incorporating SNACs gives grassroots organisations rights to open bank accounts, rent offices, subscribe to telephone lines or have contracts with the government and businesses under the name of the organisation.

<sup>7</sup> The number of social welfare corporations was 18,625, the number of private school corporations was 1,226, and the number of relief and rehabilitation corporations was 164 in the latest statistics surveyed between 31 March 2009 and 1 April 2010 (Ministry of Finance, 2010). Although the timing of the survey differs, the number of SNACs did not decrease in such a short period of time, and the number of other CSOs did not change much in a few years.

<sup>8</sup> On 1 December 2008 the reform of public benefit corporations took place, which divided public benefit

government (Salamon et al. 2000, Salamon et al. 2004, Pekkanen 2004, Pekkanen 2000, Tsujinaka et al. 2009). Neighbourhood organisations are ingrained in Japanese society. SNACs are regarded as having greater autonomy and being relatively free from government intervention. As a recent trend, the growth of social enterprises was pointed out in the AC meeting; these are located in the fuzzy boundaries between civil society and the market.

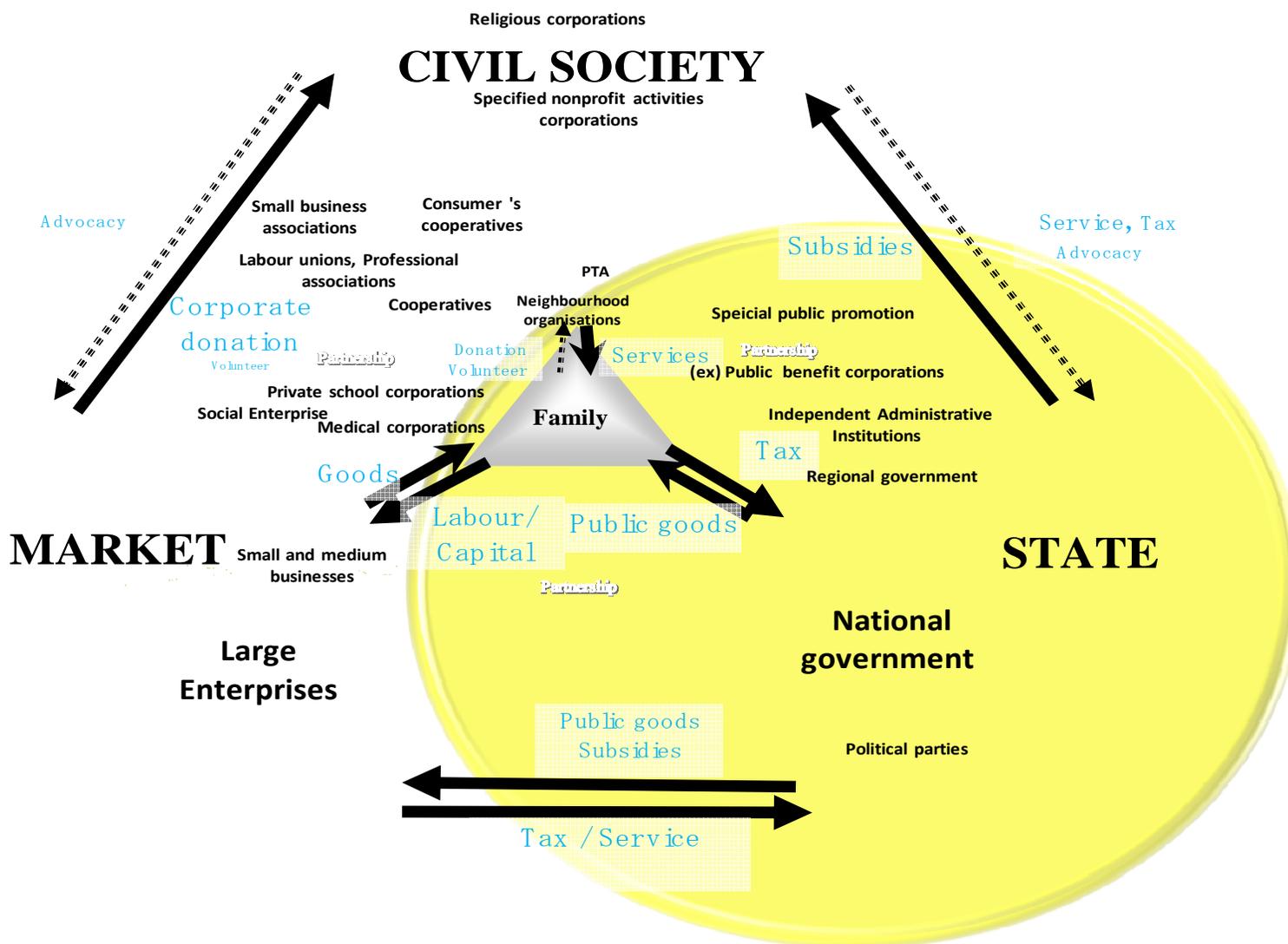
One of the distinctive characteristics of Japanese civil society is the particularly low levels of trust towards religious groups (therefore in the map, the name of religious groupings is located furthest from other sectors at the edge of civil society). In the AC meeting, it was even discussed whether it was appropriate to include religious groups as part of CSOs. In particular, the dreadful attack by Aum Shinrikyo (a religious group) in 1995 that killed 12 people and injured 5,000 others has been clearly remembered by the public, which causes a negative image towards religious groups (see Hardacre 2003).

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corporations into general incorporated associations/foundations and public benefit associations/foundations. However, as it is assumed that the duration of time after the introduction is not long enough to change the old system, this figure shows general incorporated associations/foundations and public benefit associations/foundations together as (ex) public benefit corporations.

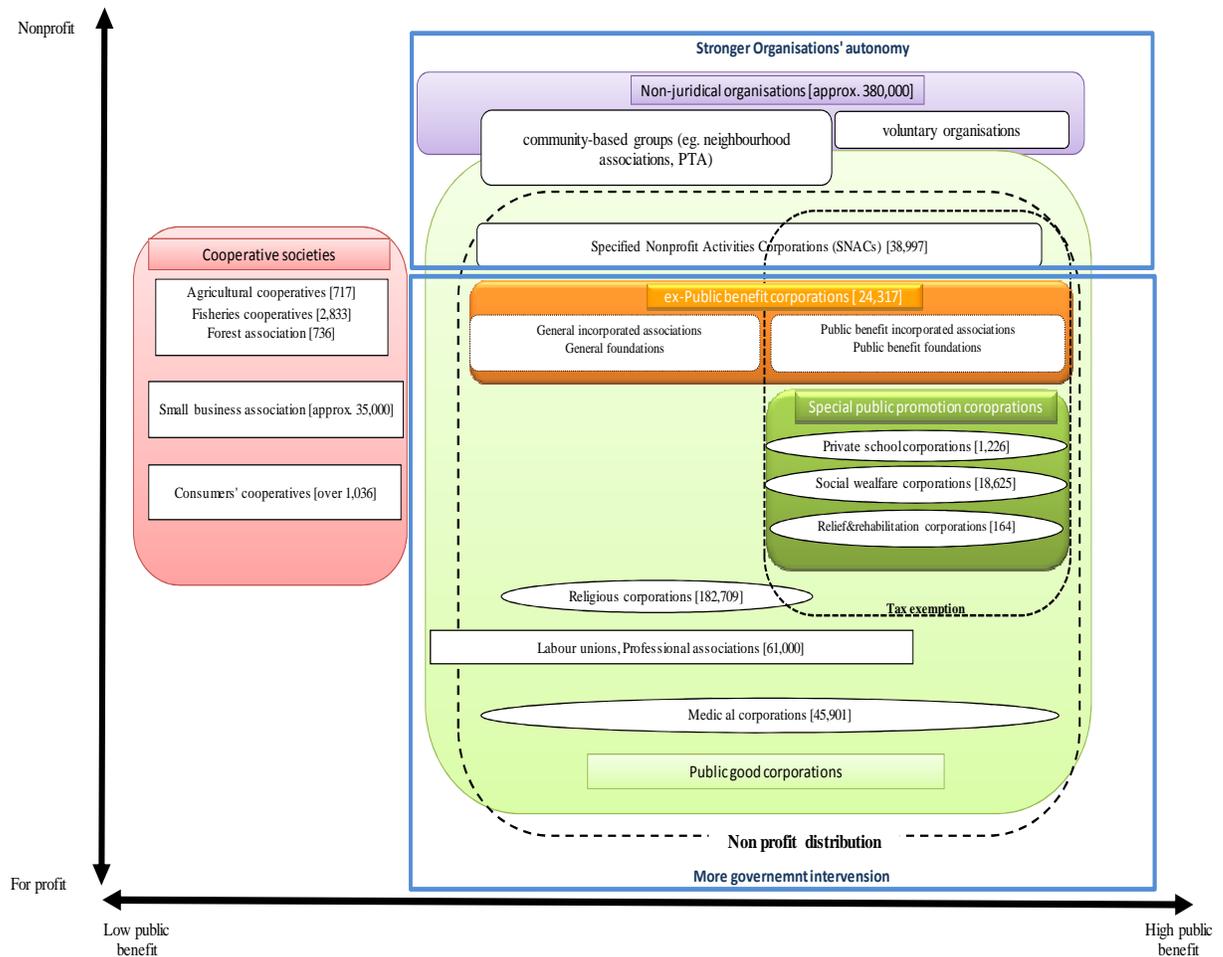
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3.1. Japanese civil society



The mapping of civil society below is created based on the legal framework (FIGURE II.3.2). Based on the legal status, cooperative societies are allowed to distribute profits yet other corporations are not allowed to do so. Although religious groupings is the largest category in the number of organisations (the number in parentheses provides the number of organisations), as mentioned above, this does not necessarily mean they are influential in society. Today, the number of overall CSOs is decreasing, yet the number of SNACs is increasing rapidly. Additionally, when the media uses a term related to civil society such as NPO, NGO and volunteers, the report is predominantly about SNACs or sometimes about non-judicial organisations (see Watari and Nakano, 2010). Hence, SNACs might be more recognised by the public despite being smaller in numbers. When measuring economic impact however, SNACs have the smallest amount of output value after labour unions (Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, 2008:58). However, the impact and the influence of each corporation and group would differ depending on the measurement being used at the current state of Japanese civil society.

FIGURE II.3.2. Mapping of Japanese civil society (see Annex 7 for the data source of the number of each corporations)



### III. ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN JAPAN

This section presents and discusses findings from the CSI project conducted in Japan. Table III below shows the score for each dimension of the Japanese CSI diamond. As mentioned in Section I, Civic Engagement is mostly measured by using WVS. The scores for the Level of Organisation and Practice of Values dimension are calculated based on the Organisational Survey. Perception of Impact dimension uses the External Perception Survey in addition to the Organisational Survey. External Environment is calculated mostly from several secondary data provided.

TABLE III. Score for each dimension of Japanese CSI diamond

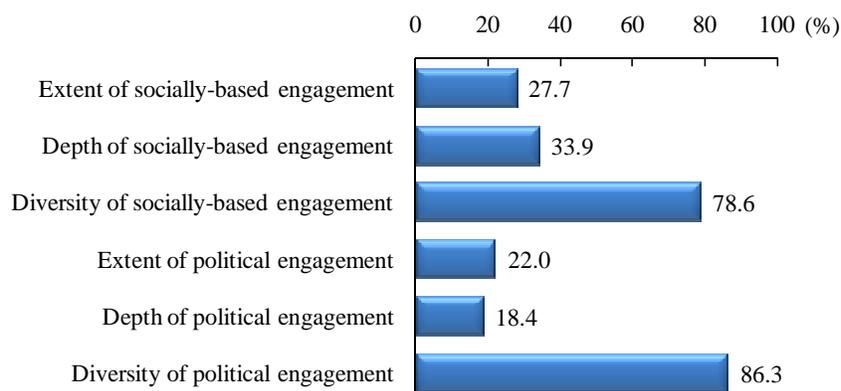
Dimension	Score
1) Dimension: Civic Engagement	44.5
2) Dimension: Level of Organisation	62.3
3) Dimension: Practice of Values	41.3
4) Dimension: Perception of Impact	55.2
5) Contextual Dimension: Environment	75.8

#### III.1. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic Engagement strives to capture the extent and depth of individual engagement in social and political initiatives (CIVICUS 2008: 22). This dimension looks at the extent, the depth and the diversity of social and political membership, social and political volunteering, community engagement and individual activism. To measure Civic Engagement, data from the WVS 2000 and 2005 were used.

The overall score for this dimension is 44.5%. Figure III.1 indicates that the overall score is lifted by the high score of the diversity of both social and political membership (78.6% and 86.3%). Diversity here means different social groups which are participating in social and political activities. On the other hand, scores of extent and depth of political engagement are low.

FIGURE III.1. Sub-dimension scores for Civic Engagement



##### III.1.1. Extent of socially-based engagement

By examining memberships and voluntarism for a variety of organisations, this sub-dimension captures the percentage of people who have participated in socially-based activities in a year. The aggregated score of three measurements for this sub-dimension is

27.7%, which is lower than the reality stated in the focus group discussions. The main argument in these was that none of the measurements include neighbourhood organisations, which have the highest membership and volunteer participation in Japan.

First, the survey discovered that 26.6% of Japanese citizens are members in at least one of the following CSOs: sports/recreation associations, art/music/educational groups, consumer organisations and religious organisations. In comparison to other countries that conducted the WVS 2005 (48 countries), church/religious organisation memberships are significantly lower in Japan than the overall average at 21.3%, while the membership for sports/recreation organisations is higher in Japan than the global average (13.9%). The membership rate for consumer organisations and religious organisations is particularly low at 0.7% and 4.4% respectively. Although sports/recreation associations and art/music/educational groups have a relatively higher membership rate at 18.3% and 10.1% respectively, this is significantly lower than local community associations. Neighbourhood organisations often conduct a wide range of activities, including political volunteering to support election processes, maintaining the local community residential environment and supporting local public service provision. They exist in all 47 prefectures in Japan, and there are 294,359 local community associations in 1,728 municipalities listed in the 2008 survey (Tsujinaka et al., 2009:44). The average percentage of membership of neighbourhood organisations is 81.4%, which is far higher than any associations categorised as socially-based CSOs in this sub-dimension.

Secondly, the index of social volunteering looks at the volunteering rate for organisations focusing on social welfare, religious and cultural activities, youth work, sports/recreation and health matters. As a breakdown, these are 5.4%, 3.2%, 3.9%, 4.1%, 6.5%, and 3.3%, respectively. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (2006) reported that 26.2% participated in social volunteering based upon results gathered from the 2006 Survey on Time Use and Leisure Activities (STULA). In comparison to the WVS 2000, the participation rate is significantly higher. This discrepancy stems from differences in the questions geared towards volunteer work in the two questionnaires. The WVS does not include volunteering for the community, which has the highest participation rate of 12.0% in the STULA 2006. Because volunteering for the community is the most common type of volunteering, it needs to be noted that the score for this dimension would presumably be higher if the volunteering participation rate for the community was included.

### **III.1.2. Depth of socially-based engagement**

This sub-dimension illustrates how deeply and frequently people are involved in social activities. The overall score for this dimension is 33.9%, which is higher than the extent of socially-based engagement. An apparent contradiction emerges here between socially-based engagement and socially-based volunteering: the score for the depth of socially based engagement (17.1%) is lower than the extent (26.6%), while the depth of socially based volunteering (26.2%) scores higher than the extent (13.4%).

The depth of socially-based engagement is measured by the percentage of active members who participate in more than one organisation. The numbers therefore suggest that people are more likely to be a member of only one organisation rather than of multiple organisations. On the other hand, while there are fewer people who volunteer than join an organisation, the figures suggest that those who do volunteer are likely to do so for more than one organisation.

This depth of community engagement indicator scored higher than others, 58.4%, for presumably similar reasons to those discussed for the extent of community engagement score. This presents the percentage of people identified as active who engage with sports clubs, voluntary or service organisations more than once a month. This therefore shows that more than half of the people who are active can be seen to be committed and highly active,

suggesting that there is a valuable social capital base from which more formal engagement processes can draw.

### **III.1.3. Diversity within socially-based engagement**

This sub-dimension addresses the representation of the population who are engaged in socially-based activities, both from extent and depth points of view. This is measured by the percentage of women, rural residents and people from different socio-economic groups in organisations. This sub-dimension seeks to determine how representative civil society is of the greater population, examining the extent to which they include people from a variety of customarily marginalised social groups. The Japan CSI does not include ethnicity or indigenous people due to data limitations.

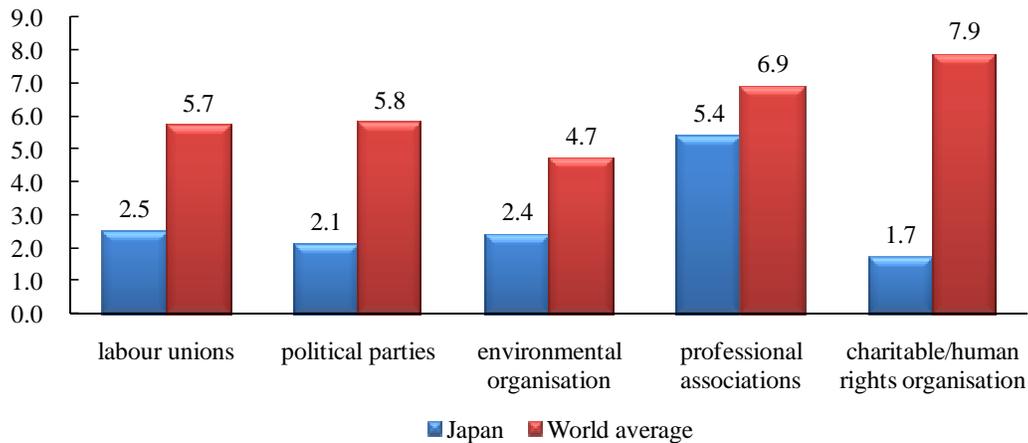
In Japan, the survey discovered that female participation in civic activities is almost as high as men with a score of 99.3% for gender diversity representation (where a score of 100% means perfect representation and 0% means zero representation). In addition, there are minimal regional disparities in the extent of civic participation, which recorded 81.7% for remote area representation. Nonetheless, socio-economic status seems to have some relationship with civic engagement. In Japan, the diversity of social class representation is 51.7%, not a high score where 100% means perfectly equal representation. The same pattern was observed in less formal civic engagement, with no differences in gender representation (100%) and a reasonable level of representation from remote areas (70.4%), with the most marked differences seen according to people's socio-economic status (68.5%).

### **III.1.4. Extent of political engagement**

This sub-dimension focuses on political civic engagement. The overall score of this sub-dimension is 22.0%. This is lower than socially-based engagement, which is not a phenomenon only observed in Japan. A similar trend has been observed in many other parts of the world (WVS database, 2010). Nonetheless, the percentage of people engaged in political related activities is lower than many other countries in WVS 2005.

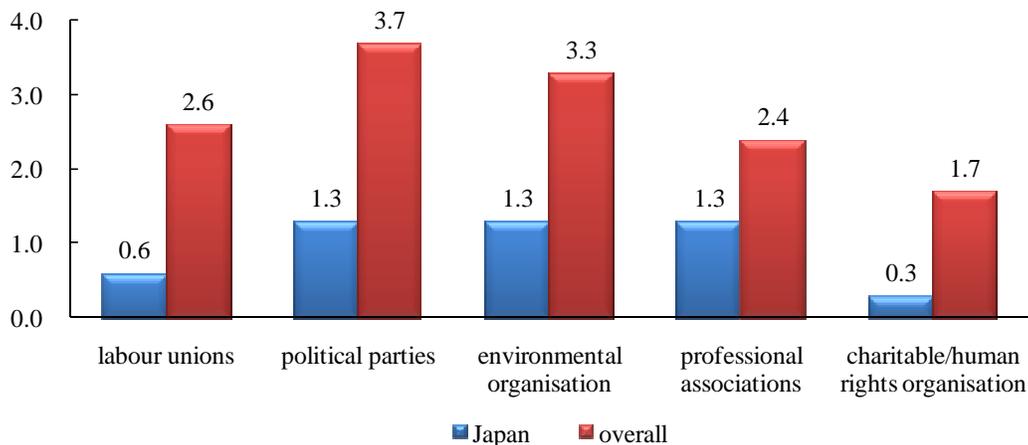
The extent of political engagement is measured by the percentage of the population that are active members of at least one political organisation. Political organisations include labour unions, political parties, environmental organisations, professional associations and humanitarian or charitable organisations. The survey discovered that the membership rate for political organisations is 2.5%, 2.1%, 2.6%, 5.4% and 1.7%, respectively. In comparison to the overall score of the membership rate for any organisation gathered from WVS data, the membership rate in Japan is lower than the average, and the membership rates for humanitarian or charitable organisations are also particularly low, as observed in FIGURE III.1.4.1 below. The low membership rate for political organisations is also reported in the Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS) 2006, which found that only 5.1% of respondents are members of political related organisations (JGSS Research Centre 2006:159).

FIGURE III.1.4.1. Membership rate for political organisations (Japan vs. WVS participating countries) Source: WVS 2005 (N=48)



The extent of political volunteering score, only 5.7%, was even lower than the score for political membership. This was measured by the percentage of people who claimed to be a volunteer for at least one political organisation. Volunteers for charitable/human rights organisations are the smallest in the percentage (0.3%). As observed in FIGURE III.1.4.2, in most cases Japan has less than half the percentage of the overall score for political volunteering.

Figure III.1.4.2. Volunteers for political organisations (Japan vs. WVS participating countries) (N=48) Source: WVS 2005



Individual activism is measured by the percentage of the population that has undertaken at least one form of political activism in the past five years. Political activism includes signing a petition, joining in boycotts, or attending peaceful demonstrations. In Japan, 26.3% of people stated having signed a petition during a five year period, which again is only just above half of the global average. The number of people who join boycotts and attend peaceful demonstrations is even smaller than those who sign a petition, at 5.0% and 2.9%, respectively. In particular, it is observed that the percentage of people who attend peaceful demonstrations is very small in Japan. Because this question was asked in 2005, a significant number of people in the world, and in western countries in particular, would have joined in the large scale 2003 demonstration against the Iraq War. However, only 2.9% of Japan's

population stated that they had attended a peaceful demonstration. This illustrates the low degree of individual activism in contemporary Japan.

### **III.1.5. Depth of political engagement**

This sub-dimension looks at how deeply people are involved with political activities. The depth of political engagement and depth of political volunteering are measured by the percentage of people involved in more than one political organisation as a member or as a volunteer as a proportion of the people who are reported being active in at least one political organisation. The survey results suggest that a very small number of people are deeply involved in political organisations in Japan, with only 20.3% a member of more than one political organisation, and 20.5% actively volunteering in more than one. These numbers are significantly low considering that in the first place only 10.8% of the population are members of a political organisation, and only 5.7% of the population are active volunteers in a political organisation.

This sub-dimension also includes an indicator of the depth of individual activism, which is measured by the percentage of people involved in more than one political action. Our findings show that only 14.4% involved in activism are involved deeply. Looking at voter turnout trends, we also note that Japan has experienced a drop in turnout between 1990 and 2005 (Akarui Senkyo Suishin Kyokai, 2010). Therefore, at the time of the WVS survey in 2005 it can be assumed that the political climate in Japan was not particularly conducive to activism. In recent years, the voter turnout rate has risen again (Akarui Senkyo Suishin Kyokai, 2010), and so it is possible that the individual political activism rate might also see an increase. However, it is undeniable that individual involvement in political action in Japan is significantly low.

### **III.1.6. Diversity of political engagement**

This sub-dimension analyses the distribution of gender, socio-economic and geographical groups of those involved in political activities. The analysis shows that distribution in regional representation is perfectly equal as this category scored 100% for both extent and depth of participation. Unlike social activities, women are underrepresented in political participation in terms of both extent and depth. Particularly for the depth of political engagement, the representation score is less than half of what it should be, at only 44.7%.

## **Conclusion**

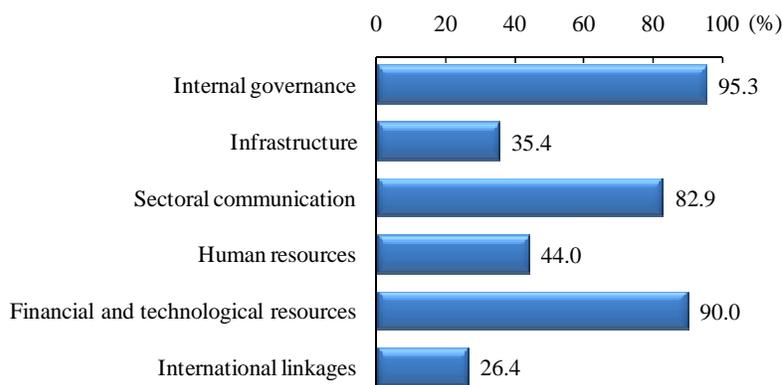
The analysis of the indicators for Civic Engagement revealed weak levels and depth of both social and political engagement in Japan in comparison to other countries. However, extent and depth of social engagement may not be as low if people's engagement in neighbourhood associations was taken into account. As for political engagement, this is low in terms of both extent and depth, even in comparison to social engagement in Japan. This suggests that political apathy is a challenge and there is little connection between participation in community networks, such as neighbourhood associations, and political activism. It also tells us that there are great gender differences in political engagement and volunteering, which could either imply low interest of women towards politics, or systematic barriers that preclude women's participation.

## **III.2. LEVEL OF ORGANISATION**

The Level of Organisation dimension describes the degree of institutional development in civil society (CIVICUS 2008:23). The scores are based on the OS. In CSI Japan, this dimension scored the highest (62.3%). However in focus group discussions in Sendai and Hiroshima, the participants, in particular CSO workers, were surprised by this high score. Although responses would seem to depend on the type of organisation, the reaction in focus group discussions offers a crucial signal as to how CSOs are feeling about themselves.

This dimension has 6 sub-dimensions: 1) internal governance, 2) infrastructure, 3) sectoral communication, 4) human resources, 5) financial and technological resources, and 6) international linkages. Internal governance, sectoral communication, and financial and technological resources score relatively high at 95.3%, 82.9%, and 90.0% respectively. On the other hand, infrastructure, human resources and international linkages score relatively low at 35.4%, 44.0%, and 26.4% respectively. Therefore, according to this survey, Japanese CSOs have good internal governance, frequent sectoral communication, and sustained financial and technological resources. On the other hand, only around a third of them are formal members of a support network and less than half of them are regarded as having sustainable human resources. Also, international linkages, as measured by the ratio of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) in Japan to INGOs in the world, are not strong.

FIGURE III.2. Sub-dimension scores for Level of Organisation



### III.2.1. Internal governance

The internal governance indicator illustrates how well CSOs are managed, calculated as a percentage of CSOs that have a board of directors or formal steering committee. The result shows that 95.3% of CSOs have either a board of directors or formal steering committee. The high score for internal governance is no surprise because organisations have to have more than three directors in accordance with NPO Law to obtain the legal status of a CSO. However, other data sources indicate that nearly 80% of organisations without legal status (N=3,179) answered that they have board members, and the rest did not answer the question. Hence, even without the legal requirement, most CSOs seem to have board of directors (Cabinet Office, 2009:50). Also, Cabinet Office (2006:20) revealed that 74.7% of SNACs (N=1,010) thought that their board is functioning well. Putting all the data together, CSOs are believed to have fairly well established internal governance.

### III.2.2. Infrastructure

Infrastructure is measured by the percentage of CSOs who are formal members of a federation, umbrella group or support network. The survey discovered that only 35.4% of CSOs are formal members of federations, umbrella groups or support networks. In total, there are 45 organisations listed as a federation, umbrella group or support network, and some organisations are named by several CSOs. Among those federations, six work at the international level, 22 are national networks, four are active at the regional level, while 13 organisations work at the provincial level. Although the number of CSOs involved in such infrastructure seems low, over half of CSOs are members of two or more networks. It is assumed that CSOs with a certain level of association tend to have strong and wide networks, whereas CSOs without any associational relations are likely to have no supporting network at all.

Because the number of respondents is only 85, it is difficult to make generalisations. Yet one notable finding is that all labour unions in the OS are members of a federation. The obvious differences from the other CSOs are that the labour unions have a longer history and are well established. On the other hand, other CSOs included in the survey are mostly SNACs or grassroots organisations which either have been established recently or still do not have a firm management system in place. In Japan, intermediary organisations often play an important role in providing support for SNACs or grassroots organisations. Yet because there is no formal registration required for such intermediary organisations, the number of organisations cannot be specified. Iwata (2010:126) indicates that there were approximately 300 intermediary organisations in 2009, based on several data sources. Therefore, although there are a large number of organisations which work to create support networks, they have not been utilised fully by other CSOs.

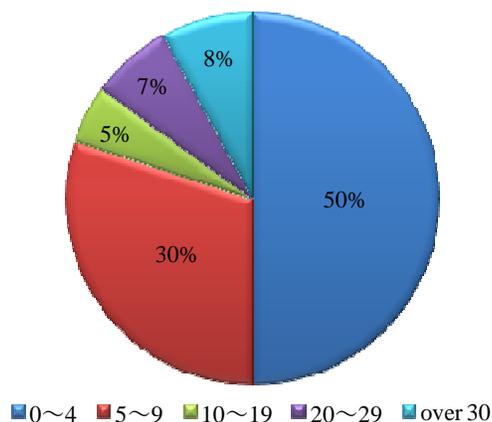
### **III.2.3. Sectoral communication**

This dimension tries to investigate how often CSOs communicate with each other within the sector through two indicators: percentage of organisations that have held meetings with other organisations working on similar issues within the past three months, and percentage of organisations that have exchanged information such as documents, reports or data with another organisation in the same period. Scores for those indicators are 81.7% and 84.0%, which demonstrate a high volume of communications and a relatively good climate for cooperation within the sector. In the focus group discussions in Hiroshima, among 18 participating SNACs, 7 SNACs regarded strong and wide networks as their strength, and 3 SNACs reflected their networks as weaknesses. The discussions also underlined the importance of networks beyond civil society with different sectors such as government or for-profit organisations. From the Hiroshima group, communication with local government is considered important because SNACs often act as service providers to complement services provided by local government. Hence, cooperation with local government makes their work more efficient and effective

### **III.2.4. Human resources**

Sustainability of human resources is measured by the CSI by the percentage of organisations in which volunteers comprise less than 25% of the organisation's average staff base. The survey revealed that only 44% of CSOs have sustainable human resources on this measure. Lack of human resources has been one of the greatest concerns of civil society, particularly in the case of SNACs. The Cabinet Office (2009c:39) reported that approximately 40% of SNACs have only one to four staff, 23.6% have five to nine staff, and 19.8% have 10 to 19 staff (N=1,200). In the OS, half of the CSOs reporting having less than five staff, and about 45% of them reported having no staff at all. Extreme cases can skew this indicator. For example there are two cases where there is one staff member in an organisation, but volunteers comprise less than 25% of staff simply because there are no volunteers, which means the organisation would be classed as sustainable. Additionally, eight CSOs were reported to have sustainable human resources when there are fewer than five staff members in the organisation. Such cases suggest that the score for this dimension may be an overestimation of human resources sustainability.

FIGURE III.2.1. Number of employees of CSOs (Organisational Survey)



### III.2.5. Financial and technological resources

This sub-dimension looks at the financial and technological base for CSOs. Indicators for this dimension score high at 83.5% for financial sustainability and 96.5% for technological resources.<sup>9</sup>

However, while financial sustainability receives a high score, we believe the method of measurement of this indicator needs to be reviewed. At present, sustainability of financial resources is measured based upon the changes between income and expenditure over two years, but it does not consider the size of the budget, which is needed to form a true picture of the strength of financial bases of CSOs. For instance, if an organisation had no income in 2007 and in 2008, the income of the organisation would not change, and on this measure it would be considered financially sustainable. This would also be the case if an organisation had zero expenditure. In reality, SNACs frequently report financial problems.

According to the NPO Comprehensive Financial Database (NPO-CFDB), the average total income is JPY 150.8 million (approximately US\$170 thousand)<sup>10</sup> and the median is JPY 268.6 thousand (approximately US\$30 thousand). Therefore, most SNACs are very small financially and only a few SNACs have a significantly large income. Indeed, approximately 15% of SNACs report their income to be zero. In 2007, the average monthly wage of 20 to 24 year olds was JPY251 thousand (approximately US\$ 2,831) (National Tax Agency 2007). Therefore, about half of SNACs cannot afford to employ even one young, full-time worker, which would normally be the least costly non-voluntary staff option. Moreover, the annual balance between income and expenditure of many SNACs illustrates a severely poor financial situation. Over 60% of SNACs recorded a zero surplus or a negative balance in 2003. Less than 20% of SNACs have surpluses exceeding JPY 100 thousand in a year (approximately US\$ 1,128). Because most SNACs do not hold a large amount of assets, normally organisations are expected to seed fund current activities by investing the surpluses of the previous year. However, if only a small number of SNACs are profitable it is difficult to foresee their sustainable growth. Additionally, in the two regional focus group discussions, financial instability was determined to be a problem by almost all CSOs. At the focus group discussions in Hiroshima, of the 18 SNACs which participated, 12 claimed that their greatest

<sup>9</sup> Technological resources scored the highest among all sub-dimensions in the Level of Organisation dimension; however, this was an almost expected result. Technological resources are measured by the percentage of organisations with a telephone line, computer and internet connection. The World Bank (2009) reported that in Japan, internet users per 100 were 75, and telephone subscribers per 100 were 124 in 2008, meaning that some people have more than one phone. Thus, it is unusual not to have those technological resources in Japan.

<sup>10</sup> Calculated by the exchange rate USD = 88.66 JPY (exchange rate as of 30 June 2010) <http://fms.treas.gov/intn.html#rates>. All calculations hereafter are done in accordance with this exchange rate.

challenge is financial sustainability. Those 12 SNACs were working in various fields, which tells us that financial sustainability is not an issue restricted to a specific field of concern. Similarly, in the focus group discussion in Sendai much attention was also given to the difficulties of fundraising. Therefore, findings from other data sources and focus group discussions depict a different picture from the OS results.

### III.2.6. International linkages

International linkages are measured by using the ratio of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) in Japan over the total number of INGOs worldwide.<sup>11</sup> According to the Union of International Associations (2009), the total number of INGOs worldwide was 13,799, and Japan has 3,642 of these. In comparison to other countries that implemented the CSI project, international linkages scored relatively high in Japan. 26.4% compared to the overall average of 15.10%. However, in comparison to Italy as another OECD country (40.80%), it is significantly low (CIVICUS database). In practice, the history of Japanese INGOs is significantly shorter than Western countries and their weak level of organisation is often criticised. While international charity work started in the late 18th Century in the West, Japanese international charity work did not begin until the early 20th Century (Shigeta 2005:31). The establishment of INGOs also came later than in the West: the boom of INGOs' establishment in Japan happened in the 1980s (Ito, 1998:76-82) while the number of western INGOs grew drastically between the 1950s and the 1960s (Shigeta 2005:36). Based on in-depth interviews with INGOs in Japan, Mekata (2004:220-229) discovered that Japanese citizens have low awareness about development issues and there is a lack of human capital to promote international linkages. These are issues to be improved if international linkages are to be strengthened.

Some positive notes are to be found in other data sources. According to the Cabinet Office (2010), 7,858 SNACs were reported to be working in the field of international cooperation on 30 June 2010. In addition, Taki (2009:7) reported widely practised international development work by grassroots organisations without corporate status. Activities undertaken range from promoting education and health to cultural exchange. The scale of their activities is not large, but their activities do promote and strengthen international linkages. Also there are CSOs conducting seminars on international development to increase awareness among Japanese people. These activities need to be encouraged and sustained, because civic understanding is essential to promoting international linkages.

### Conclusion

The Level of Organisation dimension shows the highest score of the four internal indicators of the CSI diamond. Nevertheless, CSOs in Japan do not regard themselves as having a high level of organisation. In particular, as mentioned above, focus group discussions revealed how severe the financial situation is for CSOs. Human resources are also a serious concern, with many CSOs simply not having enough workers. Therefore, this dimension has presented contradictory results since focus group discussions and secondary data has shown the challenges that CSOs face. We can also conclude that CSOs need to be encouraged to utilise more federations and umbrella organisations for building stronger networks. Moreover, the strengthening of international linkages is recommended.

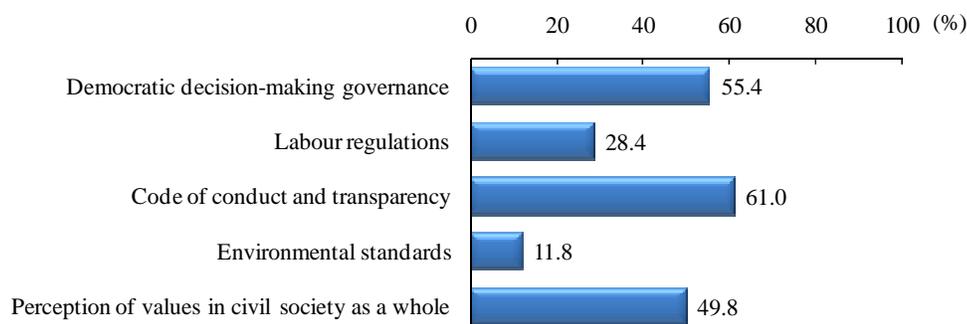
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<sup>11</sup> The Centre for Nonprofit Research and Information and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation would like to thank the Union of International Associations for their collaboration with the CSI project in providing this data. The Union of International Association's *Yearbook of International Organisations* 2008/2009.

### III.3. PRACTICE OF VALUES

This dimension tries to capture the extent to which civil society practices some core values (CIVICUS 2008:23). It examines five sub-dimensions: democratic decision-making governance, labour regulations, code of conduct and transparency, environmental standards and perception of values in civil society as a whole, and it gathers data using the Organisational Survey. This is the lowest score (41.3%) in CSI Japan, and this seems particularly to reflect the weakness of SNACs.

FIGURE III.3. Sub-dimension scores for Practice of Values



#### III.3.1. Democratic decision-making governance

This sub-dimension describes the level of democratic decision-making within CSOs. If a decision is made by elected leaders, elected boards, members and staff, the CSO is said to have democratic decision-making and governance. On the other hand, the CSO is judged to have less democratic governance if decisions are made by appointed leaders or an appointed board. The OS reports that just over half (55.4%) of CSOs are governed democratically. Five organisations answered that decisions were made by appointed leaders. There were no common characteristics such as the number of staff or types of organisations among those five. Hence it is unclear from the data what factors are encouraging or hindering democratic decision-making processes. There are growing contemporary concerns about non-democratic decision-making processes in Japan (Cabinet Office 2007:9). Nevertheless, in order to sustain the autonomy of CSOs, forcing democratic governance by law should be carefully considered, but it is strongly recommended that CSOs should maintain their autonomy and head off legislative intervention by making sure they reflect on members' views and priorities.

#### III.3.2. Labour regulations

This dimension explores how much CSOs guarantee labour rights. This is measured by looking at the availability of policies for equal opportunities and labour standards, and the level of labour rights training and membership of labour unions amongst CSO staff. The overall score is a low 28.4%, with a very low score for membership of trade unions in CSO staff (5.5%). None of the indicators for this sub-dimension exceeds 50%, with the highest score at 48.1% for availability of labour standards policies, followed by 37.7% for the availability of policies on equal opportunity, while only 22.2% of CSOs reported that they provide labour rights training.

There is extensive discussion about low salaries and long working hours in SNACs. Kato and Hayashi (2010:9-10) compared the overall average salary of workers in SNACs with that of workers in private companies and found that corporate staff earn 2.3 times more. Additionally, the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI) (2007:19) reported that only 32.9% of SNACs have a written contract for workers. Moreover, only 29.3% of SNACs have insurance for their employees, 24.6% have health insurance, and 7.5% have pension schemes.

In order to improve the situation, several civil society initiatives have been started in recent years. For instance, one of the major intermediary CSOs, Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation (JANIC) had provided study sessions about labour regulations for CSOs between 2005 and 2009 in cooperation with *Rissho Kosei-Kai Ichijiki Heiwa Kikin* (Rissho Kosei-Kai Peace Fund) (JANIC, 2010). Local CSOs also began to work on labour regulation issues, such as *Shinryoku NPO network Kyougikai* (Shinryoku NPO network association) (Tokyo Voluntary Action Centre, 2010), COM-SALON21 (Comsalon21, 2010), Toyama Volunteer Centre (Toyama Volunteer Centre, 2010), and Oita NPO Volunteer Centre (Oita prefecture, 2010). It is extremely important for CSOs to make sure that labour regulations are in place to sustain their organisation and these activities should be further encouraged and supported by the government and the wider public.

### III.3.3. Code of conduct and transparency

This sub-dimension seeks to assess how many CSOs have a publicly available code of conduct for CSO staff and how many CSOs have publicly available financial information. The overall score is 61.0%; however, this score is boosted by the score for financial transparency, 79.0%. Organisations which have publicly available codes of conduct are less than half (42.9%), and two thirds of those who do not claimed to have no intention to develop a publicly available code of conduct in the future. This survey could not go on to reveal the reason why CSOs have no intention to improve the situation and it would be useful to have further investigation on this issue to use to improve organisations' practices.

The score for transparency is significantly higher. The submission of financial reports to the government is an obligation for CSOs with legal status, which does not necessarily mean that CSOs are making an effort to deliver financial information to their members, donors and other stakeholders. In fact, according to the Cabinet Office (2006:23), only 18.5% of organisations disclosed their annual report, including their annual financial statements, through newsletters or journals distributed to members, and only 23.1% of organisations did so on their website (multiple answer questions, N=1,010). Additionally, 24.3% of SNACs (N=1,010) only submit a financial statement because it is a legal obligation. Furthermore, Baba (2005: 89) says that there is a serious problem with the quality of these reports. For instance, it was discovered that 31.1% (N=471) of submitted annual financial statements in the Aichi prefecture had some kind of misreporting (Baba 2005:89).

There have been efforts towards improving accountability and transparency in recent years. For example, an intermediate/advocacy SNAC, *Seeds shimin katsudou wo sasaeru seido wo tsukuru kai* [Seeds, Association for Establishing the Framework to Support Civic Activities], has been conducting an Accountability Study Session twice a year since 1995. Based on these discussions, SNACs issued 'The Standard NPO Financial Account Report' on 20 July 2010. This standardisation is not a legally binding regulation but there is hope that CSOs will choose to adopt it (*Seeds shimin katsudouwo sasaeru seido wo tsukuru kai*, 2010). This demonstrates progress towards advancing transparency as there had previously been no standard at all. It is expected that the standard will be enforced and modified in the light of practice, and that it will be used to promote transparency and accountability.

### III.3.4. Environmental standards

This sub-dimension shows how many CSOs have a publicly available environmental policy. The result of the OS is that only a low 11.8% of CSOs have environmental standards made available publicly. According to the CSI database, the average score of 23 countries for this dimension is 35.47% and Japan scored the lowest. The highest score was recorded in Georgia where 79.20% of CSOs stated that they have publicly available environmental standards. This illustrates the magnitude of Japan's low score for this dimension.

### III.3.5. Perception of values in civil society

The concept of civil society employed in the CSI project includes not only collective actions for public benefit, but also groups which use violence to pursue their shared interests. Although it is difficult to include those CSOs in the survey, this dimension strives to capture the extent of this negative aspect of civil society by exploring CSOs' perceptions. This sub-dimension consists of six indicators: perceived non-violence, perceived internal democracy in CSOs, perceived level of corruption, perceived intolerance, perceived weight of intolerant groups and perceived promotion of non-violence and peace. The overall score for this sub-dimension is 49.2%, with a severely low score for the perceived level of corruption. Yet, CSOs feel they have a significant or moderate role in promoting non-violence and peace in Japan, while almost no people in CSOs believe there are CSOs which are racist, discriminatory and intolerant within Japanese civil society.

The indicator measuring CSOs' perceived corruption shows that more than 95% of the respondents believe the existence of corrupt practices in Japanese civil society. The connection between the government and public benefit corporations, known as *Amakudari*, is widely recognised by the public as corruption.<sup>12</sup> This is a long standing practice that places large numbers of retired officers from central government in public benefit corporations with significantly large earnings. According to MHLW (2010), 1,401 employees of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare gained other jobs after retirement in 280 public benefit corporations as of 1 April 2010. Of those, 8.9% received an annual salary of more than JPY10 million (approximately US\$ 112,790), whereas only 4.9% of workers at private companies earned over JPY10 million annually (National Tax Agency 2009).

Additionally, during the short four month period when the media survey was conducted by the NCO, there were three scandals of corruption related to CSOs. This news covered the front pages of major national newspapers and was repeatedly reported in the inside pages in newspapers for a long time. In fact, CSO-related reports on the front pages were predominantly the scandals of public benefit corporations which gained great profits to the benefit of the personnel in charge despite the non-distribution rule of public benefit corporations (e.g. Hamahata, 2009:1, *Kanken zen Rijicho Ouryou Riikken He*, 2009:1). Abuses by CSOs working for people with disabilities were also revealed in articles (e.g. Hayashida and Kubo, 2009:1, *Kourou Shokuin Kanyoka*, 2009:1). Others reported inappropriate activities of trade unions (e.g. *Yami Senjyu Mondai*, 2009:1, Mogi, 2009:1). Because the front page is widely read by the public, those negative images could contribute to the public suspicion of CSO corruption.

### Conclusion

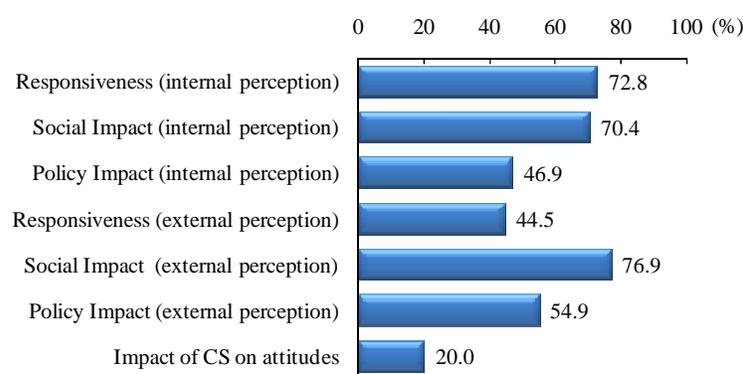
The overall score for the Practice of Values dimension is 41.3%. This is lower than any other CSI dimension. Also, this was the only score that turned out to be lower than the average score for which data was provided to Japan while preparing this report from 23 countries that took part in the CSI project Phase 2 (CIVICUS database). The score is low due to the small number of people who are members of labour unions in CSOs and the limited number of CSOs having publicly available environmental standards. However, there are movements within civil society today to improve working conditions and environmentally friendly practices, as mentioned above. Hence, in the near future the score for this dimension might become higher. By all means, better practice is urgently required because the current situation makes it difficult for workers to sustain a career in civil society, and criticism of CSOs can decrease public support. This is a critical challenge for Japanese civil society to overcome.

<sup>12</sup> *Amakudari* was originally a practice of the human resources department of the government. It assigns retired personnel from the ministries to high positions in private or quasi-public sectors. This creates a strong tie between the government and the private sector or quasi-public sectors which is then said to lead to effective management. However this tie can also bring about administrative corruption (see Choi, 2007).

### III.4. PERCEPTION OF IMPACT

The Perception of Impact dimension measures the extent to which civil society is perceived to be able to achieve impact on the social and policy arena, according to internal (within civil society) and external (outside civil society) perceptions (CIVICUS 2008:24). The Organisational Survey and the External Perception Survey are the tools used to measure this dimension. 'Internal' refers to the point of view of those within civil society, while 'external' means people outside civil society such as the government and the market. Sub-dimensions are: responsiveness (internal/external perception), social impact (internal/external perception), policy impact (internal/external perception) and the impact of civil society on general public attitudes. The overall score for this dimension is 55.2%. Details of the sub-dimensions indicate that there are gaps between how CSOs perceive their impact and how external stakeholders regard this.

FIGURE III.4. Sub-dimension scores for Perceived Impact



#### III.4.1./4.4. Responsiveness (internal perception/external perception)

Responsiveness is measured by asking respondents to comment on the impact of civil society on the country's pressing concerns. In this survey, Japan's major concerns were identified as a stable economy, and progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society. These are the two major concerns that the Japanese public raised in the WVS 2005. As an internal perception, 60.3% and 85.3% of CSOs answered that civil society has had a significant or moderate impact on stabilising the economy, and on progressing toward a less impersonal and more humane society. On the other hand, the external perceptions were 14.8% and 74.1%, respectively.

In this dimension, there are large differences between internal and external perceptions regarding the impact on a stable economy. In the AC meeting it was pointed out that this may be due to the way the question was asked in the survey. The question was, "In your country, what is the impact of civil society when it comes to a stable economy?" The expression 'stable economy' is rather vague and can be interpreted differently depending on the respondent. The question lacks indicators describing what a stable economy is and how the impact of civil society on the creation of a stable economy can be measured, and responses could vary according to context. A civil society worker might believe she or he is making a contribution towards a stable economy by providing job support or helping homeless people to re-enter society. On the other hand, those who work in other sectors may not perceive civil society's impact on a stable economy if they regard a stable economy as entailing economic growth, which is normally achieved by for-profit corporations. With the small number of respondents it is extremely difficult to conclude that 14.8% is a trustworthy percentage to describe the external perception for this impact.

As for the perception of impact on progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society, internal and external perceptions scored similarly. Nonetheless, “progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society” is also a vague description. Therefore, it has to be noted that the scores for this dimension were very subjective. From past research, however, it can be expected that CSOs are perceived both subjectively and objectively to play an important role for social development. In 2005, when the Cabinet Office conducted a survey on civic activity (N=1,010), 71.5% of SNACs believed themselves to be bridging diverse groups of people. 61.2% of SNACs consider themselves to be providing opportunities for their members to utilise and develop knowledge and ability through their activities, while 56.8% regarded themselves as providing public goods/services to meet individuals’ needs. 41.2% considered themselves to be empowering the people (Cabinet Office 2006:30). These results indicate that CSOs are perceived to have sufficient impact on social issues. The Japan Research Institute (JRI) conducted research in 2004 on the impact of civil society on social concerns such as the falling birth-rate, ageing, environmental degradation, crime, public-spiritedness and depopulation. Based on statistical analysis, the JRI concluded that civic activity has a positive impact on the issues mentioned above (JRI 2005:7). Hence, those previous surveys suggest that CSOs are contributing to wider means of social development, which should include creating a less impersonal and more humane society.

### **III.4.2./4.5. Social impact (internal perception/external perception)**

Perception of social impact also differs between internal perception and external perception. The overall score for the internal perception of social impact is 70.4 %, while the overall score for external perception is 76.9%. This suggests that more external stakeholders believe that CSOs’ activities have a significant or moderate social impact on society than CSOs themselves.

The internal perception of social impact is examined by how CSOs perceive themselves to have an impact on society in the fields where they believe CSOs should have the most impact, and in the fields where they are working. For the former, 75.6% of CSOs answered that they have significant or moderate impact on society.<sup>13</sup> For the latter, the OS found that 34.7% of organisations felt that they had not had an impact in their respective fields. Interestingly, CSOs evaluated the impact of their activity lower than the external stakeholders.

As for the external perception, external stakeholders were asked to assess civil society’s impact in the fields where they considered civil society to be the most active, and their social impact in general. For the former, 96.0% of the respondents answered that civil society has an impact.<sup>14</sup> As for the external perception of social impact in general, 57.7% of the respondents said that there is high or some impact. However, these are very subjective responses because the question asks, “In general, what kind of impact do you think that civil society as a whole has on the social context?” Given the small number of responses, it is difficult to draw many conclusions on the social impact on selected concerns. There is also a possibility that the score would be lower if this question was asked to the public in general. In 2005, a public opinion poll was conducted to capture the state of NPOs. In the survey, only 39.5% answered that they know the word ‘NPO’ and understand their activity (Cabinet Office 2005). Therefore, it assumed that if the public had been asked about the social impact of CSOs, the score for this indicator would have been lower.

<sup>13</sup> CSOs believe they have the most impact on education (31.9%), support for the poor and marginalised communities (26.1%), and social development (11.8%). CSOs view the areas of human relief, health, employment, housing and food as ones where they have less influence.

<sup>14</sup> Supporting the poor and marginalised communities is thought to be the most active field by the majority of external respondents (34.0%), followed by health (26.0%), education (12.0%) and humanitarian relief (10.0%). Social development, housing and employment were thought to be active areas by only a small number of respondents, 6%, 2%, and 2% respectively. Food was not regarded as an active field by any respondents.

### III.4.3./4.6. Policy impact (internal perception/external perception)

Policy impact is the dimension which depicts how CSOs and external stakeholders perceive that civil society has an impact on policy making. The results show that general policy impact is perceived to be high, while policy impact on specific fields is perceived to be low to medium by both internal and external stakeholders, calling into question the high general policy impact score of 77.8%. The overall scores for policy impact on specific fields for internal and external perception are 46.9% and 54.9%. This dimension also shows a lower evaluation by CSOs than external stakeholders towards CSOs' policy impact.

Among 32 CSOs that claimed to be involved with policy making in the past two years, two CSOs answered that they do not know the degree of civil society's policy impact, six that they think civil society's policy impact is limited, 14 that there is some impact, while 10 CSOs claim the impact to be significant. There is no common characteristic among CSOs that share the perception of policy impact. This probably suggests the lack of an objective standard evaluation system in Japan, which is recommended to be introduced.

### III.4.7. Impact of civil society on attitudes

This sub-dimension usually looks at the impact of civil society on attitudes by measuring the differences between members of civil society and non-members in trust, tolerance and public-spiritedness. Also, this dimension examines people's trust towards civil society. Due to cultural reasons, Japan did not include the dimension of differences in tolerance.<sup>15</sup> The overall score is 20.0%.

The data suggest that people who are members of CSOs have a higher level of trust compared to people in general and higher awareness of public-spiritedness. However, the trust towards civil society is low in Japan, which needs to be considered seriously. The level of trust in civil society is measured by the average confidence level towards CSOs including environmental organisations, women's organisations, charitable or humanitarian organisations, churches, labour unions and political parties. Overall, only 16.8% reported having high trust in those CSOs. By looking at the scores by CSO type, it is apparent that Japanese people also have significantly low confidence in charitable or humanitarian organisations and churches. In Japan, 29.1% of people answered that they have a great deal of confidence or quite a lot of confidence in the government, 21.4% thought so towards parliament, and 36.2% felt so towards for-profit large corporations. Hence, trust in civil society is lower than that in the government, the parliament and large companies.

Opinion polls also confirm low trust in SNACs: only 6.5% think SNACs are always trustworthy and 24.0% feel SNACs are trustworthy for most of the time (Cabinet Office, 2005). This is probably rooted in Japanese history, as the state dominated the public sphere for a long time. Even after the recognition of nonprofit sectors, people tend to regard private voluntary organisations as untrustworthy (Schwartz, 2003:5). Additionally, in recent years as discussed above, the public have been seeing news and television programmes reporting CSOs' corrupt practices. From 2003 in particular, the number of articles and television programmes reporting the negative side of CSOs has increased. For instance, between 2004 and 2007, Mainich Broadcasting System (MBS) broadcast a series of 'Mysterious Fundraising Organisation' programmes more than 30 times, reporting on organisations that call themselves NPOs. One organisation raised several million yen by publicising their fundraising activities as helping to save children with incurable illnesses, yet their funding was used for private purposes. This programme won various awards and its impact on the general public could be large (Watari and Nakano, 2010:86). Additionally, as mentioned in Section

<sup>15</sup> In the WVS, the question to assess tolerance, "Could you please mention any of these groups that you would not like to have as neighbours?" was not used as Japanese are not accustomed to being asked about what kind of neighbours they consider 'undesirable' (see WVS database).

II.2., there are increasing numbers of SNACs that are established by a simple authorisation process with minimal government intervention. This type of CSO could be held accountable by civic authority but there are times that civic supervision does not work effectively. Therefore, it is relatively easy for a SNAC to become a corrupt organisation, and more examples of these will further decrease trust towards CSOs among the general public. Although increasing the trust towards CSOs needs great effort and time, considering the situation mentioned above, improving transparency and accountability as well as educating the public to be responsible for supervising CSOs would help to increase the trust towards CSOs.

## Conclusion

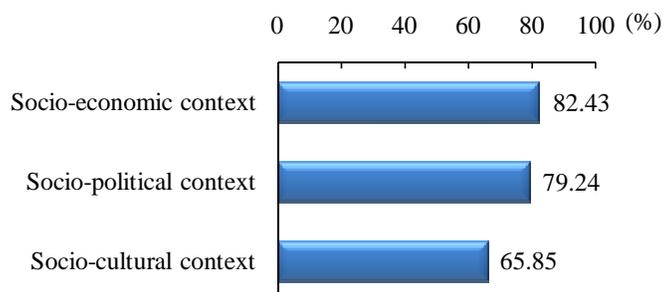
The biggest methodological challenge for this dimension was the sample size being rather small. With external perceptions in particular, it is difficult to claim the universality of the result with only 27 respondents. Since the measurements are subjective, a larger sample size would help to confirm the validity of the results. Nonetheless, by bringing in data from secondary sources as well, as suggested by CIVICUS, it became apparent that CSOs are perceived to have social impact rather than economic impact for social sustainability. Moreover, this dimension made it clear that Japan lacks objective tools for evaluation. Currently one very active CSO, *Genron NPO* has as its mission creating a strong, rich and independent-minded civil society in Japan. After two years of research and discussions with academics and practitioners, *Genron NPO* launched an advisory committee for the development of an assessment tool that could be used to declare a CSO an 'Excellent NPO'. The advisory committee established 33 criteria for an 'Excellent NPO' in November 2010. The criteria require CSOs to have excellent quality measurements on three main issues: 'social innovation', 'civic-mindedness' and 'sustainable management' (Genron NPO, 2010). It is expected that these criteria will spread widely in Japanese civil society and both CSOs and the public will have a benchmark and objective evaluation tools to assure the quality of CSOs.

## III.5. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The External Environment dimension describes the social, political and economic context of society. External environment is important because it affects the development of civil society. For instance, civil society is less likely to develop in a country where freedom of association is not legally permitted, while economic depression may also hinder the development of civil society due to a decrease in funding (CIVICUS 2008: 25). In Japan's case, the overall score for the External Environment dimension is fairly high at 75.84%.

This dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: socio-economic context, socio-political context, and socio-cultural context. Socio-economic context scored 82.4%. It assesses basic capabilities like health and education while also evaluating the levels of corruption and inequality in a country. Socio-political context scored 79.2%, which is composed of political rights, rule of law and personal freedoms, associational and organisational rights, experience of legal framework and state effectiveness. Socio-cultural context is measured by trust, tolerance and public-spiritedness and it scored 65.8%. Data for this dimension is largely compiled from a range of external sources.

FIGURE III.5. Sub-dimension scores for External Environment



### III.5.1. Socio-economic context

This sub-dimension captures the socio-economic context of the country by measuring basic capability, corruption and levels of inequality. The Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) is comprised of education and health standards: the percentage of children who reach fifth grade at school, the percentage of children who survive until at least five years old (based on mortality statistics) and the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel. The highest score will be obtained when a country achieves a 100% rate of children completing fifth grade, a close to zero mortality rate of under five year olds, and perfect coverage for healthcare during childbirth (Social Watch 2008). Japan scored 99.2 points for BCI in 2008, which means the country has progressed and is satisfying almost all the population's fundamental capabilities.

The corruption index, provided by the Transparency International Corruption Index 2008, presented a relatively corruption-free environment with a score of 7.3 on the scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (no corruption). However, corruption is very much present in the Japanese government despite the general perception of a non-corrupt society (see Van Wolferen, 1990).

Inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient on a scale of 0 to 100, where a value of 0 represents absolute equality, and 100 represents absolute inequality. In the CSI methodology, it is reversed, hence 0 represents absolute inequality and 100 represents absolute equality. In Japan, the score for this was 75.1 in 2007. Although Japan has been considered as a relatively equal society, there is a growing concern on the widening gap of inequality in recent years. In 2003, the Gini coefficient was 24.9, which equates to 76.1 on the CSI's inequality scale. Therefore, there was a 1% increase in inequality between 2003 and 2007.

### III.5.2. Socio-political context

This sub-dimension measures the socio-political context by looking at political rights and freedoms, the rule of law and personal freedoms, associational and organisational rights, experience of legal framework, and state effectiveness. The overall score is 79.24% with the highest score for political rights and freedoms (92.5%) and the lowest for experience of legal framework (58.6%).

Firstly, political rights and freedoms are measured by the Freedom House Political Rights Index (2008). The score of 92.5% describes that Japan has guaranteed freedom in electoral processes, political pluralism and participation and a functioning government. Because the score for Japan shows no significant changes over time since the first evaluation in 2003, Japan is regarded as having guaranteed political rights and freedoms.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Because the original scale is 0-40, a proportional formula was used to change this to 0-100, and the measurement shows that the higher the score, the higher the degree of rights and freedoms present in the country. This was measured based on the 3 sub-categories: degree of freedom in: a) electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, c) functioning of government. The overall score was interpreted as "free" with

Secondly, the rule of law and personal freedoms is measured by the Freedom House Index of Political Rights and Civil Liberties with particular focus on: a) rule of law, b) personal autonomy and individual rights and c) freedom of expression and belief. Japan scored 85.4%, which indicates people in Japan have many political rights and civil liberties.<sup>17</sup> Freedom of expression and belief is guaranteed in the constitution. The press is all private and independent, and media usage by individuals and internet access are not restricted. However, Freedom House (2009) pointed out that *Kisha club* (press clubs) prevents the heterogeneity of news coverage by maintaining strong ties between major media, bureaucrats and politicians. This is criticised as lowering the level of public communication by detaching the mass media from the public sphere (Freeman, 2003:237). Freeman (2003:238-240) points out the consequence of homogeneity of Japanese mass media as the strong reliance on official facts which creates a lack of reporting of unofficial voices or views of groups on the political periphery. Also, strong ties with politicians cause dysfunctional political auditing of mass media. Moreover, “impartiality and non-partisanship (*fuen-futo*)” regulation imposed on Japanese journalism limits the agenda-setting function of mass media. Freeman (2003:241-242) also claims that not being a member of *Kisha club* is extremely difficult in Japan as alternative media is regarded as untrustworthy. Japanese homogenised media reporting then shapes homogenised public opinion. Hence, on the surface, Japan has achieved greater political rights and civil liberties, yet it is questionable that the current freedom actually promotes progressive civil society, considering the system of mass media.

Thirdly, Freedom House’s Index of Civil Liberties shows a high degree of associational and organisational rights in Japan, scoring 83.3%.<sup>18</sup> Despite this high score, nearly half of respondents in the Organisational Survey feel the state regulation of civic activity is either too restrictive or somewhat restrictive. Therefore, Japanese CSOs feel that being guaranteed associational and organisational rights is not enough to establish and manage CSOs.

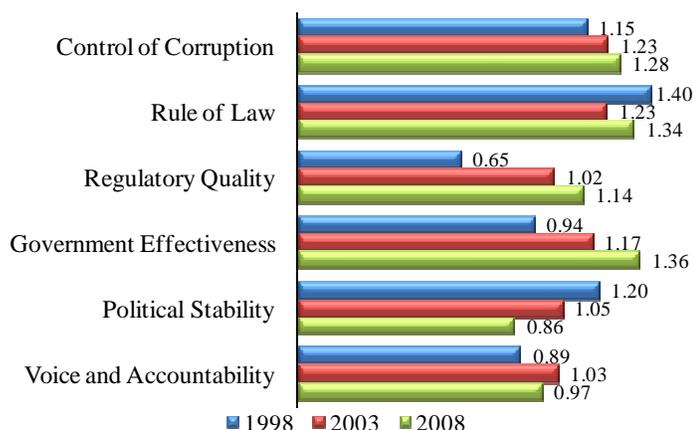
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individual scores of 12 for electoral process, 15 for political pluralism and participation, and 10 for functioning of government. The total score for the political rights and freedom is 37 out of 40, which shows a high degree of rights and freedom.

<sup>17</sup> Each score ranges from 0-16 hence overall scores range from 0-48 and the higher the score the better established is the rule of law, the greater personal autonomy and individual rights, and the greater freedom of expression and belief. To adjust scores for the CSI indicator, a proportional formula was used to change this to a 0-100 scale. Freedom House (2008) provides each score at 13, 15, and 13 respectively, and the overall score is 41 out of 48.

<sup>18</sup> The score ranges from 0 to 12, with 0 meaning no freedom of association and 12 meaning complete freedom. A proportional formula was used to change this to 0-100. The original score was 10 out of 12, suggesting Japanese people enjoy freedom of association and organisation.

FIGURE III.5.2. Each indicator scores and the changes in Worldwide Governance Indicators  
Source: World Bank (2010) World Governance Indicator



Finally, state effectiveness is measured through Governance Matters 2008, Worldwide Governance Indicators (World Bank 2010) and composed of the six aggregate governance indicators: a) Voice and Accountability, b) Political Stability and Lack of Violence/Terrorism, c) Government Effectiveness, d) Regulatory Quality, e) Rule of Law, and f) Control of Corruption.<sup>19</sup> According to the World Bank (2010), the overall indicator score has steadily increased. However, there are some concerns in state effectiveness. In 2008, the indicator showed 0.970 for voice and accountability, 0.862 for political stability, 1.358 for government effectiveness, 1.135 for regulatory quality, 1.335 for rule of law, and 1.280 for control for corruption. A higher score indicates better governance ratings in each indicator. Within those indicators, the government plays the least role in voice and accountability and political stability, which implies that particular measures should be taken to improve the government's role in voice and accountability.

### III.5.3. Socio-cultural context

This sub-dimension captures the socio-cultural background by measuring trust and public-spiritedness. The score for trust between people is particularly low in this dimension: only 39.1% of people feel that they can trust most people. Public-spiritedness however scores high at 92.6%, and the overall score is 65.85%.

CIVICUS (2008:25) views the level of trust between people as a broad measurement of the social psychological climate for association and cooperation. Based on the assumption that a high score of this index describes a favourable environment for civil society to develop, this suggests that Japanese civil society has room to develop more. However, the low level of trust may hinder the development of civil society. Although in comparison to other countries, 39.1% is not a particularly low score (World Value Survey database, 2010), there is a serious concern about the declining level of trust in recent years in Japan. Also an empirical analysis conducted by the NCO backed up the CIVICUS hypothesis that people with higher generalised trust have a higher probability of becoming a member of social and political CSOs. Hence, raising the level of generalised trust among people is necessary to improve the sector, alongside supporting other issues such as strengthening the level of organisation as discussed earlier.

<sup>19</sup> The original scale for this indicator ranges from -2.5 to 2.4, so 2.5 was added to each score to change the scale to 0 to 5. A proportional formula was then used to change the scale to 0-100. Hence, the higher the score, the higher the extent the state is able to fulfil its defined functions.

The score for public-spiritedness is high in Japan (92.6%). This measures how much people believe that it is not justifiable to claim government benefits without eligibility, to dodge paying for public transport, to commit tax fraud or to receive a bribe. For each measurement, the respondents are asked to choose the degree of acceptance ranging from 0 to 10 (0 being always justifiable, 10 being never justifiable). In Japan, the mean score for each measurement was 8.9, 9.4, 9.5, and 9.5 respectively. Although the score for “claiming government benefits to which you are not entitled” is slightly lower than the others, it is still high. From this result it can be said that Japanese people have high public-spiritedness.

## Conclusion

Japan has scored significantly higher in this dimension in comparison to the average score of 23 countries that implemented the CSI project for which data was available at the time of this report’s preparation. The scores are 75.84% for Japan and 59.5% for the average of participant countries (CIVICUS database). While this dimension is supposed to depict how favourable the context is for civil society, some other dimension scores are the same as the average or fall below it, which can be interpreted as saying that Japanese civil society could have developed more given the favourable external environment. However, there are also suspicions about whether the External Environment dimension actually captures the environment needed for developing civil society in Japan. For instance, AC members suggested that unfavourable taxation laws and insufficient education on civil society related issues should be included under this dimension as these are areas they believe need to be addressed.

For instance, in Japan, the amount of individual donations is significantly smaller than in western countries. On average, each household donates 2,382 yen (approximately US\$ 26.87) per year and this accounted for 0.08% of total household spending in 2009 (Okuyama, 2010:18). This is an issue of civic engagement and of sustainable financing for CSOs. Although it can be argued that people are simply not willing to donate, it can also be said that unfavourable taxation system for donors is hindering potential for an increase in donations.<sup>20</sup>

AC members also raised the issue of education related to civil society. Because Japan has compulsory education up to secondary school (nine years of education) and 97% of children go to high school (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010), the score for a sub-dimension on this might be expected to be high. However, education related to civil society is not yet developed within the school education system. AC members suggested introducing volunteer activities as part of the school curriculum and teaching the value of human interaction. Although the curriculum has started to include civil society related topics at the higher education level, there is still room for improvement. According to the Centre for Nonprofit Research and Information (CENPRI) (2008:11), there are 136 universities offering undergraduate courses and 30 graduate schools providing courses on

<sup>20</sup> Yamauchi (2010: 137-138) pointed out that the Japanese taxation system does not provide enough incentive for people to make a donation because the tax benefit for individual donors is insignificant in Japan. Donations by individuals recognised as having a high degree of public benefit (officially termed ‘specific tax deductible donations’ (*tokuteikifukin*) are deducted up to a maximum of 40 % of the individual annual taxable income for donations less than 5,000 yen (approximately US\$ 56.40) when taxpayers file a tax return. In other words, individual donations are deductible with specified minimum limits (floor) and maximum limits (ceiling) when taxpayers file a tax return. Under such income deduction system, the amount of refunds is the amount of donations multiplied by the marginal tax rate of the income tax. For example, when a person whose marginal tax rate is 20% donates 100,000 yen (approximately US\$ 1,128) annually, only less than 20,000 yen (approximately US\$ 226) is refunded. A person whose marginal tax rate is 10 percent is refunded less than 10,000 yen (approximately US\$ 113). Hence, the net burden ratio on taxpayers depends on the marginal tax rate, and it is thus lower for taxpayers with a higher income class since their marginal tax rate is higher than taxpayers in a lower income class. A series of tax reforms has reshaped the system in terms of the relaxation of progressive taxation of individual incomes and the reduction of the income tax rate. As a result, the incentive for individuals to donate is reduced under the current system of donations.

civil society. This accounts for 81.9% of all universities and 18.1% of all post graduate schools. However, many courses are taught in the Tokyo and Osaka metropolitan areas. It is suggested to increase satellite classes and e-learning systems for students in rural areas. In terms of the types of courses offered, more than 60% are provided on a lecture basis, 10.5% of the courses are provided as field work and only 1.9% of the courses are offered as internships (CENPRI, 2007:13). Therefore, it is recommended to increase field work and internship opportunities to provide students with practical experience of civil society.

Education related to civil society is important not only in the formal education system, but also in lifelong learning. Today, few CSOs run schools for lifelong learning and provide local citizens with opportunities to build skills and knowledge throughout their life, as well as to create networks among them, such as Kanagawa NPO Daigaku (Kanagawa NPO Daigaku, 2010), Shibuya University Network (Shibuya University Network, 2010), or Dai Nagoya University Network (Dai Nagoya University Network, 2010). It is expected that an increase in those schools for lifelong learning would enhance social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, which contributes to strengthening civil society.

## IV. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN JAPAN

This section summarises the above findings from the CSI processes into weaknesses and strengths for each dimension.

### Civic Engagement

#### *Weaknesses*

- Low level of engagement in political membership (both extent and depth)
- Low level of engagement in political volunteering (both extent and depth)
- Low level of political activism

#### *Strengths*

- High rate of membership in local community associations
- High level of community engagement
- Diversity of representation in membership of CSOs

### Level of Organisation

#### *Weaknesses*

- Weak infrastructure: low membership rate of federations, umbrella groups, support networks
- Unsustainable human resources
- Lack of financial resource base
- Lack of financial sustainability, including lack of fundraising ability
- Lack of time and effort to publicise CSO activities

#### *Strengths*

- Sufficient technological resource base
- Formal internal governance systems in place
- Frequent inter-sectoral communication

### Practice of Values

#### *Weaknesses*

- Lack of democratic decision making process within civil society
- Lack of publicly available equal opportunity policies
- Low membership rate for labour unions
- Insufficient labour rights training
- Lack of publicly available codes of conduct
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of publicly available environmental standards
- Existence of CSOs which have no intention to develop labour regulations or environmental standards
- Existence of violent forces in civil society
- High rate of corruption in civil society

#### *Strengths*

- Movement within civil society to improve the working conditions of CSOs
- Movement within civil society to make environmental standards public
- High internal democracy

- Recognition of civil society's role in promoting non-violence and peace

### **Perception of Impact**

#### *Weaknesses*

- Low evaluation of civil society's performances on stabilising the economy
- CSOs' lack of confidence to make social/political impacts
- Low level of trust towards CSOs from the general public

#### *Strengths*

- Both internal/external recognition of civil society's ability to help create a less impersonal and more humane society
- Meeting community needs
- Very high recognition of civil society ability to influence selected issues from external stakeholders
- Both internal and external recognition of civil society's impact on policy-making in general
- Civil society's influence in increasing public-spiritedness

### **External Environment**

#### *Weaknesses*

- The trend of decreasing levels of trust
- CSOs reporting the existence of illegitimate government restrictions from their subjective experience

#### *Strengths*

- Acceptable score for Basic Capabilities
- Relatively free from corruption (Corruption Index)
- Relatively low income gap
- Guaranteed political freedoms and civic freedoms
- Guaranteed freedom of association
- Guaranteed personal autonomy and individual rights
- Improving overall state effectiveness
- High public-spiritedness.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section addresses recommendations to strengthen Japanese civil society based on the findings from the CSI project. These recommendations are made for each dimension. Some recommendations are targeted towards civil society, some are suggested for the government and donors and some require attention from for-profit organisations. Moreover, some challenges should be overcome by all the sectors together.

### **Civic Engagement**

- Raise public awareness for civic engagement through education: It is strongly recommended to introduce civic education into the formal school curriculum by the joint action of CSOs and the government. Lifelong education/e-learning of civil society related issues is equally important, and this can be promoted by cooperation with the private for-profit sector.
- Expand social engagement from the community: It was revealed that Japanese civil

society has a high civic engagement rate for community based activities. This shows strong community solidarity in society. Hence, there is a potential for expanding volunteer activities from community issues to national issues. This can be done by cooperation between community based grassroots organisations or neighbourhood organisations and CSOs working on broader issues.

### **Level of Organisation**

- **Strengthen infrastructure:** Japanese CSOs have low membership rates in federations, umbrella groups and support networks. Because there is frequent inter-sectoral communication, it is possible that CSOs do not feel the need for support networks. However, in order to bring about collective action it is helpful to have stronger and wider networks beyond specific sectors. Further, although there is at least one support centre in each province, these are located in the centre of the province. People who live in remote areas might have difficulty accessing support centres and benefiting from them. Hence, the expansion of the support system for CSOs in remote areas would be helpful, with the support of government or donor foundations.
- **Establish a sustainable financial base:** Although the score of the CSI diamond is high, there are issues of financial sustainability in civil society. This is the consequence of low civic participation, lack of fundraising ability and an unfavourable taxation system for donors. Therefore, CSOs largely depend on government subsidies or outsourced business. Hence, it is important for CSOs to gain fundraising skills and for the government to conduct tax reforms. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, formal/informal civil society related education would contribute to increasing civic participation. A newly established SNAC, Japan Fundraising Association (JFRA) is making an effort to increase staff skills for fundraising activities and to provide seminars, study sessions and places for information exchange in order to strengthen organisations' fund management abilities (JFRA 2010). These activities should be supported and expanded in all sectors including the state and the market.
- **Build grounds for sustainable human resources:** Having sustainable human resources is one of the major challenges for civil society in Japan, particularly SNACs. Low salaries and absence of job security causes a lack of sustainability. As mentioned above, CSOs have relatively weak financial bases, and they are large dependent on government subsidies and outsourced business. Even if a CSO manages to obtain subsidies or outsourced business it often does not cover its labour costs. Additionally, members of CSOs feel that people in general regard CSO staff as unpaid volunteers. These factors together make it difficult for CSOs to guarantee paid posts for workers. Hence, establishing a financial base and increasing the awareness of the public is necessary. In addition, government should provide sufficient labour cost support to CSOs as a form of outsourcing their civil responsibilities.

### **Practice of Values**

- **Promote transparency:** Although many Japanese CSOs report having formal internal governance systems in their organisations, they recognised the lack of democratic decision-making procedures within their organisations. Additionally, many organisations do not publicise equal opportunity policies and codes of conduct. Moreover, financial statements published by CSOs frequently contain a significant amount of errors. Transparency is extremely important for CSOs to maintain their legitimacy and to raise funds. In order to improve the situation, a system is needed in which the public can access annual reports and evaluate CSOs. To do so, it is necessary to encourage the public to engage in CSOs' activities through education. Also, activities by some CSOs promoting transparency should be encouraged and supported by other sectors of society

as well as by CSOs.

- Increase awareness within civil society for labour rights and environment standards: The findings of this report suggest that improvements need to be made for CSOs to understand the necessity of labour rights and environment standards. The existence of CSOs which do not even think about publicising their labour regulations or environment standards implies a low awareness among CSOs over these issues. In order to increase awareness within civil society, seminars and forums for CSOs should be developed. Additionally, evaluation of CSOs by the public should be introduced.
- Combat corruption: There is widely practised corruption within civil society in relation to the government. Retired bureaucrats acquire well paid positions in public benefit corporations. The government must prohibit this practice to combat corruption. Also, there are several other corrupt practices within civil society. Therefore, more public supervision is required.

### **Perception of Impact**

- Increase the level of trust in civil society: The study found a low level of trust towards civil society in Japan. If the low level of trust towards civil society persists, a progressive civil society will not be achieved. Therefore, this is a serious issue to be tackled. To do so it requires that CSOs improve their transparency. Additionally, further research is required to identify the reasons for this distrust towards civil society. Then strategic planning to overcome this issue should be conducted.
- Set clear goals and conduct evaluations: The Organisational Survey and the External Survey showed different perceptions towards civil society in Japan. This might be because of the lack of clear goals and a standard evaluation system. Authorities, foundations and research institutes perform sporadic evaluations when they support and fund particular activities of CSOs, but there are no standard, comprehensive and regular evaluations for all CSOs and their operations. External evaluation could be costly, so at least standard self-evaluation forms should be introduced.

### **External Environment**

- Raise the level of general trust: Despite the high score for External Environment indicator in general, the level of public trust is not as high. In fact, there are concerns about the decrease in the level of trust among the public. Losing general trust would have a negative consequence for civil society due to the inactivity and lack of commitment to participation it generates. Therefore, increasing the level of general trust is necessary and can be done through educating people about the importance of reciprocity and human integration.
- Reform taxation system: Although this is not included in the CSI indicators, the current taxation system in Japan discourages donations. The government should work on reforming the taxation system in favour of donors.
- Enhance civil society education: This can be done by the government and for-profit corporations. The government should consider introducing civil society education into the formal education system, and for-profit organisations can support CSOs providing civil society education as a part of lifelong learning within their CSR activities. Investment in this education is valuable because it can supply continuous human capital for civil society as well as people who are willing to support CSOs.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The CSI indicators alone neither cover all the issues related to civil society in Japan nor capture all the realities. However, the primary research, secondary research, and focus group discussions all together endeavoured to reflect Japanese civil society as holistically as possible.

In Civic Engagement, the CSI found a low participation rate particularly for political activities. On the other hand, it shows a high engagement rate for community based activities. Although measurements differ, previous studies also suggest similar trends.

As for the Level of Organisation, the high score surprised participants in the focus groups. In spite of an especially high score for the financial stability indicator, CSO members claimed that their greatest challenge is still to gain financial stability. From the focus group discussions and secondary research it also became apparent that CSOs face a lack of sustainable human resources.

In Practice of Values, weaknesses of Japanese CSOs became clearer, such as the lack of transparency, awareness of labour rights and environment standards. Some CSOs are now working on these issues and therefore improvements are expected to be made within a few years.

It is difficult to reach conclusions on the Perception of Impact due to the nature of the questionnaires being very subjective and the small size of the sample. However, both external and internal perceptions indicate CSOs' contribution to creating a less impersonal and more humane society.

The score for the External Environment captures Japan's fundamental receptive capacity of being aware of and addressing social issues and enabling civic actions, but it does not capture directly issues to foster its institutional maturity and development such as the legislative infrastructure and the taxation system related to civil society. Also this does not observe the partnership of CSOs with other sectors. Therefore, the indicator only shows the fact that Japan is well established economically and socially, yet culturally the country has some concerns as the level of general trust is low.

The question remains whether the CSI project itself strengthened civil society. The project was one of many researches and activities in relation to civil society in Japan. At the time of the survey, for example, there were comments made that there were three similar questionnaires sent out at the same time, or that CSOs thought that they were receiving the same survey questionnaires multiple times. However, there seems to be a positive effect of the project in the places where we held regional focus group discussions. In Hiroshima, CSOs shared some challenges and discussed possible solutions based on each other's experiences. In Sendai, there were positive comments such as: they would like to create regional civil society indicators, they would like to have another regional meeting to create more networks, or they learned from the discussion that they should evaluate their activities, which they did not think was necessary prior to the focus group discussions. So a positive contribution to civil society development can be seen here.

With several study workshops held, we have received useful comments for the future development of the CSI methodology, such as pointing out the lack of logic and theoretical background in the construction of the CSI diamond, particularly the issue of not weighting various sub-dimensions. In addition, there were suggestions for not placing the indicator for External Environment and four other indicators together, because the External Environment dimension was not generated through scores of other dimensions.

The future perspective for Japanese civil society is unclear. Japanese civil society has a long-standing history, yet it has been noticed only recently. Today, with the failure of the government to provide all the necessary services for its people, there have been growing needs and the hope for CSOs to play significant roles in providing services. Additionally, in the latest general election in 2009, CSOs played a critical role of evaluating political parties. This shows that the role of advocacy for civil society is also developing. Although the CSI project has revealed many weaknesses of Japanese civil society, it was found that there are already CSOs working on those areas that need strengthening. Hence, those movements within civil society show that Japanese civil society is still progressing. However, there remain concerns about financial sustainability or lack of human capital. Additionally, there are CSOs that violate the law. Hence, Japanese civil society today can be said to be very much standing at a crossroads, and it is uncertain whether it will develop further or stagnate.

## APPENDICES

### ANNEX1. LIST OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Name	Organisation	Sector
Reiko Asano	Ohmi Network Centre	CSO
Makoto Imada	Institute for Civil Society Research	CSO
Yu Ishida	Akashi National College of Technology	Academia
Kaori Kuroda	CSO Network Japan	CSO
Masayo Kishida	Partnership Support Centre	CSO
Shiho Kato	Child-line Support Centre	CSO
Nobuko Kawashima	Doshisha University	Academia
Yoshiho Matsunaga	Osaka University of Commerce	Academia
Yuko Nishide	Tohoku University	Academia
Masahiro Okamoto	Kwansei Gakuin University	Academia
Yuka Saito	Seitoku University	Academia
Akira Sawamura	Niigata University	Academia
Kosuke Sato	Japan Research Institute	Business (Think Tank)
Junichi Takaba	Kansai NPO Alliance	CSO
Shunji Taga	National Association of Labour Banks	CSO
Yayoi Tanaka	National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation	Academia
Takaufumi Tanaka	Tokyo Gakugei University	Academia
Chikara Tsumura	Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ Trust Bank	Business
Yoji Yamahata	Yomiuri Shinbun	Media

### ANNEX2. SUMMARY OF CASE STUDIES

#### Case Study 1. Local community associations

Relevant Dimension: Civic Engagement

Author: Naoko Okuyama (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, Research Fellow of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science)

In this study, we attempt to grasp a picture of local community associations in terms of transformation and challenges of civic engagement, as well as institutional frameworks of civil society. Local community associations have functioned in maintaining and building the quality of local communities and their roles and presences are still influential and significant. Hypotheses set up in this case study are partially examined in literature reviews, studies from survey results and an interview with a key person. Local community associations can still be powerful in building local networking, partnerships with local governments, service provision and political participation. However, the emergence of new NPOs and socio-demographic changes may force the associations to reconsider their presence and the mode and shape of civic engagement in Japan may be transformed.

#### Case Study 2. Financial instability of CSOs in Japan

Relevant Dimension: Level of Organisation

Author: Naoto Yamauchi (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)  
Midori Matsushima (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)

In the CSI scores, the indicator of financial stability scored high at 96.5%, meaning 96.5% of CSOs in the Organisational Survey are said to have a sustainable financial base. However, in the regional focus group discussions, participants argued that financial sustainability is the most serious concern to many CSOs (Specified Nonprofit Activities Corporations (SNACs) in particular) in Japan. Hence, this case study was carried out to further clarify the financial sustainability of SNACs based on secondary data and focus group discussions as well as to

suggest ways to improve the situation in accordance with the types of activities of SNACs. This study demonstrated that the high score for financial sustainability in the CSI diamond has not captured the reality based on the data and findings from focus group discussions. The suggestions made in this study are that SNACs working in the fields of healthcare/social welfare, education/art/sport and environment should make an effort to increase individual/corporate contributions and SNACs should foster international cooperation which could lead to an increase in commercial activities. In addition, SNACs focusing on education/art/sport and environment should be aware of the downside of government funding and diversify their income sources.

### **Case Study 3. Accountability of CSOs: a case study of nonprofit organisations in Japan**

Relevant Dimension: Practice of Values

Author: Naoko Okuyama (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University, Research Fellow of the Japan Society for Promotion of Science)

This case study focuses on accountability from the perspectives of financial transparency and managerial assessment for nonprofit organisations, particularly SNACs, which have unique and challenging issues in terms of managerial quality, growth and practice of values. In this case study, we discuss whether this issue should be considered as an institutional challenge, as well as discussing the managerial development of nonprofit organisations.

### **Case Study 4. The image of civil society in the media**

Relevant Dimension: Perception of Impact

Author: Naoto Yamauchi (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)  
Midori Matsushima (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)  
Ayako Nakano (Digital Solution Lab, Mainichi Newspapers)  
Sawako Watari (Reporter, News Division, Mainichi Broadcasting System, Inc.)

Mass media has been recognised as an influential tool to shape public opinion. This case study was conducted to observe the image of civil society being reported in the mass media in Japan based on a method provided by CIVICUS. Four months of media survey using four national newspapers revealed that there were civil society related reports every day, and topics varied. Half of the articles appeared as news stories or factual reports. There were also notable numbers of reports on civil society activities in the opinion page, which shows that the newspaper coverage of the sector goes beyond factual description. In addition, the study showed that there were more positive reports than negative reports in general. However the reports on the front pages were more likely to depict civil society negatively, which may contribute to the negative image of civil society among the public. This case study was the first of its kind to assess the impact of civil society in Japan through daily newspaper observation. In the future, time comparisons and international comparative studies should be carried out to evaluate the impact and development of civil society in more detail.

### **Case Study 5. The relationships between trust and civic engagement**

Relevant Dimension: External Environment

Author: Naoto Yamauchi (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)  
Midori Matsushima (Osaka School of International Public Policy, Osaka University)

Despite a significantly high score for almost all sub-dimensions of the External Environment Dimension, one of the sub-dimensions, the indicator of trust, scored low. CIVICUS (2008:25) views the level of trust between people as a broad measurement of the social psychological climate for association and cooperation. This case study includes empirical analysis to examine the relationship between trust and civic engagement. We utilised data from the World Values Survey 2005 in Japan based on the hypothesis that there are positive

correlations between trust and civic engagement. The result of the analysis proved that people with higher generalised trust are more likely to become a member of both social and political CSOs. This result suggests the importance of creating general trust among the masses in order to strengthen Japanese civil society.

## **ANNEX3. SURVEY METHODOLOGIES**

### **Population Survey**

In Japan, the Population Survey was not conducted but the World Values Survey 2000 and 2005 were used instead. This was conducted by Dentsu Inc. in Japan, and data is available online (World Value Survey database Online).

### **Organisational Survey**

Due to budget and time constraints, the Organisational Survey was conducted through questionnaires in Japan. There were 85 respondents, accounting for 25% of distributed questionnaires. The distribution of fields of activities are below.

Type of organisations	Number of respondents
Traders or business association	1
Professional association (doctors, teachers, etc)	9
Trade union or labour union	5
Neighbourhood/ village committee	4
Religious or spiritual group	2
Cultural group or association (e.g. arts, music, theatre)	8
Co-operative, credit or savings group	2
Health group / Social service association (e.g. association for the disabled)	13
Youth group	4
Women's group	6
NGO/ civic group/ human rights organisation (e.g. Rotary Club, Red Cross, Amnesty International)	24
Environmental or conservational organisation	5
Other groups	2

As mentioned in the main text, the legal status of organisations was not distributed equally because 75% of the respondents are SNACs, which are newly established types of corporation characterised by civic organisations operating under citizen supervision. This high percentage of response from SNACs mostly affects the score for the Level of Organisation dimension.

### **External Perception Survey**

There were 27 respondents in the External Perception Survey, and the small sample size made it difficult to see whether the score for the Perceived Impact dimension is universal or not. Although the NCO strove to diversify the occupational backgrounds of respondents, it has to be noted that ones who participated in the survey know civil society well or at least have some interest towards civil society. Hence, public opinion may be different from the responses the NCO received.

Sector	Number of respondents
Executive branch of government	5
Private sector	9
Media	4
Academia	5
International governmental organisation	1
Others	3

## ANNEX 4. CSI INDICATOR MATRIX

Subdimension	Indicator	Name	Scores
<b>1) Dimension: Civic Engagement</b>			<b>44.5</b>
1.1		Extent of socially-based engagement	27.7
	1.1.1	Social membership 1	26.6
	1.1.2	Social volunteering 1	13.4
	1.1.3	Community engagement 1	43.1
1.2		Depth of socially-based engagement	33.9
	1.2.1	Social membership 2	17.1
	1.2.2	Social volunteering 2	26.2
	1.2.3	Community engagement 2	58.4
1.3		Diversity of socially-based engagement	78.6
	1.3.1	Diversity of socially-based engagement	78.6
1.4		Extent of political engagement	22.0
	1.4.1	Political membership 1	10.8
	1.4.2	Political volunteering 1	5.7
	1.4.3	Individual activism 1	49.5
1.5		Depth of political engagement	18.4
	1.5.1	Political membership 2	20.3
	1.5.2	Political volunteering 2	20.5
	1.5.3	Individual activism 2	14.4
1.6		Diversity of political engagement	86.3
	1.6.1	Diversity of political engagement	86.3
<b>2) Dimension: Level of organisation</b>			<b>62.3</b>
2.1		Internal governance	95.3
	2.1.1	Management	95.3
2.2		Infrastructure	35.4
	2.2.1	Support organizations	35.4
2.3		Sectoral communication	82.9
	2.3.1	Peer-to-peer communication 1	81.7
	2.3.2	Peer-to-peer communication 2	84.0
2.4		Human resources	44.0
	2.4.1	Sustainability of HR	44.0
2.5		Financial and technological resources	90.0
	2.5.1	Financial sustainability	83.5
	2.5.2	Technological resources	96.5
2.6		International linkages	26.4
	2.6.1	International linkages	26.4

<b>3) Dimension: Practice of Values</b>			<b>41.3</b>
3.1		Democratic decision-making governance	55.4
	3.1.1	Decision-making	55.4
3.2		Labour regulations	28.4
	3.2.1	Equal opportunities	37.7
	3.2.2	Members of labour unions	5.5
	3.2.3	Labour rights trainings	22.2
	3.2.4	Publicly available policy for labour standards	48.1
3.3		Code of conduct and transparency	61.0
	3.3.1	Publicly available code of conduct	42.9
	3.3.2	Transparency	79.0
3.4		Environmental standards	11.8
	3.4.1	Environmental standards	11.8
3.5		Perception of values in civil society as a whole	49.8
	3.5.1	Perceived non-violence	17.8
	3.5.2	Perceived internal democracy	92.1
	3.5.3	Perceived levels of corruption	2.8
	3.5.4	Perceived intolerance	27.8
	3.5.5	Perceived weight of intolerant groups	73.1
	3.5.6	Perceived promotion on non-violence and peace	85.0
<b>4) Dimension: Perception of Impact</b>			<b>55.2</b>
4.1		Responsiveness (internal perception)	72.8
	4.1.1	Impact on social concern 1	60.3
	4.1.2	Impact on social concern 2	85.3
4.2		Social Impact (internal perception)	70.4
	4.2.1	General social impact	75.6
	4.2.2	Social impact of own organisation	65.3
4.3		Policy Impact (internal perception)	46.9
	4.3.1	General policy impact	77.6
	4.3.2	Policy activity of own organisation	39.5
	4.3.3	Policy impact of own organisation	23.5
4.4		Responsiveness (external perception)	44.5
	4.4.1	Impact on social concern 1	14.8
	4.4.2	Impact on social concern 2	74.1
4.5		Social Impact (external perception)	76.9
	4.5.1	Social impact selected concerns	96.0
	4.5.2	Social impact general	57.7
4.6		Policy Impact (external perception)	54.9
	4.6.1	Policy impact specific fields 1-3	32.0
	4.6.2	Policy impact general	77.8
4.7		Impact of CS on attitudes	20.0
	4.7.1	Difference in trust between civil society members and non-members	18.0
	4.7.3	Difference in public spiritedness between civil society members and non-members	25.2
	4.7.4	Trust in civil society	16.8

5) Contextual Dimension: Environment			75.8
5.1		Socio-economic context	82.4
	5.1.1	Basic Capabilities Index	99.2
	5.1.2	Corruption	73.0
	5.1.3	Inequality	75.1
5.2		Socio-political context	79.2
	5.2.1	Political rights and freedoms	92.5
	5.2.2	Rule of law and personal freedoms	85.4
	5.2.3	Associational and organizational rights	83.3
	5.2.4	Experience of legal framework	58.6
	5.2.5	State effectiveness	76.4
5.3		Socio-cultural context	65.8
	5.3.1	Trust	39.1
	5.3.3	Public spiritedness	92.6

## ANNEX 5. DATA SOURCES FOR THE MAPPING OF JAPANESE CIVIL SOCIETY

Cooperatives/Groups	Data source	Year of data collected
Agricultural cooperatives	Japan National Agricultural Cooperatives (2010)	2010
Fishers cooperatives	Government Statistics Bureau (2010)	2010
Forest associations	Forestry Agency (2010)	2007
Small business associations	National Federation of Small Business Associations (2010)	2010
Consumer cooperatives	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2010a)	2010
Non-juridical organisations	Tsujinaka et al. (2003:88)	2000-2003
SNACs	Cabinet Office (2010)	2009
(ex) Public benefit corporations	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2009)	2009
Religious corporations	Agency of Cultural Affairs (2009)	2007
Social welfare corporations, private school corporations, relief and rehabilitation corporations	Ministry of Finance (2010)	2009-2010
Labour unions and professional associations	Tsujinaka et al. (2003:15)	2005-2007
Medical corporations	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2009)	2009

Note: Full reference is provided in bibliography

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