

Namibia – Civil Society Organisations Sustainability Index

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Graham Hopwood



Purpose of CSO Sustainability Index

- To create understanding of pressures on and dynamics of CSOs over time, in a particular country and across countries and regions
- Allows donor agencies to measure success of civil society programming and inform strategic planning
- Useful to capacity building service providers as a description of CSO capacity needs
- Helps advocacy organizations pinpoint and publicize issues in the legal/institutional environment that hinder CSOs' work
- Used by CSOs to advocate for funding for civil society





Background

- USAID-funded project implemented across 31 African countries
- FHI360 – prime implementer, oversees project
- ICNL (International Centre for Not-for-profit Law) – Primary editor, oversees report revision processes
- IPPR implementing partner for Namibia, holds panel of experts meeting, writes report





Methodology

- Implementing partner in consultation with FHI360 selects panel for their expertise in CSO sector's characteristics and sustainability issues.
- Panelists provide initial scores across seven 'dimensions of sustainability' on basis of developments and changes over the past year.
- Panel meets and goes through each dimension and agrees, by consensus, final scores
- IPPR writes report based on panel discussion and desk research
- Edited and revised by ICNL, USAID and experts on region in consultation with IPPR.
- Report ready to launch





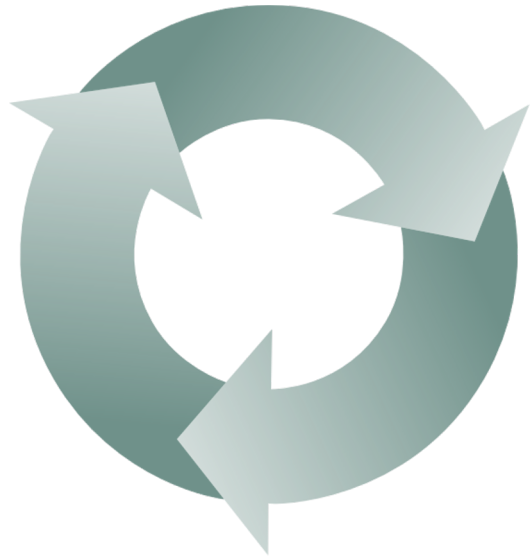
DEFINITION OF CSO

Civil society organizations are defined “broadly as any organizations, whether formal or informal, that are not part of the apparatus of government, that do not distribute profits to their directors or operators, that are self-governing, and in which participation is a matter of free choice. Both member-serving and public-serving organizations are included. Embraced within this definition, therefore, are private, not-for-profit health providers, schools, advocacy groups, social service agencies, anti-poverty groups, development agencies, professional associations, community-based organizations, unions, religious bodies, recreation organizations, cultural institutions, and many more.

--Toward an Enabling Legal Environment for Civil Society, Statement of the 16th Annual Johns Hopkins International Fellows in Philanthropy Conference, Nairobi, Kenya. The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Volume 8, Issue 1, November 2005



Civil Society Sustainability Index



- Legal Environment
- Organisational Capacity
- Financial Viability
 - Advocacy
- Service Provision
- Sectoral Infrastructure
- Public Image





Methodology

The CSOSI uses a seven-point scale (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7):

- 1 represents the highest level of sustainability - **Enhanced**
- 7 represents the lowest level of sustainability - **Impeded**

| Sustainability Enhanced | | Sustainability Evolving | | | Sustainability Impeded | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

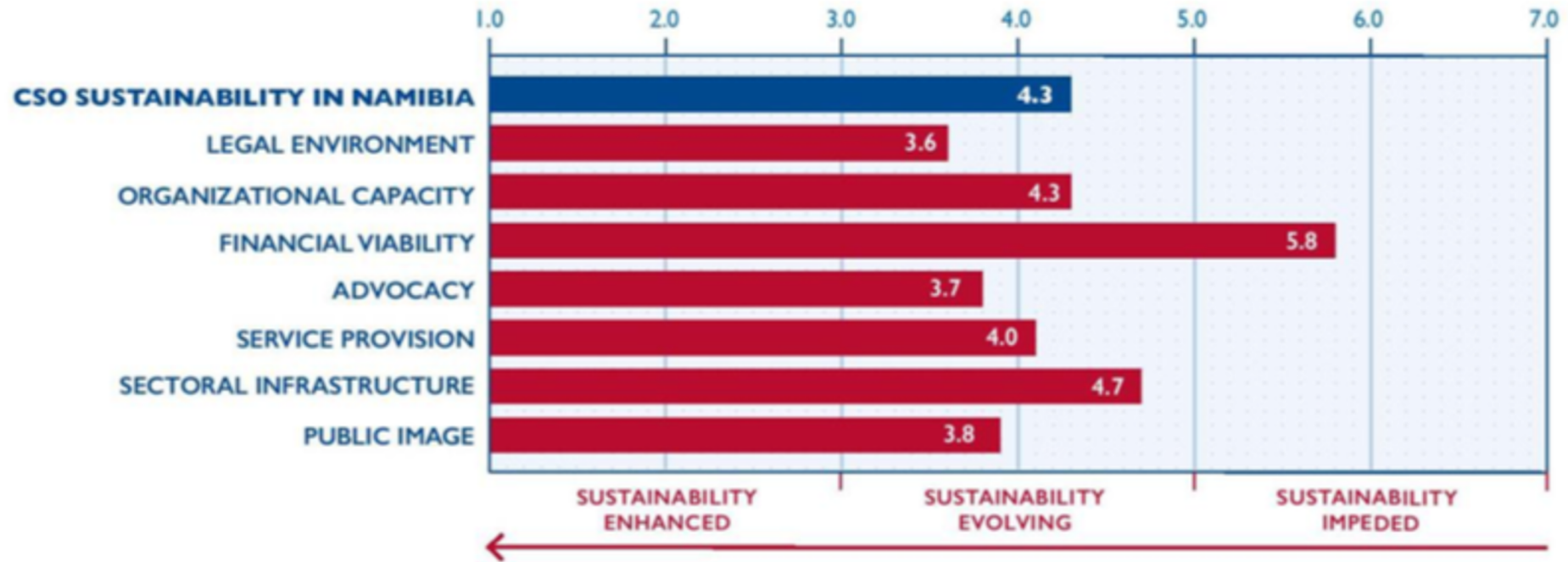
- Scoring from one year to the next revolves around incremental change
- .1 represents moderate change
- .2 represents significant change
- .3 or more represents a cataclysmic and often unexpected change





Overall CSO Sustainability

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.3





2019 in Context

1. 2019 was a turbulent year - ongoing economic recession, closely contested national elections, and a major corruption scandal
2. Drought led to state of emergency (May); 700 000 in need of food aid
3. Unemployment figures - 33 percent of the labour force and 46 percent of young people under 35 lacked jobs.
4. Economy shrank by 1 percent; public debt over 50% of GDP
5. Namibia maintained media freedom ranking – still plenty of civic space – is civil society able to use it?

2019



Legal Environment

Score stayed the same at 3.6

- Dispute over Research, Science and Technology Act - seen as placing draconian controls on research – remains unresolved.
- CSOs operating as trusts complain of arcane procedures and bureaucratic delays at Master of High Court
- Concerns about an initiative to regulate CSOs. Not clear who or what is driving it.
- No incident of outright interference or state harassment of CSOs or their work was reported.
- Govt still drafting legislation on taxing of non-profits.





Organisational Capacity

Score stayed the same at 4.3

- Many organisations operate with limited financial and human resources – constraining ability to plan ahead and maintain high standards of governance.
- Limited resources make it difficult for CSOs to meet donors' reporting requirements and complicated funding application procedures.
- With limited resources difficult for CSOs to secure office space and cover utility and communication costs.
- Very few options for stable, long-term core funding.





Financial Viability

Score stayed the same at 5.8.

- Limited core funding and short programme cycles. Has organisational impacts and human costs.
- Exact figures for foreign funding of CSO sector are hard to come by. Anecdotal evidence indicates improved funding for environmental sector.
- GRN funding of CSOs limited.
- Private sector mostly choose 'safe' options.
- Few alternatives for CSOs (philanthropy very limited; GRN not interested; private sector links weak; alternative models need to be explored – social enterprises?)





Advocacy

Score improved to 3.7

- Trend of public protests continues to develop – in 2019 GBV and corruption were the focus.
- Action on plastic waste and pressure to introduce levy on plastic bags.
- Consultations with government tend to be ad hoc.
- Some civil society representatives served on the Presidential Commission on Ancestral Land Rights.
- No visible progress on Access to Information in 2019.

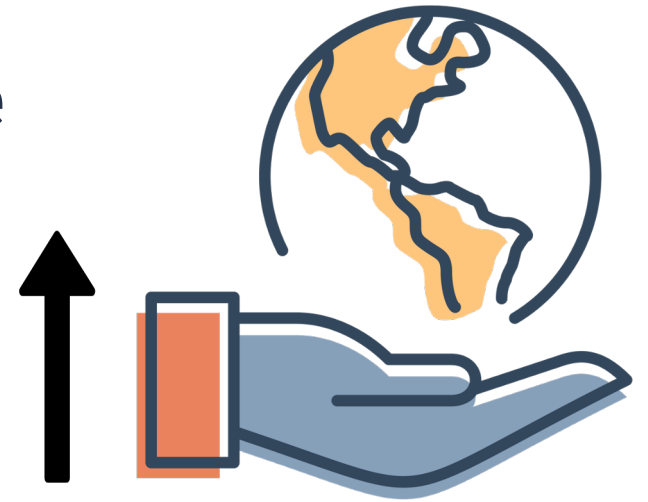




Service Provision

Improved to 4.0

- CSOs remained involved in service provision despite limited resources - services ranged from basic health care to psychosocial support, voter education, and capacity building.
- Generational change in managements of CSOs – making service provision more relevant - ‘younger, more vocal, media-savvy activists’.
- Government hardly acknowledged the work and efforts of civil society in 2019. At the same time, the government refrained from attacking organisations and activists outright, as has happened in previous years.





Sectoral Infrastructure

Score stayed the same at 4.7

- No dedicated resource centres to facilitate coordination and capacity building.
- The House of Democracy offers space to CSOs for meetings and consultations. Used to consult with the special rapporteur from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- Overall CSO sector lacked cohesion although coordination in sectors was effective.
- NID provided training to 20 CSOs on topics such as organizational ethics, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.





Public Image

Score improved to 3.8

- Wide range of media rely on civil society activists as experts and commentators.
- Reduction in government negativity about CSOs and their role.
- Although limited, more CSOs exploring multimedia options for communications and utilizing social media effectively.
- CSOs, social movements and individual activists working together on issues like corruption and GBV.





Global and Regional Trends

- Fundamental freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression backsliding across the world
- Twice as many people living in countries where civic freedoms are being violated: 40% of the world's population now live in repressed countries – In 2018 it was 19%. (Civicus, People Power Under Attack)
- COVID-19 has been used as an excuse to clampdown
- Civil society should be recognised as crucial partners in the struggle to build a better post-pandemic world.

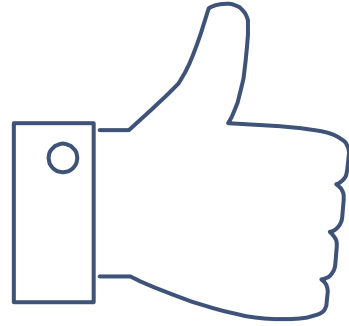




Conclusions

- Civil society needs to show why it should be taken seriously
- Need for coordination, information sharing, synergies
- Need to put case to donors, explore corporate social responsibility and other opportunities
- Utilise the civic space we have





THANKS!

Any questions?