# Civil Society

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# Crossroads

## Shifts, Challenges, Options?

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## Shifts, Challenges, Options?

Society for Participatory Research
in Asia (PRIA)

Community Development
Resource Association (CDRA)

PSO: Capacity Building
in Developing Countries

Knowledge is Power
PRIA

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENTAL PRACTICE
CDRA

PSO: capacity building in
developing countries

International NGO Training
and Research Centre (INTRAC)

EASUN: Centre for
Organizational Learning

Institute for Communication
and Development (ICD)

INTRAC
International NGO Training and Research Centre

EASUN

25 años
ICD

# *Preface*

It was April 2010 when several partners of PSO - EASUN (Tanzania), CDRA (South Africa), PRIA (India), INTRAC (UK), had met in its office in The Hague to discuss the challenges in capacity building of civil society. The conversations soon focused upon the changing nature of civil society itself. Our discussions were sufficiently disrupted through the volcanic eruptions in Iceland; we also noticed that similar civic eruptions were spreading around the world.

Over the next year, these conversations resulted in the development of a concrete proposal to work together to deepen our collective understanding of the changing nature of civil society, and its implications for capacity, around the world. The Civil Society @ Crossroads initiative was launched in July 2011 with PSO, INTRAC, EASUN, CDRA and PRIA (which acted as project anchor); ICD (Uruguay) was invited to join the collective to ensure that Latin America was covered too.

From the very beginning, three premises guided the work of this initiative.

➡ The shifting roles and challenges of civil society need to be captured through a series of stories;

➡ Inclusion of civil society in Europe and North America is as important as civil society in the southern countries;

➡ The process of enquiry must combine data collection, systematisation and reflection with key actors in those stories.

A set of research questions were used to focus the enquiry:

❖ *What are the roles, capacities, contributions and limitations of civil society in the changing local and global contexts?*

Within this overarching question, other sub-questions included:

➡ How do endogenous, informal, spontaneous, sporadic and emerging forms of civil society operate locally?

➡ What types of interactions do these informal formations have with more formally constituted actors (like NGOs)?

➡ What are the dynamics of interactions between civil society and political society at the national and sub-national levels?

➡ How does private business interact with and influence the local civil society? Where are the points of convergence, divergence and contestations?

➡ What is the nature of indigenous, local and sub-national civil society in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries? What resource and capacity challenges do they face today?

➡ What are the new challenges faced by civil society in emerging, middle-income societies? What is the impact of declining international assistance in these contexts? What patterns for resourcing civil society are evolving?

Over the past 18 months, regional focal institutions worked with a wide variety of local partners to identify and document the stories of civil society. Two kinds of narratives emerged from this. The first kind told the story of civil society in a country over a period of two to three decades; these included India, Cambodia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Netherlands, Russia, Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK). The second kind of narrative focused upon a particular issue around which a citizen movement or civil society actions were mobilised. These included the anti-corruption movement in India, the farmers' movement against land grab in Cambodia, the commuters struggle in Indonesia, the citizens' protest in Malawi and Uganda, the Occupy movement in UK, the citizens' movement in Greece, the student movement in Chile, the women's movement in Uruguay, the campaign for LGT rights in Argentina, 'roof over our heads' in Latin America and Makassar community actions in the Netherlands.

In addition to these twenty stories, documentation of indigenous civil society formations and dialogues at the country and regional levels were prepared, as briefly described in the Annexure.

Systematisation of comparative analysis was carried forward by the Crossroads Collective, with special inputs from Dr L Dave Brown. Over the next period, further dissemination of these findings is being carried out in several forms - films, cartoons, local language reflection materials and a special issue of journal Development in Practice. In addition, full texts of these materials are available in CD form, and on the websites of all the partners. We are grateful to PSO for its timely support to this initiative.

The Civil Society @ Crossroads is work-in-progress; as a collective, we plan to continue to expand the process of critical reflection with practitioners in civil society, as well as the donors and policy-makers. We invite you to join this endeavour.

**Rajesh Tandon**
November 2012

# *The Settings*

"We are not requesting a few more bucks […] but a much deeper and more systemic reform. [We seek] a change of paradigm, […] a change regarding the meaning of education." "We are not throwing a tantrum; we want to be part of the solutions." - Student leaders, Chile

"For local people, bulldozing the landscape is seen as erasing their history and disturbing social organisation and traditions." - Peter Leuprecht, 'Land concessions for economic purposes in Cambodia: A human rights perspective', November 2004

"Criticism of government ... began to be labelled (by the government) as counter-productive ... many organisations were in limbo, uncertain how to interact with a now legitimate and democratic State, and the people's voice in the body politic began to wane." – Civil Society leader, South Africa

"The social demand for the legalisation of abortion represents a debt of democracy with the women of Uruguay. We demand an abortion law that is coherent with the secular character of the Uruguayan State and respectful of the diverse beliefs and opinions that exist in a plural society." - Leaders of the women's movement, Uruguay

"... actually what is demanded by KRL Mania could be said ndhek-ndheka (very simple)… they only demand the improvement of service by fitting the Minimal Service Standard (SPM) and it does not cost much." - Budi Santoso: Commissioner of Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia

"… the government was not even willing to go by the will of Parliament. This gives rise to fundamental questions about the functioning of Indian democracy. Is this form of representative democracy allowing the will of the people to be reflected in policy and law-making …" - Bhushan P., The Saga of the Lokpal Bill, The Hindu, January 2, 2012

"I wanted to be a volunteer because I wanted to help others, but to volunteer has helped me to understand so many things..." – Volunteer of Un Techo para mi País, Argentina.

"Before December, we knew it already – no one was to be trusted, politics were corrupt, things were getting irreversibly worse all the time and there was nothing to do about it. But then we took to the streets, we found each other, and there was actually no need to read what other people wrote and do what other people had arranged to do and wait for others to think about what we want…" – Greek activist

"You can't evict an idea
Integrate, don't segregate
We are the 99 %
Grow your own community
Occupy Everywhere" – Occupy U.K. slogan

"… Malawians are now awake, watching every step the President and the Cabinet make; screaming loud if the President's convoy is too long, or if presidential trips are too frequent or if the President goes to New York with a 40 member entourage…." - The Weekend Nation of 29 September, 2012

The above ten statements are but a small sample of civil society voices, they are a sign of what citizens around the world are engaged in today. Such stories of citizens' actions can be heard, seen and noted in all societies, barrios, towns and villages. The contemporary era belongs to the citizens, their efforts, engagements and organisations. Today, there are numerous stories of civil society organising and mobilising to work towards a better life in all societies.

How has this come about? Why has this change happened? Why is it happening around the world? Is this the 'new' wave of civil society? How do the contemporary trajectories in civil society co-exist with their earlier manifestations?

This document attempts to provide narratives underlying these questions and their explanations; it emerged out of a year-long collective exploration, reflection and systematisation of the problematique "Civil Society @ Crossroads". It is an attempt to identify the choices at crossroads that citizens and their associations are experiencing at this juncture; it presents challenges of travelling on any of those roads from this juncture; and, it poses certain implications for practitioners and policy-makers alike in their effort to support and strengthen civil society.

# *Shifting Scenarios*

About two decades ago, a series of events began to dramatically change the world order. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 coincided with the return to democracy in Chile after Pinochet's dictatorship. The demise of the Soviet Union led to democratic movements and regimes in central Asia, Eastern and Central Europe. Around the world, epochal changes were taking place; the end of apartheid in South Africa and its new democratic president Nelson Mandela in 1994; the democratic regime in Cambodia in 1993; economic liberalisation in India in 1991; and the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in China in 1989. Three trends seemed to coalesce simultaneously around the world nearly two decades ago-- the rise of democracy, the globalisation of economy and the voice of civil society. Nearly 60 per cent of all countries adopted electoral democracy as a form of governance during these two decades. International trade and capital flows grew many fold linking markets globally. There was a resurgence of the concept and meaning of civil society in this period. In its new incarnation, civil society began to be heard, seen, talked and written about around the world (Florini, 2000; Hawken, 2007).

Since then, over the past two decades, a new world order seems to be unfolding. In this order, the fulcrum of economic activity has shifted away from Europe and North America to Asia; China has become the second largest economy with trillions of dollars in cash to invest around the world; private enterprise has gained greater respectability and has begun to enter the domains of social development. Post-war models of the welfare state are shifting and weakening, most dramatically in Europe and North America following severe financial crises since 2008. Democratic politics has been captured in many countries by wealth and business interests. While a number of these trends have been occurring for some time, they have now begun to be recognised. The dramatic economic growth of the past decades is now threatened by the limits of planetary resources, already reflected in food shortages, energy prices and climate changes. Citizens around the world are seeking a new social compact in which their individual and collective interests are not surrendered to the vagaries of power-seeking politics or profit-seeking markets.

In this period of two decades, civil society has also undergone dramatic shifts. In the early 1990s, the international aid system saw great possibility in increasing financial support to civil society (mostly assumed to be intermediary NGOs). This resulted in a rapid and enormous increase in the recognition of and funding to civil society strengthening programmes in the developing regions, including eastern and central Europe. Support to civil society was seen by international donors as a contribution to the processes of democratisation and liberalisation that could overcome poverty and marginalisation. International agencies and Official Development Assistance (ODA) from OECD countries focused on national and international development NGOs as

intermediaries to strengthen grass-roots citizen actions and associations (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2004; Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

These socio-economic and political arrangements have begun to unravel today. Economic globalisation is facing resistance from protectionism of national interests from the champions of globalisation (Europe and North America) and economic inequalities have deepened considerably within and across societies around the world (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Globalisation has produced an enormous concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a few global elite. Citizens in the OECD and Arab countries as well as their fellow citizens from Asia, Africa and Latin America are questioning this concentration of power and wealth and its unaccountable use around the world.

Citizens have become extremely distrustful of institutions and leaders, whether in government or business as the legitimacy and accountability of social and political institutions gets eroded (Globescan, 2012). Anarchy, authoritarianism and extremism are gaining wider currency as citizen disillusionment grows.

It is in these shifting scenarios that the nature of civil society is being interrogated in this initiative. As societies find themselves unable to choose among multiple roads to the future, the civil society sectors in many countries also find themselves at crossroads. In what ways does civil society experience these crossroads? What has changed for civil society over the last 20 years? How do those changes present new choices to existing and emerging civil society actors?

# Emerging Lessons

What do these stories of civil society suggest as plausible conclusions? What lessons can be drawn from a comparative analysis of these stories from 18 countries? In the following section, patterns emerging from the analysis of these stories are described and the dynamics underlying those patterns are explored.

1. *Citizen protests reflect the disconnect between their expectations and the performance of public authorities.*

During the past two decades, rapid economic growth and waves of democratisation have encouraged citizens to develop higher expectations for their standard of life and for government performance and accountability. International agencies increased their support to programmes of poverty eradication and democratic governance. The new generation of most NGO programmes in developing countries focused on livelihood promotion and improved basic services to the poor. Many professionally trained staff joined NGOs, both international and domestic. Their engagement with governments focused upon evidence based advocacy, led by professionals. The rise of "rights-based" approaches to development emphasised the importance of collectives of the marginalised to ask duty-bearers to live up to their responsibilities (Beauclerk, et al., 2011). Likewise, cooperation with market institutions was promoted through programmes such as micro-finance as a means for poverty alleviation; bankers and finance executives were invited to deliver these programmes to the poor. The dissemination of information and communications technology vastly increased citizen awareness of economic and political conditions in other countries, and particularly in the industrialised world. All these factors have raised citizen expectations about economic benefits and political freedoms (Knight et al., 2002). Rights, voice and dignity became part of everyday expectations of all citizens around the world and in many cases those expectations have not been met.

Most citizen movements documented here are some form of protest against certain public authorities. The Chilean students' movement began as a protest against the 'selling-off' of a private university that symbolised government failure to deliver universal access to quality education. The Traders Association in Uganda protested retroactive enforcement of ruinous new exchange rates and their inability to get any



response from the Finance Ministry. Greek citizens went to the streets to challenge the 'austerity' measures and politicians who were

more accountable to the European Union (EU) and banks than to their citizens (Badiou. et al., 2012). The perpetual lack of basic services triggered regular protests by citizens in South Africa. Fed-up with the huge and continuous stealing of public resources by politicians and public officials, citizens in India campaigned against corruption. The lack of attention to the miseries of daily commuters in Indonesia was the catalyst for the protests organised by railway users. Despite farmer dependence on their land for livelihood, government authorities connived with private contractors in land grabbing that resulted in Cambodian farmer protests and defiance (Ojendal & Lilja, 2006). Citizens' protest against authoritarian decisions by the President in Malawi expressed a lack of faith in his leadership.

How can these new citizen movements be understood? How can this almost universal phenomenon of citizen-centric civil society mobilisation be explained? At the heart of these citizen mobilisations is the critical disconnect between citizens and the public authorities. Several underlying forces may help explain this. *First,* the rapid expansion of democracy and market-oriented economic policies by the early 1990s created a widespread expectation amongst citizens that their life conditions would improve; stories from India, Greece, South Africa, Chile and UK indicate that the expectations for better livelihoods did not materialise for most.

*Second,* there was a visible and increasing concentration of power and wealth in the hands of the few local elites. Many powerful business interests were hand-in-glove with political leaders whose fortunes seemed to improve dramatically. Citizen protests in Malawi, Greece, India and UK are movements against such concentration of

power and wealth in democratically governed institutions. *Third,* in many instances, as in Uganda, India, Cambodia, Indonesia, Chile and Russia, elected representatives seem to have lost the capacity to voice the concerns of the citizens. Democratically elected leaders fail to act in support of citizens when the public authorities responsible for providing services remain unresponsive, ineffective, apathetic or mere spectators. In several instances, institutions designed to regulate private businesses fail to protect the citizens' interests. Public regulatory authorities themselves have been 'captured' by private interests so they do not perform their mandates. Democratically elected political leaders are seen to be self-serving, as opposed to serving the public interest (Weekend Nation, 2012). Citizens protest because democratic institutions do not deliver what is promised and expected; existing channels for grievance redressal and public accountability are dysfunctional. *Fourth,* the new information and communication technologies (ICT) have enormously increased information flow, awareness and solidarity amongst the citizens, especially about abuse by the elite (Sitapati, 2011). The new ICT has been an effective instrument of citizens' movements in Argentina, Indonesia, Malawi and Russia.

The sudden nature of such citizen eruptions does take public authorities by surprise. The moment that triggers such public protests on a vast scale may be unexpected, but it is preceded by years of frustrations and anger. Existing formal associations - political parties, unions, NGOs do not seem to provide collective voice to such angst. As a result, these sudden 'eruptions' by citizens may suggest a deeper disconnect within the larger

civil society. This phenomenon has been recently analysed as well (CIVICUS, 2012). However, a closer interrogation does reveal *distant complementarities in the face of proximate isolation;* historical processes of conscientisation and mobilisation by formal civil society organisations and NGOs contributed to 'building-up' citizen capacities and associations over time. This is particularly significant now since the contemporary citizen movements are not against dictatorships, but within the framework of democratic practices. These are not merely organisations of the proletariat and the working class, but include citizens from across the traditional divides - urban and rural, lower and middle classes, men and women, young and old, north and south. The disconnect and consequent citizen movements are phenomena happening in situations of apparent deprivation (as in Cambodia, India and Uganda) as well as in apparent prosperity (as in Chile, Russia, Greece and the UK).

2. *New civil society actors are organised differently than the NGOs, expressing alternative values of inclusion, participation and innovation.*

Over the past two decades, as international legitimacy and funding for NGOs increased, measures to improve their organisational efficiency and effectiveness also expanded. Various approaches to programme planning, implementation and monitoring were applied to development organisations. Restructuring financial management and governance of such NGOs also gained ascendancy; Organisation Development facilitators for non-profits became a new line of consultancy (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). However, as the size of such NGOs increased, most of the models of management and organisational effectiveness applied to NGOs were those borrowed liberally from the private corporate sector. Somewhere in this rush to ensure the enhanced capacity of NGOs to 'deliver large-scale projects' in multiple locations, perspectives related to the identity, values and missions of social change organisations got lost. Results-based management, log frames, and 'value for money' theories and tools began to dominate the leadership and management of most development organisations. While such corporate tools and approaches may well be applicable to formally structured, service-delivery oriented, medium/large size civil society organisations, their universal application to



all forms of civil society is questionable (van Til, 2000). Thus, a large segment of organisations in civil society receiving

external funding have become increasingly more formal and professionalised, even as they have grown in size and complexity.

It is in this context that the new civil society actors display different forms of organising. The Chilean student movement made *liberal use of the social media* to mobilise support for their causes; protests organised on the streets carried an almost intuitive creativity. A young woman became the media-visible face of the movement, yet leadership functions were performed by many who were active in formal structures like school councils. The 'Occupy' movements in North America and Europe defy traditional organising logic, as citizens of all persuasions - young and old, students and workers, housewives and professionals - gathered together to express the concerns of "the 99%." Occupy London was widely criticised for not adopting explicit goals for the movement, though its members agreed that it sought to raise awareness and encourage personal experiments in *"being the change"* they are seeking.

The case of commuters in Indonesia presents a similar dynamic. Fed up with poor services and inaction by the government regulator, the commuters began to organise protests spontaneously. While one person volunteered to maintain the website for communication, there was no attempt to formalise membership into an association, *or no formally anointed or agreed leadership.* Different commuters took responsibility for different functions, and their actions became the basis of legitimising their roles and contributions. The anti-corruption campaign in India had an old Gandhian - Anna Hazare, as the rallying call, but spontaneous assemblies of diverse sets of people took place in different locations countrywide.

Core groups of mobilisers emerged in these locations, but initially there was no attempt to formalise a mechanism for central coordination. The national campaign had an ever-expanding core group, and local organising efforts used a wide variety of social media.

The traders' protest in Uganda and the Malawi July uprising were likewise much less formally structured. In Uganda, the traders association played an initial role, but soon urban youth, professionals, workers and others joined in the movement; its leadership expanded gradually beyond the traders. The Malawi movement showed that *simultaneous citizens' actions in different parts* of the country could be organised without necessarily following a clear set of instructions from the 'centre'. In the Netherlands, the Makassar community relied largely on local volunteers to organise innovative community activities, though they also became acutely aware of the importance of "professionalization" as a way to manage the tensions among various community interests.

Another aspect of these new ways of organising civil society is the revival of cultural forms for mobilising citizens and maintaining a conversation. Street theatres, arts, mimicry, songs, poetry, music, from hip-hop to blues, folk to electronic, a wide spectrum of communication methods simultaneously maintained the discourse on the issues and entertained the public. The method of individual, home-based, yet collective actions has also gained considerable currency around the world, internet petitions, lighting candles or pot-banging at pre-determined times daily; such citizen actions do not require physical assemblies, though they express collective solidarity and demonstrate widespread support.

Most civil society actions continue to use *non-violent and peaceful* methods, though occasional violence on the streets cannot be overlooked. The most commonly used forms of action are fasting, hunger strikes, sit-ins, occupation of public spaces, acts of civil disobedience, and defiance of authorities. These types of citizen actions as the



language of civil society have now gained universal currency. From Greece to Russia, Ireland to UK, Malawi to South Africa, Chile to Argentina, Cambodia to Indonesia, the methods of mobilisation, organisation and protest popularised by Mahatma Gandhi are now commonplace. Such physical actions also get 'peppered-in' with more modern forms of social media, specially through mobile phones as they have become increasingly widespread.

What can explain such alternative ways of organising civil society? *Firstly,* most formal institutions, including NGOs, have become highly alienating hierarchies. In an effort to improve efficiency, human spontaneity has been marginalised (Papadakis, 2006). Alternative, more horizontal and spontaneous ways of collective functioning are being sought. *Secondly,* the young have a greater penchant for 'rejecting' the existing forms

and approaches. The new social media has been an effective tool in making such experimentation possible. *Thirdly,* previous efforts by civil society to promote self - help and empowerment of ordinary citizens over the long term have led to critiquing and questioning of established procedures, mechanisms and norms (Kilby, 2011).

As new ways of organising civil society are being invented, it is likely that many hybrid forms will emerge which combine the formal organisational and leadership approaches of NGOs with the informal ones innovated by the new citizen collectives. This integration may be especially relevant as citizens' movements attempt to secure more sustainable solutions to their concerns, and hence require organisational mechanisms of certain longevity and durability. Without such durable organizational arrangements, citizens' eruptions may not be able to secure sustainable solutions.

3. *Partnership of civil society with the old and new media both expands and regulates outreach and impacts.*

In the past, formal segments of civil society have been tentative about engaging with the media. In many countries, domestic media, newspapers and radio/television, were largely controlled by governments; open advocacy through such media channels was restricted or nonexistent. International media were somewhat more accessible, but mostly to international NGOs (INGOs) located in their headquarters. Most local civil society also lacked the capacity to engage with the media in an ongoing manner. Many NGOs remained largely focused on their work with local constituencies in remote rural areas; their work was of little interest to the

existing media, and most of them were hesitant about engaging with the media lest they receive 'undue and unfavourable' publicity. Civil society "partnerships with media" were rare or nonexistent.

The narratives from these stories suggest several conclusions about civil society partnerships with the media. *First,* the new forms of civil society actions, from mobilisation of members to devising and coordinating actions, have found new ICT very user-friendly. Horizontal forms of communication, leadership and solidarity become more feasible with the wide-spread access to the internet and mobile phones and other social media. The case of KRL Mania in Indonesia highlights the role of the moderator of Twitter, mailing list and Blackberry messenger as key in terms of managing communication in the virtual world; the moderator is an activist as well the administrator of the KRL website. In order to access government officials, the network of IBT, a technology institute, was also accessed by these activists (Nugroho, 2011).

This process of accessing new media, however, has not been limited to movements alone; formally structured NGOs have also begun to use ICT for a wide range of functions - public information and education, resource generation, membership engagement, and communication with policy-makers. Thus the *use of new social media, through the access to ICT,* has begun to shape the strategies of many civil society actors.

*Second,* increased *use of new media has not displaced the old media* - television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and so on. The

traditional print and electronic media has become far *more accessible in many societies around the world; there are many more independent and private TV channels, radio stations, newspapers* in vernacular languages, increasing their outreach substantially. This is particularly important since the general levels of literacy have also improved around the world in the past two decades.

*The old media has also become more accessible to civil society and civil society has become a matter of interest for the old media.* Many newspapers and TV channels now have reporters dedicated to access civil society views and



experiences. Thus, the Greek protests and Occupy movements were made globally known through the widespread use of old media. *The India against Corruption* campaign gained visibility through old international media and thus garnered support from the Indian diaspora worldwide. The Chilean student protests and HIV/AIDS campaigns of South Africa became known around the world through the spread and outreach of radio, television and newspapers.

Old media played a crucial *role in mobilising public opinion and channelising citizens' concerns*

in Malawi; the private print and electronic media gave ample coverage to the preparations for the demonstrations. Momentum was built through phone in programmes and genuine debates regarding the economic and governance realities on the ground. The State media propaganda and misinformation was challenged by the private media, and the State media lost credibility. Cell phones were used to coordinate citizen demonstrations that the government hoped to suppress. Most importantly, citizen journalists received training prior to the demonstrations on *'how to report the events around the demonstrations'.* Despite its heavy reliance on new media, the KRL Mania also used mass media to publicise its demands related to high tariffs and lack of safety for commuters.

Such *combinations of old and new media can enhance civil society outreach and increase pressure for reforms by public agencies.*

Several shifts in the past two decades can explain such new partnerships between civil society and the media. *First,* new media has expanded the outreach to distant others; the globalisation of ICT has expanded the spread of information in real time, thereby expanding solidarity and connectedness of civil society. *Second,* the expansion of independent and private channels in TV, radio and newspaper has created more competition and greater options for civil society, especially in contexts where the official media has restricted access to civil society questions about government policies and programmes. *Third,* the capacity of civil society to engage with old and new media has been gradually expanding, with some focused efforts in this regard in recent years. Many young civil society leaders pay much

more attention to media influence than previous generations.

Citizen mobilisation and expansion of discourse by civil society require the effective use of media in its various forms; however, the *shifting nature of today's media implies that it provides visibility and voice as well negativity and noise.*

Such a paradox happens for several reasons. The first and foremost reason is the shifting nature of the ownership of media as it has become increasingly commercialised and closely linked to market orientations. The anti-corruption movement in India had great support from TV news channels, especially the vernacular ones, in early 2011, but, in 2012, the same media began to ignore or de-legitimise the movement and its leadership when the campaign began to question the seriousness of the entire political class.

Similarly, the student movement in Chile faced a hostile media, which focused more on a beautiful leader and on the small number of violent masked anarchists than on the issues being raised or the large numbers of peaceful protesters. Journalists in Argentina supported the cause of sexual minorities though editors and the editorials of major newspapers did not. The media regularly criticised the 'Occupy' movements for absence of concrete goals and alternative solutions to unemployment and in equality. The global media continued to claim that the solution to the Greek crisis was more austerity measures, not alleviating the sufferings of its citizens.

In addition, the globalisation of media ownership and its inter-connectedness tends to differentiate between local, regional and global business interests. Thus, the global

media had different responses to citizens' actions in the northern and southern countries. The global media supported citizens' movements in India and Malawi, but they criticised citizen protests in Greece and the UK. Private media is a big business with global outreach; it has enormous financial and political influence (recent expose of Murdoch's media empire is just one example of this dynamic).

Social media and the Internet can also confuse and distort issues as 'unregulated access' regularly brings counter-voices as well; blogs can misinform as well as inform. The open access of social media is both its strength and its limitation; it is hard to know which interests are behind the 'blogosphere'. Recent attempts by many governments to control and regulate social media may actually reduce access and increase surveillance of civil society.

### 4. *Contracting resource bases are reshaping civil society roles and relationships with government and business sectors.*

The role of civil society organisations was expanded in many countries in the last half of the twentieth century. Many industrialised countries contracted out public services to civil society organisations as an alternative to State provision (Salamon, 1995). In developing countries, in the last 20 years, many aid agencies turned to NGOs and other civil society actors in their disillusionment with State failures to catalyse sustainable improvements (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). So, civil society actors became accustomed to the ready access to large international financial resources.

One of the consequences of the shifting global order is its impact on resourcing of civil society. In many developing countries, the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) began to decline and to shift in focus during the past decade. Countries like India, South Africa and Indonesia were seen to be graduating to middle income status, and were perceived to need less concessional or subsidised international aid. Zimbabwe's internal strife had begun to move ODA away from it. Most countries in Latin America, specially Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, had experienced the drying up of international aid a decade ago. Uganda and Malawi had enjoyed considerable international aid until recently, but the attention of the donor community is gradually shifting away to Ethiopia and Liberia. Reduced aid is now visible in Cambodia, since the donor community is getting more 'interested' in Myanmar. Aid is also being securitised, and shifting to conflict and post-conflict zones in the past decade.

As a consequence of this declining ODA, resources for civil society have been seriously affected. During the 1990s and early twenty first century, a large part of the increased ODA flowed into the formal, intermediate segment of civil society, especially INGOs located in OECD countries. Most of these international resources to INGOs and their domestic partners were focused on service-delivery to the poor, research and advocacy for pro-poor policies and programmes, and capacity development of local actors. The direct channels of bilateral and multi-lateral agencies as well as the indirect channel of 'pass-through' funding via northern-based INGOs were deployed to this end. With declining ODA now, many intermediate civil society organisations and NGOs in countries like India, Indonesia and South Africa are facing a serious resource crunch.

Several consequences of this financial crunch are emerging. *First,* flexible funding for independent actions of civil society organisations, which was possible largely through international resources earlier, has become increasingly scarce in these contexts. *Second,* many NGOs have begun to find new ways of mobilising resources domestically and internationally. *Some* NGOs have become actively involved in micro finance and social enterprise streams. This market-linked approach has forced these NGOs to adopt market based principles to organise themselves. Other NGOs contract with governments for service-delivery. Government funds are readily available in countries like India for this purpose and similar contracts are now being explored in countries like South Africa, Indonesia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Uganda. However, exclusive reliance on government funding for providing basic services restricts civil society organisations to working within the frameworks of government agencies providing such services (like health, education, water and sanitation) or the modalities of for-profit providers who are active in basic service delivery activities.

*Third,* with growing wealth in these southern countries, *private philanthropy* is also gaining momentum; most of its resources are presently directed at service delivery towards the poor, weak, disabled, young or elderly populations. The new trend of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), largely fuelled by global competition in the late 1990s, is encouraging companies to contribute towards charitable activities, focused mostly on improving relations with business-relevant communities such as production locations (plants and mines), worker residences, or customer locations.

Therefore, the formally organised, intermediate segment of civil society in southern countries is facing serious choices about their resource base and the activities required to secure it. Shifts in resource flows have more sharply defined the *differentiation between the roles of civil society.* Those engaged in service-delivery find it difficult to undertake advocacy; those following the social entrepreneurship model find themselves ignoring the non-market aspects of their societal contributions.

The three streams of resources for intermediate civil society actors seem to be each linked to specific roles; funding from governments for service-delivery; funding from corporates for social enterprises; funding from philanthropists for service-delivery or social entrepreneurships. The critical shift is that contracting resource base is restricting civil society organisations to service delivery and social enterprise functions. Community mobilisation and awareness generation and independent advocacy for reforming democratic governance do not seem to have much resource support in these countries.

It is a matter of time, say, five more years before these trends begin to seriously affect civil society in countries like Uganda, Malawi and Cambodia as well. What can be done to prepare for that eventuality?

The shifting scenario of resources to civil society presents another trajectory in the OECD countries. In European countries like the Netherlands and the UK, there was a rich historical tradition of supporting charity, largely through organisations originally affiliated to churches. The 20th century was marked by shifting relationships between the State and civil society during the emergence

of the welfare state. The provision of social welfare services was taken over by the State agencies that funded civil society to provide the same. The late 1990s saw the rise of the Compacts in UK and a change from statutory unconditional grants to contracting for NGO services (Casey, 2010).

In the Netherlands, civil society development and relations with the State have mainly been shaped through the process of "pillarisation" initiated in the mid-19th century by the government as a way of solving tensions in the "land of minorities". This segmentation of society led to a framework in which civil society was shaped and ordered separately in so-called "pillars". Each pillar had its own organisations, political parties, churches, schools, newspapers, trade-unions, and sport associations, subsidised by the state. Although pillarisationas a dominant model for organising society (and civil society) in the Netherlands has slowly disappeared, civil society organisations were mainly sustained through subsidies from the State until a few years ago. This applied equally to domestic civil society actors as well as to INGOs (Hupe & Meijs, 2000).

However, things began to change in the twenty-first century due to a variety of reasons. First, the neo-liberal approach to social policy began to influence the European governments. The principle of self-funding by beneficiaries began to gain ascendancy in domestic programmes. In UK, the 'third way' was seen as a blend between the public and the private financing of social welfare. Its latest manifestation is the 'big society' of the conservatives in government today (Alcock, 2010). Second, partnership with civil society has gradually shifted to contracting and tendering, where market

mechanisms are used to allocate scarce public resources to service delivery by non-profits (Donnelly-Cox & Cannon, 2010). Non-profits that contract for service delivery in UK, Ireland and Netherlands are now large corporations and their organisations are operating on for-profit market approaches of competition, professionalism, efficiency and value-for-money.

*Third,* the financial crisis and subsequent recession has further squeezed resources for civil society in many European countries. As unemployment rose, as social welfare services were cut and as large-scale austerity measures were introduced, more questions are being asked about government funding for domestic and international civil society. *Fourth,* the recession in Europe has led to further questioning by politicians and the public of the validity, meaning and ethics of overseas aid. That critique is specially focused on those countries that have shown rapid economic growth in the past decade and it has led to further reduction of international aid. Many INGOs based in Europe, especially in Ireland and Netherlands, have experienced significant contraction in their resources for overseas programmes, both from public and private sources. *Fifth,* declining overseas aid budgets have created further pressures on INGOs to align their programmes according to national self-interests defined by their foreign ministries, in a few sub-Saharan countries (and now Myanmar and Arab countries are being prioritised).

These trends present significant *choice-points for civil society in Europe* as well. In the Netherlands, most organisations have reacted by seeking other ways of accessing public funding to continue their activities. Others

have attempted to realign themselves in order to draw greater support from within their own society. Service delivery non-profits in the Netherlands have been less affected; in fact, financing of some service delivery non-profits has increased, while funding has been cut for those working on social causes, solidarity issues (such as international development), advocacy, and promoting diversity (Schulpen, 2006).

From the above, it appears that the formally organised intermediate *NGOs are at serious crossroads in view of the shifting resource base in the south and the north.* That segment of civil society which organises its work through volunteers and personal donations is less affected. *Others have to choose between publicly funded service delivery routes of contracts, or market-linked social enterprise routes like micro finance, or a substantial reduction in their budgets and activities.* These choices define the functions and roles of civil society more sharply today than in the past decades.

5. *Political space for civil society and its relations with political society are simultaneously contracting and expanding*

Around two decades ago, civil society regained public presence as a consequence of democratic upsurges in many parts of the world (Huntington, 1992). As new democratic governments began to get institutionalised, citizens began to demand their rights from them. Some civil society actors helped overthrow those prior authoritarian regimes. Later, they were active in pro-poor advocacy campaigns to realise policies and programmes that address poverty and exclusion in their societies. Many INGOs began to support such advocacy efforts by civil society; many UN

conferences of the 1990s created opportunities for global solidarity amongst civil society actors in the north and south, east and west. Major international campaigns, the anti-debt Jubilee campaign for example, made the presence of civil society more visible in the global arenas and institutions (Florini, 2000; Fox & Brown, 1998).

In recent years, political society, elected representatives, political parties, public officials, have challenged this growing influence of civil society nationally and trans-nationally by questioning its legitimacy and
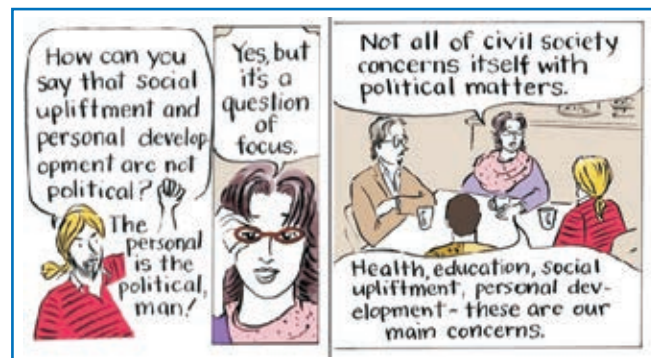


accountability as a participant in public policy and decision - making. The stories from this initiative suggest that relations between civil society and political society have become increasingly complex, and depend very much on the kinds of roles that civil society plays in a given context over time. There is now a very wide span of such engagements between them - 'constructive engagement', 'mutual influence', 'mutual castigating and political opposition' and 'co-option'. How are these relationships evolving now?

Several experiences provide examples of *changing relationships between social movements and the political system.* For the first time in

recent history, a large-scale social movement in Chile (the student mobilisation for education reforms) was not led by any political party. In fact, the political parties were taken aback at the intensity of citizens' actions. Likewise, the anti-corruption movement in India 'surprised' political parties, some of whom attempted to join in the movement after successful citizen mobilisation had occurred. The 'Occupy' movements in USA and UK took most political parties by surprise. The continued protests by citizens demanding proper treatment for HIV/AIDS had surprised the ruling ANC leadership in South Africa. The women's movement in Uruguay built alliances with political parties. In Argentina, support for equal marriage and gender identity laws grew so fast that even the leaders of the movement were astonished at the speed of the fundamental changes in social attitudes and legislative support. In recent years, therefore, formal political systems - political parties, politicians, government officials, politburos and parliaments - have been many a times sidelined by intense citizen actions. New civil society movements have begun to define the issues and mobilise the public in ways that may seem to undermine the legitimacy of existing political actors (as is clear in respect of issues of environment, women's rights, child rights, rights of indigenous communities over natural resources).

However, civil society also engages constructively with political society sometimes in order to ensure that its concerns, priorities and agendas are understood and acted upon by the formal political system

*Firstly,* constructive engagement with the formal political system occurs when civil



society performs service delivery functions. In several countries, it serves to complement the roles of the government by organising and mobilising the community to access their rights and claim services. This is as widespread in Europe and USA as it is in the southern countries. One of the concerns on *this crossroad of service delivery* is to maintain an independent identity and not be seen as a mere extension of a government agency or department.

*Secondly,* many southern countries (like India, South Africa, Uganda, Indonesia and Cambodia) are experimenting with decentralisation of political authority through some form of democratic local governance institutions; the sub-national devolution to Welsh and Scottish Parliaments in UK is a similar phenomenon. Although these countries are at different stages of decentralisation, a common ground for civil society engagement with political society has been to strengthen local governance institutions. In the last decade, many civil society organisations have provided training and capacity building support to local governance institutions (Tandon, 2011). The transfer of knowledge and practices of civil society in participatory processes and expertise in participatory planning and budgeting, for example, has been appreciated by the political system.

*Thirdly,* many governments invite civil society to contribute to the programme planning, policy-making and monitoring activities of government agencies and ministries; civil society 'experts' serve on many official committees and institutions now. The space for civil society's contributions to development policy and programming has distinctively increased, as many political leaders and government officials recognise their considerable practical knowledge and professional expertise. This is increasingly happening in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, India, South Africa, Uganda and Indonesia now. Similar trends exist in Europe as well.

However, the relationship between civil society and political society can also turn hostile and contentious, thereby *shrinking* political space. First, such hostility occurs when civil society appears to be acting as a 'political opposition'. When citizen movements challenge government performance in Chile and India, when miners strike against national wage policies in South Africa, when farmers resist government-aided 'land grabs' in Cambodia, when traders call for citizen action in Uganda against the Central Bank's foreign exchange policy - political leaders perceive this as a threat to their position, authority and legitimacy. Similar contestations are taking place in Greece, Russia and UK when civil society actions challenge the policies of the ruling elite in governments.

Second, in recent years, the issue of corruption and accountability in the public sphere, amongst politicians and officials and sometimes also involving 'crony' capitalists capturing natural resources at throwaway prices, has caught the imagination of citizens

world wide. Civil society actions expose the corruption of wealthy and powerful actors through information disclosure, media campaigns, public protests and legal actions. Such civil society actions are particularly critical of the political class, and hence are fiercely resisted and countered by the latter. The intensity of hostility increases many fold if these civil society actors are funded through international sources (as in Russia and India recently).

*Third,* many educated urban middle class youth and professionals are joining these new citizen movements, whether they are students in Chile or in India, commuters in Indonesia or traders in Uganda. The issues of corruption and lack of accountability cut across all categories of citizens, so the political class has become increasingly nervous. Most previous civil society actions focused on the issues of the poor, but this new generation of issues engages a much broader set of citizens, commuters, traders, university students and LGBT populations, for example. The sense of insecurity amongst the political society has been heightened by the activism of middle class citizens.

In response to these threats, the political system has maligned, harassed, intimidated and threatened civil society activists and organisations seen to be instigating such movements. For example, the Indian government and political parties have been undermining the India Against Corruption campaign and its leaders; Cambodian security agencies are harassing NGOs which are providing legal aid to farmers' associations; Putin's government is restricting international funding of Russian NGOs that challenge his policies; and ANC leaders in South Africa are suppressing awkward

questions by 'unleashing' party workers to protest. Attempts to silence such critiques, and to use the State security apparatus to intimidate activists, has become a common posture of the political class in the face of civil society demands for accountability.

Thus, political space for autonomous and independent civil society voice and action seems to be both expanding and contracting, almost simultaneously. The widespread distrust of citizens towards formal political authority, institutions and leaders is often mobilised by civil society in many countries today. The formal political system (with a capital P) is being thus challenged by the informal political activity of civil society (with a small p); the politics of these citizen actions today is counter-factual to the politics of the political class and formal political institutions.

Civil society, at many crossroads, needs to be *able to bridge these two worlds* in ways that maintain its public sphere of autonomy at the same time that it influences and holds accountable the formal political society.

6. *Blurring north-south boundaries call for reassessing civil society roles and realigning their relationships within and outside their countries.*

Historically, domestic civil society organisations in both the north and south focused on issues of poverty, malnutrition, education and health care in their own societies; they provided services to the poor and the marginalised, and sometimes partnered with their governments to deliver programmes. International NGOs, mostly based in Europe and North America, used resources from their societies and governments to support the local work of southern NGOs (Lindenberg & Bryant, 2001). Few northern NGOs working overseas recognised the work of local civil society in their own countries, or explored connections between their domestic contexts in the north and poverty in the south.

Now, the blurring of distinctions between north and south is having several new impacts on civil society. In countries like Chile, Argentina, India, South Africa and Indonesia, much of the work of civil society has historically focused on issues that affect people within the country. However, these countries have also begun to play an important role in the global arena; India, Brazil and South Africa are active members of new formations like IBSA and BRICS. Together with Mexico and Indonesia, they are now part of the global governance mechanism of G20. The governments of these countries have important roles on matters affecting the global governance of trans-national issues like reforms of the financial sector, crisis in fuel and food, climate change, arms trade, and so on. In addition, private businesses from these countries are now playing very aggressive roles in investments and related commercial activities throughout the world.

Many a times, the policies and practices of these governments and businesses in international arenas are systematically different from their domestic policies. They exploit resources and labour in pursuit of markets and profits, without bothering about local communities or the sustainability of their interventions. The democratic ethos, practices and policies established in these countries over decades of struggles by civil society are not necessarily the basis of their trans-national positions, policies or practices.

As a result, the indigenous, domestic civil society in these southern countries is facing several dilemmas and is at crossroads. *First,* most of the civil society in these countries has been so domestically focused that it pays little attention to the trans-national power and influence being exercised by their governments and businesses. They do not understand why their governments are buying more shares in the IMF and the World Bank (WB). They do not understand how their domestic economy and employment benefit from exploitative investments in markets abroad and exports of goods, services, capital and labour.

*Second,* much of civil society in these countries is caught in the 'bind' between perceived national interests (as articulated by their governments and businesses) and the values and principles established in global covenants and discourses. If their governments do not agree to binding obligations on emission control to reduce climate change, they are not sure what position to take. For example, should they support the continued use of oil, coal and nuclear energy necessary to sustain high rates of economic growth and hence increase in per capita incomes of their own societies, even if it contributes to global warming? Likewise, if their businesses 'win' contracts and investment opportunities for harvesting natural resources that can be expected to degrade environments and displace communities, they are confused as to whether they should protest against such trans-national practices as they do in domestic cases.

*Third,* civil society in these countries is unable to access adequate information of what happens in other societies as a consequence of the investments and policies of their own governments and businesses abroad. Public disclosure of such information through Parliaments or media is rather rare in countries like India and South Africa; mechanisms for accessing such information are non-existent or non-operational. Sufficiently critical analysis of such policies and practices from a global humanitarian perspective is also not available. Some such



studies are emanating from research centres or INGOs in the 'north,' but political and business classes in 'southern' countries tend to label all such critique as 'motivated by foreign hand' to derail their economic growth .

Yet, opportunities for sharing the innovations and experiences of civil society from such countries with those of other developing countries are immense. Many of the practices evolved by civil society in Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, India, or Indonesia are more contextually resonant and appropriate to their counterparts from countries like Cambodia, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Nigeria, Egypt, Jordan and Venezuela. Yet, the current arrangements of funding by governments or private initiatives from OECD as well as other countries do not support 'south-south cooperation' in practice.

As a result of the above, the civil society in these emerging countries faces confusions, dilemmas and choices @ Crossroads.

Another manifestation of this change in the blurring of the boundaries between the north and south is experienced by civil societies in Europe and North America. Many 'northern' NGOs focused on supporting development projects in 'developing' countries of the south  know more about civil society in those developing countries than their own 'domestic' civil society. In fact, in countries like UK, USA, and Netherlands, internationally focused NGOs have had limited understanding of, and connections with, their own domestic contexts.

However, the above trends are facilitating those connections. *Firstly,* there is a new sense of solidarity emerging between civil societies in the north and south. In North America, the 'Occupy' movements since September 2011 have raised the issue of income inequality that allocates most of the benefits of economic growth to one per cent of the population, while the 99 per cent divides a shrinking portion. Such focused attention to the growing inequalities in USA, Canada and UK by civil society of these countries is a recent phenomenon, partly because inequality has escalated so steeply in the last few decades. The activists of these movements in Europe are learning about the critiques of WB/IMF policies of structural adjustment and neo-liberal Washington consensus, which was very common amongst civil society actors in southern societies for the past two decades. These critiques have been voiced in World Social Forum (for example) since 2000. There is now emerging a 'new' sense of solidarity amongst domestic civil society of Europe and

North America with civil society in the 'developing south' as it becomes clear that global elite around the world have shared interests, close networks, and enormous influence over national and international political and economic decision-making institutions and authorities.

*Secondly,* civil society in the OECD countries is beginning to examine 'domestic' policies and practices of their own governments and businesses as they adversely affect their own people and those around the world. The Debt and Development Coalition Ireland (DDCI) was launched to campaign for debt and tax justice issues in the global south. After the economic crisis hit Ireland in 2008, DDCI has begun to focus its attention on domestic debt in Ireland. The tactics learnt earlier during international campaigns in Latin America and Asia, are now being deployed in Ireland. In the Netherlands, some INGOs have brought in the practice of 'participatory budgeting' to their local governments evolved from Brazilian and Indian civil society experiences. The practices of community led monitoring of basic services and participatory urban planning, pioneered and practiced in developing countries, are now being deployed in the UK. Practices and innovations in micro-finance, developed in South Asia and Latin America, have now been adapted for local use in North America.

As NGOs in North America and Europe begin to share civil society practices and expertise developed in the 'south' within their own societies, they find that policies and mechanisms for resourcing such efforts are a major constraint in their own countries, as well as in regional and global bodies like EU. They face new dilemmas as they attempt

to 'bring in' such innovations to their own societies now, since they had been financed to 'export' European innovations to these developing countries all these past decades.

7. *Measuring the impacts of civil society actions entails expanded definition of success over the longer term.*

As has been described earlier, civil society focusing on service-delivery through large non-profit organisations which access donor resources has been driving results-based, quantifiable definitions of success. As public resources for aid and social welfare decline, there is increasing pressure to show visible results and "value for money" in the short term. Thus, in the everyday work of a formally organised intermediate civil society actor, success is defined in terms of formally stated project goals, results and outcomes. The indicators and means of measurement are neatly codified in "log-frames" approved by donors. Such procedures are now increasingly used by national governments and private philanthropists in southern countries too. Such short-term, project-focused and quantifiable measures of success focus attention on immediate, concrete results, but they may distract attention and resources from larger values and systemic



changes that lie at the heart of civil society missions (Ebrahim & Rangan, 2010).

In this initiative, civil society aimed to achieve many kinds of success over a longer span of time. *First,* success involved delivering specific benefits to particular communities facing a specific socio-economic problem. For example, the civil society actions to 'build roof over our heads' in Latin America aimed to reach out to all homeless families, even though it began with a few households in Chile. Likewise, Indonesian commuters focused their efforts on improving the service and safety standards of the railways. *Second,* civil society action to change government policy or legislation defines success in more general and the longer term. The campaign to legislate abortion in Uruguay or to give legal equality to sexual minorities in Argentina or the Lok Pal Bill in India to punish the corrupt are examples of larger scale and long term definitions of success. *Third,* civil society initiatives that resist the policies of elected governments in Uganda, Greece, Ireland, Cambodia and UK may need to define success in terms of initiatives that promote active citizenship and democratic accountability. *Fourth,* long term changes in attitudes, norms and visions of societies and institutions have also been the focus of many civil society actions. Such campaigns may seek to redefine the meanings of public goods or institutional priorities. For example, the student movement in Chile focused on the importance of more equal educational opportunities; the farmer organisations in Cambodia emphasised the value of land to peasants and the importance of controlling land grabs; and the concern in Zimbabwe was reconciliation and peace-building in a

country beset by decades of conflict and exploitation. *Fifth,* civil society's success may also be measured in terms of enabling citizen expression of and innovation for important values that are not fulfilled by existing institutions of society. The Occupy movements and the Greek citizen eruptions gave citizens opportunities to reinvent participatory decision making and mutual education initiatives. The Malawi protests allowed citizens to express their dissatisfaction with the President's lapse into corrupt practices; civil society in Russia is increasingly active as a vehicle for citizens' expression of concerns about their lives. In measuring the success of such transformative



missions of civil society, the achievement of concrete and measurable goals may be less important than the provision of opportunities for citizen expression, experiment and participation in shaping their lives.

It is useful to understand how and why such expansive meanings of success are emerging. At *the heart* of the long term meanings of successful impacts is the growing recognition that countervailing power is required to engage the growing concentration of wealth and power within and across societies. Such countervailing power can be most easily

exercised where political space is available; there are some contexts where political space is shrinking, as demonstrated by the experiences in Russia or Zimbabwe (Javeline & Lindemann-Komarova, 2010; Sachikonye, 2012). *A second* major factor underlying such expansive interpretations of success is the growing opportunities for distant solidarities and coordinated action through the new ICT and social media. Fast and interactive communication has enabled various civil society efforts to connect with and learn from local, national and international experiences. These linkages fuel citizen awareness and activity at a pace that frightens many authorities. *Third,* there is now emerging evidence that 'inclusive institutions' serve the long term interests of economic development much better than those which are monopolised by a few elite. The broad-based citizen participation and influence sought by civil society actors can enable the economic innovation and productivity required for long term prosperity. So expanding civil society definitions of success to include building inclusive and accountable institutions can shape political and economic activity that expands the resources available to the society as a whole.

In this sense expanding the meanings of civil society's successful efforts may contribute to sustainable development in the long haul.

Measuring the success of civil society initiatives may require understanding society itself over a period of time; attempts to narrowly quantify short-term outcomes may be useful for some purposes, but assessment is also needed in the context of macro- and long-term trajectories of societal choices at various crossroads.

# *Implications of Crossroads*

The lessons emerging from this process of systematisation resonate with developments in civil society in other countries. The Arab Spring raised similar issues and dynamics in several countries in the region, as the Occupy movements in many OECD countries challenged the growing concentrations of economic wealth and political power in the hands of the one per cent. New citizen actions are emerging by the thousands to respond to local corruption and unaccountable governance in China. Political space for civil society and active citizenship is expanding in Myanmar, and youth movements in Senegal and Canada look similar to the Chilean student movement. It may well be a period of human history that requires new ways of understanding and working with civil society. This Section presents some implications of these findings for policy-makers and practitioners.

## For Practitioners

Civil society practitioners include a wide range of actors. Some practitioners belong to formally structured intermediary NGOs; others are a part of informal associations of citizens; many are concerned with transforming and improving the conditions of fellow citizens and their environment.

➡ *Citizen mobilisation, organisation and conscientisation needs renewed attention.*

Civil society rests on active citizenship, aware, organised and vocal. Civil society's contribution to the conscientisation of citizens has been gradually slowing down in many countries. The role of numerous intermediary, formally structured NGOs, trade unions, cooperatives, church bodies, feminist groups and study circles as vehicles for enhancing the political and social awareness of citizens has declined in recent years. As societies reach crossroads, aware and active citizenship alone can ensure equity, justice and peace.

➡ *Formally organised civil society actors need to redefine their identity* and mission in relation to citizenship and democracy.

The crossroads for the formally organised segment of civil society is to re-examine its larger purposes and missions in society today; its identity as a civil society actor is closely linked to that mission and its contemporary interpretation. There is a need to distinguish value and mission based identities from those of non-profit service contractors that enable governments to provide basic services. Likewise, there is a need to distinguish itself from those social enterprises that depend on resources from market transactions. Redefining the identity of intermediary NGO actors as value based actors independent of the State and the market has become imperative in articulating the real 'value-added' of civil society.

➡ *New forms of resource mobilisations are imperative for formal civil society organisations.*

There is an urgent need to find ways to expand the resource base in ways that enables civil society to maintain and pursue

its independent mandate. A large segment of this resource base has to be linked to the energy, capacity and creativity of citizens themselves. Civil societies need more cogent public education activities to promote their value-additions as independent actors promoting active citizenship. The lessons from European civil society in transitioning from social welfare systems may be particularly relevant for other countries in the context of their changing political economies.

➡ *Civil society practitioners need enhanced capacities to operate in ambiguity, uncertainty and chaos*

Civil societies need capacities to improve communications, interaction and partnership with a wide range of other actors. The capacity to use the tools of old and new media are critical for public education and critique. The capacity to build bridges with dissimilar others is critical to mobilising information and resources for the successful solving of complex problems. The capacity to mobilise energies of youth and other volunteers is central to mobilising resources in a world of scarcity. New ways of exercising leadership in civil society will be critical to respond to new expectations. In these times of uncertainty, ambiguity and chaos, civil society leadership has to be equipped to carry out missions, to build partnerships, to mobilise resources, and to engage effectively with new citizen movements critical to achieving shared values.

➡ *There is an urgent need to promote experimentation and innovation in ways of organising societies.*

The current model of economic development and political governance requires serious rethinking. Neo-liberal, market-driven, globalisation approaches to economic development have created serious problems of inequality, unemployment and recession in the northern countries; rapid economic growth in the new emerging economies is giving rise to similar problems. Economic growth already threatens the planetary ecology and sustainability of the environment is unlikely under this model. While many countries have embraced democratic forms of governance, recent experiences with concentrations of power and wealth, financial instability, and corrupted governance systems are alienating citizens in many countries. Independent, valuebased civil society organisations have been vehicles for social, economic and political experimentation with alternative institutional forms in many countries. Revitalising and deepening democracy requires more participatory approaches to solving problems and building institutional arrangements that are better suited to current economic, social, political and technological contexts. Civil society can contribute to incubating such innovations through a new wave of experimentation.

## For Policy-makers

The findings also suggest implications for those whose actions can create enabling environments for civil societies to meet their potential for societal contributions. These actors are national and provincial policy-makers and policy implementers as well as national and international donors, including philanthropists and foundations.

➡ *Recognise the distinctive roles and contributions of civil society.*

A critical implication of these findings is the need for clarity amongst policy-makers about the distinctive contributions and limited roles of civil society. As a promoter of active citizenship, civil society can bring to the attention of policy-makers issues that concern citizens, policies that hurt them, programmes that do not meet their basic needs, innovations with wider relevance to society, and actions of various institutions of society which are not adequately accountable. Clarifying civil society roles and contributions across levels of political society and public authorities can make a positive difference. That clarity needs to be then supported by legal and institutional arrangements that create an enabling environment for civil society to carry out these roles.

➡ *Promote spaces and mechanisms for continuous civil society engagements and dialogues with public authorities and private business.*

Democratically constructed and open inclusive spaces and mechanisms for ongoing dialogues between public authorities and civil society may reduce the possibility of surprising 'eruptions' that result in misunderstanding and sometimes repression. Spaces for dialogue are also needed between civil society and private business to enhance mutual appreciation, understanding and collaboration on shared agendas. An important characteristic of such an engagement is acceptance of disagreement and conflicts of perspectives, data and values. Such mechanisms need to be inclusive of various perspectives and need to operate at various levels simultaneously. In

many countries, there is increasing recognition among both government and business about the value that can be added to their own interests by appropriate collaboration with civil society actors, and policy-makers can act to encourage further exploration of those possibilities.

➡ *Invest in flexible, responsive and accountable resource support to civil society.*

A major crisis facing civil society is declining investments in its capacities and operations; policy-makers and donors at national and trans-national levels need to think about finding new, flexible and responsive ways of providing resources to all segments of civil society. Examples might include further incentives to private philanthropy to support civil society, encouraging citizens to participate in voluntary action, or autonomous civil society trust funds managed in a transparent manner. Public resources need to be made available to civil society activities that foster public goods and activities that support effective democracy, such as active citizenship.

➡ *Support south-north-south partnerships in civil society for knowledge sharing and solidarity.*

Policy-makers can catalyse large multiplier effects by encouraging more south-south and south-north-south partnerships amongst civil society actors. Many creative innovations could be disseminated more rapidly by initiatives that increase knowledge sharing, increased solidarity, and joint innovation across civil societies in many countries. Such support could also contribute towards building active global citizenship and collaboration to promote shared global humanitarian values.

➡ *Invest in longterm reflective and analytical capacities in civil society.*

The opportunities for multi-region reflection on the experiences of civil societies around the world made possible through this collective initiative are indeed rare and precious. Policy-makers may enable and invest in capacities for analytical and reflective processes in civil society to define and measure success, share and sharpen innovations, and promote social learning across practitioners, researchers and policy-makers. In a world where transnational problems and dynamics occupy an ever larger place in the challenges and crossroads emerging for most societies, investing in learning capacity for sources of social innovation is a high priority.

# *Annexure*

## Stories of Civil Society @ Crossroads

| AFRICA | |
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| **South Africa** | **Struggles Against Systems that Impoverish: South African Civil Society at the Crossroads** – James Taylor, Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), (james@cdra.org.za)<br><br>Civil society in South Africa had played a major role in campaigns against "The System" of apartheid; it later became a major force for constitutional reforms in post apartheid democratic South Africa. Many civil society organisations began to work on service delivery and capacity building after the transition to democracy. As the system has not fulfilled the aspirations and needs of many South Africans, civil society finds itself involved in renewed advocacy campaigns against what appears to be the resurgence of old phenomenon of concentration of unaccounted power. With international funding declining rapidly, many crossroads appear to confront South African civil society today.<br><br>**Multi-layered Relations in Civil Society of South Africa** - James Taylor, Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), (james@cdra.org.za)<br><br>This is the story of three decades of relationships between a grassroots land movement in South Africa, an intermediary NGO in South Africa supporting that land movement and a European NGO's staff who provided solidarity and resources to them. The multi-layered relationship between these three actors acquires multi-faceted aspects over this period, as changes in South Africa, Europe and the world take place. Through the lens of these protagonists, civil society's crossroads become sharply articulated. |
| **Zimbabwe** | **Zimbabwe: Development Challenges and CSO Responses** - Mutizwa Mukute, Research and Development Consultant, Rhodes University, (mmukute@gmail.com)<br><br>A good part of Zimbabwe's history since colonisation has been characterised by economic justice and human rights issues. Violence and impunity has been one of the major tools used for dispossessing local populations by Colonial masters, liberation by freedom fighters, repossession of economic assets such as land in the post independence |

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| | period, and suppression of opposition throughout the last century. It is against this background that civil society is directing its energies towards peacebuilding. The crossroad for such civil society actors is the challenge of sustaining practical actions towards peacebuilding at local levels in the face of continued conflicts and violence at the national level. |
| **Malawi** | **Civil Society at Crossroads in Malawi** - Chiku Malunga, Capacity Development Consultants (CADECO), (cadeco@sdnp.org.mw)<br><br>The protests by Malawian citizens against President Mutharika's regime for economic mismanagement and bad governance on July 20, 2011 shocked the government which unleashed repression to control the mass protests. With the sudden death of Mutharika and the formation of the new government, which has tried to redress some of the grievances of the citizens, the challenge for the Malawian civil society now is to maintain its independent voice as it acts as a watch-dog of the government. |
| **East Africa** | **Traders and Citizens Against Financial Crises in Uganda** – Jackline Kabahinda, EASUN, (jackiekabs@gmail.com)<br><br>The Kampala City Traders' Strike symbolises the business community presenting and representing the interests of the citizens amidst a financial crisis in Uganda. The strike came as a shock to the powerful Central Government of Uganda. The crossroads for civil society in the context of the strike is in terms of the capacities and relationships to be able to coordinate the wider civil society to champion citizen's issues and wellbeing.<br><br>**Tanzania Village Leadership: New Formations in Civil Society** - Mosi Kisare, EASUN, (mosi.kisare@easun-tz.org)<br><br>The promotion of "effective and gender responsive leadership", is one of the intervention areas of UZIKWASA, a community based organisation working in the Pangani District of Tanzania, which has a highly patriarchal cultural setting. Despite the terrain, UZIKWASA has significantly impacted on the lives of the citizens in the area through community sensitisations and training. The story models a responsive community village leadership. |

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| **Cambodia** | **Changing Civil Society in Cambodia: In Search of Relevance** - Thida Khus, SILAKA (thida_khus@silaka.org) & Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), (kaustuv.bandyopadhyay@pria.org)<br><br>The role of Cambodian civil society has varied over the past two decades - from peace building and reconciliation in the early 1990s to community development and service provision; more recently, some sections of civil society are focusing on issues of human rights and democratic governance. The challenge for the Cambodian civil society now is the hegemonic dominance of a single party often restricting the political space. As farmers organise themselves to resist land grabs by private business in collusion with government officials, repression against civil society increases. Gradually declining independent international funding and the continued presence of many INGOs are creating new crossroads for domestic civil society.<br><br>**Citizens' Action Against Forced Land Acquisition in Cambodia** - Priyanka Singh & Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), (priyanka.singh@pria.org) & (kaustuv.bandyopadhyay@pria.org)<br><br>The movement against 'land grab' in Cambodia grew out of widespread discontent, insecurity, and anguish created by forced loss of lands, livelihoods and traditional ways of living of the rural population, especially in the wake of the new policy of Economic Land Concessions. A few formal civil society organisations in Cambodia supported the protests of rural communities with awareness building and legal aid. |
| **India** | **Civil Society in Changing India: Emerging Roles, Relationships and Strategies** – Debika Goswami & Rajesh Tandon, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), (debika.goswami@pria.org) & (rajesh.tandon@pria.org)<br><br>Indian civil society has evolved through many phases since Independence; yet, the dramatic shifts due to rapid economic growth have caused major challenges for civil society. With India's growing economic status in the world, international resources for development have dried up; new actors in CSR and private philanthropy have emerged. Large scale inequality and growing contestation around the control of natural resources has resulted in many citizens' movements throughout the country. The State's response has been to question the |

| | legitimacy of civil society. Formal civil society organisations face the crossroad of maintaining independence for advocacy and social mobilisation of the excluded.<br><br>**The Anti-Corruption Movement in India** - DebikaGoswami & Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), (debika.goswami@pria.org) & (kaustuv.bandyopadhyay@pria.org)<br><br>The anti-corruption movement, spearheaded by Anna Hazare, is a milestone in the Constitutional history of India forcing the government to accept civil society's demand to be allowed to participate in drafting the anti-corruption law. The widespread and spontaneous response to the call for protest against corruption surprised the political class; active support from the media took the message far and wide in urban and rural areas. The movement also invigorated myriad dynamics of relationships between the State on one hand and the formal civil and political societies on the other. |
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| **Indonesia** | **KRL Mania, the Internet Based Consumer Movement of the Electric Railway Train Users in Indonesia** – Sri Indiyastutik, YAPPIKA (The Indonesian Civil Society Alliance for Democracy), (tuti_hadisudarmo@yahoo.com)<br><br>The protest by commuters of electric railway in Jakarta, Indonesia (forming a community called Electric Train Users' Community ---KRL Mania) against the Railway Company focused on the demand for improved quality of services. The use of social media has been instrumental in spreading awareness among masses, generating greater participation in the movement as well as sending signals to the government authorities about the significance of the issue. |
| **EUROPE** ||
| **Ireland** | **Responding to Crisis: Understanding the Effects of Political and Economic Crisis on Civil Society in the Republic of Ireland** - Rowan Popplewell, International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), (RPopplewell@intrac.org)<br><br>Throughout the last two decades, the economic boom precipitated a period of unprecedented financial and organisational growth for many civil society organisations in Ireland. However, during this period the Irish State simultaneously increased its control over civil society, limiting its ability to criticise government policy and advocate for change. The recent economic and political crisis has led to the further shrinking of |

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| | civil society space and resulted in huge reductions in State funding and citizen contributions. While examples of more progressive responses exist, overall questions remain about the ability of Irish civil society organisations to respond creatively, innovatively and progressively. |
| **United Kingdom** | **Civil Society in the UK: Long Historical Journey into Current Crossroads** – Brian Pratt, International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), (BPratt@intrac.org) and Olga Savage, Independent Researcher (olgasavage@hotmail.com)<br><br>The UK has a rich and centuries long tradition of charity, mutual help, volunteering and advocacy that can be traced back to the 13thcentury. The civil society sector in the UK has grown out of a long process of formalisation of voluntary and community based activities and its character forged through its relationship with Church and State. The new policy environment (Big Society) poses many challenges to different segments of civil society in the UK.<br><br>**Under the Radar: Civil Society at Grassroots in UK** - Andri Soteri-Proctor, Jenny Phillimore & Angus McCabe, Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), (A.SoteriProctor@bham.ac.uk ), (J.Phillimore@tsrc.ac.uk) & (a.mccabe@tsrc.ac.uk)<br><br>'Grassroots' activities exist at the heart of civil society in UK, making up the largest component of its landscape (in the forms of art and music groups; self-help/ mutual support groups; culture, faith and diaspora based groups. They remain invisible, under the radar, and have historically been overlooked in any discussion on civil society in the UK. However, government policy is now shifting and social and political interest in less formal aspects of civil society is also increasing.<br><br>**Occupy London: Pre-Figurative Political Action and Civil Society** - Neil Howard, Researcher, University of Oxford, (neil.howard@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk) and Keira Pratt-Boyden, Independent Researcher (k.pratt.boyden@gmail.com)<br><br>The Occupy London protest emerged in response to the current economic downturn. It discusses how the refusal to adopt either a formal leadership structure or pre-defined, singular goal was itself a conscious strategy of the movement. It looks at two core activities of Occupy London, the 'Tent City University' and the 'Welfare and Wellbeing Working Group', both of which were rooted in principles of openness and inclusivity. |

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| **Greece** | **Treading New Ground: A Changing Moment for Citizen Action in Greece** - Maro Pantazidou, Independent Researcher, Consultant and Facilitator, (maro.pantaz@gmail.com) |
| | The European debt crisis and Structural Adjustment Programme in Greece resulted in dramatic transformations in the Greek society at crossroads. The Syntagma Square movement, which demanded direct democracy in the summer of 2011, was a crucial moment of citizen protest and participation. Although the Syntagma Square occupation ended due to violence unleashed by the State, the movement generated new civic practices which are trans-located to other spaces. |
| **The Netherlands** | **Dutch Civil Society @ Crossroads** - Rik Habraken & Lau Schulpen, Centre for International Development Issues Nijmegen (CIDIN), Radboud University Nijmegen, (r.habraken@maw.ru.nl) & (l.schulpen@maw.ru.nl); Lucas Meijs, Erasmus Centre for Strategic Philanthropy / Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University Rotterdam, (lmeys@rsm.nl); Cristien Temmink, Department Learning for Change, PSO Capacity Building in Developing Countries, (temmink@pso.nl) |
| | The Netherlands have one of the largest civil societies in the world. Dutch politicians and civil society organisations do not recognise this fact themselves. The Dutch civil society through a system of pillarisation has outsourced many important functions like financing, governing, and legitimising to the government. Two cases (traditional and contemporary) are presented to show the consequences of this. |
| | **Professionalise or Explode? The Makassar Neighbourhood Community in Amsterdam** - Cristien Temmink, Department Learning for Change, PSO Capacity Building in Developing Countries (temmink@pso.nl) |
| | The case of the recently established Makassar neighbourhood community in Amsterdam reflects on the last and most recent phase of civil society development in the Netherlands and is exemplary for the felt need to "create" civil society and for the citizens to take responsibility. Being successful, the Makassar community has the possibility of applying for governmental subsidy, running the risk of becoming a traditional, government controlled non-profit organisation. |

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| **Russia** | **Russian Civil Society @ Crossroads** - Charles Buxton, International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), (charlesb@intrac.kg) & Evgenia Konovalova, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, (emk92@mail.ru)<br><br>Civil society in Russia played a huge role in dissident ideology during the collapse of the communist regime in the early 1990s. Two decades later, the Russian civil society is experiencing increased State control and an ever more restrictive legal and political environment. The "crossroad" for the Russian civil society is whether it collaborates with or critiques the government. It is faced with the dilemma of collaboration without co-option and maintenance of its own independence. |
| **LATIN AMERICA** | |
| **Latin America Regional Story** | **Beyond Emergency Housing: Youth Participation in Civil Society in Latin America** - Anabel Cruz & Analía Bettoni, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD), (acruz@lasociedadcivil.org) & (analiabettoni@gmail.com)<br><br>The 'Un Techo para mi País' (A roof for my country) movement in Latin America has helped unmasking massive poverty. With its genesis in the social policy of the Catholic Church and an activity in one specific area in Chile, today it has a secular image as a pluralist movement and operates in 19 countries. Remarkable is the youth participation in the movement. 'TECHO', as it is called today, in spite of its sustained and colossal growth, faces some specific crossroads related to institutionalisation, and its policies of partnership with other civil society organisations and the private sector. |
| **Chile** | **The Chilean Student Movement: An Expanding Space for Civil Society** - Inés M. Pousadela, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD), (pousadel@gmail.com)<br><br>The Chilean student movement in 2011 began with a protest against the high cost of higher education, but quickly spread to focus on the entire education system in the country, which basically remained unchanged even in the years of democracy. In the process, the movement has demanded a reform of the Chilean Constitution itself. Far from being an eccentricity of the student movement, this demand turned out to be shared by 75% of Chileans and the upsurge resulted in the largest mobilisation process in Chile, without the leadership of political parties, since the restoration of democracy in the 1990s. |

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| **Argentina** | **From Subjects of Shame to Agents of Change: The LGBT Movement in Argentina** - Inés M. Pousadela, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD), (pousadel@gmail.com)<br><br>The glaring success of the Argentine LGBT movement was the passing of the Equal Marriage Law (legalising same sex marriage) and Gender Identity Law pushed forward primarily by the Argentine LGBT Federation (FALGBT) and other organisations representing the so-called 'sexual minorities'. The movement successfully changed public psyche from considering sexual diversity as embodied and subject to ridicule and contempt to a situation in which diversity was given legal recognition; not only civil, but also social and political rights were granted equally to all people regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. |
| **Uruguay** | **The Women's Movement in Uruguay: A Decade-Long Struggle for Legal Abortion** - Inés M. Pousadela, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD), (pousadel@gmail.com)<br><br>The movement to legalise abortion in Uruguay, which was initially promoted by a few isolated feminist groups, is later embraced by a broad coalition of social, trade union, youth, student, Afro-descendent and sexual diversity organisations. Far from its origins as a simple 'women's thing' belonging to the private sphere, the movement has successfully elevated 'abortion' to be a social issue, a concern for both men and women and a legitimate object of public policy. Finally, the Senate passed the Bill in October 2012. |

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