CIVIL SOCIETY INNOVATION INITIATIVE (CSII)

FINAL PROGRAM REPORT
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Members of the CSII network during the Inter-Regional Retreat in Almaty, Kazakhstan, June 2018.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS</td>
<td>Annual Program Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CER</td>
<td>Regional Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSII</td>
<td>Civil Society Innovation Initiative</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRG</td>
<td>Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4C</td>
<td>Innovation for Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRR</td>
<td>Inter-Regional Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAB</td>
<td>Knowledge, Attitude, and Behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Civil Society Innovation Initiative (CSII) is a four-year program implemented by Counterpart International in partnership with CIVICUS and Tides Center. CSII emerged in response to growing restrictions against civic freedom, attacks on civil society organizations (CSOs) and a need for linkages between civic actors in open and restrictive spaces. As USAID’s implementing partner on the program, Counterpart’s primary objectives were to support the formation and growth of a global network of civil society organizations, activists, and leaders into regional incubators (eventually called “regional hubs”) and to form a single support team (called the “Helper Hub”) with CIVICUS, Sida’s implementing partner.

The initiative began in 2014 with seven co-creation workshops around the world. Two years later, the first of CSII’s regional hubs launched and the initiative was publicly rebranded as the Innovation for Change (I4C) network. In 2020, the I4C network has more than 1,000 civil society organizations (CSOs) and is composed of seven regional hubs in Africa, Central Asia, East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia, and the Pacific.

I4C is a global, community-led network of people who are inspired by ideas and who connect, partner, and learn together to defend and strengthen civic space and overcome restrictions to basic freedoms of assembly, association, and speech. I4C network members lead advocacy efforts, conduct research, expand and build the network, educate and train, fundraise and mobilize local resources, enhance digital literacy, and develop technologies. Counterpart’s work ended January 2020, but USAID continues grant-making through the Tides Center and Sida continues support through CIVICUS. The I4C network now consists of seven regional hubs, each with a Director and core staff who assess their region’s civic space concerns, develop long-term strategies, implement activities that use social innovations to address these challenges, and actively work toward financial sustainability.

The regional hubs are connected to each other through personal relationships, the network’s Global Governance Circle, a community WhatsApp group, and innovationforchange.net. The website, developed by Counterpart for the I4C network, houses numerous toolkits, methodologies, and innovations on topics such as digital security, social innovation modelling, network development, evaluation, innovation labs, and social inclusion. One of Counterpart’s legacies is having put in place simple, inexpensive, and flexible data collection, analysis, and visualization processes and infrastructure to unify all regional hub activities in the I4C Network Activity Dashboard and Database.
PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Counterpart issued grants of approximately $900,000 USD to the regional hubs to support start-up and innovation activities (elaborated in Part 3 of this report, Helper Hub Services, Grant-Making and Operational Support). In total, the hubs received approximately $8 million USD from USAID and Sida to fund regional hubs’ operations and activities, as well as to facilitate network connections through in-person events hosted by the Helper Hub. Counterpart made the following contributions to the network:

- Awarded 13 grants totaling $501,427.48 to establish the regional hubs in the first year.
- Supported the regional hubs with grants, network growth support, and shared processes for communication, data collection, learning, and adaptive management.
- Helped establish the Global Governance Circle, a network-wide governance body that facilitates network-wide strategy and decision-making.
- Established the Platform and Communications Working Group, Developmental Evaluation Community of Practice, Finance Community of Practice, and Network Development Working Group.
- Established data collection tools and infrastructure to semi-automate analysis and enable visualization of network activities in the I4C Network Activity Dashboard.²
- Designed and developed the Innovation Gallery³ and helped promote the civic innovation labs⁴ and rapid prototyping⁵ models.
- Developed a Digital Toolbox on innovationforchange.net for network members to learn about tools for network development, innovation, digital safety, social media analytics, fundraising, and advocacy.

![Figure 1 I4C Network String Map](image)

¹ These groups are now managed by the regional hubs and there are support centers within innovationforchange.net platform for advocacy, network development, and Developmental Evaluation.
³ [https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-gallery/](https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-gallery/)
⁴ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_axl30fzxm0&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_axl30fzxm0&t=5s)
⁵ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt7VJi99jPE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xt7VJi99jPE)
PART 1: THE CSII JOURNEY

A TWO-YEAR CO-CREATION JOURNEY TOWARD A MORE SELF-RELIANT CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK

How does a donor funded program go about building a global network of civil society actors and organizations capable of defending and strengthening civic space? Move deliberately, slowly, and patiently. And what if that network must be independent, locally owned, and sustainable? Use participatory processes, surrender control, and double the amount of planned time.

This describes the CSII programs' origins and the journey of building the network known as Innovation for Change. CSII emerged in response to growing restrictions against civic freedoms and a need for linkages between civic actors working in open, restricted, and closed civic spaces. The complexity and scale of the challenge drove USAID to embrace a new, more inclusive approach to problem-solving that maximizes participation by the widest array of civil society partners. With more than 1,000 members, CSII has become one of USAID’s biggest and longest co-creation processes.

"Collaboration can indeed be messy, but it's worth the extra time and effort. Over the course of the last five years, CSII has listened, learned, and adapted along the way. Through a sustained, global process of co-creation and co-design, demand-driven hubs have been launched that are truly owned by civil society and work to promote, strengthen, and connect civil society actors around the world in an unprecedented way."

- Mariam Afrasiabi, Senior Civil Society Advisor in the Civil Society and Media Division at USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

The journey has been unpredictable, experimental, and iterative. The network began with co-creation and gradually seven hubs formed and launched. Midway through, governance structures were needed to drive network growth, continue the shared mission and identity of the network, and enable collective decision making when necessary. The Helper Hub relied on knowledge capture tools and processes and flexible innovation processes throughout. Counterpart has learned much along the way.

EARLY COMMITMENT TO CO-CREATION AND FLEXIBILITY

The co-creation process\(^6\) took longer than initially expected and USAID and Sida grew anxious to see launches, network growth, and innovations. One of the biggest challenges was balancing traditional procurement modalities and prescriptive design with the need for flexible and experimental approaches, partnerships, and funding.

\(^6\) The CSII co-creation journey with voices from participants is documented on [http://csiilearn.org/#/process/the-call? k=2646d](http://csiilearn.org/#/process/the-call? k=2646d)
Each Hub matured at their own pace and the unique civic space challenges and culture shaped their priorities. Africa Hub focused on member growth, while East Asia and MENA chose to grow slowly based on trust and to keep a tight hold on network members. LAC Hub committed early to open engagement and a strategy focused on events and partnerships. The South Asia hub steadily increased membership of activists, organizations, and individuals dedicated to promoting the shared values and vision of the Hub. Central Asia Hub also pursued an open, public-facing strategy and focused on big innovation events.

REGIONAL HUB MILESTONES

NOVEMBER 2014 – CO-CREATION WORKSHOP 1
The first co-creation workshop was held in Istanbul over three days in November 2014 and brought together 64 representatives from 45 civil society organizations, including international NGOs and regional groups from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. CIVICUS carried out extensive stakeholder mapping to understand the context and challenges and identify key actors in each region to invite to the workshop. This would become “the most comprehensive and up-to-date database of civil society opinions on civic space issues... and [a map of] the key actors that are helping to protect civic space and strengthen civil society globally.”

APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2015 – CO-DESIGN REGIONAL WORKSHOPS
151 civil society leaders from six regions and 47 donor representatives and observers participated six co-creation workshops to capture regional input and new ideas and resources to shape plans for each regional hub.8 Counterpart and CIVICUS selected lead organizations to run each regional workshop.

FEBRUARY – APRIL 2016 – REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS
Regional incubators led consultations to get buy-in from key partners, expand the initiative, and finalize plans for the regional hubs to pitch during International Civil Society Week in Bogota, Colombia.

“At the end of the Colombo meeting, we knew where we were headed. The ship had not just an outline, but it had a crew, a body, and unfurled sails.”

– Trinajan Radhakrishan, South Asia region participant.

2016 – NEW FUNDING AGENT
The Tides Center joined the Helper Hub as USAID’s primary funding agent and began issuing large grants ($100,000) for regional hubs’ operational costs. At this time, Counterpart’s support shifted from event management,
administrative support, and network development to a focus on integrating civic technologists into hub activities, issuing small innovation grants, and developing network-wide processes for data collection and analysis.

**MAY 2017 – FIRST INTER REGIONAL RETREAT**
During the Inter Regional Retreat (IRR) in Johannesburg, South Africa, participants spent time sharing expertise, seeking advice, and collaborating with their regional peers. Annual IRRs would continue to be one of the primary ways that hub staff would interact and have face-to-face design sessions.

**2017 – 2018 – REGIONAL HUBS FORM AND LAUNCH**

“The hubs’ experience in the early years focused on establishing a regional collaboration model and explaining to CSOs a new approach of implementing a project based on collective inputs and co-creation. This created a lot of frustration due to the time and effort it required, but ultimately the collective inputs and co-creation model played a huge role in the network’s growth and maturity as well as those of the partner organizations.”
- Charles Kojo Vandyck, Africa Hub and Global Governance Circle steward.

**2019 – HUBS ACTIVITIES INCREASE**
Regional hub structures, strategies, and implementation solidified by 2019, reflected in the rapid expansion of activities (Figure 2) starting in 2017 and peaking in 2018. In the first years of the process, the regional hubs did relatively few activities and held co-design events. After 2017, the regional hubs started activities geared towards network interaction and knowledge sharing, including conferences, workshops, webinars, and innovation labs.

![Figure 2 Network Activities by Type 2015 – 2019](image)
MARCH 2018 - FIRST GOVERNANCE CIRCLE MEETING
The Governance Circle meeting in San Francisco continued the governance processes that started in the May 2017 IRR. Each regional hub worked on a governance process and elected a steward to the Global Governance Circle. The Governance Circle, as both an entity and process, matured over time, helped by the bi-annual Governance Circle meetings (held in-person) and monthly virtual meetings organized with Loomio.

NOVEMBER 2019 - THIRD INTER REGIONAL RETREAT
The third IRR in November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand focused on Sustainability and Resource Mobilization. The two-day conference focused on groups discussions on a range of topics, from resourcing models to planning for coordinated fundraising. At this event, Counterpart’s Helper Hub worked with the regional hubs to transition key functions to them. MENA Hub now plays an active role in managing the network-wide data collection and technology and communications infrastructure, such as the digital toolbox and the innovations gallery. CIVICUS is continuing targeted support services – advocacy, strategic communications, learning and results, financial management – to the regional hubs.

REFLECTIONS ON THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

The regional hubs’ innovation journeys – from co-creation, to hub formation, to network growth, to regional and global governance – have been guided by trial and error, exploration of the unknown or the uncertain, and a process of continuous learning. Counterpart propelled the innovation journey forward by providing the regional hubs with financial resources, technical support, and advice on operational structures.

Each regional hub, as well as the Helper Hub, have invented, developed, tested, implemented, succeeded, failed, and iterated their ideas, activities, services, and operational practices. This process of innovation (Figure 3) has created space for each regional hub to figure out what to do differently, what strategies and activities achieve their desired results, and what to do or where to go next.

Figure 3 Innovation Spiral (Sources: Nesta and U4 Innovation Lab)

9 https://innovationforchange.net/en/irr2019/
With this approach, the regional hubs pursued their unique strategies and activities, while leveraging their connections to one another to learn about new models – such as innovation labs, sharing economy platforms, and financial sustainability models and fundraising strategies – while remaining unified in their mission to address civic space challenges.

**LESSON-LEARNED BY COUNTERPART’S HELPER HUB TEAM**

The CSII co-creation was different model\(^{10}\) from a typical international development program. USAID and Sida chose a collaborative design process with few concrete parameters for the program—no results framework, performance indicators, or prescribed path for how the regional hubs ought to be formed or what results they should achieve. These early decisions by the donors ensured that their agendas would not detract from local civil society ownership. In the Helper Hub role, Counterpart applied knowledge and skills in civil society strengthening while avoiding a prescriptive ‘one-size fits all’ model and using highly adaptable approaches. Self-determination and local ownership were the key and CSII’s co-creation approach has proven to be essential for the hubs’ journey to self-reliance.

Counterpart’s Helper Hub lessons-learned offer a starting point for future co-creation models:

- Maintain commitment to co-creation and local ownership beyond throughout implementation, not just during planning and design phases.
- Actively work to include small CSOs and non-traditional civil society actors.
- Co-creation requires lots of time and resources to discuss and flexibly refine the implementation model.
- Prepare to simplify and adapt grant-making processes to work for the partners.

PART 2: CIVIC SPACE CHALLENGES AND NETWORK RESPONSES

CIVIC SPACE CHALLENGES AND TRENDS IN THE NETWORK

In countries all over the world, activists, journalists, CSOs, NGOs, and community leaders are facing restrictions on their basic freedoms and expressions of dissent and resistance. The I4C regional hubs share in these challenges, and these profiles explore the challenges each prioritized, their accomplishments, and approaches. Annex 1 offers a closer look at the Top 7 Civic Space Challenges Faced by the I4C Network.

An international wave of nationalistic sentiment and authoritarian responses have led to government restrictions on civil society. Civil society organizations (CSOs) face costly registration requirements and are often required to submit plans for their activities with the government. Authoritaian governments are spreading the narrative that CSOs are serving foreign interests, which reduces their funding sources and seeds citizens’ mistrust. Amidst these negative perceptions, CSOs are struggling to engage grassroots and local communities in a constructive manner. These factors make financial sustainability of civil society organizations and civic activities even more challenging.

Legal frameworks and policies limiting basic freedoms – association, peaceful assembly, expression, media – are prevalent globally. Weak or harmful Internet Freedom policies exacerbate civil society actors’ cybersecurity and safe operations, in addition to eroding basic freedoms of expression and access to public information for everyday citizens.

I4C network members have identified the prevalence of non-collaborative culture and models among CSOs as exacerbating the lack of capacity for technology, data, and innovation. CSOs are often competing with each other for a finite pool of resources and are busy with day-to-day operations and activities that they do not pause to reach out to different civic actors such as entrepreneurs, technologists, and legal experts who could strengthen their work. These dynamics also contribute to a lack of coordination between CSOs.

Sustainability and viability of CSOs has become the top concern across the I4C network. Discussions among network members in regional and international gatherings inevitably focus on problems of sustainability, not just of the regional hubs as donor funding winds down, but for organizations facing financial pressures.
Civic Space Challenges
- Threats to fundamental freedoms of association, expression, and assembly.
- Selective application and interpretation of laws.
- Limits on access to information, even when laws are officially on the books.
- Inconsistent infrastructure for information, communications, and technology (ICT).
- Stifled resource flows that make advocacy work by local and regional CSOs harder and more fragmented.

Approaches
Africa Hub has more than 360 members from 30 countries in Africa and MENA region and has embraced the role of being an intermediary between citizens and government. Their mission is to protect, strengthen, and expand civic space. Africa Hub services focus on campaigns, rapid support, and legal analysis of regulations and administrative decisions. The hub engages in structured dialogue with key stakeholders, develops access to information strategies, and shares knowledge and approaches that can be scaled across the region.

Accomplishments
- **Successful advocacy campaigns:** Unmask Them in Egypt to revoke NGO Law #70; Jeunes Nous Pouvons to promote youth participation in the DRC 2018 Election; and a campaign to revoke social media tax on “Over the Top” services in Uganda.
• **Awareness raising** efforts include pop-up events\(^1\) with the network and regional connector organizations.

• **We-Account Social Innovation Challenge** (2018) received 375 applications on innovative ideas in the areas of transparency, accountability, and natural resource management. Five awards were made to SEMA\(^2\) (Uganda), Kinara Youth\(^3\) (Tanzania), Freshmarte GS\(^4\) (Nigeria), Dream Factory\(^5\) (Botswana), Tobongisa Technologies\(^6\) (Democratic Republic of Congo).

• **Successful advocacy campaigns**: *Unmask Them in Egypt*\(^7\) to revoke NGO Law #70; *Jeunes Neus Poucions*\(^8\) to promote youth participation in the DRC 2018 Election; and a campaign in Uganda to revoke social media tax on “Over the Top” services.

• **We-Protect! Initiative** supports Rule of Law and Legal Support for human rights defenders. This included the Legal Innovation Lab (May 2018) where 33 lawyers, technologists, and campaigners designed solutions and three legal products/services to support human rights lawyers which will be developed in 2020.

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**Innovations Spotlight**

**Guidebook for Alternative Funding Models in Africa** raises awareness of best practices. It reviews various types of activities CSOs can undertake to diversify their finances, including providing consultancy services, building assets, organizing events, charging membership fees, starting social enterprises, engaging in micro-finance or fiscal sponsorship opportunities, issuing social or green bonds, fundraising via crowdfunding, and more.

**Proofchain**: The service ensures the tracking of farm inputs throughout the delivery chain, creating transparency and accountability for the system to curb misappropriation, collusion and embezzlement of subsidy funds.

**WeEngage**: The App is the first online tool that tests the capacity of African CSOs in policy influencing and advocacy. After the self-assessment, the App recommends information to the user on to address policy influencing and advocacy capacity gaps.

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\(^2\) [https://talktosema.org/about/](https://talktosema.org/about/)

\(^3\) [https://www.facebook.com/kinarayouth](https://www.facebook.com/kinarayouth)

\(^4\) [https://www.facebook.com/freshmarte/](https://www.facebook.com/freshmarte/)

\(^5\) [https://www.facebook.com/dreamfactoryfoundation/](https://www.facebook.com/dreamfactoryfoundation/)


\(^7\) [https://unmaskthem.org/](https://unmaskthem.org/)

\(^8\) [https://www.jeunesnouspouvons.org/](https://www.jeunesnouspouvons.org/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>EHAHRDP</td>
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<td>Consultations on Hub Concept</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>Equal Ground</td>
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<td>Mapping of Transparency &amp; Accountability Actors in Africa</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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<td>$32,152.00</td>
<td>Workshop to train a cohort of data practitioners and mentors</td>
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<td>FOFI</td>
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<td>Citizen-Government discussions on civil society policy documents</td>
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<td>2019</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>SENEGEL</td>
<td>$9,999.00</td>
<td>Women leadership training</td>
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</table>
Civic Space Challenges
- Huge security challenges from community and participants, central concern.
- Complex registration processes for CSOs.
- Restrictive measures for the receipt of foreign and local funding, such as additional reporting requirements to governmental agencies.
- Policies and laws preventing advocacy and media coverage especially around civil and political rights.
- Insecurity, internal conflicts, terrorism, and harassment that affects the human rights and curtails civic space.
- Democracy versus security narrative.
- Lack of solidarity and advocacy alliances among civil society.
- Limited access to knowledge and capacity building resources.

Approaches
Central Asia Hub has members from Afghanistan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. They have a small group of core members and run events with broad outreach and civic participation. The hub fosters constructive CSO-government relations to widen civic space in the region. The hub’s goal is to strengthen CSOs’ skills in non-combative civic engagement, especially for marginalized groups such as people with disabilities and women. The hub is focused on civic engagement, education and training, data literacy, research, network building, and capacity building of CSOs to learn how to use technology as part of civic engagement. The hub hosts an annual Innovation Festival that connects civil society leaders from across countries, sectors, ages, and groups to exchange ideas.
Accomplishments

- More than 10,000 people participated in one or more I4C Central Asia activities.
- Hosted 25 regional events for the I4C network.
- Hosted annual Innovation Fair to better connect the civil society leaders.
- Hosted Make-a-thons\(^{19}\) for people with disabilities led to successful innovations\(^{20}\).
- Hosted Tech BootCamps to improve digital literacy and innovation capacity.
- Research organization Porsesh\(^{21}\) created a Civil Society Innovation Index\(^{22}\) to assess the level of innovation of CSOs.
- Digital Transparency Index\(^{23}\) through IRIM\(^{24}\) to assess the government digital transparency and promotion of the right to information on I4C Central Asia’s website and other digital platforms.

Innovation Spotlight

**TOM: Kazakhstan:** As part of the inaugural Innovation Fest, the Central Asia Hub and its partners hosted teams of inventors, students, technologists, medical technicians, and engineers to develop and test innovative solutions to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities.

**The Regional Placemaking Festival:** There is a lack of activities and initiatives that inspire people to jointly rethink and remake public spaces to belong to the people who use them and meet the needs of all users. The workshop was established a dialogue between Almaty theaters and social activists to work together in finding ways to represent public problems with the help of theatrical instruments.

\(^{19}\) [https://18plusidea.kz/bolshoe-chemy-izobretenie](https://18plusidea.kz/bolshoe-chemy-izobretenie)


\(^{21}\) [http://www.porseshresearch.org/about-us/](http://www.porseshresearch.org/about-us/)


Subsoil Data Sharing: Unrest occurs annually in the regions of Kyrgyzstan due to the lack of transparency in the social allocations of subsoil users. The Nash Vek synchronized a government website with an open budget and so that all residents can see real-time receipts from subsoil users.

### Central Asia Hub Grants

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<td>Develop Innovation Assessment Tool</td>
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<td>CRDL</td>
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<td>CIPI</td>
<td>$9,981.00</td>
<td>Watchdog service tracking website blockages</td>
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Civic Space Challenges

- Civic space is shrinking rapidly.
- Poor regulatory powers by governments.
- Lack of corporate responsibility and accountability.
- Prevailing culture of impunity.
- Suppression of struggles for cultural identity, religious freedom, and self-determination.
- Lack of inclusion of marginalized voices.
- Lack of access to information and incursions on freedom of expression in both the virtual and physical spaces.
- Private sector-government collusion.
- Interpretation of laws to disadvantage CSOs and people’s movements.

Approaches

East Asia Hub represents ten countries and has engaged 130 organizations, country and regional networks, and peoples’ movements and have worked with 200 activists and rights defenders, journalists, academics, and digital
activists. The East Asia Hub focuses on broad public awareness of human rights and works with civil society leaders to help them better understand the increasing risks that go with crackdowns on democracy activists, journalists and legal advocates.

Hub activities include corporate responsibility dialogues, innovation fairs, digital security and safety workshops, disinformation research and workshops, and research on regional impacts of the China Belt and Road Initiative. East Asia slowly grew membership in 2016 by starting with established sub-regional and regional networks. In 2017 and 2018 they began identifying local organizations doing work related to I4C’s thematic activities, and in 2019 by using existing members to vet new members in specific countries. This was part of their strategy to provide opportunities for civil society to co-design and develop activities led by the hub and network members.

Accomplishments
- From 2017-2019, hosted successful workshops on disinformation, digital security, and media & freedom of expression in Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Hong Kong.
- Developed an agenda to address impacts of China’s Belt and Road Initiative.
- Held learning exchanges between civil society leaders and democracy activists in Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar.
- Participated in Rohingya peace dialogues.
- Produced Mothers of Dragons, a video series featuring stories of hope, courage, and persistence from mothers, rights defenders, and activists. The first video, Malaysia's Mothers of Dragons: We can’t keep quiet anymore25, was published March 2020. Korea’s Mothers of Dragons and Taiwan’s Mothers of Dragons will be published later in the year.
- Held a Civic Innovation Fair to promote social innovation successes against closing civic space in the region.

Innovations Spotlight

Malaysia’s “Mothers of Dragons”: Four Malaysian moms share about the struggles they have had to overcome to be the fierce human rights defenders they are today.

**CSO Sustainability Database:** Collection of case-studies and analyses of innovative models used by CSOs to diversify funding, with particular attention to self-financing (fees for service, membership fees, income-generating activities, investment income, monetary and in-kind donations) and local financing (public fundraising, fundraising from specific sectors and professions, local foundations, crowdfunding/sourcing, government grants and partnerships, business sponsorships and donations).

**Combating Disinformation Workshop:** The East Asia Hub increased of the capacities of CSOs responsible of the communication for the information approach and the production of writings and identified of potential steps to follow to build confidence and common language between CSOs and journalists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Forum-Asia</td>
<td>$29,937.00</td>
<td>Regional Consultations for East Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Forum-Asia</td>
<td>50,677.80</td>
<td>Information Sharing and Digital Activism Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Open Culture Foundation</td>
<td>$19,758.04</td>
<td>Combating Disinformation Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>SIA</td>
<td>$28,584.22</td>
<td>Alternative Financing Models Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civic Space Challenges
- Corruption, political espionage, fragile institutions.
- Threats against freedom of association, peaceful assembly, and expression.
- Unfavorable legal frameworks such as burdensome tax and financial regulations.
- Distrust between the civil society sector and the private sector.
- Decrease in international aid funds going to the region.
- Lack of cooperation among civil society organizations.
- Weak philanthropic culture.
- Technology illiteracy.
- Weak management and operating capacity of Civil Society Organization.

Approaches
LAC Hub has over 90 core members from 20 countries. The hub focuses on creating opportunities for civil society leaders, technologists, social entrepreneurs, and academics to co-create solutions to the region’s most complex social, political, and economic problems. Early on, the LAC Hub inventoried the different human rights and democracy networks operating in the region and decided to focus on building better regional cooperation and strategic alliances.

Hub activities include peer-learning, mentoring and collaboration on fighting legal restrictions and providing safe operations for human rights activists, prototyping and innovation workshops, advocacy campaigns.
Accomplishments

- Created the ComuniDas.org platform\(^\text{26}\) as a creative solution for civil society organizations and actors to access resources and exchange skills in response to restrictive governments trying to block access to funding for CSO.

- Launched an advocacy campaign with TECHO with over 5,000 people in informal settlements launched Ciudades x Jóvenes (Cities by Youth)\(^\text{27}\). This movement made it possible for young people to participate in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) – the United Nation’s roadmap for urban development.

- Partnered with Wengu, a technologically adept social change organization, to create Social Innovation and Technology Festivals (FITS). These workshops bring together CSOs, academics, and technologists to create innovations and include members of the business community who might provide financial investment.

- Analyzed a dataset provided by Change.org to see how citizen campaigns in Latin America aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Innovations Spotlight

**Rendir-App** This tool for CSO self-evaluation and improvement of accountability capacity includes 12 commitments of the Global Standard and touches on three basic areas: what you want to achieve; your approach to change; and what you do internally.

**SDG Platform** aims to connect the RACI experience of networking at local, national, regional and international levels, with better access of information on the 2030 Agenda. The Platform is a space for CSOs to showcase their work against the SDGs and the creation of public policies.

**The Project Writing Wizard** helps CSOs with little experience in writing a proposal by guiding them through a series of prompts and generating a first-draft document to build off.

\(^{26}\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaFyA3AYce0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaFyA3AYce0)

\(^{27}\) [https://youtu.be/g29joP81gKg](https://youtu.be/g29joP81gKg)
### LAC Hub Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>GRUPO FARO</td>
<td>$60,000.00</td>
<td>Regional Consultation for LAC region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>GRUPO FARO</td>
<td>$68,131.00</td>
<td>Build Communidas Sharing Economy Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Wingu</td>
<td>$20,040.00</td>
<td>FITS - a Social Innovation and Technology Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Fundación Connectas</td>
<td>$32,277.64</td>
<td>Communications workshop for civil society in closed and closing spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Techo International</td>
<td>$30,894.27</td>
<td>Research on youth, urban issues and advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>CDI Chile</td>
<td>$31,444.70</td>
<td>Innovation Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Makaia</td>
<td>$23,585.66</td>
<td>Digital Transformation Assessment and Advancement Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>ACST</td>
<td>$24,965.79</td>
<td>Grow participation in civil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>RACI</td>
<td>$24,515.00</td>
<td>Research Change.org data – compare with the sustainable development goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Presentes</td>
<td>$9,997.00</td>
<td>Open data set to raise awareness of acts of violence against LGBT+ populations in Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Innpactia</td>
<td>$9,996.00</td>
<td>Proposal writing wizard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civic Space Challenges

- Complex registration processes and reporting requirements to governmental agencies.
- Restrictive measures for the receipt of foreign and local funding.
- Measures preventing advocacy and media coverage, especially in the area of civil and political rights.
- Lack of solidarity among civil society leaders.
- Limited access to Arabic language resources.
- Limited knowledge sharing and capacity development.

Approaches

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Hub has over 200 members spread across 18 countries. MENA Hub chose to have a less public profile and to focus their activities on advocacy and campaigns, digital security, accountability and transparency, knowledge management, and resource mobilization. MENA Hub activities include workshops on digital security, advocacy, and financial sustainability. The hub also supports digital advocacy and activism collaborations between CSOs, social entrepreneurs, and technology experts.

Accomplishments

- Trained 509 participants on digital security throughout the region.
- Trained 63 participants on advocacy and campaigning.
• Implemented four advocacy campaigns in Algeria, Mauritania, and Yemen.
• Built a sharing economy platform called Tabadol.
• Developed Accountability Dashboard, a tool to track government projects and initiatives.
• Developed a Knowledge Souk to gather Arabic language knowledge resources and share approaches for improving activism and engagement.
• Researched on digital money and cryptocurrencies are enabled or blocked in open, closing, and closed space.

Innovations Spotlight

**Mapping Report on Closing Civic Spaces:** The MENA Hub in partnership with Partners-Jordan mapped CSOs advocating and campaigning in the region to promote non-violent strategies and tactics for social change. They also mapped resources available in Arabic for non-violent strategies and tactics, as well as the development of tools and resources around issues related to the closing of civic spaces.

**Media Freedom Status in the Arab World:** This report documented violence against journalists in 2018, raising public awareness of the issues faced by journalists in the region and making recommendations for how to reduce attacks in the future.

**Sustainability Research:** This report mapped the landscape of digital money and policy framework in the MENA region, with a context-specific focus on “relatively open” countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia). The also looked at the status of digital currencies in the region, including barriers and opportunities for usage and adoption and legal and regulatory challenges and opportunities.

**MENA Hub Grants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>JCI-RADES</td>
<td>$7,586.42</td>
<td>Regional consultations, MENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>ANND</td>
<td>$17,200.00</td>
<td>Regional consultations, MENA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>SMEX</td>
<td>$36,466.00</td>
<td>Advocacy and Security Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>7amleh</td>
<td>$23,354.89</td>
<td>Advocacy and Security Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>CDFJ's/ICP</td>
<td>$24,745.39</td>
<td>Monitor and document attacks on the media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civic Space Challenges

- Harassment, attacks, and criminalization of human rights defenders, journalists, and bloggers professing secular views.
- Attacks by state and non-state actors in Pakistan and Afghanistan on free speech, protests, and human rights defenders.
- Increasing risks for marginalized populations, especially religious minorities.
- India Foreign Contribution Regulations Act (FCRA) Law to manage dissent.
- Shrinking funding environment and NGO laws restricting outside funds.
- CSOs working on human rights and environment far less likely to access funds.
- Corporate philanthropy more common, but not going to CSOs.

Approaches

South Asia Hub is focused on building connections between CSOs, technologists, legal advocates, and journalists and on civil society resourcing models. Hub activities include workshops, research, advocacy campaigns, tools for legal aid support, matchmaking with funders, innovation festivals, and a social enterprise accelerator for youth.
Accomplishments
South Asia Hub represents eight countries and has members who are: civil society leaders, security experts, civic technologists, legal advocates, and journalists.

- Hosted training on financial models such as local fundraising and social enterprises.
- Hosted Innovation Labs in rural areas to connect marginalized communities to civic space innovations.
- Helped direct at-risk journalists “safe houses” for protection.
- Created a database called Legal Recourse Mechanism to identify lawyers and organizations who can support CSOs in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- Created a Knowledge Resource Center to disseminate information and exchange skills.
- Hosted Arts Lab for Social Change\(^2\) to bring together youth, technology, music, arts and civic engagement.
- Conducted campaigns to improve civic space: See Me, Beyond Headlines and IYouWe.

Innovations Spotlight

**Innovative Funding Workshop:** The South Asia Hub launched a training on innovative funding in partnership with the Social Enterprise Academy. The three-day boot camp focused on transitioning CSOs from donor-dependency to a social enterprise model for their organization. Participants developed an understanding of key concepts of social enterprise, designed a social mission for their enterprise, and applied graphic learning to understand the various business models social enterprises use.

**Legal Recourse Mechanism and Institutional Mapping Exercise:** The South Asia Hub conducted a competitive process and identified seven qualified service providers to conduct a comprehensive mapping of existing legal aid services and programs in their country. The mapping exercise took into account the following dimensions: geographic coverage, speed of response, client base served, and gaps in niche service areas.

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\(^2\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHNOEhDEWaY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHNOEhDEWaY)
**Hackergram Innovation Lab:** A diverse group of more than 20 social activists and innovators in India participated in the Lab to reflect on the concept and emerging need for safe civic space and also to ideate innovative solutions to meet such needs. Ideas generated included making accessible transportation, income-generation measures for eco-friendly handicrafts, a maker network, and co-creation exercises for local self-government.

### South Asia Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Equal Ground</td>
<td>$40,840.00</td>
<td>Regional consultations, South Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>VANI</td>
<td>7,243.64</td>
<td>Pop-up event, Awareness-raising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Civic Space Challenges

- Effects of climate change and environmental degradation.
- Lack of transparency and accountability in government.
- Mining and the impact of fossil fuel.
- Legal environment that limits international funding sources.
- Political climate requires civil society activities to align with the national interests.
- Lack of inclusion of marginalized populations, exacerbated by geographic distances between countries and communities that make connection and communication difficult.

Approaches

The Pacific Hub is the newest to I4C and represents 30 individuals and organizations across the three Pacific subregions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The Pacific Hub is committed to youth-leadership and in their 2020 strategic planning phase, they are focused on activities that open up dialog environmental problems that threaten the way of life for Pacific Island cultures.

The Pacific Hub’s mission is to foster a culture of experimentation to design, test, and prototype new ideas that address civic space restrictions, natural resource management dialogues and decisions, and CSO sustainability challenges. Following other I4C hub models, the hub is focused on bringing together civil society, technologists, private sector, and social entrepreneurs. The Pacific Hub plans to use citizen-generated data to increase the sector’s accountability and legitimacy as an intermediary between citizens and governments and to raise awareness of civic space issues and increase activism through traditional storytelling practices.
PART 3: MATURATION OF THE HUBS

HELPER HUB SERVICES

The Helper Hub’s support services started out as: grants and operations, influence and advocacy, social labs, communications, network health, partnerships, communications, learning and sharing, and sustainability. The Helper Hub team adapted the services over the years to reflect the needs of the Regional Hubs and network members.

2015-2016

Counterpart and CIVICUS collaborated to develop and manage a shared work plan. Helper Hub staff were assigned the role of “Points of Contact” for each regional hub. Helper Hub supported regional hubs to enhance strategic communication, access funding, use data collection and analysis processes, troubleshoot operational challenges, and hire staff. CIVICUS led advocacy campaigns support and Communications. Counterpart led network development and supported public messaging strategy, standard language, and new branding.

2017 - 2018

Counterpart led the design and implementation of a data collection and analysis process. Helper Hub adapted services to focus on: promoting network health, strengthening communications, increasing influence and advocacy, supporting grants and operations, promoting learning and sharing, supporting innovation labs, and strengthening sustainability.

Counterpart generated quarterly updates on network activities (part of USAID reporting requirements), generated periodic innovationforchange.net blog posts.

Counterpart and CIVICUS decided to have separate but coordinated work plans to reduce friction between leadership teams and enable more efficient operations and implementation. Timing of this change had minimal impact on regional hubs, who were in implementation mode on their strategies and activities.

Counterpart created a video and podcast series to share stories and content from the regional hubs with USAID and with a larger public-facing audience.

2019-2020

Counterpart focused on generating content using a civic storytelling model and creating the Innovation Gallery to share the regional hubs knowledge, stories, and content on the network’s efforts and impact with external audiences.

29 https://innovationforchange.net/en/community-blog/
HUB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The Helper Hub worked with consultants to develop network-wide governance models that were presented during the IRR in Johannesburg May 2017. After much discussion on the models, participants created a visual depiction called the Global Governance Circle (Figure 11). This was envisioned as a collaborative decision-making body with two stewards from each regional hub in charge of overseeing global framework, global governance, and financial matters. And the Helper Hub would provide support and external advisors could engaged as needed.

This was the jumping off point for each of the regional hubs to define their unique governance structures. A consent-based decision-making model was chosen to enable broader participation and to ensure that decisions move forward even when there is disagreement (unless someone vetoes or blocks). Loomio, a decision-making software designed, was used to assist the group with the collaborative decision-making process.

From the inception of the Global Governance Circle idea in 2017 to the inaugural group of regional hub stewards in April 2019, several important decisions were made and the frequency of meetings and activities steadily increased.
AFRICA HUB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Africa Hub uses a four-part governance structure. The Board of Management is comprised of seven individuals with regional representation who ensure the Hub conforms with all compliance and legal requirements. The Board assesses overall direction and strategy, assists with stakeholder relations and risk management, and provides policy decisions such as vision, mission, and goals/objectives. The Secretariat coordinates the day-to-day operations of the Hub and daily administrative tasks. Duties include handling human resource and personnel issues, as well as company finances. It is overseen and run by a Regional Manager based in Nairobi, Kenya and who reports to the Hub’s Board of Management. The Regional Connectors are the partners and organizations from each of the continent’s sub-regions (West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, and North Africa) who assist with implementation of the Hub’s sub-regional activities. The Regional Connectors report directly to the Hub’s Secretariat and Regional Manager. The National Chapters are network members and local organizations who fully support the Hub and promote its goals and objectives at the country/national level and participate in decision-making processes. The National Chapters report to the Regional Connectors and the Hub’s Secretariat directly.

CENTRAL ASIA HUB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Central Asia Board oversees the long-term strategic direction of the Hub and upholds the values of innovativeness, openness, subsidiarity, member orientation, and communication. The Board is responsible for setting Hub policy, Partnership Policy, Membership Policy, and others. Two board members are elected to represent the seven countries in Central Asia (Afghanistan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and one to three additional members are chosen. Board members serve for 36 months (no re-election), and every 18 months one of the two Board for each country changes. The Board meets in-person and online.

EAST ASIA HUB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Since 2016, East Asia Hub’s leadership has consisted of a team of incubators, among them, the Asia Democracy Network, Forum-Asia and the Southeast Asia Press Alliance. When the incubation phase ended, a new leadership structure was proposed by the Working Group on Governance (September 2018) and affirmed two months later at the Annual Strategy Meeting, Penang. The transformation from a team of three Incubators to an East Asia Governance Circle (EAGC) has an expanded leadership of five people in staggered terms.

LAC HUB GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The LAC Hub created a General Assembly that is responsible for establishing strategic guidelines and adopting government decisions by simple majority. The General Assembly meets at least once a year in-person or virtually and is made up of representatives of social organizations, NGO networks, and companies. The main functions of the General Assembly are: approve operating and governance regulations; approve the Strategic Plans for a period of three years; approve the Annual Technical and Financial Report presented by the Regional Executive Committee (CER);
appoint representatives to the Regional Executive Committee (CER) for a period of three years; approve the appointment of the representatives to the LAC Hub and approve the membership policy; and create “working commissions” to lead activities.

The LAC Hub established the CER, a body responsible for executing the agreements emanating from the General Assembly, with four representatives (from Mexico and Central America, Caribbean, Andean countries, and Southern Cone and Brazil). CER representatives are appointed for a three-year period and their job is to prepare the Operational Plan and Annual Budget, implement the membership policy, prepare the annual technical and financial report to the General Assembly, and manage alliances and resources that support the Hubs overall sustainability.

The third supporting structure is the Technical Secretariat which manages operational activities such organizing CER and General Assembly meetings, supports the work commissions, develops proposals for activities that will sustain the Hub, keeps track of membership and enforce accountability and transparency mechanisms, and facilitates information exchanges among members, CER, and the General Assembly.
NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Counterpart supported Network Development by funding regional co-creation workshops and developing a Network Development Workbook and training to help the regional hubs develop their membership plans and operational strategies.

Counterpart created the innovationforchange.net website in 2015 to connect the network and help them share resources, disseminate information and blog posts about activities, and share stories about innovations developed by network members and the hubs. More than 1,000 network members created accounts.

Counterpart developed a Digital Toolbox within the website to help network members learn about online tools and services for network development, innovation, digital safety, social media analytics, fundraising, and advocacy. The platform houses the Communities of Practice for advocacy, network development, and Developmental Evaluation.

By 2017 it became clear that the regional hubs had their own strategies and unique needs, and the Helper Hub shifted to a more hands-off model in which points of contact provided technical and strategy support as needed and requested by the hubs and their network members. Around this time, Counterpart established data collection tools and infrastructure to semi-automate analysis and power visualization to explore and understand activities and innovation diffusion across the network. The I4C Network Activity Dashboard gathers qualitative data that can be analyzed and visualized to understand hub activities, events, innovations, and challenges over time.

By the end of 2019, Counterpart transitioned responsibility for the platform to the MENA Regional Hub which manages it with support and oversight from CIVICUS. The I4C Network Activity Dashboard continues to collect and aggregate data from across the network and maintenance is supported by CIVICUS.

GRANT-MAKING AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Counterpart issued grants with USAID funds to support early network formation and strategic planning activities, and CIVICUS used Sida funds for grant-making to support small innovation activities and cover costs for travel to conferences and events. When the Tides Center joined the Helper Hub in 2017, they began grant-making with USAID funds to the regional hubs to support operational costs.

In 2018 when Sida reduced funding levels to CIVICUS, the Helper Hub organizations strategized how to simply grant-making processes for the network. Counterpart did this by moving to an online, form-based process that automated the application process for the network and for Counterpart’s operations teams. This shift enabled 28 judges from around the world to submit their scores and comments online, and quickly discuss and visualize the results. This created a faster and more effective and transparent grant-making process for the 2019 Civic Innovation Challenge Annual Program Statement (APS).
The categories, funding amount, and recipient organizations for Counterpart’s grants over the course of the program are presented in Figure 13.

- **Start-Up Support**: These were the earliest and largest grants and supported hub planning and operations.
- **Capacity Building**: These grants generated activities such as digital security, financial models, innovation labs which expanded the skills of hub members.
- **Knowledge, Attitudes, Behaviors (KAB)**: These activities focused on hub objectives such as shifting perceptions of citizens, policymakers, and other stakeholders through advocacy campaigns.
- **Community and Local Engagement**: These grants helped to develop hub membership and improve connections with CSOs, community, government, and other stakeholders.
- **Assessment**: These grants supported CSOs to develop or use self-assessment tools for competencies and skills such as innovation and digital effectiveness.
- **Sustainability**: These grants funded research on financial models and diverse sources to improve self-reliance and local resource mobilization.
- **Watchdog Role**: These grants supported activities to raise awareness and track government actions related to civic space.

*Figure 13 Counterpart Grant-Making Analysis*
SUSTAINABILITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Each of the regional hubs worked hard to build the content, connections, processes, and infrastructures necessary for sustainability. The regional hubs have refined their strategies and structures to pursue sustainability through membership fees, business models that align with their services, and building capacity and skills in fundraising and local resource mobilization. The Global Governance Circle has made financial sustainability priority objective and network members frequently shares resources and knowledge related to financial sustainability.

Partnerships are an important aspect of how the regional hubs solve civic space challenges. Private sector and nonprofits provided cash and in-kind contributions to network members as they performed activities. Companies provided licenses to software (Microsoft) and data (Change.org). Fellow nonprofits provide training (Internews, Central Asia Podcasting School) provided training at events and webinars. Hubs reported at least $218,000 in fundraising. The Helper Hub collected data on contributions to the network through Activity Report, but the dataset is limited to what network members self-reported.
INNOVATION CAPTURE AND DIFFUSION

The I4C network is founded on the premise that regional hubs are the drivers of change and creators of innovations that address their civic space challenges. Over the years, the resources, innovation processes, research, workshops, and campaigns developed and used by each regional hub have spread across the network. The first measurable instance of a tool or process used by one hub being adopted by another was the Innovation Lab format. Central Asia Hub was the first to run Innovation Labs and eventually codified their approach and shared it with LAC Hub (June 2017). A year later, the Innovation Lab model was used by Africa Hub (May 2018). Digital security workshops were widely replicated across the network and LAC Hub’s sharing economy platform Comunidas (May 2017) was replicated by MENA Hub to create Tabadol (which entered Beta stage in January 2019).

Counterpart hypothesized that analyzing emerging patterns would help the network understand how their responses to civic space challenges and innovations move through the network over time. Counterpart tracked the spread of innovations30 by asking network members to report on the innovative tools and processes used in their activities (July 2018). The Network Activity Dashboard was launched to track these key data points and Counterpart used Kumu to visually analyze the dataset (Figure 14).

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30 https://embed.kumu.io/7449d33bc01f8e9fd7a2107f6df5d721#v3l

Figure 14 Civic Innovation Dashboard
These tools enabled Counterpart to understand when, how, and under what circumstances an “innovation” – activities, cross-regional exchanges, and processes – moved from hub to hub. Unsurprisingly, innovation transfer between hubs was more frequent when hub members planned or participated in innovation events or Inter Regional Retreats.

Counterpart launched the Innovation Gallery\(^3\) with the goal of increasing visibility of the regional hubs’ innovations and activities. Visitors and network members can:

- **Search and read about innovations** – learn about the innovation, civic space problem, solution, and view media content. [https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-gallery/](https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-gallery/)
- **Share your innovation** – I4C members can share about and showcase an innovation they have implemented. [https://innovationforchange.net/en/share-an-innovation/](https://innovationforchange.net/en/share-an-innovation/)
- **Create your portfolio** – I4C members can create a portfolio of innovations, activities, or projects that they are already implementing or seeking funding to support. [https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-portfolio-list/](https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-portfolio-list/)

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\(^3\) [https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-home/](https://innovationforchange.net/en/innovation-home/)
FLEXIBLE EVALUATION APPROACH

From 2014 to 2017, USAID’s Global Development Lab asked Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) to conduct learning and evaluation activities for CSII. The purpose was to capture the co-creation process and in doing so, help USAID understand the design process, the journey and milestones, and assess effectiveness and outcomes along the way from the perspective of the civil society stakeholders. The method was named Process Historian by the then-USAID AOR, and the process and results are documented on CSIIlearn.org.

USAID’s Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) and Counterpart shared the desire and vision to shift from a centralized learning and evaluation approach to one that was owned by the hubs, focused on their perspective, and built their capacity for adaptive management and learning. Counterpart chose Developmental Evaluation because:

1. Traditional, performance-based, and predictive causal Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approaches are poorly suited to assessing results and impact for the I4C network.
2. Regional hubs exist in dynamic systems and civic space contexts and an evaluation method that does not attempt to pre-determine outcomes is better suited to the network.
3. Regional hubs lead their own strategies and activities and should also lead their own evaluation, learning, and adaptive management processes and tools.

Counterpart put a call out for Developmental Evaluation consultants in January 2018. While the consultant was being onboarded, the Helper Hub hosted a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand for a group of self-identified learning champions. Counterpart, CIVICUS, and DAI jointly designed and hosted the workshop, marking the official transition from Process Historian to Development Evaluation. This was the first capacity building opportunity for learning, evaluation, and adaptive management with regional hub staff. The next step was consultations with regional hub champions during the 2018 IRR. Counterpart, CIVICUS, and the consultant worked over the next year to customize and iterate the Developmental Evaluation approach with the Hub champions. Figure 16 depicts the Developmental Evaluation process in action and the activities and tools used by the regional hubs at each phase.

32 http://csiilearn.org/#/analysis?_k=5efd2
33 https://usaidlearninglab.org/sites/default/files/resource/files/85_-_dai_-_global_-_the_civil_society_innovation_initiatives_process_historian_approach_to_cla.pdf
35 https://www.devex.com/jobs/development-evaluation-consultant-innovation-for-change-program-525772
Developmental Evaluation activities proved useful for the regional hubs when preparing Governance Board briefings, generating storytelling content about activities, and informing data-drive decision making among regional hub teams. Counterpart created informational content about Developmental Evaluation such as data collection tools, processes for participatory data interpretation and analysis, podcasts and video series, and a community of practice.

The regional hub Developmental Evaluation Champions are deciding how to adapt the process moving forward, with CIVICUS in an oversight and support role. Counterpart’s lessons-learned about the methodology and sustainability of the Developmental Evaluation are presented below.

### METHODOLOGICAL LESSONS LEARNED

- Double the timeline and add more resources for non-traditional evaluation, learning, and adaptive management approaches. They take more time to learn and implement effective than traditional approaches. This likely would have supported faster maturation of skills progresses and that sustainability is more likely.

- Having the Hub Developmental Evaluation champions determine the evaluation facets (civic space challenges, network development, innovation, governance, impact) meant that they found value in and could use the analysis to inform and influence hub leadership, strategy, and Governance Board decisions.

- The approach would have been more effective if greater attention and time was focused on engaging and coaching hub champions in the process rather than documenting the process as a reporting deliverable.

- Counterpart and CIVICUS utilized staff with Developmental Evaluation experience which proved critical for developing user-friendly, flexible tools for the hubs. However, they were not effectively utilized to help raise awareness and buy-in among the Helper Hub team or participate in capacity building of hub champions.

### SUSTAINABILITY LESSONS LEARNED

- A co-created and iterative approach was effective for buy-in and a focus on capacity building and mentorship of hub Developmental Evaluation champions was critical to success.

- The insights, content, and data generated by Developmental Evaluation activities could have been used by a larger group of people for more purposes if the hub directors and Helper Hub points of contact had been engaged throughout the process.

- Each regional hubs progressed at different speeds in their Developmental Evaluation journey. Variations are linked to differences in the hub’s baseline capacity, level of engagement with the Consultant, and whether the hub champion was responsible for multiple critical roles in their hub’s operations.
PART 5: LESSONS LEARNED

The CSII project achieved the goal of creating a strong, diverse, responsive, and self-reliant network of civil society hubs. The regional hubs lead themselves and are connected to each other through their relationships, shared vision and values, and a Global Governance Circle.

The network continues to solidify their regional and network-wide sustainability strategies. Donor funding for hub operations will be critical in the next two years while the regional hubs pursue these strategies. The regional hubs have matured and grown significantly in the last four years, and donors can engage them as partners in tracking and responding to restricted civic space challenges. Counterpart offers the following reflections for USAID.

- **Five years is not sufficient to co-design and develop a fully sustainable global civil society network.** The longer co-creation period meant there was less time for implementation than initially envisioned. Cultivating trust takes time, building regional connections requires in-person interaction, and the physical and digital safety risks to civil society actors in restricted spaces requires a great deal of patience and sensitivity when deciding how to track and report on network activities.

- **Co-creation is essential for self-reliance.** Maintaining the momentum and principles of co-creation throughout has been essential to the ownership and commitment of the regional hubs. The focus on civil society leadership, flexibility with branding and marketing, and regional hub's adaptiveness to their civic space priorities was critical for the innovations and activities that emerged from the hubs.

- **Implementing partner relationships and decision-making matters.** The Helper Hub did not have a prime within the implementing partner consortium because of how USAID and Sida issued awards in the first stage of the co-creation process. Though having one workplan and division of roles and responsibilities was effective for the Helper Hub as an entity, this was difficult to maintain at the organizational level because of operational and managerial challenges. Each organization had different donor reporting and compliance requirements, and decision making was difficult when consensus could not be reached or leadership opinions diverged.

- **The people are the process.** The success of the regional hubs is based largely on the people. In the first few years, most of the organizations and individuals in the hubs were volunteers. There is a limit to what can be achieved when dealing with turnover and burn-out. As the hubs matured, there were more resources, which mitigated the impact of personnel changes.

- **Network-based capacity development approach.** Counterpart experimented with new approaches, tools, and processes for building capacity and connections of the regional hubs in a network structure. The regional hub operations and performance improved and grew stronger and more sustainable over four years. USAID could further examine and experiment with this networked approach to capacity building.
ANNEXES

Annex 1: The Top 7 Civic Space Challenges Faced by the I4C Network

Annex 2: Networked Innovation: Collective Impact for Civic Space, final learning event session summaries
Annex 1: Top 7 Civic Space Challenges Faced by the I4C Network

TOP 7 CIVIC SPACE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE I4C NETWORK

The past five years have not been kind to civic space defenders. Today, public freedoms of speech, assembly, and association are more constricted than they have been for many years. Members of Innovation for Change – a global network of civil society organizations (CSOs), activists, journalists, and technologists – work tirelessly to reverse the steady global restriction of civic freedoms.

In 2014, Counterpart International was awarded a component of the “Innovation for Change Program,” or “I4C” -- to network organizations in closing civic spaces and provide peer-to-peer support. Since that time, Counterpart and our partners, CIVICUS and the Tides Foundation, have seen our colleagues in the I4C network face a number of civic space challenges. This list highlights the issues that they face today, drawing from interviews and reporting of network members and an analysis of the problems they tackled in the innovation gallery, the I4C’s catalogue of innovative actions and activities.

7. GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

One of the most powerful tools authoritarian governments have to protect themselves from accountability is legislation that restrict CSOs. At Networked Innovation in January 2020, Africa Hub member Charles Vandyck outlined how governments around the globe are learning from each other and passing legislation restricting CSOs access to funding,
creating an onerous registration process, curtailing protests and targeting particular groups and minorities, increasing surveillance on the operations of civil society, and passing public order acts, as well as legislation authorizing the interception of communications in the name of security.

To address this issue, network members have campaigned to overturn or prevent the passage of local restrictive laws, researched and documented the spread of these laws on a regional level, and planned the creation of regional think tanks to create opposing pressure on governments.

6. CITIZEN MISTRUST OF CIVIL SOCIETY
Many CSOs and actors experience mistrust from the public, not just their governments. This creates a cyclical challenge in which civil society struggles to mobilize the population, and struggles to achieve sustainability through support from local audiences.

“The public doesn’t stand in solidarity with CSOs,” says Rajae Boujnah, Manager of the MENA hub. “People need to know about us and [the] things that civil society [have done], - laws for participatory democracy - but the people don’t know this was our role in making this happen.”

“...In [Latin America and the Caribbean] we don’t trust institutions,” says Guillermo Correa, of the LAC hub, head of the Argentinian nonprofit RACI, and CIVICUS Board Member=. “... We don’t trust the government and we don’t trust NGOs. Thus, people don’t make donations to NGOs because they don’t know of the money will go to the beneficiaries.”
Efforts by the I4C network to build public faith in civil society include transparency projects like Plataforma Para Transparencia in Guatemala and public awareness campaigns in Morocco and Iraq.

5. LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY
Solidarity between actors is a key component of any successful movement. But today, many CSOs struggle to find common ground or ways to coordinate and combine efforts or information even when they share a common objective. To adapt to this, hubs have spent a lot of effort dedicated to building local networks. Boujnah shares that the MENA hub dedicated a great deal of effort to the “regional collaboration model and explaining to CSOs a new approach of implementing projects based on collective inputs and co-creation. This created a lot of frustration in the early stages [of the MENA Hub] given the time and efforts it consumed but it ultimately played a huge role in the network's growth and maturity.” Coordination and connection between civil society has been a primary focus of the Central Asia hub. The hub has invested heavily in their TechBootCamp model to bring together technical and non-technical members, and they host an annual Innovation Festival to bring civil society actors together across regions, generations, and sectors to exchange information and ideas.

4. LACK OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION
When CSOs lack information, particularly public information, it’s difficult to campaign or advocate for the government to change things. Many of the grant proposals Counterpart received the years highlighted civil society’s lack of access to information, whether it is data about attacks on minority populations or the frequency with which the government blocks access to critical media websites. A good dataset and publicly available information can transform an incident or anecdote into an example of broader trends.

Agencia Presentes developed an open dataset on attacks against the LGBTQ+ community in Argentina.
Even when governments are interested in making available data that is relevant to civil society, it can be a struggle to get quality information on matters of public interest. “Not all government agencies are aware of importance of publishing data online,” said one Innovation For Change network member. “Most often, they employ older generation specialists who consider newspapers as the main source of information and provide access to information only upon request.” Because of this, many projects Counterpart funded focus on data capture, research to fill information gaps, and building more reference points for public campaigns. Innovation for Change members have developed databases about attacks against LGBT+ communities (Argentina), tracked internet shutdowns (Tajikistan), and developed websites to showcase both government (Kyrgyzstan) and civil society (Guatemala) spending and activities.

3. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION CAPACITY
The world is an increasingly complicated place, and CSOs need to develop more skills and capacities in order to succeed. “Capacity building is number one for sure,” said Mouna Ben Garga, the lead of the CIVICUS team dedicated to supporting the Innovation for Change network. CSOs need to be able to handle everything from managing operations, to collecting and managing data, to handling digital security, and innovating in their processes, or they risk falling behind and failing to meet their objectives.

To that end, much of the Innovation For Change network's efforts have been dedicated to measuring CSO capacity and making concrete improvements. The Afghan CSO Poshesh developed the Civil Society Innovation Index to help CSOs identify ways they can innovate better. Makaia developed a service for measuring and building an organization's digital transformation. Wingo's service measures digital skill capacity and recommends tools and skills to acquire. ICD and Transparencia por Colombia even created tool to measure and improve CSO accountability in order to improve trust. By creating resources for improving capacity, network members can help each other to improve.

2. INTERNET FREEDOM RESTRICTIONS
From the restriction of freedom expression online, to censorship and intimidation, mass surveillance of citizens online, civil society faces a new era of Digital Authoritarianism. As governments seek to control their citizens through technology, CSOs struggle to act, coordinate, and communicate safely. In an age when websites are blocked and messages are monitored, CSOs aren’t sure how to work together to campaign, what information they can send safely, or where they can upload their files. Last year, as the Central Asia hub’s Innovation Festival took place in Kazakhstan, government Internet shutdowns hampered the coverage of violent suppression of protests outside.

Much of the work of Innovation for Change network has been to prepare for the threats of the digital world. Network members have organized almost 30 digital security trainings for nearly 450 people across MENA, South, Central, and East Asia. Citizens have learned to use better tools and better practices to navigate a difficult world.

1. SUSTAINABILITY
CSOs have long struggled to diversify their funding streams and achieve sustainability in their journey to self-reliance. CSOs often lack the capacity to develop clear, well-thought-out proposals for funding. International politics also play
a role. A major source of income for many CSO has been funding from foreign donors – either traditional government and foundation bodies, or funds obtained through online donations from international networks. Governments have increasingly sought to clamp down on foreign contributions to local nonprofits, claiming such funding makes them instruments of external powers and undermining recipient legitimacy.

To address financial pressures, network members have used a variety of methods. Social Innovations Advisory (SIA) in East Asia, WASC in Africa, and SMEX in MENA have each created guides and other documents related to fundraising. SIA created a number of repository of case studies and a guide for obtaining alternative sources finance. WASC created a similar guidebook for the Africa context, and SMEX developed an overview of the state of crowdfunding in MENA. Other organizations have taken a different tack – Innpactia created a Project Writing Wizard that guides young organizations in developing proposals.

CONCLUSION
It is not easy being part of an organization defending civic space in the world today, but members of the Innovation for Change network and CSOs around the world are working hard to try to make the world a better place.
In January 2020, twelve members of the Innovation for Change (I4C) network convened in Washington D.C. to share how the Innovation for Change network has developed into a sustaining, innovative network over the past five years. As the final I4C event in which Counterpart International participated, the activity also served as a learning event where network members would recount their hub's unique challenges and how they have responded to address them over time. These session summaries offer discussions highlights from I4C members during the event and include links to presentations from the event.

Link to event presentations and Link to event speakers

**DAY ONE SESSION SUMMARIES**

**KEYNOTE: CIVIC SPACE IN AFRICA AND THE ROLE OF THE AFRICA HUB**

**SPEAKER: CHARLES VANDYCK, HEAD, CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT UNIT, WACSI**

View VanDyck' Keynote on Civic Space in Africa slides

Charles VanDyck explored the state of civic space in West Africa. The global trend of deteriorating civic space is especially visible in West Africa, where more than eighty-eight percent of the population lives in “obstructed” civic space or worse. In a context where NGOs are controlled through increasingly restrictive legislation, digital and internet restrictions enable government spying, and human rights defenders are openly attacked, West African civil society struggles to make an impact. In response, the Innovation for Change Africa Hub facilitates ideas, solidarity and social innovations. Through activities like the Social Innovation Challenge – the Africa Hub launched five pilot projects to improve transparency and accountability and natural resource management. Hub member West Africa Civil Society Institute (WASCI) developed a guidebook on alternative funding models that it is promoting among civil society organizations in Africa. Funding models are only part of the equation for sustainability. “Financial resources are great, but we need commitment.” said VanDyck. “I’ve seen in the network a lot of commitment and this is needed.”
TED TALKS: STORIES OF INNOVATION IN RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS
LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: CHINA’S FOREIGN NGO LAW AND CIVIL SOCIETY’S RESPONSE IN MOBILIZING LOCAL FUNDING
SPEAKER: SHAWN SHIEH, SIA AND ICNL, EAST ASIA HUB

The 2016 Foreign NGO Law had a dramatic impact on civil society in China, according to Shawn Shieh, director of Social Innovations Advisory, LTD. (SIA). He went on to set out the ways the passage of the law impacted civil society. Before the law, there was relatively little government supervision of foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their activities in China. Afterwards, government oversight of international bodies was intensified; all foreign NGOs had to find a local organization to partner with, there had to be a paper trail of all activities with the police. NGOs were directed to work towards government priorities of poverty relief, child education, and infrastructure, and away from such topics as labor, legal aid, women empowerment, and LGBT rights.

As a result of this, civil society organizations in China have adapted their funding models. In 2009, civil society mainly depended on international funding. In 2019, civil society in China now primarily depends on local funding. Wealthy donors, local foundations, government funds, and social enterprise models have all gained in popularity. On the plus side, this means that Chinese civil society has adapted to changing circumstances, but civil society orgs are structurally and politically pressured from working outside the government’s focus.

BRANDING CSOS AS TERRORISTS: CHANGING THE PERCEPTIONS OF CSO IN CIVIC SPACE:
“ALL PEOPLE ACT TOGETHER” MENA HUB CAMPAIGN
SPEAKER: RAJAE BOUJNAH, MENA HUB

Rajae Boujnah, the manager of the Innovation for Change MENA Hub, discussed how civil society organizations in her region are responding to negative public perceptions of civil society. Because civil society organizations often operate with the support of foreign money, there is a perception that they are “working for foreign interests and donors, not working on the nation’s interests.” This is exacerbated by the apparent lack of accountability structures in the MENA “[CSOs] get funding, but how are they really accountable?” asked Boujnah, “It is not clear to people that we have our own control mechanisms and structures. This is something we need to address in our narratives with the public.”

According to Boujnah, the MENA hub is adapting to this reality in two ways. First, by highlighting the benefits of civil society mobilization through awareness campaigns. “People need to know about us and so many things that civil society did - laws for participatory democracy - but the people don’t know this was our role in making this happen.” The MENA Hub is organizing awareness campaigns in Morocco, Iraq, and Bahrain to this effect. Moving forward, the hub will also push the media to engage the public in CSO’s initiatives, seeking to strengthen the public’s engagement from the policy matters in which they actually are aligned with civil society.
ACCESSING AND MOBILIZING FUNDING: OBSTACLES TO ACCESSING FUNDING FOR CSOS IN CIVIC SPACE
SPEAKER: JUAN LOZANO, INNPECTIA, LAC HUB

Juan Lozano, the CEO of Colombia-based social enterprise Innpectia, spoke about the need for civil society to shift their financing strategies. “Willingness is very powerful,” said Lozano, “but willfulness is not enough. Great imagination and creativity are happening with very limited resources. But over the years, I have seen have civil society has gotten used to working with limited resources. It has resulted in bad contracting habits many times. Bad talent management and human resources.” Lozano described resourcing as “a new form of closing civic space.”

Among other things, Lozano advocated that civil society needs to shift its model for generating revenue. Civil society organizations typically get funding to do a task, then plan and execute on the task. Lozano proposed that CSOs should be designing a plan, obtaining funding, and developing partners in achieving the task for sustainability. He pointed to the example of a small nonprofit that had been supported by Innpectia. “Guaicaramo was 2-years old [and] didn’t have much funding, but before they turned five years old, they influenced the planning of the municipal budget in a small town with a huge rehabilitation challenge between government and ex-combatants. They partnered with Loyola and 1.3 million people who belong to indigenous communities.” Lozano drove home the point that new financing models and partnerships are needed for civil society to be effective.

SIT-DOWN SPEED GEEKING
In this section, speakers from across the I4C network sat down with guests to rapidly share how they’ve innovated to address civic space challenges in their regions. Participants rotated to different tables every ten minutes to get a brief overview of the innovations launched in the network and to have a conversation about those innovations.

ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD—RAJAE BOIJNAH, MENA HUB
The MENA hub developed a tool made with freely accessible code to make it possible for people to access information on public policy and the implementation status of projects, improving government accountability. The Accountability Dashboard will be published in February 2020 and first employed at the municipal level in Tunisia.

WE-ENGAGE: SOCIAL INNOVATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY – JENNIFER ACIKO, HUB AFRIQUE
In 2018 the Africa Hub organized a small grants program focused on the themes of transparency and accountability for natural resource management, funding five small pilot projects. One of the submitted projects by SEMA, made it possible to anonymously report on interactions with police, especially focusing on instances of police corruption. The police used the data to pinpoint both bad and good actors. The pilot project will be scaled up and has been incorporated in the 2020 government budget. 20 police stations will be added and offices in the judiciary will test the services.
PROJECT-WRITING WIZARD – JUAN CARLOS LOZANO, INNPACTIA, LAC HUB

Juan Lozano presented Innpactia’s project writing wizard, a tool incorporated into Innpactia’s website – to help anyone looking for funding to drafting a proposal through a series of prompted questions. So far 86 projects have been formulated using the tool - after 100 have been submitted, Innpactia will conduct a review of the quality of proposal and, based on the analysis, adapt the tool. Innpactia has obtained the support of the Ford Foundation to translate the tool from Spanish into English.

USING RESEARCH TO SUPPORT CIVIL SOCIETY – BATSUGAR TSEDENDAMBA, CENTRAL ASIA HUB

Batsugar Tsedendamba highlighted the ability of research to support civil society efforts to protect civic space. In 2019 the government of Mongolia attempted to pass legislation aimed at curtailing civil society, claiming that that NGOs and CSOs are a threat and are money laundering. IRIM conducted research on civil society and conducted a campaign to highlight the function of civil society. The bill was defeated and IRIM is helping to draft a law defining civil society.

USING INNOVATION EVENTS TO EXTEND CIVIC SPACE – PHILIP REICHMUTH, CENTRAL ASIA HUB

Phillip presented the various models employed by the Central Asia Hub to facilitate the exchange of innovative practices. Phillip Reichmuth presented the various models employed by the Central Asia Hub to facilitate the exchange of innovative practices. One example of a format the hub uses is TechBootcamps, which are one to two-day events that bring together NGOs to learn new tools and skills, including project management, to do their work. Innovation For Change Central Asia also organizes a flagship event call Innovation Festival, a multi-day event held in Almaty that bring together anywhere between 500 and 5,000 participants to showcase innovations, invent new approaches through hackathons and to participate in cultural activities. The approaches that Central Asia uses have diffused throughout the network and have been adopted by other network members. For example, the Latin America and Caribbean Hub (LAC Hub) has replicated the TechBootcamp and Innovation Lab format in their own work.

IYOUWE CAMPAIGN – SOUTH ASIA HUB REPRESENTATIVE

Elections in Pakistan are frequently marked by violence. The IYouWe campaign used an online pledge and organizing using Crimson Hexagon, a social media analysis services made available by the Helper Hub. The PakVotes project crowdsourced citizen reports on instances of violence in the recent Pakistan elections.
TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Format of the session: During this session, network members presented five-minute pitches on local technology solutions, then divided into breakout discussions to have direct interaction with event participants.

FREE AND OPEN SOURCE TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION – DEREK CAELIN, HELPER HUB

Derek Caelin, Innovation Specialist for Counterpart International, shared the data collection, aggregation, and analysis tools deployed by the Helper Hub to track activities and innovations as they diffused across the network.

THE TECHBOOTCAMP MODEL – PHILIPP REICHMUTH, CENTRAL ASIA HUB

The Central Asia Hub’s Philipp Reichmuth shared this format for bringing together technical and non-technical actors to learn new skills and processes for project managing.

CIRCUMVENTION TECHNOLOGIES AND CHALLENGES – SOUTH ASIA HUB REPRESENTATIVE

A representative from the South Asia Hub stated that CSO safety in an era of surveillance and cyber-attacks required both policy and technological solutions. This speaker hosted a breakout discussion on the use of VPNs and other cyber circumvention tools.

THE USE OF CROWDFUNDING AND FINTECH IN MENA – SHUROUQ QAWARIQ, MENA HUB

Shorouq Qawariq shared some interesting facts, in the form of questions, about fintech in the MENA region. Some of the questions included: Did you know that it is illegal to even share that one is looking to raise resources on Facebook in the UAE? That financial data in MENA is generally owned by institutions, not by individuals? Qawariq’s talk dove deeper into Fintech tools.

SCALING UP SHARING ECONOMY MODELS FOR SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY – RAJAE BOUJNAH, MENA HUB

Rajae Boujnah shared how the MENA Hub was learning from the experience of the LAC hub’s sharing economy platform Communidades to develop a similar platform, Tabadool, in the MENA region, which is adapted for the local context.
**Panel: Network Sustainability for I4C**

Diversification of Funding Sources: The Golden Triangle of Financial Sustainability and I4C – Juan Lozano, INNPACTIA, LAC Hub

[View Network Sustainability for I4C slides]

Juan Lozano shared a number of different strategies that could be used by the I4C hubs to generate funding. Outside the traditional model of grants, hubs can use membership fees, philanthropy, individual fundraising, and crowdfunding. Membership fees are a particularly useful mechanism for defraying or providing operational costs. It is important to be clear about what services members receive. Lozano also outlined how hubs could become part of the grants pipeline of a team of donors; he proposed a model for regional hubs to become central actors in fundraising – ensuring hub-lead decision-making and inclusion.

**Inter-Sectoral Network and Its Design: Initiating Inter-Sectoral Collaboration & Designing a Sustainable Network – Ehsan ShayeGan, PRSO, Central Asia Hub**

[View Inter-Sectoral Network Design slides]

Ehsan ShayeGan explored different models for networks and recommended that I4C follow an “intersectoral network approach” – a collaboration between civil society, the private sector, and government. “The design of a network is important,” said ShayeGan. “The network design determines whether the network will succeed or fail…Strong, collaborative networks can increase efficiency, cut costs, improve outcomes, and help develop relationships internally and externally which will benefit the organization.”

Image: Provan and Kenis outline three forms of network structure: self-governance, lead organizations governance, and network administrative organization governance.
LOCAL SOLUTIONS FROM THE I4C NETWORK: IDEAS FROM IRR AND WAYS TO ADDRESS CHINA’S GROWING INFLUENCE – SHAWN SHIEH (EAST ASIA HUB) AND GUILLERMO CORREA (LAC HUB)

Shieh and Guillermo Correa presented on the results of a brainstorm session held during the November 2019 Inter-Regional Retreat (IRR). This session focused on ways to make the network viable to foundation and corporate partners. In this session, network leadership proposed to leverage the network members’ expertise and engagement.

Image: A mind map produced at IRR 2019 that explored how to build the network’s appeal to foundations and corporations.

PANEL: RESEARCH-POWERED CIVIC SPACE RESPONSES

This session’s objective was to share key applied research being done in the I4C network, much of it receiving both technical and grant support from the Helper Hub.

EXPLORING CITIZEN PRIORITIES: ARE CITIZEN PRIORITIES AlIGNED WITH THE 2030 AGENDA? – GUILLERMO CORREA, RACI, LAC HUB

View Exploring Citizen Priorities slides

In this session Guillermo Correa reviewed a recent partnership between Argentine Network for International Cooperation (RACI) and Change.org. The online petition company provided RACI with a database of activities from Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico, which RACI staff reviewed to answer the question: “Is the big data that we have available showing progress against the Social Development Goals (SDGs)?”. RACI analyzed more than 3,500 petitions (engaged with by 39 million users in LAC from 3 countries) using the data to see where citizens were focused. Of the petitions analyzed, the SDGs #3 (Good health and wellbeing), #10 (reduced inequalities), #16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) were prioritized by citizens. According to RACI, their research demonstrated that governments in the three countries were focused on #10 (reduced inequalities).
KNOWLEDGE SHARING BETWEEN CSOS AND THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY – GUILLERMO CORREA, RACI, LAC HUB

The LAC region is faced with an unfriendly regulatory environment, lack of market adoption of digital payment methods (e.g. debit cards not widespread), and lack of knowledge of cryptocurrencies and digital payments. However, says Correa, these challenges also provide an opportunity for the Innovation for Change network to be valuable actors. I4C could potentially provide e-learning on topics such as BlockChain, Finance, and FinTech through Coursera, coalition building between entrepreneurs and civil society, entry to the sharing economy by allowing for profits to access platforms like MENA’s Tabadol, where CSOs can leverage their policy advocacy expertise and knowledge of institutional challenges.

ALTERNATIVE OR HYBRID FUNDING AND BUSINESS MODELS: BUILDING THE ROADMAP TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR RIGHTS-BASED CSOS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH – SHAWN SHIEH, EAST ASIA HUB

View Alternative or Hybrid Funding and Business Model slides

Shieh presented on his research into how various nonprofits have diversified their funding models. His research generated sixteen case studies of CSOs with alternative financing models in the Asia-Pacific region. One key question from Shieh’s research was, “Can new business and funding models that CSOs are exploring – for local and self-funding - can they strengthen CSO accountability and legitimacy?” His findings indicated that yes, deriving funding from local sources - or even from the recipients of support - increased their perception of legitimacy and the seriousness with which people engaged in their services.

DIGITAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX AND USING RESEARCH TO CREATE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX – BATSUGAR TSEDENDAMBA, IRIM, CENTRAL ASIA HUB

View Digital Transparency Index slides

Batsugar Tsedendamba’s organization IRIM determined that there was a gap in existing transparency indices which made it difficult to analyze the results. IRIM developed a new transparency analysis approach, looking at transparency from an Institutional, demand-supply, and organizational perspective. Their pilot project was implemented in Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.

CIVIL SOCIETY INNOVATION INDEX (CSI) – EHSAN SHAYEGAN, PRSO, CENTRAL ASIA HUB

View Civil Society Innovation Index (CSI) slides

Shayegan spoke about Porsesh’s work in developing an index for assessing the innovativeness of organizations. There are two forms of questionnaires - one that can be done by a CSO itself, and one by an external evaluator. The framework examines various elements of an organization, from their communication tools to the openness of the
organization’s management style. PRSO is seeking to expand the index beyond the pilot stage and broadly assess the CSO membership of the Central Asia Hub.

**PANEL: ADVANTAGES OF A NETWORKED APPROACH TO RESPONDING TO CIVIC SPACE CHALLENGES**

**SPEAKERS:** NOEL DICKOVER (HELPER HUB), JAMILA AZIZOVA (CENTRAL ASIA HUB), JENNIFER ACIKO (AFRICA HUB)

The panelists explored how the Innovation for Change network model has enabled them to address civic space issues that have emerged over the past five years. Over time, the network became more locally driven, focusing on priorities in each region while remaining unified in the mission of the broader network. Jamila Azizova pointed out that Central Asia hub used to be a component of the South Asia hub – it formed in response to the individual needs of the Central Asia region. Jennifer Aciko remarked that the Africa hub now consists of sub-regions (east, west, south, and north) and are now even exploring having national chapters.

**DAY TWO SESSION SUMMARIES**

**VIDEO: MOTHERS OF DRAGONS**

**SPEAKER:** SHAWN SHIEH, SIA, EAST ASIA HUB

Speaking on behalf of Corinna Lopa, Shieh revealed the East Asia’s “Mothers of Dragons,” a video series dedicated to recounting the stories of activist women in the network. The video showcases interviews with Asiah Abd Jalil, Bernice Chauly, Mahi Ramakrishnan, Nadia Gideon are campaigners for LBGT and women’s rights in their various communities in Malaysia.
PANEL: EMERGING BIG PICTURE TRENDS FOR 2020 FOR CIVIC SPACE
SPEAKERS: JENNIFER ACIKO (AFRICA HUB), MOUNA BEN GARGA (HELPER HUB), SHAWN SHIEH (EAST ASIA HUB)

Guillermo Correa began the panel with an inciting question: the world is faced with resurgent authoritarianism, an increasingly influential China mobilizing through the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), disinformation, and global institutions seemingly no longer fit for their purpose. How can the Innovation for Change network respond?

The panelists identified several areas for engagement. Jamila Azizova talked about the need to improve CSO capacity and raise awareness of the influence of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (China is the fourth largest investor in Argo’s home country, Kazakhstan, totaling 55 projects in 2019 with relatively little visibility to the public.)

Shawn Shieh agreed that the BRI program needs careful examination “because they [the Chinese government] tend to invest in the lowest common denominator” which “tends to encourage corruption”. He further emphasized the need for civil society to adopt alternative funding models. “When I was doing my research on alternative funding models,” Shieh said. “I found that the way that organizations got funding changed their local perception of legitimacy.”

Jennifer Aciko talked about the Africa hub’s plans to encourage solidarity between various civil society organizations within their network by facilitating joint campaigns against restrictive laws for civil society, harmful cyber laws, and laws that lead to unchecked surveillance.

A WINDOW INTO HONG KONG
SPEAKERS: JOHNSON YEUNG CHING YIN, URGENT APPEAL COORDINATOR & CAMPAIGNER, CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN, AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HK

Johnson Yeung Ching Yin provided an overview of the objectives, tactics, and current status of the Hong Kong protest movement. During a Q&A period participants, Johnson’s analysis emphasized the power of the decentralized nature of the movement, which in Hong Kong has enabled protesters to geographically disperse (making it more difficult for the regime to suppress them) and to spread out the task of identifying trusted actors and spoilers. Johnson also focused on the role of technology - with an online forum like LIFHK allowing users to anonymously plan activities, live maps of police activities helping protesters avoid tear gas, and Vote4.hk allowing citizens to mobilize and advocate with their elected representatives.

FUTURE DIRECTION AND NEEDS OF THE I4C NETWORK
SPEAKERS: RAJAE BOUJNAH (MENA HUB), CHARLES VANDYCK (AFRICA HUB), ANONYMOUS VANDYCK, SOUTH ASIA HUB MEMBER

Representatives from the MENA, Africa, and South Asia hubs reflected on the changing nature of civic space across the world, things that need to be addressed and ways to support the I4C network do their work.
Rajae Boujnah stated that one of the MENA Hub’s objectives was to formally register Innovation For Change as an organization in the countries in which it operates. This will also enable them to focus on digital currencies and facilitating the sharing economy.

The South Asia hub member reflected on the need for maturing the network’s institutions, given the changing realities on the ground. The need for this is considerable, as the Internet continues to fracture into separate domains regulated respectively by the U.S., Russia, and China.

VanDyck highlighted the need to constantly update the network’s governance models. He reiterated the funding challenges – ones that were a focus at this event – that are always present. He is interested in adopting alternative models that may replace traditional donor funding. For VanDyck, this process of changing funding models will take time, but it is important for diversifying the sustainability of the network.