

Strategy and Planning Tool for Civil Society Measures in Acute Crises

Manual: Instructions and Examples

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Four Analytical Steps

The aim of this tool is to support donors to strategically develop portfolios of measures to support civil society actors in a country or region. The tool comprises four analytical steps that logically build on each other. The analysis should be applied in crisis contexts characterized by a high degree of political instability (e.g., in the course of democratization or autocratization processes) and typically by a strong presence of physical violence as a means of political contestation. This handbook is accompanied by a set of templates (in Word) to be filled in.

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Analysis of the Crisis Context

1

Goal: This step reduces the complex crisis context to its most important aspects.

Approach

Dynamic crisis contexts are difficult to capture completely. The analysis therefore concentrates on understanding the main lines of conflict and their most important characteristics: actors, the scope of physical violence as well as a geographic focus. The analysis helps to fundamentally understand the conflict and thus enables a focused discussion of which dynamics, if any, can be influenced by the organization's own activities. It also sharpens the view of the role that civil society actors ("CS actors") play in the specific crisis context and helps to identify room for maneuver as well as risks in promoting civil society activities.

Instructions

Please fill in the columns for all relevant conflict lines (including political conflicts) of the crisis context. You can add as many lines as you like.

Example

Table 1: Analysis of the Crisis Context

Conflict Lines	Actors	Scope of Physical Violence	Geographic Focus
Attacks of jihadist groups	JNIM, ISGS etc. vs. Malian and foreign soldiers	High	North and Central Mali; increasingly Bamako; Liptako-Gourma region

Notes on the Columns

Conflict lines: Short description of the conflict, e.g. "X against Y." This serves to clearly distinguish between the individual conflict lines. A possible overlap with the information in the subsequent "Actors" column is unproblematic.

Actors: Key actors in the respective conflicts. Compared to the "Conflict lines" column, actors can be captured more granularly at this point. With regard to civil society promotion, potential connections with CS actors can become visible.

Scope of physical violence: Physical violence in connection with the individual lines of conflict

can vary in its intensity, from "non-existent" to "very high," and can occur both widespread and sporadically. This information helps to classify conflict lines with a view to ensuring the immediate physical safety of the population. With regard to civil society support, the security situation is decisive for the scope of action for external support.

Geographic focus: City or region of conflict. This information helps to develop localized civil society measures with a view to relevant conflict lines and risks.

Analysis of Civil Society Actors and Their Impact Logics

Goal: This step maps the relevant civil society groups according to the impact logics of their activities, their policy relevance, and outreach.

Approach

“Civil society” is always a diverse category representing a wide range of different actors. The range of different types of CS actors can, for example, include non-governmental organizations, trade unions, the media, religious and faith-based groups, diasporas, activists, grassroots groups, and research institutions. Moreover, CS actors pursue different logics of action, whose relevance and effectiveness in influencing conflict dynamics can vary greatly depending on the context. Despite this diversity, civil society activities with direct political relevance can typically be grouped into five categories: (1) mobilization; (2) lobbying; (3) idea generation; (4) monitoring; and (5) civic education. Some CS actors also provide services to society as a whole or to specific social groups, sometimes as implementers of donor-funded measures. The latter activities are relevant here only when a link to political conflict dynamics is evident. To support the development of impact-oriented measures (➔ Step 4), the typology of impact mechanisms is used here as a primary

Figure 1: Impact Logics of Civil Society Actors



organizing criterion. In cases where CS actors pursue multiple impact logics, they should be assigned to the most relevant category. In addition to their identification and categorization, the analysis step captures key attributes of civil society actors that are particularly important for evaluating potential funding: goals, geographic focus of activities, degree of formal organization, capacity, legitimacy, civic space, and any fundamental reservations about cooperating with them.

Instructions

2.1

Identify CS actors or groups of CS actors (e.g., trade unions) that are working along the different logics of impact (lobbying, mobilization, monitoring, idea generation, and civic education) and enter them accordingly in the first column.

2.2

Fill in the table for all relevant CS actors. Depending on the number of CS actors, you might add or remove rows.

Example

Table 2: Analysis of Civil Society Actors and Their Impact Logics

CS Actor	Goals	Geographic Focus	Degree of Formalization	Capacity	Legitimacy	Civic Space	Reservations Against Cooperation
CIVIC EDUCATION							
Actor A	Improvement of governance and human security	Countrywide	Registered NGO	High organizational capacities; low personnel and financial capacities	High	Open	No reservations
MONITORING							
Actor B	Promotion of public discourse; watchdog of international & national actors	Countrywide; digital	Not registered	Low	To be verified	Restricted	No reservations

Notes on the Columns

Civil society actor: Designation of a single CS actor or a civil society group comprising several similar CS actors. The designation serves to clearly distinguish the different CS actors.

Geographic focus: Location and/or region in which the CS actor is primarily active. The geographic focus of activities informs the reach and potential legitimacy of a CS actor.

Degree of formalization: Registration status, structure, legal and organizational form. The degree of formalization is decisive for the modalities of external support for and cooperation with a CS actor. Depending on the context, a non-registered CS actor, for example, may face additional obstacles in accepting external funding.

Capacity: Human, organizational and financial capacities as well as expertise. The purpose is to identify potential actors that are effective and to concretize their respective needs for potential support.

Legitimacy: Trust in and representation of the population. Legitimacy in the eyes of the population or population groups often cannot be clearly determined due to a lack of representative data; accordingly, the aim here is to make a rough assessment that is as evidence-based as possible. Low local legitimacy can significantly impair the impact of civil society activities. This does not necessarily mean that CS actors with

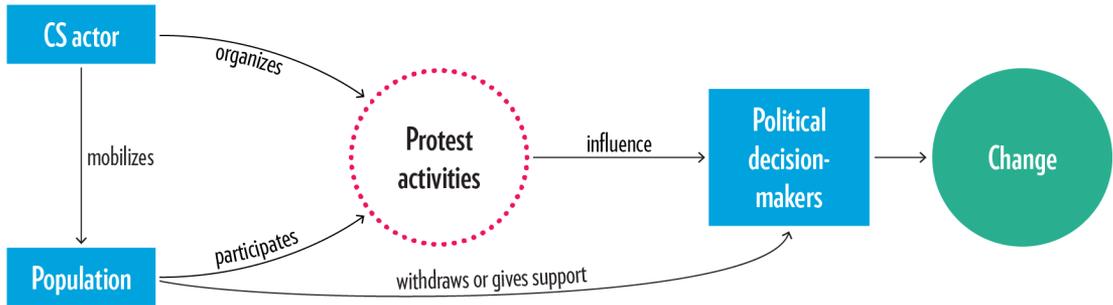
low legitimacy should be excluded from external support – but this aspect should be taken into account when designing support.

Civic space: Room to maneuver in order to carry out activities. The civic space can vary from “open” to “closed.” In an open civic space, a CS actor can carry out their activities without restrictions. In a closed civic space, on the other hand, a CS actor is systematically confronted with constraints imposed on its activities in the form of intimidation or repression (e.g., arrests, searches, or disappearances). The civic space can vary between different CS actors.

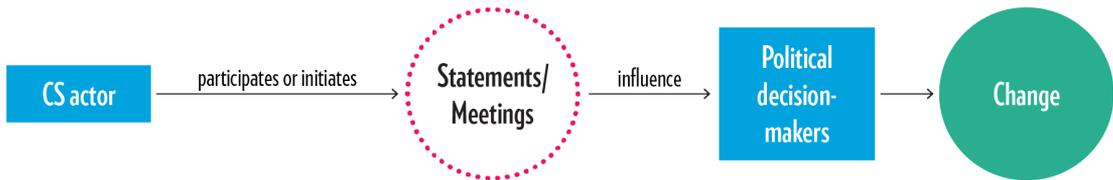
Reservations against cooperation: Essential considerations that exclude an actor from cooperation. Typical examples are a categorical position of the respective actor against foreign funding or substantial evidence that the actor is involved in harmful activities. Actors for whom such reservations are identified are not considered in further analysis.

Impact Logics of Civil Society Actors

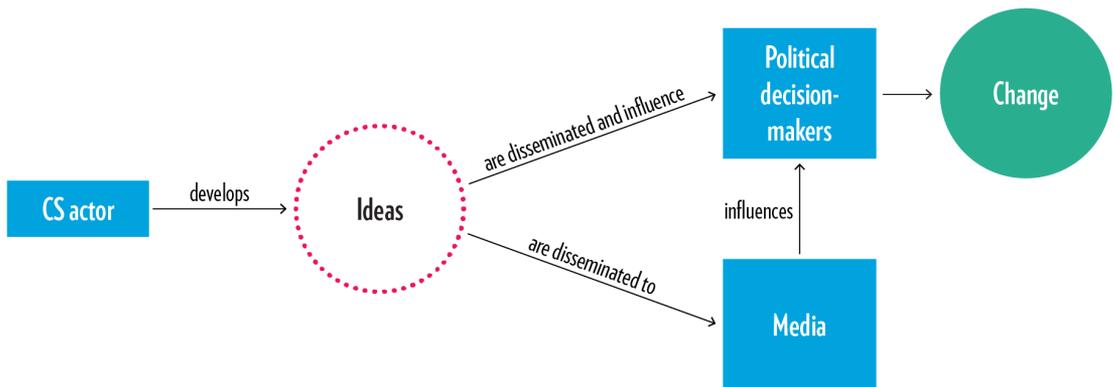
Mobilization: Civil society actors organize political pressure by orchestrating collective action with public participation, such as protests, boycott, strikes, or petitions. Political impact may be achieved by influencing relevant decision-makers, or by effecting changes in the political leadership of a country or region.



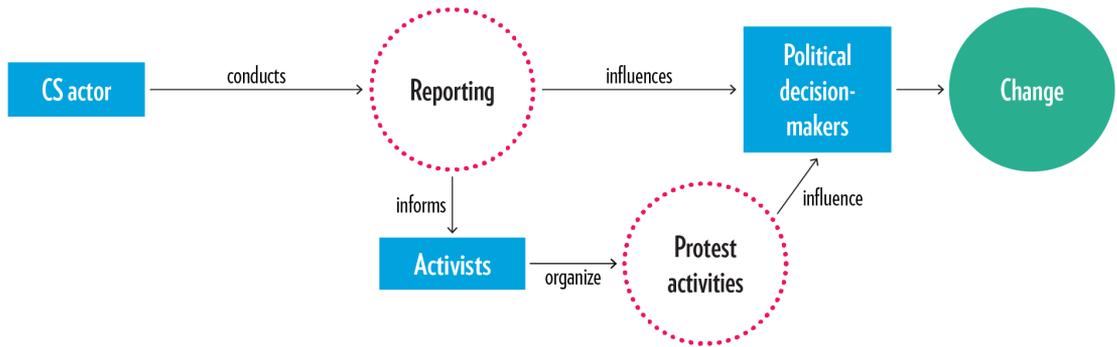
Lobbying: Civil society actors publish statements or organize meetings in order to influence decision-makers in favor of their agenda.



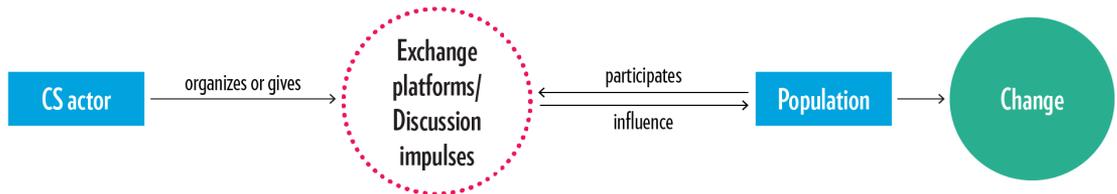
Idea generation: Civil society actors develop innovative ideas regarding political, economic or social issues and disseminate those via the media and/or directly among political decision-makers in order to influence the latter's thinking and behavior.



Monitoring: Civil society actors (e.g., independent and investigative media, watchdog NGOs, etc.) create transparency regarding political, economic or social issues and regarding the behavior of powerful actors. Their reporting may aim to influence decision-makers directly (as those will seek to avoid condemnation, reputational damage or pressure by international actors or political rivals) or indirectly by exposing wrongdoing that may feed into public mobilization. Either way, the objective is to push for adherence to existing laws or ethical principles.



Civic education: Civil society actors nurture democratic consciousness among the public by providing platforms for exchange or giving impulses for an informed and differentiated public debate that recognizes diverse positions.



Analysis of External Actors and Development of Concrete Goals

3

Goal: This step specifies concrete objectives for the area of civil society support on the side of the funding organization, based on the latter's overarching policy and strategic goals, and relates these to the engagement of other external actors.

Approach

Specific objectives for civil society support are an important prerequisite for ➔ Step 4. These objectives should be logically derived from or consistent with the overarching goals of an organization's engagement in a country. A comparison of one's own objectives with the engagement of other actors helps to coordinate activities if necessary and to understand to what extent measures of other actors may have a negative impact on one's own engagement. This comparison focuses on essential aspects of the respective engagement: political and strategic goals; scope of the engagement; scope and goals of previous civil society support, if applicable, as well as human and financial resources for civil society support.

Instructions

3.1

Please fill in ➔ Table 3 for your own organization. To develop concrete goals for civil society support, orientate yourself along the **impact logics** and write them in the column (e.g.; "**civic education:** strengthen democratic public discourse").

3.2

Fill in ➔ Table 3 for other relevant external actors. Select the type of external actor (e.g., other national actors, international partners, other international actors, etc.) and enter it in the rows provided. Depending on the number of external actors, you might add or remove lines.

3.3

With the help of ➔ Table 3, conduct two coherence checks:

1. Coherence of your organization's own *policy and strategic goals* with those of the other external actors.
2. Coherence of your own organization's *specific civil society support objectives* with those of other external actors.

If there is an overlap or complementarity, mark the cells green. If there are different priorities without recognizable intersections, mark the cells yellow. If the activities of the other external actor conflict with your own objectives, mark the cells orange.

Example

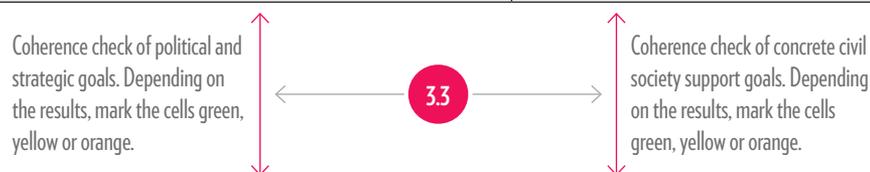
Table 3: Analysis of External Actors

3.1 Your Own Organization

Political and Strategic Goals	Concrete Goals for Civil Society Support
Combatting terrorism Political stability and political inclusion/democratization Limiting the influence of external actor A	<u>Civic education</u> : Preventing extremism, promoting democratic public discourse <u>mobilization</u> : Increase the reach of pro-democratic actors <u>monitoring</u> : Factchecking of “fake news” <u>Lobbying</u> : - <u>Idea generation</u> : -



3.2 Other External Actors



External Actor	Scope of Engagement in the Country/Region	Political and Strategic Goals	Scope and Goals of Previous Civil Society Support	Human and Financial Resources of Civil Society Support
OTHER NATIONAL ACTORS				
Actor B	Low	Strengthening democracy and political participation; freedom of expression and press, human rights	Support for trade unions, think tanks and NGOs; goal is to keep democratic institutions alive	Low
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS (e.g. EU, FR, US)				
Actor C	To be verified	Improving governance; stability and security	Civil society support not a primary goal; support to culture and art	To be verified
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTORS				
Actor D	To be verified	Economic and security cooperation; diplomatic support	Disinformation campaign	To be verified

Notes on the Columns

Political and strategic goals: Overarching goals for a country or region.

Concrete goals for civil society support: Based on the political and strategic goals, concrete goals of CS promotion are formulated along the impact pathways in order to develop impact-oriented measures.

External actor: The description of other national actors, international partners, and other international actors.

Scope of engagement in the country/region: The full extent of engagement (beyond civil society support) in a country or region. The level of engagement can vary from “low” to “high” and has implications for the role and ambition of the external actor in that country or region.

Scope and goals of previous civil society support: Current engagement in the area of civil society support, including goals, if applicable. The level of engagement can vary from “low” to “high” and has implications for the relevance of civil society funding in the overall engagement.

Human and financial resources: Resources that have been allocated to civil society support to this date. The amount can vary from “low” to “high.” If exact amounts are easily available, feel free to add them. This serves as another indicator to assess the role and ambition of the external actor in this country or region.

Development of Measures

4

Goal: This step examines the possibilities for civil society support from your own organization and develops measures.

Approach

Each actor has its own interests and goals. In order to be able to support CS actors in a meaningful way, their goals should have sufficient overlaps with those of your own organization. Looking again at the capacity and legitimacy of the individual civil society actors also helps to assess whether they would be suitable partners and also to identify potential starting points for support measures. The analysis thus brings together information from ➔ Steps 2 and 3 and uses it as the basis for developing your organization's own possible measures, which are then examined in terms of effort and return as well as risks and related containment measures and prioritized on this basis.

Instructions

4.1

Transfer the information on “CS actor,” “capacity,” and “legitimacy” from ➔ Table 2 to Table 4. Do this only for actors for which there are no reservations against cooperation (➔ Table 2) and for which the respective impact logic is compatible with the specific goals you identified in ➔ Table 3.

4.2

Identify common goals for your organization and the CS actors. The goals of the CS actors can be found in ➔ Table 2. If you find common goals, fill these into the respective column.

4.3

Fill in the remaining columns of ➔ Table 4. Depending on the number of CS actors, you might add or remove rows.

Example

Table 4: Development of Measures

CS Actor	4.1		Common Goals of Your Organization and the CS Actor	Support of Other External Actors	Measures	4.2		4.3		
	Capacity	Legitimacy				Effort	Return	Risks	Mitigation Measures	Prioritization
CIVIC EDUCATION: PREVENTION OF EXTREMISM										
Actor A	High organizational capacities; low human resources and financial capacities	High	Prevention of extremism; promotion of democratic public discourse	External Actor B	Strengthening Connections with other CS actors to increase reach	Low costs for locations and travel	Increased reach through joint activities	Potentially implementation pressure in case of excessive funding	verification of real needs	medium
MONITORING: FACT-CHECKING OF "FAKE NEWS"										
Actor B	Low	High	Promotion of public discourse; watchdog of international & national actors; Fact checking	To be verified	Strengthening Connections with other bloggers and trainings on digital security	Low costs for locations and travel as well as trainers	Strengthening of collective action and joint process of learning; improvement of digital security	Accusation of external influence and local discrediting as a result	Low-threshold support without visible external communication	High

● Direct transfer of information from previous analytical steps

Notes on the Columns

Support from other actors: Existing external support, if applicable. This information is relevant for donor coordination and a rough assessment of the available capacities on the side of the civil society actor.

Measures: Development of measures based on the information developed.

Resource analysis: A comparison of effort and return is used to allocate limited resources wisely.

Risk analysis: Risks such as a discrediting of civil society actors at the local level, co-optation by external actors or political elites, creating conflicts between CS actors or a loss of support among the population are identified and, if necessary, mitigation measures are developed.

Prioritization: Initial prioritization using a process of weighing measures.

About the Project

This strategy and planning tool is part of our Stabilization Lab project that investigates different challenges in stabilization policy and practice. Supporting civil society actors in acute crises is the first issue of a series of stabilization dilemmas GPPi will address. Besides this tool, GPPi also published the study *Supporting Civil Society Actors in Acute Crises (2023)*. The Stabilization Lab is financed by the German Federal Foreign Office.

gppi.net/project/stabilization-lab

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