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Two Commas and a Full Stop

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE CIVICUS INDEX
ON CIVIL SOCIETY PROJECT IN SOUTH AFRICA

*by the Co-operative for Research and Education
(CORE)¹ and the Institute for Democracy in South
Africa (IDASA)*

¹ The South Africa CIVICUS Index Project was implemented by CORE and IDASA on behalf of the South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). This paper was prepared by Phiroshaw Camay (Project Leader) and Anne Gordon of CORE, on the basis of the results of the survey questionnaire, key informant interviews, provincial and national workshops, and the review of existing data and literature.

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Part I

Introduction

This report is based on a consultative research project undertaken by CORE and IDASA, in co-operation with the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). It provides the results of our efforts to implement in South Africa the proposed CIVICUS methodology for the development of a Civil Society Index².

A consultative approach was selected in order to reflect as accurately as possible perceptions of civil society across the country. Within this short period, 21 workshops have been conducted – two in each of South Africa’s nine provinces, and three at national level; a total of 213 questionnaires was completed by representatives of a wide range of civil society organisations (CSOs); secondary research was conducted to source other relevant data and analysis, and a number of key opinion leaders were interviewed. The results presented in this paper, therefore, provide an accurate reflection of South African civil society’s perceptions of itself, in terms of the four dimensions of the CIVICUS Civil Society Diamond³: structure, space, values and impact.

This report is divided into three main sections. Following an explanation of the objectives and approach of the study, the first section provides a working definition and explains the types of organisations included in civil society, for the purposes of this study. It then offers a brief but essential analysis of several historical factors which are crucial to an understanding of present day civil society in South Africa. A discussion of the characteristics of and roles played by CSOs follows. A recent and significant case is explained to illustrate how South African civil society has had a major impact on national development issues, as well as issues of international importance.

The second section is itself divided into three parts. First, it presents the Civil Society Diamond which emerged from this research. Second, the four dimensions of civil society addressed in the Diamond are discussed in depth. Third, the results of a separate but related enquiry on the media’s coverage of civil society and other stakeholders further informs our analysis of perceptions of civil society in South Africa.

The third section draws out the key findings of the research and posits priorities for a future civil society agenda based on provincial and national vision-setting exercises. It concludes with a statement of how and why this study has added value to an understanding of civil society in South Africa.

The Appendix explains in detail the unique methodology adopted by CORE and IDASA in implementing this research project. It is our view that the extensive survey and consultative processes used lend considerable credibility to our findings.

² In March 2001, CORE and IDASA received funding from USAID/Pretoria via Creative Associates Inc. (CREA) to undertake this research. The period available for the research was therefore only four months.

³ The CIVICUS Diamond Tool and analytic framework was developed for CIVICUS by Dr. Helmut Anheier, Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics. For more information, see Anheier, H. K. and Carlson, L., *Civil Society: Measurement and Policy Dialogue*, London: Earthscan, forthcoming

Part II

What/Who Constitutes Civil Society in South Africa

The Objectives, Approach and Value Added of the South Africa Study

This research project is part of the broader process to develop a common vision of a healthy civil society and prepare a short-term programme of action to achieve this vision. The objectives of CORE and IDASA in pursuing the research component of this process are:

- To increase knowledge and understanding of civil society through reflecting on and assessing the structure, space, values and impact of civil society;
- To test and assess the effectiveness of the CIVICUS Civil Society Diamond as an agenda-setting tool;
- To make some preliminary recommendations as to how South African civil society can be strengthened;
- To share the findings and lessons learnt from the research with civil society formations in other countries and regions

Having provided the baseline data and analysis, CORE and IDASA are also committed to assisting SANGOCO to fulfil the project's broader goals.

A highly consultative, interactive research approach has been adopted for this project. South African experience has proven time and again that such processes are most likely to elicit the data and perceptions that we require. This methodology is described in detail in the Appendix on Project Implementation.

Value Added to the Study

This methodology provides a large portion of the value added – by engaging civil society in the design and implementation of the study and in debating and verifying its conclusions. In this way, we are able to raise the level of consciousness and understanding of the indicators and issues within civil society. By including government and donors in our final workshop, we are also able to deepen their appreciation of civil society's diversity and potential contribution to society at large. Another aspect of the value added is the inclusion of a wide range of CSOs in the study, and not limiting ourselves to so-called NGOs/CBOs. This provides a broader context for all of the types of organisations included in our definition of civil society, and gives them an opportunity to see themselves as part of a bigger picture. Further, by combining consultations in each province (focus groups of sorts), a national sample survey administered to civil society leaders across sectors, and an investigation of existing sources of information and data, we are able to cross-check and verify our conclusions – another means of adding value to existing analysis.

Limitations of the Study

The study unavoidably suffers from some limitations. First, had more time been available to develop and test the questionnaire, omissions would have been corrected and the framing of questions improved. Second, the time limitations meant that invitations to the first round of workshops were

not sent out with as much advance notice as one would have wished, resulting in inadequate representation from certain sectors of civil society. Third, due to time and financial constraints, the sample size will need to be treated as a snapshot at a given moment.

A Definition of Civil Society in South Africa

As civil society means many different things to different people and the CIVICUS founding document had defined civil society, a working definition of civil society in South Africa had to be agreed by South Africans for the purposes of this project. The broad definition had to be further disaggregated to understand which types of organisations were to be included in the study and which were not.

The CIVICUS Index Project defined civil society as:

the sphere of institutions, organisations, networks and individuals (and their values) located between the confines of the family, the state and the market, which is bound by a set of shared civic rules, and in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.

The vibrant nature of civil society in South Africa and its role in the immediate past led many researchers, academics and practitioners to take issue with several aspects of the definition provided in Helmut Anheier's paper, due both to varying interpretations of key phrases and to certain assumptions implicit in it.⁴ Many disagreed with the inclusion of the market parameter, arguing that the free market / neo-liberal assumptions underlying this are not accepted by many South Africans. Recent experiences have also indicated that civil society can emerge or exist in other forms of economies. Many pointed out that contrary to the belief that civil society "shared civic rules", the SA context demonstrates the opposite. Many CSO leaders felt it necessary to disobey unjust laws and to fight against illegitimate authorities. Further, many practitioners disputed that CSOs always share "common interests" between them. Agreeing a definition was therefore an extremely complicated task.

The working definition finally agreed upon was:

Civil society is the sphere of organisations and/or associations of organisations located between the family, the state, the government of the day, and the prevailing economic system, in which people with common interests associate voluntarily. Amongst these organisations, they may have common, competing, or conflicting values and interests.

This revised definition was used in the second series of workshops across the country and healthily debated in the final national workshop by donors and CSO participants.

What Types of Organisations Are Included in Our Definition?

What was somewhat easier, though it too led to probing discussion and even heated debate, was the determination of which types of organisations should be included in the definition for this study.

⁴Anheier, 2000.

Table 1. Types of Organisations Included and not Included in the Research

Types of Organisations included in the Research	Types of Organisations / Institutions not included in the Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) • Non-profit organisations (NPOs) • Community-based organisations (CBOs) • Associations / networks of NGOs/CBOs • Trade unions and federations • Professional associations • Employer / business associations and their federations • Sports / arts / cultural organisations • Religious organisations • Independent research institutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties • Statutory institutions established by Chapter 9 of the SA Constitution, eg. the Independent Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission, etc. • Universities • Government established and funded organisations (GONGOs) • Government established grant-making institutions, e.g. National Development Agency, Independent Development Trust • Local and international grant-making foundations / agencies

Key Historical Factors in the Development of South African Civil Society

In recent research conducted by CORE, we have concluded that there are several key factors which have made South African civil society what it is today.⁵ These factors still play a role in the dynamics of civil society and affect its ongoing evolution. Awareness of these factors is essential for an understanding of what has emerged from this study in terms of civil society's structure, space, values and impact.

Survival and solidarity: Before colonisation, the indigenous people in the region cared for and shared with those within their own communities or tribes. They established rules of behaviour and protocol for many of the conventional functions which CSOs perform today, whether these were related to petitioning the authorities, providing welfare support, or resolving disputes. Many CSOs emerged out of the need for these communities to provide for their basic material and spiritual survival and to maintain solidarity and cohesion as industrialisation took hold in South Africa. Based on the tradition of ubuntu⁶, they created community-based self-help initiatives. Some of these evolved into community protest organisations focused on tangible issues related to their economic and political marginalisation, e.g. political freedom, housing, rates, food prices, etc. Thus, they merged the traditional and the modern. Many retained an informal character so as to avoid state repression. Some have survived into the democratic era, others have not.

Race: Racial discrimination and segregation has had a significant impact on the evolution of South African civil society since the 17th century. This impact can be understood in terms of political control and economic exploitation as well as huge disparities in financial and human resources available for development infrastructure and services. As a result, not only were many areas grossly underdeveloped, but the lack of political space under apartheid for CSOs representing each of the black communities (African, Coloured and Indian) exacerbated the disparities between black and

⁵See especially Camay and Gordon, 2000.

⁶Ubuntu is "a term used to express the qualities underlying the values and virtues of essential humanity and compassion" and "is a way of life that positively contributes to the sustenance of the well-being of a people/community/society. Ubuntu is a concept that promotes the common good..." [Sindane, 1994, p. 9]

white. Racism continues to be a major constraint to non-racial nation-building efforts in democratic South Africa. Despite some progress, racism still manifests itself in civil society through divisions within and between organisations.

Class: Along with race, class has been a determining factor in access to economic, political and social power. Whilst in some cases class cuts across the racial divides, in others it has exacerbated the existing subjugation by race. Economic class barriers between workers and owners / management exist on farms, mines and factories. Before and during apartheid, trade unions by law were racially based, thus dividing workers, making their struggles more difficult and resulting in duplicated structures and effort. Class divides led to “a welfare-oriented and patronising mentality amongst those with access to wealth and power, aimed at maintaining the dependence of the disadvantaged”. [Camay and Gordon, 2000, p. 109]

The anti-apartheid struggle: The struggle against apartheid and the resulting resistance organisations were key to the emergence of civil society as it appears today. CSOs which grew out of oppressed and exploited communities played a major role in the social and political mobilisation against apartheid. Organisations led by whites also emerged in support of these. Some groups were multi- or non-racial. Most CSOs active in the struggle promoted a strong culture of human and civil rights. However, where the struggle necessitated secrecy and subterfuge, it sometimes resulted in organisations with inadequate governance structures, a lack of accountability and a reluctance to co-operate and share information. Thus, it has on the one hand allowed for a surprising spirit of tolerance and reconciliation, but on the other has created a new set of challenges for organisations in the post-apartheid era. The transition from resistance organisations in an oppressive society to development organisations in a democratic dispensation has seen the demise of some, the transformation of others, and the creation of many new organisations to meet new needs.

Colonialism and euro-centric models: Formal civil society was initially founded by the whites who colonised South Africa. Thus, the organisations reflected European models focusing on welfare, many of which emanated from missionaries. They were hierarchical in structure, with a paternalistic mentality. Domination by the British also led to the formation of a separate set of Afrikaner organisations aimed at cultural preservation and cohesion, and resistance to British hegemony. Many of these still exist, though they too have adapted to the changing environment.

Characteristics of Civil Society in South Africa Today

In the initial nine provincial workshops, participants were asked to identify the characteristics that they associate with South African civil society. There was a considerable degree of consensus across provinces. Those characteristics that were mentioned in most or all of the provinces included:

- Non-profit
- Voluntarism / use of voluntary workers
- Altruism – no personal benefit
- May be membership-based or service-oriented
- Formed voluntarily by citizens in society – freedom of association
- Formed on the basis of like-mindedness and common interest
- Delivery oriented and needs driven
- Value and ethics driven
- Diverse – working in a wide range of fields
- Independent / autonomous of government
- Having own constitution, rules, and independent governance structures which make policy for the organisation

A strong theme which emerged concerns the representativeness and responsiveness of CSOs. Whilst some felt that CSOs tend to represent the 'periphery', e.g. the disadvantaged and poor on the margins of society, most took a more general stance that CSOs – no matter whom they represent or serve – operate on the basis of a mandate from their members or beneficiaries, are 'driven' by the communities benefiting, are established because of or responding to the needs of people, and so on. Others commented that CSOs are community-based and oriented, are mainly situated in the community and are therefore accessible to the people, and strive to provide effective services. In one province, participants referred to CSOs' interface role between the people and the bureaucracy. Still others referred to the participatory and mobilising nature of CSOs. Thus, there was a clear consensus that CSOs work to improve the well-being of people, though they may approach this work from a variety of perspectives.

Another important theme related to the role of CSOs as agents of change, 'social entrepreneurs' or proponents of 'alternative visions of society'. Others called it 'idealism'. Some referred to their role as 'watchdogs of government for the people', generally from an 'apolitical'⁷ position. Some spoke of their role in 'empowering' people. Though we have noted above that most felt CSOs are independent of government, others characterised the relationships with both government and business as 'interdependence'.

Differing views were put forward with regard to the theme of co-operation and sharing amongst CSOs versus that of competition with each other and 'self-centredness'. Whilst some emphasised sharing of resources, working together, networking, providing technical and professional support, and avoiding duplication, others took the opposite view. Similarly, some regarded CSOs as inclusive, and others as exclusive – in terms of their membership, target communities, and viewpoints. Whilst both transparency and accountability certainly featured on most participants' 'wish-lists', there was less conviction regarding their current prevalence.

Roles Played by South African Civil Society

CSOs play many essential roles in South Africa, including:

- Relief
- Welfare
- Service provision
- Training and technical assistance
- Technical innovation
- Traditional community-based burial societies, savings groups, etc.
- Co-operative, income generation
- Religious / faith-based
- Economic interest associations
- Human rights promotion / protection
- Civic / democracy education
- Community development
- Advocacy
- Networking

⁷Clearly these respondents did not have the trade unions in mind, e.g. COSATU as a partner in the ANC Alliance.

The following brief case study illustrates what is possible when CSOs are well-prepared with analysis of a policy issue, a clear, achievable objective and a feasible strategy.

David beats Goliath: South African Civil Society and Government Join Together To Defeat Multinational Pharmaceutical Companies

The fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic has become one of the pre-eminent issues – a health issue but also a moral, social, and economic one – in democratic South Africa. The South African government has only recently begun to face up to the impact this pandemic has on its broader development plans. The United Nations estimates that 4.7 million South Africans are living with HIV/AIDS – out of a total population of about 42 million people. This number is rising steadily. There is as yet no comprehensive national policy to fight the disease and its impact, and funding in both the public and private sector is woefully inadequate. There is a shocking lack of AIDS education programmes, of counselling, testing and treatment facilities, of hospices and homes for AIDS orphans, etc. The vast majority of the people have little or no access to drugs, whether to treat opportunistic infections, to prevent mother-to-child transmission, to treat victims of rape, etc.

The availability of drugs, mostly patented by the huge multinational pharmaceutical companies, became a key site of the struggle against the disease. Such patented drugs are far too expensive for most developing countries. Civil society organisations in South Africa, such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA), had been arguing for access to cheaper drugs in the fight against HIV/AIDS long before the SA government took serious action. TAC, on its own, was taking increasingly aggressive measures to persuade the government to urgently import cheap generic drugs. Zackie Achmat, TAC's director and a leading activist, bought cheap generic antiretroviral drugs in Asia and brought them into South Africa illegally to make their point.

The South African government drafted, and Parliament passed, the Medicines and Related Substances Control Amendment Act in 1997, as a vital means of meeting government's constitutional obligation to deliver affordable and sustainable health care to all the people, especially those denied it under apartheid. Essentially, the law permits government to circumvent patents and to import or manufacture generic drugs in order to deal with a health emergency such as that posed by HIV/AIDS. South African civil society supported the Act, but continued to lobby for other complementary measures.

The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of South Africa (PMA), backed by 39 multinational drug companies with a combined market capitalisation of US\$1.3 trillion (10 times the GDP of South Africa) [The Star, 17 April 2001], decided to take the government to court to prevent implementation of the Act. They argued that the Act would undermine confidence in the global patent system which is its 'lifeblood' – that patents are essential to ensure investment in costly research on new drugs. They also argued that government had ignored their offers of donations and price cuts of essential HIV/AIDS drugs.

TAC spearheaded the public awareness of the court case and the need to improve access to essential medicines – both in SA and elsewhere. Achmat urged the government to stand firm, stating the "world's pharmaceutical companies are not on the right side of the law or on the moral right side. They've taken on the wrong issue at the wrong time against the wrong people". [Citizen, 19 April 2001]

The TAC campaign was strengthened by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) –

the largest federation representing millions of workers. This was significant because on this issue, COSATU was speaking for all South Africans, not just its members, in calling for a comprehensive national treatment strategy. COSATU argued that government was not doing enough to meet the challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Demonstrations by civil society groupings were held at the PMA offices and at the court. The CSOs spoke with informed and authoritative voices, based on careful research and direct experience – adding value to the government’s case.

In addition to the SA CSOs, the campaign was joined by several international CSOs including Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF) and Oxfam. MSF’s “Drop the Case” petition was endorsed by 260,000 citizens, and 140 organisations from 130 countries. Oxfam called the case a “gross violation of human rights that would set a terrible precedent for developing countries”. [The Star, 18 April 2001] The European Parliament and institutional investors in the drug companies responded by calling for the companies to drop their court case against the Act.

Confusion emerged amongst the drug companies regarding how to proceed. The negative publicity was a public relations disaster for the PMA and the drug companies. Several wanted to get out of the court battle as quickly as possible. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, intervened at the request of several of the largest pharmaceutical companies. He telephoned President Mbeki to indicate that there was room for negotiation. This led to the talks which finally agreed on the terms for withdrawal of the case.

The court case finally came to a head in April 2001, three years after the passage of the Act. The 39 companies unconditionally withdrew their action against the government. They agreed to pay the government’s court costs, but not TAC’s costs incurred as a ‘friend of the court’. They also said they would work more closely with government and civil society to help the poor obtain access to medicines. For its part, government committed to consulting the companies in drawing up the regulations for implementation of the Act.

The outcome of the case was hailed worldwide as a ‘real triumph of David over Goliath’. The Health Minister, Dr. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, said: “We regard today’s settlement as a victory in the sense that it unfreezes our law and restores to us the power to pursue policies that we believe are critical to securing medicines at affordable rates and exercising our control over them. We will continue to engage the pharmaceutical industry, to consult them and challenge them, as appropriate”. She added that the case “confirmed views that international markets had no in-built conscience, but that ordinary people acting collectively had a responsibility to make these companies accountable for how they respond to critical issues”. TAC said the outcome signalled “a dramatic shift in the balance of power between developing countries and the drug companies” [Citizen, 20 April 2001] and Oxfam called it “a rare victory for the world’s poor over powerful multinational companies”. [The Star, 20 April 2001] A Washington Post editorial hailed the settlement, and praised Oxfam and Amnesty International, but did not mention TAC despite the key role it had played. [Washington Post, 24 April 2001]

It is now incumbent upon the SA government to develop the necessary policy framework and take the required action to address the pandemic. Government committed to drawing up the regulations necessary to implement the Act, to creating a pricing committee for essential drugs, and to developing a system of generic substitution. However, it did not agree to the use of antiretroviral drugs, saying widespread use was still unaffordable. It has nonetheless agreed that provincial health authorities may act as they deem necessary in supplying the drugs in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

As a result, TAC acknowledged that they would support the government or criticise it as necessary. In the absence of government action, COSATU has started a campaign to get employers to pay for antiretrovirals for their workers. Clearly, the struggle has only begun.

Part III

The CIVICUS Society Diamonds: Its Dimensions and Indicators

The CIVICUS Civil Society Diamond methodology interrogates the health of civil society by analysing four dimensions: structure, space, values and impact. CORE participated in a CIVICUS meeting in Germany in February 2001 to develop questions linked to a series of indicators for each dimension. Though CORE and IDASA later added a range of indicators relevant for the South African context, for purposes of comparability and due to space constraints, only a select few of these are reflected in this report. The complete analysis will be included in the final report for publication.

Developing the South African Civil Society Diamond

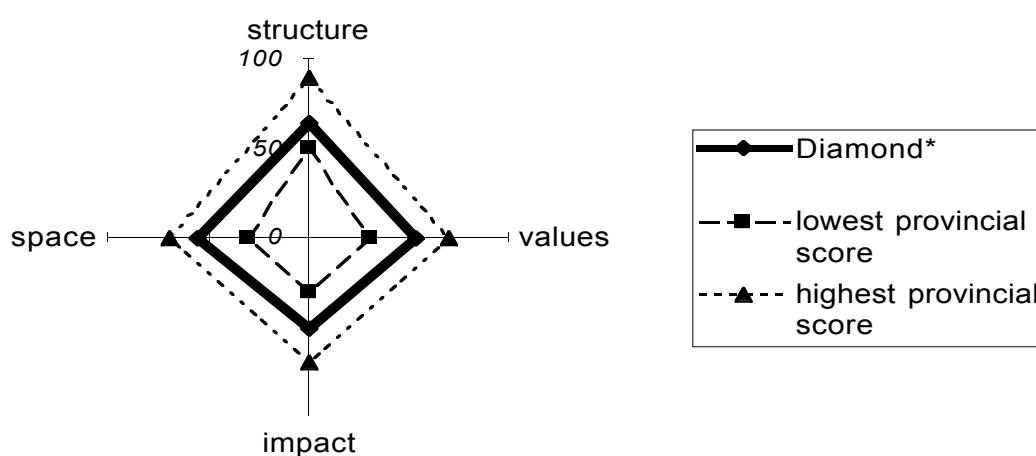
Each participant at the initial workshops was asked to score the four dimensions individually, following which a consensus view was obtained in a plenary discussion. Table 2 shows the first series of provincial workshops yielded for the four dimensions:

Table 2. The Scores for the Four Dimensions from the First Series of Provincial Workshops

Province	Structure	Space	Values	Impact
Eastern Cape	6	7	6	7
Free State	9	6	4	3
Gauteng	6	7	6	5
KwaZulu-Natal	7	6	6	5
Mpumalanga	6	6	7	4
Northern Cape	7	4	5	6
Northern Prov.	7	3	6	5
North West	5	5	3	6
Western Cape	6	7	5	4
National Average	6.5	5.6	5.3	5

The provincial diamonds have not been revised in light of the questionnaire results as CORE and IDASA agreed that the provincial sample sizes were too small to be reliable indicators of a general view. It was agreed therefore that the first workshop Diamond outcome should be utilised as it represents a consensus view amongst workshop participants⁸.

The graphic representation below shows an inner diamond reflecting the lowest provincial scores on each dimension (Structure: 5, Space: 3; Values: 3; Impact:3); an outer diamond reflecting the highest provincial scores (Structure: 9; Space: 7; Values: 7; Impact: 7); and a middle diamond based on the national average scores (Structure: 6.5; Space: 5.6; Values: 5.3; Impact: 5). It is the middle diamond – the National Average – which represents the consensus view on the state of civil society in South Africa.



*The South African Index project was conducted separately in all nine South African provinces. The Diamond represents the national average.

Table 3. The Four Dimensions of the Civil Society Diamond

	structure	value	impact	space
Diamond*	65.0	53.0	50.0	56.0
lowest provincial score	50.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
highest provincial score	90.0	70.0	70.0	70.0

⁸ Graphs illustrating the nine provincial civil society diamonds are available.

*The Structure of Civil Society*⁹

There is no accurate, definitive data available on the actual numbers of CSOs currently operating in South Africa. Estimates have ranged from about 17 000 to 54 000 to 140 000. However, we do know that South African civil society is highly heterogeneous, representing a wide range of interests, operating in many different sectors and both in rural and urban areas, and playing a wide variety of roles. Because the country is still experiencing its transition from the repressive apartheid regime to a democratic, open socio-political system, civil society is in a state of constant change and adaptation. . Many existing organisations have had to change their orientation from a focus on resistance to apartheid to one aimed at development, service provision, and consolidation of democracy. There are continuing tensions between CSOs that supported the struggle and the post-1994 transformation process and those that did not. Certain organisations (especially trade unions and civics) closely linked to the current dominant political party, the African National Congress, face their own particular challenges as they consider how best to relate to their struggle ally which is now the government. The historical factors referred to above continue to influence civil society. This is largely a healthy process as civil society responds to its changing environment, though it does create an uncomfortable climate of uncertainty for some.

As a matter of interest, we show below the results of CORE's governing board survey regarding the dates of establishment of respondent CSOs. These data confirm the fact that new CSOs continue to be established up to the present in significant numbers.

Table 4. Period of Establishment of CSOs* (%)

Period	1997 Survey	1998/9 Survey	2000 Survey
Pre-1900	17	5	16
1901-1960	17	15	16
1961-1970	17	21	16
1971-1980	12	21	16
1981-1990	40	26	20
Post-1990	31	26	45

Source: CORE, Governing Board Surveys, 1997, 1998/9, 2000.

Note: * Sample varies each year, but with some overlap in respondents.

Is There a Diversity of CSOs in South Africa which are Membership-based or Service-oriented?

Before answering this question in light of the questionnaire responses, we would like to note that this question creates a false dichotomy. Many South African CSOs are both membership-based and service-oriented, sometimes providing services only to their members and sometimes serving

⁹The analysis for this dimension of the Diamond would have been enhanced had we been given access to the findings of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector project on the non-profit sector in South Africa. Their research included a quantitative assessment of South African civil society which is not available elsewhere, but has not been released yet. Great anxiety was expressed about this in provincial and national workshops.

communities beyond their membership, with members themselves as service-providers.

In most of the provinces, there is a reasonable diversity of membership-based and service-oriented CSOs. The questionnaire probed the issue of diversity from several angles: the ways in which they are constituted and registered, the type of area in which CSOs work, their geographical location and areas of work, their target audiences, the sectors and types of activities engaged in, and their budget size. Where organisations were membership-based, we probed the size of that membership and the requirements of active members. Some of the most significant results are reported below:

Membership-based: 66% of respondents said they are membership-based organisations. 19% have individual members, 19% have group or organisational members, and 28% have both. Size of membership varied considerably, with the largest percentage having between one and 50 members (18%).

Table 5. Membership Size

Numbers of members	%
Not a membership-based organisation	35
1-50 members	18
50-100 members	5
100-200 members	6
200-500 members	8
500-1000 members	4
1000-2000 members	3
2000-5000 members	5
5000-10 000 members	3
More than 10 000 members	3
Do not know	4

The requirements of membership do not appear to be onerous, with only 36% of total respondents requiring membership fees and 23% requiring attendance at meetings. We would have to conclude therefore that members are not particularly active in most CSOs, beyond these normal requirements.

Type of area in which the organisation works: 40% said they work in metropolitan / large urban areas, 44% in small towns, 34% in urban informal settlements, 27% in rural informal settlements and 52% in rural areas. There is considerable overlap reflected here, evidence that many organisations operate in more than one type of area. From these figures, the urban-rural balance appears to be reasonable. However, this may be a function of our own attempts to achieve a balanced sample for the survey. Other information available to us suggests that rural areas are more often neglected.

Target audiences: The results show that 75% target ordinary citizens, grassroots, and workers. Quite a large percentage – 60% – particularly target community officials and leaders, perhaps an indication of the facilitative role such people play. About a third of respondents target government officials and elected representatives, 40% target NGO leaders and staff, and about a third target either academics / researchers or professionals. Only a third target the media. The mere 13% which target youth is of some concern, given the huge challenges faced by this group in South Africa today.

Clearly, many organisations operate in more than one sector. Whilst encouraging in light of the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the high percentage for HIV/AIDS does not mean that all of these CSOs have a major focus in this sector; rather it probably indicates that many CSOs have recently incorporated HIV/AIDS-related activities into their existing programmes due to donor and government funds being made available for this purpose.

Table 6. Target Audiences of CSOs (%)

Target Audience	%
Government Officials	34
Elected Representatives	27
NGO/Leaders/Staff	40
Academics/Researchers	27
Professionals	30
Media	29
Community Level Officials/Leaders	60
Ordinary citizens/Grassroots/Workers	75
Youth	13
Other	13

Sector of work: Table 7 outlines the responses given when asked if they run programmes and projects in particular policy areas.

Table 7. Sector of Work

Sector	%
HIV/AIDS	80
Education	78
Welfare	75
Health	74
Human Rights	73
Women's Rights	70
Democracy	65
Transparency & Governance	62
Land	44
Housing	43

Clearly, many organisations operate in more than one sector. Whilst encouraging in light of the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the high percentage for HIV/AIDS does not mean that all of these CSOs have a major focus in this sector; rather it probably indicates that many CSOs have recently incorporated HIV/AIDS-related activities into their existing programmes due to donor and government funds being made available for this purpose.

Types of activities: To a similar but completely open-ended question, “what are the five primary types of activities and programmes their organisation is involved in”, the most often cited responses were (in declining order): training / education / skills development / capacity building; community development; human rights; advocacy and lobbying; health / AIDS; and research / information dissemination. This largely confirms the responses on sectors of work (see above).

Are There One or More CSO Umbrella Bodies in the Province?

The consensus in all provincial workshops was that there are several umbrella bodies functioning in each province. Specific umbrella bodies noted included SANGOCO and its provincial structures, COSATU and other union federations, federations of business, agriculture and professional bodies. Unfortunately, this question was inadvertently left out of the final questionnaire.

When asked specifically if they belong to SANGOCO, three-quarters said yes. This high affirmative response should not be over-rated as a large proportion of the interviewees were accessed through SANGOCO structures.

Does this Body Promote Common Interests?

This question also was omitted from the questionnaire. However, the workshops did address it. Whilst no consensus was reached, some comments included:

“SANGOCO facilitates common interests but needs to improve management, sharing and administration practices, and to find a balance between being event-orientated and having an ongoing implementation plan.”

“Umbrella bodies do promote common interests, but there is also considerable in-fighting.”

“There are certain goals and interests which organisations share with SANGOCO.”

One of the main challenges faced by CSO umbrella bodies, networks and alliances is to articulate the common goals and objectives of its members and to make collective representations with a mandate from member CSOs to government and other stakeholders. However, there was also general agreement that civil society as a whole does not speak with one voice. Another key challenge is to ensure that members of umbrella bodies perceive that they are receiving direct benefits from such membership. Where they do not, they are less likely to be committed and to participate actively.

Do These Organisations Join Alliances or Networks to Further People's Interests?

When asked whether their organisation works in an informal way with other organisations, 48% responded regularly, 39% occasionally, and 12% said rarely or never. In terms of more formal co-operation, e.g. with a contract or other agreement, 36% said regularly, 33% occasionally, and 30% rarely or never. Thus, informal forms of co-operation seem to be more prevalent than formal ones. Workshop discussions noted that umbrella groups are often formed around specific issues of common interest, e.g. the child support grant, CSO tax exemption, labour rights, human rights, etc.

Participant comments included:

“Organisations do not have an impact on their own, but as part of a larger body or network they do.”

“Those with similar views should have opportunities to work together.”

“The common interest amongst CSOs is development.”

“Competition amongst CSOs makes networking difficult.”

A further response to this question can be found in the fact that 54% of respondents said that they agree and 24% strongly agree with the view that “there is not enough co-operation amongst CSOs”. So, whilst one question indicated that there is already a considerable amount of joint effort, another demonstrates a clear sentiment that co-operation should increase in order to adequately further people's interests. Sectoral networks should be particularly encouraged.

Which groups does your organisation interact with on a face-to-face basis? (%)

Table 8. Interaction of CSOs with Different Group (%)

Government Officials	76
Elected Representatives	53
NGO / Leaders / Staff	80
Academics / Researchers	62
Professionals (such as Health Care Workers, Teachers, Etc)	66
Media	53
Community Level Officials / Leaders	78
Ordinary Citizens / Grassroots/Workers	76
Other, specify	15
Don't know	3

Do CSOs Work with Grassroots Organisations or Individuals Directly?

It was noted above that 75% said they target ordinary citizens, grassroots communities and workers in their work, and 60% said they target community level leaders. In addition, when asked “which types of groups does your organisation interact with on a face-to-face basis”, 76% said ordinary citizens, grassroots communities and workers. A further 80% said they interact with NGO leaders and staff. When asked which types of organisations they work with, 36% said they work with community-based organisations (CBOs), 52% with trade unions, 46% with faith-based organisations (which largely operate at the grassroots).

Do CSOs Co-operate with the Private Sector?

In the survey, 79% of CSO respondents said that they interact with businesses. In response to another question, 50% said they work with businesses, and 40% said they work with parastatals. The discrepancy probably relates to interpretation of the word “interact” – this could refer to business as funding sources or simply as stakeholders in communities where CSOs operate. When asked to respond to the view that “CSOs should co-operate more with the private sector”, 45% agreed and 33% strongly agreed. 12% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 7% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The CSI Handbook 2000 is a specialised annual publication which features corporate social investment trends in South Africa. The survey for 2000 estimates that the total corporate CSI budget, including multinationals and parastatals as well as other companies operating in South Africa, was R1.63 billion in 1999 (more than US\$200m) and R1.8 billion in 2000 (more than

US\$225m). It is estimated that in 2001, this figure may rise to R2 billion. However, the report does not disaggregate the figures to show how much of this funding was given to CSOs.

Participants in the workshops stated quite firmly that co-operation with the private sector should be expanded and improved:

“In some provinces, the private sector is relatively small, e.g. in Northern Province there are only three major companies who can be approached for support. Thus, CSOs are all fighting for a slice of a small pie.”

“Many CSOs do not get support from the private sector even if they have a good profile.”

“The private sector can be relied upon for uses other than simply money. They can share skills, management capacity, and other non-material benefits.”

“Few businesses are actually involved in philanthropic support of CSO activities; it depends on the type of activity and the interests of the company.”

Others said, however, that CSOs should choose carefully those private sector firms that they work with so as to avoid compromising CSO goals and values.

Do CSOs Receive their Funding from Different Sources, such as Government, the Private Sector, Foreign Governments, the General Public?

Funding sources (see Table below): CSOs appear to receive funding from several sources. 32% of respondents receive up to a quarter of their funding from fees for service provision to other CSOs; and 23% receive up to a quarter of their funding from fees for service provision to government and the remaining 23% similarly to business. A further 11% receive up to half their funding from services provided to government. For 24% of respondents, government grants constitute a further quarter of their funds, and for 10% these grants make up half of their income. This is an indication of the increasing importance of government funding at all levels (national, provincial and local). There was concern expressed at some workshops that CSOs are becoming too dependent on government as a result.

Membership dues do not constitute a major portion of CSO funding, with only 30% receiving up to a quarter of their funds from this source. Subscriptions for publications or other products constitute up to a quarter of total funding for 25% of respondents. This shows some emphasis on income-generation by CSOs.

With regard to donor funding of various types, 10% of respondents said they receive between 50% and 75% of their funds from South African donors (business, trusts, foundations); 13% receive between 25% and 50% and 33% receive up to 25% from these sources. However, 31% of respondents receive no South African donor funding at all.

International private donors such as private foundations play an important role. 19% receive up to 25% of their funds from this source, 13% receive up to 50%, 11% receive up to 75%, and 13% receive up to 100% in this way. 39% receive no funding from international private donors.

The figures for international governmental donors are similar, although 50% of respondents receive no funds from this source. 74% receive no funds from international inter-governmental organisations, and only 10% receive up to 25% from this source, with few others receiving anything.

An area of concern for the future is the relatively low level of funds coming from private individual donations and bequests. Nearly half of the respondents receive no funding of this kind. Only 34%

of respondents receive up to 25% of their funding from this source, and a further 8% receive up to 50%. This shows that individual philanthropy does exist in South Africa and should be more actively promoted. More favourable tax-exemption laws would help considerably in this regard.

Though we did not probe such organisations in this survey, it is well-known that funding bodies established with a view to serving as intermediaries for government and donor funds intended to support CSOs – such as the National Development Agency, the Independent Development Trust, the National Lottery, etc. – have experienced inordinately long delays in their establishment, in putting their administrative and grant-making procedures in place, and in actually dispersing funds to qualifying CSOs. Other bodies such as those set up to support small, medium and micro-enterprise development often through CSOs, have also been fraught with difficulties and, in some cases, mismanagement and corruption. This lack of efficiency and effective management has caused the closure of some CSOs and the disruption of programmes for many.

What are the sources of your organisation's funding? Approximately what percentage of its funding does your organisation receive from each source?

Table 9. Funding Services

Sources	None	1-25 %	26-50%	51-75 %	75-99 %	100%	Don't Know
a. Fees for Service Provision to other NGOs	52	32	6	2	0	1	6
b. Fees for Service Provision to Government	51	23	11	6	1	2	5
c. Fees Service Provision to Business	60	23	4	3	1	1	8
d. Government (National, Provincial and Local) Grants	47	24	10	5	2	3	8
e. Membership dues from Individuals and/or Organisations	56	30	4	2	0	1	7
f. Private Individual , Donations Bequests	48	34	8	3	0	2	6
g. Subscriptions for Publications or Products	67	25	2	1	0	0	4
h. South African Donors (e.g. Business, Trusts, Foundations)	31	33	13	10	5	4	4
i. International Private Donors e.g. Foundations	39	19	13	11	7	6	4
j. International Governmental Donors	50	17	15	6	4	4	3
k. International Inter-Governmental Organisations	74	10	4	4	1	1	5

In addition to the CIVICUS questions we obtained feedback on several other important issues related to the structure of South African civil society, including:

Financial sustainability: We asked an additional, highly relevant question about CSOs' perceptions of their organisation's financial sustainability, with worrying results. Only 2% said they were permanently sustainable due to an endowment. 22% considered themselves sustainable over the long-term, with a good balance of fees for service and a diversified donor base. 20% said they had average prospects for sustainability, with some income-generating activity and likely donor support for at least five years. 27% said they had only fair prospects for short-term sustainability with donor funding up to three years but uncertainty beyond that. A total of 23% said they were either existing from hand to mouth, not funded at all, or on the verge of closing.

Size of budgets: To gain a clearer idea of the relative size and contribution to the economy of South Africa by CSOs, we asked respondents to provide figures on their budget size for the current year and previous two years. Six to seven percent had no budget at all for all three years. Between 11% and 15% had budgets of only up to R99,999; about 20% had budgets between R100,000 and R500,000, 10% had between R500,000 and R1-million and another 11-13% between R1-million and R2m-million. Between 12 and 15% had budgets between R2-million and R5-million, and a further 13-16% had budgets over R5-million.

Size of organisation reflected as number of employees: CORE's governing board survey shows that many CSOs are quite small, with 41-45% having fewer than 10 staff and 24-28% having between 11 and 30 staff. Only 10-13% had more than 50 staff.

Changes in organisational structure: Another indication of the status or dynamic of organisations is the extent to which their structure has changed over time. The figures for the creation of new units either inside or outside CSOs are particularly high (58% and 40% respectively), providing an indication of diversification and growth within civil society.

The Space Accorded to and Occupied by Civil Society

The South African Constitution of 1996, with its highly progressive and inclusive Bill of Rights providing for human, civil, political and socio-economic rights, accords civil society as much legal space as any country in the world, and more space than many. There are also several pieces of legislation which provide for the registration of CSOs in different forms – as non-profit organisations, trusts, companies not for gain, voluntary, educational or welfare organisations, trade unions, etc.¹⁰

Do Laws Exist for CSO Registration?

The most recent, and perhaps most important current legislation is the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) Act passed in 1997 after a long consultative process involving CSOs, the Department of Welfare, and the parliamentary portfolio committee.¹¹ Broadly, the Act provides for registration of non-profits with the Department of Welfare (DoW). It aims to create an environment in which NPOs can flourish; to establish an administrative and regulatory framework within which NPOs

¹⁰The relevant laws include: (1) The Non-Profit Organisations Act No. 71 of 1997; (2) Companies not for gain: Section 21, Companies Act No. 61 of 1973; (3) Welfare Organisations: National Welfare Act No. 100 of 1978; (4) Trusts: Trust Property Control Act No. 57 of 1988; (5) Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995; (6) Fundraising Act of 1978.

¹¹CORE has written a case study of this consultative process as part of its research on Civil Society and Governance in South Africa, which will be published later this year.

can conduct their affairs; to encourage NPOs to maintain adequate standards of governance, transparency and accountability and to improve these standards; to create an environment within which the public may have access to information concerning registered NPOs; and to promote a spirit of co-operation and shared responsibility within government, donors and amongst other interested persons in their dealings with NPOs.¹²

Since 1997 when the Act was passed, approximately 7,000 NPOs have registered with the Department of Welfare.¹³ Whilst this represents a relatively small proportion of the estimated total number of CSOs in South Africa, the registration process is progressing reasonably well. The DoW has taken steps to publicise the requirements and procedures more widely and to improve its internal efficiency in processing applications. It has also recently requested that registered NPOs submit reports to the DoW.

The survey questionnaire asked respondents whether their organisation is formally registered, and if so, as what type of entity. 36% said that they are registered as a non-profit organisation under the NPO Act, 38% are registered as a Section 21 company, 10% as a trust, 2% as a voluntary organisation, and 1% as a co-operative. 8% said they were not registered at all.

Is your Organisation Formally Registered, and if so, as what type of Entity?

Table 10. Types of Registered Organisations

Not registered at all	8
Section 21 not-for-profit company	38
Trust	10
Voluntary Organisation	2
Co-operative	1
Non-profit Organisation (with the Dept. of Welfare under the NPO Act of 1997)	36
Academic Institution	1
Still busy registering	1
Other	1
Not Applicable	2
Don't know	2

¹²NPO Act, Section 2.

¹³Estimate provided by the NPO Directorate, end July 2001. See table for detailed figures for May 2000 and May 2001.

How Easy or Difficult is it to Register an Organisation?

When asked this question, 41% of respondents said it was easy and 13% said very easy. However, 27% said it was difficult and 9% very difficult. Discussion revealed that those in provinces with large distances between rural areas and metropolitan centres, where CSOs lack access to government offices, information and documentation, found it most difficult. Participants also expressed concern that some CSOs do not understand either the NPO Act itself, the processes for registration, or the benefits they can derive from having registered. Some noted that the preparation of constitutions and business plans took a long time and was costly, largely because they hired lawyers or consultants to assist them – an expense which many argued was unnecessary. This appears to be a result of a combination of inadequate information dissemination by government and CSO networks and the failure of individual CSOs to take responsibility for accessing such information.

How Long did it Take your Organisation to Complete the Registration Process? (%)

Table 11. Time Required to Register a CSO

Not Registered	9
Under Three Months	25
Three to Six Months	25
Six Months to a Year	13
More than a Year	9
Not Applicable	2
Don't Know	18

Was this Time Frame Acceptable? (%)

Table 12. Judgement of Time Needed to Register a CSO

No	25
Yes	49
Not Applicable	2
Don't Know	23

Did the Time Frame and the Process Itself Affect your Organisational Operations? (%)

Table 13. Effect of Registration Time on Organizational Operations

No	51
Yes	27
Not Applicable	2
Don't know	19

Table 14. Number of Registered NPOs

Province	Number of NPOs registered		Percentage change
	2000*	2001**	
Eastern Cape	261	595	228%
Free State	371	383	3%
Gauteng	1 131	1 459	29%
KwaZulu-Natal	671	999	49%
Mpumalanga	104	378	263%
Northern Cape	118	394	234%
Northern Province	97	125	29%
North West	109	563	416%
Western Cape	435	880	102%
Total	3 297	5 776	75%

Sources: * NonProfit Organisation Act 1997: Register, Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette, 26 May 2000.

** NonProfit Organisation Act 1997: Register, Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette, 25 May 2001.

How Easy or Difficult is it to Obtain Tax Exemption Status?

This is far more problematic. When asked this question, 17% said it was easy and 4% very easy, but 27% said it was difficult and 22% very difficult. A total of 31% said either they did not know or that the issue did not apply to them. We believe that the latter responses are an indication of a lack of understanding of what tax exemption means and of information about the procedures involved. CSOs require a greater understanding of the benefits they can derive from the Department of Finance / South African Revenue Service's newly released regulations regarding tax.

Do CSOs have Access to Government to put Forward CSOs' Views?

When presented with the statement that "civil society does not have sufficient access to government", a total of 57% said they neither agreed nor disagreed. 20% agreed and 17% disagreed. When asked to react to the statement "civil society has sufficient access to Parliament", 12% neither agreed nor disagreed, 63% disagreed and 25% agreed. This implies that less than a quarter of respondents feel that CSOs have sufficient access to either the executive or the legislative branch of national government.

It seems from responses to other questions, that CSOs have considerably better access to some parts of government than others. Whilst only 23% said they interact or work with the Cabinet and only 26% said they interact or work with Parliament, 68% said they interact or work with national government departments. More revealing is that fully 90% interact or work with provincial government departments and 92% with local government. Fifty eight percent said they interact or work with provincial legislatures. Thus access at provincial and local levels is much better than at national level.

Access to government is affected by location, language, educational levels, presence or lack of media outreach, as well as the approach taken by government itself at each level. Some localities and provincial governments have made more effort than others to include CSOs in policy dialogue. Many communities do not know how to gain access, where to go or whom to approach, and this lack of information can be detrimental. It was also noted that while CSOs are bad at selling themselves to government; others have an entitlement mentality, expecting that government will come to them. Other comments included:

"Knowledge is needed to empower people. Democracy happened in 1994, but people are not yet aware of their democratic rights. They need to know the Constitution, its contents and democratic rights. We need workshops on this."

"People should learn to do things themselves, go to government, go to departments, it's their right. Instead of always waiting for SANGOCO to do it, they should stand up and go. Stop talking and start doing!"

"You can't wait for information to come to you – you must seek it out!"

"We are not sharing information; things can go on without having an impact – we need to earn to share information with one another, and in a way that is most useful to us all."

"There is a wall – government competes with CSOs and is threatened in their power base."

Local government has become non-negotiable on some issues (e-g. Igoli 2000) and thus civil society feels it has hit a wall and has no access."

Accessibility does not mean influence – you cannot make government listen to you. Government nods their heads but doesn't always listen."

"We don't go to the legislature to lobby. We work close to the ground but we don't impact on policy. We should be holding [them] accountable, but it is very seldom that we actually do that."

“Government appears to ignore the views of CBOs.”

“Meetings keep getting postponed and you are sent from pillar to post.”

“We are shy, we don’t know how to make submissions, approach government or impact on policy. We have been given tools through the Constitution, through public participation units in the legislature. We don’t use these tools and this space.”

These discussions indicate that whilst some CSOs still cite their lack of resources as a major disempowering factor, others are less tolerant of such excuses.

In the Province, is Business Actively Engaged Through their Philanthropic Activities in Supporting CSOs?

As noted above, CSOs would like to see business providing more support. Forty-nine percent of respondents agreed with the statement that “civil society does not receive sufficient support from the business community”, and 27% strongly agreed. Only 14% disagreed. Confirming this perception of moderate support, when asked to describe the reaction of certain stakeholders to the work that their organisation does, 16% said business is actively supportive, 14% said business is supportive, 30% said neutral, and only 4% said business is opposed.

Perceptions were expressed that the conditions of assistance usually favour business more than the recipient CSO or community. They also noted that national businesses are not interested in contributing to CSOs in certain regions.

Table 15. CSO Interactions with Government and Business

Does your organisation interact or work with:	No	Yes	Do not know
a. Judicial System / Courts	49	48	2
b. National Cabinet	72	23	4
c. National Government Departments	30	68	1
d. National Parliament	70	26	2
e. Provincial Government Departments	9	90	1
f. Provincial Legislatures	39	58	2
g. Local Government	7	92	1
h. International Govt Agencies (such as the UN, EU & IMF)	45	51	3
i. Chapter 9 Institutions such as Human Rights Commission	29	69	2
j. Businesses	17	79	3

The environment for corporate social investment in South Africa is dynamic and fast-changing. Almost 50% of the responding corporates have re-strategised their CSI programmes in the last two years. There is also a tendency to align such programmes with core business at the same time as trying to respond to changing needs. More emphasis is now being given to joint ventures or partnerships – possibly to the benefit of CSOs, especially those that are community-based. CSI motivations range from being a good corporate citizen, improving the quality of life of communities the company does business in, and creating a conducive business environment. There is some tension between the ‘philanthropic’ and the ‘enlightened self-interest’ motivations. There is also sometimes a frustration on the part of CSI practitioners that their company programme is marginalised relative to company priorities.

Is the regulatory and legislative environment sufficiently empowering?

With regard to space, an overall perceptual question was posed. In response to the statement that “the regulatory and legislative environment is sufficiently empowering to CSOs”, 29% agreed, 3% strongly agreed, 12% neither agreed nor disagreed, 41% disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed. Thus, more than half of the respondents felt that the regulatory and legislative environment is not sufficiently empowering. These perceptions should be investigated further to determine specifically what aspects are problematic.

The Values Held and Promoted by Civil Society

Values are often seen to be one of the most important factors that set CSOs apart from other actors in society. Questions in the survey attempted to probe this perception further and determine what values actually underpin CSOs’ objectives and programmes.

Five Key Values that Organisations Promote by Organisations

Table 16. Responses Concerning the Five Key Values Promoted by Organizations.

Values	%
Democratic rights / Human rights / Justice / Freedom / Equity	122
Accountability / Transparency / Consultation / Commitment	36
Diversity / Inclusivity / Tolerance / Non-partisanship	34
Community Participation / Empowerment	10
Ubuntu / Sharing / Trust / Unity	9
Good Governance / Professionalism / Efficiency / Excellence	3
Non-Value Response Given*	241

Note: As respondents could give up to 5 answers, the percentages total more than 100%.

*Non-value responses were those that cannot be considered ‘values’. As this was a completely open-ended question, some respondents provided responses which, in the view of the researchers, could not be classified as ‘values’

Participants commented:

“CSOs should be in a position to uphold some moral values in society, but they do not for example point to corruption or poor governance within their own organisations when criticising government for the same thing.

“CSO goals are linked to the problems of society; goals will change as problems change. Some CSOs may cease to exist when the problems they address are solved.”

“There is an energy / emotional / psychological cost to working face to face with communities. There is a high burnout rate and no counselling for staff. Since SA has become a democracy even more energy is needed because it is a democratic government being fought.”

“We are all in this transformation process together, but we need to work in a constructive way. Everyone needs to know what their roles are.”

“CSOs should put activism back into civil society.”

We asked another question about CSOs perceptions of their relationship with government. This is particularly important in the context of the changed political circumstances in South Africa.

Which one of the following terms best describes your organisation's usual relation to government? (%)

Table 17. Attitude Towards Government

Ally	6
Co-operative	54
Critical	27
Confrontational	4
Indifferent	4
Other, specify	1
All	1
Do not know	4

Many CSOs are still uncomfortable with the concept of ‘loyal opposition’ and with the idea that they can move from one of these types of relationships to another depending on the issue. Many feel that it is ‘politically correct’ so see themselves on the same side as the majority government most or all of the time (60%). However, there are increasing numbers of CSOs who recognise the government’s inability to deliver on all of its promises and who are more willing to be seen as critical (31%).

Are CSOs Accountable to the public?

One way to assess this is to probe what types of internal CSO documentation is made readily accessible to the public. Respondents indicated that 41% make their annual reports available to the public on request, and 24% proactively disseminate them to a distribution list. With regard to membership numbers, the responses were 34% and 10% respectively; for membership lists, 40% and 8%; for sources of funding, 43% and 9%; for budgets, 28% and 7%; for assets owned by the organisation, 33% and 6%; for salary ranges, 15% and 2%; for activity reports, 45% and 16%; and for financial accounts, 38% and 8%. This data suggests that CSOs are reasonably accountable to the public with regard to the internal workings of their organisations, although there is room for improvement, e.g. in preparing and disseminating reports and through public report back meetings, especially in the rural areas.

However, there was a perception that CSOs are more accountable to their donors than to their beneficiaries. Their reports are not always adequately available or explained to the communities with which they work. CSOs should constantly ask themselves the question: Whose interests are we serving?

How Accessible is Each of the Following Pieces of Information about Your Organisations? (%)

Table 18. Public Transparency of CSOs

	Do Not have this	Available only to Management	Available to Management & Staff	Publicly Available on Request	Proactive Dissemination Sent out to Distribution List
a. Annual Reports	3	6	25	41	24
b. Membership Numbers	28	6	23	34	10
c. Membership Lists	24	7	22	40	8
d. Source of Funding	6	5	37	43	9
e. Budget	4	14	47	28	7
f. Assets Ownership	9	9	42	33	6
g. Salary Ranges	9	27	44	15	2
h. Activity Reports	2	6	21	45	16
i. Financial Accounts	2	18	33	38	8

Are CSOs Transparent about their Finances?

The fact that most organisations answered the question about their budgets is some evidence of transparency about finances. Also, NPO registration with the Department of Welfare carries with it an obligation to submit copies of accounts on an annual basis. Organisations appear to be more ready to release information about annual accounts than they are about budgets and sources of funding. Budgets do not necessarily reflect actual income and expenditure, which could explain some hesitation. Sources of funding are sensitive due to the competitive nature of present-day civil society.

Participant comments indicated that:

“There are some fears of accountability and transparency – CSOs don’t want to be put out of business because of their openness.”

“Good books do not amount to impact or accountability.”

“It is very bad how some people conduct themselves... they get funds on the basis of work in the community, but don’t use it on the community. There is no accountability.”

“All training will not help if we do not respect money that belongs to the people. We are just custodians.”

Is Internal Democracy Practiced in CSOs by Engaging Members / Beneficiaries in Planning, Designing, Implementing and/or Evaluating their Activities?

With regard to accountability to specific groups, we asked whether CSOs’ governing boards included members from government, target groups / beneficiaries, relevant professions, and donors. Eighty-three percent include representatives of their target groups or beneficiaries, 81% have members of relevant professions, 37% include government, and 26% include donors. This is a positive sign that more emphasis is placed on governance by target groups / beneficiaries and by professionals than by government and donors.

We specifically asked CSOs who is involved in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating their activities. Members’ involvement was: planning, 31%; designing, 23%; implementing, 26%; and evaluating, 24%. Beneficiaries and target groups involvement was greater in all phases: planning, 56%; designing, 39%; implementing, 53%; and evaluating, 43%. These figures indicate that CSOs do give some priority to ensuring participation by their beneficiaries and target groups so as to ensure that programmes are responsive and sustainable, and that they as organisations are held accountable.

Which of the following groups are actively involved in planning, designing, implementing and/or evaluating your organisations' programmes and projects? (%)

Table 19. Internal democracy in CSOs

	Planning	Designing	Implementing	Evaluating
Donors / Funders	20	17	18	67
Board of Directors	66	58	27	66
Executive Leadership	76	79	65	75
Senior Staff	81	75	79	69
Junior Staff	56	51	70	41
Beneficiaries / Target Groups	56	39	53	43
Other CSOs	22	16	19	19
Membership	31	23	26	24
Ordinary Citizens	21	13	19	19

The most significant roles in these processes were, not surprisingly, played by the executive leadership and the senior staff.

Do CSOs Promote Human Rights?

South African CSOs play a significant role in the promotion of human rights. This activity is firmly grounded in the Constitution's extremely progressive and comprehensive Bill of Rights, and commitment is particularly high in light of South Africa's history of human rights abuse. We noted previously that 73% of respondents run programmes and projects in the area of human rights.

Despite the Bill of Rights, CSOs considered government's role in handling human rights matters to be somewhat lacking. Whilst 49% said government is doing fairly well, only 9% said very well. 32% assessed their performance as "not very well" and 10% as "not at all well". This should be a wake-up call for government and for the Human Rights Commission.

There was a certain amount of cynicism regarding CSOs' approaches to human rights:

"CSOs are sometimes gullible and assimilate somehow; often they preach values which they do not practice. For example, they do not always respect the rights of their own employees, despite preaching adherence to human rights."

"Whilst human rights is inherent in pro-poor policy work, there is a difference between internal and external promotion of rights and diversity."

"Civil society must fight to ensure enforcement and implementation of the rights provided in the Constitution and legislation. The debate about rights is over; now the rights need to be protected."

Do CSOs Promote Diversity?

Sixty-one percent of respondents felt that their organisation is sufficiently representative of the South African population, but 35% said it is not. A number of questions were asked about the race, gender and disability composition of their staff and board.

Perhaps more indicative were the answers to questions about whether organisations had written affirmative action policies, and how well they were actually handling such issues. Fifty-five percent have affirmative action policies for gender, and 36% do not. Forty-five percent have affirmative action policies with regard to race, and 47% do not. Thirty-six percent have such policies with regard to people with disabilities, but 55% do not. Given the non-discrimination provisions of the Bill of Rights, these figures are low. When asked how well they were handling employment equity issues, 29% said very well, 39% said fairly well, 22% said not very well, and 5% said not at all well. It is not clear on what basis respondents assessed themselves so favourably in light of the lack of written policies.

There were also comments to the effect that CSOs are more serious about promoting diversity outside their organisations than inside. “The demographics of our own organisations is not always representative. Most organisations are still led by men – take a look around the room.” Another referred to affirmative action policies not being enough..

As with other dimensions, we probed additional indicators not included in the CIVICUS material, but which are of great importance to the health of South African civil society.

Internal CSO Governance

We included several revealing questions on this crucial aspect of CSO values and structure. When asked if their organisation had a board of directors, trustees, governing body or elected executive, 97% of respondents said yes. Similarly, 97% said they have either a constitution or articles of association governing their organisation. Eighty-nine indicated that they have an organisational Code of Conduct. In some provinces, CSOs stressed that problems arise due to corrupt or weak board members.

Another question asked respondents to assess their organisations performance with regard to several key indicators of good governance. These responses may be inflated by a 'halo effect' or lack of objectivity. Thirty-six percent said their CSO was handling organisational governance very well, 50% said fairly well, 11% said not very well, and 2% not at all well. 44% said their organisational management was being handled very well, 43% said fairly well, 11% said not very well, and 2% not at all well. With regard to the day-to-day running, 45% said they were doing very well, 44% said fairly well, 10% said not very well, and 1% said not at all well. On controlling and monitoring expenses, 50% said this was handled very well, 41% fairly well, 5% not very well, and 3% not at all well. Finally, with regard to their adherence to ethical principles, 49% said very well, 39% said fairly well, 7% not very well, and 3% not at all well.

How Well Would you say your Organisation is Handling the Following Matters? (%)

Table 20. Internal Management in CSOs

	Very well	Fairly well	Not very well	Not at all well	Do not know
a. Organisational governance	36	50	11	2	1
b. Management of the organisation	44	43	11	2	0
c. Administrative matters / day to day running	45	44	10	1	0
d. Employment equity with regard to race, gender, people with disabilities and the aged.	29	39	22	5	5
e. Controlling / monitoring expenses	50	41	5	3	2
f. Adhering to ethical principles	49	39	7	3	1

Then we asked whether their organisation had specific written policies. We covered affirmative action above under diversity issues. Ninety percent said they have written conditions of employment, 90% have written disciplinary policies, 80% have written policies on staff development and training, and 70% have written policies on performance appraisals. This is encouraging. However, only 47% have written conflict of interest policies, 51% have an HIV/AIDS policy, and 59% have a written policy on dealing with internal corruption (though this last issue may be covered in their Code of Conduct).

In CORE's governing board survey, we obtained the following responses to the same question. The results indicate some major weaknesses in internal governance, for example, in 2000 only 37% had a written conflict of interest policy and only 26% had a Code of Conduct for the board. Very few organisations appear to have in place a system which requires board members to stand down after they have served a fixed number of terms or years, and even fewer have a written policy as to whether board members are paid fees. Clearly, CSOs need to do more work to entrench good governance within their own organisations.

Does your Organisation Have Written Policies in place for the Following(%):

Table 21. Board Policies in CSOs

Policy	1997	1998/9	2000
Conflict of Interest	28	31	37
Board List of Responsibilities	31	31	48
Board Code of Conduct	45	54*	26**
Board Rotation System	27	24	18
Board Term Limit	15	18	24
Fundraising Policy	23	29	36
Fees paid to Board	7	3	12

*Board or staff or both

**67% for staff

Provided responses which, in the view of the researchers, could not be classified as 'values'

Independence / Autonomy

Quite a number of respondents raised concerns about the danger that their independence and autonomy from government would be compromised by the fact that they are obtaining increasing proportions of their total funding from government as fees for services or programmes. This is largely a result of the changed donor emphasis since the pre-1994 period when they preferred to fund CSOs directly. Since 1994, they have begun to provide more funding to the democratic government at all levels and less to civil society:

The donors do not work with CSOs directly, but through government. Government channels money between donors and CSOs; therefore government also becomes an intermediary between CSOs and the people.

Some questioned whether independence from government exists only on paper and in principle. Many expressed the view that CSOs are intimidated by the government and feel that they owe allegiance to the government. Further, they fear that if they are too critical, they will lose their access to government funds. Some also argued that CSOs should be wary of the dangers of being co-opted by government and/or by particular political sides. Concern was expressed that CSOs were not adequately performing their watchdog function – that the earlier impetus was gone – and that they have become too reactive as opposed to proactive. Nonetheless, it was argued that CSOs should perceive themselves as independent and act accordingly.

Voluntarism

The survey included a question aimed at better understanding to what extent CSOs rely on volunteers to deliver services and to perform core functions for the organisation. For service delivery, 12% of respondents rely completely on volunteers, 29% rely on them to a large extent, 38% to some extent and only 20% not at all. For core functions, 13% rely on volunteers completely, 21% to a large extent, 36% to some extent, and 30% not at all. The responses provide a clear message that voluntarism is thriving in South Africa, despite much negativism about entitlement mentalities, etc.

Altruism

All of the available information about salary scales in the CSO sector indicates that staff of CSOs earn significantly lower salaries than their equivalent in government and the private sector. Whilst we did ask a question about salary scales in the survey, the results were reported in too disparate a fashion to permit aggregation. Other sources, including Statistics SA, SANGOCO, the IT Salary Survey 2000, and CORE's governing board surveys, all confirm that CSO staff are generally motivated by selfless values rather than a desire for personal material gain.

The Impact of Civil Society

The fundamental problem in attempting to assess this dimension is that there is a serious lack of measurement of CSO impact – both quantitative and qualitative. Whilst it is agreed that they have a wealth of experience, they do not document it. This was partly attributed to the expertise, funding and time required to conduct evaluations, and partly to the difficulties posed by the nature of CSO work. Respondents cited a conflict between evaluation related to an end product versus the process-oriented nature of community development work. There was, however, a general acceptance of the view that CSOs need to improve their monitoring, evaluation and institutional learning capacity so as to, in turn, improve the quality and quantity of their work. In particular, it is essential to focus on the extent to which CSO activities have improved the lives of the people they purport to serve.

Are CSOs Successful in Representing the Interests of their Members / Beneficiaries?

In response to the statement that “Ordinary citizens are not adequately represented by existing CSOs”, 47% agreed, 24% strongly agreed, 6% neither agreed nor disagreed, 19% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed. More than 70% believe that CSOs are not successfully representing citizens' interests. This is a serious criticism of organisations, which often sell themselves precisely as ‘the voice of the people’. CSOs should urgently engage in some serious self-examination to understand where the apparent disconnect is occurring.

In one province, it was noted that:

“Issues are increasingly being mainstreamed, such as the rights of disabled people, and the result is more integration and less of a need for issue specific organisations. Therefore, small, unresourced organisations have no purpose anymore. The Department of Welfare now requires organisations to address a ‘basket of services’. This leads organisations to wonder if they can still fulfil the objectives they originally set out with.”

¹⁵SANGOCO Poverty Hearings: These were country-wide public hearings held by SANGOCO in 1998 to permit citizens to assess the advances made or not made by government and civil society with regard to poverty alleviation and to articulate the development priorities of the people.

Others said:

“CSOs are responsive to the interests of their members / beneficiaries. Their work is crucially linked to community needs. If this stopped, their raison d’etre would cease.”

“CSOs ability to improve the well-being of their communities depends on the availability of funding.”

“Some organisations do not have the capacity to make an impact.”

“CSOs are not organised enough to speak with one voice.”

Are CSOs Successful in Putting their Interests on the Public Policy Agenda?

When asked whether their participation in the policy making process had brought about any policy change in the past five years, 27% said no; 16% said yes, just once; 28% said yes, a few times; 13% said yes, many times; and 17% said they did not know.

From a rather different perspective, we asked respondents to react to the statement that “CSOs should be more critical of government”. 35% agreed, 38% strongly agreed, 12% neither agreed nor disagreed, 12% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. This shows a strong sentiment (73%) amongst CSOs that they should be doing more to critically analyse government policy, and implies that they are not very successful in putting their interests on the agenda partly because they are not trying hard enough.

As can be seen from the insert on community participation in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), a statutory body created in 1994 as a forum for policy debate amongst government, labour, business and community, CSOs (other than trade unions) have been relatively weak in their impact on the policy agenda. A further example of not doing enough was the SANGOCO-sponsored Poverty Hearings held four years ago.¹⁵ Whilst the hearings succeeded in raising considerable publicity around the plight of people living in poverty in South Africa, they failed to contribute to the policy dialogue regarding poverty eradication strategies and a valuable opportunity for policy impact was lost.

Are CSOs Invited to Participate in Legislative Processes?

CSOs are invited to make inputs to legislative processes at national, provincial and local levels. We asked respondents to indicate which types of inputs they have been involved in and the responses were: Forty-six percent had made written submissions to parliament; 46% had made written submissions to provincial legislatures; 58% had made submissions to white or green paper processes; 33% had given testimony to parliamentary committees; 79% had formal private discussions with government officials; 55% had formal discussions with legislative officials; 76% had informal private discussions with government officials; 56% had informal discussions with legislative officials; 81% were involved in seminars and workshops with both government officials and legislators; and 63% released information or took a policy stance through the news media.

“Whilst CSOs are invited to participate in legislative processes, this is often done just as a smoke-screen.”

CSOs do have the possibility of participating, but most legislative processes take place in urban areas; standing committees do not reach out to rural CSOs and communities

Are CSOs Successful in Influencing Government Policy?

Two questions were asked in order to gauge overall perceptions on policy impact. When asked to react to the statement that “Civil society has sufficient influence over government”, only 20% agreed, whilst 50% disagreed and 18% strongly disagreed. In reaction to the statement that “civil society has sufficient influence over parliament”, even fewer agreed (14%), whilst 50% disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed. CSOs appear to feel that whilst they have been invited to make inputs on policy issues, their impact is very limited.

At provincial workshops, participants expressed a range of views:

“Government seems not to accept criticisms, making it difficult to get CSO influence across to government.”

“Our values and government values are different – especially in terms of addressing the needs of the people.”

“We are currently trapped because our comrades are in Parliament and therefore everything government does is ‘right’ and it is difficult to criticise. We need to re-evaluate this position and change our attitudes.”

“There has been no change in the community even though we argue with local government all the time.”

“An organisation does not have an impact on its own, but as part of a larger body or network they do.”

“CSOs are responsible for the erosion of their advocacy role”.

“CSOs do co-operate with government, but on government’s terms.”

Survey respondents were asked to assess the impact of specific policy advocacy tools used in trying to influence government. The table below compares these responses to the responses to another question which asked what was the level of impact of each policy advocacy strategy.

Table 22. CSO Policy Advocacy Strategies

Policy advocacy strategy	CSOs involved	CSOs' impact (%)*		
		Great Deal of impact	Limited impact	No impact
a. Written submissions to National Parliament	46	13	27	16
b. Written submissions to Provincial Legislative Assemblies	46	10	26	18
c. Submissions to White or Green Paper Processes	58	22	26	13
d. Testimony to Parliamentary Committees	33	15	22	12
e. Formal Private Discussions with Government Officials	79	13	43	22
f. Formal Discussions with Legislative Officials	55	19	29	15
g. Informal Private Discussions with Government Officials	76	20	40	19
h. Informal Discussions with Legislative Officials	56	17	28	20
i. Seminars and Workshops with Government Officials and Legislators	81	34	39	11
j. Releasing Information or Taking a Policy Stand through News Media	63	26	29	13

*These percentages do not add up to 100% as figures for 'Not Applicable' and 'Do not know' are left out here.

These results show that the greatest impact was achieved through seminars and workshops, informal private discussions with government and legislative officials, taking a policy stand via the media, and submissions to white and green paper processes.

When asked a slightly different question: *at which stage of the policy process did you make an impact?* Twelve percent said they had an impact when involved in internal political party policy debates. This is significant because it shows that first, the outcomes of such debates have major implications for policy, and second, that a fair number of CSO leaders have access to such debates. Similarly, interactions with cabinet ministers and senior department officials were cited by 21%.

White and green paper processes were cited by 36% and parliamentary committees by 19%. This confirms the figures in the table above, reinforcing the view that white and green papers and other parliamentary hearings provide important opportunities for CSO impact. 34% indicated that interactions with implementing agencies had an impact. It would be useful to probe further what types of agencies they were referring to.

CSOs – especially trade unions and business and employers' associations – also have a considerable impact in the context of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), a statutory body created in 1994 as a forum for policy debate amongst government, labour, business

and community. The community constituency provides representation for certain CSO groupings, but to date has been less effective than the other three constituencies for reasons related to the issues debated, the selection and capacity of delegates, and a lack of resources. However, the CSO constituency is trying hard to advance a pro-poor agenda on issues related to HIV/AIDS, disability, public works programmes for job creation, formation of co-operatives through new legislation, restructuring and transformation of local government, black economic empowerment, opposition to privatisation of public utilities, etc.

When CSO parliamentary offices were interviewed, they stressed that CSOs have the greatest impact when they work in coalition with other organisations, when interventions are made early in the process, and when adequate follow-up is made. They also noted that CSOs need sound information and research that can add value to policy debates, and that they should establish contact with key drivers of policy in both the legislature and the executive branches. Combining these strategies with media coverage adds to their influence.

Are CSOs Successful in Implementing Government Policy?

The questionnaire did not provide direct answers to this question, except to indicate the difficulties CSOs face in tendering for government contracts and receiving payment for services under government contracts. Twenty-one percent said it is difficult to tender for government contracts and 37% said it is very difficult. Only 12% said this is easy. Twenty-seven percent said it is difficult to actually receive payment for services rendered, and 32% said it is very difficult. Again only 12% said it is easy.

CSOs seem to perceive government as being more supportive of their work than not, but this is not translated into direct co-operation in implementation. Fifty-four percent said that government supports their work, but only 10% said government is actively supportive, and 26% said government's attitude is neutral. Only 5% said government opposes its work.

In response to the statement that "CSOs should co-operate more with government", 44% agreed, 32% strongly agreed and only 10% disagreed. CSO programmes also often complement those being conducted by government agencies.

It is also important to note that CSOs may not wish to implement government policy if they disagree with it, and may instead seek funding from other sources to implement their own programmes. It was noted that whereas CSOs generally try to remain apolitical, many policies and programmes are perceived as politically loaded.

Some workshop participants also expressed concern and frustration that sometimes, following consultations with government regarding proposed activities, found that government 'stole' their ideas and implemented them without the CSOs' involvement.

Do CSOs Successfully Co-operate with Government in Implementing Government Policy in Favour of their Membership / Beneficiary Communities? Do CSOs Succeed in Improving the Well-being of their Membership / Beneficiary communities?

Whilst policy dialogue was addressed reasonably thoroughly in the survey, direct questions about perceptions of implementation and benefit to communities were unfortunately omitted and therefore cannot be reported upon. However, discussion in the workshops indicated that participants were somewhat cynical about the ability of CSOs to improve the well-being of communities by implementing government policy.

“Often people who implement projects and policies have no credibility or standing with the community, were not in the process from the beginning, and therefore fail to deliver.”

“CSOs dance to the government music. They are only successful in implementing government policy which benefits their members/beneficiaries to the extent that they receive financial support.”

“Communities must be able to see the difference in their lives; there must be a visible, tangible presence in the community.”

Are CSOs Generally Portrayed Positively in the Public Media?

A general statement saying that “Civil society receives sufficient support from the media” elicited this reaction: Thirty percent agreed, 5% strongly agreed, 19% neither agreed nor disagreed, 37% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed. When asked to describe the reaction of the media to the work their organisation does, 44% said the media is supportive, 10% said it is very supportive, 35% neutral, and only 3% thought the media opposed their work. Consistently, 70% of CSOs felt that the coverage of their organisation had been positive, 18% felt it was neutral and 3% felt it was negative.

Respondents were asked how often, over the past five years, their organisation had received media exposure (other than advertising), in radio, television, newspapers and other print media, and electronic media. Coverage by radio and in the print media were the most frequent. Considering the relative newness of electronic media, the responses were not discouraging.

Over the Past Five Years, How Often Has your Organisation Received Media Exposure (other than advertising) From:

Table 23. SOs Media Exposure

Type of Media	Never	Just Once or Twice	A few Times	Often	Do Not Know
Radio	15	9	32	28	2
Television	38	19	24	13	4
Newspapers / print media	14	20	36	27	3
Electronic media	41	11	19	20	9

The feedback in the workshops was somewhat contradictory to the survey results as a whole. Comments in the workshops were by and large more negative. Workshop participants commented that there is no consistent programme to publicise in the media the impact of CSOs on communities. There was a strong feeling that CSOs whilst they do receive some publicity, CSOs need to tap more into available outlets. Some pointed out that those organisations with charitable objectives, i.e. welfare organisations, tend to receive more exposure. In some provinces, race was also seen as a factor favouring coverage of white-led CSOs and limiting coverage of black-led ones.

Some complained that CSOs are portrayed in the media as the opposition whilst in other provinces they said CSOs are seen as siding with government. Others felt that media ownership was not interested in covering CSOs but rather pursue their own agendas. Some felt that the media prefer to cover negative stories about CSOs:

Feeding 1 000 people is not newsworthy, but R1 000 stolen from a CSO is. Or, CSOs are usually portrayed as incapacitated groups scrambling for funds and not as organisations successfully implementing programmes.

Too much coverage portrays CSO scandals and corruption, and too little of their positive accomplishments.

The following section elaborates further on the role of the media vis-à-vis civil society.

The Media and Civil Society

The media inevitably has some impact on public perceptions of civil society and of other stakeholders. Acknowledging this, we sought to probe whether South African media provide positive, negative or neutral coverage of civil society, government, business, donors, community development and welfare, economic development and research, and other miscellaneous topics related to development aid. We used CORE's press clipping service to review and analyse press coverage over a 15-month period between January 2000 and March 2001. More than 1600 articles were reviewed, primarily from South African daily and weekly newspapers, plus several monthly magazines and journals. Some foreign publications carrying South African news were also included. The main results are shown in the two tables below.

Table 24: Media Coverage Articles Reviewed by Focus and Tone (%)

	Focus of article	Positive	Negative	Neutral
Civil Society	56	29	15	100
Government	35	53	12	100
Business	65	16	19	100
Donors	81	15	4	100
Community Welfare	49	45	6	100
Economic Development and Research	88	10	2	100
Miscellaneous	31	33	36	100
TOTAL	50	36	14	100

The positive coverage of civil society centred on the constructive contributions made by citizens and CSOs to welfare and development across the country, and the benefits of altruism and philanthropy. Local level, human interest and development initiative stories appear to be particularly newsworthy. This conclusion is reinforced by the levels of attention paid to community welfare and

development in general. Negative coverage highlighted funding and fundraising problems faced by CSOs, some cases of corruption, and CSOs' need to be more creative and proactive in their programme approaches.

Much of the negative coverage of government focused on difficulties in delivering services, whether due to inefficient or corrupt bureaucrats or inadequate policy. In particular, the media targeted problems encountered in the national welfare system, eg. making payouts to children, the elderly, the disabled, etc. It also dealt with the problems faced within government in distributing funds earmarked for CSOs and other development projects, e.g. the National Lottery and the National Development Agency.

The positive coverage of business and donors focused largely on grants given to both civil society and government at different levels as well as corporate social responsibility programmes in partnership with government, civil society and communities.

Table 25: Relative levels of coverage by Focus and Tone (%)

Focus of article	Total Number of Articles	% of total Articles covered	% of positive coverage	% of coverage
Civil society	297	18	20	15
Government	341	21	15	32
Business	160	10	13	4
Donors	79	5	8	
Community Welfare and Development	416	26	25	32
Economic Development and Research	97	6	11	2
Miscellaneous	219	14	8	13
Total	1609	100	100	100

These data reveal a number of trends which should be of interest to all the stakeholders concerned.

- More than half of the coverage of civil society was positive (56%) whereas only one-third of government's coverage was positive (35%). Business (65%) and donors (81%) received the most positive coverage.
- Nearly one-third of the coverage of civil society was negative (29%) whereas more than half (53%) of the coverage of government was negative.
- In purely quantitative terms, community welfare and development (26%) received the most coverage. Civil society (18%) and government (21%) received comparable amounts of press, whereas business (10%) and donors (5%) received far less attention in the development domain.
- Out of the total positive coverage, again community welfare and development had the greatest

share (25%), whereas civil society had 20% and government 15%, with business (13%) and donors (8%) trailing again.

- Out of the total negative coverage, government (32%) and community welfare and development (32%) received by far the most. Civil society fared relatively well, with only 15% of the negative press, with business (4%) and donors (2%) having negligible amounts.

Overall, civil society fares reasonably well in terms of media coverage, and certainly better than government. However, it is also clear that if CSOs had more proactive public and media relations strategies, especially reporting on their community-level accomplishments and innovations, their media profile could be improved.

Part IV

Conclusion

Key Findings

This study has provided South African civil society and other stakeholders with a plethora of relevant indicators of the current health of South African civil society. It has helped to pinpoint a variety of issues which require short, medium and long-term action. Whilst extremely difficult, the key findings could be summarised thus:

South African civil society has two essential and complementary challenges: consolidating an enabling environment and responding effectively to the challenge of poverty eradication.

Abie Dithake, SANGOCO Executive Director

Structure: The participants were relatively confident about the structure of civil society in South Africa, although civil society is still affected by the country's history of racial discrimination. South African society also continues to face many challenges due to the complex process of transformation of the state, society and economy, required as part of the country's democratisation. A key challenge is civil society's new, evolving relationship with donors and a democratic government with regard to funding.

An important challenge is how that part of civil society made up of NPOs, NGOs, and CBOs, can more fruitfully engage other segments such as trade unions and business and employers' associations, as well as arts, culture, sport and professional associations, to strengthen civil society as a whole. This, in turn, can help to build a culture of participation, inclusiveness, and tolerance. It can further move South Africa closer in reality to the ideals expressed in the Constitution – of equality, non-discrimination, and unity.

Space: Whilst the space available to civil society has vastly increased since the advent of the new dispensation in 1994 in terms of more enabling legislation and regulations, key aspects such as registration and tax exemption are still in the early stages of implementation. Further, there is a perception that CSOs need to improve their capacity in various ways such that they can fully occupy the space that is potentially available. CSOs need to enhance their capacity to influence government policy and to access government support for programme implementation.

Values: There appears to be a gap between the values espoused by CSOs and the extent to which those values are put into practice – internally and externally.

Impact: Respondents were most circumspect about the impact that civil society currently has. Whilst agreeing that they do have significant impact, they recognise that CSOs have not consistently measured this impact – on policy and on people's lives – in a sufficiently systematic way, either in the short or medium term. Nor have they successfully projected their image and accomplishments via the media available to them.

Agenda Priorities: Recommendations from the Vision Setting Exercise

The second round of provincial workshops served as a forum to report back on the results of the first round of workshops and the analysis of the survey questionnaires. Each workshop included a vision-setting exercise, aimed at developing a set of priorities which would constitute an agenda for future action. The provincial recommendations have been collated and merged to create a national agenda. Specific recommendations or visions which have emerged apply to individual CSOs, their umbrella organisations, government, the private sector, donor agencies, and the media. The recommendations are divided according to the four dimensions and some of the indicators used in the above analysis. In the full listing of the vision recommendations, we used the term ‘obligations’ repeatedly below in order to stress the need for individuals, organisations, and government to fulfil their obligations in addition to exercising their rights. What is reproduced here is a drastically abbreviated version of the vision.¹⁶

In the vision setting exercise, participants were asked to answer the following questions:

- Given the findings, what in your view are the most urgent issues requiring attention?
- What steps would you recommend CSOs take in South Africa?

The CORE / IDASA research team determined that it was not possible to posit a Vision Diamond. Any change to the Civil Society Status Diamond could not be accurately assessed as a snapshot at a particular future moment. South African civil society is constantly in flux due to the ongoing transformation of our society. Nonetheless, a clear vision and action programme did emerge from the 18 provincial workshops and the final national workshop.

We wish to note that there is a tendency when asked such questions for respondents to develop a ‘wish list’ without taking into account whether their proposals are realistic or achievable, and whether resources currently exist for such activities. Thus, for example, there are some expectations of SANGOCO, which should be dealt with by individual CSOs or other CSO networks. The scope of this study in the time available did not allow for a reality check of these expectations.

The following provides a brief summary of the vision:

Structure: South African CSOs should co-operate more with each other; make their umbrella bodies more representative and accountable, e.g. through provincial and sector structures; and work towards more effective co-operation with the private sector, donors and government. They should diversify their funding base in order to achieve a greater degree of independence and sustainability.

Space: South African CSOs must assist each other, particularly those in most remote and disadvantaged regions, to benefit from new government provisions for registration and tax exemption. Important information with regard to the legislative and regulatory environment should be filtered down to grassroots organisations so that they are empowered to attain all possible benefits. Individual CSOs should take responsibility and seek out the necessary information and educate themselves about available opportunities, and should keep their own houses in order so as to qualify for such benefits.

Both CSOs and government (at all levels) should increase their levels of mutual understanding – of their respective values, processes, structures, and capacities. CSOs must be more proactive in obtaining access to government with a view to making well-informed, constructive representations on behalf of their communities, and generally improving participation in democratic processes and structures. In turn, government should listen more willingly and carefully to South African CSO inputs.

¹⁶ The complete statement of vision recommendations is available from CORE

South African civil society must take more responsibility for its own situation, and should respond to issues on the basis of what we are and what we represent.

Values: CSOs should improve their public and financial accountability through self-discipline, ethical responsibility, internal good governance, and internal/external transparency. “CSOs’ accountability to their beneficiaries is non-negotiable.” CSOs should encourage and manage diversity within their organisations and promote tolerance of diversity in society as a whole. They should act in a manner consistent with the view that: “All development issues are human rights issues.” Most importantly, they should move away from an entitlement mentality, understanding that: “No one owes us a living!” Also, CSOs should ensure that their programmes are consistent with the values they promote: “practice what we preach!”

Both within their own organisations and amongst individual citizens and other stakeholders, CSOs should promote philanthropic giving as a means of engaging more people and organisations in working towards the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty. Similarly, they should build upon shared values and goals to encourage voluntarism as a means of empowering communities and organisations to do more for themselves.

Impact: CSOs should improve their capacity to measure impact and communicate effectively to others regarding the positive impact they have had on government policy, and on the lives of the South African people, particularly in terms of poverty eradication. They must plan for such measurement by developing base line data, identifying appropriate indicators and means of quantifying them. They should report on and disseminate the results widely. CSOs can use the media more proactively and effectively, with a focus on community radio, local and provincial media, and in local languages as appropriate. The media should, in turn, be educated and encouraged to engage in more in-depth coverage of civil society issues.

The Contribution of the Index to Strengthening Civil Society in South Africa

As the Executive Director of SANGOCO said at the concluding National Workshop:

The benefits of the CIVICUS Index Project cannot be over-estimated. It will help South African civil society to cope with the syndrome of change in which it finds itself, to benefit fully from the democratic state and dispensation, and to redefine our roles.
[paraphrased]

The *CIVICUS Index Project* has presented us with a new opportunity to assess the status, roles and functions of civil society in the post-apartheid period. This review of the post-1994 experience has in turn provided CSOs with an impetus to consolidate present gains, recognise existing weaknesses, and set goals for strengthening our organisations and maximising positive impact on people’s lives in the future. The study results provide an important base line against which to measure civil society’s progress.

Next Steps

The SANGOCO Reference Group, at its meeting on 27 July 2001, discussed the modalities for dissemination of the study. The need to filter more information to the grassroots was cited as a priority. It was suggested that sector networks could go to government departments to make presentations on the results of the study. It was also agreed that workshops should be held in each of the provinces with officials from both provincial and local government, to educate them about CSOs through explanation of the results of the study and their implications for action.

Presentations to the South African Grantmakers' Association (SAGA) and to the SANGOCO National Council were recommended. Further, the study will be published in full with a suggested print run of 3 000 copies, and it may be posted on a website when completed. A summarised user-friendly version will also be produced and distributed at grassroots level.

Appendix 1

Project Implementation

The South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) was accepted as the lead agency on the project. Funding was secured from USAID/Pretoria, provided via their contractor, Creative Associates (CREA). A request for proposals was issued. CORE and IDASA submitted a joint proposal, which was assessed and selected over competing proposals from several other civil society research organisations. As part of the project agreement, CORE and IDASA have consulted on a regular basis throughout the implementation with both SANGOCO and CREA. Representatives of the research organisations which competed in the bid have also been included in workshops so as to draw on their knowledge.

SANGOCO was separately tasked with organising nine provincial workshops to introduce the Civil Society Index Project to its own members, and at the same time conferred with them about other SANGOCO-related issues and projects. This provided an initial awareness-raising, at least for NGOs (only part of the wider civil society) around the country. Phiroshaw Camay of CORE assisted SANGOCO by facilitating the discussion of the CIVICUS Index Project at most of these workshops.

Appendix Table 1 details the research process undertaken by CORE and IDASA over the short period between March 2001 when the grant agreement was signed with CREA and August 2001 when this draft paper was finalised. This research process was apparently far more complex and labour-intensive than those undertaken in most other countries. We hope and believe that this effort has yielded an accurate picture of civil society in South Africa. The data and analysis will also constitute the basis for further research.

We would like to acknowledge here the CORE and IDASA staff who worked extremely hard on all aspects of this project and who are jointly responsible for the end product.

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Appendix 2

Chronology of Tasks / Activities Carried Out in 2001

Time frame	Task / Activity	Conducted by:
8 March	Planning meeting	CORE / IDASA
March – May	Preparation of organisational databases from which to draw provincial / national samples for surveys and workshops	CORE
March – May	Design of survey questionnaire	CORE / IDASA
March – May	Preparation of bibliography on civil society	CORE
March – June	Monitoring and analysis of press clippings	CORE
May – June	Telephone survey	IDASA
May – June	Key informant interviews	CORE / IDASA
May – June	Review of existing literature	CORE
3 May	National workshop for researchers and academics	CORE
4 May	National CSO workshop	CORE / IDASA
23 May	Planning meeting	CORE / IDASA
24 May	Western Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
25 May	Eastern Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
28 May	Northern Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
29 May	Free State provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
30 May	Gauteng provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
1 June	KwaZulu / Natal provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
4 June	Mpumalanga provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
5 June	Northern Province provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
7 June	North West provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
15 June	Draft report for presentation to feedback workshops	CORE / IDASA
2 July	Northern Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
3 July	Free State provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
4 July	Gauteng provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
5 July	North West provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
11 July	Northern Province provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
12 July	Mpumalanga provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
16 July	KwaZulu / Natal provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
18 July	Eastern Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
20 July	Western Cape provincial workshop	CORE / IDASA
27 July	Draft report presentation to SANGOCO, CREA, USAID	CORE / IDASA
30 July	Draft Report presentation to National Workshop (including national and provincial CSOs, government, business, donors, and media)	CORE / IDASA
7 August	Complete final draft report for presentation to CIVICUS National Assembly in Vancouver	CORE / IDASA

Appendix 3

Project Methodology

In order to adequately reflect the complexity and diversity of South African civil society, CORE and IDASA adopted a participatory research methodology for this project. The aim was to engage representatives of the range of civil society organisations in the country.

Further, our view was that to make an accurate assessment as the basis for the Civil Society Diamond, it was important to understand both civil society's perceptions of itself as well as the reality of its situation. Thus, the questionnaire attempts to collect both factual and perceptual data. Factual data has also been collected from studies conducted by other South African organisations. The 21 workshops have provided invaluable perceptual inputs.

The process initially involved a major sampling exercise, conducted by CORE, to develop lists of the full range of CSOs in the country, by sector and province, and to identify appropriate organisations from each of South Africa's nine provinces to be invited to the workshops and to be included in the telephonic survey. This exercise has also provided us with an overview of the composition of civil society in the country.

A. The Initial Workshops for Researchers, Academics and National CSOs

The first workshop held was with researchers and academics who have studied various aspects of civil society in South Africa. The second workshop comprised senior staff of national CSOs from a range of sectors. In both cases, the definition of civil society and the parameters of this study were presented and discussed in detail. Discussion covered the Civil Society Diamond, the dimensions and indicators of civil society health, the South Africa-specific indicators, and the project methodology. The draft survey questionnaire was reviewed in detail. Both workshops provided useful inputs, theoretical and practical, and raised issues to be explored further in the study.

B. The Survey Questionnaire and Interviews

The extensive questionnaire, which covered key aspects of all four dimensions, was jointly drafted by CORE and IDASA, and then revised incorporating comments from the first two workshops. It was administered in person at workshops or telephonically to a total of 213 civil society leaders in all nine provinces. The total sample had a 50-50 gender distribution. The survey data were analysed by IDASA's Public Opinion Service.

C. The First Phase of Provincial Workshops

Between late May and early June 2001, nine workshops were conducted, one in each of South Africa's provinces. CSO leaders from all sectors were invited to attend in order to obtain a representative sample. CORE sent out a total of 404 invitations on the basis of a complex sampling exercise. 167 accepted the invitations, and 139 actually attended.

Part of the survey questionnaire was faxed or e-mailed to participants in advance so that they could collect the required data in their offices. The balance of the questionnaire was administered at the workshops.

Table 26. Survey Respondents

Province	Nos. at First workshop Invited	Nos. at First workshop Attended	Nos. interviewed by Phone	Total in Survey*
Eastern Cape	60	24	10	34
Free State	44	18	20	38
Gauteng	51	9	13	22
KwaZulu/Natal	38	13	4	19
Mpumalanga	44	18	14	32
Northern Cape	34	10	6	16
Northern Province	36	13	5	18
North West	44	24	2	25
Western Cape	49	13	6	19
Total	400	139	82**	213

*(at workshops or by telephone)

Note: *The discrepancy between the total of participants at the workshops plus phone interviews and the actual total in the survey results from the fact that where there was more than one respondent per organisation, IDASA only considered the most senior respondent.

** Two from unspecified provinces.

The same agenda was followed at each workshop. First, the project was introduced by Phiroshaw Camay, the Project Leader. This was followed by discussion of the key characteristics of South African civil society. Participants then spent an average of 60-90 minutes completing the questionnaires. Next, there was a discussion of the definition of civil society and of what types of organisations are included in the study and which are excluded. Participants were then divided into groups and asked to answer the sets of questions related to each of the four dimensions of the Civil Society Diamond. Having done that, each participant ranked the four dimensions on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). In their groups they then agreed on a joint score. These were presented to the plenary, which then debated the scores and reached consensus on a single score per dimension resulting in an agreed Civil Society Diamond for the province. Lively discussion accompanied each phase of this process.

D. Review of Existing Literature

This aspect of the study, conducted by CORE, involved the preparation of a bibliography of civil society in South Africa (published by CORE under the title "Civil Society: A Selected Bibliography of South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa"). It also involved a review of much of this literature as a means of contextualising the survey data and workshop feedback. Some findings from these sources have been incorporated into the analysis.

Table 27. Workshop Attendees

Province	Total Invited	Total Attended
Eastern Cape	45	23
Free State	20	16
Gauteng	48	15
KwaZulu/Natal	38	13
Mpumalanga	35	13
Northern Cape	21	10
Northern Province	27	21
North West	30	31
Western Cape	37	9
Total	301	151

E. Media Coverage

Using CORE's regular press clipping service, media coverage of civil society and other stakeholders was assessed over the 15-month period from January 2000 to March 2001. Articles were categorised as either positive, negative or neutral, with regard to the stakeholders concerned. Conclusions were drawn regarding the impact of such coverage on public perceptions of civil society.

F. The Second Phase of Provincial Workshops

In July 2001, the second set of provincial workshops were held. Again, these were facilitated by Phiroshaw Camay. One IDASA staff member was present at each workshop to act as rapporteur. The objective of these workshops was to report back to CSOs in the each province regarding the provincial profile of civil society as it had emerged to date through the previous workshop discussions and the survey questionnaire responses. Feedback was sought from participants with regard to the preliminary conclusions. The same agenda was followed for each workshop.

A total of 301 CSO representatives were invited to these workshops and 151 actually attended. The table above details the participation at the second provincial workshops, by province.

G. Key Informant Interviews

In addition to the survey, interviews were conducted with key informants other than civil society leaders to assess perceptions of civil society impact on the part of government, donors and others. For example, CSO Parliamentary Office staff were interviewed to gain their perspective on the impact of CSOs on national legislative outcomes. Those interviewed included: [complete list still awaited from IDASA]

Table 28. Key Informant Interviews

Name	Position	Organisation
Gail Smith	NPO Directorate	Department of Welfare
Omamo Edigheji	Researcher	NEDLAC
Khulu Mbongo	Community Convenor	NEDLAC
Colleen du Toit	Director	SA Grantmakers Assoc.
Lala Camerer		Institute for Security Studies
Judi February		IDASA Parliamentary Office
Mike Zothiga		SACBC Parliamentary Office
Napo Nchabeleng		COSATU Parliamentary Office
Dags Tilton		SACC Parliamentary Office

H. Meeting with SANGOCO and the Reference Group

On 27 July 2001, CORE and IDASA met with some members of the SANGOCO Reference Group to make an initial presentation of the study results and obtain their comments.

Discussion focused initially on the registration process, and on how to link it to improved internal CSO governance. The group discussed means of facilitating CSOs' preparation of meaningful constitutions and make them living documents for the organisation. Despite the fact that the NPO Directorate said they were pleased with the numbers of registered NPOs which complied with the requirements to submit reports, they noted the need to provide for more effective mechanisms of annual oversight, whether for CSOs registered as NPOs, or as other types of entities. The lack of consistency between the regulations for registration under the NPO Act, the National Development Agency, the Department of Finance / SARS tax exemption, etc. was raised as a serious problem in the legal / regulatory environment. It was suggested that perhaps the NPO Directorate should become a stand-alone statutory body which could effectively co-ordinate and implement these matters.

Also, the group agreed that there is a need to differentiate between the roles of individual CSOs and SANGOCO's roles, with a few to ensuring that individual organisations take more responsibility to solve their own problems. The point was made that SANGOCO does not have capacity to deal with a wide array of requests and demands upon them. This is an issue, which should be addressed at the upcoming NGO Week debates.

I. The National Report-back Workshop

South Africa is unique in its history of consultative dialogue between various key stakeholders – a critical factor in the success of the negotiated political transition to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. After the first democratic elections in 1994, civil society organisations have had to make huge changes in terms of their goals, structures, programmes, skill base, and so on. That

process is still ongoing as democracy is consolidated and new or adjusted priorities emerge.

Relations between and amongst levels of government, civil society, business and donors have also undergone substantial changes – changes which are still in process. In light of this situation, we also felt it essential to test in at least a limited fashion how government's perceptions of civil society are evolving, and how these perceptions compare with civil society's understanding of itself. We therefore chose to invite some key government officials to the National Workshop so they could react to the conclusions of the study. Similarly, due to their direct impact on the current and future roles which civil society can play, business, donor and media representatives were invited.

The National Workshop, held on 30 July 2001 in Johannesburg, therefore aimed to provide a report-back to representatives of CSOs and other stakeholders on the outcomes of the study and to afford them an opportunity to comment. The workshop was attended by over 50 participants, with 40 CSOs including individual CSOs, civil society research organisations, CSO sector networks, and provincial and national offices of SANGOCO. There were also six donor agencies, three representatives from the National Department of Social Development, NGO Directorate, plus several media organisations, including two national newspapers and the SABC.

The agenda of the National Workshop began with an opening statement by Abie Dithlake, Executive Director of SANGOCO. Phiroshaw Camay, Director of CORE and Project Leader for this study, then explained the background and process of the study. Derek Davids of IDASA then presented many of the key results of the survey. CORE and IDASA then responded to some queries about the project's methodology, sample, and results.

Phiroshaw Camay reported on the vision setting exercise undertaken at the second set of provincial workshops. After lunch, the vision was further discussed. Individual participants confirmed the provincial reports and diamonds as being accurate. Whilst concern was raised that this study repeated previous research and conclusions, the participants felt that this study at this time was not only meaningful but also set a new vision for civil society organisation practice in the future. There were no substantive additions to the vision.

It was agreed that the study results and the vision would be further discussed at the Provincial NGO Weeks and then at the National NGO Week in November 2001. SANGOCO representatives also indicated that the study would constitute a major input into their current preparation of a Development Charter.

This was followed by a discussion of the expected next steps, including dissemination of the study through publication of the full document as well as production of a leaflet with a summary of the results, aimed at community organisations and the wider public. The intention is that such a leaflet would also be translated from English into several of the other 10 official South African languages.

J. Completion and Publication of the SA Report

A final paper for presentation to the CIVICUS World Assembly in Vancouver, Canada, 19-23 August 2001 has been completed. The version for CIVICUS is abridged according to their specific format instructions.

Following the Vancouver Conference, and discussions with the other national research teams regarding comparisons of the various country results, the full-length SA Report will be revised and finalised for publication. The final report will include some analysis of how South Africa compares with other countries. CORE has committed to completing this by the end of September 2001.

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Note: CORE has prepared an 81-page bibliography on civil society in South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa as part of this project. The final draft of this paper will include more reference to the broader literature and the list below will reflect those as appropriate.

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