



REPORT ON REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY IN WEST AFRICA

DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2015

VENUE: WACSI SECRETARIAT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| List of Acronyms and Abbreviations | 3 |
| Report Summary | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Opening Session | 5 |
| Session 1: Presentations on ‘Sustainability within a Changing Global and Regional Context’ | 6 |
| Research and Capacity Building Initiatives on Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa | 7 |
| Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa and Beyond | 9 |
| Session 2: Organisational Experiences and Responses to Sustainability | 11 |
| INADES-Formation International (Côte d’Ivoire) | 11 |
| Kenya Community Development Foundation (Kenya) | 12 |
| CBM International (Togo) | 13 |
| Afrikids (Ghana) | 14 |
| Session 3: Issues, Challenges and Solutions in West Africa | 15 |
| The Way Forward | 16 |
| Conclusion | 17 |
| <i>Annex 1: Programme agenda</i> | <i>18</i> |
| <i>Annex 2: List of participants</i> | <i>19</i> |

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| CBOs | Community Based Organisations |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organisations |
| DPOs | Disabled People’s Organisations |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| ILO | International Labour Organisation |
| INGOs | International Non-Governmental Organisations |
| INTRAC | International NGO Training and Research Centre |
| KCDF | Kenya Community Development Foundation |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NHIA | National Health Insurance Authority |
| PME | Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| STAR Ghana Ghana | Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness in |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| WACSI | West Africa Civil Society Institute |

REPORT SUMMARY

The issue of sustainability of civil society in West Africa is becoming increasingly important with the gradual decline in significant funding from donors over the coming years. Civil society has started discussions on the implications of this on their status and functioning in years to come. The workshop, organized by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) in partnership with International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) and other support from Plan Sweden, Wilde Ganzen, Broederlijk Delen and CBM International, sought to create a platform for discussion and learning on the way forward.

The full-day workshop was divided into four sessions to ensure an exhaustive discussion of the different issues outlined. This report summarises the outcome of the meeting. The first session of the meeting focused on the current state of sustainability within the changing contexts in Ghana, West Africa and the wider regional and global setting. Presentations highlighted the outcome of the research conducted by WACSI with support from STAR Ghana showcasing the state of affairs in Ghana. The wider global context of civil society sustainability was also elaborated on with the situation in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and other regions emphasized. Pertinent discussions followed these presentations to iron out some misconceptions and seek clarity on other issues presented.

The second session gave some civil society organisations in Africa the opportunity to share their experiences and productive practices on how they moved towards more sustainable organisations. Inades-Formation International based in Côte d'Ivoire, the Kenyan Community Development Foundation in Kenya, CBM International West Africa regional office based in Togo and AfriKids in Ghana all shared their stories.

Participants were divided into three groups after this to have practical discussions on the various issues facing civil society organisations in Africa and to propose possible solutions to overcoming these challenges. Each group presented the outcome of its discussions to the larger gathering.

This third and final session ended with a short presentation from INTRAC and WACSI on their joint initiative for work on civil society sustainability in West Africa. The views of civil society groups present were sought on the proposed way forward after the workshop after which the meeting was brought to a close. The details of this report highlight the outcome of the meeting as it happened with the key take home points clearly outlined for further action by civil society in West Africa.

Introduction

The West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), in collaboration with the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) and with support from Plan Sweden, Wilde Ganzen, Broederlijk Delen and CBM International organised a one-day regional workshop on the Sustainability of Civil Society in West Africa on November 17, 2015 at the WACSI Conference Hall in Accra, Ghana. The workshop brought together 37 participants from nine (9) countries across Africa and beyond to discuss the sustainability of civil society and civil society organisations as a critical issue in the light of changing global, social, political and economic dynamics. This aligns with a regional project conceptualised by the institute which seeks to explore possible solutions to civil society sustainability, including through a pilot research commissioned by WACSI with support from STAR Ghana on “The State of Civil Society Organisations’ Sustainability in Ghana”.

Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Take stock of issues and initiatives around sustainability in Ghana and the West Africa region;
- Enable dialogue between different stakeholders on sustainability;
- Present examples of how CSOs are responding to sustainability challenges;
- Explore mechanisms for supporting sustainability; and
- Identify priorities and develop initiatives for action on training, organisational development and research in the region and in other parts of the world.

OPENING SESSION

The opening session was facilitated by Mr. Charles Vandyck, Capacity Building Officer at WACSI, who informed participants of housekeeping arrangements. He handed over to Ms. Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director of WACSI to deliver the opening remarks, followed by the keynote address and launch of the published research by Ambassador Elkanah Odembo.

Opening Remarks, Ms. Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director of WACSI

Ms. Afadzinu welcomed participants to the workshop and was grateful to participants for honouring the invitation to attend the meeting. She spoke briefly on the need for such an important meeting particularly within the context of changing aid and relations between donors and civil society in the region. She mentioned that there was a current need for discussions around the issue of sustainability in Africa and West Africa in particular because of the changing dynamics and the current interest of donor countries to redirect their funds to addressing their internal issues. Ms. Afadzinu concluded by saying that WACSI was dedicated to promoting the sustainability discourse and to partnering with other organisations to make civil society sustainable in West Africa.

Keynote Address and Launch of the Research Report, Ambassador Odembo¹, Country Director of Care International, Ghana

Ambassador Odembo expressed his deep appreciation in being associated with the programme and the opportunity given to present the keynote address. He stated that the current economic, social and political progress being made by many African countries evident in the ‘Africa Rising’ narrative is a positive step for the continent despite the many gaps identified. He also noted civil society’s acclaimed contributory role to the process. Ambassador Odembo however questioned the extent to which civil society meaningfully engages the different development agenda regionally and on the continent. To him, there was the need for civil society to actively engage in these processes and refrain from praising itself about its perceived importance which may contrast with the general view. He added that civil society needs to make a case for its relevance and existence as well as clarify what it does and what its influence is. Those, to him, were as important aspects of sustainability as financial sustainability, which has been the main focus whenever the topic is raised.

The research commissioned by WACSI was therefore a very important piece of document that addressed all the different aspects of the topic and was worth pushing forward. He ended by suggesting that the issue of sustainability is a process and not an event and he hoped that the workshop was just the beginning of such a process. Ambassador Odembo pledged Care International’s support for the step being taken and was eager to see the sustainability movement grow. He concluded his address by officially presenting and launching the research commissioned by WACSI titled “*The State of Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa: Striving, Surviving or Thriving*”, which he said was worth reading and using as a working document.

SESSION 1: PRESENTATIONS ON ‘SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN A CHANGING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT’

1. Research and Capacity Building Initiatives on Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa – Isaac Arthur, Research and Documentation Officer, WACSI

Civil Society Sustainability Project Background

WACSI with seed-funding from STAR-Ghana commissioned a research on “The State of Civil Society Organisations’ Sustainability in Ghana” in November 2014. This research is part of a regional effort to develop a comprehensive programme on sustainability in West Africa aiming at strengthening the capacity of the civil society sector to sustain dialogue and provide a common voice and actionable strategies. The specific objective of the research was to explore, gather and share knowledge on sustainability in order to kick off a regional agenda, using Ghana as a pilot to shape a programme for other West African countries.

Mr. Arthur stated that CSOs in West Africa are recognised as a vital force in strengthening governance processes but of the over 4,920 civil society organisations that were registered in Ghana in 2011, only 1,500 to 2,000 were actively functional bringing into question the existence and functioning of the remainder. Considering these developments, and in the face of dwindling

¹ Ambassador Odembo wrote the foreword of the research document produced on “The State of Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa: Striving, Surviving or Thriving”

donor resources, it appears legitimate to examine whether the gains made by civil society will be sustained and whether the sector will be found thriving in the near future. The sustainability discourse has become even more important presently because of the inadequate awareness and understanding among Ghanaian civil society actors of the urgency of the challenge.

Research Methodology

The methodology used to conduct the research included: exploratory research and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Online surveys, interviews and conversations with a wide range of actors within the civil society fraternity and beyond, questionnaires, publications, blogs, desk reviews of commentaries and general literature on the state and models of civil society sustainability across the world were consulted.

Key Findings of the Research

Mutable Meanings of Civil Society Sustainability: Mr. Arthur in his presentation stated that sustainability is a generic concept defined more by the context of its application than by any settled meaning. The research focused on the approach that sustainability is about the ability of a given organization to reduce its dependency and to improve its significance in the market while maintaining its social mission. It can also be approached as the strong ability and capacity to maintain independence, continually generate expected funds to pursue planned operations, command strong recognition and legitimacy, and wield influential power in its mission and the sector in which it operates. The study suggests that: 1) Civil society sustainability is largely a process although it can equally be a goal in its own right 2) Civil society sustainability can better be understood by description rather than definition 3) Sustainability is a broad and holistic concept. It goes beyond just survival towards thriving, resilience, autonomy, independence and continuous functioning. Civil society sustainability thus goes beyond just availability of funds.

The State of Civil Society Sustainability in Ghana: The research identified four (4) key dimensions of sustainability. It further revealed that the state of civil society sustainability in Ghana remains challenging with an overall composite score of 2.7 out of 5. The score indicates that sustainability of civil society is quite far from satisfactory. Specific areas of sustainability and their corresponding scores for CSOs surveyed are outlined below:

- Financial Sustainability (*Score= 2.4*): Civil society in Ghana is under intense pressure to operate, survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive funding environment.
- Operational Sustainability (*Score=2.6*): This reflects a challenging and less-than satisfactory state for CS to continue their operations (struggling-to-thrive situation).
- Identity Sustainability (*Score=3.1*): Sustainability of CSOs identity was generally satisfactory. In spite of the challenging nature of fund-raising and operations, civil society as a sector would continue to exist and thrive to contribute towards socio-economic development in Ghana.
- Interventions Sustainability (*Score=2.7*): CSOs are generally in a state where the likelihood of beneficiaries continuing interventions looks less than satisfactory.

In the light of the changing development landscape, four (4) States of Sustainability were identified. These include; 'Strivors' - not sustainable; 'Survivors' - challengeably sustainable; 'Thrivors' - satisfactorily sustainable; and 'Sustainable' - very sustainable. Overall, the study gives an indication that most civil society organisations are currently just surviving and struggling to thrive.

Recommendations from the Research

Key recommendations formulated at the end of the research included the following;

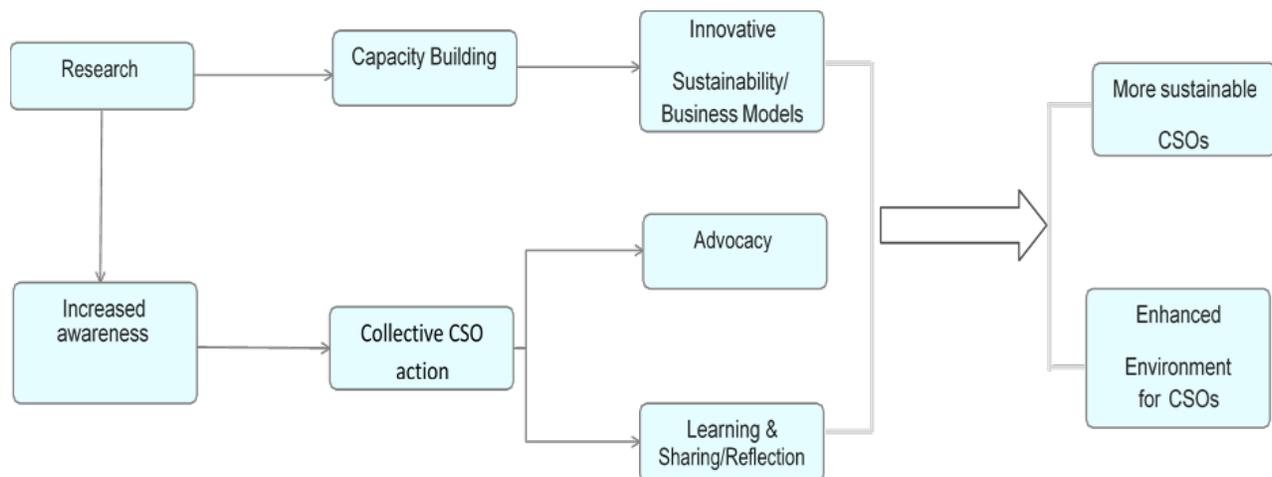
- Diversification of financial resources through exploring domestic resource mobilisation; exploring crowd-funding and online fund-raising platforms; experimenting with diaspora philanthropy; exploring social enterprises; and considering the setup of profit-based subsidiary enterprises.
- Institutionalization of structures and practices of good governance are valuable
- Investment in capacity building even in the face of dwindling funds
- Provision of a periodic health check on relevance, mission and programmes
- Sharing of results broadly and investment in visibility
- Enhancement of quality of service delivery
- Enhancement of influential power
- Leadership
- Strategic alliances with the private sector
- Planning for sustainability

Sustainability Programme

Beyond the research, the sustainability project designed and developed by WACSI include the following key activities;

- Collation of existing sustainability models
- Development of a Civil Society Sustainability Index (CSSI) for Ghana
- One-on-one information sharing, networking and awareness creation
- Inaugural Sustainability Stakeholder consultation
- Advocacy Campaign
- Capacity Building: design and development of a CSO-focused Sustainability Training Toolkit
- Building partnerships

These are captured and outlined in a Theory of Change model as illustrated below;



A summary of the study shows that while several organisations are striving to operate; others are just surviving the change while many others are actually thriving, at least at present. The state of sustainability of civil society in Ghana can be described as very challenging but one that is not too gloomy to cause the 'extinction' of civil society. There is some hope as some strategies and adaptations are already taking place. Civil Society Organisations must not only survive but thrive to be satisfactorily sustainable.

Mr. Arthur concluded his presentation by stating that the inaugural regional consultation is a key foundational step towards the achievement of the overall goal of the project which is to ensure that the contributions of civil society actors and organisations towards deepening democratic governance at both national and regional levels are sustained and consolidated. To achieve this, WACSI deemed it appropriate to develop a partnership with INTRAC because of its rich experience working on sustainability globally, specifically in Asia and Europe. Considering WACSI's experience in West Africa, the two institutions saw the need for a mutually beneficial partnership. In addition, Mr. Arthur stressed that WACSI's role will be to facilitate an inclusive process that will promote joint efforts from the various organisations engaged and/or interested in this agenda.

2. Civil Society Sustainability in West Africa and Beyond: A Global Perspective – Dr. Rachel Hayman, Head of Research, INTRAC

Dr Rachel Hayman introduced INTRAC as an NGO based in the UK which is dedicated to strengthening civil society around the world, working with many organisations, donors and partners across Africa, Asia, Central Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. This workshop, she stated, comes almost a year after a conference INTRAC organised on civil society sustainability in the UK where a key recommendation was to stimulate similar debates in different parts of the world in order to build up a body of evidence from different contexts about civil society sustainability. This would be relevant to galvanize the attention of policy-makers and decision-makers across governments, donors (public and private) and civil society about the crucial issue of civil society sustainability. Her presentation sought to establish why sustainability is such a critical concern not only in West Africa but in many parts of the world. It also provided an explanation as to why INTRAC and WACSI have agreed to collaborate on this initiative.

To start off, Dr Hayman indicated that the situation depicted by the WACSI-commissioned research on civil society sustainability is replicated around the world where civil society faces huge challenges as a result of political and economic shifts. INTRAC believes that for civil society to be effective and achieve real social change, it needs to be sustainable. The sustainability of CSOs is affected by the given country context but also by the regional and the global context; these vary within countries and across regions and the world. Some trends are however quite common.

Globally, there are major trends that affect the work and growth of civil society. Challenges that civil society is addressing and having to face include: 1) persistent poverty, marginalisation and inequality; 2) conflict and humanitarian crises; 3) restrictions in the operating and political space for civil society (affecting a huge number of very different countries); and 4) shifts in official aid patterns caused by political/economic change. Positive trends on the other hand have shown the: 1) increase in new donors and philanthropic giving in multiple forms; 2) spread of new technologies which enable people to organise in different ways; 3) economic growth that

offers potential for change in peoples' lives; and 4) improved political governance, accountability and transparency in many places.

For INTRAC, sustainability stems from civil society having legitimacy in their communities, a clear purpose and change-oriented goals, good progressive leadership, strong relationships with relevant stakeholders (across civil society, communities, government), accountability to those stakeholders, and resources (including financial and structural capacity as well as necessary skills). Dr Hayman added that organisations often lay claim to these elements but do not necessarily have them. They cannot fulfil their mission if they are constantly focused on their own survival. Additionally, the balance between these elements may differ in some places with particular issues being more pertinent than others. The question often asked in this regard is: Which elements of civil society should be sustained and why? In many places NGOs have failed to achieve change after decades of funding and the international system has fostered the growth of a sector that in many places has become dependent on external aid, has lost its connections to local communities and issues, and is regarded as inefficient and ineffective. It is therefore essential that;

- CSOs get accessible, relevant and practical support to become more sustainable and less susceptible to the vagaries of the economic and political climate.
- INGOs greatly improve how they support partners to become sustainable, while also addressing their own sustainability challenges.
- Funders rethink how they support civil society to ensure that sustainability is a central component of their policies and programmes.

For this to be done effectively, there is a need for better empirical evidence through dialogue and research about what is happening in different places. There is also a need to seriously consider the elements of civil society which will be affected; and the extent to which organisations are prepared for this. Dr Hayman stated that this will be one of the key areas of INTRAC's work for the next 5 years. The workshop was thus a building block for a programme of work that will tackle this problem. Specifically, the workshop would be useful to test the conceptualisation of civil sustainability and what really matters in the current context in terms of issues, obstacles and solutions. It will also be an informative opportunity to receive inputs into INTRAC and WACSI's programme ideas.

Panel Discussion

The presentations led to an active discussion which raised a number of key issues:

A participant raised a question about the shepherding role (or lack thereof) of government for civil society in Ghana. He expressed concern about the limited governmental assistance provided to civil society which did not go beyond the registration of CSOs with the Department of Social Development. He cited the case of Kenya and the United Kingdom where the governments put in place a body to help guide civil society in its effective functioning. A reaction to the point raised however encouraged civil society in Ghana to find effective means of regulating itself instead of relying on the government to do so. Another important point raised during discussions brought up the manner in which the sustainability question was being raised and addressed. One participant thought that the approach was centered on holding organisations accountable for their own sustainability whereas the external policy environment also plays a vital role in organisations' sustainability. He thought it was thus necessary to treat the topic using this two way approach. Many participants agreed to this submission.

In addition to the above, participants raised the issue about the implementation of the results of the study. Some participants were curious to know how West African civil society could implement the results of the study and engage at the regional level in the process, identifying and exploiting relevant entry points needed to be identified in order for this to happen. In response to this, it was suggested that civil society latch onto already existent agenda like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) development agenda which is the current issue under discussion to push their agenda at the regional level. Lastly, the question on how to get donors on board to support the sustainability agenda was raised. To this, one participant responded that this was a major part of the agenda which required civil society to think differently than it had done previously. The workshop was only to propel reflections on how to go about achieving this and was not to be a onetime event but the beginning of a longer process.

SESSION 2: ORGANISATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES TO SUSTAINABILITY

The second session was an experiencing sharing session that showcased examples of sustainability activities carried out by different CSOs on the continent.

1. INADES-Formation International (Côte d'Ivoire) – Francis Ngang

Mr. Ngang began his presentation by giving a brief history of the organisation as well as a summary of its mission and vision. INADES was formed to work for the economic and social advancement of people, with special emphasis on the people's own free and responsible participation in the transformation of their societies. It focuses on small-scale farmers' agro-enterprise development, community based natural resources management, community micro-finance, decentralization and local governance and development policy advocacy. The main challenges facing the organisation were in five (5) main areas: maintaining the dynamics of association life, maintaining institutional culture, staying relevant within changing contexts, resource mobilisation and hiring and keeping qualified staff. In the face of the challenges, INADES-Formation has endeavoured to take various measures over the past few years to overcome them.

Maintaining the dynamics of association life: This was done by seeking membership contributions through annual dues, intellectual contributions and voluntary service and by budgeting costs for translation and interpretation services. They also undertook a massive decentralization process between 1997 and 2010 which strengthened the membership base of the organisation.

Maintaining institutional culture: The organisation overcame the challenges related to generational transition and work culture (religious vs. secular) through self-evaluation and introspection. These were supported by the institution of induction processes for association members and staff and by embracing key values which were built into the overall strategic work approach. The organisation also made several investments in the development and review of its Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) framework for institutional learning.

Staying relevant within changing contexts: This included the need to contextualise the mission statement and to address the ever evolving development needs and work approaches, technological developments as well as the organizational structure and staff requirements. The organisation also invested in research and innovations and constantly updated its work

approach, methods and tools, including adaptation to the new trends in communication, delivery methods, product and service content. The thematic areas of focus and the organisational structure were also reviewed and updated.

Resource mobilisation: Under this area, the organisation faced the test of overall dwindling development assistance with funding partners scaling down their operations or opting out completely. The funding modalities also saw a change with a significant move from core funding to calls for tenders and proposals. They in addition faced tax related challenges and increasing competition in the development market place. Despite the numerous challenges under resource mobilisation, Inades-Formation put in place several strategies for sustainability which included: the development of its own facilities, the creation of an institutional policy for building reserves and other efforts to generate its own income through the sale of educational materials, subscription fees for correspondence courses, rental of its meeting facilities and maintenance charges for staff residences among others. It also undertook public fundraising efforts like the launch of the African Fund for Rural Development (Fondafrica).

Fondafrica was launched as a full institution separate from INADES-Formation which was dedicated to public fundraising, investing funds collected and sharing income generated to participating organizations to support their development work. Mr. Ngang however noted that the high cost of maintaining the fund caused INADES-Formation to integrate it into its structure in later years. Revenue accrued from it over time also proved little compared to the projections made in earlier years.

2. Kenya Community Development Foundation (Kenya) - Lawrence Mwangabi

Mr. Mwangabi began his presentation by giving a brief outline of KCDF's work. The organisation is a Kenyan philanthropic foundation that provides grants and technical support for sustainable community-driven development initiatives. Its mission is to promote sustainable development of communities through social investment, resource mobilization, endowment building and grant making. Recent trends and the changing context however posed several challenges to the organisation. The international financial challenges plus an increasing demand to demonstrate evidence and value for money has meant stiff competition with other actors to raise funding for quality programming. Kenya also attained the status of lower-middle income country which has further meant shrinking aid to the country and its civil society organisations although there are signs of growing levels of poverty despite reaching that status. Lastly, unconducive legal regimes including taxation, and the insecurity faced by the country have compounded existing challenges making resource mobilization even more trying.

Direct effects of the changing trend led to the following negative outcomes for the foundation: limited funding for programme work, difficulty in accessing donors, difficulty in creating stable local sources of income and challenges in establishing an asset base which can generate enough resources on its own. To overcome these difficulties, KCDF undertook some activities to increase its internal funding. It undertook income generating projects whose proceeds were ploughed back into the fund, it cut down on wasteful habits e.g. reducing paper memos and using technology and invested surplus funds (e.g. money obtained from corporates) into interest bearing opportunities. It also created an endowment fund and engaged in active 'friend raising' to obtain support from capable individuals and organisations.

Although the foundation has largely succeeded in using the above mentioned strategies in raising funds, Mr. Mwangwabi stressed on the fact that the process was not an easy one. He added that for any endowment fund to succeed, it is important to ask some pertinent questions. He said it was necessary to determine the ultimate growth of the fund before it starts. It is also important to know who would manage the fund and determine how they would be selected. There is equally a need to have a mechanism in place to keep the fund manager(s) on their toes. Moreover, the entity that develops, reviews and approves an investment strategy should be put in place and made known to all. Lastly, an annual spending rate should be established for any fund to ensure its sustained growth to cushion capital from being affected and to address inflation.

Mr. Mwangwabi summarized his thoughts on what worked for the foundation by stating that fundraising for an endowment goes hand in hand with fundraising for other functions at KCDF. KCDF also develops different packages/products for different audiences, hence using a two pronged approach in fundraising. It again ensures staff buy-in to the organizational mission leading to voluntary payroll contributions by staff members.

Mr. Mwangwabi highlighted possible lessons for other civil society organisations. He mentioned the need for long term critical thinking, good governance including active engagement of boards and transparency on how funds are used and accounted for. He added that it could be worth investing in a good software programme that will for example track all sponsors, give timely reminders and have accurate records as well as investing in a vibrant and innovative fundraising and communication strategy. He concluded by observing that having a brand is key in putting all of these together. He advised that civil society in Africa needs to shift from being wasteful; they should equally stick to their core business and mandate without being under pressure to follow donor trends.

3. CBM International (West Africa Regional Office) – Michael Kirumba

Mr. Kirumba in his presentation described the work of CBM International. CBM is an international Christian development organisation committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world. It addresses poverty as a cause and a consequence of disability, and works in partnership to create a society for all. Using the context of Disabled People's Organisations (DPO), Mr. Kirumba proposed the following as the way forward in discussions towards achieving sustainability of civil society in Africa.

- For sustainability, there is need to address the injustice of inequitable education experienced by persons with disabilities. This requires a long-term commitment as opposed to short-term trainings and workshops.
- Capacity building on themes such as advocacy and policy mainstreaming will be required to provide DPO representatives with the required skills to advocate for inclusion by their government and other stakeholders in all facets of life.
- Contextual models for disability-mainstreaming might be necessary due to low capacity of West African governments to allocate resources for various social-economic programmes i.e. what works in Europe does not necessarily work in West Africa.
- Mainstream civil society organisations need to integrate disability as a cross-cutting issue in their work. This requires a review of their models of operations and practices, and a

critical reflection on the rights of marginalized groups as they set about carrying out their activities.

- Supporting and strengthening the governance and management capacity of DPOs.
- Coordination among donors and other stakeholders supporting DPOs to avoid duplicating efforts and resources.
- Evidence on disability is lacking. Research should include disaggregated disability indicators where possible to have a basis for advocacy with regional leaders.

4. AfriKids (Ghana) – Nich Kumah

Mr. Kumah presented his organisation's experience in undertaking sustainability measures. He briefly explained the work of the organisation which involves working with indigenous communities in northern Ghana to improve the quality of life for rejected and vulnerable children. AfriKids targets the root causes of the children's problems by improving community support services and by providing access to basic education and primary health care. Mr. Kumah went ahead to share AfriKids' experience in taking steps towards building its sustainability.

Firstly, AfriKids saw the sudden fold up of many reputable organizations and NGOs which were seen to be flourishing in northern Ghana e.g. Youth Alive, FASCOM, etc. There is also current donor fatigue in Africa which has been compounded by the change of Ghana's status to a lower-middle income country. This has caused a shift of interest to least developed countries in Africa. Thirdly, the constant change in focus and interest of donors has necessitated a corresponding change in approach by civil society organisations. There has been a major global paradigm shift in policy where donor countries are now turning their attention to maintaining peace in conflict areas. Responding to the changing tide, AfriKids has put in place a number of strategies to ensure their sustainability in the country. Efforts include: mainstreaming interventions, reintegrating children into their communities, a family livelihood support programme, positioning AfriKids as the organisation of choice to partner in project implementation and building organisational capacity to fundraise locally.

By mainstreaming its interventions, AfriKids Ghana shares the responsibility of its activities in education and health with other stakeholders by collaborating closely with institutions such as the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Health Service. In reintegrating children into their communities, the burden of their welfare is shared with others. The organisation started by sending children to live with extended family members during school holidays. Family members on the other hand were supported with microfinance to generate income to support the children. Additional income is created by the organisation through its social enterprises where income generating activities are undertaken. Such activities include: the AfriKids medical centre, sale of energy efficient stoves, a travel and tour agency and the production and exportation of shea butter.

In terms of positioning itself as an organisation of choice for partnership, AfriKids has worked over the years to build an impressive reputation which has led to productive partnerships with some UN agencies like UNICEF, the ILO, government agencies and some reputable banks. They did this by investing time in building their strategy; e.g. theory of change and building a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system, implementing learning from research and evaluation and developing a solid communication strategy. The organisation has also built the capacity of its staff to fundraise both locally and internationally and presently boast of a very

vibrant programme and fund-raising department, which has written proposals and secured funding for big projects from development partners like Empower, UNICEF, ILO, etc.

Despite the impressive steps taken by AfriKids, a number of key factors limit the effectiveness of their work. These include: the delay in the release of funds by government, e.g. capitation grants, the attitude of some staff of their partners, the inability of families to support children because of climate change which has affected their source of livelihood i.e. farming, the continuous increase in the cost of education and the delay in payment for medical services provided by the National Health Insurance Authority (NHIA).

To flourish however, Mr. Kumah advised civil society organisations to be efficient, relevant, increase their networking and share best practices and have strong and effective governance systems. He also advised them to be accountable and transparent in all they do and diversify their social enterprises for more sources of funding. Lastly, they should building on existing indigenous knowledge and resources which will help promote ownership.

SESSION 3: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES IN WEST AFRICA

Participants were divided into three groups after presentations to garner diverse thoughts and opinions on the issues, challenges and possible responses to sustainability in West Africa.

The objectives of the session were to:

- Test the relevance of the general ideas on sustainability challenges and issues to the region
- Identify and discuss specific obstacles to civil society sustainability in the region
- Identify and discuss what needs to change to address these specific obstacles in region

Participants came up with the following;

Obstacles to Sustainability in West Africa

Participants noted that even though some points were considered obstacles, they could easily be identified as opportunities depending on how they are used and/or taken advantage of.

1. Institutional capacity: Participants identified the challenges some organisations face with their internal capacities. Many, for instance, are unable to retain their staff or lack the capacity to carry out their programmes.
2. Legislative framework: The tax system in some countries create difficult conditions for organisations to properly operate with the burdensome levies constantly demanded from them.
3. Restrictive political spaces: In some countries, the political environment restricts civil society organisations from operating freely and openly as they should.
4. Changes in aid flows: Presently, many donor countries are cutting down on their aid to developing countries in some thematic/programmatic areas and focusing on ones with more interest to them. Others are redirecting their resources towards their own internal issues. This has reduced the amount of funding hitherto available to civil society.
5. Poor relationships between civil society and its stakeholders: In some instances, the lack of accountability and transparency of civil society actors towards their donors and particularly their beneficiaries has caused their loss of legitimacy before the latter.
6. New technologies: The ever-changing technology landscape e.g. the growing use of social media, shows the need for civil society actors to be constantly abreast to know how to use them to their advantage.

7. Philanthropy and new donors: The emergence of new donors and the novelty of their modus operandi, coupled with the lack of knowledge of some civil society organisations on how to effectively engage them raises gaps in their operations.
8. Poverty, marginalisation and inequality: The rising levels of poverty and inequality is reducing the alternative sources of funding for many civil society organisations and further increasing the scope of work of organisations that work to address issues in these areas.
9. Economic growth: Participants stated that some donors exit the country because of the impression that it is economically stable, at the same time, others use this as a reason to come on board because they see it as a forum for progress. In this case, economic growth is both a bane and blessing.
10. Good leadership: The unfortunate evidence of bad leadership both in government and within civil society itself has slowed the sector in achieving its mandate in many places. The lack of proper succession planning in cases where the former is not rampant also prevents the continuation of the good work started by others.
11. Governance systems and other bureaucratic procedures: The long procedures involved in administrative processes in many places makes it extremely difficult for civil society to function efficiently and produce time-bound responses to issues that arise in their operations.

Recommendations on/Solutions for the Way Forward

1. Participants proposed that there was the need for a change in the way civil society and government perceive each other to enable both parties see themselves as the development partners they are.
2. Civil society was also advised to shift from their dependence on donors to their citizenry and investigate how citizens could actively participate in civic issues.
3. There is also the need for CSOs to change from the current practice of competing with each other for resources, visibility, etc. to cooperating to allow for more concerted efforts in their work.
4. Participants suggested that documentation and sharing of best practice within civil society will be beneficial especially for feeding into other programmatic areas.
5. Civil society actors present called for better coordination and networking within the civil society fraternity as relationships are key to sustainability. The sector was also encouraged to build partnerships with others like the private sector and government.
6. A suggestion was made to civil society to improve its transparency and accountability to stakeholders especially with its constituents. This would increase its credibility and legitimacy and consequently the support for continued existence.
7. Participants also suggested that it is necessary to build the capacity of CSOs i.e. both human and technical capacities to enable them carry out their mandates effectively and fully.
8. A further recommendation advised CSOs to clearly outline and carry out their purpose – mission, vision and objectives – and desist from changing to meet donor priorities wherever funding opportunities were spotted.
9. CSOs present called for thorough research into countries with unfavorable environments for better understanding of the political restrictions for targeted advocacy. Such research

will also arm civil society in those countries with the appropriate strategies to know how to survive.

10. Civil society actors in the discussions thought that there was a need for the sector to build a database of donors which will serve an alternative source of development partners. This involves effective mapping, networking and advocacy strategies.
11. Finally, recommendations were also directed at INGOs to ensure they involve and support small and grassroots organisations in addition to the bigger urban ones who usually obtain their assistance. They were asked to direct technical and institutional support as well as capacity building efforts to grassroots groups particularly on pro bono basis to enable them build up smaller groups into more sustainable ones.

The Way Forward – Post-Workshop Programme

After presentations from participants, Mr. Vandyck brought the workshop to a close by outlining the proposed plans by WACSI and INTRAC to partner on the way forward. Plans were consolidated into 4 points:

1. Organising national and regional platforms on sustainability:
2. Use of participatory research to document and share examples of how CSOs are adapting
3. Identify effective mechanisms that support sustainability and help funders shape their support instruments accordingly
4. Develop long term organisational/development tools to help CSOs become more sustainable

Views gathered from participants showed positive support for the points raised for the way forward. Participants thought that dialogues would provide the needed platform to continue reflections on the subject as well as create awareness on the issue. It would also provide the space for knowledge and experience sharing. They however suggested that discussions be held not only at the national and regional levels but at the sub-national levels (engage community based organisations) as well to enable the capturing of views at the grass root level. Additionally, engagement with regional bodies like ECOWAS should seek to influence and not just proffer recommendations. They added that research is an additional tool that could be used to obtain the different views on the issue especially from the grass root level. Other views included; lobbying donors to allow for a certain margin for innovation within contracts which would allow recipients the liberty to make some decisions, and learning, sharing and collaborating from and with like organisations in the process instead of competing with them.

CLOSING SESSION

Ms. Nana A. Afadzina closed the meeting by thanking participants on behalf of WACSI, INTRAC and other partners for making the effort to attend the workshop. She stated that the meeting was a fruitful one which led to a lot of reflection on the way forward. Ms. Afadzina reiterated that the workshop was just the beginning of a longer process and although it was spearheaded by WACSI and INTRAC, other partners were strongly encouraged to be an integral part and play an active role to see the movement to its end through knowledge and idea sharing and effective networking. She added that in moving towards a more directed approach, it would be more effective to take advantage of existing platforms and make this civil society sustainability discourse relevant to other ongoing development agenda at national, regional and international levels, e.g.: the Sustainable Development Goals, ECOWAS development plans, etc.

Annex 1: Programme Agenda

| TIME | ACTIVITY | RESOURCE PERSONS |
|--|---|--|
| 8.30-9:00 | ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS | WACSI |
| 9:00-9:30 | Welcome Message & Launching of the Research Report on the <i>State of Civil Society Sustainability in Ghana</i> Keynote address Overview of agenda and objectives for the day | Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director, WACSI Ambassador Elkanah Odembo, Country Director of Care in Ghana Charles Vandyck, WACSI |
| SESSION ONE: SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN A CHANGING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT | | |
| 9:30-10:15 | Presentation from WACSI on research and capacity building initiatives on civil society sustainability in West Africa Presentation from INTRAC on global perspectives on civil society sustainability | Isaac Hubert Arthur, Head of Research, WACSI Rachel Hayman, Head of Research, INTRAC |
| 10:15-10:30 | Plenary discussion | |
| 10:30-11:00 | TEA BREAK | |
| SESSION TWO: ORGANISATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES TO SUSTAINABILITY | | |
| 11:00-12:00 | Presentations by: INADES, Cote d'Ivoire Afrikids Ghana Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), Kenya CBM, West Africa Regional Office | Francis Ngang, INADES Nich Kumah, Afrikids Lawrence Mwangwabi, KCDF Michael Kirumba, CBM |
| 12:00-12:30 | Plenary discussion | |
| 12:30-13:30 | LUNCH BREAK | |
| SESSION THREE: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS IN WEST AFRICA | | |
| 13.30-14.15 | Break-out groups | Plenary –Rachel Hayman Group 1: Isaac Hubert Arthur Group 2: Rowan Popplewell Group 3: Omolara Balogun |
| 14.15-15.00 | Group feedback and plenary discussion | |
| 15.00-15.30 | TEA BREAK | |
| SESSION FOUR: MOVING FORWARD | | |
| 15.30-16.50 | Presentation from INTRAC and WACSI on their joint initiative for work on civil society sustainability in West Africa Participatory planning exercise | Rachel Hayman Charles Vandyck Isaac Hubert Arthur Rowan Popplewell |
| 16.50-17:00 | Closing Remarks | Nana Afadzinu, Executive Director, WACSI |

Annex 2: List of participants

| S/N | Name of Participant | Country | Organisation |
|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Francis Ngang | Cote d'Ivoire | INADES – Formation |
| 2 | Michael Kirumba | West Africa Regional Office | CBM |
| 3 | Marjolein Baltussen | Ghana | CBM |
| 4 | Robert Wiggers | Netherlands | Wilde Ganzen Foundation |
| 5 | Aka Alexis Anouan | Burkina Faso | Burkina Faso Fundraising Association |
| 6 | Lawrence Mwangwabi | Kenya | Kenya Community Development Foundation |
| 7 | Ambassador Elkanah Odembo | Ghana | Care in Ghana |
| 8 | Linda Zaiane | Ghana | Plan International/Sweden |
| 9 | Rachel Hayman | United Kingdom | INTRAC |
| 10 | Rowan Popplewell | United Kingdom | INTRAC |
| 11 | Emmanuel Kumi | Ghana | University of Bath |
| 12 | Beatrice Brew | Ghana | West Africa network for Peace Building |
| 13 | Nana Hagan | Ghana | Ghana's Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) |
| 14 | Linda Marfih | Ghana | Afrikids Ghana |
| 15 | David Pwalua | Ghana | Afrikids Ghana |
| 16 | Nich Kumah | Ghana | Afrikids Ghana |
| 17 | Hunge S. Gabriel | Nigeria | African Movement of Working Children and Youth |
| 18 | Naomi Gogo | Ghana | African Movement of Working Children and Youth |

| | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------|
| 19 | Karen Shormeh Sai | Ghana/SA | Africa Philanthropy Network |
| 20 | Emile Bela Kouakou | Nigeria | WACSO |
| 21 | Grace A. Afrifal | Ghana | Abantu for Development |
| 22 | Afiba Dolphyne | Ghana | IDEG |
| 23 | Isaac Harouna | Ghana | IDEG |
| 24 | Colzon Akambaziam | Ghana | Consultants |
| 25 | James K. Blondy | Ghana | Med Recruit Ghana |
| 26 | Kyerewa Asamoah | Ghana | GCAP Africa |
| 27 | Nafi Chinery | Ghana | AWDF |
| 28 | Isaac Hubert Arthur | Ghana | WACSI |
| 29 | Omolara Balogun | Ghana | WACSI |
| 30 | Nana Afadzinu | Ghana | WACSI |
| 31 | Charles Vandyck | Ghana | WACSI |
| 32 | Vicentia Kotia | Ghana | Australian Embassy/ AusAid |
| 33 | Mawuena Hayibor | Ghana | DANIDA/ Danish Embassy |
| 34 | Cynthia Nyam | Ghana | ACBF |
| 35 | Ernest Okyere | Ghana | Christian Aid |
| 36 | Abdul Tejan-Cole | Senegal | OSIWA |
| 37 | Amidu Tanko A. | Ghana | STAR Ghana I |