



**FORUM**CIV.

# **OVERALL PLAN FOR OPERATIONS 2018–2022**

2021

# CONTENTS

Vision and purpose ..... 3

Present situation ..... 3

Success factors ..... 6

Goals ..... 7

Priorities ..... 8

Organisation ..... 9

Financial consequences ..... 10

Follow up ..... 11

**Cover photo:** Member of the Amazon Theatre Group in Manyatta-Kisumu. Amazon Theatre is one of the local groups under Kisumu Progressive Youth, a Wajibu Wetu partner that uses art in form of theatre for educative community outreaches

Photo taken by Alamin Mutunga

# PRESENT SITUATION

Where are we today and why? What does the future hold? What insights have we gained?  
How is ForumCiv doing?

## HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE |

We are at a crossroads in history, a period characterised by increasing multipolarity, turbulent institutional and global governance, leading to an uncertain decade for the prospects of democracy and human rights along with the physical, socio-political, and environmental securities that go hand-in-gloves. In addition, with reports revealing a dangerous global decline for the 13th consecutive year of democracy and civic space, the landscape has become much more challenging for democracy and human rights activists. These developments are reflected in the rise of nationalist leaders and political parties - in both traditionally democratic countries and emerging democracies - who are changing the narrative on several political subjects and seem to be making a case to trade freedom and human rights for supposed security and economic prosperity. This has led to a highly charged and polarised political climate globally as proponents of uncompromising democracy and human rights clash with repressive regimes. We see an insecure sociopolitical environment for environmental activists, women's rights advocates, and human rights activists with life-threatening consequences. In 2019 Front Line Defenders reported an increase in killings of human rights defenders totalling 304 persons in 31 countries, highlighting the pressure and threats facing civil society actors around the world. Apart from the appalling killings of rights activists, repressive governments have also shrunk civic space by non-lethal but violent and intimidating means such as: criminalisation; arbitrary detentions and torture; restrictive legislation; surveillance and control of cyberspace and social media; delegitimising smear campaigns; and threats.

In addition, indigenous people's rights, way of life, and property is facing an ever-growing threat from both private companies and governments through destructive extractive processes and projects such as mining, plantations, infrastructure construction, and weapons testing. And for environmental activists raising their voices to counter these human and environmental rights violations the stakes and threat are very high. To put things into perspective, of the 304 human rights defenders who were killed in 2019, 40% worked on land, indigenous peoples, and environmental rights. This results in an average of 3 environmental rights activists killed every week in 2019. These statistics are a stark representation of the growing relationship between climate change, land rights, and environmental issues with a worsening human rights situation on the global level. As such, both Swedish CSOs and their global partners working in these contexts have a big role to play in advocating for, promoting, and implementing environmental justice approaches in the broader effort towards climate change adaptation and mitigation given their profound understanding of

## OUR VISION

A just and sustainable world where all people have the power to effect change.

## PURPOSE

- Strengthening marginalised people around the world who organise to claim their rights.
- Advocating for changes that contribute to a just and sustainable world.

how underlying structural causes and power relations interact and affect socio-political and economic outcomes in societies experiencing severe environmental pressure. In addition, these developments further contribute to our recognition that social and environmental challenges are interdependent and therefore both need to be jointly addressed in our work towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Democracy and respect for human rights are crucial for sustainable development and civil society is key to realising this goal. Authoritarian governments on the contrary, have set out to close down civic space in a bid to maintain their power, weakening many CSOs in the process. Worthy of note is the apparent collusion between repressive governments and non-state actors such as corporations, organised criminal groups, and armed groups, further worsening the threat to democracy, civil society, and rights activists as repressive governments can obtain deniability and avoid accountability by acting through third parties. It has become increasingly dangerous to challenge governmental power structures and the levels and types of restrictions imposed on organisations have increased, thereby reducing their ability to function effectively.

Freedom of expression is also under attack, both for established media and press organisations, journalists, as well as everyday citizens. The Freedom House report Freedom in the World shows freedom of expression and democracy on the decline over the past 14 years, with countries experiencing declines in their freedom outnumbering those with an increase since 2006. According to the CIVICUS Monitor, only 3% of

the world's population live in countries deemed open societies and the percentage of people living in repressed countries increased from 19% in 2018 to 40% in 2019. Also, serious threats to civil society have been observed in 111 of the 196 countries included in the Monitor.

**AGENDA 2030** | Independent and effective CSOs play a vital role in realising the 2030 development Agenda. This includes localising the SDGs, protecting rights, promoting accountability and providing valuable monitoring frameworks. Sweden has taken the lead on implementing the 2030 Agenda at the international stage by initiating a High-Level Group, and on a national level by establishing a national committee (Delegationen för Agenda 2030) which submitted its final report in March 2019, pointing out areas which require the most focus in the coming years in order to move forward towards SDGs. In the report the delegation emphasised the need to move from goal-setting to achieving concrete results and launched an action plan focusing on six areas: equality and gender equality; a sustainable society; a socially beneficial, circular and bio-based economy; a strong business sector with sustainable business; a sustainable and healthy food chain; as well as knowledge and innovation. One of the main ideas in the action plan is to create and encourage partnerships between the public sector, civil society, business, and information society. In addition, the need for developing new and improved forms of coordination and governance, as well as agile leadership which acts with long-term results in mind was pointed out.

Therefore, there is a need to continue monitoring and holding decision-makers accountable for these commitments made and to advocate for further commitments in order to reach the global goals. ForumCiv's advocacy work focuses on the global perspective and the external effects of Swedish policies. This is important because addressing issues where Swedish policies have a global impact, or where there are conflicts of interest between various policy areas is crucial in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

**DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND AID EFFECTIVENESS |**

In 2016, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) widened its definition of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to include costs related to peace and security expenditure which contributes to sustainable development. The new definition also takes into account the role of private sector engagement in development and resource flows. However, follow-up on private sector resources and effectiveness is difficult to track and monitor since no agreement has been reached on how to report on private sector instruments. In addition, including more costs as ODA can be used as a smokescreen for some international actors to utilise aid to promote their national interests at the expense of stakeholders who represent some of the most marginalized people in the world. While this development blurs the line between what is considered ODA and what is not, arguments and supposed safeguards have been made in support of this new development in development policy and ODA in the OECD's Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) framework.

Furthermore, these changes in the categorisation of development funding, trends, and priorities could lead to a re-evalua-

tion of relevance of actors. The EU is a major actor in development cooperation and is increasingly becoming important for us. Decisions at the EU-level are therefore very important for CSOs in Sweden and by association our partners in the global south and Eastern Europe. However, a visible and worrying development is the increased EU focus on economic interests, migration and security. This means CSOs in Sweden, perhaps more than ever before, have to get involved in the debates, questioning, and monitoring of policy-makers and raise awareness of issues related to poverty, equality, democracy, and human rights and clearly communicate how achieving these core issues which we stand for are sustainable pathways to realising long-term socioeconomic development, peace, security, and stable societies where forced migration and displacement are significantly reduced as a result.

Following the European Parliamentary election in May 2019 and the negotiation of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (long-term budget), the overall EU budget as a percentage of EU Gross National Income (GNI) decreased from 1.13% to 1.11%. The forecasted European Development Fund



will remain at 0.03% of the total EU budget for 2021-2027, representing a slight decrease in EU funding available to development initiatives and CSOs. In the Swedish context, we are experiencing a shift in the political landscape whereby there is a gradual emergence of political parties and leaders pushing for cuts to the Swedish international development aid budget which would be gravely detrimental to the global struggle for improved democracy and human rights, further endangering oppressed populations, while also weakening both Swedish CSOs and their foreign partners and associates who are key actors in this struggle. Swedish CSOs involved in development cooperation are key in the effort to strengthen CSOs in countries experiencing even more profound shrinking democratic-civic space and this trend can only be counteracted through concrete and careful action. In Sweden, the government's priorities as visible in: budget allocations; the framework of Swedish development cooperation; the strategy for civil society support; as well as guidelines provided by Swedish International

Development Agency (Sida) are factors of highest importance and determine the resources, scope and range of CSOs activities with respect to human rights and democracy promotion. If the 2020 corona crisis is leading to a decrease of Swedish development support, the resources provided by Sida's strategic partners (SPO's) becomes even more pivotal. In a situation like that, ForumCiv has to put particularly emphasis on direct support to local partner organisations during the following year.

Furthermore, as competition for funds increases globally and donors stress the importance of aid effectiveness and building partnerships with various actors, abiding by the Istanbul Principles on development effectiveness has become a cross-cutting issue and high on our agenda and mode of operation at all levels. In this more challenging environment, there is an

increased need for CSOs to be more transparent, accountable, predictable, and result-driven. The goal is to ensure that as much as possible, all the human and material resources utilized in our work is beneficial to all stakeholders and be effective at promoting human rights and democracy. A central part of realizing this outcome is increasing our emphasis on accountability and transparency and increasing capacity-building on these areas for our partners on both national and global level, while sharing lessons learned in the process. This ties to our adoption and promotion of a rights-based approach to development cooperation and also Going Glocal – strengthening our presence in countries of operation, increasing member value, decentralizing resources and the implementation and assessment of projects.

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Climate change demonstration in Stockholm 2019. Photo: Maurits Otterloo

## INTERNAL FACTORS

ForumCiv has for the past years focused on improving several areas of our work. The new matrix organisation that came into effect on January 1st 2017, included the difficulty of increasingly complex processes – as we work cross-sectionally and globally to a higher extent than previously. To ensure that we continue focussing on the right areas an evaluation of the change project has been conducted in early 2020.

The employee survey conducted at the beginning of 2020 shows remarkable improvements in all areas that have been examined. Our internal reporting from all units and hubs also contribute to the image of a better work environment as all report a return to healthy staff turnover. With the appointment of the new Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General in the first half of 2019, there has been a strong commitment among the management to ensure that ForumCiv is one organisation and to address the recent changes with renewed energy.

The internal working groups, global teams, contribute well to operations and the decentralisation of ForumCiv, as it ensures global perspectives throughout operations and on strategic internal processes. As the concept of and the Global Teams themselves have become more mature the structure has become more flexible to allow for different needs and roles within ForumCiv.

Developing our role as a platform for civil society is key for ForumCiv. The relationship with the member organisations has improved as we have met with more of them in 2019, both from the office staff but also through the member working group appointed by the Board, both formally and informally to better understand their needs. This has resulted in recommendations for further improvements which will begin to be dealt with in 2020 but also in 2021. Developing the ways in which we communicate with members will help to further the improved relation.

In 2019, Sida conducted an efficiency audit of ForumCiv and the results from this audit play a great role in how ForumCiv will continue to improve the organisation. In combination with the recommendations mentioned above, as well as the results of the evaluation of the change project we foresee that work done in 2020 will give a good ground for looking further and moving forward in 2021.

## SUCCESS FACTORS

Within our Purpose, what will we focus on in order to be appreciated and successful?

### Competence

- Theory of change drives all our work
- Effective development cooperation methods
- Being a skilled advocate
- Demonstrating lasting results
- Direct contextual knowledge through local presence
- Member organisations with extensive knowledge of development perspectives and cooperation
- Bottom-up perspective on development
- Innovative and flexible towards change
- Being an excellent employer attracting highly skilled staff

### Simplicity

- Being a straightforward partner to work with for applying organisations, local partners, and donors
- Focus on simplicity and cost-effectiveness in all our internal processes
- Clarity and transparency in what we stand for and everything we do
- Complex messages expressed simply

### Presence

- Having a presence in tough or challenging places and working with grassroots organisations
- Making use of our presence in strategic regions
- Advocate and be an influential voice within development cooperation
- Credibility in our way of working with partners – being a receptive, active partner that operates on equal terms

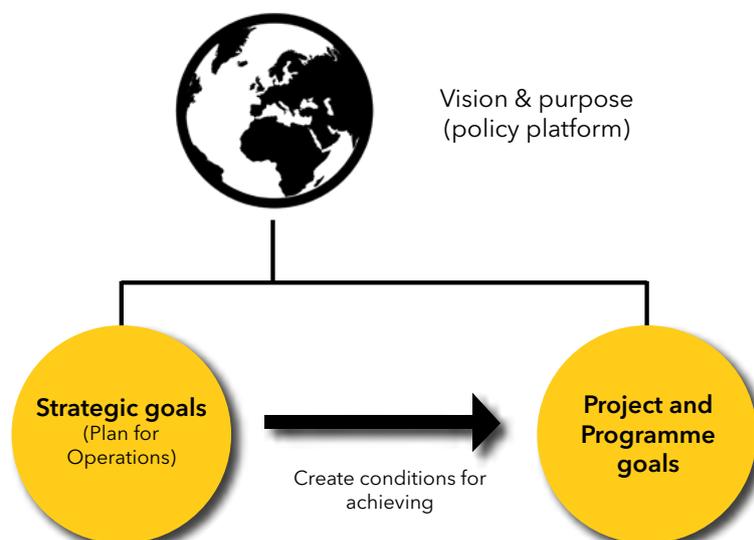
# GOALS

ForumCiv has five goals for the period 2018–2022, which together contribute to fulfilling our purpose.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic goal	Where are we in 2022:
<b>Strong through our diversity</b>	ForumCiv is recognised by members and other stakeholders as an important platform for civil society. We do this by making visible the work of the many diverse organisations with which we work, without thematic or geographical limitations. We are an influential voice in development cooperation championing the role of civil society in promoting democracy and fulfilling human rights.
<b>Effective and credible</b>	Through a rights based approach, guiding our Theory of Change, we achieve high impact. We are recognised by donors and partners to be a reliable and straightforward organisation to work with.
<b>Continuous improvement</b>	Our processes are clearly defined, efficient and fully implemented. Leadership is clear and all decisions are guided by our purpose. We have improved results and increased the potential for synergies by innovating and by coordinating between organisational units, with our members, and through strategic partnerships.
<b>Close to where the change takes place</b>	In order to benefit from contextual knowledge, competence and opportunities, we are present close to where the change takes place.
<b>Financially sustainable</b>	Our financial sustainability is strengthened through diversified funding.

## FORUMCIV'S GOAL STRUCTURE



# PRIORITIES

What will we do in order to reach our goals?

## CHAMPIONING CIVIL SOCIETY

**IN ITS OWN RIGHT** | Civil society is a central component in democracies based on diversity and plurality. The global trend does not reflect this: in democratic and un-democratic states alike, the space for civil society is increasingly under attack. Civil society's response is to adapt our roles and tasks in different contexts – to discontinue our work is not an option! The changing environment for civil society affects our members and partners and their contributions, and this requires ForumCiv to better utilise the unique role as a platform to stand up for the smaller organisations in development cooperation. We must begin promoting a wide range of solutions that reflect this plurality and find more flexible and synergy seeking ways of supporting and building capacity of civil society in Sweden and globally.

**GOING (REALLY) GLOBAL** | With the knowledge gained from the evaluation and the implementation so far, 2020 and 2021 will give an opportunity to, in a coherent way fully assess evaluation results and stakeholders' experiences. On basis of these inputs and conclusions, and in close coordination with member organisations, it will be possible to determine if, and how Going Global can be the best administrative and implementing instrument to realise the full potential of the platform that ForumCiv is.

**PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT** | ForumCiv and its members must more actively use the platform to enter into partnerships that further development. By adopting more flexible perspectives on cooperation and partnership and using our unique role ForumCiv should be a nexus of new alliances that include members, partners, businesses, media and other actors.

**COMMUNICATION FOR DEMOCRACY** | The foundations for development cooperation are under attack and as the largest platform for civil society in Sweden, ForumCiv must raise a strong voice that ensures that politicians and the public are aware of the importance of development cooperation and civil society in promotion of democracy globally.

Member communication means that we can better include and represent a wide range of civil society actors when communicating with duty bearers, but also vital for us to be able to meet members' needs. Results communication means that we show what our support results in. Internal communication within ForumCiv means that we can continuously improve efficiency, ensure standardised processes and a global organisation that is able to effectively support civil society.

**STRATEGIC APPROACH TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** | We continue rolling out the fundraising strategy in 2021, in combination with advancing programme development, ensuring quality of results and reports in ongoing programmes, deepening the focus on PME integration and by taking strategic steps in order to meet upcoming major applications.

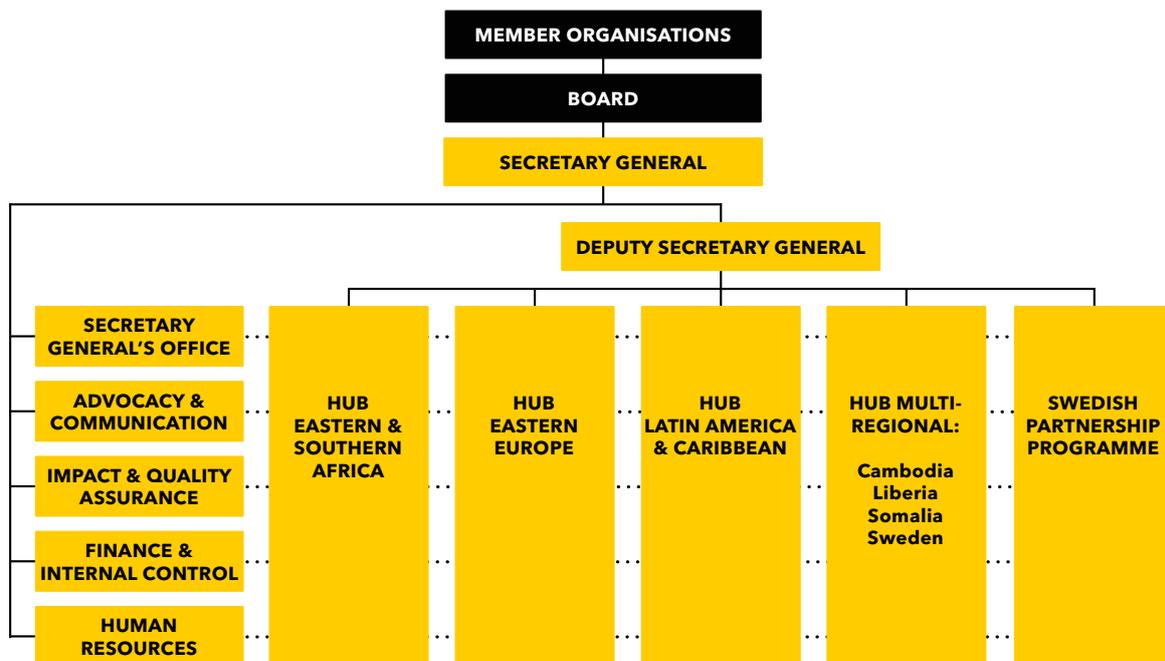
**DEVELOPING THE MEMBERSHIP VALUE** | Strengthen the influence, visibility, and transparency for member organisations.



Annual Meeting 2018. Photo: Maurits Otterloo

# ORGANISATION

Below is an organigram of ForumCiv, valid from 2020-01-20:



Our organisational structure aims to promote coordination and cooperation between units and Global Teams are used to a great extent. The management team is global and includes Heads of Units, Hubs and Country Offices. This helps in ensuring that the global organisation is considered at all times, and benefits from different perspectives from within the organisation.

# FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

What revenues, costs and investments do we expect? What are our financing needs and how can we satisfy them?

**FINANCIAL SCENARIOS AND PRIORITIES** | The Plan for Operations 2021 foresees a budget frame of 400-430 MSEK. The financial scenario on which we base our planning is dependent on the development of the volume of the pending contracts for funds related to programs with direct support to local organisations from several donors (for example by the EU and various Sida departments). Many of the direct support programmes (programmes where funding and/or other types of development cooperation is provided directly to local partners) run on short-term agreements. This means that multi-year forecasts are unreliable. The forecast below is to be interpreted as a rough estimate and ambition for the coming years.

In 2019 one new direct support EU program agreement was signed in Hub Latin America and the Caribbean spanning

2019-2022. The framework agreements with Sida Civsam for South/East and with Sida Partnership Forum for the information grant are approved for 2018-2022.

However, we see potential for further growth during 2020-22, in the global South and East, focusing on grants to:

- diaspora programmes,
- programmes in conflict and post-conflict areas,
- programmes in countries where civil society is under pressure.

Programme applications covering all these areas are planned or already submitted.

Type	Budget (MSEK) <sup>1</sup>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Communication programmes (Globalportalen and Global Development Issues), Sida Partnership and Swedish Network for Eastern partnership programs, Sida Europa	5	6	6 (6)	5 (5)	5 (4)
Direct support to local organisations, various donors	59	83	152 (152)	90 (60)	90 (28)
Sub-granting to Swedish CSOs. Includes Sida Civsam and Sida Partnership Forum info-kom grants and the grant from Swedish Council for Higher Education (one year contract)	244	230	266 (266)	282 (274)	282 (274)
ForumCiv's costs for administration, quality assurance and Capacity development	43	48	55 (55)	52 (43)	52 (41)
<b>Total per year</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>479 (479)</b>	<b>429 (382)</b>	<b>429 (366)</b>

1. The table shows the range between a realistic forecast and the funding with a signed agreement (in parenthesis)
2. Budget 2020 includes carry over from year 2019

These costs will mainly be financed through funding from:

- Sida (different departments and embassies)
- Sida Civsam
- Sida Partnership Forum
- Swedish Council for Higher Education
- EU
- Membership fees ForumCiv
- Membership fees & sales from Globalportalen

# FOLLOW UP

## INTERIM REPORTS

In relation to the detailed Plan for Operations developed by the ForumCiv staff, we follow-up activities at all levels, with a focus on deviations from plan.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

The annual reports follow-up the Plan for Operations at all levels and focuses especially on analysing the fulfilment of strategic goals and priorities. Goals are followed up using key indicators. Indicators for the strategic goals 2018-2022 were decided by the Board in the beginning of 2018 and are followed-up by the Annual meeting, through the Annual Administrative Report. In addition to key indicators and the analysis of development results, ForumCiv complements its follow-up system with specific evaluations. The Overall Plan for Operations is revised annually under the direction of the Board and is approved by the Annual Meeting.

Photo to the right: Nicholus Twesigye, a local doctor at the community health centre and Treasurer at Bishozi National Organisation. Photo by Alamin Mutunga.



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