

Two years on from Busan: Looking back, looking forward

*An analysis of a survey on the implementation of the
Istanbul Principles, Human Rights-Based Approaches to
development and equitable partnership,
and the Enabling Environment*

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This survey and analysis was compiled through a collaborative effort between Jared Klassen (CCIC), Suzanne Kindervatter (InterAction), Fraser Reilly-King (CCIC), and Brian Tomlinson (AidWatch Canada and the Working Group on the Enabling Environment of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2011, political leaders, government representatives, civil society organizations, and private sector representatives met in Busan, South Korea, for the Fourth High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness¹ (HLF4). The aim of this and the previous three forums was to increase the positive impacts of official development assistance in terms of its delivery, quality, and impact. From 2010-2011, many North American civil society organizations (CSOs), under the auspices of CCIC in Canada and InterAction in the US, participated in the preparatory activities for the Forum, and some attended the Forum itself. The Istanbul Principles for CSO development effectiveness² and minimum standards on the Enabling Environment³ (or civil society space) are two key CSO issues that were acknowledged at HLF4.

In June of 2013, the Canadian and American platforms for international development CSOs, CCIC and InterAction (respectively), launched a joint-survey to get a sense of how their members have engaged in the Busan process and how they have been impacted by its outcomes. More specifically, the survey was designed with four key goals:

- to map activities by Canadian and US organizations with respect to the Istanbul Principles and Enabling Environment;
- to establish what gaps could be filled to help organizations better implement the Principles, in particular on Human-Rights Based Approaches and equitable partnerships;
- to establish the degree to which a disabling environment (both at home and overseas) may be impacting organizations' and their partners' ability to affect change; and
- to determine how organizations and their partners are responding to this environment.

This report is based on responses from the 44 organizations that participated in this survey. Of these, 12 are from the United States while the remaining 32 are from Canada. Note that each question in this survey was optional, therefore response rates vary from one question to another.

This executive summary draws out the key findings from the survey analysis in the full report. The subheadings are based on the focus areas represented in the survey, followed by significant findings from the survey data. This summary also highlights the recommendations and next steps from the concluding section of the report.

BUSAN AND THE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM

Global, multi-stakeholder discussions on development effectiveness

Many organizations saw the Busan process as an opportunity to collaborate with other CSOs on issues that were core to their organizational values and priorities.

The survey demonstrated that there was a high level of engagement in the Busan process, with roughly 75% (of 39 respondents) indicating some form of pre- or post-Busan involvement. The most common modes of engagement included workshops and webinars related to the Busan outcomes.

Comments from respondents indicated that much of their organizations' Busan-related work was

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/fourthhighlevelforumonaideffectiveness.htm>

² <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/istanbul-principles,067>

³ http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/international_framework_open_forum.pdf

done through coalitions and networks of civil society organizations. This helped foster a shared learning environment and formulate a coordinated response.

Overall, two thirds of respondents indicated that their organization's priorities and operations were impacted by the High-Level Forum in Busan.

ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES

Mutually shared values guiding the development work of CSOs worldwide

A very high percentage of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the Istanbul Principles (95% of 37 respondents), and 60% of respondents to this question said that they have integrated the IP into some element of their work.

However, elements of the Istanbul Principles are not necessarily new to these organizations. Twenty (20) % used the comment space to indicate that these principles are already standard practice or part of their core principles.

While parts of the Istanbul Principles may be familiar, many organizations indicated interest in reviewing their organization's practices through the lens of the IP as a complete framework. This integration includes organizational or program reviews using the IP, creating guiding principles and benchmarks, and integrating the IP into their communications and public engagement strategies.

Sixty-one (61) % (of 36 respondents) said they will look to integrate the Istanbul Principles into their future planning and programming. Most examples of this work were focused on internal capacity building (such as reviewing organizational activities, setting goals, integrating into strategic planning, and creating compliance metrics). Others indicated an intention to offer training for international partners.

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

A framework to operationalize priorities based on international human rights standards

When asked whether or not they integrate Human Rights-Based approaches into their programs, 97% (of 29 respondents) indicated that components of a Human Rights-Based Approach were part of their operations. Many indicated that human rights considerations are an integral part of their work, while others identified specific programs or departments related to HRBA.

Thirty (30) % of these respondents used the "comments" space to identify specific tools and resources their organization uses to help guide their work related to HRBA. Other organizations highlighted the capacity building and training aspects of their work with host-country partners, specifically related to contextual human rights issues.

Although human rights considerations underscore much of their organizational values and practice, respondents expressed an interest in making HRBA approaches more explicit in their work.

Many challenges were identified when it comes to implementing HRBA. Key themes include difficulty in finding funding models and support for HRBA work, limited organizational capacity to implement HRBA effectively and broadly, the challenge of measuring and mainstreaming HRBA, and other external factors (such as government policies and practice, and working in conflict settings).

What would help? Many respondents identified helpful tools to implement HRBA into regular practice. These included establishing a “Knowledge hub” or some means of centralizing lessons learned, best practices, evaluation metrics, and other resources. Members also expressed interest in workshops and case studies. Public awareness campaigns could be used to shape how HRBA is perceived by governments, donors, and the general public. While tools and resources could be beneficial, providing CSOs with the space to prioritize these aspects in their work. (See “Enabling Environment” below.)

EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Development-driven relationships based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship

Sixty (60) % (of 29 respondents) said their organization have good models and resources for equitable partnerships. These resources include criteria for initiating partnerships, methods of evaluating partnerships, and ensuring partnerships are core to their operations.

The survey also highlighted some of the key challenges related to equitable partnerships. The two most prominent challenges were power dynamics (funding models, donor/recipient relationships, results-based funding stipulations, and prioritizing local knowledge instead of coming in with solutions drawn from “best practices”) and the time and resources required to invest in equitable relationships.

What would help? Sharing tools, resources, and insights were once again highlighted. Due diligence guides and metrics for measuring equitable relationships would also be helpful. Some organizations said it was simply a matter of investing more time in these relationships and, once again, having the “space” to prioritize building relationships with partners.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Interrelated legal, policy and funding conditions that impact the capacity of CSO development actors to work effectively

Two key themes emerged related to enabling environment challenges imposed by domestic governments (i.e. Canada or the U.S.). Fifty (50) % (of 28 respondents) identified funding modalities as a key challenge, including difficulty in getting government funds, and more specifically government funding that supports their organizational priority areas (such as HRBA and developing equitable partnerships). Twenty-nine (29) % of respondents suggested that legal requirements were a significant barrier (including difficult application requirements and maintaining charitable status). Furthermore, several respondents felt that their ability to operate as legitimate development actors was either constrained or threatened.

In response, CSOs are working to create space for dialogue and policy influencing by directly engaging government officials, for their own organizations or on behalf of their partners. Some of this work was also done through CSO networks and coalitions. A second prominent approach included public engagement strategies, intended to raise the profile of this issue and to get public support for it by highlighting constraints and corresponding policies.

In terms of host-country governments, respondents identified a greater number of enabling environment issues experienced by CSOs. The responses were also less concentrated on specific issues,

representing a broad range of enabling environment challenges. Themes identified included: violence and political instability; discriminatory government policies/practices, especially those towards specific groups (e.g. minority ethnic groups); lack of funding security due to shifting donor policies; and challenges in receiving funds from outside the country.

In response, organizations are creating space for dialogue and policy influence and working to help local populations realize their rights. This is done primarily through a capacity building approach – that is, looking to support and encourage local partners to realize their rights by resourcing them and strengthening local CSO platforms. Organizations are also working with global or broad networks and coalitions to raise the profile of issues in host countries.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

What can councils and regional networks in the United States and Canada do to support these organizations?

While evaluating current practices, identifying areas of growth, and implementing changes are steps to be taken at the organizational level, councils and regional networks have a significant role to play in building on the awareness and momentum generated by Busan and these global principles.

Communities of Practice: Creating opportunities for organizations to explore “what is out there” in terms of practice, tools, and resources relating to these principles and frameworks would be beneficial. Several organizations indicated that they already had tools, policies, and effective practices in place, while other organizations suggested that this was an anticipated area of growth for their team. Peer learning exchanges on these issues would be beneficial.

Self-Assessments: Some organizations indicated their interest in integrating metrics related to the Istanbul Principles into their work. A simple organizational self-assessment tool would help organizations evaluate their level of compliance with the Istanbul Principles and find ways to strengthen both their practice and the work of their partners.

Training: Further outreach should be undertaken with the survey group to determine the extent to which organizations would value and participate in onsite workshops related to the Istanbul Principles, Equitable Partnerships, and implementing Human Rights-Based Approaches.

Joint Advocacy: The constraints to HRBA and equitable partnerships, as well as the severe narrowing of civil society space around the world, are well documented in the survey responses. Some of these challenges can be addressed by changes in CSOs’ own systems and practices. But external forces, particularly from donors and governments, are a greater factor. Regional councils and networks could play a convening role in collective advocacy to begin to address some of these issues.

Public Engagement and Communications: The aim of these efforts would be to promote the inherent value in Human Rights-Based Approaches and the Istanbul Principles, as well as to raise awareness and foster a better understanding of enabling environment issues. Communicating the crucial value of equitable partnerships should also be a part of these efforts. These communication strategies could focus on public awareness, but more specifically on influencing the behavior on policy makers and/or donors.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, Canadian and U.S. governments along with other donors, developing nations, and a range of development actors (including civil society organizations) have met during a series of High Level Forums to discuss ways to improve the effectiveness in both the delivery and impact of official development assistance (ODA) or aid.

In 2003, donors agreed to harmonise their operational policies, procedures, and practices with those of partner country systems to improve the effectiveness of their aid delivery with the **Rome Declaration on Harmonization**.

The 2005 deliberations in Paris, France, produced the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**. The Declaration includes five basic principles: **ownership** by developing countries of their own strategies for poverty reduction; **alignment** by donors with these national objectives and systems; **harmonization** of donor policies and practices; a **results** focus; and **mutual accountability** of donors and partners for development results. The Paris Declaration remains a key global framework for aid effectiveness and influenced both the Canadian and U.S. government as they launched their own aid reform efforts.

In 2008, a forum in Accra, Ghana, produced the **Accra Agenda for Action**, which complemented the Paris agreements and for the first time **recognized civil society organizations (CSOs)**⁴ as development actors in their own right. Around that time, instead of complying with Paris or Accra, CSOs insisted that they would develop their own principles or standards for development effectiveness.

The Fourth and final High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness was convened in Busan, South Korea in late 2011. At this forum, CSOs and new development stakeholders, including the private sector, parliamentarians, municipalities and emerging donors (Brazil, China, India and Russia), joined the deliberations and adopted the Busan Partnership for Development Effectiveness (BPd). The BPd looked to both strengthen and deepen implementation of Paris and Accra, while also adding a new set of principles to guide development cooperation: ownership of development priorities by developing countries; focus on results; inclusive development partnerships; and, transparency and accountability to each other.

The Fourth High Level Forum also brought with it some particularly important developments for civil society. It acknowledged CSOs as independent development actors in their own right, and recognized the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and the accompanying Siem Reap Framework, as the standards by which CSOs would guide their work. It also recognized the role that governments had to play in creating an enabling environment for CSOs, consistent with internationally agreed upon human rights standards, to enable CSOs to fulfill their potential as independent development actors. Furthermore, it affirmed the vital role that CSOs play in helping people to claim their rights and in promoting Human Rights-Based Approaches to development.

⁴ CSOs can be defined to include all non-market and non-state organizations outside of the family in which people organize themselves to pursue shared interests in the public domain. They cover a wider range of organizations that include membership –based CSOs, cause-based CSOs, and service-oriented CSOs. Examples include community-based organizations and village associations, environmental groups, women’s rights groups, farmers’ associations, faith-based organizations, labour unions, cooperatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, and the not-for-profit media. CSOs often operate on the basis of shared values, beliefs, and objectives with the people they serve or represent. (Taken from *An assessment of the Accra Agenda for Action from a civil society perspective*, Better Aid, November 2009, p. 7)

Since Busan, civil society organizations working on aid and development effectiveness have united the voices of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, two CSO platforms that were actively engaged in the lead-up to Busan, into one voice – the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). The CPDE now sits in the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness (GPEDC), the institutional structure responsible for monitoring and the outcomes of Busan, including commitments made by CSOs as stakeholders in the process, and guiding world leaders towards the next global meeting. CPDE members are engaging with the official process through the Indicator on the enabling environment- one of ten indicators established by the GPEDC to monitor progress on implementing the outcomes of Busan – and the work stream on inclusive development leading up to the First Ministerial Meeting of the GPEDC, to be held in Mexico in April 2014. CPDE also has four Working Groups moving forward different aspects of work, including on the enabling environment and CSO Development Effectiveness.

In June 2013, in response to a request from CPDE, CCIC launched a joint-survey in collaboration with Canadian Provincial and Regional Councils, and the US National Platform, InterAction, to gauge the level of awareness of the Busan process among North American CSOs and to determine how these organizations were responding to the Istanbul Principles and Enabling Environment issues. The survey was launched with the following four goals:

- Map activities by Canadian and US organizations with respect to the Istanbul Principles and Enabling Environment;
- Establish what gaps could be filled to help organizations better implement the Principles, in particular on Human-Rights Based Approaches (the foundation for all eight principles) and equitable partnerships;
- Establish the degree to which a disabling environment (both at home and overseas) may be impacting organizations' and their partners' ability to affect change;
- Determine how organizations and their partners are responding to this environment.

Accordingly, the survey sought a number of things: to determine organizational awareness of the Istanbul Principles; to identify the tools that have been developed to implement them; to identify barriers to better implementing two of the key Principles (human rights based approaches and equitable partnership); and, to map understanding of issues related to the Enabling Environment, both the challenges organizations are facing on this issue at home and in countries where they work. This report synthesizes the key findings from the **44 organizational representatives** who responded to the survey.

The findings in this report will be shared with the full membership of the Canadian and American international cooperation councils to support ongoing work on CSO development effectiveness in these key issue areas. The results will also be shared with CPDE in order to contribute to their global analysis of organizational awareness and implementation of the Istanbul Principles and the current climate of the Enabling Environment. In particular, the findings on the latter will inform a report being prepared by the CPDE for the First Ministerial Meeting in Mexico in 2014. Finally, these results may be shared with government officials in both Canada and the United States.

This report has four sections. Firstly it explains the survey design and methodology, the profile of individuals who responded to the survey, and the limitations of the survey findings and the analysis that can be drawn from them. Secondly, it presents the findings of the survey. These touch upon five issue areas: 1) engagement prior to and following the Fourth High Level Forum in Busan; 2) awareness of the Istanbul Principles and the degree to which these principles have been implemented, both to date and

looking forward; 3) reflections on Human Rights Based Approaches; 4) experiences with Equitable Partnerships; and 5) Enabling Environment challenges both to organizations in North America and to the partners where these organizations are working. The report ends with some conclusions and forward looking recommendations.

2.0 SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

InterAction and the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC) conducted the survey of their respective memberships between June and July 2013. Member organizations were given approximately four weeks to complete the survey. In Canada, the survey was also distributed to members of the Provincial and Regional Councils.

The questions were drafted collaboratively between InterAction and CCIC, while also incorporating feedback from a member of the CPDE Working Group on the Enabling Environment. In particular, the input from the CPDE Working Group provided the framework for shaping questions related to the Enabling Environment (See the “Enabling Environment” section for this framework). The survey questions were designed to draw out overall trends among CSOs in North America, while also giving survey respondents the opportunity to qualify their answers with responses to open-ended questions. A full list of the survey questions can be found in the **Annex**.

Respondents were NOT required to answer every question in the survey. As such, among the 44 organizations who responded to the overall survey, not all responded to every question. To acknowledge this, where statistics are reported as percentages in this document, these percentages will be followed by the number of respondents to that particular question. For example, “60% (of 37 respondents) said that they have integrated the Istanbul Principles into some element of their work.”

Responses were kept confidential, although respondents were required to enter their name, organization, and contact information to confirm organizational identities. Direct quotes will be shared anonymously.

2.1 PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Forty-four (44) organizations responded to the survey, including 12 from the United States and 32 from Canada (of which 23 were members of CCIC and 15 were members the Provincial and Regional Councils, with an overlap of 6 of these Canadian respondents indicating membership in both CCIC and a Provincial or Regional Council).

Canadian Profile

CCIC distributed the survey to about 90 member organizations as well as the broader membership of Provincial and Regional Councils. Of those reached, a total of 32 organizations responded. These organizations represent a diverse range of sizes as well as organizational priority areas.

US Profile

InterAction distributed the survey to about 70 member agencies, and 12 of those responded. The 12 organizations which completed the survey represent different sub-sets of the InterAction community and break down as follows in terms of their primary focus: advocacy/rights—2; operational overseas—7; both advocacy and operations—1; and peace/conflict—2. Only about 20 InterAction members were

actively involved in the two years of preparatory activities for the Busan High Level Forum, which accounts for the fairly low (17%) response rate. However, over half of InterAction's 190+ members are involved in advocacy for reform of US foreign assistance, which includes advancing some of the Istanbul Principles and a positive Enabling Environment for CSOs.

2.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The responses of the CCIC members, Regional Councils, and InterAction members are only broadly illustrative of key trends and issues, since the sample is fairly small and not fully representative. Any statistical analysis of the survey results should therefore be understood from this perspective.

It is significant to note that the number of responses for the sections of the survey on Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA) and the Enabling Environment (EE) were quite a bit lower than for the responses to other sections of the survey – 15 out of the total 44 survey respondents skipped all of the questions related to the Enabling Environment. For the U.S. sample, respondents dropped from the total of 12 organizations down to 6 respondents in these sections. This is surprising, since the Enabling Environment is one of the priorities of InterAction's collective advocacy. For the Canadian sample, respondents dropped from the total of 32 down to 21.

Short of asking survey respondents why they skipped this section, it is difficult to ascertain conclusively why many chose to do so – perhaps the survey was too long and people grew impatient; perhaps people did not have a firm grasp of EE concepts and how they are playing out at a practical level; perhaps some organizations deemed the topics to be too sensitive; or perhaps there were other circumstances at play. Regardless, the small number of respondents and the broad nature of their responses makes it hard to draw clear conclusions from this section, other than perhaps a need for CCIC and InterAction to engage our respective memberships more pro-actively around this important issue.

That said, many of the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions in other sections provide rich and valuable insight on implementing the Istanbul Principles, and the lived experience of implementing human rights based approaches and equitable partnerships.

3.0 RESULTS

The following results are organized based on the key thematic focus areas of the survey. The subheadings have been drawn out based on trends that emerged from the data. Some of the information lends itself to being presented graphically and comparatively. And where this information has been illustrated, it is usually presented at an aggregate level for North America and then, as noted below, disaggregated to profile the results for the United States and Canada separately. There are also descriptive components that highlight and interpret aspects of the data to help clarify the results. Furthermore, these results include selected quotations (without attribution to maintain anonymity) from the survey responses to further illustrate key themes that emerged. Throughout this report, response rates have been rounded to the nearest percentage point (See the note in the above section titled "Survey Design" regarding reported percentages). A summary of the key findings and follow-up recommendations may be found in the section entitled "Conclusion."

Once again, please note that where statistics are reported as percentages in this document, these percentages will be followed by the number of respondents to that particular question. For example,

“60% (of 37 respondents) said that they have integrated the Istanbul Principles into some element of their work.” While the survey had a total of 44 respondents, many questions in the survey were optional and therefore reflect a varied response rate from one question to another.

Throughout this report, responses will also frequently be displayed in a disaggregated format. For the most part, this is to distinguish between US and Canadian responses, but occasionally, it is also based on an organization’s membership to InterAction, CCIC, and/or provincial or regional Canadian councils. Note that where organizations are members of multiple networks (for example, an organization may be a member of both CCIC and a provincial/regional Canadian network), they will be represented/counted twice on these disaggregated bar graphs.

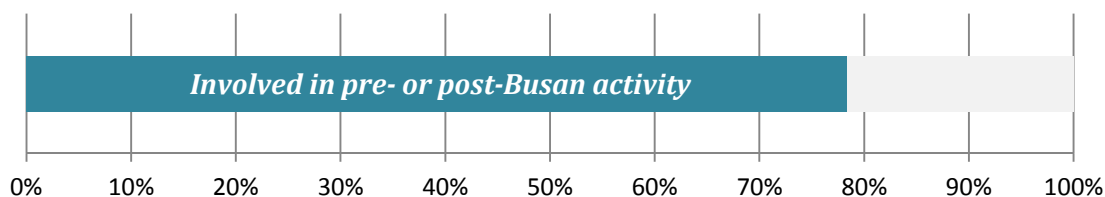
3.1 BUSAN AND THE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM

As noted earlier, Busan was the fourth in a series of high level meetings on aid effectiveness. Both InterAction and CCIC were actively engaged in CSO preparations for Busan. Representatives from both organizations were part of coordinating committees that contributed greatly to the role of CSOs in this High-Level Forum. Both InterAction and CCIC also facilitated opportunities for CSOs to engage in post-Busan -related activities including sector-wide consultations, public engagement strategies, and engaging with government representatives.

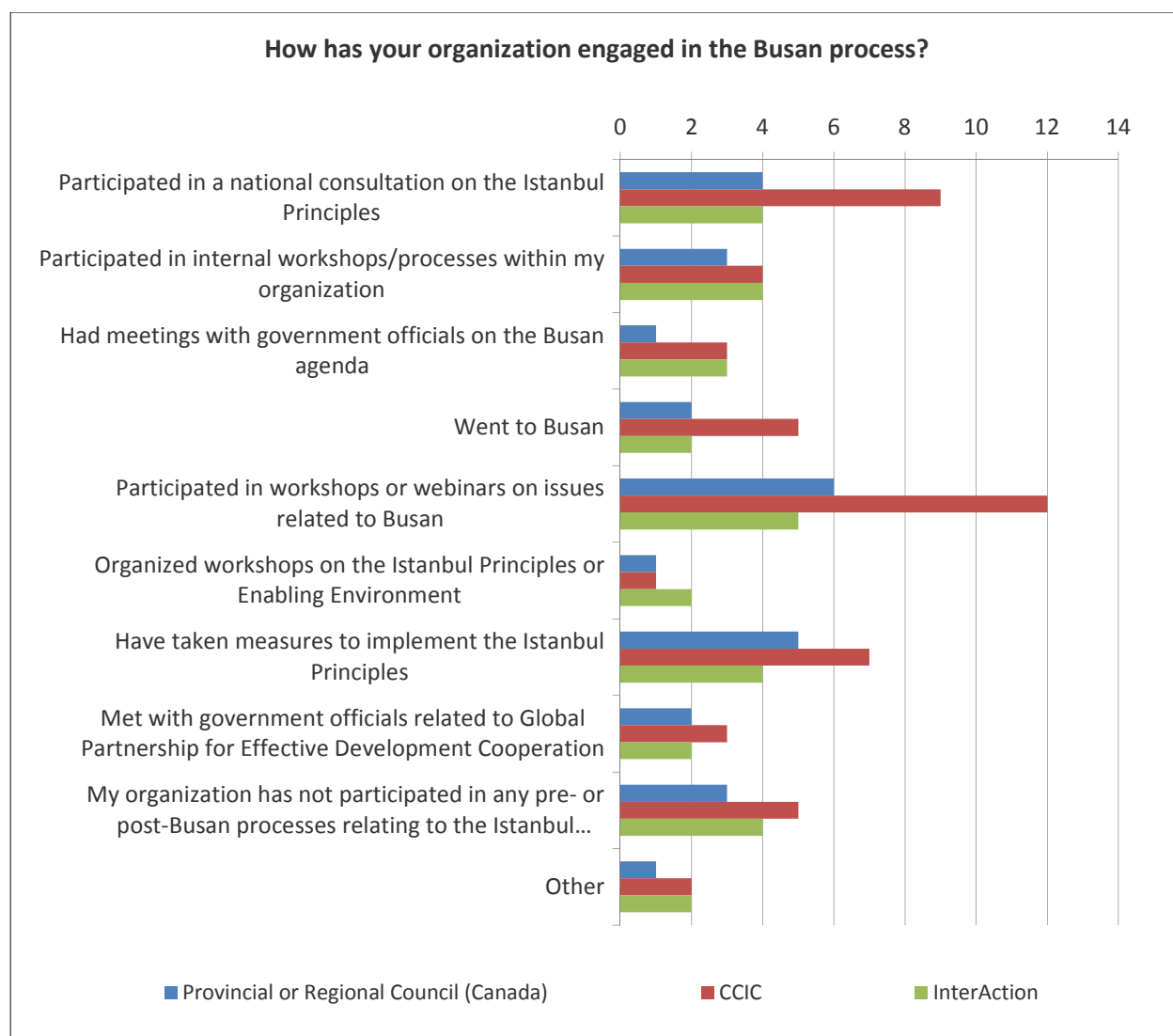
The first part of the survey focused on how respondents had engaged in both the pre- and post-Busan Process.

HIGH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Responses indicated that there was a high level of engagement with the Busan process. Roughly three-quarters of those who responded to the question indicated that they had been involved in some form of pre- or post-Busan process.



The most dominant mode of involvement was workshops and webinars on issues related to Busan. This could include development issues such as the Enabling Environment for civil society, human rights-based approaches, or the Istanbul Principles. The Istanbul Principles, a key framework acknowledged by the Busan process (see “Istanbul Principles” section below for further details), also saw a high level of engagement from members. Forty-one percent (of 39 respondents) indicated that they had participated in a national consultation on the Istanbul Principles as part of their post-Busan engagement.



Engaging in the Busan Outcomes was frequently done through coalitions and networks of civil society organizations, including InterAction and CCIC, as well as smaller thematically-based coalitions. A few members of CCIC produced case studies for a 2013 Calendar that highlighted the Istanbul Principles in action. Other networks made submissions to government bodies recommending policy changes that reflected the Busan agenda. Some connected with the CIVICUS network in Montreal, while a few respondents from the United States indicated that they collaborated with NGOs on work related to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.⁵

⁵ In 2008, the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra recommended establishing The International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS) to address the challenges of aid effectiveness in fragile and conflict affected states and promote a dialogue about creating lasting peace and sustainable development globally. The IDPS brought together donors, partner countries, multilateral agencies and CSOs, in three official meetings that led to the Dili Declaration, the Monrovia Roadmap on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, with its five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding goals. The latter was agreed and signed in Busan. The New Deal set out a new way for Donors and FCAS countries to interact.

Overall, the survey indicated that there was a high level of awareness of the Busan process. Only 15% (of 39 respondents) indicated that they were not aware of the High-Level Forum in Busan. Over two-thirds of respondents suggested that Busan had impacted their organization. For some, the Busan outcomes were integrated into strategic planning processes and organizational reviews. Of all those that responded, 43% (of 39 respondents) indicated that the Busan outcomes motivated or encouraged their organization to work on both the Istanbul Principles and Enabling Environment issues, while 28% indicated that Human Rights-Based Approaches were explored as a result of Busan.

“We have just finalized a five year strategic plan... one of our goals in the strategic plan is focused specifically on increasing our capacities to partner with local civil society (and other actors) in a more reciprocal and equitable way, while another of our organizational priorities focuses on promoting equality and voice, specifically for women and girls. Both of these goals challenge us to look inward, at our own practices and behaviors and attitudes, as well how these principles play out in our programming.”

“Busan was not necessarily the impetus for this work. It is long-standing and fundamental to our ways of working.”

Other respondents indicated that, while the subject matter of the meeting in Busan was relevant to their work, they were not directly impacted by the Busan process. In these cases, many of the principles that emerged through Busan were noted to already be part of core operations and strategies.

The following sections explore in greater detail how these organizations are engaging with the Istanbul Principles, Human Rights-Based Approaches, and Enabling Environment issues.

3.2 THE ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES

The **ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES (IP)** for CSO development effectiveness are a set of mutually shared values guiding the development work of CSOs worldwide. The principles were developed over a three year time period, from June 2008 – June 2011, prior to Busan under the coordination of the Open Forum. National platforms in more than 70 countries conducted national consultations with over 3500 CSOs on the elements that should underscore the Principles. These national reports were the basis for the Istanbul Principles and Siem Reap Framework. Since the principles were developed from the bottom up, they are an integral part of the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness⁶ AND a distinct globally acknowledged reference of effective development work for CSOs across the world. The eight Principles are:

- Respect and promote human rights and social justice;
- Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girl’s rights;
- Focus on people’s empowerment, democratic ownership and participation;
- Promote environmental sustainability;
- Practice transparency and accountability;
- Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity;
- Create and share knowledge and commit to learning;
- Commit to realizing positive sustainable change.

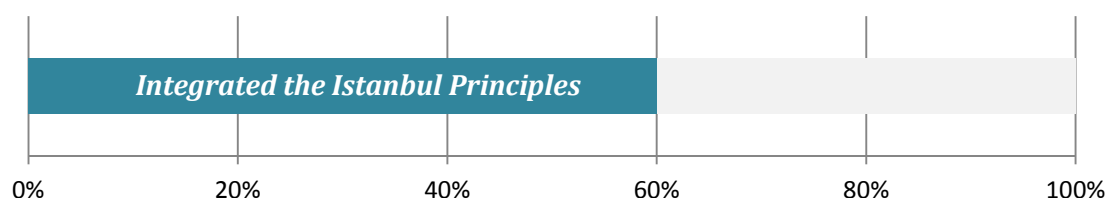
⁶ <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-global-report,052-.html>

Parties to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation⁷, the final outcome document, agreed to “encourage CSOs to implement practices that strengthen their accountability and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness” (para 22. b).

Many organizations are implementing aspects of the Istanbul Principles. The following survey questions identify how the Istanbul Principles are being implemented as a **framework**.

UNDERSTOOD AND INTEGRATED, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY NEW

It is encouraging to see that 95% (of 37 respondents) indicated that they are familiar with the Istanbul Principles. When asked what their organization has done to engage or implement the Istanbul Principles, 60% (of 37 respondents) said that they have integrated the IP into some element of their work.



This “integration” can take on many forms, and respondents were encouraged to use a comment box to share how these principles had impacted their organization. Seven respondents said that the Istanbul Principles led them to conduct an organizational or programmatic review and consider if they ought to revise their practice and policies. This included discussions at the board level, refining mission statements, producing “guiding principles” for their practice that reflect the Istanbul Principles, and integrating the Principles in consultations with overseas partners. Others made the Istanbul Principles part of their communications strategy, with examples including a series of podcasts, case studies to be published in a calendar, and creating questions for reflection among the sector. Furthermore, 43% (of 37 respondents) participated in a general workshop on the Istanbul Principles.

“We have integrated the principles into all our work on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States -- including advocacy around the post-2015 agenda.”

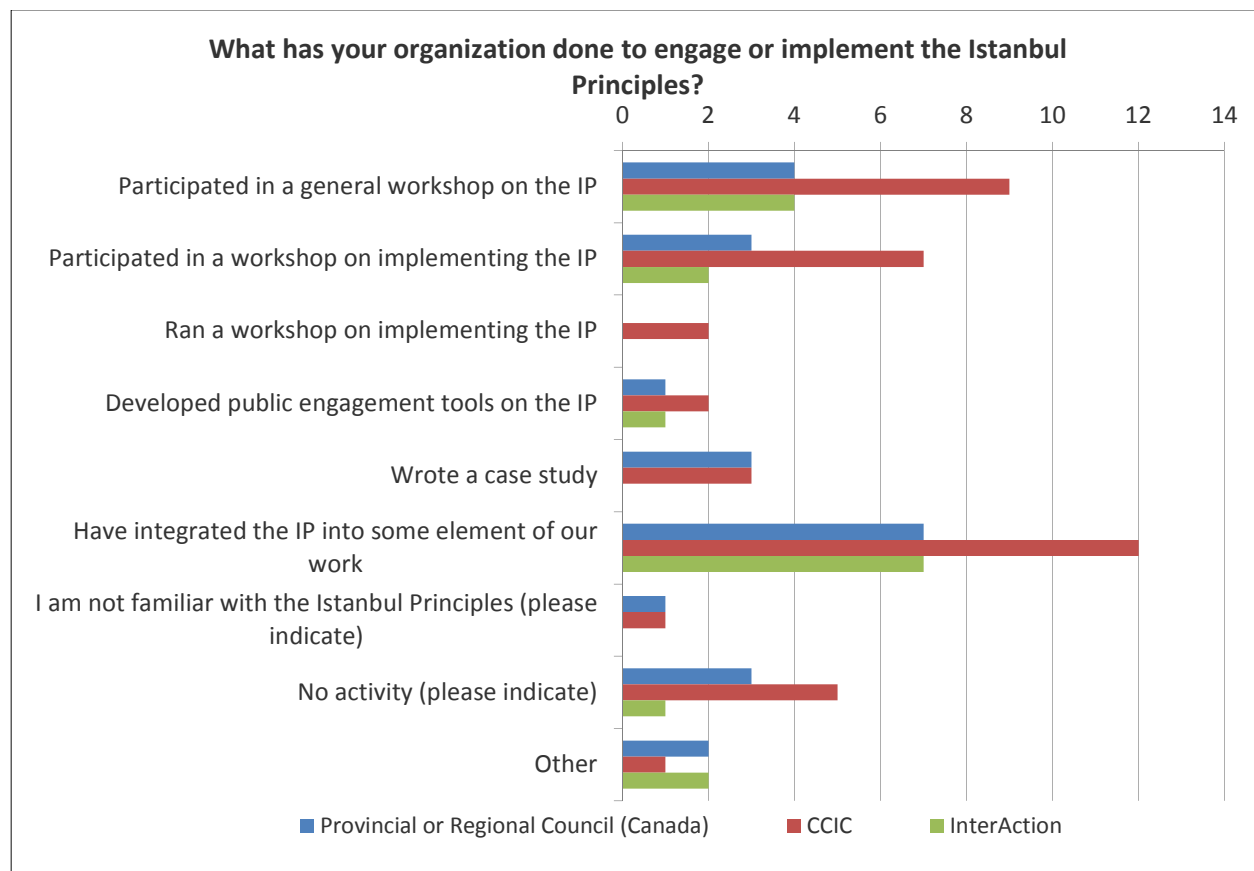
“We have thought about how the IP relate to public engagement, and created some reflection questions for the sector in Canada.”

“Though was not a conscious or deliberate process on our part, many of the principles are embodied in the work that we do and in the strategies and technical frameworks that guide our programming.”

Six respondents noted that the Istanbul Principles are more intrinsically part of what they do. Related comments revealed that the Istanbul Principles were already “standard practice” and core principles in all of their work.

Still, while *components* of the Istanbul Principles may be reflected in organizational activities and priorities, 22% (of 37 respondents) indicated that they have done no activity directly related to the Istanbul Principles framework.

⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>



IP-RELATED ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE

The survey went on to ask if the responding organizations were planning any future initiatives around the Istanbul Principles. Sixty-one percent (of 36 respondents) indicated they will incorporate Istanbul Principle-related activities in their future planning and/or programming.

“Our strategic plan for the organization includes having working groups that analyze our current activities and then set goals for advancing social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability. We have developed models and promising practices for equitable partnerships and a shared learning site for advancing learning in the organization and with our partners.”

In their comments, by and large, respondents indicated that IP-related activities would focus on internal capacity building. More specifically, 50% of those who were anticipating IP-related activities suggested that this work would include reviewing organizational activities, setting goals, and integrating the Principles into regular strategic planning sessions. Lessons learned on effective implementation of the Istanbul Principles would be shared internally, and some organizations intend to include IP components in the training of new staff. Several respondents also indicated that reviewing goals and determining

indicators could be used to create metrics that would help their organization monitor and measure the degree to which they were complying with the Istanbul Principles.

This level of integration is expected to go beyond the organizations themselves. As many of these organizations work with international partners, several respondents indicated that they wanted to share these priorities with their partners by offering training related to different components of the Istanbul Principles. Three responses indicated that facilitating training workshops would be coming in their near future.

“We are planning to hold workshops in all four of our geographic areas of work at least annually dealing with aspects of the principles.”

3.3 HRBA AND EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Development effectiveness promotes sustainable change, within a democratic framework, that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors. Development effectiveness in relation to aid is understood as policies and practices by development actors that deepen the impact of aid and development cooperation on the capacities of poor and marginalized people to realize their rights and achieve the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs). It is clear that human rights are at the core of development effectiveness.

Parties to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation⁸, the final outcome document, noted (para 22) that, “Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation.”

A Human Rights-Based Approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and readdress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress (Office of the High Commission of Human Rights). This approach encompasses elements including:

- Non-discrimination
- Due diligence (in considering conditions affecting the capacities of people to claim their rights)
- Participation and empowerment
- The interdependence of rights (addressing economic, social, and cultural rights)
- Democratic ownership (respect for political rights, accountability and transparency)
- The right to decent work (socially inclusive economic strategies)

Equitable Partnerships refer to the commitment of CSOs, “to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship” (Siem Reap Framework, p. 10). Equitable Partnerships play a significant role in overall goals of development effectiveness. It is clear that elements of Human Rights-Based Approaches are evident in these Equitable Partnerships and vice-versa.

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

HRBA AS A CORE OPERATION

Survey respondents were asked whether or not they integrate Human Rights-Based approaches into their programs. Ninety-seven percent (of 29 respondents) indicated that Human Rights-Based Approaches were part of their operations.

With such an affirming response, it is no surprise that human rights considerations are (and have been) a big part of how these organizations work. Over half of respondents commented that a rights perspective has always been central to their organization's priorities, ranging from internal ethics standards to partnership selection to program and project design.

"Our theory of change is grounded in the rights of individuals and communities to exercise their full range of human rights and to hold governments and duty-bearers to account for creating the conditions that allow women and men, girls and boys in all their diversities to enjoy those rights."

With that said, the profile of respondents to this question is also worth noting. Although the overall responses gave a strong indication of HRBA awareness and integration, only 6 out of 12 U.S. organizations responded to this question. Those U.S. organizations that responded affirmatively are child focused organizations guided by the Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child and peace-focused groups. The response rate from Canadian organizations was slightly higher at 23 out of 32, representing a diverse range of organizational profiles.

Many organizations indicated that they have specific departments and programs that focus on human rights issues. Some organizations have local (North American) offices that have a strong advocacy component to their work. Others stated that they have international programs that focus on specific rights issues such as the right to decent work, gender rights, food security, and access to education. Again, examples given highlighted the fact that due to their partnership model of development, Human Rights-Based Approaches also included some level of capacity building and training on specific rights issues for host-country partner organizations.

"We also have a cross-departmental working group leading 'safe programming' initiatives to ensure that fundamental human rights principles, including nondiscrimination, meaningful access to assistance and services, and safety and dignity are recognized and realized in program design and implementation across all of our sectors."

Other organizations chose to identify the policies, tools, and resources that their organization has used or developed to help guide their work with respect to HRBA. These guidelines included human rights dynamics such as impartiality, neutrality, independence, non-discrimination, gender, children's rights, good governance and democratic ownership, as well as the conditions that affect the capacity of communities to claim their rights. One respondent noted that their organization had explicitly adopted a HRBA policy framework that was reflected in all their program design.

While components of HRBA may play a key role in the operations of these organizations, several respondents indicated that a regular review of their programs from a human rights perspective could be a natural next step for them to enhance the prioritization, implementation, and evaluation of compliance with HRBA.

"We have always understood our work and the work of our partners from a rights perspective. Having said that, we have not taken the time to review our work from a HRBA framework to see where we could improve on this."

HRBA IS COMPLEX, LONG-TERM, AND DIFFICULT TO DEMONSTRATE “RESULTS”

In evaluating the implementation of Human Rights-Based Approaches, survey respondents gave feedback on what they felt were the main challenges that organizations face in terms of better integrating HRBA into their programs. These responses touched on themes of finding support for human rights-based work, limited organizational capacity, the difficulty of measuring and mainstreaming HRBA, and external factors.

One of the most commonly cited challenges was the difficulty in getting funding for human rights-based activities. One respondent identified that “there can be the perception that basic needs are more important than knowing your rights and it is easier to engage in service provision than it is to approach systemic change.” Several responses suggested that current donor policies are focused on short-term results – a significant challenge for organizations looking to achieve the long-term systemic change that is necessary when dealing with human rights issues. This pressure to demonstrate results, accountability for funds, and “value for money” makes it challenging for organizations to prioritize HRBA over other development approaches that are easier to communicate to donors. In addition, even for donors that invest in longer term development programs, human rights programs can be viewed as too political and challenging to host-country governments.

“It is slow, complex and difficult to measure change in the elements of HRBA, and the biggest challenges will be countering the results and value for money agendas that are becoming more prevalent in the development sector.”

“Understanding the depth of what is involved in HRBA [is a challenge]. I do not believe that I fully understand the implications of all the above principles.”

Because HRBA are often long-term and complex, one-third of the responses indicated an experienced difficulty in measuring the impact of HRBA. Respondents identified several barriers to better implementing HRBA, including the following: a lack of tools/resources to integrate HRBA; difficulty understanding the depth and complexity of HRBA; and the challenge of measuring and attributing social change to specific interventions.

The complexity of working for social change related to human rights issues in a wide range of contexts makes integrating HRBA a challenging task. Five different respondents suggested that scaling up or “mainstreaming” Human Rights-Based Approaches becomes increasingly difficult. Organizations need to have flexibility to adapt their approach to different contexts.

“These are such BIG issues that they might seem too hard to incorporate into very small, local-level projects.”

Organizational capacity may be seen as another factor that makes implementing and mainstreaming HRBA difficult. Several respondents indicated that better integration of HRBA approaches implies additional costs and human resources to train and equip staff to identify and address human rights issues in their work. This can be a serious undertaking, particularly for organizations that have thousands of staff.

Civil society organizations face other external challenges that make integrating HRBA difficult. These organizations occasionally operate in contexts with weak governments or even failed states, making collaboration (or even coordination) with local authorities difficult. Other times the policies and priorities of these local governments can impose barriers for civil society organizations to operate and address human rights issues (the section on the Enabling Environment goes into greater detail on this

subject). Conflict, fragile contexts, and violence are other external factors that can have serious implications for addressing human rights issues.

In response to these challenges, some organizations suggested that a third option for addressing HRBA was possible: focusing on other aspects of community development (such as food and water security, education, and health) would in turn contribute to community empowerment and confidence in addressing human rights issues from the grass-roots level.

"[Our organization focuses on] strengthening 'community voice' through capacity building and empowering vulnerable communities in relation to multi-stakeholder dialogue and ensuring [fair] policies (including things like pro-poor business policies and regulatory environments for small entrepreneurs and MFIs). Fair trade access, fair price and fair work."

UNPACKING THE CHALLENGE: TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO INTEGRATE HRBA⁹

In response to all the challenges identified, survey respondents indicated a strong interest in hearing what other organizations are experiencing around integrating Human Rights-Based Approaches.

About one-third of respondents indicated that some form of “knowledge hub” would be one helpful way for organizations to share case studies, tools, guides, metrics, and indicators that have guided their work in implementing HRBA. This could lead to “guides that facilitate the integration of HRBA in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation,” similar to what others have used for adopting Results-Based Management (RBM) approaches.¹⁰ Another respondent suggested that these could be “based on key human rights declarations and international law... particularly if they were designed in way that allows participants to understand and analyze these principles in a meaningful way based on their own context and culture.”

This is just one method of having greater organizational collaboration around human rights approaches and principles. Others suggested that workshops with accompanying case studies would help give clarity to development professionals looking to integrate more HRBA in their organization’s work.

Several other respondents indicated that they would find it helpful to have simplified tools that could be used for sharing with organizations with lower capacity levels. This could also include materials that could be shared with international partners. Again, these tools could provide the basis for evaluating current practices and partnerships through a human rights-based framework.

⁹ While the survey sought to identify what tools and resources would be helpful to advance implementation of HRBA in development planning, tools will only go so far. The realization of human rights is not a technical process, but rather a social and political one. Equally, unless organizations agree to adopt an HRBA framework and approach, it will be hard for individual staff to use such tools and resources, regardless of how useful and practical they are. There is a bigger question here of organizational change that is worth noting.

¹⁰ As a point of interest, the United Nations Development Programme and the UN Office of the High Commission for Human rights actually run a joint web portal of tools for integrating human rights based approaches into programming. On-line: <http://hrbaportal.org/archives/resources/undp-ohchr-toolkit-for-collaboration-with-national-human-rights-institutions>

Further thought was given to how Human Rights-Based Approaches are perceived among funders as well as the general public. A few organizations identified public awareness campaigns, storytelling techniques for describing HRBA programs, and even creating a kit to train funders on why they should fund programs that are based on this approach. Several other responses also noted the frustration of trying to secure funding for programs utilizing HRBA, suggesting that other tools would not be helpful until policy and funding barriers were removed.

“I would not identify tools as a significant barrier. Knowledge and appropriation may be limits but the greater inhibitor is the political and funding environment.”

EQUALITY AS A FUNDAMENTAL CRITERIA IN PARTNERSHIPS

Survey respondents were asked if they had good models or resources for equitable partnerships, a question to which 60% (of 29 respondents) indicated affirmatively. While this was an open-ended question, these responses generally fell into one of three categories: criteria for starting partnerships, tools or resources for evaluating partnerships, and a clear understanding of partnerships as core to their organization’s operations.

A number of criteria were mentioned for initiating equitable partnerships. These criteria embodied qualities such as shared goals and values, reciprocity, mutual trust and respect, friendship, solidarity, and joint decision making. One U.S. respondent recommended a new publication¹¹ by another InterAction member, which deals with equitable partnerships.

“All the development work in which we are involved is initiated and implemented by local NGO's who make decisions and manage projects with the agreement to make the best use of funds provided.”

Some respondents also indicated that they have clear methods for evaluating the health and equality of partnerships. These mechanisms included feedback loops, having an organizational Partnership Policy, hosting a “Partners Forum” every two years, annual reviews with partners, and even creating an online community to link all of an organization’s partners. Indicators for evaluating partnerships included collaborative skills as well as open questions that allowed partners to assess the equality of the partnership. Several organizations also noted that they have used the services of third-party evaluators to assess the equality of their partnerships.

About one third of respondents indicated that equitable partnerships are a central part of their organization’s values and operations. These partnerships were described as long-term, relationship-based, and transparent (including financial records). The focus of these partnerships is to strengthen local capacity, prioritize partner-defined goals and outcomes, and emphasize shared decision-making.

“We work with, not through, partners.”

¹¹ *Learning to Listen*, by Dayna Brown et al (<http://www.amazon.com/Time-Listen-Hearing-Receiving-International/dp/0988254417>)

POWER IMBALANCES AND DONOR-PRESSURE POSE A CHALLENGE TO EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

Through this survey, respondents were given the opportunity to identify what they saw as the big challenges faced when implementing equitable partnerships. Again, an open-ended question gave respondents the freedom to identify and describe the challenges they saw through their experiences.

There are power imbalances that are inherent in many of these partnerships, respondents said. Many of these power imbalances are related to the broader structure of donor and recipient, organizing and implementing organizations. In particular, finances were identified as playing a central role in threatening the true equality of these partnerships. This power dynamic is evident when available finances influence setting program or organizational priorities, or selecting organizations to partner with in the first place.

“Financial inequity creates unavoidable power imbalances; overseas partners are not in a position to be equal financial partners in our joint programming.”

“Sharing power with others can be a challenge, particularly when one organization is 'responsible' for management/oversight of donor resources. In such situations, the role of an INGO as a 'partner' and the ways in which the relationship can be equitable, though inherently unequal, is not always clearly understood.”

The hierarchy of donor and funding systems also illuminates power imbalances. Respondents noted that the donor/recipient nature of these systems stress the relationships through expectations to succeed and produce results. Just as North American development actors feel pressure from their donors, “the lack of financial autonomy on the part of [our partner organizations] is an important limiting factor.”

One respondent noted this as a direct impact of fiscal challenges back here in North America, saying,

“Our current funding environment is undermining our ability to work respectfully with partners. The increasingly short-term project-based, results-focused nature of restricted funding makes long-term relationships and our traditional approach to accompaniment and mutual learning increasingly difficult to sustain. Moreover, in an environment of reduced funding [there is a risk] that we will find ourselves competing with our partners for funding, rather than promoting their direct access to funding.”

Other respondents identified previous practices in partner relationships and organizational mindsets as a barrier to equal partnerships. A “history of inequality in the conversation [on equitable partnerships] inhibits global partners from sharing more transparently.” Organizations developing “best practices” and “evidence-based solutions” can also pose a threat to the autonomy and priorities of host-country partners by overlooking local solutions and practices, i.e. contextual considerations. Another respondent noted that coming into a context with a clearly defined plan of action also impacts which organizations are selected as partners. Giving priority to “‘hard’ technical skills over ‘softer’ partnering skills (listening, compromise, negotiation, etc.) tends to skew conversations between partners to focus on project deliverables rather than on the relationship between partners and whether/how that’s functioning, is equitable, transparent, reciprocal, etc.”

Related to this is the challenge of knowledge. With international NGOs looking to partner with local civil society organizations, several respondents identified the challenge of giving space and prominence to local knowledge and solutions.

“I think that the idea of development work being locally led is very important here -- too often a Western aid agenda is thrust upon local actors, and we need to learn better how to have equitable partnerships that are based on the ideas and ownership of people receiving the aid.”

One third of the responses indicated that to truly build equitable partnerships requires a significant investment in terms of time and resources. Respondents acknowledged that this takes a long-term perspective and commitment as well as setting aside time for reflection and review. This type of relationship requires significant dedication of staff time, resources (such as travel expenses), and adequate core funding that allows organizations to prioritize these approaches.

WHAT WOULD HELP? TOOLS, RESOURCES AND WORKING GROUPS

In conclusion, several respondents suggested that, while equitable partnerships were a “core part” of their organizations operations, they could be more intentional about making room to monitor and evaluate these relationships to ensure that they are indeed equitable. Tools, resources, and sharing insights were again identified as a few ways that these organizations could strengthen their equitable partnerships. Responses included examples such as new approaches, models, and case studies, practical due diligence guides for engaging in partnerships, and ways to measure partnerships in terms of the “impacts of a successful partnership beyond project deliverables.”

“Equitable partnerships are part of our programming principles, and we have very good examples of enacting the principle in much of our programming. However we do not have a systematic way of monitoring it across all our programs and this would be something we would aspire to do.”

Hosting workshops on equitable partnerships was also identified as a potentially effective way of helping organizations implement equitable partnerships. Tools and case studies can be helpful, one respondent said, but “unless there is an incentive (such as attending a workshop), materials may not be read, or just skimmed.”

Others identified that it wasn’t a matter of developing tools that would strengthen organizational practices with regards to partnerships. Rather, organizations simply needed to invest more time and resources. Again, comments identified the challenge of long-term core funding that would support and make this practice attainable.

3.4 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The Enabling Environment refers to a set of inter-related conditions – such as the regulatory and legislative environment, the openness of government and donors to engaging with CSOs, the transparency and accountability with which information is shared, and the CSO community’s own collective mechanisms for self-monitoring, accountability and collaboration – that impact on the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

At the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) noted that for

CSOs to reach their full potential as independent development actors in their own right, governments needed to “provide an enabling environment that maximizes (CSO) contributions to development.” (AAA, para 20. c) The Task Team on the Enabling Environment and CSO Development Effectiveness, a multi-stakeholder body that brings together CSOs, donor government and partner governments, have established a minimum set of standards required of a truly enabling environment.¹² However, since Accra, conditions for civil society have worsened substantially.¹³

Despite this worsening environment, parties to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation¹⁴, reiterated their commitment and agreed to (para 22. A), “Implement fully our respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development.” To follow up on this commitment, the monitoring framework for Busan includes an indicator to measure progress on the Enabling Environment (“Indicator 2”¹⁵). CIVICUS, among others, was involved in supporting the development of Indicator 2 on the Enabling Environment for civil society organizations. To complement both this work and its annual report on the State of Civil Society, in September 2013, CIVICUS launched a Civil Society Enabling Environment Index (EE Index) as a source of reliable, international and comparative quantitative information. The EE Index is available online.¹⁶

However, there are substantial limitations to the index, largely due to the fact that it relies exclusively on existing data sources that arguably give too much weight to broad indicators of democracy and participation, while insufficiently considering three key EE determinants for CSOs in all their diversity: (1) the existence and implementation of legal and regulatory environments, including the arbitrary political targeting of CSOs; (2) access to political and institutional space for dialogue; and (3) the resourcing environment for CSOs. Unfortunately, these are also the areas that have the least existing datasets. Nonetheless, an index that does not substantively address these determinants will provide a bias in favor of general indicators for democratic practice without due consideration of the specific features of an enabling environment from the perspective of civil society.

To address this issue, the Working Group on Enabling Environment of the CSO Partnership for Effective Development has developed a Framework for Assessing Progress on the Enabling Environment, concentrating on these three areas. The Framework is intended to complement the CIVICUS index, but also to add substantial qualitative dimensions to the indicators. The Working Group is currently piloting this Framework and a corresponding set of indicators in ten countries around the world.

¹² The Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and the Enabling Environment, “Key messages for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness”, 2011, on-line: http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/final_key_english_c3.pdf

¹³ See for example, CIVICUS, “Civil Society: The Clampdown is Real: Global Trends 2009-2010”, December 2010, on-line: http://www.crin.org/docs/CIVICUS-Global_trends_in_Civil_Society_Space_2009-2010.pdf and CIVICUS, “2013 State of Civil Society Report”, 2013, on-line: http://socs.civicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2013StateofCivilSocietyReport_full.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

¹⁵ For further details on the indicators and the global monitoring framework, see “Guide to the Monitoring Framework of the Global Partnership,” on-line: <http://effectivecooperation.org/files/2013%20busan%20global%20monitoring%20guidance.pdf>

¹⁶ See: CIVICUS 2013 Enabling Environment Index, online: <http://civicus.org/what-we-do-126/2013-05-06-10-38-39/1886-download-the-2013-enabling-environment-index-eei-report>.

The framework is as follows:

- Area One: **Core human rights affecting CSOs**
 - Dimension One: **Realization of rights** (such as right to associate, right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression)
 - Dimension Two: **The legal and regulatory environment** (e.g. easy for CSOs to register, CSOs are free from interference/harassment, CSOs can openly express their views and engage in advocacy)
 - Dimension Three: **Rights of specific groups** (non-discrimination against particular groups in the application of laws)
- Area Two: **Policy Influencing**
 - Dimension One: **Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing** (CSOs can engage the government at multiple levels, represent marginalized groups, CSO input is taken into account in policy outcomes)
 - Dimension Two: **Access to information** (transparency and accountability from governments in developing priorities, strategies, plans, and actions)
- Area Three: **Donor – CSO relationships** (CSOs acknowledged as effective, independent development actors, and donors provide clear financing modalities)

As noted already, the survey questions around Enabling Environment were designed with the above framework in mind. Survey respondents were also asked to make a distinction between “Host Country” and “Domestic” issues. Host Country contexts were defined as international contexts in which their organization has programming, or where they are working with “Local Partners” (organizations based in the Host Countries that they have partnered with in their programming). “Domestic” issues referred to the North American context in which survey respondents felt enabling environment constraints due to Canadian or American governments.

In recent years, organizations in Canada and the United States have felt increasingly constrained by the domestic environments in which they are operating (see box below).

CHALLENGES TO THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IN THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT

The case of Canada

In July 2010, following a year-long internal review, the then Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) restructured its Partnerships with Canadians Branch (PWCB) offering “a new approach to engage Canadians and organizations in international development.”¹⁷ PWCB is the primary agent through which Canadian CSOs obtain funding for international development initiatives.

The new approach promised to “streamline the application process and reduce the administrative burden for project applications” to ensure effective and measurable results on the ground.¹⁸ In doing so, the funding process shifted away from “responsive programming”, in which CIDA received proposals from CSOs based on the CSOs’ priorities, to responding to periodic CIDA initiated calls-for-proposals

¹⁷ Canadian International Development Agency, 2010, “Minister Oda announces next step to CIDA’s aid effectiveness”, Government of Canadian, <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/CEC-722111726-KXG>

¹⁸ Ibid

aligned with CIDA's own immediate thematic priorities and countries of focus. There have been no major calls by PWCB since April 2011.

The sea change took place almost overnight, with no dialogue with CSOs, no transition period for many organizations, most of which had partnered with CIDA for two to three decades. In the sudden absence, or very episodic availability, of funding, and of any clear timelines around future funding, the uncertainty has meant that organizations have had to cut staff and programs, leave partners in limbo, and establish contingency plans.¹⁹

In addition, the uncertainty of future government funding, has led to a chill on advocacy activities. There is a widely shared perception among Canadian CSOs that the current government looks unfavorably on organizations that do policy and advocacy work, (entirely within the rights of all charities), especially if such work is critical of the government.

Essentially, the critique from many in civil society is that the current government has reduced Canadian development organizations to the status of being its service delivery agents. This contradicts commitments Canada made internationally to recognize and work with CSOs as development actors in their own right.

A more detailed case study, entitled "Silencing Voices and Dissent in Canada," can be found on-line at <http://socs.civicus.org/?p=3825>

The case of the United States

InterAction's case study in the CIVICUS State of Civil Society 2013 report notes that "the US government plays a supportive and enabling role with regard to US-based international NGOs, and USAID and US NGOs have historically enjoyed a close strategic partnership." However, there are several areas of concern around which InterAction and its members continue to engage government officials: changes in funding modalities used to engage US NGOs, the shifts in how US NGOs are engaged in public-private partnerships, the expanding role of the US military in humanitarian response, and the imposition of policies which would restrict the CSO enabling environment in countries around the world.

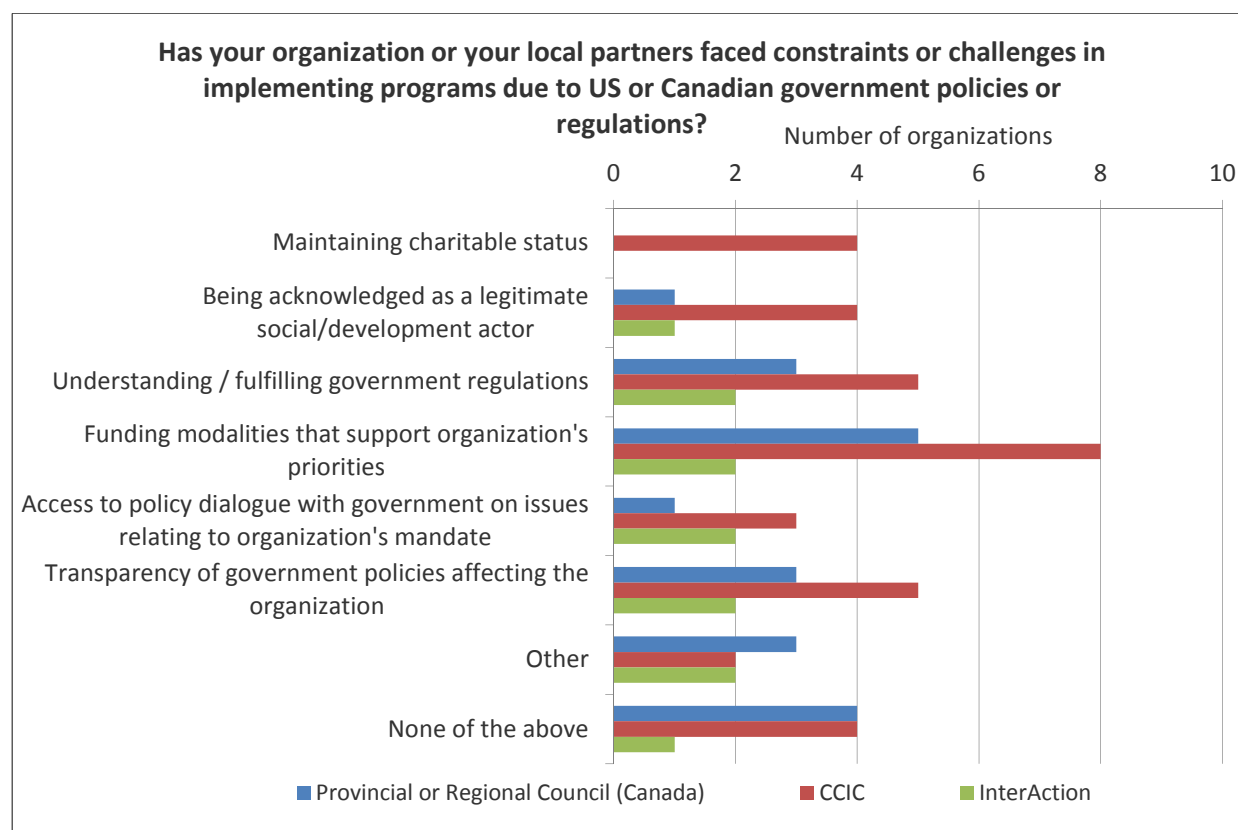
Regarding restrictive policies, InterAction has been part of a lawsuit which challenged a requirement in 2003 Leadership Act that all groups receiving U.S government funds for international HIV and AIDS work have "a policy explicitly opposing prostitution" on the basis of the violation of freedom of speech of NGOs according to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. After a series of victories in the lower courts, the case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in the spring of 2013. On June 20, the Supreme Court affirmed a lower court's decision to overturn the Act. InterAction views this as a resounding affirmation of the freedom of civil society organizations to express their views.

A more detailed case study, entitled "The US Government's Enabling Environment for US-based International NGOs," can be found on-line at <http://socs.civicus.org/?p=3830>

¹⁹ For more details, see the findings of "Putting Partnership back at the Heart of Development: Canadian Civil Society Experience with CIDA's Call-for-Proposal Mechanism, Partnerships with Canadians Branch" Inter-Council Network and CCIC, (March 2012), http://www.ccic.ca/files/en/what_we_do/2012_03_Survey_Report_e.pdf

THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTEXT: FUNDING CONCERNS, A THREATENED LEGITIMACY, AND CALLS FOR DONOR TRANSPARENCY

The first part of the section on the Enabling Environment issues focused on the domestic context – that is, constraints that organizations felt due to North American government policies that influenced their organization’s ability to exist and operate. To capture this information, survey respondents were given a choice of six different dimensions of Enabling Environment issues (which were derived from the aforementioned framework), with the option of selecting “other.” Respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their choices by means of a comment box.



The number one constraint experienced by respondents was funding modalities, with over 50% (of 28 respondents) indicating that the current funding modalities do not support their organization’s priorities. This was particularly notable among Canadian respondents (both CCIC members and Provincial/Regional Council members). Many responses made the connection to government bodies as donors, noting that their priorities, political objectives, and conditions for funding did not align with their organizational priorities. One respondent even went as far as to say that in relation to funding challenges, “[the current government’s] approach to ‘dialogue’ is ‘we brief you, you listen and comment’.” Other responses observed a more general decline in government funding or experienced uncertainty with regards to future funding opportunities from their government.

Several respondents described challenges related to legal requirements for organizations to exist or operate. Canadian responses (specifically, CCIC members) identified challenges with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) in terms of maintaining their charitable status.

“Government regulations [can be a challenge]. For example those relevant in complex emergencies, can be restrictive (e.g. anti-terror legislation).”

American responses indicated that specific application or reporting requirements limited their organization’s ability to access or appropriately apply for government funding to their areas of operation. This was noted to be a significant barrier for small organizations that may not have the same staff resources available to ensure their organization is meeting these requirements.

A few respondents indicated that they felt their organizations were not adequately respected as legitimate development actors. Canadian respondents were more prominent in noting that the space for political activity was felt to be in decline, and organizations wishing to engage in political activity experienced fear and anxiety in this changing context.

“The Government is hostile to CSOs and does not appear to recognize the expertise or added value of development agencies, in particular those that bring a rights-based approach to their work and associate with social movements that mobilize to advocate for fundamental reform. Meanwhile the space for political activity and for support to dissent is shrinking.”

Other general responses reflected levels of frustration with government transparency in terms of its international development funding structures and broader priorities. As the next section illustrates, this led some organizations to focus on advocating for greater transparency from their governments.

The following are a few related comments organized by Canadian or American organizations:

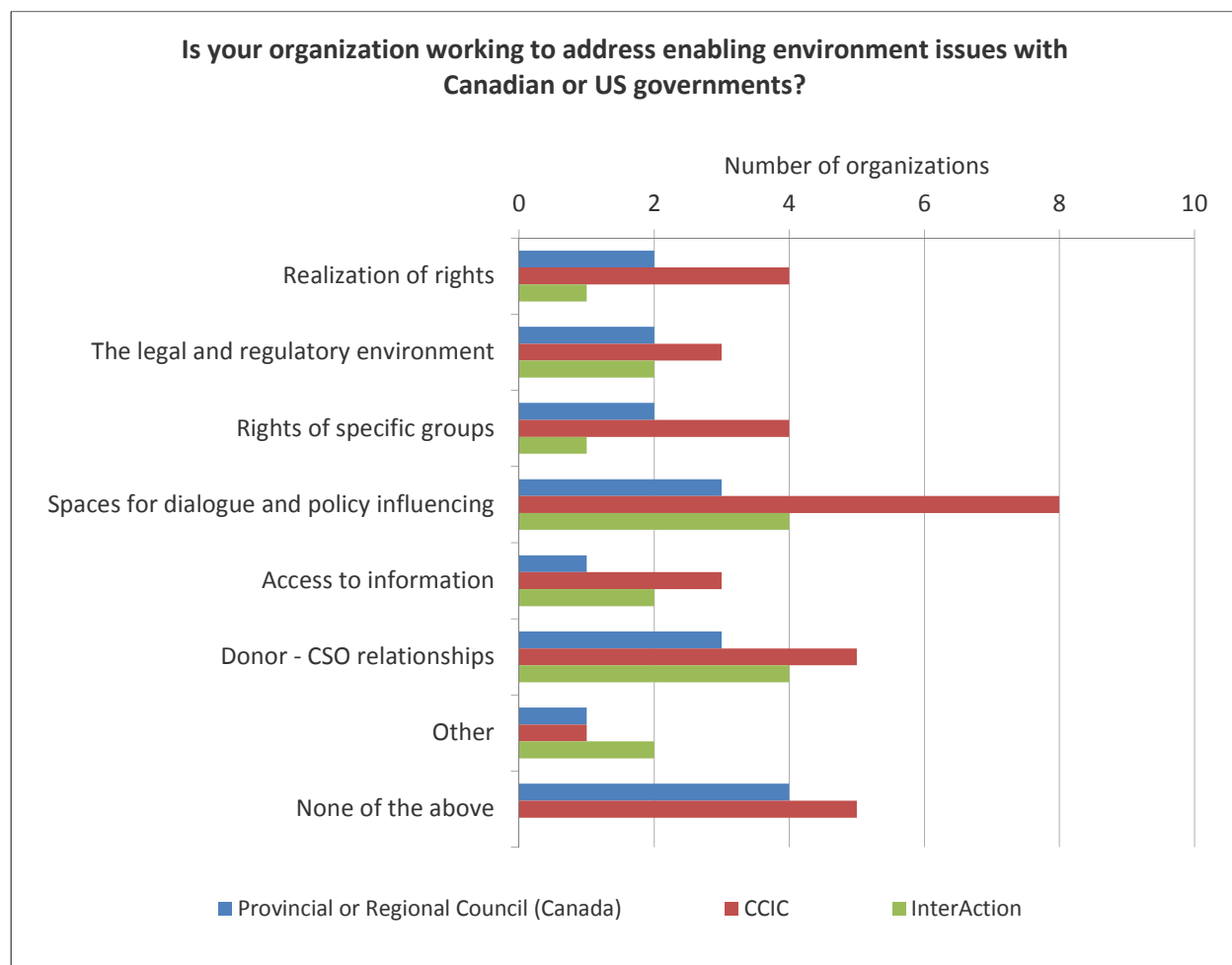
Canada	United States
<p>“The climate of fear around political activity as well as anxiety around reincorporation - these have taken a lot of time and effort that could be going towards other things.”</p> <p>“Legal requirements to maintain charitable status in Canada (CRA), in particular those that demonstrate 'command and control', constrain our funding opportunities.”</p> <p>“Government policies (exclusive partnership on refugee response with UNHCR) and political objectives (channeling majority of funding through the UN system), limit the opportunities for NGOs.”</p>	<p>“Currently US approach to "dialogue" is "we brief you, you listen and comment."”</p> <p>“US regulations are extremely difficult and intimidating for smaller local NGOs to understand.”</p> <p>“We have been very actively involved with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, where the Enabling Environment is an extremely important background issue (civil society cannot participate in the ways envisioned by the New Deal if the Enabling Environment is restrictive).” (See footnote 2 above.)</p>

CREATING SPACE FOR DEBATE AND CHALLENGING GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS: AN ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITY

When asked what CSOs were doing in response to Enabling Environment challenges in Canada and the United States, the top two responses were addressing “Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing” (48% of 27 respondents) and “Donor-CSO relationships” (41%). Only one quarter of respondents indicated they were not currently working to improve Enabling Environment conditions for their organization or for the civil society sector.

It is clear from the responses, that creating space for dialogue and policy influence takes several forms. Some organizations noted that their strategies included directly engaging with government

officials and civil servants who may be able to influence the policy and contextual conditions that impact their organization's work. These meetings may focus on broader issues that are core to the organization's priorities, or they may include advocating on behalf of international partner organizations. One respondent noted that their advocacy agenda included promoting more direct funding to international partner organizations, rather than going through North American intermediaries.



While this type of advocacy work may be done by individual organizations, several respondents also indicated that their advocacy agendas were carried out through larger civil society networks as part of a coordinated response – through national platforms of which the organizations are members (like InterAction in the United States or CCIC in Canada), as well as other networks coordinated on the basis of more specific organizational agendas.

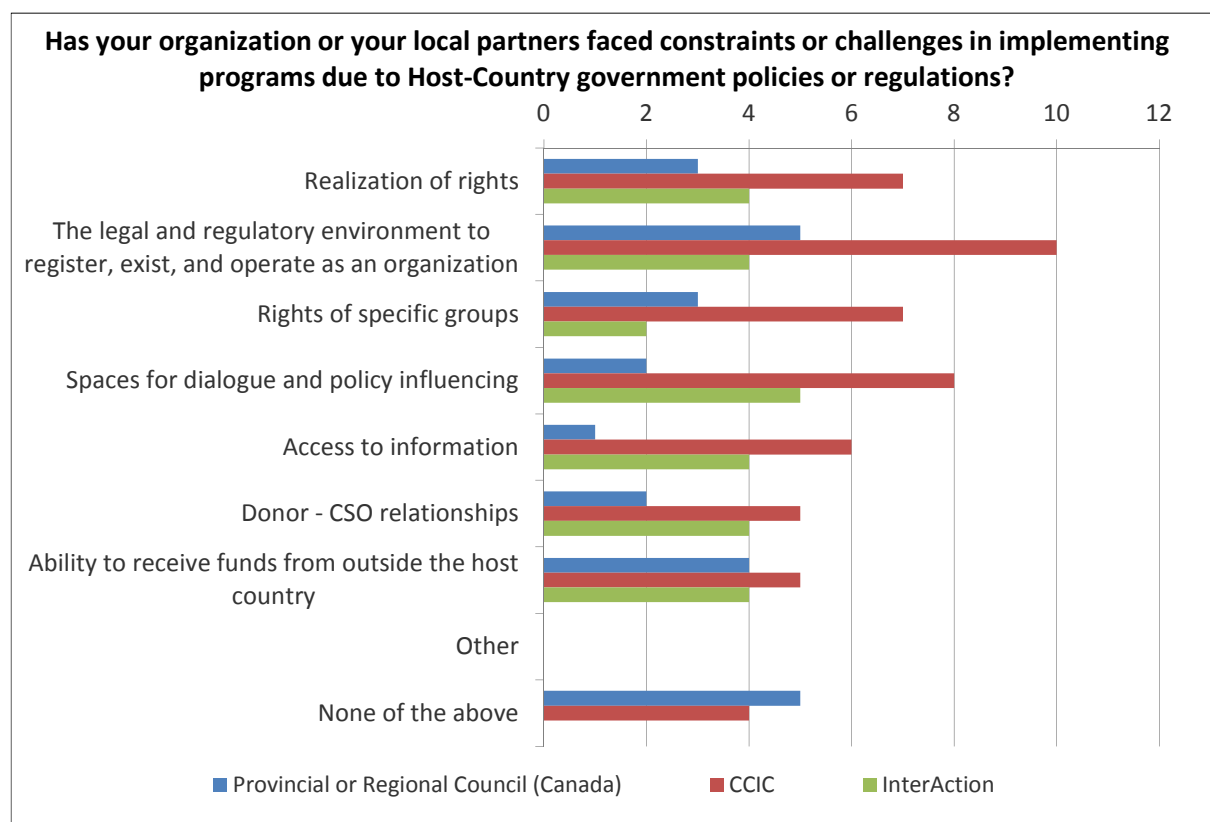
Directly engaging governments on Enabling Environment issues, while prominent, was not the only approach cited by respondents. Several responses identified public engagement as an effective way to raise the profile of this agenda and garner more support from the general public. The public awareness campaigns that were noted focused on identifying the constraints experienced by international partners, as well as the impact of government policies on the organization's ability to work in its priority areas.

The following are a few related comments organized by Canadian or American organizations:

Canada	United States
<p>“The spaces to influence Canadian government are limited but we have been taking full advantage of those that exist, meeting with government officials and appearing before parliament. As well, we have been speaking out publicly and participating in Voices, a coalition of CSOs concerned about democracy and human rights, among other initiatives.”</p> <p>“We engage actively in CCIC around creating dialogue with government.”</p> <p>“[Our organization] along with other NGOs is working with CIDA on issues of Child protection and Rights.”</p>	<p>“We are working actively with the US government (especially State Dept) on these issues.”</p> <p>“We have engaged in larger InterAction efforts to engage with USAID on procurement reform and USAID Forward, which will allocate more resources than ever before directly to local actors.”</p> <p>“We seek to influence US government policies and actions on the question of enabling environment in the partner countries where we work, particularly when partner country governments are imposing restrictions on the freedom of local CSOs to organize, operate and advocate.”</p>

ISSUES WITH HOST-COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS: MORE PROMINENT, BUT MORE DIVERSE

The second part of the survey on Enabling Environment issues focused on how respondents (and their international partners) were impacted by policies and priorities of host-country governments. Similar to the questions that focused on the domestic government context, respondents were given a



choice of seven different dimensions of Enabling Environment issues (derived from the aforementioned framework), with the option of selecting “other.” Respondents were again encouraged to elaborate on their choices by means of a comment box. A total of 27 organizations (both US and Canadian) responded to this question.

While “The legal and regulatory environment to register, exist, and operate as an organization” ranked as the most significant challenge (63% of 27 respondents) in host-country contexts, all of the other EE issues were selected by 37% to 48% of question respondents. As you can see from the chart above, survey respondents are dealing with a diverse range of Enabling Environment issues related to host-country governments.

“Around the regulatory/legal environment, we work with organizations such as women's groups in Sudan (north) where other NGOs have recently been shut down by the government.”

“We work primarily in Central America, where human rights abuses are rampant, primarily in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. These three countries also have some of the highest homicide rates in the world, combined with a culture of impunity, making them particularly dangerous for groups working to advance rights.”

The comments section also provided a glimpse of the crosscutting themes that contribute to Enabling Environment challenges. Five organizations identified violence and political instability as a key contributor to EE challenges in international contexts, creating an unpredictable environment. Discriminatory government policies and/or practice were also commonly cited, including those directed at specific groups such as women, children, youth, or members of the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) community. Other comments indicated that government policies made it challenging for CSOs to exist and operate all together.

Funding stability and current modalities again came up as a challenge related to supporting the core mandates of these civil society organizations. Shifting donor priorities has left host-country partners without resources, and government structures made reporting requirements for CSOs a significant barrier to receiving donor funds. More specifically, several respondents noted that there were substantial challenges for host-country partners to receive funds from out of their country of operation.

“Many donors have shifting priorities affecting our local partners particularly in places like Guinea-Bissau (“aid orphan” - donors are pulling out whole scale).”

“Places like Bangladesh require permission from the host government to transfer funds and it is challenging - we've had transfer of funds held up for months.”

WHAT ARE THEY DOING ABOUT IT? FINDING SPACE, PROMOTING RIGHTS

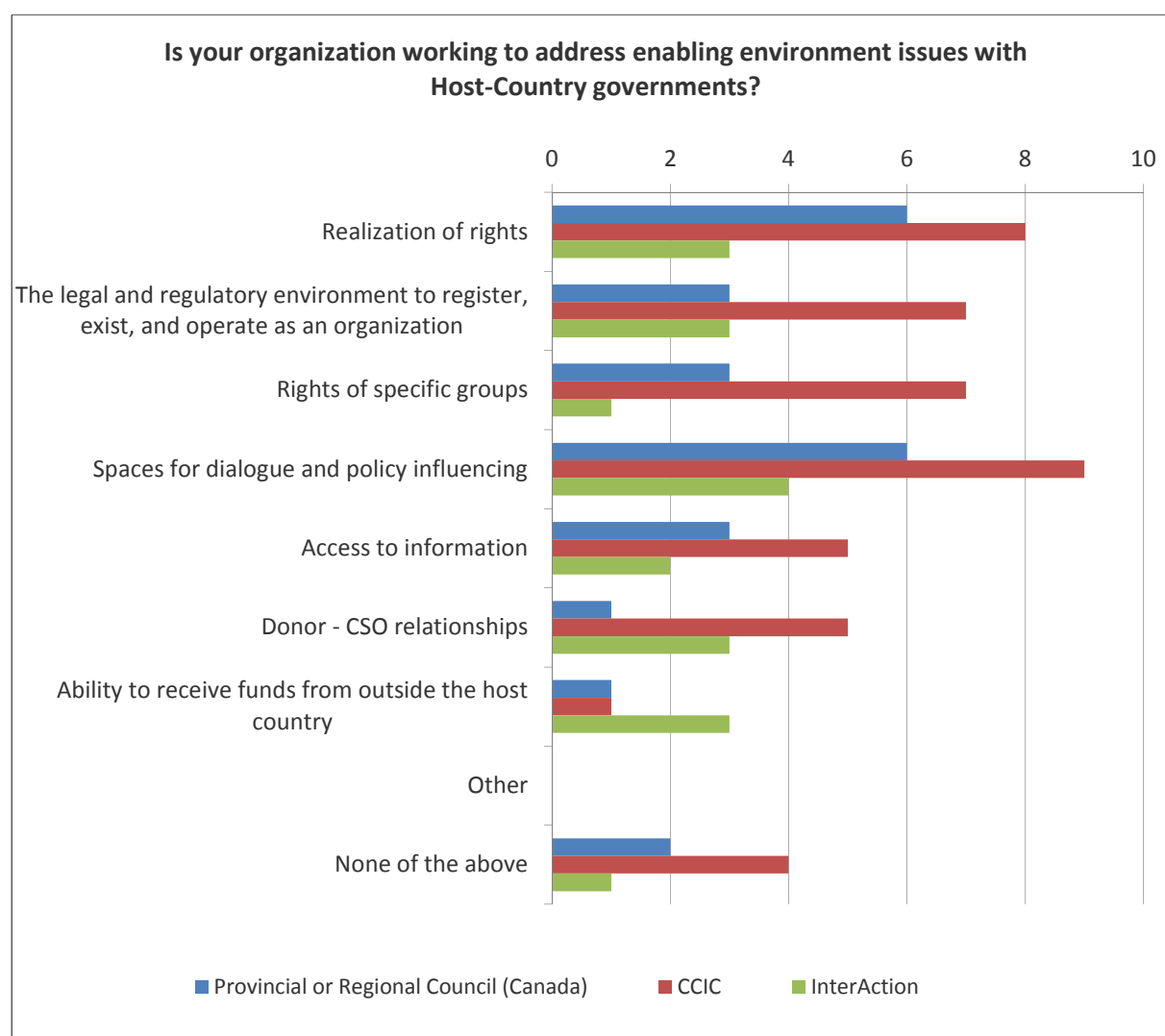
In the midst of these complex and diverse challenges, respondents suggested that they are taking a range of approaches to support their host-country partners. Similar to the previous question identifying challenges experienced by host-country governments, this question identified a varied approach was being taken to address EE issues in host countries. Among these approaches, working to create “spaces for dialogue and policy influencing” (65% of 26 respondents) and working for the realization of rights (58%) ranked as the top two responses.

The comments section identified some of the nuances of these approaches. First of all, it is significant to note that respondents identified capacity building as a prominent theme – that is, respondents identified their role as one to encourage and support host-country partners in identifying their own rights and advocating for more effective policies. Efforts focused on “strengthen[ing] local CSO platforms and their voice in national development planning.”

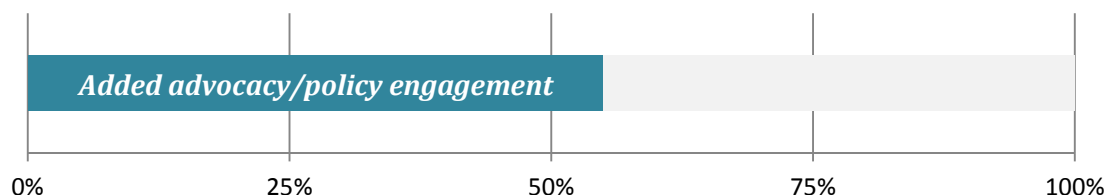
“We participate with in-country NGO networks to share challenges with government policies that inhibit operations and encourage local partners to advocate for more effective policies with their own local and national government leaders.”

“We also take full advantage of international spaces to pursue these rights and promote a healthier enabling environment.”

A second, less cited approach included working with broader (i.e. regional or international) NGO networks and CSO platforms to address Enabling Environment issues in host-countries. The purpose of these groups is to raise public awareness of issues faced by host-country partners as well as creating a greater voice to approach and influence policy makers.



ADVOCACY FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENT ISSUES – SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING NEW



55% (of 27 respondents) indicated that they have added an advocacy/policy engagement component to their work due to Enabling Environment issues. When given a chance to elaborate, several respondents indicated that advocacy on these issues is something they have been doing for a while, or something that their host-country partners are engaged in. This indicates that advocacy work may not be something altogether new for their organization, but rather a dimension that has been adapted based on contextual circumstances.

“Advocacy and policy work is integral to all of our development work but we have most certainly increased our investment and engagement in several countries.”

“We are also supporting three human rights advocacy groups, one in each of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.”

“We are beginning to do this and as an initial step have taken an inventory of the advocacy or policy work that our partners are doing.”

The comments section of this question allowed respondents to give examples or sentences to clarify what their added advocacy work entailed. Based on these responses, advocacy work includes engaging with larger scale CSO networks and aiming to influence broader agendas (such as the Post-2015, Post-Millennium Development Goal agenda), as well as resourcing and supporting individual host-country partners in their advocacy efforts. Despite pressure that some organizations have felt to reduce their advocacy work, some respondents indicated that they are undertaking initiatives to help them better understand and support the advocacy efforts of their host-country partners. Furthermore, advocacy work was noted as something done in order to increase the scale of impact of their work.

3.5 WORKING ON THESE ISSUES GOING FORWARD

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they or their organization would be interested in engaging in work (or receiving information) related to CSO development effectiveness or Enabling Environment. The response to this question was generally positive with approximately 55% (of 27 respondents) indicating they would be interested in future updates from the CPDE working groups on Development Effectiveness, on Human Rights-Based Approaches, and on Enabling Environment issues. Approximately one quarter of respondents to this question indicated that they were not aware of these groups.

4.0 CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

BUSAN: Both CCIC and InterAction invested substantial resources in terms of engaging in Busan, and it is encouraging to see the different ways in which their respective memberships have engaged in the Busan process. Although the total number of organizations who participated in this survey was relatively low, it appears that for many organizations Busan was an opportunity to collaborate with other CSOs on issues that are core to their existence – principles that guide their engagement in development, the impacts that these engagements are having on people’s lives and livelihoods, and the enabling environment that allows them to do so. This collaboration was evident both in terms of preparations for Busan and the many forms of follow-up that succeeded the High Level Forum.

ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES: In particular, there was a high degree of awareness of the Istanbul Principles, developed through a participatory global civil society process that engaged over 70 national platforms, including both InterAction and CCIC. Many survey respondents indicated that components of these Principles were not new for their organization. While various CSOs may already have integrated many of the principles into their mandates and operational practices, what was new was that the Principles were developed globally by CSOs for CSOs, and not imposed on CSOs by government. These political dimensions aside, many survey respondents remarked that they still found the Principles useful as a benchmark against which to revisit or revise their own organizational principles and policies. Several respondents noted that these principles were things that were assumed in their organization, but Busan and the follow-up gave them the impetus to re-examine their practices in light of these principles. This is reflected in the indications of follow-up activities that organizations are planning to do. Ultimately, this is one of the key intents of the Istanbul Principles – that they act as a global reference point against which CSOs can constantly self-evaluate their own programs and practice, and strive to enhance their own development effectiveness and impact.

Although there is only so much we can derive from the sections on human rights based approaches (HRBA), equitable partnerships, and enabling environment, given the limited number of respondents, the survey does indicate that there is progress for some organizations in addressing these issues, or at least a desire to build their organization’s ability to respond to these issues.

HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACHES (HRBA): There are positive trends in terms of groups integrating HRBA into organizational practice. Many organizations indicated that they have tools and systems in place to ensure they are upholding and promoting human rights standards in their work. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that these standards and metrics are being shared with host-country partners. Again, while incorporating components of human rights issues may be “inherent” in the work of many of the organizations that responded, having a common set of standards and shared tools or resources will be helpful for some organizations to consider how they may strengthen their human rights-based approaches to development, both within organizations and between partners. Many respondents noted that a regular review of their programs from a human rights perspective could be a natural next step for them to enhance the prioritization, implementation, and evaluation of compliance with HRBA.

This regular review could help organizations develop new tools and capacity to address some of the main challenges to HRBA identified by participants– mainstreaming an HRBA approach across the work

of an organization and its partners, measuring the HRBA approach and its impacts, and creating a narrative for funders that is supportive of a human rights framework and longer-term systemic change that is necessary when dealing with human rights issues. As noted above, there is also significant scope for peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing among and between organizations, drawing on these tools – something that speaks to the strong desire of many respondents for sharing tools and collaborating. But integrating HRBA still poses a significant challenge, especially in an environment focused on results, and operating programs in country contexts that could be extremely challenging, for example conflict and fragile affected states. But it is not impossible, and many organizations have found a middle ground addressing issues like inequality, empowerment and inclusion, that speak to human rights, without necessarily using the language of human rights.

EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS: Likewise, equitable partnerships are a central element of both an organization's values and its means of operating, according to the organizations that responded to this survey. The focus of these partnerships is to strengthen local capacity, prioritize partner-defined goals and outcomes, and emphasize shared decision-making. Some organizations identified tangible steps they had taken to shift the notion of equitable partnerships as a core organizational principle into effective development practice. Accordingly, respondents identified different tools they have developed to evaluate the health and equality of partnerships. Others indicated an interest in learning from the experience of others in order to improve their practice to demonstrate higher compliance with equitable partnership standards.

Ultimately, though, there are still some notable barriers to making these partnerships truly equitable. The power dynamics inherent in donor/recipient models puts strain on relationships. Equally, funding stipulations that demand short-term and measurable results sits contrary to the longer time and resources required for organizations to adopt and implement practices that ensure long-term equitable partnerships. Hard technical skills related to project implementation are favored over softer skills related to building long term partnerships. These constraints box partners into the role of "service providers" more than truly equal partners. As one respondent said, there is a "lack of appreciation for non-financial benefits of project and program development and delivery." Finding funding for work that's geared towards long-term objectives and transformative change can be a significant challenge.

Nonetheless, clearly there is still a lot that organizations can do, and must consistently and very intentionally do, to ensure the health and equality of their relationships with partners. As with HRBA, several respondents noted that one significant shift could come from public engagement and communications strategies that demonstrate the value of initiatives that support long-term equitable partnerships, and recognize that such initiatives are a tangible "result" in and of themselves.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT: Survey feedback on Enabling Environment issues reflected tensions similar to those found in human rights-based approaches and Equitable Partnerships. Indeed, funding modalities that support organizational priorities related to HRBA and Equitable Partnerships were cited as the most prominent Enabling Environment challenge when dealing with domestic governments (i.e. Canada or the U.S.). It also appears that the legitimacy of these priorities (and even the existence of some organizations who put these principles at the heart of what they do) is also being challenged by governing bodies and policy makers, as noted by organizations who expressed challenges in maintaining charitable status or the degree of hostility they felt while trying to stand up for their organizational values.

Enabling Environment challenges experienced due to host-country governments are both diverse and more prominent, according to the responses in this survey. While the issues and approaches vary

from one context to another, organizations noted that a key priority is being able to resource and support their host-country partners to respond to the human rights and enabling environment issues in their local context through policy and advocacy work. Context-specific responses are difficult to standardize and scale up, yet respondents still noted the value of learning from the efforts of others, particularly in terms of effective strategies.

LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING: The value of sharing knowledge and experiences emerged consistently as a theme throughout the survey. Effective models, best practices, guidelines and metrics may be helpful for organizations looking to strengthen their practice as it relates to the Istanbul Principles, Human Rights-Based Approaches, Equitable Partnerships, and the Enabling Environment. Others noted that workshops, peer-to-peer learning circles or communities of practice, and case studies on these issues would be an effective way to move beyond the material resource of this information. This format encourages participants to interact with those who have direct experience and learn how they adapted to the demands of specific contexts instead of trying to find a “one size fits all” approach. Clearly the experience of many of the respondents in this survey can offer key insights and practical “how to’s” to other organizations. Such learning is still highly valued. But CSOs continue to face increasing burdens on their time, which has encouraged individuals to opt out of non-essential opportunities for professional development, learning, and self-reflection. This may limit the utility of such learning exercises. The ways that information is made available is critical to determining the extent to which it will translate into changes in actual operational practice. A combination of providing individuals with opportunities to learn, while giving them concrete tools to take back to their organization, might help bridge this gap.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The survey findings indicate that the Busan Fourth Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, including its preparation and follow up, have had an impact on the CSO communities in Canada and the U.S. The Busan processes clearly reinforced core development principles for many organizations or shifted others toward more of a focus on them. In a sense, Busan served as a milestone, a time for CSOs to stop and reflect and review their work through the lens of the Busan outcomes.

Across the board, for survey respondents, Busan connected them to civil society more broadly and brought a greater awareness of the principles and issues that transcend national borders. For some respondents, this awareness has translated into action, as they have run workshops on the Istanbul Principles, made headway on HRBA, equitable partnerships, and a positive enabling environment.

The challenge and opportunity for CCIC, InterAction, and CPDE going forward is how to build on both the awareness and the momentum happening within certain organizations. How can our national and global networks further advance the progress catalyzed by Busan? Sharing information and collective advocacy are both key, and the following are suggested specific “next steps.”

Self Assessments: Some organizations indicated their interest in integrating metrics related to the Istanbul Principles in their work. A simple organizational self assessment tool (which CCIC and InterAction could have a hand in creating) would help organizations evaluate their level of compliance with the Istanbul Principles and find ways to strengthen both their practice and the work of their partners.

Training: Further outreach should be undertaken with the survey group to determine the extent to which organizations would value and participate in onsite workshops. This follow-up could also increase

the relevance of training which has already been planned. For example, in Fall 2013, CCIC will be collaborating with Equitas-International Centre for Human Rights Education and the Coady International Institute to pilot some training modules and workshops on Human Rights-Based Approaches and Equitable Partnerships. The HRBA module will help organizations integrate a rights approach into project cycles, and the Partnership module establishes a model for equitable partnership and some indicators for organizations to evaluate their partnerships and strengthen their approach. The response to these initial training modules could be an appropriate gauge for evaluating and rolling out future training opportunities.

Communities of Practice: Creating opportunities for organizations to explore “what is out there” in terms of practice, tools, and resources relating to these principles and frameworks is an important next step for the sector. Several organizations indicated they already had tools, policies, and effective practices in place, while other organizations suggested that this was an anticipated area of growth for their team. InterAction and CCIC could jointly establish online “communities of practice” to share tools; but just as importantly, they could connect organizations with experience with those seeking to move forward in HRBA, equitable partnerships, or enabling environment. The actual strategy and change process is determined by what organizations want to learn about from one another. The two platforms could broker such peer learning exchanges.

Joint Advocacy: The constraints to HRBA and equitable partnerships as well as the severe narrowing of civil society space around the world are well documented in the survey responses. Some of these challenges can be addressed by changes in CSOs’ own systems and practices. But external forces, particularly from donors and governments, are a greater factor. InterAction and CCIC, with CPDE, could for example consider a pilot effort for collective advocacy in a few countries in which organizations there would jointly set priorities to achieve breakthroughs on the enabling environment. Depending on resource availability, these could become case studies for a joint publication and/or lead toward a regional or global conference.

Public Engagement and Communications: The aim of these efforts would be to promote the inherent value in Human Rights-Based Approaches and the Istanbul Principles, as well as raise awareness and foster a better understanding of enabling environment issues. Communicating the crucial value of equitable partnerships should also be a part of these efforts. However, to ensure that investments make a difference, it is key to clearly define the audience and determine how educating this target group could be leveraged to influence the behavior of policy makers and/or donors. In other words, it must be situated within a broader campaign for change.

ANNEX: FULL SET OF QUESTIONS

The following is a copy of the survey sent out to member organizations:

CCIC and InterAction are conducting a survey of our respective members. This survey has four goals:

- Map what Canadian and US organizations are doing around the Istanbul Principles and Enabling Environment;
- Establish what gaps could be filled to help organizations better implement the Principles;
- Establish the degree to which a disabling environment (both at home and overseas) may be impacting organizations' and their partners' ability to affect change;
- Determine how organizations and their partners are responding to this environment.

The results of this survey will feed into an ongoing global processes related to both the work of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE), the Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment (a team comprised of donor, partner government, and CSO actors) and other post-2015 discussions.

Throughout this survey, key terms and references will be underlined to provide further information and points of clarification. Simply move your mouse over the underlined text for an explanation. If, at any time, comments are unclear, please use the space at the bottom of the page to make note.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey (approx. 20 min). Please provide your name and contact information at the end of the survey so we can send you the results and contact you with any follow-up questions.

1. This report will be used to identify overall trends among CSO organizations in the United States and Canada. This information is kept confidential - no organization or individuals will be identified without personally requesting your permission at a later date.

Please provide your name and contact information so we can send you the results of the survey and contact you if there are any follow-up questions.

Name
Organization
Contact Details

2. Which platform is your organization a member of?

InterAction
CCIC
Provincial or Regional Council (Canada)

BUSAN PROCESS

In November 2011, the [Fourth High Level Forum on aid effectiveness](#) was held in Busan, South Korea (HLF-4). The forum culminated in the signing of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation by ministers of developed and developing nations, emerging economies, providers of South-South and triangular co-operation and civil society - marking a critical turning point in development co-operation. It established new principles of country ownership, a focus on results,

inclusive development partnerships and transparency and accountability.

The [Busan Outcomes](#) also highlighted the importance of the [Istanbul Principles](#), the [Enabling Environment](#), and [Human Rights-Based Approaches](#) to development.

3. Please select any of the pre- or post-Busan processes in which your organization participated.

- Participated in a national consultation on the Istanbul Principles
- Participated in internal workshops/processes within my organization
- Had meetings with government officials on the Busan agenda
- Went to Busan
- Participated in workshops or webinars on issues related to Busan
- Organized workshops on the Istanbul Principles or Enabling Environment
- Have taken measures to implement the Istanbul Principles
- Met with government officials related to Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
- My organization has not participated in any pre- or post-Busan processes relating to the Istanbul Principles and/or Enabling Environment initiatives
- Other

In all cases, please specify details if necessary:

4. Have the Busan Outcomes motivated/encouraged your organization to work on the following issues:

- Istanbul Principles
- Enabling Environment
- Human Rights Based Approaches
- My organization has not been impacted by Busan Outcomes
- My organization is unaware of the Busan Outcomes

ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES

The **ISTANBUL PRINCIPLES** for CSO Development Effectiveness (IP) are a set of mutually shared values guiding the development work of CSOs worldwide. As such, they are an integral part of the [International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness](#) AND a distinct globally acknowledged reference of effective development work for CSOs across the world. The eight Principles are:

- 1) Respect and promote human rights and social justice;
- 2) Embody gender equality and equity while promoting women and girl's rights;
- 3) Focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation;
- 4) Promote environmental sustainability;
- 5) Practice transparency and accountability;
- 6) Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity;
- 7) Create and share knowledge and commit to learning;
- 8) Commit to realizing positive sustainable change.

Many organizations are implementing aspects of the Istanbul Principles. The following questions look at reviewing and implementing the Istanbul Principles as a **framework**.

6. What has your organization done to engage in work around the Istanbul Principles or implement them? (Please describe your activities for each choice, if applicable)

- Participated in a general workshop on the IP
- Participated in a workshop on implementing the IP
- Ran a workshop on implementing the IP
- Developed public engagement tools on the IP
- Wrote a case study
- Have integrated the IP into some element of our work
- I am not familiar with the Istanbul Principles (please indicate)
- No activity (please indicate)
- Other

In all cases, please specify details if necessary:

7. What does your organization plan to do around the Istanbul Principles?(recent or upcoming initiatives)

- No plans
- Activity planned, as follows:

HRBA

A **HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH** is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress (Office of the High Commission of Human Rights). This approach includes elements like:

- Non-discrimination
- Due diligence (in considering conditions affecting the capacities of people to claim their rights)
- Participation and empowerment
- The interdependence of rights (addressing economic, social, and cultural rights)
- Democratic ownership (respect for political rights, accountability and transparency)
- The right to decent work (socially inclusive economic strategies)

In 2013, CCIC is planning to develop some user-friendly modules on Human Rights-Based Approaches and equitable partnerships, geared towards development programmers.

9. Do you currently integrate Human Rights-based approaches (HRBA) into your programs?

- No
- Yes (please specify by describing some of the features of your approach)

10. What do you think are, or would be, the big challenges that organizations face in terms of better integrating HRBA into their programs? Please be as specific as possible.

11. What tools would be useful to address these gaps or challenges and improve your work related to HRBA?

EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS are transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organizational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity, and global citizenship. (See page 13 of the [Siem Reap CSO Consensus \(Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness\)](#) for more information)

12. Do you currently or have a good model/resources for equitable partnerships (benchmarks, criteria etc. for evaluating the key elements of equitable partnerships)?

- No
- Yes (please specify by describing some of the features of your approach)

13. What do you think are, or would be, the big challenges that organizations face in terms of implementing equitable partnerships? Please be as specific as possible.

14. What tools would be useful to address these gaps or challenges and improve your work for equitable partnerships?

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The **ENABLING ENVIRONMENT** refers to a set of inter-related conditions that impact on the capacity of CSO development actors to engage in development processes in a sustained and effective manner.

The Enabling Environment Working Group (from [CPDE](#)) has created the following framework:

- **Area One: Core human rights affecting CSOs**
 - Dimension One: **Realization of rights** (such as right to associate, right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression)
 - Dimension Two: **The legal and regulatory environment** (e.g. easy for CSOs to register, CSOs are free from interference/harassment, CSOs can openly express their views and engage in advocacy)
 - Dimension Three: **Rights of specific groups** (non-discrimination against particular groups in the application of laws)
- **Area Two: Policy Influencing**
 - Dimension One: **Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing** (CSOs can engage the government at multiple levels, represent marginalized groups, CSO input is taken into account in policy outcomes)
 - Dimension Two: **Access to information** (transparency and accountability from governments in developing priorities, strategies, plans, and actions)
- **Area Three: Donor – CSO relationships** (CSOs acknowledged as effective, independent development actors, and donors provide clear financing modalities)

In the following questions, references are made to "Host-Country" contexts (international contexts in which your organization has programming) and "Local Partners" (referring to organizations based in the Host-Countries that you have partnered with in your programming).

The first two questions apply to the Enabling Environment with **US and Canadian Governments**:

16. Has your organization or your local partners faced constraints or challenges in implementing programs due to *US or Canadian government* policies or regulations? These challenges may include:

- Maintaining charitable status
- Being acknowledged as a legitimate social/development actor
- Understanding / fulfilling government regulations
- Funding modalities that support organization's priorities
- Access to policy dialogue with government on issues relating to organization's mandate
- Transparency of government policies affecting the organization
- Other
- None of the above

Please explain and/or provide examples:

17. Is your organization working to address enabling environment issues with *Canadian or US governments*? (Please describe your activities for each choice, if applicable)

- Realization of rights
- The legal and regulatory environment
- Rights of specific groups
- Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing
- Access to information
- Donor - CSO relationships
- Other
- None of the above

Please explain and/or provide examples:

The next two questions apply to the Enabling Environment with **Host-Country Governments**

18. Has your organization or your local partners faced constraints or challenges to the implementation of programs due to *host country government* policies or regulations? These challenges may include:

- Realization of rights
- The legal and regulatory environment to register, exist, and operate as an organization
- Rights of specific groups
- Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing
- Access to information
- Donor - CSO relationships
- Ability to receive funds from outside the host country
- Other
- None of the above

Please explain and/or provide examples:

19. Is your organization or your partners working on enabling environment issues with *host-country governments*? If so, which issues? (Please describe your activities for each choice, if applicable)

- Realization of rights
- The legal and regulatory environment to register, exist, and operate as an organization
- Rights of specific groups
- Spaces for dialogue and policy influencing

- Access to information
- Donor - CSO relationships
- Ability to receive funds from outside the host country
- Other
- None of the above

Please explain and/or provide examples:

20. Have your organization or your partners *added* advocacy and/or policy work to your service delivery and programmatic work at the country level due to enabling environment constraints?

- No
- Yes (please explain, including examples of countries where this is a stronger focus of your work)

The [CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness](#) (CPDE) continues to serve as a global platform to explore these issues of Development Effectiveness and the Enabling Environment.

22. Would you or your organization be interested in engaging in work (or receiving more information) around CSO development effectiveness or enabling environment with the context of the following (please check):

- CPDE Working Group on Development Effectiveness (CSOs only)
- CPDE Working Group on Rights Based Approaches (CSOs only)
- CPDE Working Group on Enabling Environment (CSOs only)
- Task Team on CSO Development Effectiveness and Enabling Environment (Donor, partner country and CSO)
- I am not familiar with these groups

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.