



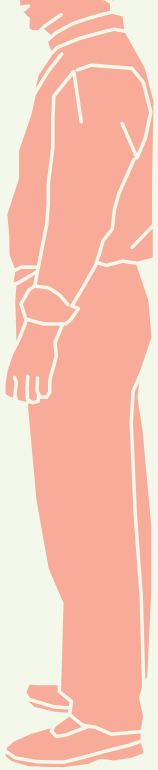
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Ministry of Youth, Sports &
Community Empowerment
Republic of Maldives



COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE MALDIVIAN CIVIL SOCIETY



APRIL 2023

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FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that we present the second iteration of a Comprehensive Study on the Maldivian Civil Society. This latest report is a further testament of UNDP commitment towards its national partners and to the development and sustainability of a vibrant civil society space in the Maldives.

Civil society are essential in ensuring transparency and accountability, innovation, and social cohesion, advocating the rights and needs of marginalized groups, promoting social justice and driving inclusive and sustainable development for the country offering a bridge between national public and private institutions and local communities. It is also a vital instrument in facilitating the flow of knowledge and policy participation between communities and decision makers, fostering in practice the essence of inclusive governance. We extend our appreciation to all the civil society organizations that continue to catalyze change and have contributed to the study.

The study provides stakeholders with an understanding of the changes that have occurred within the Maldivian civil society in the past decade. We hope the study with its recommendations to strengthen and support civil society in its effectiveness within diverse sectors will be an invaluable tool for all stakeholders.

This study was conducted and published with the generous support of the European Union (2021-2022) and the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2022 – 2023). The partnerships between development partners, national counterparts and civil society lay the groundwork to empower individuals and communities to build an equitable and resilient society.

Enrico Gaveglia

Resident Representative, UNDP Maldives

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
ICNPO	International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MoYSCE	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
TM	Transparency Maldives
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDC	Women's Development Committee

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society, initiated by UNDP Maldives in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment (MoYSCE), aims to provide an overview of Maldives' civil society sector, including civil society organizations (CSOs), and also taking account of government agencies, donor agencies, unregistered movements and the broader community.

The study comprised four main data collection components: (1) a desk review of existing literature including the legislative framework around CSOs, (2) a categorization survey which was open for all registered and unregistered CSOs, (3) in-depth interviews among a selected sample of CSOs, and (4) stakeholder consultations including Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with central and local stakeholders and community groups in selected islands. The study methodology, sample size, respondent rates, and challenges and mitigation measures adopted are further detailed in Chapter 4 of this report.

This report is presented in eight chapters: a desk review of the legal framework and regulatory environment, study methodology, the Maldivian civil society landscape, operation of CSOs in Maldives, collaborations and partnerships, independence, credibility and public confidence in the sector, regulation and governance of CSOs and finally, key recommendations. The following paragraphs briefly summarize the discussions in each chapter.

The current Associations Act establishes the legal framework for the formation, registration and operation of associations, parties and clubs. However, inadequacies in the legal framework in terms of definitions and classifications are exacerbated by combining non-governmental organizations (NGOs), sports clubs, foundations and more under one roof. Governing all CSOs under one umbrella can lead to logical inconsistencies as clubs and other organizations may have a profit

component but no social component. Moreover, this uniform system of governance creates discrepancies, as a result of differences in the nature of the organizations, highlighting issues and inconsistencies across CSOs in terms of accessibility, resources and other factors.

The current legal framework also causes confusion regarding the governing body of Maldivian CSOs. When the Sports Act was reviewed to further understand this discrepancy, it was found that the Commissioner of Sports is the governing parental body of sports clubs, raising questions about whether sports clubs would still be governed under the Associations Act or if governance would be duplicated. In reaction to this apparent conflict, the MoYSCE stated that organizations must register under the Sports Act only if sports are their primary activity and, if not, can choose to register under the Associations Act. Given the generalist nature of Maldivian CSOs, especially in the smaller island communities, where many CSOs focus on both sports and other community empowerment areas, the issue regarding the governing body still remains unsettled. Further discussions on the issue and other relevant legal documents are discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.

Following Chapter 4 on methodology, Chapter 5 of this report outlines the current civil society landscape in Maldives. It provides an overview of CSOs in Maldives including a summary of the registration process, the length of time of their operation and reasons for their establishment. It also categorizes CSOs based on their nature of organization, focus area, location, geographical scope, target beneficiaries and broad functions. This chapter further explores the characteristics of Maldivian CSOs including their income, membership size and volunteer base, level of activity and required assistance. The next few paragraphs will briefly summarize the findings.



607
active CSOs
in Maldives

In 2021, MoYSCE launched a re-registration procedure to update Maldives' CSO registry and identify active CSOs, which showed a total of 607 active CSOs in Maldives. The removal of sports-related CSOs from the registry, as well as previously registered CSOs not re-registering, has resulted in a major fall in the number of registered CSOs in Maldives. When asked why they hadn't properly registered, two unregistered CSOs which participated in this research reported that they didn't have the ability to do so as they were new and had only recently started operation.

The study also revealed difficulties in the long-term viability of Maldivian CSOs, since many CSOs stop operations when the founder retires or becomes unavailable. A review of the motivations for CSO formation indicated that many CSOs had several goals, with over half of CSOs stating that their primary goal was to develop and improve their island, with the desire to involve young people in interesting and productive activities.

The majority of CSOs, 80 percent, identified themselves as NGOs despite more appropriate categorizations based on their operations or functions. CSOs based in Malé identified themselves as more diverse types of organizations, indicating that those in Malé may be more diverse and more aware about the different natures and types of organizations that can be active under the broader civil society umbrella.

In terms of key focus areas, the registration documents classified the CSOs into five broad focus areas: social (71 percent), sports (30 percent), religious (21 percent), environment (18 percent) and rights based (15 percent).

The categorization survey built on these 5 broad categories and adopted 25 more detailed categories to comparatively analyse the data against the previous iteration of this study conducted in 2011. The findings show that CSO engagement in certain focus areas has increased over the past decade. These trends also reflect the general increase in awareness in these areas as well as an increased policy focus and concentrated efforts in the development of them. Data also showed that CSO engagement decreased in certain areas in the past decade. For instance, the category 'Sports, Music, Art and Leisure' has observed a significant drop from 54 percent to 26 percent since 2011. A likely reason for this is the ratification of the new Sports Act which required sports clubs to deregister under the Associations Act and re-register under the Sports Act.

The data received on focus areas were also used to classify whether CSOs in Maldives were generalist or specialist. The findings showed that CSOs in Maldives are more generalist (55 percent) than specialist (45 percent) with 8 percent of the CSOs operating in over 7 focus areas. This observation is not vastly different from that of the previous study which demonstrated a 50-50 division between the two categories. However, when the figures were compared across different regions of the country, a trend was observed of Maldivian CSOs growing increasingly specialized over time. This suggests that CSOs are becoming more aware of the need to expand their efforts to close gaps in society.

CSOs focus areas



71%
Social



30%
Sports



21%
Religious



18%
Environment



15%
Rights based

CSOs operated locations



49.3%
Malé



52%
Island/
community



33%
National

In terms of location, data showed that nearly half of CSOs, 49.3 percent, were based in Malé. Analysis of the geographical scope covered by CSOs showed that over half, 52 percent, operated at an island/community level and 33 percent operated at the national level.

The number of CSOs that operated at an atoll, regional or international level was relatively low. In terms of target beneficiaries, data show that half of the CSOs, 51 percent, generally focused on the whole population while just below half, 48 percent, targeted youth.



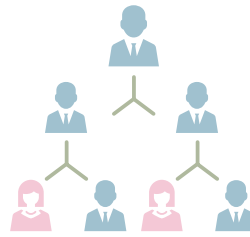
54%

CSOs engaged members or volunteers **BELOW 50**

only 2%



CSOs reported having members **ABOVE 1,000**



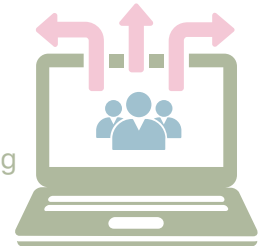
The survey found that women were usually less active in CSOs, with the bulk of CSOs having **NO WOMEN** in decision-making positions.

The study also classified CSOs based on various characteristics. In terms of funding, 41 percent of CSOs did not receive any income in 2019. **The survey indicated that over half, 54 percent, of the CSOs had engaged members or volunteers below 50 in number and only 2 percent reported having over 1,000 members.** The majority, 72 percent, of CSOs reported the number of volunteers as below 50. It is important to note that in the context of Maldivian civil society, “members” and “volunteers” were often considered interchangeable or synonymous.

The study determined the degree of CSO activity: 38 percent of CSOs reported undertaking 1 to 5 activities in the previous year, while 17 percent of CSOs reported having conducted none in the previous year. Maldivian CSOs were generally active despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though usual CSO operations may have been delayed or were ceased, numerous CSOs around the country rallied and offered assistance in relation to the impacts of the pandemic, including vaccination and relief efforts. That being said, it was reported on some islands that CSOs typically mobilize for significant events, and that ongoing involvement does not occur in a consistent form throughout the year. Further discussion and details on the topic are presented in Chapter 5 of this report.

Chapter 6 of the report focuses on the operations of CSOs in Maldives. The chapter explores three key areas of CSO operation: (1) Internal management, planning and efficiency, (2) Resources, capacity and competency, and (3) Perceived challenges, needs and accessibility. The study indicated that most CSOs have a democratic system of governance as almost all CSOs (98 percent) reported that their executive committee is elected by its members. When asked if they have defined policies, strategies and action plans, more than half of the CSOs (61 percent) reported producing operational work plans. However, fewer reported having a long-term vision or strategies (43 percent). A lack of long-term vision or a lack of an ideological foundation and strategic thinking that should be rooted in the CSO’s operations frequently has an impact on the organization’s sustainability and points to poor planning and internal management.

The survey found a significant amount of resource sharing between CSOs, with **54%** of CSOs receiving expert support from other CSOs

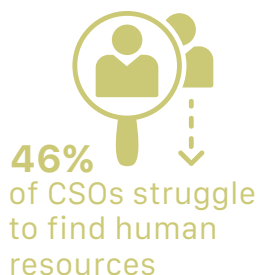


Many Maldivian CSO activities are run by **VOLUNTEERS**, with no paid personnel

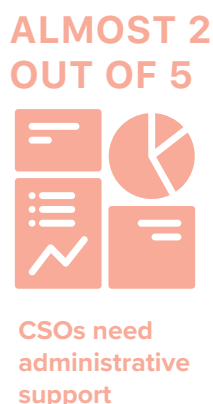
In terms of human resources, the survey discovered that women were usually less active in CSOs, with the bulk of CSOs having no women in decision-making positions. The survey found a significant amount of resource sharing between CSOs, with 54 percent of CSOs receiving expert support from other CSOs. It was learned that many Maldivian CSO activities are run by volunteers, with no paid personnel.

Despite training being a key factor in capacity-building, 41 percent of CSOs had received no training in the past two years. The study also explored the training needs of CSOs: half of the CSOs, 50 percent, require training on raising finances or other finance-related matters while 41 percent want further subject-matter training. A significant share, 30 percent, of CSOs also stated they require training on project development, concept paper development and proposal writing.

Financial constraints were identified to be the most significant barrier for CSOs to their effective and efficient operation. Interviews revealed that CSO efforts to obtain further funds were impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Individual donations, domestic sponsors and fundraising efforts are currently the most prevalent sources of income for CSOs.



The study explored in-depth the various forms of challenges that CSOs face. **A total of 74 percent of CSOs experience financial issues, while 46 percent of CSOs struggle to find human resources. CSOs also cited a variety of resource-related issues, including a shortage of capacity, time, office space, infrastructure, equipment and technology, and public relations skills.** Stakeholders also raised concern about staff turnover and a reliance on volunteers, as well as issues with continuity and impediments to CSO growth due to insufficient training, resources and funding. About a fifth, 20 percent, of CSOs said they are hampered in their work by political influences. CSOs also reported a lack of cooperation between councils/government and CSOs, as well as political interference, government divisions, a lack of government aid, and other structural and institutional challenges including bureaucracy, a lack of a central register with which to effectively interface, a lack of accountability and transparency, and corruption within CSOs. CSOs also mentioned socio-political issues such as Maldives' small population, a lack of public support, the limited resource mobilization space and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



When asked about the kind of assistance they require to overcome these obstacles, the data revealed that almost four out of five CSOs need financial assistance and almost two out of five CSOs need administrative support. Further discussion and details with regard to CSO operation are presented in Chapter 6 of the report.

Chapter 7 of this report focuses on CSO collaboration and partnerships including cross-CSO collaboration and engagement with policymakers and with the private sector. According to the report, there is a significant level of collaboration among CSOs, with 72 percent indicating that they had cooperated or partnered with another CSO at some time. According to stakeholder dialogues, government ministries cooperate with CSOs on a range of activities on a need-to-know basis and do not consistently incorporate CSOs in their operations. A majority, 59 percent, of CSOs said they have previously engaged and/or partnered with a government agency. In terms of CSO collaboration in local governance, councils indicated that due to the present administration's inexperience, they have only been able to work with CSOs in a limited capacity, mostly in the production of plans for land use, island development, women's empowerment and other planning procedures. In regard to engagement with political parties, the bulk of involvement with CSOs was based on understanding social concerns and the community's needs in preparing manifestos and development plans, as well as debates about extending the role of CSOs. In terms of private sector collaborations, despite an increase in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes by various corporations across the nation, the majority of CSOs (59 percent) reported that they had yet to work or partner with a private institution. Further discussion on CSO collaboration and partnerships is presented in Chapter 7 of the report.

Chapter 8 of this report highlights the issues of independence, credibility and public confidence in the sector. During the study, stakeholders noted that support for CSOs was waning compared to previous years. The reasons given for this diminishing support included lack of cooperation among CSOs owing to political disagreements and CSOs having political ties. Stakeholders also remarked on the absence of CSO engagement in the monitoring of political processes and the lack of consultation mechanisms between policymakers and CSOs.

While almost half of the CSOs said they functioned independently of donors, sponsors and government influence, more than half of the CSOs said they were influenced by political parties and organizations. This was attributed in part to the rise of political parties and polarization on certain islands, which caused what was once friendly competition between two districts to devolve into political rivalry, jeopardizing the outcome and effectiveness of civil society activities and collaborative efforts.



CSOs have a **GOOD INFLUENCE** on the **COMMUNITY**

Despite some worries regarding a lack of significant contributions, the survey revealed that CSOs have a good influence on the community and that the public has a favourable opinion of them. CSOs identified the need to increase their visibility and engagement with the public by increasing the number of activities, public engagement and transparency to improve public confidence and credibility. Further discussion on CSO independence, credibility and public confidence is found in Chapter 8 of this report.



65%

said that forming a CSO in Maldives is very easy or easy.

Chapter 9 of the report discusses the need for regulation, compliance and governance of CSOs. The study found that 72 percent of CSOs are aware of national or local laws and regulations that apply to their work. **When asked about the present ease of compliance with legislation, 65 percent of CSOs said that forming a CSO in Maldives is very easy or easy.** However, a large number of CSOs are unaware of all of the legal obligations of a CSO in Maldives. In order for CSOs to effectively comply with regulatory and legal obligations, it is critical that legal requirements are not burdensome and excessive.



OVER HALF of the CSOs believe CSO regulations should be decentralized



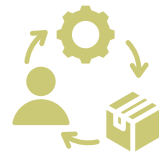
63% of the CSOs situated in Malé want to be governed by the central government

19% CSOs operating on islands prefer to be regulated by the central government.

The survey also examined opinions on the governance of CSOs. While practically all CSOs recognize the necessity for regulation, **CSOs are advocating for the decentralization of CSO regulation, with over half believing that local governments (either island councils or atoll councils) should be responsible for regulating CSOs. However, the majority of CSOs situated in Malé want to be governed by the central government (63 percent), whereas just 19 percent of CSOs operating on islands prefer to be regulated by the central government.**

The primary justification for being governed by the central government, according to those who favour it, is uniformity in laws, rules and standards for all CSOs. CSOs who prefer local governments to regulate the sector, on the other hand, feel that this will increase the sector's efficiency and allow them to work more closely with the regulator. Indeed, one of the primary complaints of island-based CSOs is that the central government places too much emphasis on Malé, further entrenching already existing inequality and inconsistency.

Chapter 10 of the report provides further recommendations on improving the civil society space in Maldives. **Based on the findings of this study, the recommendations are presented in six key thematic areas:**



1 Internal management and efficiency



2 Resource and capacity constraints



3 Collaboration and partnerships



4 Independence, credibility and public confidence



5 Conflict management



4 Regulation and governance

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Research background

The Comprehensive Study of Maldives Civil Society Space, initiated by the UNDP Maldives in collaboration with MoYSCE, aims to gain an overall understanding of the civil society sector in Maldives. It is the second iteration of a study previously carried out in 2011, and intends to provide the current context of the civil society sector in Maldives and the impact of the sociopolitical changes that have occurred in the past 10 years on the operation of CSOs. Moreover, the study will aim to identify entry points, opportunities and challenges for the civil society space in Maldives to better inform policy interventions.

The primary aim of this study is to provide an overview of the civil society sector in Maldives by considering not only CSOs, but the broader context in which they operate, and so taking into account other relevant stakeholders including government agencies, donor agencies, unregistered movements and the broader community. The second iteration of the study, conducted from June 2021 to March 2022, will also serve as a tool for comparison of today’s landscape of civil society with that of the past 10 years, identifying both improvements and setbacks. The data collected for this study are used to provide recommendations on the most effective modalities to engage with CSOs, and how stakeholders such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and MoYSCE can inform policy to better facilitate CSO activities and address their needs to build resilient, inclusive and active communities.

2.1.1 Objectives

The scope of this study is to provide a thorough understanding of the civil society sector using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, along with an analysis of the existing relevant literature. The primary objectives of the study include:

- 1 | Review the existing legal framework, legislation, regulations, assessments, consultation reports and practices relevant to the civil society sector.
- 2 | Map existing CSOs based on a selected criterion of categorization (area of work, target groups and functions) to obtain an overview of the CSO landscape.

- 3 | Attain a deeper understanding of the roles, operations and principles of the CSOs.
- 4 | Identify and disaggregate their capacity needs, administrative and other challenges, accessibility, opportunities and relevant governance factors.
- 5 | Understand the gaps that can be addressed in policy formulation and intervention, as well as to understand the perceptions and expectations of external actors.
- 6 | Identify the needs and perceptions of community members regarding CSO roles and activities, and provide recommendations on how to improve the relationships between CSOs and community.
- 7 | Provide recommendations on the most effective modalities for donor agencies and government institutions to engage with CSOs.

2.2 Background

The definition of “civil society organization” tends to be quite broad in nature and generally refers to collective public action.¹ Intergovernmental organizations have opted to understand civil society by focusing on the varieties of organizations that can be considered CSOs. As described by UNDP Asia and the Pacific, “civil society constitutes the full range of formal and informal organizations that are outside the state and market. This includes social movements, volunteer organizations, indigenous peoples’ organizations, mass-based membership organizations, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively”.²

¹ Cameron, G. (2008). Background paper: How should we classify civil society? A review of mainstream and alternative approaches. International NGO Training and Research Centre.

² UNDP (2022). “Partners”, Asia and the Pacific.

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) use a similar definition of CSOs, drawn from two separate surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, and noting non-profit organizations are distinct from the state and the private sector.³ Recurring themes were also found in Johns Hopkins University's definition of CSOs, as cited by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID): "formal or informal, self-governing, separate from government, non-profit, and voluntary participation."⁴ Some examples of CSOs are youth groups, community groups, trade unions, business representative organizations, professional associations, environmental groups, charitable organizations, sports clubs, NGOs and foundations.⁵ Hence, for the purpose of this research, CSOs are defined as those non-profit, non-governmental organized forms of mobilization, whether official or informal, rather than individual actors, existing in the realm of the independent public, typically working outside of the state and the market even though certain overlaps exist (i.e. "political society" and "economic society").

The global emergence of CSOs can be tracked to socially, politically and economically significant years including at the end of World War II when there was a community need for providing assistance for disadvantaged and marginalized people.⁶ The 1980s then showed a political shift towards an interest in the global economy where employers and workers sought to improve firm competitiveness and profitability while maintaining labour standards.⁷ Coincidentally, this is when the International Labour Organization (ILO) began giving more prominence to tripartite governance arrangements involving the state, employers and workers between whom social dialogue began concerning workers' rights and best practices.⁸

Since its inception, the civil society sector has grown tremendously and has played an important role in supporting communities and keeping governments in check. The term "civil society" gained popularity in the 1990s to describe activities by groups that played a significant role in driving democratization movements against governments.⁹ Such civil society groups or organizations that were active, competitive and diverse in scope have been successfully linked to healthy democracies.¹⁰ Moreover, CSOs have been instrumental in implementing development projects in communities because they aim to fulfil specific societal needs independent of state or financial motivations.¹¹ Conversely, the absence of involvement of CSOs has been seen in areas with fragile states, in states with poor state–society relations and where CSO initiatives may be deterred by official actors.¹²

2.3 Civil society in Maldives

Maldives saw its most significant political transition stages during 2008 with the ratification of the new Constitution that separated powers into executive, judiciary and the parliament, and set up independent commissions that introduced mechanisms for transparency and accountability. This also paved the way for the first multi-party elections in Maldives. The right and freedom to form associations, societies and parties; freedom of expression; freedom of assembly; and the right to pursue civil action via such mobilization are constitutional rights recognized in Maldives.

Another key development in the Maldivian political environment includes the transition towards a decentralized system of governance with the passing of the Decentralization Act in 2010. This shift in governance is an important development in empowering local

³ OECD. (2020). "Working with civil society: Findings from surveys and consultations." In *Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society*, Paris, OECD Publishing.

⁴ Ibid.; USAID (2011). *2011 CSO Sustainability Index for the Middle East and North Africa*.

⁵ Hinds, K. (2019). *Civil Society Organisations, Governance and the Caribbean Community*. 1st ed. Springer International Publishing.

⁶ Crouch, C. (2006). "Neo-Corporatism and Democracy." In *The Diversity of Democracy: Corporatism, Social Order and Political Conflict*, edited by Colin Crouch and Wolfgang Streeck: 46–70. Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ ILO. (2018). "Governance and Tripartism Division." Geneva: International Labour Office; Harrison, K.H. and Montoute, A. (2018). "Global Forces and the Continued Role of Caribbean Trade Unions as Political Actors?" In *Caribbean Realities and Endogenous Sustainability*, edited by Nikolaos Karagiannis and Debbie A. Mohammed: 266–288. Kingston: University of the West Indies Press.

⁹ Hinds, K. (2019). *Civil Society Organisations, Governance and the Caribbean Community*.

¹⁰ Putnam, R.D. (1995). "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65–78.

¹¹ Hinds, K. (2019). *Civil Society Organizations, Governance and the Caribbean Community*.

¹² Plank, F., Keijzer, N. and Niemann, A. (2021). "Outside-in Politicization of EU–Western Africa Relations: What Role for Civil Society Organizations?," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(1): 161–179

communities to take autonomy and agency in their island's development.

Notable recent changes to the civil society space in Maldives can be observed in the governance and empowerment of CSOs. While the Ministry of Home Affairs has been the regulatory body for the CSOs in the past, with the change in government in 2019, the mandate has now been transferred to MoYSCE. The name of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment was also updated to include the new mandate of the ministry, which gives the CSO sector higher significance.

In addition to the recent change to the regulatory body, the regulation and governance framework for the operation of CSOs is also currently being revised. At the time of this report, a new Associations Act is being debated in the Parliament which, once approved, will replace the current Associations Act (Act Number 1/2003). The revision of the Act has been long awaited and was also recommended in the previous iteration of this study, in order to strengthen the regulatory framework and empowerment of CSOs.

The significance of such developments and the surrounding legal framework for CSOs is explored further in the following chapter.

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The following section provides a brief summary, overview and analytical review of the main legislative documents pertaining to the civil society sector. It focuses on assessing relevant legislative developments that have come into effect that are relevant to the operation and governing of the civil society sector. This legislation includes the Associations Act (Act Number 1/2003), Sports Act (Act Number 30/2015), Income Tax Act (Act Number 25/2019) and Decentralization Act (Act Number 7/2010) with the National Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2019–2023 reviewed as a key policy document.

3.1 Associations Act (Act Number 1/2003)

The Associations Act (Act Number 1/2003) establishes the legal framework for the formation, registration and operation of associations, parties and clubs. The term “Association” is defined in the Act as those associations, parties and clubs formed in conformity with this Act as business organizations or non-profit organizations. In this context, a “non-profit organization” is defined as any association founded for charity purposes from among the associations registered under this Act.

The Associations Act is the key piece of legislation outlining the basic responsibilities and functions of CSOs. As such, the Act includes provisions for registration, governing regulations, association details, details of founding members, committee members, a member registry and responsibilities for income generation, financial records maintenance, auditing, submission of annual accounts and reports, and more. The Act also comprises several provisions to the role and what is up to CSOs’ discretion. As per the Act, every association has the discretion to collect a membership fee from its members, seek and accept assistance from foreign parties, and is permitted to do business in the name of the association to achieve its objectives stated in the governing regulation, in so far as it is in line with the laws and regulations of Maldives. The Act does not provide any substantial clarification for the bounds of Association activities, particularly regarding “doing business”, which is allowed. This fundamentally contradicts the premise of the Act as well as the premise

that CSOs are non-profit organizations. The Act only specifies that any business transactions should solely be for the purposes of achieving CSO objectives and not to raise earnings for its members or claim profits. This is important to note because, during the consultations conducted for this study, there were concerns raised by stakeholders regarding the possible profit component of some organizations. Certain procedures may be needed to ensure that all organizations registered as CSOs are non-profit.

The Act also defines the duties of authorities in the formation and management of associations, as well as the institutional framework for their operations. The statute expressly states that when formulating, designing and implementing policies, every government body shall endeavour, within the bounds of laws and regulations, to help and support non-profit groups registered under this Act. This has been reflected in other recent legal developments such as the amendment of the Decentralization Act which is discussed later in this chapter.

Furthermore, the Act emphasizes the discretion of the governing authorities in prohibiting the incorporation of an association in order to protect the country’s harmony and sovereignty. Following that, associations are prohibited with purposes that are in conflict with Islamic principles or disregarding Islamic religion; that rebuke or undervalue the religious harmony of the country; that express or propagate the thinking and beliefs of any other religion other than Islamic religion; that is in breach of the Maldives constitution; that is underrating the freedom and sovereignty of the country or its government; or that instigates or motivates the breaking away of citizens inside the border of the Republic of Maldives or any persons from Maldives from the boundary of the State’s enforcement. This limitation corroborates with that posed by the Constitution of Maldives as well, i.e. even though freedom of association and expression is recognized as constitutional rights, the interactions cannot be contrary to any tenet of Islam, which underlines the constitutional framework of Maldives.

While the Act provides a clear definition of CSOs, one of the primary points of deliberation in the Maldivian context

involves determining the parameters for defining CSOs within the current regulatory environment. Language and terminology difficulties were emphasized in several of the meetings held during the data collection process of the study, pointing out that the generic umbrella word ‘jamiyya jamaa’aiy’ (CSOs) is seen to be ambiguous, especially in public usage, where the focus has been on volunteering rather than professionalism. Stakeholders also highlighted that freedom of association is a right, and while the civil society sector refers to a wide array of organizations from NGOs to clubs, societies, advocacy organizations and other professional groups, it can lead to difficulties categorizing the nature of their operations.

Furthermore, stakeholders also stressed the inadequacies in the legislative framework for definitions and classifications. Merging NGOs, sports and clubs under one roof creates logical flaws considering that clubs and societies might have a profit component while not having a social component. This further exacerbates the issue that sports clubs are currently governed under two Acts and the issue of many such sports clubs also being highly involved in activities of social cohesion and community building. The governance of sports clubs and the impact of the new Sports Act is further explored later in this chapter. While looking at the premise on which CSOs can be defined, it can be understood through legislation, literature and stakeholder consultations that CSOs are typically non-governmental, non-profit organizations that aim to empower communities.

In this regard, even if the umbrella of non-profit organizations is broad, having different groups such as foundations, lobby groups and worker unions governed under a single Act causes contradictions in governance due to the differences in the nature of the organizations and the diverse functions and objectives. Stakeholders highlighted that this uniform governance of a diverse group highlights problems and discrepancies between the different groups in terms of accessibility, nature of work, funding and so on. For example, some unions or sports clubs may only serve a specific interest and not societal welfare while foundations tend to generally have more access to political figures and resources.

All stakeholders emphasized the necessity of setting a clearer boundary in classification, especially for more efficient governance, rather than regulating all bodies under the same Act despite the fact that their nature of work may differ. However, it was also proposed from a governance standpoint in the Maldivian context that all organizations, regardless of title, as long as they are working for community empowerment, should be grouped together. Concerns were voiced, however, that

any classification imposed for regulatory purposes should not put any constraints or restrictions on the expansion of CSOs in terms of their beneficiaries or geographical coverage.

The above limitations and contradictions of the Associations Act were also highlighted 10 years ago in the previous iteration of this study. The implementation of the previous study’s recommendation for revising the Associations Act is currently ongoing, as a new Associations Bill is presently being discussed in Parliament, as mentioned before. The new Associations Bill, like the existing Act, specifies the legal rules for creating, registering and administering a CSO, as well as the governing method, CSO rights and obligations, and the roles and discretion of the CSO registrar, among other aspects. CSOs are defined in Article 9 of the Bill as a non-profit organization created in compliance with the Act by at least two persons working together to achieve specified goals within legal bounds that are open to public membership. Article 10 of the Bill also states that closed member recreational and social clubs, private foundations, technical associations, organizations and societies, collaborative e-alliances, federations, networks with regional and international CSOs, charities and Persons With Disabilities (PWD)—inclusive organizations promoting the rights and participation of PWDs fall within the CSO sector.

The Bill defines its basic premise, emphasizing that CSOs must be non-profit legal organizations in line with Islamic values, the Constitution, laws and regulations, and international conventions. The Bill also states that any capital or revenue created by CSO operations and fundraising efforts cannot be dispersed to members in such a way that members can own this capital or income, and that organizations registered under this new Act are not permitted to make any profits or payments save for allowances and pocket money given to those participating in activities held by CSOs.

Article 7 of the Bill further expands on the provisions of the current Associations Act, stating that any registered CSO can raise funds for their activities and objectives specified in their Memorandum of Association, promote their values and beliefs, sue other parties, be sued by other parties, advocate for policies, and disseminate information to the public.

3.2 Sports Act (Act Number 30/2015)

The Maldives Sports Act (Act Number 30/2015) also gives relevant context to the present governance of CSOs. The current legislative structure groups sports clubs as Associations governed by the Associations Act. However, provisions for the governance of sports clubs are also specifically provided in the Sports Act. According to Article 5 of the Act, competitive sports clubs such as national sports federations, sports associations, general sports clubs, specialty sports clubs, cultural sports clubs and tournaments must register with the Commissioner of Sports. Even with the new Associations Act, sports clubs are to be regulated by two distinct statutes, and initial observations point to a conflict of interest. Article 5e of the Sports Act clarifies the apparent conflict by saying that when the Act is ratified, clubs and organizations established under the Associations Act must also file registration paperwork under the Sports Act within 180 days after the formation of a new Executive Committee. Those clubs and organizations may, however, participate in sporting activities throughout the registration period, according to the legislation.

The Sports Act outlines the responsibilities and discretions of the Commissioner of Sports and the National Commission of Sports, including aspects such as maintaining the registry of clubs, ensuring that club activities and member conduct are in accordance with the club's code of conduct, governing regulations and legislations, as well as provisions such as providing financial and technical assistance, in addition to supporting and assisting clubs focusing on social welfare.

Despite the fact that the aforementioned rules are specified, the Act still contains some uncertainties about the governance of sports clubs, as well as the regulatory authorities surrounding their governance. Article 6 of the Act states that the Commissioner of Sports is the governing parental body of sports clubs, which creates a useful distinction given that many sport clubs operate on self-interest (the interest of their players and teams) and not necessarily for community welfare. However, this provision leads to confusion as to whether sports clubs would still be regulated under the Associations Act, or whether this has created a duplication of governance for sports clubs, especially given that a large number of sports clubs, particularly in island communities are more generalists, focusing not only on sports activities but also on other social areas. In response to this seeming inconsistency, MoYSCE clarified that organizations are only required to register under the Sports Act if their

primary activity is sports. Essentially, organizations can choose to register under the Sports Act or, if their major activities involve other areas such as social cohesion, they can register under the Associations Act.

It is expected that upon the ratification of the revised Associations Act, some of these ambiguities will be rectified as the new Bill excludes sports clubs. This should clear up some of the problems that have arisen as a result of organizations such as sports clubs being included under the same umbrella as all other CSOs despite the fact that their governance, opportunities and emphasis are different. Nonetheless, given the generalist nature of the majority of CSOs in Maldives, some sports clubs are involved in areas such as social cohesion, environmental protection, and so on.

3.3 Income Tax Act (Act Number 25/2019)

The Income Tax Act (Act Number 25/2019) provides relevant information on the legal responsibilities and exemptions for CSOs in terms of income and taxation. The most significant provision in this Act for civil society space is Article 12(d) which states that "Income derived by a charitable organization approved by the Commissioner General" is exempt from tax.

The Act also exempts tax on "donations made by a taxpayer to a government institution or a charitable organization approved by the Commissioner General", saying they "may be deducted in the computation of the taxpayer's taxable income for the accounting period in which such donation was made". This provides an incentive to taxpayers to donate money to charitable organizations. The same principle is also reflected in relation to businesses' tax governance as well, where funds paid to a charitable organization can also exempt businesses from tax, again acting as an incentive to engage and support CSO activity.

The Act also clarifies that the procedure for approving charitable organizations under this Act shall be determined in the Regulation made pursuant to this Act. Accordingly, the Income Tax Regulation (2020/R-21) was made pursuant to the authority granted the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) by the Income Tax Act recently and provides further details that are relevant to the conduct of charitable organizations. The objective of the regulation is "to facilitate the efficient administration of the Act, set out the rules to be followed by all persons within the scope

of the Act and to establish policies and procedures with regard to the imposition of Income Tax in the Maldives”. Chapter 6 of this regulation outlines the clauses relevant to charitable organizations where it defines a “body” or “association” as any body or association which is registered with the relevant Government authority under the Associations Act (Act Number 1/2003); or any that are established in Maldives pursuant to an Act of Parliament.

Within this regulation, the responsibilities of charitable organizations are outlined. Article 48 states that charitable organizations approved by the Commissioner General shall submit an annual report to MIRA. The annual report should include a statement of comprehensive income which shows the details of donations received during that year in a format prescribed by MIRA.

Furthermore, even though income derived by approved charitable organizations is exempt from income tax in Maldives as per the Income Tax Act, Clause 51 of the income tax regulation states that “income derived by a charitable organization shall be exempt if the charitable organization was approved by the Commissioner General on or before the date the charitable organization would have been liable to submit an income tax return if such income were not exempt from tax”.

3.4 Decentralization Act (Act Number 7/2010)

With the transition to decentralized governance across the islands of Maldives, the Decentralization Act (Act Number 7/2010) highlights the powers and responsibilities of governance authorities, particularly in relation to civil society activity and community empowerment. Under the Act, local councils are given more powers with respect to governance on islands and atolls. This provides a new opportunity for CSOs to engage with the local authorities with a new perspective and will open doors for CSOs to engage with the community in new ways, influence the community and achieve their goals more effectively. The Decentralization Act is one of the key documents included in this review, as the decentralized system of governance is intended to be highly participatory and involved with the community, with specific provisions made in regard to community engagement, and CSOs are perhaps one of the key catalysts for fostering that dialogue, particularly in island development projects.

The premise of the Act relies on the creation of offices, posts, island councils, atoll councils and city councils

and the determination of their characteristics, jurisdiction and required principles or rules for the purpose of decentralized administration of Maldives. The Act also provides descriptions of the roles of authorities such as atoll councils, island councils and city councils in regard to community participation. Moreover, the Act also outlines important points related to projects carried out by the central government in the administrative divisions, collaboration of councils with other parties and aspects related to the private sector.

One of the most notable provisions in this statute in terms of increasing the number of CSOs is that the legislation requires the involvement and participation of CSOs in island development projects. This allows significant influence on the island’s development and advancement, as well as adding value to the CSOs’ impact. This is because the inclusion of CSOs in participatory planning in national development plans, governance frameworks and policymaking can facilitate the community’s perspective being heard and better represented.

The requirement for community consultation is explicitly mentioned regarding the powers and responsibilities of the island council in Article 22(b) which states that island councils should “prepare island development plans in consultation with the community, and submit the plan to the atoll council”. Similar aspects are highlighted in regards to city councils as well. The Act also states in Article 71 that “the Council must endeavour to increase participation and the role of the private companies, NGOs and associations in planning and implementation of development activities”.

The Act also describes the role of civil society actors in regards to projects carried out in the islands in Article 68 of the Act, where it states that prior to launching a project in an administrative division, CSOs must carry out discussions with the relevant councils. Furthermore, Article 75 of the Act also states that “in order to provide basic services and to increase income earning opportunities, and to realize economic and social prosperity, the council may collaborate with private companies, associations and cooperative societies”. Therefore, it can be understood that the Decentralization Act encourages collaboration between the councils and CSO actors.

3.5 National Strategic Action Plan 2019–2023

To understand whether the safeguards and provisions for CSOs in the regulatory frameworks are translated into policy, it is useful to review the Government of Maldives' Strategic Action Plan (SAP), which is a key policy framework and planning document that governs the current Government's five-year term. It is also the primary implementation and monitoring instrument for tracking the progress of the current Government's policies and development goals.

The current SAP prioritizes community participation and engagement in life enhancement and social activities, as well as the creation of multipurpose community spaces, placing much emphasis and importance on the participation of CSOs in implementing major policies, therefore encouraging lead agencies to work with CSOs in implementing their policies. It also focuses on civil society development and engagement to enable local and community-level development, particularly in light of the decentralization policies that place decision-making power and agency in the hands of the councils.

Some of the SAP's major community empowerment goals are outlined in the chapter on "Dignified Families". The chapter places great importance on strengthening and activating CSOs and highlights policy targets that are crucial to the operation and effectiveness of CSOs. Further key goals related to CSOs are highlighted in Policy 3 of the Community Empowerment section, which aims to empower CSOs to contribute to an inclusive political, cultural and socioeconomic environment with MoYSCE serving as the lead implementing agency. The policy's key objectives include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Ensure the CSO Act is passed, with the recommendations from the CSOs incorporated.
- Establish a standardized practice for CSOs to access council/public facilities free of charge, to conduct programmes.
- Create a national grant fund for CSOs to access grants from the government, for sustainable development activities aligned with government policies.

- Establish a mechanism with Local Councils to oversee the utilization of the funds by CSOs for social development activities conducted in the communities.
- Provide training/development opportunities for CSOs.
- Provide opportunities to increase women and PWDs leadership and active participation in CSOs.
- Conduct robust monitoring to ensure that CSOs are registered in adherence with CSO regulations, and conduct activities necessary to ensure the proper implementation of the Associations Act.
- Create mechanisms for CSOs to participate in national and local development planning.
- Assist Island/City Councils to include the expertise of CSOs in the community empowerment programme conducted in the community.
- Create a dynamic CSO portal with an updated online database of CSOs; establish connections between all registered CSOs by providing space to link CSO websites and other relevant material through the CSO portal; assist CSOs to work smarter and more efficiently by creating an avenue for online submission of all formal documents through the CSO portal.
- Conduct programmes to promote volunteerism among youth and young adults, and within representative segments of the population (women, elderly, foreign/migrant workers).

The same policy, together with objectives from the prior and succeeding SAP policies, outlines obligations placed not just on MoYSCE but also on other stakeholders such as CSOs, local councils and Local Government Authorities.

4 STUDY METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the study methodology adopted for the purpose of this research. The study comprised of four components:

- 1 | Desk review of existing literature (including registration documents from MoYSCE)
- 2 | Categorization survey
- 3 | In-depth interviews
- 4 | Stakeholder consultations (including KIIs and FGDs)

4.1 Inception stage

4.1.1 Pre-inception meetings

At the pre-inception stage, four key stakeholder consultations were held to gather initial input in developing the methodology for this study. The organizations which met during the pre-inception stage are listed in Annex 1.

The pre-inception meetings mainly focused on acquiring stakeholder input, particularly regarding the issues that arise in classification, categorization, regulation and governance, in addition to the general challenges and opportunities for CSOs. A further purpose of these meetings was to gain insight on the current CSO landscape.

4.1.2 Desk review

During the inception stage, an initial desk review of the existing legislative framework, legislation and regulations, assessments, consultation papers and practices related to the civil society sector was conducted. The objective of the desk review was primarily to identify and review the existing documents that provide an overview of the systematic and institutional framework under which CSOs must operate, and identify the gaps that need to be addressed, particularly in assessing important developments within the last 10 years that affect and shape how CSOs operate today.

Various national legislative, policy and constitutional documents, relevant reports, and academic and other literature on mainstream civil society analysis were reviewed as part of this desk review. Content analysis of the registration documents of the most recent audit process carried out by MoYSCE in 2021 was undertaken, particularly to understand the current civil society sector landscape. The documents reviewed for the purposes of this study are listed in Annex 2.

4.1.3 Survey instruments

Following the pre-inception meetings and the desk review, three questionnaires were developed, one for each component of the data collection: the categorization survey, in-depth interviews and stakeholder consultations. Upon approval of the questionnaires from the client, they were translated into Dhivehi and submitted for approval from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The questionnaires (bilingual, in Dhivehi and English) for this study are included in Annexes 9, 10 and 11.

An initial inception report was developed at the end of the inception stage, consisting of the background and scope of the study, an overview of the current CSO landscape, the proposed survey methodology based on the pre-inception meetings and the desk review. The inception report also included draft survey instruments to be approved before the start of the survey process.

4.2 Sample

The following Table 1 summarizes the samples for all three data collection processes:

Table 1: Summary of the samples from three data collection processes.

REGION	SAMPLE SIZE		
	CATEGORIZATION SURVEY	IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS	STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS (NO. OF KIIS AND FGDS)
1. Upper North	Open for all registered and unregistered CSOs	6	3
2. North		11	3
3. North Central		5	3
4. Malé		36	27
5. Central		3	3
6. South Central		5	3
7. Upper South		4	3
8. South		3	3
Total			73

- Population below 1,000
- Population between 1,000 and 2,500
- Population between 2,500 and 5,000
- Population above 5,000.

The breakdown of the islands selected for stakeholder consultations are presented in Annex 4.

4.3 Data collection

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to ensure validation and the triangulation of data and information collected. The process took place from 27 October to 28 November 2021 via online meetings and telephone calls and took a total of 20 days. In order to adhere to COVID-19–related restrictions at the time of survey, in-person meetings and interviews were completely avoided.

4.3.1 Categorization survey

The purpose of the categorization survey was to categorize CSOs based on a number of factors and provide a content analysis of the civil society space. The survey gathered quantitative data on the CSO sector and acted as a mapping tool to create a database and overview of the CSOs in the country based on selected categorization criteria as explained below.

The questionnaire developed for the categorization survey was fairly short, consisting of 20 questions, and followed key criteria used in mainstream civil society analysis as per international literature. These criteria include a categorization based on focus areas, geographical scope, target beneficiaries, broad functions, income size and size of member/volunteer base. Additional information was collected—sources of income, level of activity and assistance required—to get a better understanding of the general situation and operation of CSOs.

4.3.2 In-depth interviews

To understand the landscape of CSOs on a broader and deeper level and to triangulate the data from the categorization survey, a series of purposive in-depth interviews was conducted with a smaller number of selected CSOs across seven regions in Maldives. The interviews collected both quantitative and qualitative data on CSOs to gain deeper insight on their capacities and needs by gaining a comprehensive understanding of the roles, operations and principles of CSOs in Maldives.

The data collection for the in-depth survey was conducted with the help of enumerators. The enumerators were trained before starting the data collection process. This training involved a briefing on interviewing techniques, information on the survey and its objectives, and providing them a run-through of each question. Enumerators were

also trained to deal with different types of respondents and responses they may come across, and how to ensure that data were generated for every questionnaire to increase the response rate and minimize error margins and bias. The training also included a mock-interview exercise where enumerators practised and rehearsed the process of carrying out the interviews before their execution.

4.3.3 Stakeholder consultations

A set of KIs and FGDs were conducted with selected stakeholders including government ministries, donors/development agencies, island councils, women development committees and youth groups in the selected islands in each survey region. The purpose of the stakeholder consultations was primarily to understand stakeholders' views and experience with CSOs through collaborative efforts or otherwise and to identify perceptions of the role and performance of CSOs.

The guiding questionnaires for these interviews were adapted accordingly, depending on the stakeholder and their roles. The interviews were conducted with stakeholders that are relevant to the CSO sector from a political, governance and institutional perspective at both the community and national level.

4.4 Respondent details

Table 2 summarizes the number and share of respondents by region for the categorization survey, in-depth interviews and stakeholder consultations.

Table 2. Respondent rates by region for all three data collection processes

REGION	CATEGORIZATION SURVEY		IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS		STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS (NO. OF KIIS AND FGDS)
	RESPONDENTS	% SHARE (N = 97)	RESPONDENTS	% SHARE (N = 97)	
1. Upper North	15	15%	6	13%	1
2. North	11	11%	7	15%	2
3. North Central	13	13%	3	7%	3
4. Malé	34	35%	19	41%	13
5. Central	5	5%	1	2%	4
6. South Central	9	9%	4	9%	1
7. Upper South	4	4%	3	7%	2
8. South	6	6%	3	7%	1
Total	97		46		27

At the end of the categorization survey, a total of 113 original entries were found; however, after data cleaning and removal of repetitive entries, a total of 97 entries were available for analysis.

At the end of the data collection period for the in-depth interviews, a total of 50 entries were completed; however, after data cleaning and removal of repetitive entries, a total of 46 entries were available for analysis. A summary of the sample sizes and response rates by region for the in-depth survey is presented in Annex 5. The survey team also interviewed two unregistered CSOs, one fairly new movement (CSO 1) and one with more experience functioning as an NGO (CSO 2).

The survey team was unable to reach or confirm several stakeholder consultations by the end of the data collection period. Nevertheless, a total of 17 KIIs and 10 FGDs were successfully completed, from which valuable data were derived that provided insights on the engagement with

and the perception of CSOs as well as challenges and opportunities in activating the CSO community for a better, more resilient, active and inclusive society. The breakdown of stakeholders that were approached and interviewed for the KIIs and FGDs are presented in Annex 6 and Annex 7 respectively.

When the data were analysed in terms of responsiveness by location, it was observed that CSOs in Malé demonstrated the highest response rate, representing 35 percent of the respondents from the categorization survey and 41 percent of the respondents from the in-depth surveys.

4.5 Treatment of data

The quantitative data from the categorization survey and in-depth interviews were analysed through profiling and classification, and triangulated with the data available on criteria such as geographical scope, membership size, location and focus area. Where possible, the data were also compared with the data presented in the previous iteration of this study. However, it is important to bear in mind the differences in sample size and the differences in the sociopolitical environment in interpreting these comparisons.

The qualitative data from the in-depth interviews were analysed to find underlying themes and narratives to better understand the civil society landscape, and the factors affecting CSOs and the surrounding environment. These data, along with the qualitative data derived from stakeholder consultations, were used to verify and cross-check the quantitative data obtained from the CSOs, as well as to formulate the most useful and meaningful recommendations on the best modalities to engage with CSOs and empower them to contribute to more active, inclusive and resilient communities.

4.6 Challenges and limitations

A myriad of limitations and challenges arose in the process of this study, both before and during the data collection process. These include issues related to COVID-19 restrictions, such as not being able to conduct FGDs as well as other interviews in person and having to rely on digital means only; issues in the sample frame leading to possible sample bias; issues of non-responsiveness and lack of participation by CSOs; and problems arising due to self-reporting. A brief summary of the main challenges and limitations of the research and mitigation measures adopted are summarized in Annex 8.

5 THE MALDIVIAN CIVIL SOCIETY LANDSCAPE

The study's initial groundwork aimed to gain an understanding of the current CSO landscape of Maldives and a better understanding of the contextual and environmental factors affecting CSO operations. This chapter provides an overview of CSOs in Maldives, including discussions regarding the recent re-registration process, continuity in CSO operations and reasons for CSO establishment. It further provides insights on the categorizations of CSOs, including the nature of the organization, focus areas, locations and geographical scope, and other characteristics of CSOs based on the registration data obtained from MoYSCE and the categorization survey.

5.1 Overview of civil society organizations

5.1.1 Overview of CSO registration process

The recent developments in the governance and regulatory environment, such as the transfer of the parental body of associations and the ratification of the Sports Act prompted MoYSCE, as the Ministry regulating CSOs, to update the registry of CSOs. To update the CSO registry under the new mandate, MoYSCE conducted an audit process where they opened re-registration up for CSOs from 16 March to 30 June 2021. At the end of this audit process, a total of 607 CSOs submitted re-registration documents and were considered active CSOs. The figure revealed a relatively low response, especially when compared to the previous iteration of this study conducted in 2011, which reported 1,121 registered CSOs.

The significant reduction in the registered CSOs in Maldives under the new parent body could be, in large part, due to the elimination of sports-related CSOs, and in part due to the non-re-registration of previously registered CSOs. Considering that the initial iteration of this study was conducted in 2011, significant changes in the CSO landscape is expected as the previous study indicated that more than half of the CSOs registered in 2011 were sports-related. Furthermore, given that MoYSCE made multiple attempts to contact these CSOs during the audit process, the Ministry believes the most likely reason for non-response was because these CSOs were simply not active. MoYSCE reported that the final figure was close to

their predicted figure of 700 CSOs.

However, there may be other reasons for the low registration rate. For instance, the regulatory environment can either help or hinder the engagement of CSOs. In fact, “simplifying regulatory requirements, ensuring that those requirements are not unduly burdensome”, is one of the responsibilities of the state according to international best practice.¹³ Moreover, the UN General Assembly has called upon states “to ensure, where procedures governing registration of CSOs exist, that these are transparent, non-discriminatory, expeditious, inexpensive, allow for the possibility to appeal and avoid requiring re-registration.”¹⁴ It can be deduced, therefore, that ease of compliance with regulatory responsibilities and the familiarity of laws and changes in the regulatory environment may possibly impact CSOs’ responsiveness to a regulatory responsibility such as the aforementioned re-registration process.

The study asked participants of this study about the ease of compliance and familiarity with regulations. The survey participants were all active CSOs registered under the re-registration process as well as two unregistered CSOs. The findings from this inquiry are outlined in Chapter 10.

To understand more concretely whether CSOs were disincentivized to re-register or what the reason is for fewer active CSOs, it is useful to investigate those CSOs that became inactive following the regulatory change. While it was not part of this survey, it is a useful area for further future investigation to explore regulatory factors affecting CSO operations and continuity, as well as their responsiveness to regulatory changes.

Nonetheless, the study did aim to further understand possible reasons for unregistered CSOs by surveying unregistered movements in the survey process. As discussed in the survey methodology, the survey team was able to gather information from two of such unregistered movements. When these unregistered CSOs were originally questioned about why they hadn't legally registered, both responded that they lacked the ability to do so, as they are new and have just recently begun their operations. These groups also mentioned that they may explore registering as a formal CSO in the future.

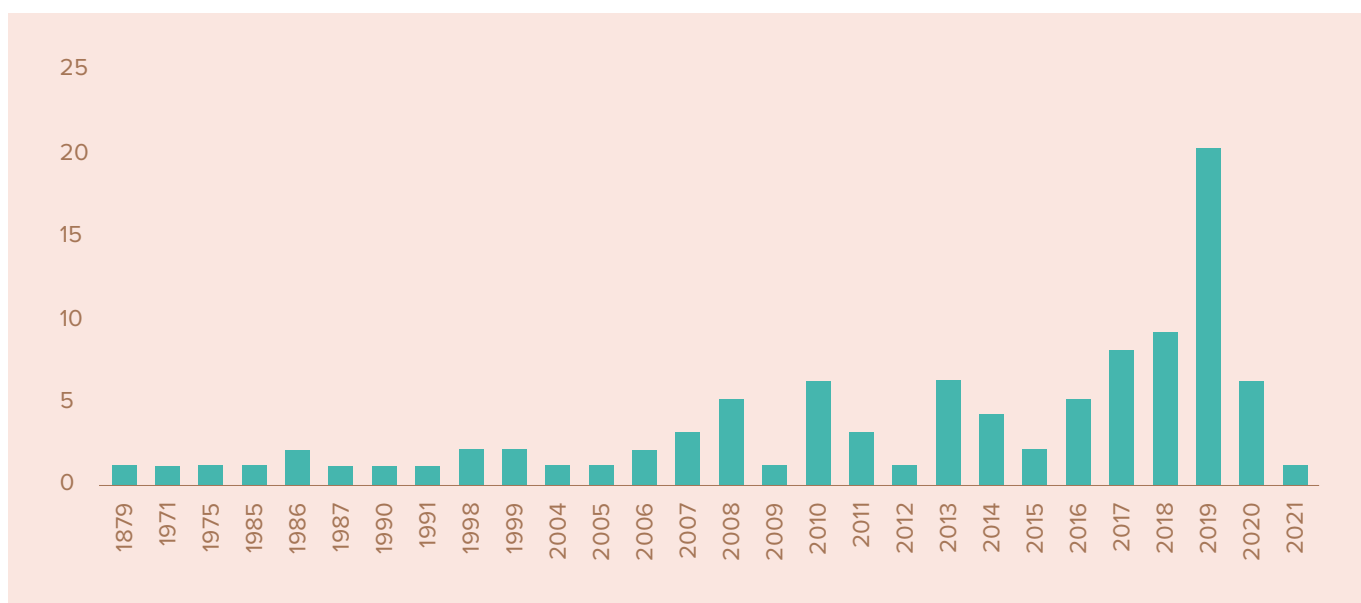
¹³ OSCE/ODIHR-Venice Commission (2015). “*Joint Guidelines on Freedom of Association*”.

¹⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2017). *Challenges facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

5.1.2 Continuity of CSOs in Maldives

In recent years, there is an overall increase in the number of CSOs registered according to the registration documents provided by MoYSCE (Figure 1). Given that the majority of these respondents are in the new registry as well, a possible explanation could be that the continuance of CSOs is low, i.e. older CSOs might possibly have been inactive at the time of re-registration whereas the CSOs registered during more recent years may have been more active and more responsive.

Figure 1. Number of registered CSOs by year



This is in line with the information received during the pre-ception stakeholder consultations, where stakeholders pointed out challenges for the continuity of Maldivian CSOs, for example, CSOs frequently cease operations when the founder steps down or is unavailable. Upon inquiring about the decrease in the number of CSOs after the re-registration date, MoYSCE said that several techniques were employed to disseminate the re-registration information to CSOs, yet a drastic reduction in the number of active CSOs was observed during the process. That said, at the time of this study, MoYSCE reported having plans to re-open registration after the new Associations Act is ratified, to address the issue of the substantial reduction in the number of active CSOs. The Ministry planned this in acknowledgment of the fact that many CSOs working on the ground may not have had proper access to information, as well as the fact that the database at MoYSCE needs to be improved and updated.

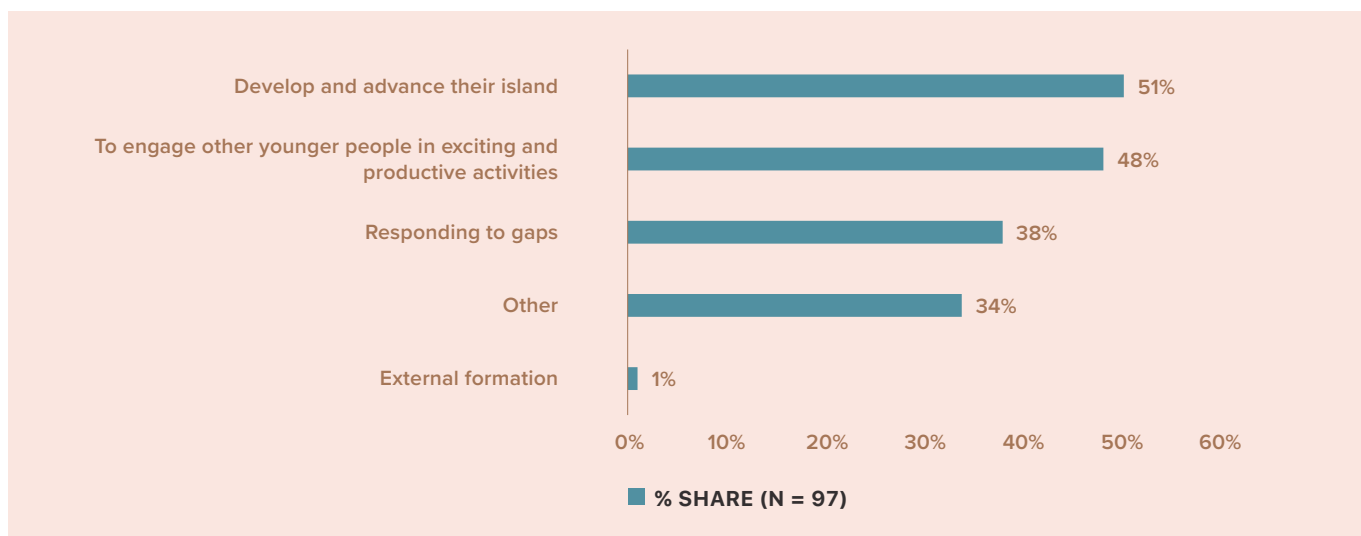
5.1.3 Reason for establishment

An active civil society sector is an indication of an inclusive and resilient community, as CSOs often occupy an important position in the development dialogue. As described by the African Development Bank, "It provides opportunities to bring communities together for collective action, mobilizing society to articulate demands and voice concerns at local, national, regional, and international levels".¹⁵ As such, identifying what motivates collective action and mobilization allows gauging the responsiveness of the civil society sector to community needs. Therefore, this study assessed the reasons for forming the CSOs, also through the categorization survey.

second at 48 percent. A further 38 percent of CSOs stated that the reason for their establishment was to respond to various gaps¹⁶ while only 1 percent stated that it was for the purpose of an external formation.¹⁷ A significant portion, 34 percent, stated other reasons. Upon further analysis of this category, it was observed that many entities provided additional details of their reason for establishment; however, these were typically related to the reasons already provided. For instance, many of the reasons can be classed under 'responding to gaps', such as the need to focus on different focus areas like women's empowerment and environmental conservation.

Examination of the reasons for CSO establishment revealed that many CSOs had multiple objectives, accounting for the overlapping of the following breakdown in shares. A little over half, 51 percent, of the CSOs stated that their reason for establishment was to develop and advance their island, while the need to engage youth in exciting and productive activities came in at a close

Figure 2. Reasons for forming CSOs by percentage of CSO respondents



¹⁵ African Development Bank (2012). *Framework for Enhanced Engagement with Civil Society Organizations*. Abidjan: African Development Bank.

¹⁶ UNDP Maldives (2011). *Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society*. "Responding to gaps" in this inquiry is a borrowed term from the previous iteration of this study and refers to forming the organization to respond to an area where there was little done and which they saw as important for a social benefit or particular area of interest.

¹⁷ Ibid., "External formations" are similarly adopted from the previous study, and refers to organizations formed by external parties, figures, an organization or by a party not involved in the active running of the CSO but receive support from that party, figure or organization.

5.2 Categorization of CSOs

A primary component of this study was the categorization of CSOs and providing a content analysis of the civil society space. The criteria assessed via this study have been previously used in mainstream civil society analysis according to academic literature on the subject. These criteria include categorization based on type of organization, focus areas, geographical scope, target beneficiaries and broad functions. The interchangeable nature and lack of adequate information on the alignment of terminology and CSO functions meant that classification based on the nature of organization was limited in its usefulness and representation. However, criteria such as focus area, target beneficiaries and broad functions provided useful analyses for understanding CSOs in Maldives. Moreover, classification of geographical scope, which was recommended in the previous study, was further analysed to understand the coverage and reach of CSOs in Maldives.

5.2.1 Nature of organizations

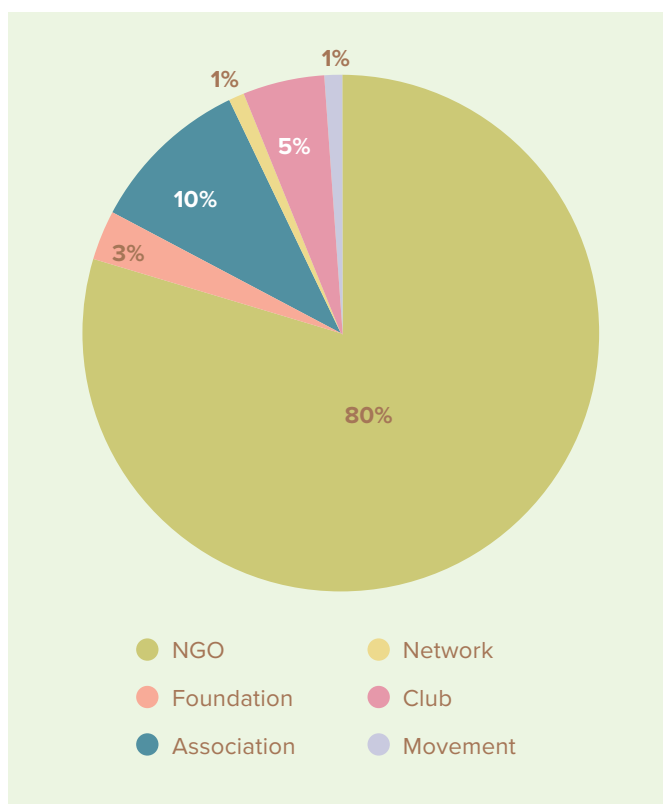
The civil society sector, as characterized earlier in this report, is a broad umbrella comprising organizations of different natures; one of the first criteria of categorization utilized in mainstream civil society analysis is based on type of organization.

While this is a common method in the literature, and can be applied to the context of Maldivian civil society, there are some limitations to this classification for the local context. This is mainly due to, as discussed in Chapter 3 of this report, the interchangeable nature of terminology and the grouping of all CSOs under one umbrella, even in the Maldivian legislative framework.

Nonetheless, CSOs were asked to self-identify the nature of their organizations, and the large majority, 80 percent, of CSOs identified themselves as ‘NGOs’. Following that, 10 percent of the CSOs identified themselves as an ‘Association’ while 5 percent identified themselves as a ‘Club’. Very few CSOs identified themselves as a ‘Foundation’, ‘Network’ or ‘Movement’. Further analysis showed that CSOs in island communities mostly identified as an NGO, Association or a Club whereas a more diverse range of types of organizations were observed among CSOs based in Malé. This indicates that CSOs in Malé may be more diverse and more aware about the different natures and types of organizations that can be considered under the broader civil society umbrella.

Nonetheless, there was no indication from the interviews as to whether there was any consistency in how CSOs defined themselves and in their operations and/or functions. This was also a common sentiment among various stakeholders consulted for this study that the diverse terminology observed among CSOs in Maldives did not have a distinct correlation to the function of the organization. Further investigation and data are required to assess the degree to which terminology reflects the functioning of CSOs.

Figure 3. Types of organizations as reported by CSOs



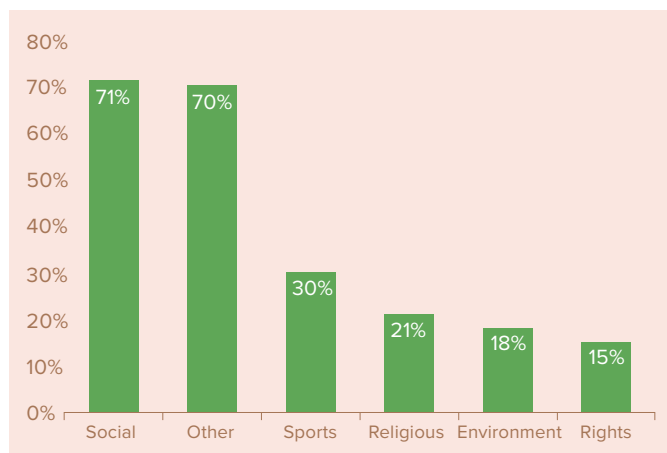
5.2.2 Focus area

Area of work is one of the other primary criteria used in this study for the purposes of categorizing the civil society sector in Maldives. Classification based on ‘focus area’ is used in various mainstream civil society analyses and in the international classification systems such as the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations (ICNPO) which uses 12 key areas of focus for classifying CSOs.¹⁸ Classification based on the focus area of work for CSOs provides a particularly useful means of understanding the overall activity in the civil society space. This is also useful for stakeholders such as government agencies and donor agencies. By assessing the areas in the community where civil society contribution appears to be more prominent and areas that appear to be lacking sufficient engagement or representation, resources can be directed towards addressing gaps. It also facilitates the understanding of trends in the type and focus of work done by the civil society sector in Maldives.

5.2.2.1 Registration data

The registration documents did not yield adequate information on whether the nature of work was a distinctive factor on the choice of terminology but it provided five key focus areas in which CSOs operated. It was observed that a vast majority of the registered organizations fell under more than one focus area: social (71 percent), sports (30 percent), religious (21 percent), environment (18 percent), rights (15 percent), and other. There was no clarification available on the areas that may fall under the category of ‘other’ (70 percent).

Figure 4. CSO focus areas as per re-registration documents



¹⁸ Salamon, L., Sokolowski, S. and Haddock, M. (2017). *Explaining Civil Society Development: A Social Origins Approach*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

5.2.2.2 Categorization survey

To ensure criteria that are applicable to the context of Maldives, the categorization survey served to build on the five broad categories used in MoYSCE’s CSO registry. The study also adopted the 25 focus areas from the previous study for comparative purposes. CSOs were asked to describe their focus area without presenting to them any specific areas and the data were classified based on the areas of work identified in the previous study, which allowed for a useful comparison. This comparison helped to understand how the focus of CSO contributions has changed within the past 10 years, to determine whether any new areas of importance have gained prominence, and to inform policy decisions on redirecting efforts, opportunities and resources. Furthermore, the myriad of focus areas identified in this categorization also provides a more expanded, comprehensive detail to the current re-registration data from MoYSCE which uses minimal and rather broad categories.

Bearing in mind that some CSOs have multiple focus areas, the survey revealed that almost half, 49 percent, of the CSOs worked towards ‘Education, Training and Learning Improvement’. The second most popular focus area was ‘Sports, Music, Arts, and Leisure’ with 36 percent of the CSOs working in this area. The third most represented focus area was ‘Environment Protection, Climate Change Response and Wildlife Protection’ with 33 percent of the respondents; and fourth was ‘Social Cohesion Development, Volunteerism, Service and Peacebuilding’ at 30 percent. The focus area with the fifth highest engagement was ‘Sustainable Development and Infrastructural Development’ at 21 percent. Other notable areas that revealed a high level of engagement were ‘Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups (Children, People with Disabilities, Elderly People)’, ‘Building People’s Skills, Character, Capacity and Conduct’, ‘Religiosity and Religion’ and ‘Gender Equality, Women’s Rights and Women Empowerment’.

While this provides insight into the coverage of civil society activity and reflects societal needs and priorities, it does not necessarily evaluate the level of contribution to society. It is important that engagement in these focus areas reflects and facilitates change in policy discourse, awareness, perception and behaviour.

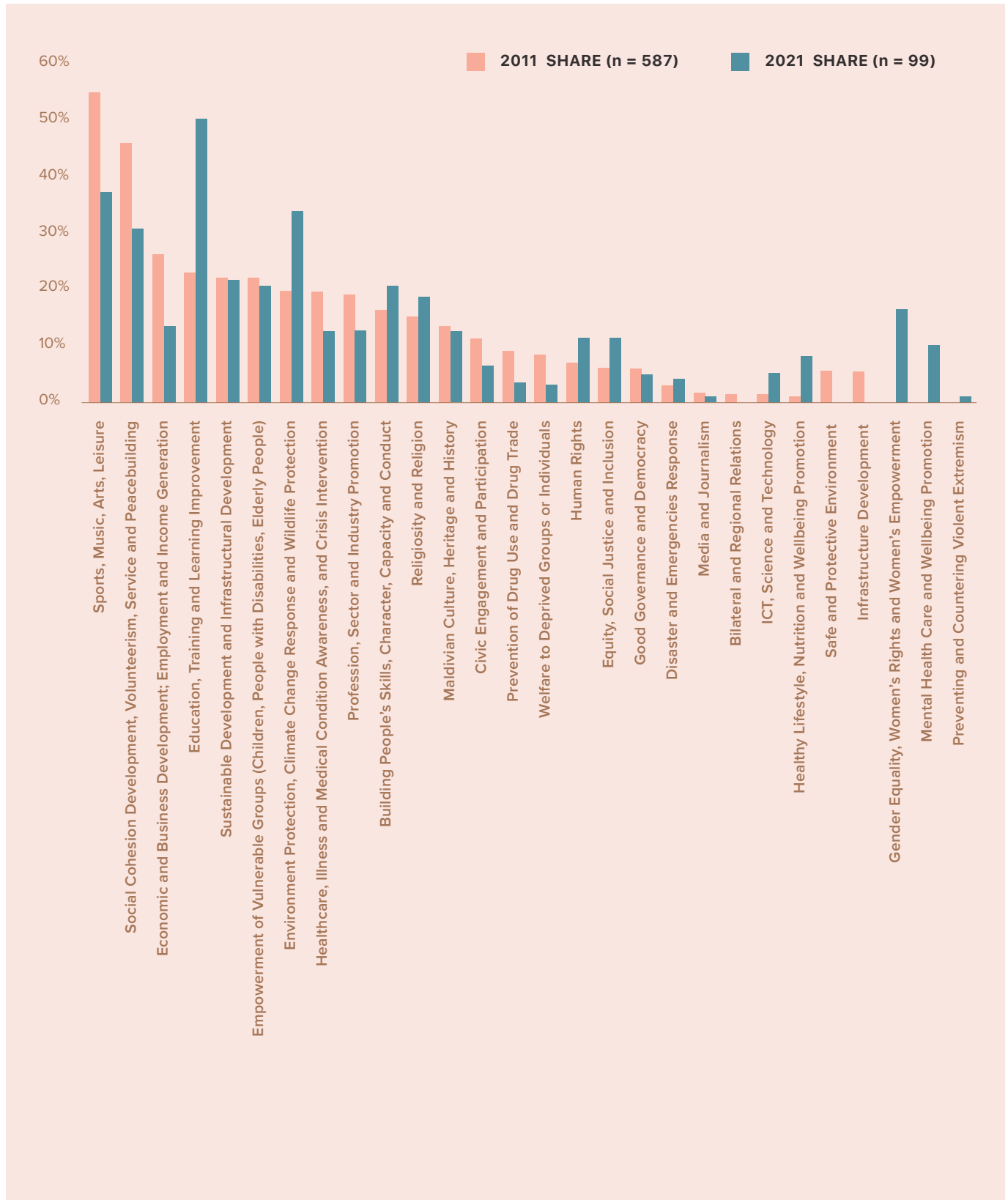
The focus areas with the lowest level of engagement were ‘Media and Journalism’ and ‘Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism’, both with 1 percent of the respondents. ‘Bilateral Relations’ and ‘Welfare to Deprived Groups or Individuals’ were two focus areas that showed no engagement.

The study also examined whether the areas of work for CSOs showed any trends over the past 10 years by comparing the current data with the first iteration of this survey. The following table summarizes the findings.

Table 3. Comparison of area of work in 2011 and 2021

FOCUS AREA	2011 STUDY		2021 STUDY	
	NO. OF CSOs (n = 587)	% SHARE	NO. OF CSOs (n = 99)	% SHARE
Sports, Music, Arts, Leisure	317	54%	36	36%
Social Cohesion Development, Volunteerism, Service and Peacebuilding	265	45.1%	30	30%
Economic and Business Development; Employment and Income Generation	151	25.7%	13	13%
Education, Training and Learning Improvement	132	22.5%	49	49%
Sustainable Development and Infrastructural Development	127	21.6%	21	21%
Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups (Children, People with Disabilities, Elderly People)	127	21.6%	20	20%
Environment Protection, Climate Change Response and Wildlife Protection	114	19.4%	33	33%
Healthcare, Illness and Medical Condition Awareness, and Crisis Intervention	114	19.4%	12	12%
Profession, Sector and Industry Promotion	109	18.6%	12	12%
Building People's Skills, Character, Capacity and Conduct	92	15.7%	20	20%
Religiosity and Religion	87	14.8%	18	18%
Maldivian Culture, Heritage and History	77	13.1%	12	12%
Civic Engagement and Participation	63	10.7%	6	6%
Prevention of Drug Use and Drug Trade	52	8.9%	3	3%
Welfare to Deprived Groups or Individuals	47	8%	3	3%
Human Rights	41	7%	11	11%
Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion	35	6%	11	11%
Good Governance and Democracy	34	5.8%	5	5%
Disaster and Emergencies Response	16	2.7%	4	4%
Media and Journalism	9	1.5%	1	1%
Bilateral and Regional Relations	8	1.4%	0	0%
ICT, Science and Technology	7	1.2%	5	5%
Healthy Lifestyle, Nutrition and Wellbeing Promotion	6	1%	8	8%
Safe and Protective Environment	31	5.3%	N/A	N/A
Infrastructure Development	30	5.1%	N/A	N/A
Gender Equality, Women's Rights and Women's Empowerment	N/A	N/A	16	16%
Mental Health Care and Wellbeing Promotion	N/A	N/A	10	10%
Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism	N/A	N/A	1	1%

Figure 5. Comparison of area of work in 2011 and 2021



The focus area with the most engagement, Education, Training and Learning Improvement, observed a major increase from 22.5 percent to 49 percent since 2011. The study also showed a significant increase in engagement in areas such as ‘Environment Protection, Climate Change Response and Wildlife Protection’, ‘Human Rights, Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion’, ‘Building People’s Skills, Character, Capacity and Conduct’, ‘Religiosity and Religion’, and ‘ICT, Science and Technology’, which is a positive change and indicates that civil society efforts are being concentrated in important and crucial areas. These trends may reflect the general increase in awareness of these areas as well as increased policy focus and concentrated efforts in their development. For instance, areas such as environmental protection and climate change response, where a high level of involvement has been observed as per this study, have also risen in relevance and facilitated increased policy interventions.

Conversely, the category ‘Sports, Music, Art and Leisure’ observed a significant drop from 54 percent to 26 percent since 2011. A likely reason for this is the ratification of the new Sports Act which required sports clubs to deregister under the Associations Act and re-register under the Sports Act. This nonetheless prompted another observation, which is also briefly discussed earlier in the legal framework chapter of this report. Similar to the previous study, this iteration also observed, via the survey and registration documents, that many of the organizations working in sports and recreation areas still operated in multiple other focus areas. This indicated, and was further observed during discussions, that even the carrying out of sports activities was in line with the objective and aim of improving social cohesion and strengthening the community spirit, which was an observation made in the previous study as well. In fact, another finding in line with the previous study that was highlighted by councils during stakeholder consultations was that many such sports clubs do not mobilize only for the promotion of sports but when called for community building or social development projects as well. A recent example of this is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many such organizations in island communities mobilized and participated in relief efforts and voluntary work in the pandemic management.

Therefore, even though the study revealed a significant decrease in CSOs engaged in ‘Social Cohesion Development, Volunteerism and Peacebuilding’ from 45.1 percent to 30 percent, the involvement of CSOs in activities of social cohesion may extend beyond and or be conducted through other focus areas. The overlapping of key focus areas for these sports clubs was further evident through the stakeholder consultations with councils and Women’s Development Committees (WDCs) who

revealed that sports-based activities were often the only or the main form of social community-based activities that engaged the public either as players, organizers and spectators.

The study also revealed a significant decrease in CSOs engaged in ‘Economic and Business Development; and Employment and Income Generation’ from 25.7 percent to 13 percent. CSOs focused on ‘Civic Engagement and Participation’ also decreased from 10.7 percent to 6 percent. It may be useful to investigate why there is less engagement with these focus areas and evaluate whether policy or developmental efforts are needed in these areas to raise awareness and/or if CSOs need more awareness, incentive and capacity to mobilize effectively in these areas. CSOs engaged in economic and business development, for instance, may have declined as a result of the fast-growing small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector in Maldives, where some 90 percent of the 8,000 firms registered to pay taxes are SMEs.¹⁹ There may be less of a compelling need to advocate for this area, as indicated by more government initiatives concentrating on economic proliferation, such as the introduction of different microfinance schemes focusing on sustainable SME growth.²⁰ One such policy development during recent years that may have led to the reduction of CSO engagement could be the current government establishing the SME Development Finance Corporation Pvt Ltd (SDFC) in 2019 to make SME loans more sustainable.²¹ Such developments incentivize the establishment of SMEs instead of CSOs.

The study also generally found that areas such as ‘Sustainable Development and Infrastructural Development’, ‘Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups (Children, People with Disabilities, Elderly People)’, ‘Maldivian Culture, Heritage and History’ and ‘Good Governance and Democracy’ had roughly the same levels of engagement without significant differences.

¹⁹ Munawar, Ahmed (2021). “SME Financing in the Maldives”. *Maldives Financial Times*. 8 July.

²⁰ Maldives Monetary Authority (2019). “Impediments to SME Growth in Small Island Developing States – The Case of the Maldives”, Aishath Sajny, Research and Policy Notes, RPN 1-19.

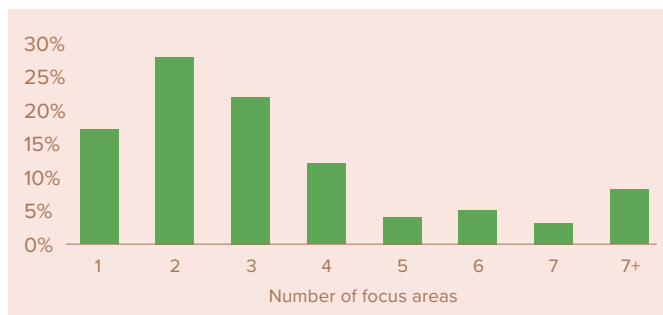
²¹ Ibid.

5.2.2.3 Generalist versus specialist CSOs

Given the fact that many CSOs function in a variety of areas, the issue of generalist versus specialized organizations should be addressed. Generalist CSOs work on a variety of different thematic focuses and are likely to have knowledge, reach and expertise. Most of the time, generalist CSOs have a broader goal directed toward the general development of populations and communities, whereas specialized organizations focus on a specific cause or issue. Specialist CSOs may be organizations that work only in one sector, focusing solely on one area and designing their actions around that specific cause. Or they may work in two areas with some overlap between them. Due to their strong participation in one or two relevant topics, specialist CSOs frequently have a greater understanding of specific issues than generalists. The increased share of generalist CSOs indicates that civil society is reacting to community needs, which are most likely centred on the welfare and growth of a specific community. As a result, generalists frequently tailor their activities to address the larger requirements of community empowerment and development, whereas specialists are more likely to see the growth of a single group or advocate for a specific cause. As a result, specialists frequently have stronger expertise in their cause and more negotiating power in policymaking and subject advocacy, but resources are more constrained or limited.

The data received on the focus areas can also be used to roughly classify whether CSOs in Maldives were generalist or specialist. For the purposes of this study, a CSO engaging in one to two focus areas were referred to as specialist and those engaging in more than two focus areas were deemed as generalist. Accordingly, the study found that 45 percent of the CSOs had a specialist focus and 55 percent were generalist, with 8 percent of the CSOs operating in over 7 focus areas. This also supported the discussions held during the pre-inception stage regarding focus areas as a criterion for categorization, where stakeholders pointed out that Maldivian CSOs were typically more generalist than specialist. This finding is not vastly different from that of the previous study which demonstrated a 50-50 division between the two categories.

Figure 6. Number of focus areas by CSOs



Apart from ‘Media and Journalism’ and ‘ICT, Science and Technology’, all the other focus areas were predominantly engaged by generalist CSOs (Figure 7); and generalist CSOs were engaged at a much higher rate in almost all the focus areas.

Figure 7. Specialist and generalist CSOs by focus area



When using location as a measure for identifying the distribution of generalist or specialist organizations, the data showed that the distribution in Malé and Central regions was more or less the same (a little over half were generalist in North Central Province, Malé and Central regions). However, it was observed that the Upper North Province had more generalist CSOs whereas the South Central and South provinces had more specialist CSOs.

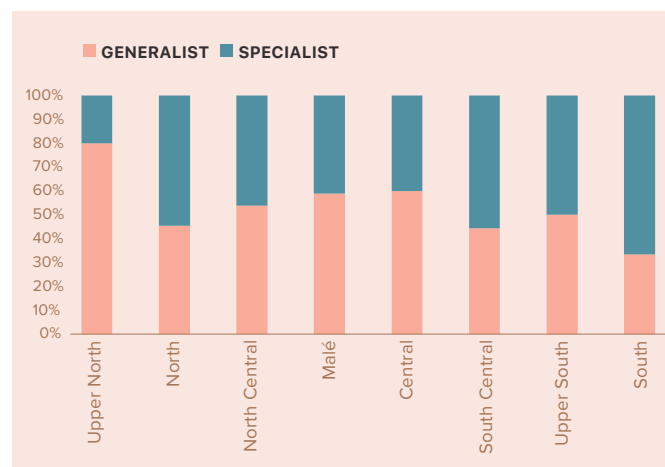
However, the previous study’s observations found that CSOs based in Malé were more specialist and those in the islands were more generalist. This may be because CSOs based on the islands were often more community-based and therefore engaged in multiple focus areas at an island/atoll level whereas Malé-based CSOs were often subject-based and operated at a national level—an aspect raised by stakeholders in the pre-inception meetings as well. Generalist CSOs often work with community-based goals and therefore mobilize in a myriad of different activities that ultimately promote their community whereas specialist CSOs work on a certain cause or subject.

However, even though there were more generalist CSOs than specialist in this current study, a likely reason for the change may be that island-based communities have an understanding of the importance of concentrated efforts on certain issues. The previous study proposed that the reason why island CSOs were more generalist than specialist could be attributed to ‘the relative lack of access to professional and technical resources at island level, making it in fact difficult to develop a specialist outlook on a particular topic’. However, with current advances in technology and changes in the socioeconomic context, this may no longer be a determining factor.

Table 4. Specialist and generalist CSOs by region

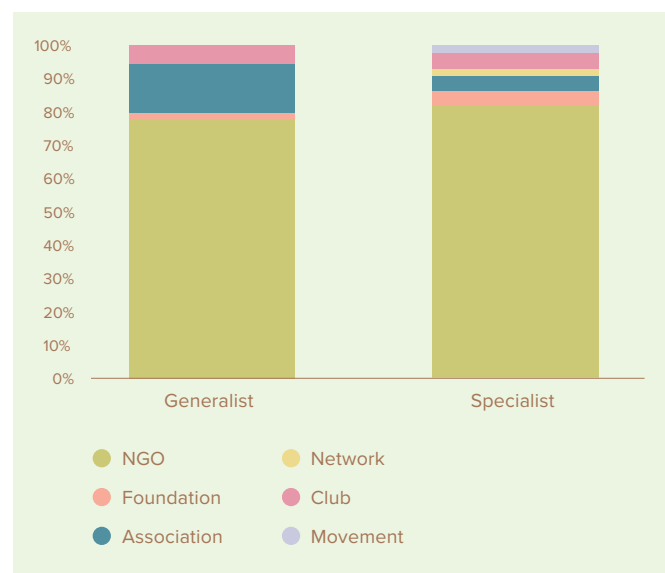
REGION	GENERALIST	SPECIALIST	TOTAL
Upper North	12	3	15
North	5	6	11
North Central	7	6	13
Malé	20	14	34
Central	3	2	5
South Central	4	5	9
Upper South	2	2	4
South	2	4	6
Total	55	42	97

Figure 8. Specialist and generalist CSOs by region



The study showed that specialist CSOs called themselves by more diverse names—a movement, club, network, association or foundation—while more generalist CSOs called themselves an ‘association’. However, this is not a major point, as for both categories, the vast majority of CSOs identified themselves primarily as NGOs.

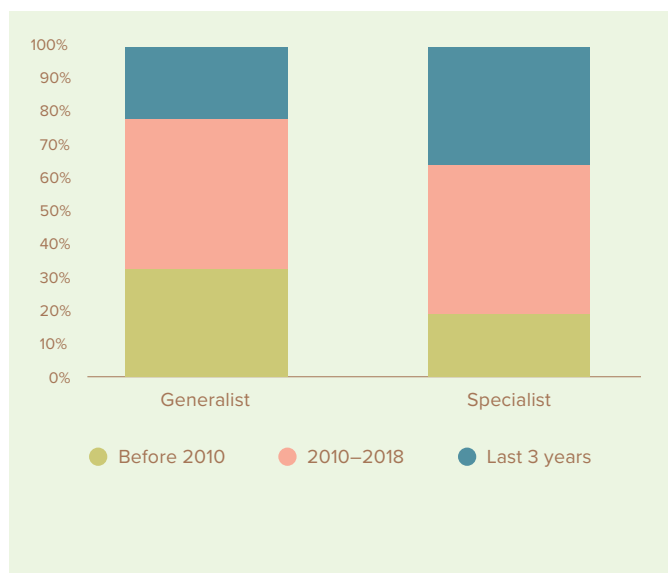
Figure 9. Specialist and generalist CSOs by nature of organization



The classification of generalist versus specialist CSO was also cross-tabulated against the registration years to find any shifts in the broader civil society activity. Interestingly, the study showed that more specialist CSOs than generalist CSOs registered during the last three years. A similar amount of generalist and specialist CSOs registered between 2010 and 2018, and before 2010, more CSOs were generalist.

Therefore, a clear trend can be observed that Maldivian CSOs are gradually becoming more specialist. This indicates that CSOs may increasingly recognize the importance of concentrated efforts that need to be targeted towards gaps in society, or an increased focus on a specific group of people who need more attention than the general community. That said, there is still a higher total share of generalist CSOs than specialist throughout the country.

Figure 10. Specialist and generalist CSOs by year of registration



5.2.3 Location and geographical scope

The overall distribution of CSOs and the extent of their geographical reach can be further examined by analysing the data available on the location and geographical scope of CSOs, a criterion assessed to determine CSOs’ level of operations in terms of island, atoll, regional, national and/or international level. This particular criterion is also a popular classification used in civil society analysis according to academic literature. However, assessing location and geographical coverage alone does not provide adequate information to clearly map the civil society sector as it does not show what activities CSOs carry out. This does provide a useful outlook, particularly for donors and government agencies, as it can imply the expansive strength, level of institutionalization, and networks and partnership relations of a CSO.

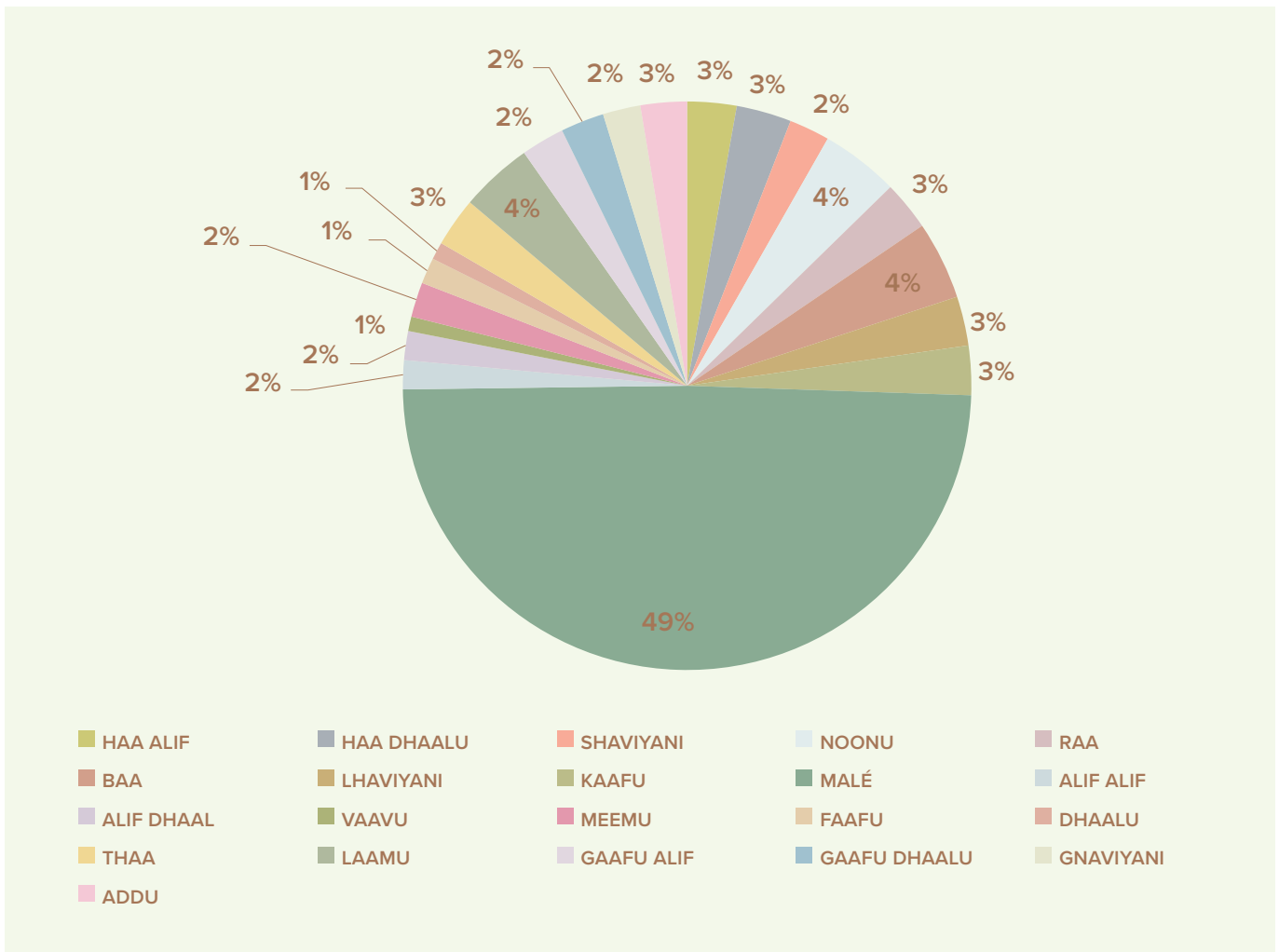
5.2.3.1 Generalist versus specialist CSOs

The registration documents gave an overview of CSO activity across the different atolls of Maldives. The review showed that the most organizations, 299, or 49.3 percent out of the total 607, were based in Malé. The remaining 308 organizations were scattered across various atolls, a breakdown of which is provided in the table below.

Table 5. Breakdown of CSO location as per re-registration documents

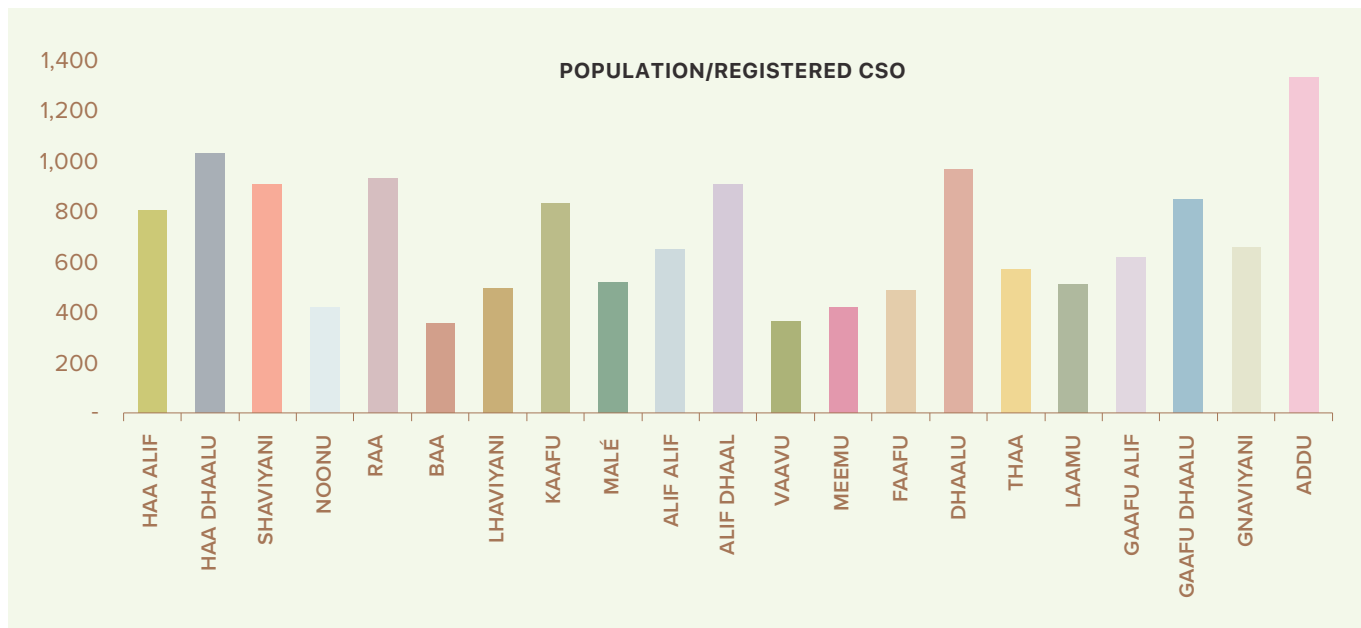
ATOLLS	NUMBER OF REGISTERED CSOs	POPULATION
Haa Alif	17	13,672
Haa Dhaalu	19	19,541
Shaviyani	14	12,636
Noonu	27	11,229
Raa	17	15,819
Baa	27	9,601
Lhaviyani	17	8,380
Kaafu	17	14,092
Malé	299	153,904
Alif Alif	10	6,475
Alif Dhaal	10	9,086
Vaavu	5	1,811
Meemu	12	5,022
Faafu	9	4,365
Dhaalu	6	5,786
Thaa	17	9,656
Laamu	25	12,676
Gaafu Alif	15	9,221
Gaafu Dhaalu	15	12,690
Gnaviyani	13	8,510
Addu	16	21,275

Figure 11. Breakdown of CSO locations as per re-registration documents



Further data breakdown revealed useful information on the level of general CSO representation and their involvement in various communities. When compared with the populations of various atolls to determine the average number of people CSOs represented from the atolls, registration documents demonstrated that Addu has the lowest number of CSOs based on population. While Malé has almost 50 percent of the CSOs, the population represented by CSOs is comparable to populations represented on atolls.

Figure 12. Population by atoll per registered CSOs



5.2.3.2 Categorization survey

As mentioned earlier, the data on CSO locations do not provide insight on the actual reach of their operations. Therefore, the categorization survey aimed to classify CSOs based on geographical scope. Accordingly, the data revealed that over half, 52 percent, operated at an island/community level and 33 percent operated at a national level. The shares of CSOs that operated at an atoll level, regional or international level were relatively low at 8 percent, 3 percent and 4 percent respectively.

Further analysis was done on CSO geographical scope to determine their operational reach and scope based on generalist or specialist CSOs. The analysis showed that the distribution of generalist and specialist CSOs working at an island level was fairly even. No major difference was found at the national level either, but it was observed that more specialist than generalist CSOs were operating at an international level.

Figure 13. Geographical scope of CSOs

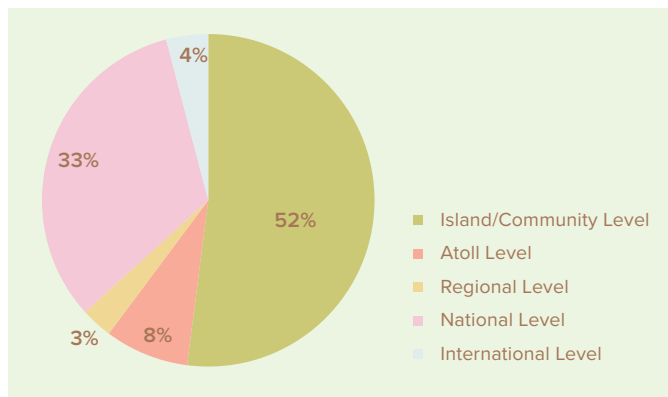
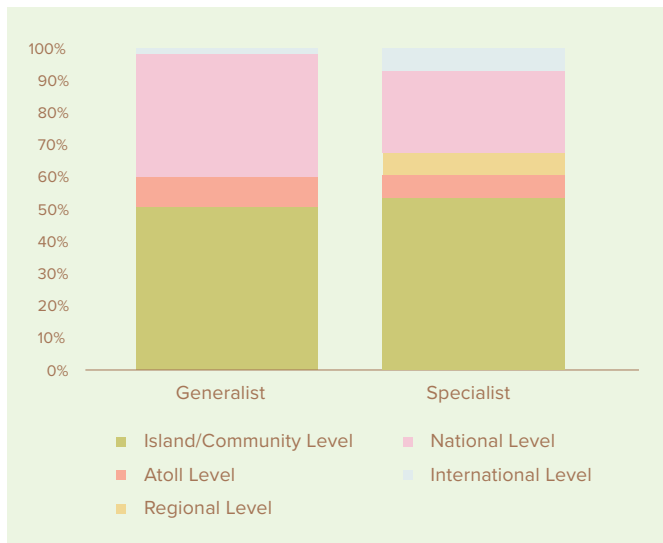


Figure 14. Specialist and generalist CSOs by geographical scope



During the stakeholder consultations, it was discussed that issues may arise in employing geographical coverage as the only classification. Stakeholders pointed out that classification by geographical scope will not reflect accessibility disparities; it was also observed that while national-level CSOs make significant contributions, island-based CSOs frequently lack capacity-building opportunities due to their geographical dispersion and limitations in financing and grant possibilities for capacity-building and resource-building. Therefore, while assessing CSOs based on coverage may help to gauge internal levels of institutionalism and strength in mobilization, it does not necessarily reflect the contribution of CSOs.

Stakeholder meetings held during the pre-inception stage also touched on other classification criteria such as group beneficiaries. Concerns were voiced, however, that any classification imposed for regulatory purposes should not place constraints or restrictions on the expansion of CSOs in terms of their beneficiaries or geographical extent.

5.2.4 Target beneficiaries

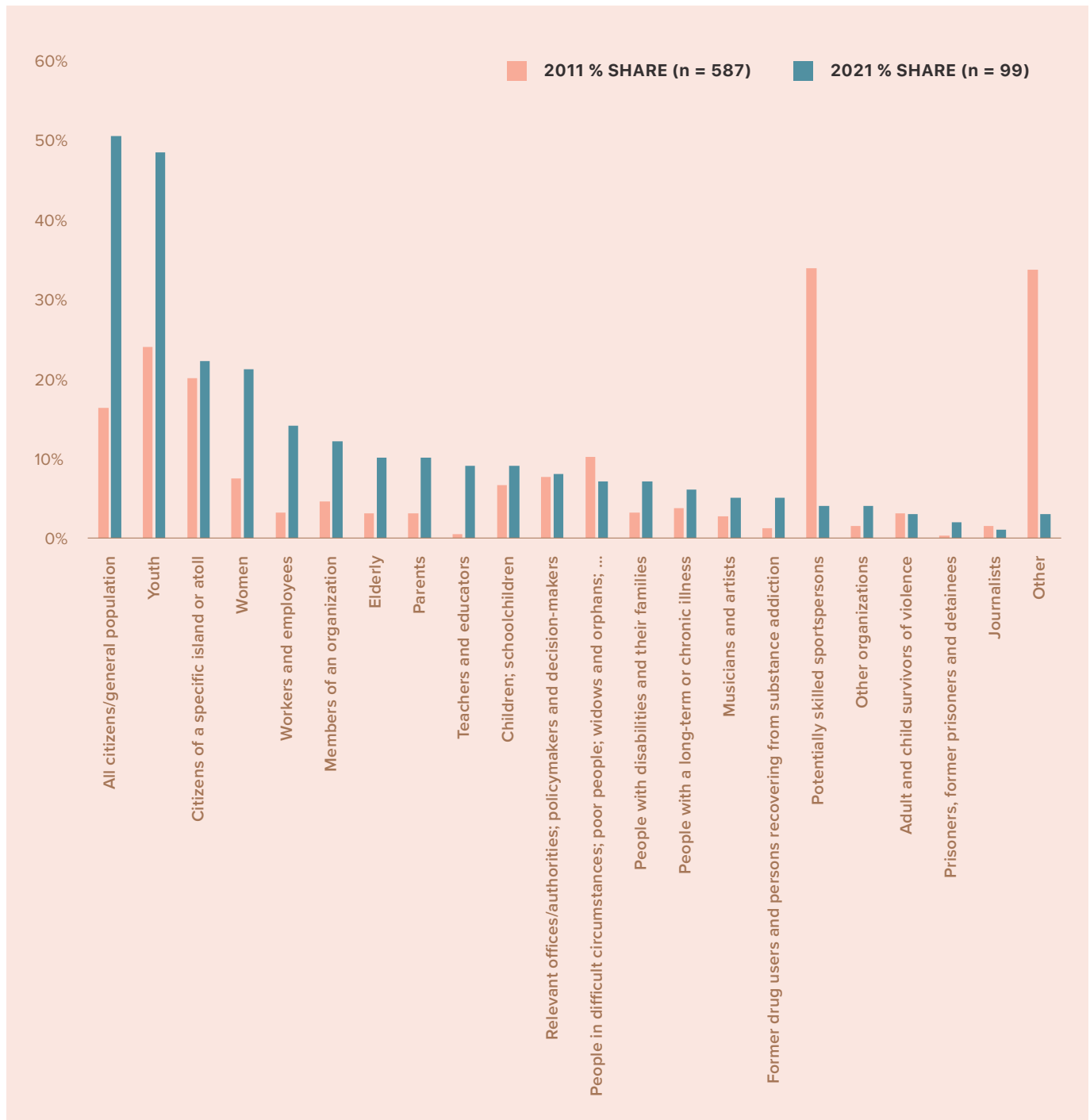
Classifying CSOs based on the target beneficiaries or groups is another popular measure of categorization used in mainstream civil society analyses. This classification allows understanding which groups in the community are the key recipients of various civil society activity, and therefore, determining the gaps in possible beneficiaries. This information can help to establish whether the most vulnerable groups are receiving civil society focus, and if there are any important groups that are being neglected. Classification based on target groups can also aid CSOs and other stakeholders to reach and connect with other organizations with a similar focus.

According to the categorization survey, half of the respondents, 51 percent, generally focused on the whole population. Youth came in a close second with 48 percent of CSOs focusing on them, while 22 percent of CSOs targeted a specific island or atoll, and 21 percent focused on women. These findings were roughly in line with the findings of the focus area classification given that approximately half were generalist, and half in this category focused on the general population. The target beneficiaries with the lowest focus were journalists at 1 percent, and prisoners, former prisoners and detainees at 2 percent. This shows that the key groups in the community that are not being targeted in CSO work include prisoners, former prisoners and detainees, adult and child survivors of violence, former drug users and persons recovering from substance addiction as well as journalists/bloggers. However, it is important to bear in mind that classification based solely on target beneficiaries can potentially single out a vulnerable group, creating a sense of isolation or possibly an unhelpful social distinction for groups such as victims of abuse or violence. Furthermore, some target groups do not necessarily have the same needs as other target groups. The categorization of CSOs based on focus areas can help to clarify the specific needs they fulfil for beneficiaries.

Table 6. Key comparisons between target beneficiaries in 2011 and 2021

TARGET GROUP	2011 STUDY		2021 STUDY	
	NO. OF CSOs (n = 587)	% SHARE	NO. OF CSOs (n = 99)	% SHARE
All citizens/general population	96	16%	50	51%
Youth	141	24%	48	48%
Citizens of a specific island or atoll	118	20%	22	22%
Women	44	7%	21	21%
Workers and employees	19	3%	14	14%
Members of an organization	27	5%	12	12%
Elderly	18	3%	10	10%
Parents	18	3%	10	10%
Teachers and educators	3	1%	9	9%
Children; schoolchildren	39	7%	9	9%
Relevant offices/authorities; policymakers and decision-makers	45	8%	8	8%
People in difficult circumstances; poor people; widows and orphans; marginalized people; unemployed	60	10%	7	7%
People with disabilities and their families	19	3%	7	7%
People with a long-term or chronic illness	22	4%	6	6%
Musicians and artists	16	3%	5	5%
Former drug users and persons recovering from substance addiction	7	1%	5	5%
Potentially skilled sportspersons	199	34%	4	4%
Other organizations	9	2%	4	4%
Adult and child survivors of violence	18	3%	3	3%
Prisoners, former prisoners and detainees	2	0%	2	2%
Journalists	9	2%	1	1%
Other organizations	198	34%	3	3%

Figure 15. CSO target beneficiaries comparison between 2011 and 2021



Comparison of the target groups between the two studies showed a significant increase in those who focused on the ‘General population’ from 16.3 percent in 2011 to 51 percent in 2021. The same can be said for the target group ‘Youth’, that doubled from 24 percent to 48 percent.

As such, it can be interpreted that the needs of youth and youth empowerment were a key focus in CSO activities

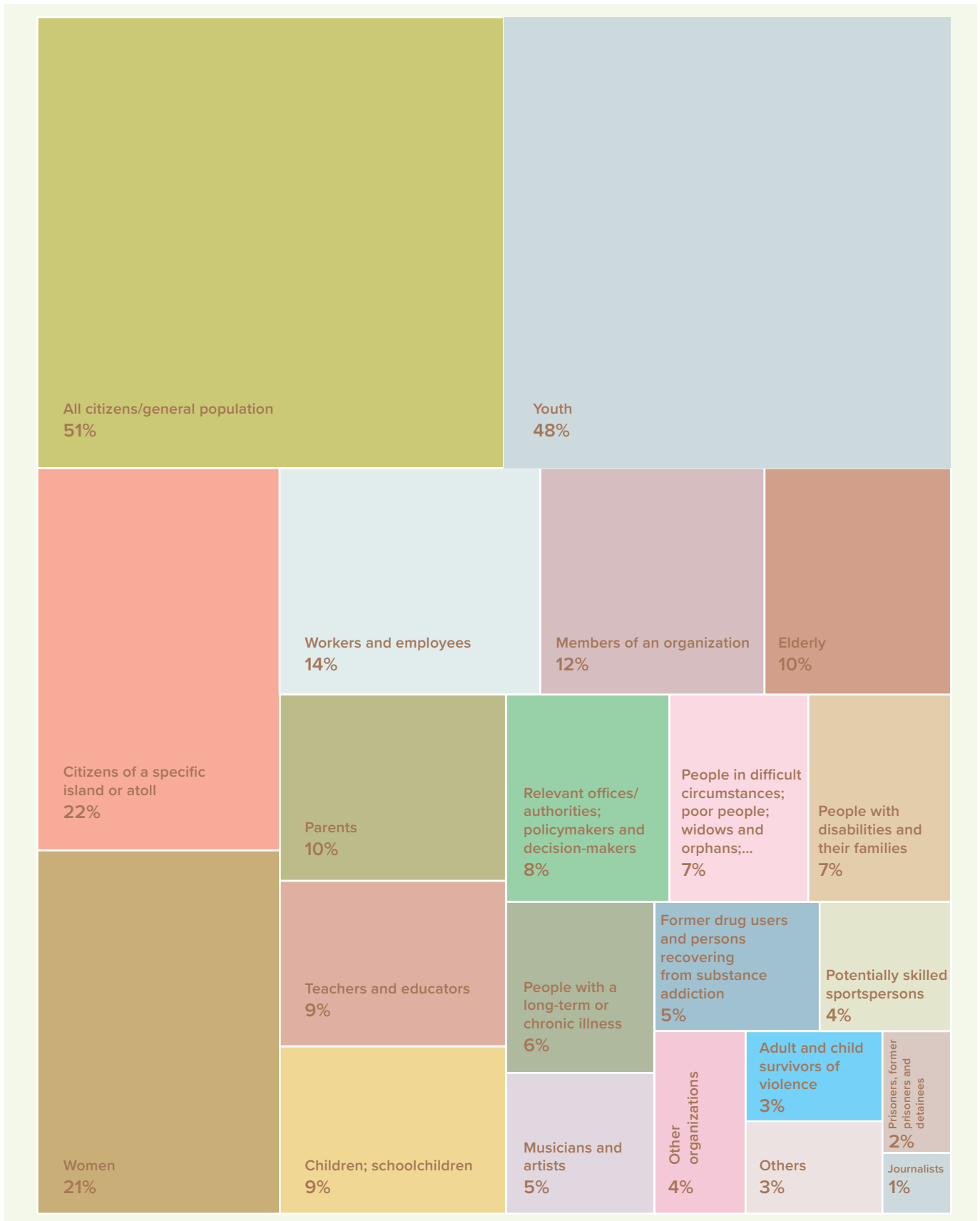
and was a sign that active and informed participation by young people was encouraged and facilitated. This is highly important given that youth empowerment and participation can result in activities that are focused on issues faced by youth. Thus, their understanding of problems will be more relevant to the needs of their generation, which will ultimately contribute to a healthier and resilient community.

Furthermore, some target groups that may be increasing in size and require attention also observed an increase in the number of CSOs who target their activities towards them. The groups include 'Women', 'Workers and employees', 'Members of a specific organization', 'Elderly', 'Parents', 'Teachers and educators', 'Children and schoolchildren', 'People with disabilities and their families' and 'People with a long-term or chronic illness'. The fact that all these groups are receiving greater attention is a positive indication that the civil society sector in Maldives is becoming more welfare-focused and inclusive.

On the other hand, the data also showed that 'People in difficult circumstances; poor people; widows and orphans; marginalized people; unemployed' as categorized in the survey received less attention, demonstrating a fall from

10.2 percent in 2011 to 7 percent in 2021. It is possible that special attention might be required for people who are socially and economically marginalized, and policymakers can encourage and facilitate the mobilization of CSOs to help these groups in need. The comparative analysis also revealed that some CSO target groups remained fairly unchanged between 2011 and 2021 such as 'Citizens of a specific island or atoll' (20 percent to 22 percent) and 'Adult and child survivors of violence' (unchanged at 3 percent). The group of 'Potentially skilled sportspersons' also significantly decreased as a share of CSO focus from 33.9 percent in 2011 to 4 percent in 2021. This is likely due to the ratification of the Sports Act that led to sports clubs working towards the promotion of sports and sports-skilled persons to be registered under the Sports Act and not the Associations Act.

Figure 16. Tree map of target groups



When assessing the target groups of CSOs by region, the study found that most groups were targeted by those in Malé. Upper North and South-Central regions also showed CSO activity having more recipient groups whereas the North Central, South and Upper South regions showed only a few groups being targeted. This is line with the earlier findings which showed that specialist CSOs were mostly based in the South and Upper South regions and generalist CSOs were more in the Upper North region. Much like the categorization by geographical scope, this interpretation can also be useful to further evaluate the possibilities of any groups that might require special attention due to not currently being the focus of CSOs. For instance, while Malé CSOs targeted a wide range of beneficiaries, CSOs from Central and Upper South regions targeted only a few. It was noted that some regions such as South and North Central did not observe any CSO activity directly targeted towards women, a key demographic in any population.

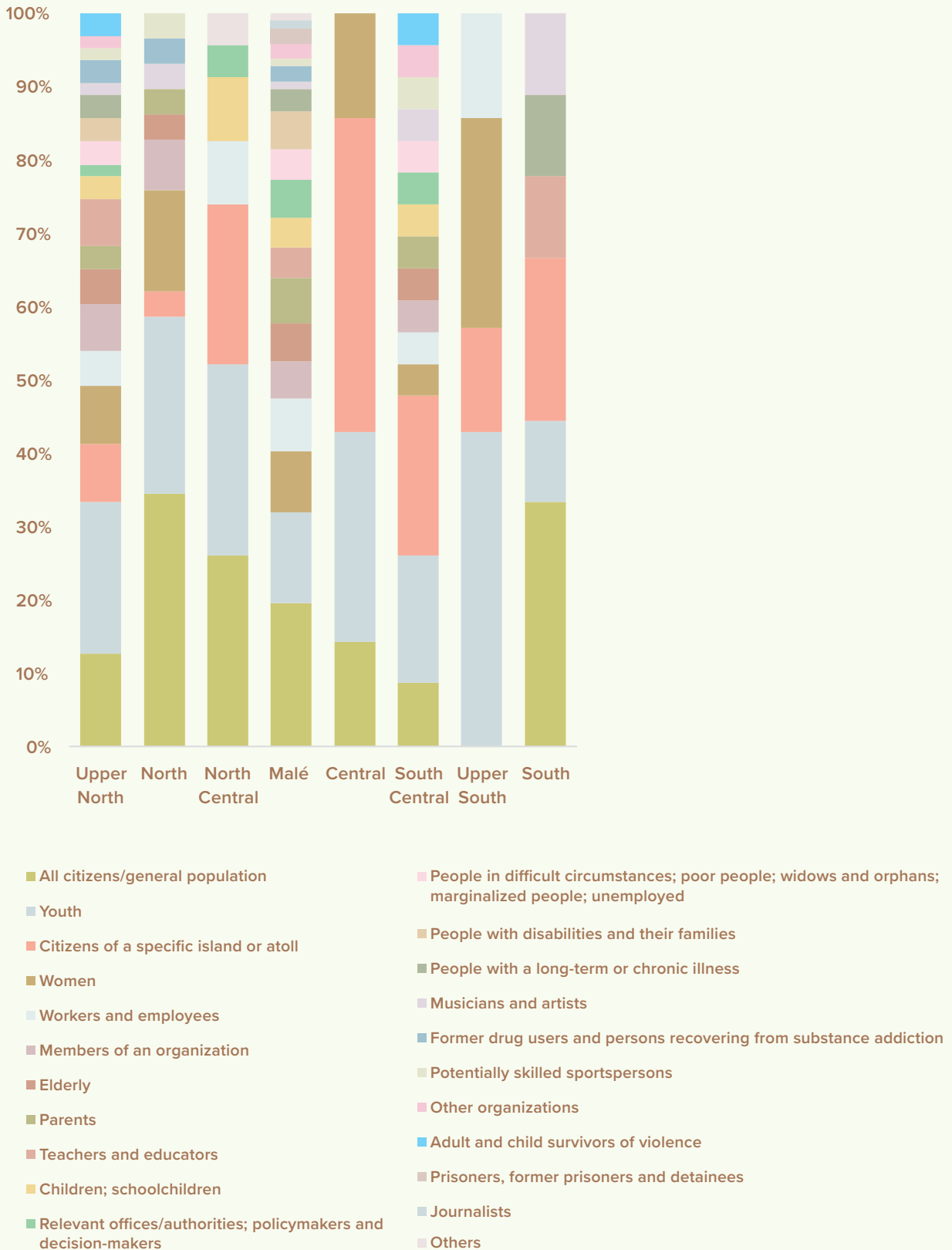
The study also gauged community perceptions from two key target beneficiaries: women and youth. Discussions held with women and youth groups found that while women in communities were generally not dissatisfied, there was an overall lack of activities that were specifically oriented towards women or women's needs. In fact, according to the data received by WDCs, much engagement with women was still grounded in activities related to social cohesion and community involvement and most of these activities involved stereotypically "women's activities". WDCs informed the study that women were involved in the organizing of social activities such as cleaning initiatives and sports tournaments, even those such as football tournaments in which men typically participate.

Furthermore, some councils expressed concern that their communities did not place enough emphasis on crucial groups such as women, and were advised that most CSO activities were geared toward sports or general community-based activities rather than the special needs of women in the community. Councils also commented that the limited events aimed at women were generally sports-related, rather than social or educational. When the study was discussed further with WDCs, it was discovered that, while women were typically receptive and involved in CSO activities, there was a lack of activities specifically targeted at, designed for and implemented to specifically empower women, and/or to improve their educational or socioeconomic status in these islands.

Youth, on the other hand, appeared to be sufficiently targeted in every region. However, the nature of youth involvement was further explored in FGDs with youth groups in various islands and also in discussions with

island councils. As a result, the study found that a large portion of youth-based activities were related to sports, tournaments and general social activities rather than activities aimed at youth empowerment and improving skills and capacity development. So while target categorization seemingly shows that CSOs are largely focused on youth, youth may not be receiving attention in all the necessary areas.

Figure 17. CSO target beneficiaries by region



5.2.5 Broad functions

Another main way of classifying CSOs is by their role in development. This classification approach assesses the way CSOs design their activities and scopes of work to best pursue their ideological objectives. This could be an ‘orientation’ towards development, such as ‘welfare’, ‘development’ or ‘empowerment’; or the ‘results’ of development such as ‘representation’, ‘advocacy and technical inputs’, ‘capacity building’, ‘service delivery’ and ‘social function’. These categories are adopted by institutions such as the World Bank.

The functions adopted in this study for categorization were the same as those employed in the previous study. The functions were determined during the first iteration of this study by analysing CSO purpose, activities and their targets. The data from that study also assisted in formulating a comparison as to how CSO functions may have changed in the past decade.

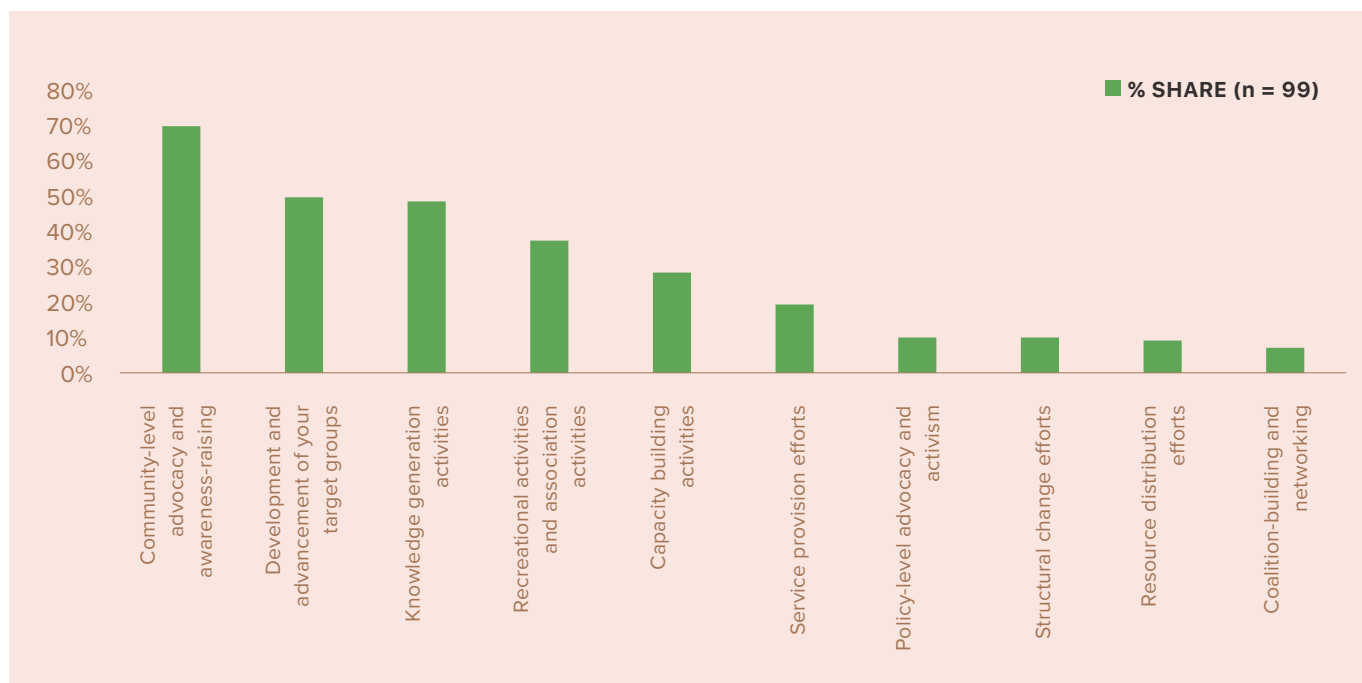
A comparative analysis can aid in identifying any trends in CSO priority, engagement and activity changes between the two studies. This assessment showed that the majority

(70 percent) of the CSOs’ main function was ‘Community-level advocacy and awareness raising’, a stark increase from 40.2 percent in 2011. Almost half (49 percent) stated the ‘Development and advancement of their respective target groups’ was their broad function. This finding is slightly different but still in line with the observations of the previous study. According to the previous study, over half (58.6 percent) listed ‘Development and advancement’ as their function while ‘Community-level advocacy and awareness raising’ was the second most popular function with an engagement of 40.2 percent. ‘Coalition-building and networking’ scored the lowest with 7 percent of CSOs with this function. This function was also the lowest in the previous study. Therefore, no major changes were observed overall in terms of the broad functions of the civil society sector in the past decade. This study showed a general increase in most of the broad functions except ‘Service provision efforts’. However, even though a reduction in service provision functions is observed, the COVID-19 pandemic saw various organizations that did not have a ‘Service provision’ focus mobilize and engage in communities across the country.

Table 7. Key comparisons of broad functions between 2011 and 2021

FUNCTION	2011 STUDY		2021 STUDY	
	NO. OF CSOs (n = 587)	% SHARE	NO. OF CSOs (n = 99)	% SHARE
Development and advancement of your target groups	344	58.6	49	49%
Community-level advocacy and awareness-raising	236	40.2	69	70%
Recreational activities and associational activities	125	21.3	37	37%
Knowledge generation activities	125	21.3	48	48%
Capacity-building activities			28	28%
Service provision efforts	115	19.6	19	19%
Resource distribution efforts			9	9%
Policy-level advocacy and activism	50	8.5	10	10%
Structural change efforts	40	6.8	10	10%
Coalition-building and networking	19	3.2	7	7%

Figure 18. Broad functions of CSOs



5.3 Characteristics of civil society organizations

5.3.1 Income

For private, public and civil society organizations, financial autonomy, agency and capacity are crucial benchmarks in evaluating effectiveness, size and success. As such, classifying CSOs based on income-related aspects will provide an understanding of the civil society sector's financial needs. The categorization survey also obtained income data including income sources and the size of incomes.

5.3.1.1 Source of income

As per the findings of the survey, 36 percent of the CSOs stated that their income came mostly from individual donations. CSOs also received funds via domestic sponsors (34 percent) and fundraising activities (29 percent). While 10 percent reported having no income, only 5 percent of CSOs stated that they received any government assistance. Interestingly, 6 percent of the CSOs reported business income as a main source of income. This income was from activities such as renting out spaces, operating a gym and plant sales.

Figure 19. Main sources of income and funding to CSOs by percentage of CSOs

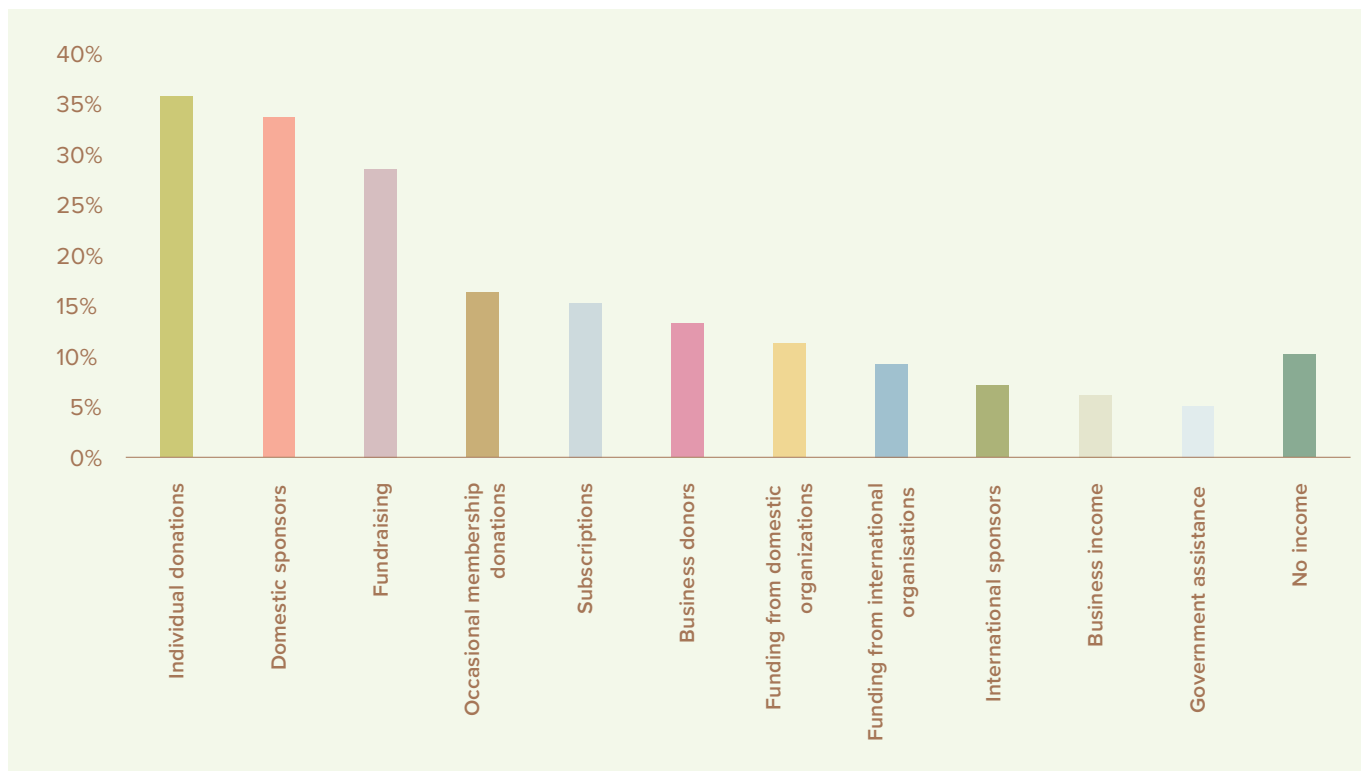
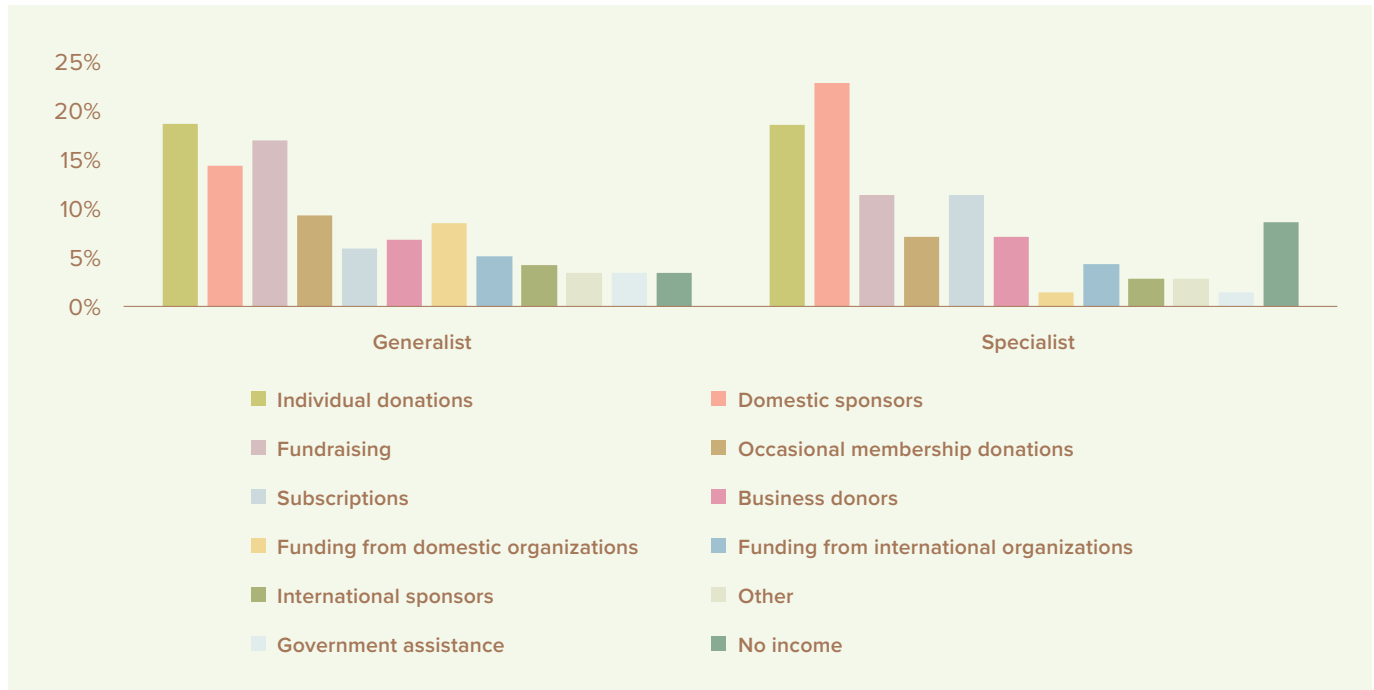


Table 8. Income source breakdown by number of CSOs and share

INCOME SOURCE	NO. OF CSOs	% SHARE (n = 98)
Individual donations	35	36%
Domestic sponsors	33	34%
Fundraising	28	29%
Occasional membership donations	16	16%
Subscriptions	15	15%
Business donors	13	13%
Funding from domestic organizations	11	11%
Funding from international organizations	9	9%
International sponsors	7	7%
Business income	6	6%
Government assistance	5	5%
No income	10	10%

Further disaggregation of the income sources of generalist and specialist organizations showed that they both received about the same share of individual donations. However, it was observed that the main income sources for specialist CSOs came from domestic sponsors and a fair bit from subscriptions compared to generalist CSOs. Generalist CSOs received more income through fundraising, occasional membership donations, and comparatively from a more diverse range of sources than specialist CSOs. The data also showed that more specialist than generalist CSOs reported having no income.

Figure 20. Sources of income generation by generalist and specialist CSOs



5.3.1.2 Size of income

Given that 2020 was a year where all sectors and parties were drastically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and many CSOs were not operational, income size data for this study were gathered by inquiring about the income receipts for the year 2019, to help ascertain the average income levels of CSOs.

The study showed that, in 2019, 23 percent of the CSOs had an income between MVR 10,000 and MVR 50,000. A total of 19 percent of CSOs reported an income below MVR 10,000 while 3 percent reported a very high income of over MVR 1 million. A rather high percentage (34 percent) reported no income for the year 2019. Further analysis was done to determine whether CSOs with a larger scope had a higher income; however, the results interestingly showed that 70 percent of the international-level organizations reported no income. In fact, the data revealed that most of those who identified themselves as working at the international and national level reported having no income.

Figure 21. Percentage of CSOs by their income range during 2019

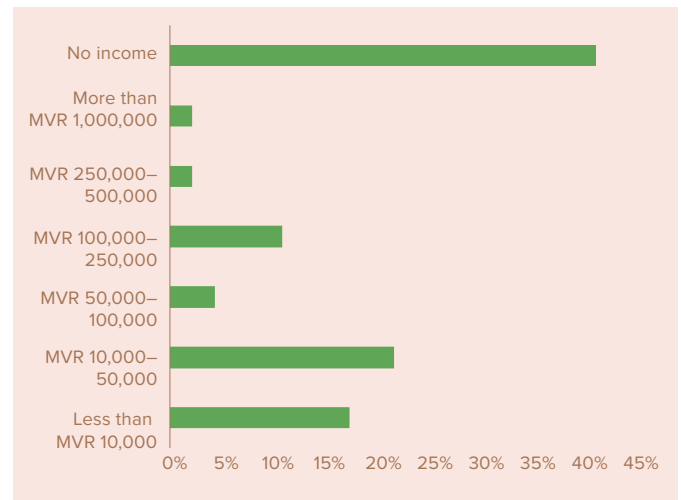


Table 9. Number of specialist and generalists CSOs classified by income range

INCOME RANGE	GENERALIST	SPECIALIST	TOTAL
Less than MVR 10,000	15	4	19
MVR 10,000–50,000	12	11	23
MVR 50,000–100,000	4	1	5
MVR 100,000–250,000	6	3	9
MVR 250,000–500,000	2	1	3
MVR 750,000–1,000,000	2	1	3
More than MVR 1,000,000	1	2	3
No income	13	21	34
Total	55	44	99

Analysing generalist and specialist CSOs based on income size, about half of specialist CSOs, 48 percent, were found to have no income compared to generalist CSOs with 24 percent having no income. And there was a larger share of CSOs with an income less than MVR 10,000 among generalist than specialist CSOs.

Figure 22. Income range by specialist and generalist CSO



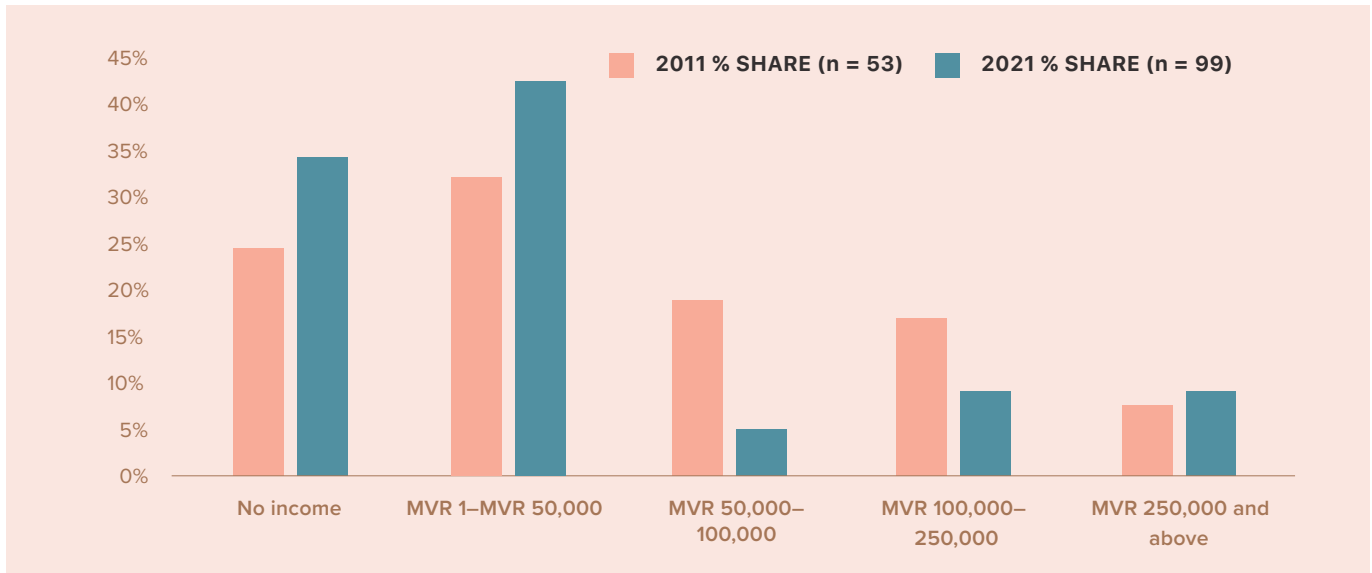
This study also compared the income levels from this current study with those of CSOs 10 years ago, as reported in the first iteration of this study in 2011. The income bands used in the previous study were different, however. As such, the figures have been adjusted to reflect comparisons with the broader income bands specified in the 2011 study.

Compared to data from 2011, there is a 10 percent increase in the share of CSOs with incomes less than MVR 50,000 and a 9 percent increase in the share of CSOs earning no income. The percentage of CSOs earning between MVR 50,000 and MVR 250,000 also decreased compared to 2011; however, a slight increase of 1 percent in CSOs earning at higher income brackets of above MVR 250,000 can be observed. The increase in the number of CSOs earning no income indicates that organizations may be struggling with financial autonomy and in raising sufficient funds, and may require extra attention when formulating ways to regulate the sector.

Table 10. Comparison of CSO income in 2011 and 2021

INCOME RANGE	2011 STUDY		2021 STUDY	
	NO. OF CSOs (n = 53)	% SHARE	NO. OF CSOs (n = 99)	% SHARE
MVR 1–50,000	17	32%	42	42%
MVR 50,000–100,000	10	19%	5	5%
MVR 100,000–250,000	9	17%	9	9%
MVR 250,000 and above	4	8%	9	9%
No income	13	25%	34	34%

Figure 23. Comparison of CSO income in 2011 and 2021



5.3.2 Membership size and volunteer base

The number of members or volunteers engaged in a CSO is another measure that can be used to classify CSOs. According to the survey, over half, 54 percent, of the CSOs had a membership below 50 and 20 percent had between 50 and 100 members. Only 2 percent reported having a membership of over 1,000 members. As for volunteers, the majority (72 percent) of CSOs reported their numbers as below 50, while 20 percent stated that they had between 50 and 100.

It is important to note that in the context of Maldivian civil societies, “members” and “volunteers” were often considered interchangeable or synonymous.

Figure 24. Membership size of CSOs

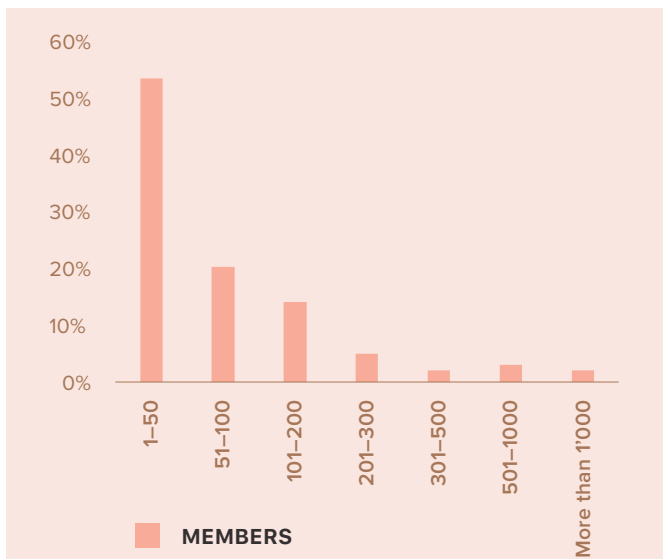
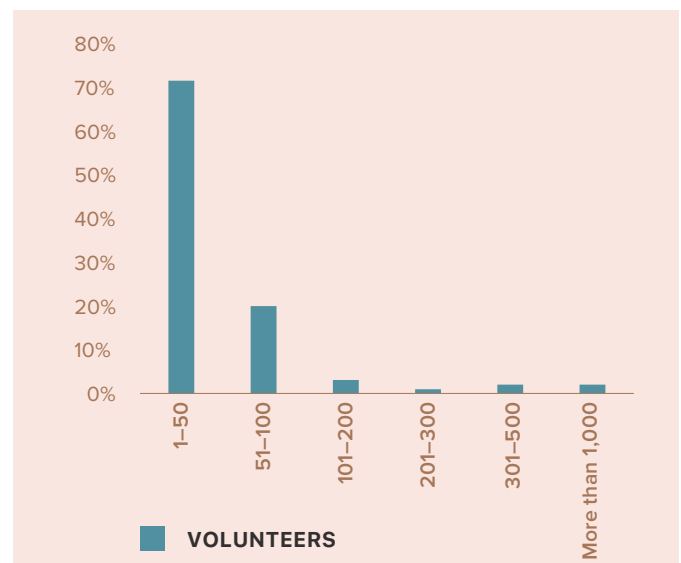


Figure 25. Volunteer base of CSOs

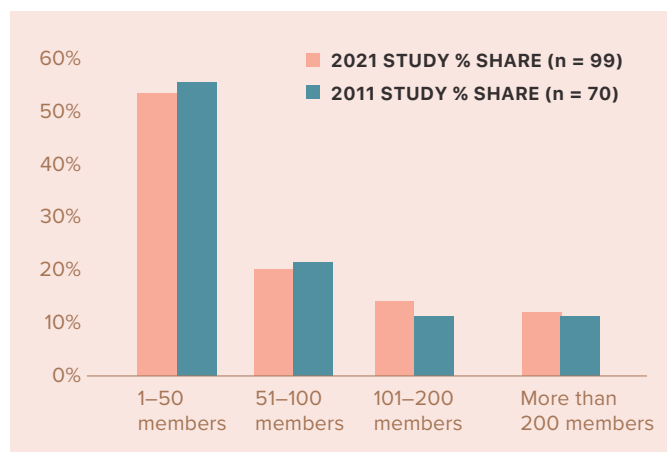


Comparison of the membership size of CSOs between the previous iteration and this study was done to understand how the civil society sector has developed. A growth in the average member base indicates an increasing number of people engaging in civil society and the overall growth of the sector and its contributions. However, the bands were different between the two studies for the first two categories. In the 2011 study, the first two bands were 1 to 60 members and 61 to 100 members, while in the current study, the bands were 1 to 50 members and 51 to 100 members. For the purposes of general comparison, it is assumed in this study that the 1–60 band corresponds to the 1–50 band and the 61–100 band with the 51–100 band.

Table 11: Comparison of CSO membership size in 2011 and 2021

MEMBERSHIP SIZE	2011 STUDY		2021 STUDY	
	NO. OF CSOs (n = 70)	% SHARE	NO. OF CSOs (n = 99)	% SHARE
1–50 members	39	56%	53	54%
51–100 members	15	21%	20	20%
101–200 members	8	11%	14	14%
More than 200 members	8	11%	12	12%

Figure 26. Comparison of CSO membership size in 2011 and 2021



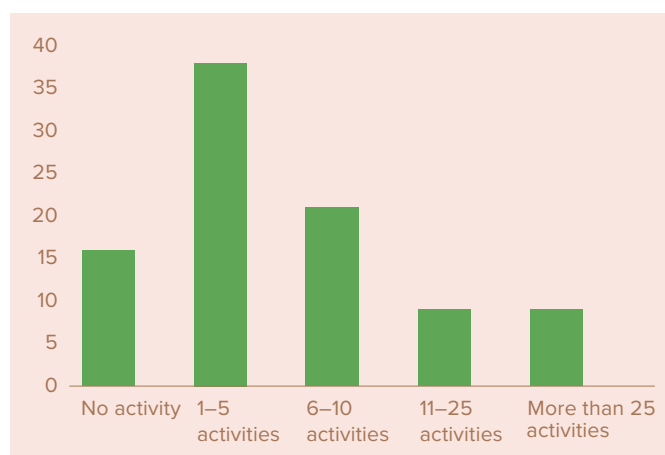
The data revealed that the percentage of organizations with a member base of below 100 has slightly decreased, while those with a member base larger than 100 has slightly increased. This increase indicates a gradually growing base of members and involvement of people; however, the differences are not significant over a 10-year period.

5.3.3 Level of activity

The level of activity of CSOs was assessed to provide a general overview of civil society activity and community mobilization. Most CSOs stated that they conducted 1 to 5 activities in the past year while 23 percent reported to having conducted 6 to 10 activities. Some CSOs had been very active in the last 12 months with 10 percent stating that they conducted between 11 and 25 activities and 10 percent reporting having conducted more than that. However, 17 percent of the CSOs stated that they did not

carry out any activities in the past year. Nonetheless, even with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be observed that CSOs in Maldives remained rather active. It is important to note that while typical CSO activities may have not been operational, many CSOs across the country mobilized and volunteered to help with the impacts of the pandemic, and in vaccination and relief efforts.

Figure 27. Number of activities conducted by CSOs

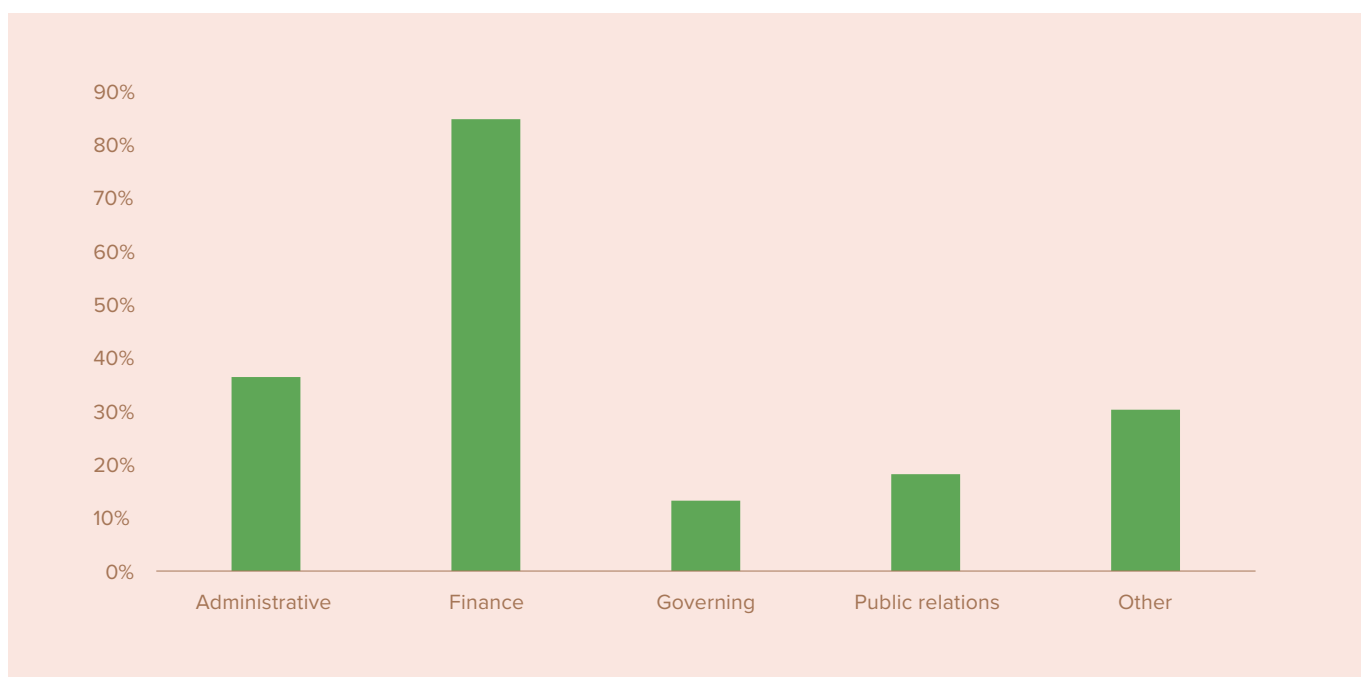


When stakeholders were questioned about civil society's involvement, many acknowledged that CSOs were actively and positively contributing to the subject of their cause or to the community. However, certain FGDs raised key points concerning CSOs' sustainability and activities. Some islands stated that CSOs frequently engaged during a single festival, such as Ramadan or Eid, mobilizing for activities around that celebration, but that continuous engagement does not occur throughout the year in a consistent form.

5.3.4 Required assistance

A major point of inquiry throughout this study was to understand the needs and challenges of CSOs. Therefore, the categorization survey was used to gauge the general needs of the CSOs. A predominant majority, 85 percent, of CSOs stated that they required financial assistance, and 36 percent stated that they required administrative assistance. Some CSOs also reported that they required public relations assistance (18 percent) and assistance in governance (13 percent). A total of 30 percent of CSOs also stated 'other' assistance was needed, with the most notable specification being the need of a working space.

Figure 28. Types of assistance required by CSOs



The qualitative data collected from stakeholder meetings also indicated significant capacity requirements and areas in which support was necessary. The issue of lack of resources or lack of working space was raised, with CSOs being forced to hold meetings and planning procedures at someone's home or in a coffee shop. Donor agencies also said that CSOs required support in governance as well as in compiling paperwork for bids and tenders and other documentation related to taking advantage of opportunities available to them. Stakeholders expressed worry about their restricted capacity, which can cause them to lose focus, limiting their ability to participate in and

contribute to the advancement of the community. On the other hand, stakeholders highlighted the reality that CSOs that get help and/or funds become overly dependent on the donor or the grant. This emphasizes the significance of guaranteeing CSO continuity through developing their capacity in a sustainable way.

6 OPERATION OF CSOs IN MALDIVES

This chapter addresses the operation and functioning of CSOs in the civil society space. The findings of this section are primarily drawn from the in-depth interviews and further triangulated with qualitative input from stakeholders to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role, operations and principles of CSOs in Maldives. The chapter outlines four key areas:

- 1 | Internal management, planning and efficiency
- 2 | Resources, capacity and competence
- 3 | Perceived challenges, needs and accessibility
- 4 | Collaborations and partnerships

6.1 Internal management, planning and efficiency

This chapter explores the organizational and institutional features of CSOs. The efficacy of internal management processes, as well as the availability of resources, is critical to the efficient operation of CSOs. Therefore, this chapter aims to assess institutional clarity as well as the mechanisms that underpin internal processes, including aspects of planning, management of activities, institutional robustness and internal organizational strength and efficiency.

6.1.1 Planning and management

The success of CSOs is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of their internal management and organization. Internal management is dependent on both the clarity of the organization's strategic aims or purpose, as well as the efficiency with which it operates. Similar assessments in other island countries have shown that shortcomings in formal systems and processes within organizations, such as poor monitoring and evaluation systems and a lack of formal policy and procedure maintenance, create a gap between strategies and operations. This in turn leads to ineffective strategic planning processes that do not translate into specific

operational goals.²²

This study examined operational and strategic planning levels by asking if CSOs had developed an annual work plan²³ and/or strategic plan.²⁴ Unlike a work plan, which focuses on the near future and outlines operational aspects, as well as what needs to be done on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to achieve strategic objectives, a strategic plan is developed with the ideological objectives, long-term vision and strategic plans that will subsequently guide the annual planning process, specific objectives and desired outcomes, and activity details. The two frequently go hand in hand because a strategic plan ensures that the specifics of the planning process and activities stated in the work plan are purposeful and beneficial to the long-term trajectory.²⁵

More than half of the CSOs taking part in the survey (61 percent) said they had prepared an annual work plan. When asked about how well they were able to accomplish their plans, most CSOs reported that they had difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic imposing both financial and operational challenges. However, they also reported the methods most frequently employed to ensure they achieve the plans, which includes carrying out monthly follow-ups, management meetings, and maintaining their activities according to the plan. In order to do so, CSOs stated that they sometimes self-finance programmes and have a benchmarking system in place where they plan to carry out at least a fixed number of activities within a given period. Only one of the two unregistered CSOs stated that they had prepared a work plan and stated that they can generally accomplish their works according to the plan.

CSOs who reported not having annual work plans were asked how their organization's activities are planned and operate. They responded that their activities are

²² UNDP (2015). *A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific*. Suva: UNDP Pacific Centre.

²³ For the purpose of this research, a work plan is a short-term plan (often developed annually, but also for shorter time periods or special projects) that specifies the numerous operations that have been scheduled in accordance with the organization's wider strategic objectives.

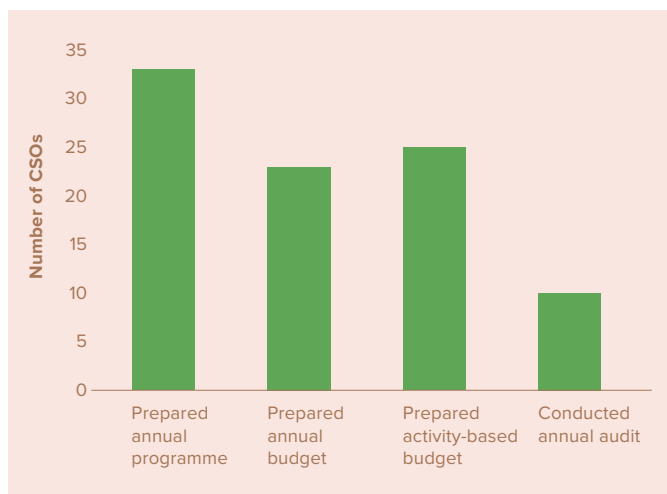
²⁴ In this research strategic plans relate to a strategy that has a long-term objective in place and provides vision and direction in the CSO's growth trajectories in an institutionalized manner.

²⁵ Starboard Leadership Consulting (2022). "The Difference Between Strategic Planning And Annual Planning", Blog.

usually planned internally by the executive committee or discussed by founding members, as well as through other meetings and online discussions.

In regard to strategic planning, the survey results showed that while more CSOs produce operational work plans, fewer have a long-term vision or strategies. As per the findings, only 43 percent of the CSOs have strategic plans, while a significant 57 percent of the CSOs reported not having one. An explanation for this disparity might be that long-term thinking is not rooted in a CSO's ideological base, a topic raised by various stakeholders during the course of this study. Stakeholders emphasized that a lack of long-term vision or a lack of ideological foundation and strategic thinking that should be rooted in a CSO's operations frequently has an impact on the organization's sustainability. This was owing to the fact that CSOs in Maldives are frequently founded by a passionate individual or a political figure. Furthermore, due to inadequate institutional procedures that underpin the operation and lifespan of the CSO, once the individual steps down, the organization sometimes stops functioning as well. Thus, a positive link between effective planning and CSO longevity can be observed.

Figure 29. Organizational management and planning functions of Maldivian CSOs

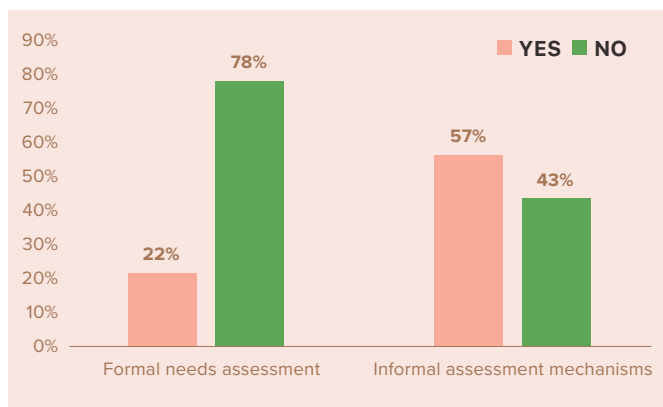


The level of CSOs' institutionalism and planning was also explored by assessing whether CSOs fulfilled their annual reporting responsibilities and prepared annual programmes and activities. A large majority of CSOs, 80 percent, reported preparing annual reports while 20 percent said they didn't. In terms of organizational management and planning, 72 percent of the CSOs reported having prepared an annual programme, 54 percent prepared an activity-based budget, 50 percent prepared an annual budget and 22 percent carried out an annual audit.

The level of planning was also assessed during the unregistered CSO interviews. While only one of the two CSOs reported having an annual budget, work plan and strategic action plan, the second CSO reported carrying out their planning via internal discussions.

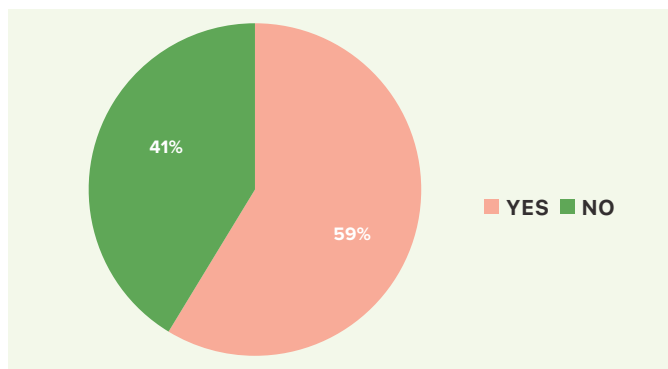
A capacity and needs assessment is a valuable tool for improving planning and management processes and monitoring and evaluation, as well as for assessing an organization's overall capacities, efficiencies and weaknesses. However, according to the survey (Figure 30), only 22 percent of CSOs have undertaken such an assessment, while the bulk of CSOs, 78 percent, said that they have not studied needs or capabilities in a formal manner. Over half (57 percent) of those CSOs that had not conducted a formal needs and capacity assessment reported that they had informal systems in place to analyse the organization's needs and difficulties. While neither of the unregistered CSOs have carried out a formal capacity and needs assessment, both stated that they do have an informal mechanism to assess their organization's needs and challenges.

Figure 30. Experience and capacity of CSOs in carrying out a capacity and needs assessment



Moreover, in order to gauge the strength of monitoring processes, CSOs were asked if they had the ability to carry out a capacity and needs assessment. The results showed that more than half of the CSOs, 59 percent, have the ability to conduct such an assessment (Figure 31). CSOs need to have the ability to examine their organization's requirements, challenges and capabilities to result in long-term growth and development.

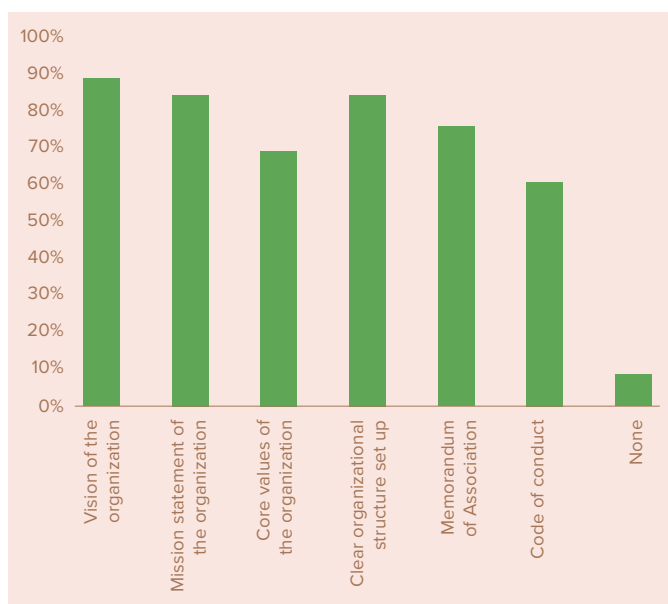
Figure 31. CSO capacity to carry out a capacity and needs assessment



6.1.2 Institutional and organizational strength and internal efficiency

The study asked CSOs whether their scope of work was clearly defined and had guidelines. The results showed that more than 85 percent of the CSOs have vision and mission statements and a clear organizational structure while 70 percent of the CSOs have their core values defined. A total of 76 percent of the CSOs refer to a Memorandum of Association for the scope of work and 61 percent of the CSOs reported that they have a defined code of conduct. On the other hand, 9 percent of the CSOs reported that they have no document guiding their work. Of the unregistered CSOs, only one of the two had their vision, mission, core values, organizational structure and code of conduct prepared. This CSO also was operating as an NGO, whereas the other operated as a movement and did not have any written scope of works or organizational structure.

Figure 32. CSOs with a clear scope of work



Organizational strength can also be gauged to an extent by the frequency of activities and Executive Committee (exco) meetings, which is a vital part of the planning process for activities. The study found that CSOs conduct eight exco meetings per year on average, and that most CSOs conducted four meetings per year. This figure was also the same for the unregistered CSOs. In regard to frequency of activities, the study found that on average, CSOs carry out eight activities per year and that most CSOs carry out no activities during the year. The lack of activity by these CSOs is very likely due to the operational and financial difficulties that came with the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the many challenges CSOs face internally and externally in effectively carrying out their activities. However, interviews with the unregistered CSOs revealed that they carried out an average of six activities over the previous year despite limited capacity and impediments imposed by COVID-19.

Figure 33. Frequency of meetings

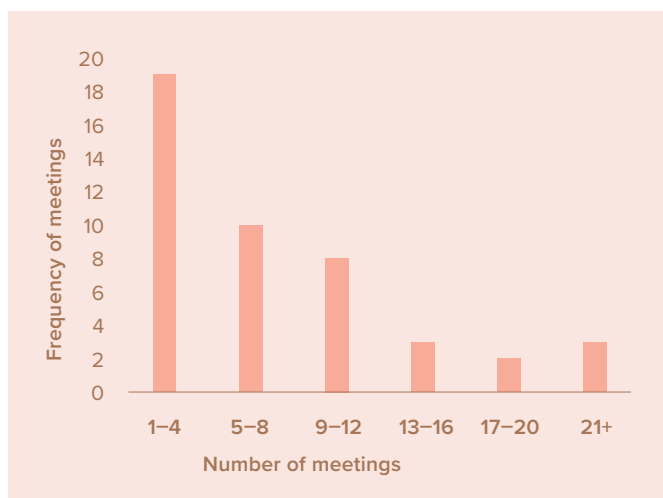
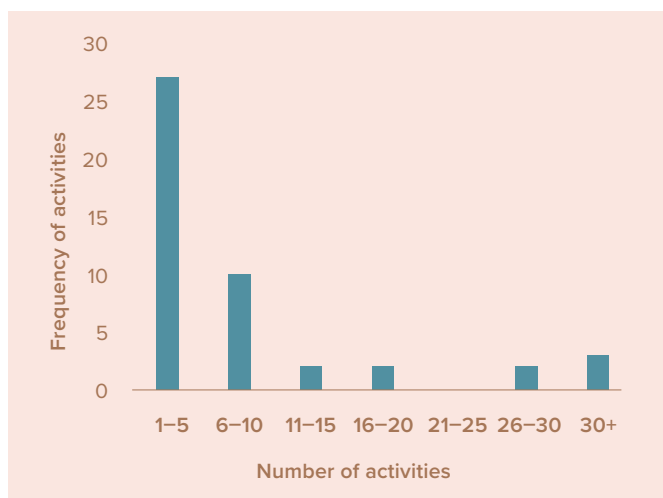


Figure 34. Frequency of activities

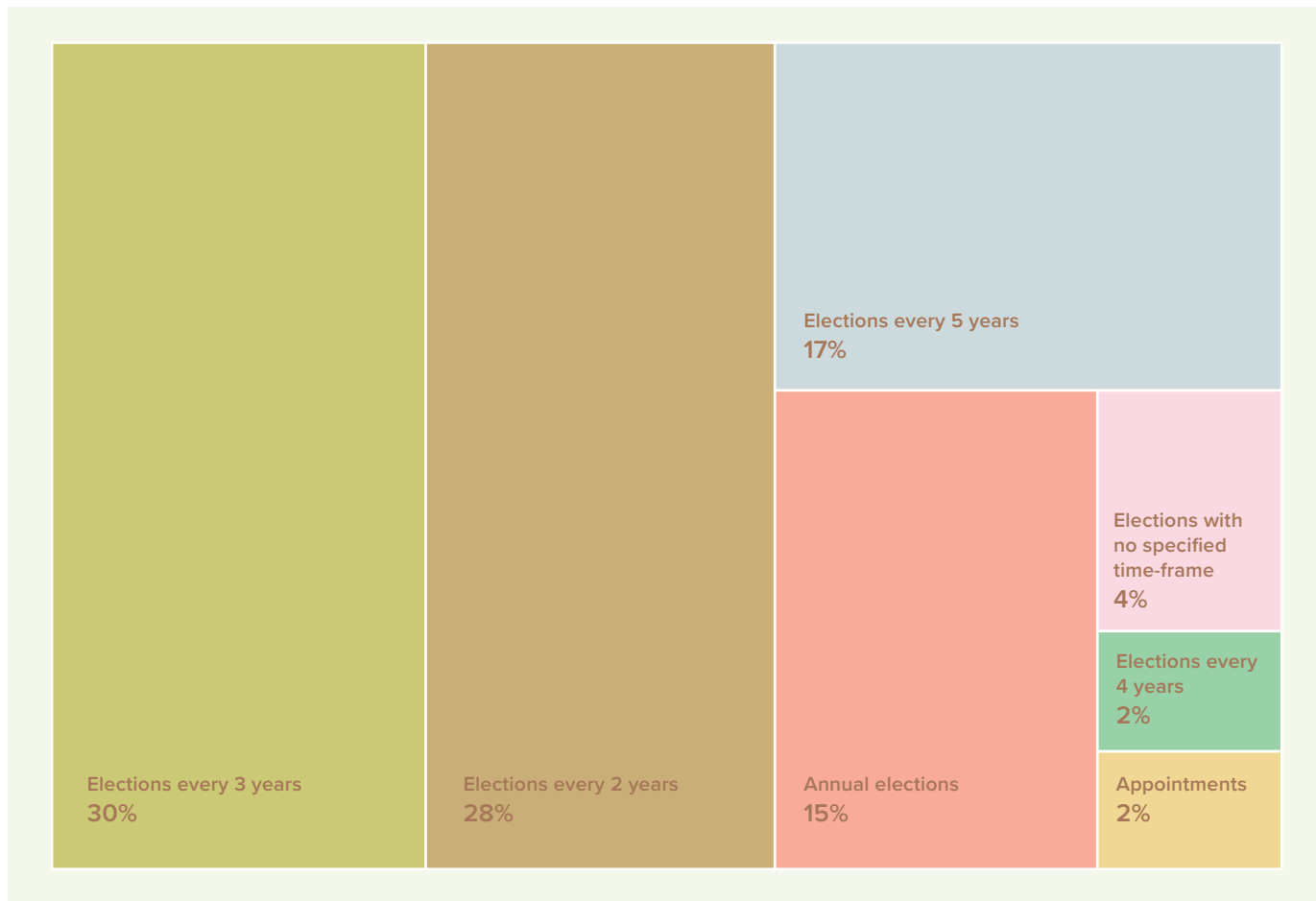


The study also asked about the mechanism by which exco members are appointed and committees formed. Nearly all, 98 percent, of the executive committees of the CSOs are elected by members, indicating that most CSOs have a democratic system of governance. A large majority (78 percent) of the CSOs stated that they have an election cycle of 2 to 5 years while 15 percent stated that CSO executive committees are elected annually. Of the two unregistered CSOs that were interviewed, the movement had not yet had an exco election, as they had been operating for less than a year and did not have an established organizational structure, while the NGO stated that their exco is appointed by their CEO. It is important to note that aspects of organizational management such as conducting annual general meetings and having procedures in place for elections are mandated by the Associations Act; however, these responsibilities do not fall upon unregistered CSOs.

Table 12. Executive committee election mechanisms of CSOs

ELECTED EVERY # YEARS	#	%
Elected – No specified timeframe	2	4%
Elected – Annually	7	15%
Elected – Every 2 years	13	28%
Elected – Every 3 years	14	30%
Elected – Every 4 years	1	2%
Elected – Every 5 years	8	17%
Appointed	1	2%

Figure 35. Executive committee formation mechanisms, share of CSOs with mechanism



Organizational robustness is also determined by the mechanisms by which an organization maintains ethical conduct. A total of 61 percent of CSOs stated that they have an internal mechanism in place to maintain ethical conduct while 39 percent said they did not. When asked about the methods for monitoring ethical conduct, 18 percent of CSOs stated that it should be done by an appointed person or committee, while 20 percent stated that a separate board should oversee ethical issues. A total of 32 percent of CSOs stated that the executive committee should monitor ethical conduct while 5 percent of CSOs stated that such issues should be managed via public consultation. A total of 25 percent cited other options such as external/third party assistance, getting help from the council and/or internal; and discussions within the organization. Both unregistered CSOs interviewed stated that they had methods of maintaining ethical conduct; one said it should be overseen through an internal mechanism/procedure by the executive committee and the other by public consultation (with members and those targeted for services and activities).

Figure 36. CSOs have a mechanism to maintain ethical conduct

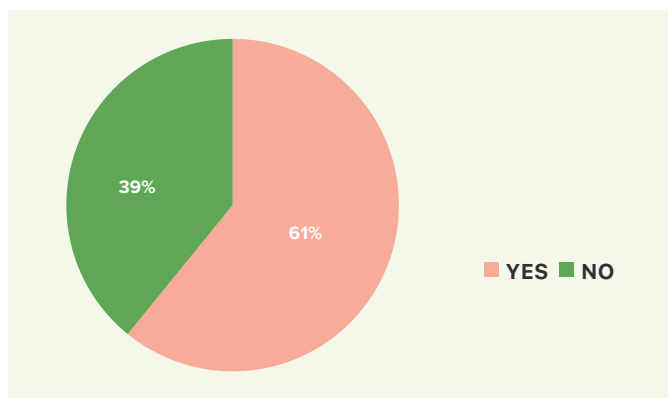
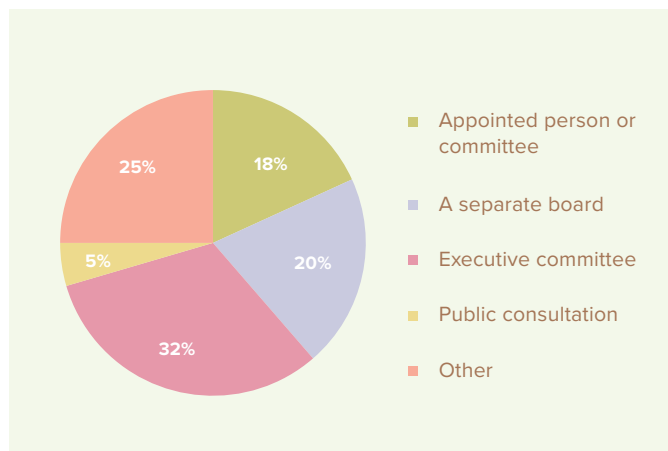


Figure 37. CSOs' preferred method of maintaining ethical conduct



In summary, CSOs in Maldives have planning processes that reflect short-term objectives or daily functioning, the processes are not necessarily powered by long-term vision or strategic thinking. More positively, CSOs generally have a mechanism for maintaining ethical conduct and welcome democratic and transparent governance processes.

The ability and effectiveness of CSOs to meet community needs and contribute to societal well-being also depends on their internal procedures, connected to basic characteristics such as clarity of goal, vision, objectives, scope and target beneficiaries, and anchored in a solid ideological framework. In this regard, stakeholders discussed what could be done to improve CSOs' ability to work for their communities, emphasizing the importance of improving CSO administration and governance, which strengthens the membership base and engagement with members through internal mechanisms, annual general meetings (AGMs), and so on, while emphasizing the importance of establishing the CSO's ideology and philosophy from the start.

Donor agencies emphasized during stakeholder discussions that a clear ideological base is a necessity for CSOs; without this, donors find it difficult to identify CSOs that work with the causes they want to fund, and CSOs that are responding to need. Donors also emphasized that the aims of CSOs and donor agency strategies should be congruent; this will determine donor assistance in the medium term. Donors also described additional constraints that hamper their ability to support CSOs in the most beneficial way, and pointed out that they view CSOs as frequently having low technical and institutional competence, as seen in their submissions.

6.2 Resources, capacity and competence

This section addresses CSOs' resources, capacity and competence, as well as issues of access and other challenges. The critical need to help CSOs with resources and in building institutional capacity has been addressed by all stakeholders throughout this study. Similar assessments from other countries described that constraints regarding capacity and sustainability primarily arose due to factors related to resource limitations, such as inadequate human resource management, a lack of accessible relevant training opportunities, and a lack of expertise in areas such as financial management, despite having a significant pool of volunteers at the organization's disposal.²⁶ Moreover, the previous iteration of this study also recognized that CSOs in Maldives were limited in their capacity due to resource constraints, relying substantially on volunteerism. Three key areas of resource capacity and accessibility were identified during this study: the availability and needs of human resources and volunteers, financial resources, and training opportunities and accessibility; these areas are analysed below.

6.2.1 Human resources

The availability of adequate human resources is fundamental to CSOs. They need to have enough people to work with their target communities. As CSO work is not for profit and depends largely on voluntary contributions, CSOs generally can't hire substantial human resources.

In examining the human resource capacities of CSOs, the data revealed that, on average, CSOs have 9 executive committee and/or founding members (6 males and 3 females). Most CSOs do not have fee-paying members; those that do have an average of 4 fee-paying members (including 3 males and 1 female). The study found that CSOs have a mix of non-fee-paying members and volunteers and often regard them as interchangeable. Excluding outliers, CSOs reported an average of 109 non-fee-paying members (90 males and 19 females) and 45 volunteers (25 males and 20 females). While most CSOs do not recruit employees, those who do, employ 1 full-time employee and 1 part-time employee on average.

When data were disaggregated by gender, the study found that women were generally less involved in CSOs.

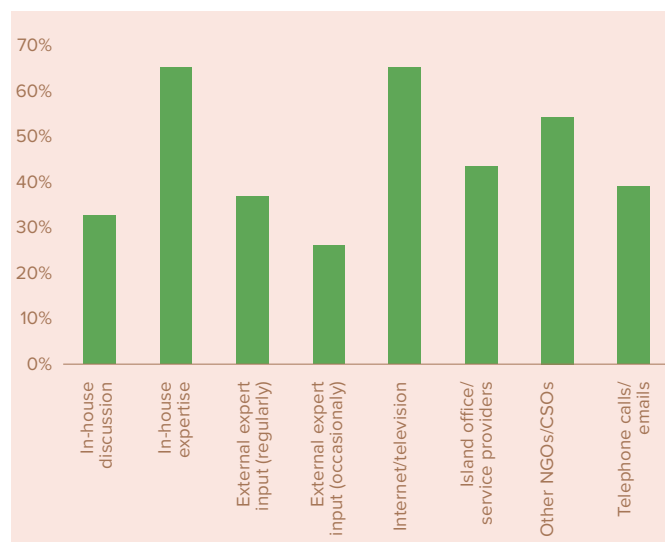
²⁶ UNDP (2015). *A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific*. Suva: UNDP Pacific Centre.

The study also found that most CSOs had no women in decision-making positions, and that among those who do, CSOs on average have three women in decision-making positions. However, during stakeholder consultations with WDCs, the input received revealed that women often engaged in the planning, execution and management of various projects, with some islands stating that women's involvement is higher than men's in some cases. However, this involvement is not reflected in women being in decision-making positions.

In regards to the availability of specialists and specialist input, most CSOs, 65 percent, reported getting assistance from in-house experts and internet resources. The study also observed a considerable degree of resource sharing between CSOs; 54 percent of CSOs get specialist assistance from other CSOs and possibly international organizations. Island-level offices and service providers also provide assistance to CSOs where 43 percent of CSOs reported receiving such assistance. Some CSOs also cited other sources of specialist assistance such as universities.

The availability and use of specialist input was also gauged with the unregistered CSOs. Both CSOs stated that they currently use in-house expertise, receive regular external input and obtain other required input through the internet and TV.

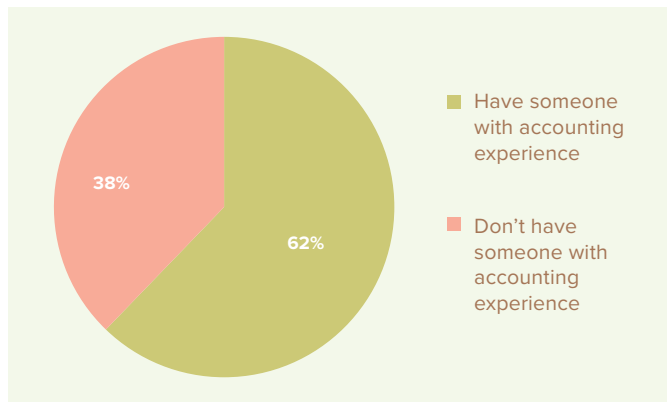
Figure 38. Availability and use of specialist input and advice, share of CSOs accessing and using type of input



The study also asked about the financial expertise of the CSOs, finding that 64 percent of CSOs have someone with bookkeeping and accounting expertise. However, given that a large share of CSOs do not have bookkeeping and

accounting expertise and given the wider problem of highly prominent financial challenges among CSOs, it may be useful to focus capacity-building efforts towards helping and empowering CSOs in their financial management. The more experienced unregistered CSO stated that they have accounting and bookkeeping expertise while the other said they did not, as they are fairly new and small and haven't yet required financial expertise.

Figure 39. Availability of accounting and bookkeeping expertise to CSOs



A key observation of the Maldivian civil society space as observed from the in-depth interviews is the significant involvement of volunteers. A substantial reliance on volunteerism was observed 10 years ago in the previous study as well. Based on the data shown above, it can be observed that the majority of Maldivian CSO operations are handled by volunteers, and CSOs do not normally hire paid full-time or part-time workers. This might be an indicator that internal organization isn't very strong or could indicate financial difficulties and inconsistent revenue.

During the study, stakeholders underlined the importance of addressing volunteer retention issues for CSOs. Stakeholders highlighted the difficulties in obtaining appropriate expert personnel and raised the importance of maintaining a pool of volunteers through tactics such as greater training initiatives.

Given the importance of volunteers to the operation of CSOs, it was also essential to learn how CSOs retained volunteers and their advice for maintaining volunteers. CSOs' main ideas for volunteer retention include reward-based methods such as recognition and certificates for participation and motivation, as well as participation-based methods such as increasing training and capacity-development opportunities, events, volunteer programmes and recreational activities aimed at volunteers.

CSOs also emphasized the need for developing a stronger connection with volunteers through methods such as successfully conveying the organization's aims, making CSO resources available to volunteers, soliciting input from volunteers, and creating a nice working atmosphere. CSOs also recognized the value of maintaining communications and updates using instant messaging applications like Viber or WhatsApp, registering volunteers and holding meetings.

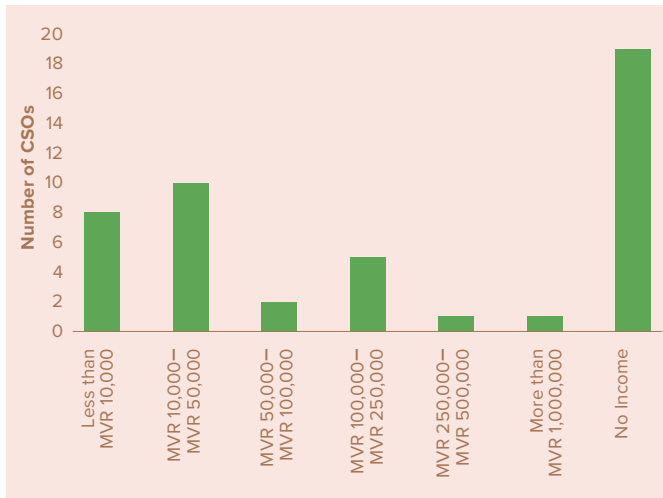
Despite both unregistered movements highlighting a lack of human resources, neither had any mechanisms set in place for volunteer retention. One stated that they haven't carried out any activities that require volunteers and therefore have not yet had to focus on volunteer retention while the other said their voluntary base is retained through personal passion towards the cause.

It is also critical to guarantee public interaction with CSOs to maintain a volunteer base and increase their pool of human resources. To understand this, CSOs were asked how they ensure and monitor public engagement with their organizations. Some of the methods CSOs listed include: enhancing participation rates by marketing events, garnering social media popularity, and obtaining feedback and comments from attendees and members, sometimes using feedback forms. Unregistered CSOs stated their main means of engaging with the public was through social media by consistent updates about events, projects, subjects and causes and engaging in public discussions.

6.2.2 Funding and financial resources

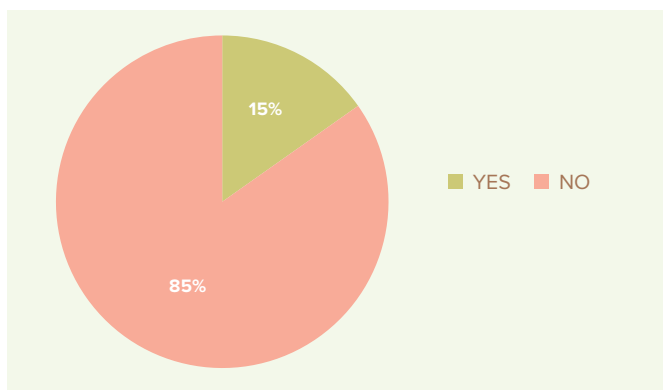
The study discovered that financial constraints were the most significant challenge for CSOs in their effective and efficient operation, based on both qualitative and quantitative data. As a result, in addition to examining financial sources, the research also analysed income levels and other income-related aspects through the in-depth interviews. Accordingly, the study found that 41 percent of CSOs did not receive any income in 2019. This is also in line with the finding of the categorization survey. Moreover, 42 percent of the CSOs received incomes less than MVR 100,000 in 2019 and 11 percent CSOs received between MVR 100,000 and MVR 250,000. Only 4 percent of the CSOs received more than MVR 250,000, which was only 2 of the survey respondents. Of the unregistered CSOs, only the more experienced one, functioning as an NGO, received some income. Their income came from different sources, including domestic and international sponsors, individuals and business donations, and via fundraising activities and the sale of products.

Figure 40. Income levels of CSOs



In order to assess the contribution of donor agencies to financially assisting CSOs, the study also inquired whether CSOs received any funding from donor agencies. The large majority of CSOs, 85 percent, reported that they received funding from a donor or government agency: mostly from international organizations, Maldivian government ministries and through CSR initiatives of companies. The remaining 15 percent stated that they did not yet receive any funding from a donor or government agency (see Figure 45), and neither have either of the unregistered CSOs.

Figure 41. CSOs that have received funding from a donor or government agency



In terms of financial support offered to CSOs through other stakeholders, the discussions revealed that some stakeholders have collaborated with CSOs via subgrants and the assignment of specialized tasks under grants in particular areas, including civic education and women’s empowerment. However, it was also stated that donations are typically given to national-level CSOs, possibly because donor agencies frequently work in specialized

areas. This necessitates an examination of the different financing sources available to smaller island-level CSOs. Stakeholders largely agreed on the need to increase revenue creation options, such as earning income through merit-based activities.

The study also analysed CSOs’ financial autonomy and agency. When asked whether CSOs had a separate bank account for their organization’s purposes, 61 percent said they did, while 39 percent said they did not. Even though it is not legally mandatory to have a separate bank account, stakeholder consultations revealed that several government agencies and donor agencies require CSOs to have a separate bank account, particularly for receiving grants or financial assistance. It can be observed that ascertaining financial agency is linked to the accessibility of various opportunities and assistance for CSOs.

6.2.3 Access to training

For CSOs to be able to grow in number and strength, it is necessary for them to increase their various capacities. The study found that 65 percent of the CSOs reported being a part of a capacity-building programme. A total of 41 percent of CSOs reported receiving capacity-building programmes from international donor agencies and the government. Capacity-building was also received from private institutions, other CSOs and online. In addition to the 35 percent of CSOs that stated that they had not participated in such programmes, both unregistered movements interviewed stated that they had not been part of any capacity-building or training programme.

Figure 42. CSOs that have been part of a capacity-building programme

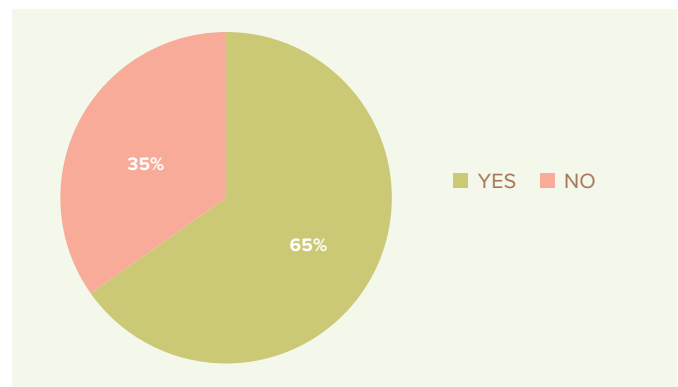
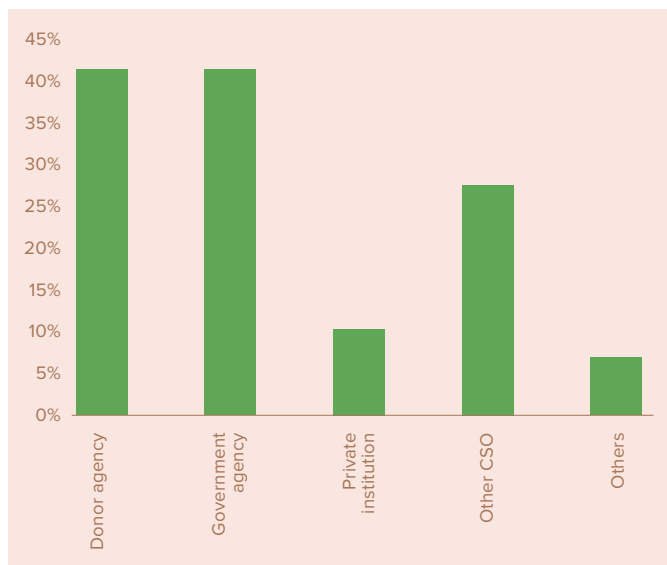


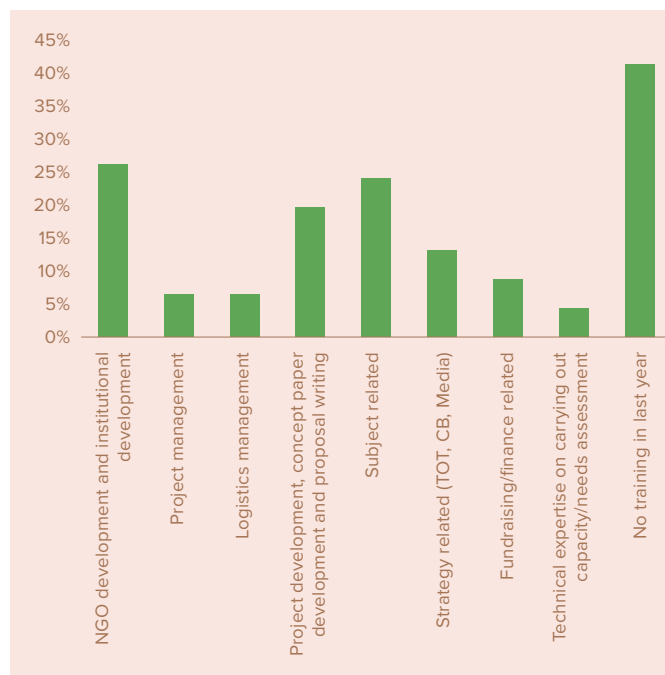
Figure 43. CSO participation in capacity-building programmes, by provider



The interviews also inquired about the various types of training CSOs had received in the past two years; 19 out of 46 CSOs (41 percent) reported that they had had no training programmes in the last two years. Both unregistered CSOs stated that they had not participated in any capacity-building programmes in the past two years.

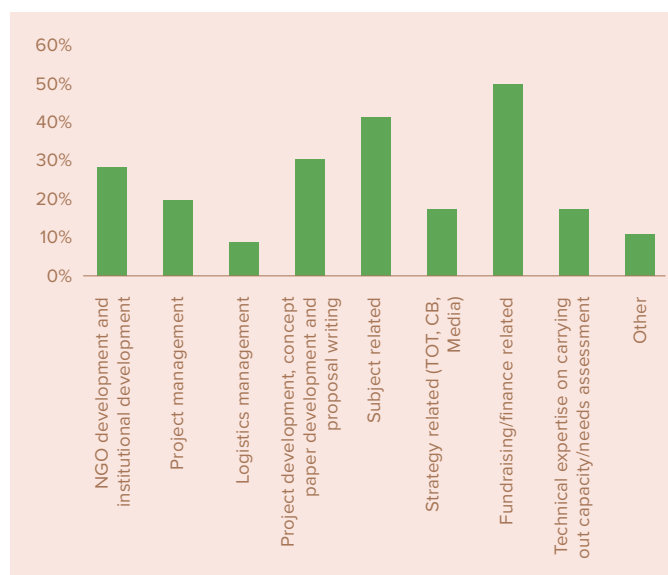
Some of the most popular trainings received by CSOs included CSO development and institutional development (received by 26 percent of the CSOs) and trainings regarding project development, concept paper development and proposal writing (received by 20 percent). A total of 24 percent stated that they received subject-related trainings while fundraising, project management and logistics management training was received by 8 percent of the CSOs. Only 2 percent of CSOs received a training on needs assessment although most CSOs reported to have the expertise and capacity to carry out needs assessments.

Figure 44. CSO participation in training, by type



Given that so many CSOs had received no training in the past two years, the study also explored the training needs of CSOs. This information is particularly useful for agencies that wish to develop capacity-building and training programmes for CSOs. Half of the CSOs (50 percent) want training on raising finances or other finance-related matters while 41 percent want further training on a subject matter. Several CSOs also stated they required training on project development, concept paper development and proposal writing (30 percent). Both unregistered CSOs stated that no trainings were received during the past two years and specifically highlighted the need for training on fundraising and finance-related aspects. One of them also stated that they require capacity-building and training in CSO development and institutional development and project development and management.

Figure 45. Types of training required by CSOs



6.3 Perceived challenges, needs and accessibility

Early in the interview, respondents were asked about the specific issues and difficulties that CSOs experience in their line of work. The goal was to gain an overall sense of the issues that CSOs encounter without focusing on a specific topic. As a result, a diverse range of responses was gathered. These issues ranged from resource-based difficulties such as financial and financing difficulties, a lack of office space and infrastructure, a lack of human resources such as technical employees and volunteers, and a lack of equipment and technology. CSOs also expressed concern over capacity, time restrictions and public relations issues while stakeholders voiced concerns regarding issues such as high staff turnover, dependency on volunteerism, and issues with continuity and impediments to CSO growth due to inadequate training, resources and funding.

The study also delved deeper into the organizational challenges CSOs face when planning, organizing and implementing their operations. The survey discovered that 74 percent of CSOs experience financial issues, while 46 percent of CSOs struggle to find human resources and 20 percent of CSOs reported that political influences impede their work.

In terms of the general challenges that unregistered groups face as civil society actors, most of the challenges faced by unregistered CSOs were similar to those stated

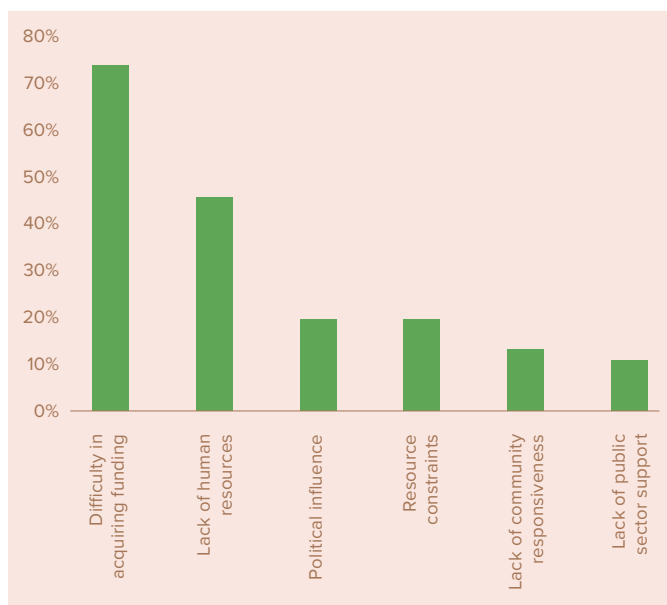
by registered CSOs. These challenges included resource limitations, particularly in acquiring finance and funding opportunities as well as human resource shortages. One of them emphasized that in their work, they observed a lack of government support, political influence and a lack of community involvement and responsiveness.

In discussing capacity challenges for the operations of CSOs, stakeholders described the challenges of geography, where island-based CSOs usually have limited access to capacity-building or resource-building opportunities because of their location, while national-level CSOs had better access. Stakeholders expressed concerns regarding operational weaknesses and continuity, noting that CSOs usually halt activities when the founder steps down or becomes unavailable. All stakeholders described challenges such as a lack of funding and the fact that many CSOs do not have a sustainable operation, while also emphasizing the importance of developing capacity-building programmes for the sector and the fact that CSOs frequently require a great deal of help and assistance.

CSOs also highlighted additional challenges in terms of other parties and the surrounding environment. CSOs noted a lack of cooperation between council/government and CSOs, a lack of government aid, political interference and government divisions. Other structural and institutional challenges cited by CSOs were bureaucracy, a lack of a central register with which to effectively interface, a lack of accountability and transparency, and corruption within CSOs. CSOs also noted socio-political challenges, such as Maldives' small population, a lack of public support, restricted resource mobilization space and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders agreed and also expressed concern about the constraints and limitations of current regulatory systems, underlining the need and necessity of prioritizing CSOs in policy formulation. It is vital that policymakers and donor agencies address such concerns in order to facilitate a resilient and active civil society, as studies have demonstrated that CSO potential can be hindered due to factors such as distrust of and by governments, a lack of structured mechanisms to ensure priority to civil society, and their weak and ad hoc dialogue with governments.²⁷

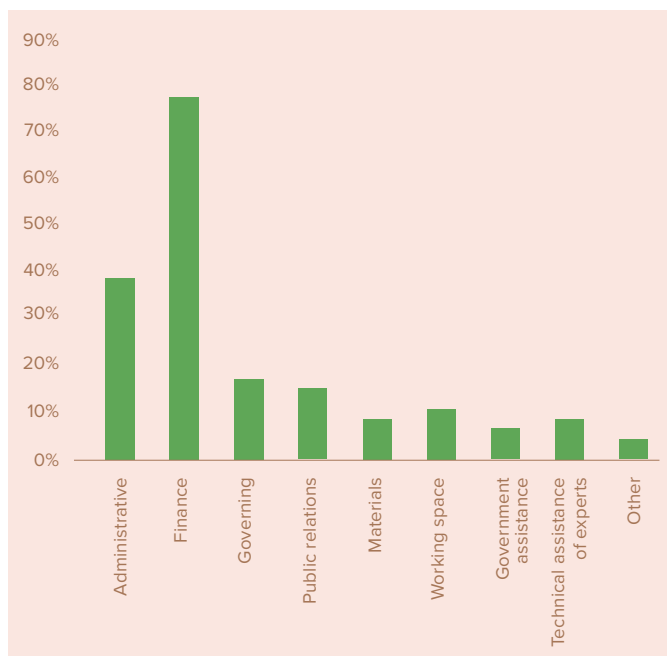
²⁷ UNDP (2015). *A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific*. Suva: UNDP Pacific Centre.

Figure 46. Challenges faced by CSOs



When asked about the kind of assistance needed to overcome these obstacles and enhance their internal management and efficiency, most CSOs stated that they required assistance in one or two areas. The data revealed that almost four in five CSOs need financial assistance and almost two in five CSOs need administrative support. Both unregistered CSOs stated needing administrative and financial assistance. Other types of assistance described by the respondents included assistance in governing, public relations, sourcing materials, establishing a working space, government assistance and technical expertise.

Figure 47. Kind of assistance needed by CSOs



When stakeholders were asked about the types of assistance currently available to CSOs, they reported a variety of options, including capacity-building training, awareness programmes, partnership-building exercises, technical expertise, small grant schemes, orientation programmes, financial contributions, networking sessions, sub-grants, training of trainer (TOT) grants, and more. However, despite the fact that various support mechanisms have been initiated, not all CSOs have access to them. Many lack the necessary knowledge and technical expertise to identify the opportunities available to them.

Moreover, according to stakeholders, donors and sometimes government ministries frequently seek to support professional CSOs because their initiatives are often subject-oriented and go through a competitive selection process. So, donors often pursue specialist CSOs that demonstrate sufficient know-how and expertise and have a specific focus area, thus limiting opportunities for generalist CSOs. Some donors use a competitive selection process for CSOs and consultancy firms which means that CSOs with competitive, professional experience and resource capacity have an advantage compared to organizations that are smaller and less experienced. In this regard, CSOs in Malé have access to more technical resources, and their chances are higher, then, of getting assistance. This could perpetuate the disparities between Malé-based and island-based CSOs. Stakeholders verified that there is this difference in access to opportunities and stated that given the requirement for specialist and experienced CSOs, they frequently end up working with the few CSOs with whom they usually collaborate or partner. This is because these selected CSOs have been able to establish positive relationships with their funders, increasing the impact of their work. It is crucial to note, however, that donors sometimes also have a publicly accessible process for all of their collaborations, and several have expressed the need to increase accessibility for emerging organizations.

Stakeholders did not typically differentiate between registered or unregistered organizations in providing assistance. However, some donor agencies stated that in providing grants or financial assistance, the government procedures of awarding registered CSOs are adopted. While this is understandable in terms of preserving legitimacy and financial transparency, it nevertheless limits prospects for unregistered movements that may have unique knowledge and/or impact in a particular area.

While options for assistance are available, the effectiveness of such support, including financial aid, can be limited in expanding CSO capacity. Some grants

have specific requirements, such as guaranteeing that the funds be solely utilized for the project and not elsewhere. This can stymie the operations of CSOs, which may already be restricted in capacity and finances, and then continue to restrict CSOs' potential to become self-sufficient, since less funding is being directed toward CSO and resource development. Indeed, studies have found that greater specialized financing for a specific project or programme meant that the majority of funds flowed through CSOs as programme implementers, with less funds going to the CSOs themselves.²⁸

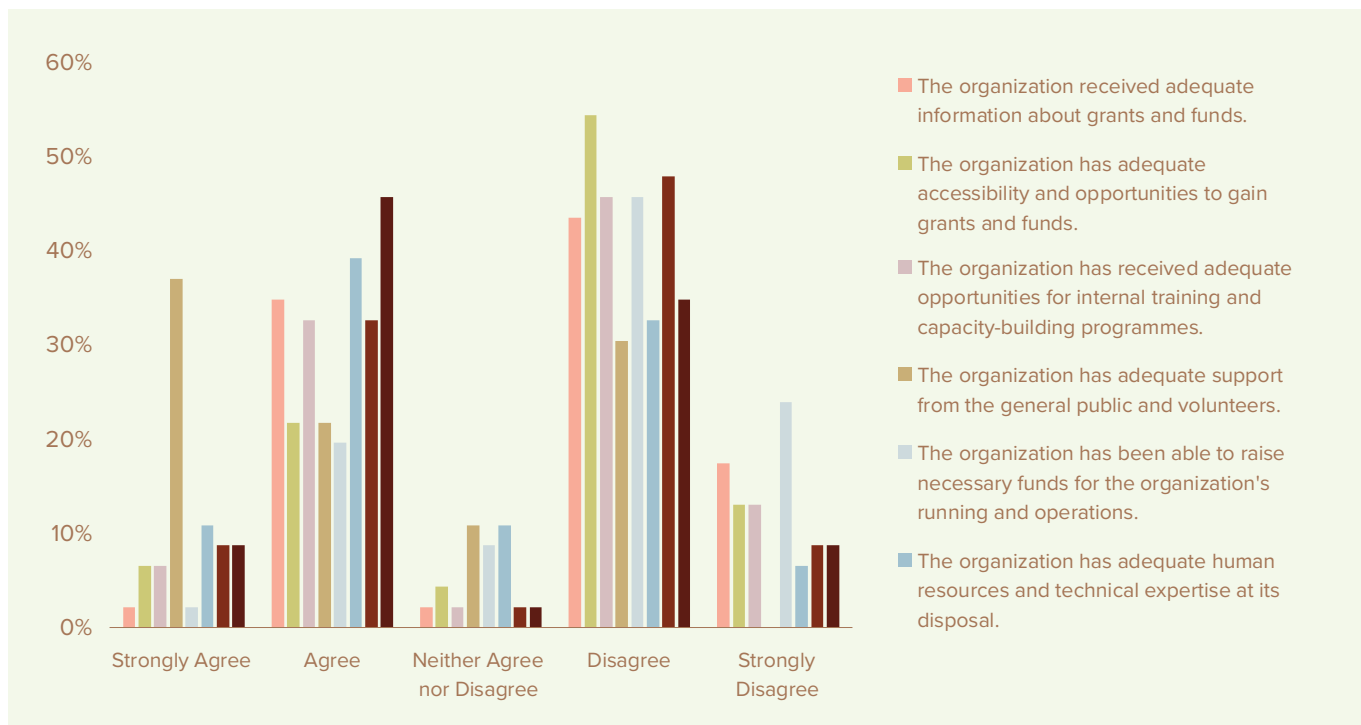
The study gathered data on CSOs' general perceptions of funding, resources and capacity. Analysis showed that CSOs frequently differ on accessibility, opportunity and financing information. The survey also indicated that CSOs are often hampered in their capacity-building efforts. See Table 13 and Figure 52 for a summary of the findings.

Table 13. CSO perception on funding, accessibility, capacity and resource constraints

	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE
The organization received adequate information about grants and funds.	37%	2%	61%
The organization has adequate accessibility and opportunities to gain grants and funds.	28%	4%	67%
The organization has received adequate opportunities for internal training and capacity-building programmes.	39%	2%	59%
The organization has adequate support from the general public and volunteers.	59%	11%	30%
The organization has been able to raise necessary funds for the organization's running and operations.	22%	9%	70%
The organization has adequate human resources and technical expertise at its disposal.	50%	11%	39%
The organization has adequate infrastructure and working space available.	41%	2%	57%
The organization has adequate access to information, data and research, and knowledge on target subjects.	54%	2%	43%

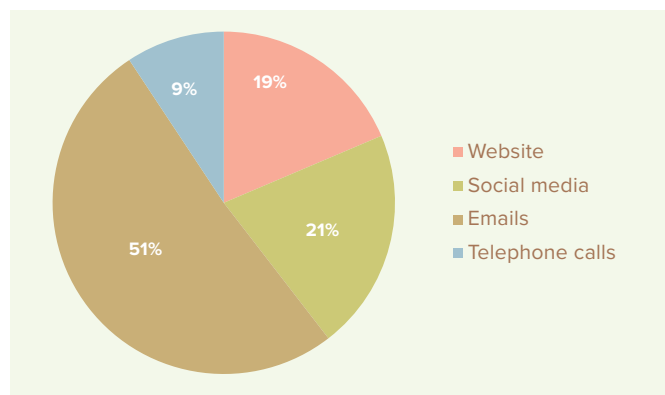
²⁸ OECD. (2020). "Working with civil society: Findings from surveys and consultations." In *Development Assistance Committee Members and Civil Society*, Paris, OECD Publishing.

Figure 48. CSO perception on funding, accessibility, capacity and resource constraints



A large share of CSOs, 59 percent, said that they have general public support and appropriate knowledge of the target populations, while 50 percent of CSOs believe they have the technical skills and human resources to carry out operations. The majority report being limited by resources such as infrastructure and working space, 57 percent, and 70 percent report not being able to raise the necessary funds for their operations. Both unregistered CSOs believed that they did not have adequate accessibility and opportunities to gain grants and funds. One emphasized more strongly that funds and human resources were not sufficiently available while the other said adequate infrastructure was not available. Both groups agreed that despite limited resources and capacity, they have adequate access to information, data and research, and knowledge on target subjects.

Figure 49. Preferred mode of communication to receive information



CSOs must have adequate access to information to carry out their work. In terms of their preferred mode of communication to receive updates and information, over half (51 percent) of the respondents chose emails, 21 percent chose social media, 19 percent chose websites and 9 percent chose telephone calls (Figure 53). CSOs also gave other suggestions including conducting seminars. Both unregistered groups chose social media as their preferred means of communication, and as these groups are not governed by a parent body, increasing efforts on social media to reach them could be useful.

7 COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The collaborative nature of CSOs and the strength of collaborations with other institutions is important to their work, and can help them ensure that societal welfare requirements are met in development initiatives and policy formation.

International good practice underlines fundamental human rights standards that should be respected in order to guarantee that CSO contributions to society are meaningful.²⁹ To begin with, the role of civil society in society must be recognized, and civil society actors must be free to act independently and advocate positions that differ from those of public authorities.³⁰ Second, all civil society actors must be welcomed and enabled to participate in public life without any kind of discrimination.³¹ Third, because government authorities and civil society actors share the goal of improving people's lives despite playing separate roles, mutual respect is essential.³² The fourth principle is that public authorities and organizations must operate in the public interest with openness, responsibility, clarity, transparency and accountability.³³

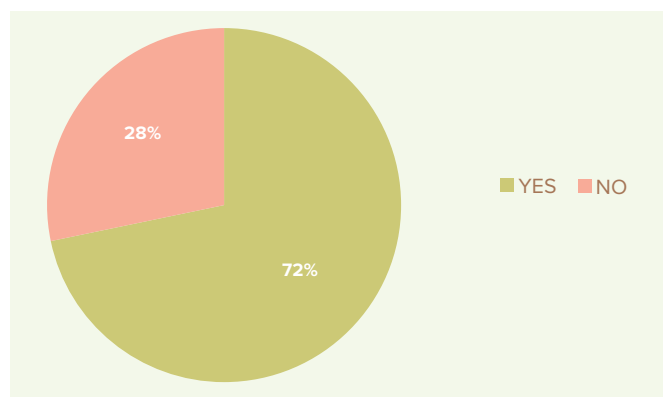
CSOs' ability to respond to gaps is naturally increased by collaborative activities in which input, resources and expertise are pooled. Shared spaces for dialogue and collaboration, as well as decision-making processes, are key conditions for CSO empowerment.³⁴ Studies have indicated that the success of collaborative efforts is dependent not just on effective information exchange, but also on robust institutional mechanisms.³⁵ As a result, even if civil society's vital role is understood, the value and efficacy of advocacy cannot be measured in the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures.

7.1 Collaboration with other CSOs

The study found a very high level of collaborative efforts between CSOs themselves, with 72 percent stating that they have at one point collaborated or partnered with another CSO. According to stakeholder input, the activities included community-based social activities, sports festivals and celebrating various occasions. Relevant case studies have shown that frequent collaboration among CSOs is expected and consistent with the perceptions of stakeholders: given the many generalist CSOs functioning in Maldives, it makes sense that CSOs would collaborate in various, diverse focus areas. Stakeholders also generally underlined the need for improving procedures for cross-CSO collaboration, and the value of a framework and guidelines for various stakeholders to incorporate CSOs and their input into various planning and implementation initiatives.

In terms of collaboration and partnerships with international CSOs, stakeholder consultations revealed that international CSOs mostly interact with the public through local CSOs and generally work in a technical capacity. It was recognized that collaborating with foreign CSOs may also boost the capacity of local CSOs. Collaborative work included projects on gender-related work (awareness of domestic and gender-based violence) and social inclusion, forums, partnership development with important government institutions and policymakers, small grant schemes, capacity-building programmes, public awareness and good governance. International donors also collaborate with CSOs to put country partnership ideas into action.

Figure 50. Collaboration with other CSOs



²⁹ OHCHR (2014). *A Practical Guide for Civil Society: Civil Society Space and the United Nations Human Rights System*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ UNDP (2015). *A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific*. Suva: UNDP Pacific Centre.

7.2 CSO engagement with policymakers

CSO engagement in policymaking is a vital part of ensuring that community needs are represented in development-related planning processes. CSOs' perspectives are also vital to and taken into account while formulating development plans and strategies in Maldives as mandated by the Decentralization Act. In fact, one of the key conditions which underlies good practice in ensuring CSO engagement and relationships with policymakers is a conducive political and public environment which values and encourages civic contribution and where public officials are responsive to civil society actors in their regular interactions.³⁶

Stakeholder consultations with several government agencies revealed that government ministries collaborate with CSOs on a variety of initiatives on a needs basis. Even though the government does not routinely include CSOs in their operations at present, government officials did recognize the necessity to do so. The government agencies also recognized that CSOs might have a unique viewpoint on various matters, given how they work closely with the community—a trait that was identified during consultations.

While the importance of CSO involvement with policymakers and government agencies is apparent, given that CSOs work closely with and represent the needs of the community, it is important to assess the relationship between such stakeholders and CSOs. As such, a total of 59 percent CSOs stated that they have previously collaborated and/or partnered with a government agency, indicating a satisfactory level of engagement in government-supported projects and development efforts. Neither of the unregistered CSOs has collaborated or engaged with a government institution. It is important to establish, therefore, a mechanism by which unregistered CSOs can be more recognized and how their contribution can be utilized in development-related projects and in informed policymaking. Any attempt to activate unregistered movements and recognize their contribution and potential input in development-related issues and policy could start with an open call or a publicly open outreach programme.

Government ministries have collaborated with CSOs, particularly those with comparable priority areas and

beneficiaries to the ministry's purpose. For example, the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services (MoGFSS) has a platform called "Ibama", which is now being rolled out and functions with island-based CSOs and WDCs, with a lot of leeway given to islands to adapt to the island situation based on the template provided by the ministry. Such joint activities can enhance the effectiveness of government programmes by mobilizing organizations that are deeply connected to communities and have a unique contextual awareness of community needs.

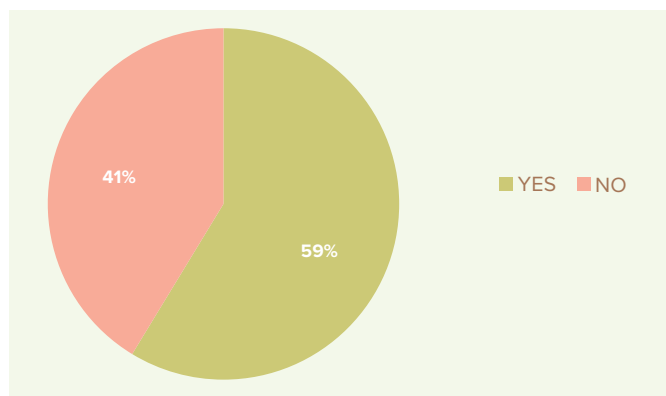
With the transition to a decentralized form of governance, it is also critical to understand CSO engagement with island councils. Consultations with several island councils offered insight into their community's joint activities with CSOs. However, councils stated that the administration of the current council was very young. Hence, they so far have had only a short length of time to engage with CSOs. As a result, councils have been unable to initiate many initiatives, but aim to do so in the next years.

It is important to highlight the benefit of monitoring mechanisms by which CSO partnerships in the decentralized form of governance are monitored near the end of each election cycle. Councils now collaborate with CSOs in a limited capacity, mostly in planning procedures such as the preparation of land use plans, island development plans and women empowerment plans. Councils said that the majority of their cooperation with CSOs revolved around social activities, celebrations, service provision, religious events, COVID-19-related tasks, and community activities such as beach clean-ups, training programmes and sports tournaments. Some noteworthy alternative forms of engagement based on stakeholder input included improving CSO knowledge and capacity in monitoring political processes, addressing misinformation and access to information, and environmental governance.

The study also looked at political parties' interactions with CSOs. Several CSOs, as well as focus group discussions with youth and councils, reported that political influence is a challenge that they have experienced; it ultimately inhibits community spirit and CSOs' capacity to contribute to the community in a cohesive manner. Consultations with political parties found that the majority of engagement with CSOs was centred on focus group discussions on social issues and the community's need to establish manifestos and development plans, and conversations about expanding the role of CSOs.

³⁶ OHCHR (2014). *A Practical Guide For Civil Society: Civil Society Space And The United Nations Human Rights System*.

Figure 51. CSO collaboration with government agencies



The strength of partnership networks between stakeholders and CSOs is critical in paving the path for a more engaged, inclusive and resilient community. In order to strengthen the impact of CSOs in society and foster their engagement, it is important to consider best practices for safeguarding and expanding civic space, as this will ensure that CSOs are heard and strengthened in society. A paper by USAID outlining best practices on safeguarding civil society space found that safeguarding space and building capacity for civil society is a long-term effort and that early action in transition periods is critical.³⁷ During political transitions, when new governments have many potential issues to address, this provides a window of opportunity to improve and develop enabling environments for CSOs.³⁸ This crucial early engagement can lay a long-term foundation for a strong civil society.³⁹ Connecting civil society to development outcomes in newly transitioning countries that were seeking international recognition or were more dependent on international funding was found to be a factor in the success of diplomatic efforts to advocate against a restrictive law.⁴⁰ Finally, the report found that consultative processes between CSOs and government are only credible when independent CSOs are invited to participate.⁴¹

Studies have shown that these factors are already globally considered in civil society engagement policies. Key findings of the two-year survey conducted by the OECD with Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members found that the majority of members (22, 76 percent) had a policy or strategy for working with CSOs in place.⁴² Such policies can include guidelines, legislation, strategies, principles and action plans, and were developed in consultation with CSOs. Some DAC members continued to also involve CSOs in policy monitoring, which was supported by CSOs' desire to be engaged in policymaking relevant to CSOs.⁴³ Another survey conducted on CSOs by Kornswieg, Osborne, Hovland and Court at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) for their Research

and Policy in Development programme revealed several interesting findings. While the previous survey by OECD found that CSOs welcomed opportunities to participate in policymaking related to CSOs, this survey by ODI showed that it was a vital objective of CSOs to influence government policymaking in other aspects such as governance and accountability, rural livelihoods and agriculture, and education and gender issues.⁴⁴ Notably, the majority of CSOs were found to be working across a broad range of issues (generalist) rather than a single issue (specialist), which is relevant to the context of Maldives.⁴⁵

³⁷ USAID (2014). *Stand With Civil Society: Best Practices*.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² OECD (2020). "Working with civil society: Findings from surveys and consultations."

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Overseas Development Institute (ODI) (2006). *CSOs, Policy Influence, and Evidence Use: A Short Survey*. Jillian Kornswieg, David Osborne, Ingie Hovland and Julius Court. February. London: Research and Policy in Development (RAPID), ODI.

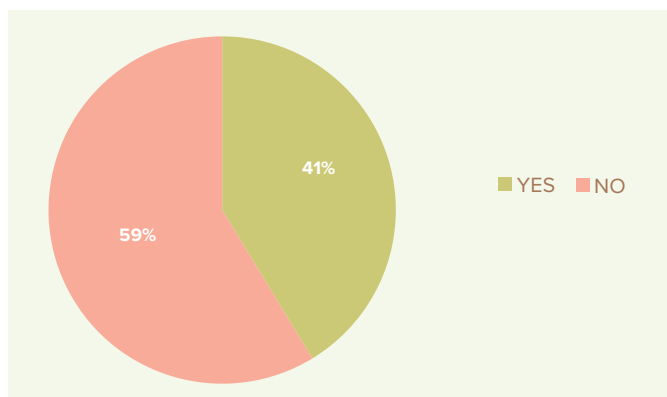
⁴⁵ Ibid.

7.3 CSOs and the private sector

In relation to CSOs’ engagement with private institutions, stakeholder interviews revealed that private companies were deeply involved in Corporate Social Responsibility, frequently in areas such as aiding children and people with disabilities, youth empowerment, women’s empowerment and environmental protection. It was observed that when partnerships with some CSOs grew stronger, they were generally engaged regularly. Their impact was higher as collaborative efforts grew stronger. Furthermore, stakeholders stated that in terms of building partnerships, CSOs are often allowed to begin and participate in publicly accessible ways, with an emphasis on the CSO’s reach, breadth and capabilities.

However, despite seeing an increasing amount of CSR initiatives by various companies around the country, most CSOs, 59 percent, stated that they haven’t yet collaborated or partnered with a private institution while 41 percent stated that they have done so. This might be an indication that the private sector needs to strengthen their efforts to work with CSOs, possibly through CSR, and they could engage the public by mobilizing the strengths of the civil society sector.

Figure 52. CSO collaboration with private institutions



Of the unregistered CSOs, one did not engage in any collaborative work or partnerships with a private organization and the other, though a fairly new movement, had collaborated with a private institution, though for an event, not for a long-term project.

8 INDEPENDENCE, CREDIBILITY AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE SECTOR

This chapter discusses CSOs' independence in their operational environment and their credibility in the eyes of the general public. The independence of a CSO can be affected by many factors, including financial soundness, operational procedures, principles and values of the CSO, and the personnel involved. Perceived independence contributes to the credibility of a CSO and thereby contributes to the public confidence in the CSO and the sector. As CSOs are formed "to pursue shared interests in the public domain",⁴⁶ this automatically extends a moral high ground towards CSOs compared to organizations in business and other sectors. Consequently, CSOs are judged more critically if their values, principles and independence are perceived to be compromised. Hence, the effectiveness of the CSOs will be largely dependent on public confidence in them and the wider sector, and maintaining credibility and confidence will be a key factor to the success of CSOs. This chapter will look at the perceived independence of CSOs in the eyes of both CSOs and stakeholders, how CSOs seek to resolve and manage conflicts, and how to ensure that their credibility and public confidence in them is maintained.

8.1 Maintaining independence

CSOs' independence is crucial to maintaining the credibility to provide services and achieve their goals. FGDs and stakeholder consultations indicate that there are mixed opinions on CSO independence. While many commentators perceived the role and operations of CSOs positively, some are critical of CSOs' effectiveness in achieving their goals and reaching their target groups. Some commentators particularly highlighted the fading support for CSOs compared to the past.

Some of the reasons for this decrease in support include a lack of collaboration between CSOs due to political differences, indicating political affiliations and other influences that affect their independence. Stakeholders cited the lack of CSO involvement in the monitoring of political processes and the lack of consultative processes among policymakers and CSOs during policy formulation. While it is best practice internationally to have good consultative processes between CSOs and government,

this is predicated on CSOs being independent and without influence.⁴⁷

The political climate in which CSOs operate can have a direct impact on their success. According to studies, the success of CSOs increases as the political environment improves. A good political environment is characterized by democratic governance qualities such as free speech and free media.⁴⁸ According to the same report, a hostile political climate is characterized by hostile factors such as CSOs seen to be anti-government, corrupt government officials and lack of transparency.⁴⁹ These elements contribute to unconstrained arbitrary state power, which limits CSOs' independence and impact.

8.1.1 Influence from donors, sponsors and the government

When asked about influence from donors, sponsors and the government, just under half of the respondents (48 percent), reported that they did not face influence from donors, sponsors and the government and stated that they do not know whether this happens. However, 37 percent of the respondents and the unregistered CSOs stated that they faced influence from donors, sponsors and the government and/or have known it to occur.

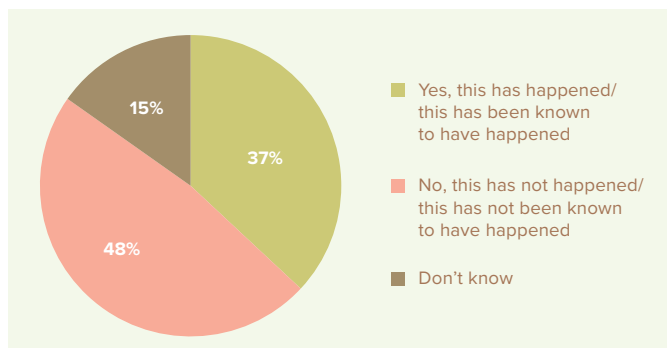
⁴⁶ OECD (2012). *Partnering with Civil Society – 12 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews*.

⁴⁷ USAID (2014). *Stand With Civil Society: Best Practices*.

⁴⁸ ODI (2006). *CSOs, Policy Influence and Evidence Use: A Short Survey*.

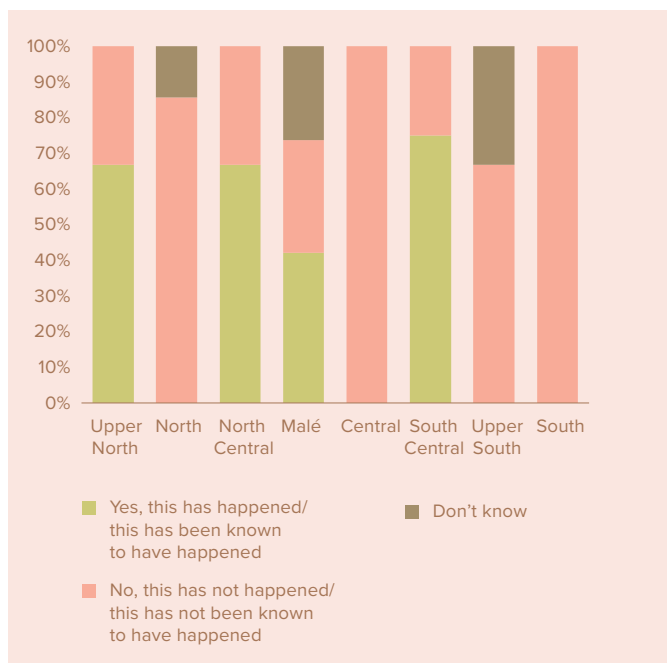
⁴⁹ Ibid.

Figure 53. Influence from donors/sponsors and/or the government



Looking at how the influence and operational independence differs by location, it is notable that CSOs based in Malé and the Upper North, North Central and South Central Regions reported that a higher percentage of CSOs are influenced by donors, sponsors or the government compared with those who are not. CSOs in other regions (North, Central, Upper South and South) did not report influence from donors, sponsors and the government.

Figure 54. Influence from donors/sponsors and/or government by region



Among those who faced the most influence from donors, sponsors and the government are CSOs targeting the general population, citizens of a specific island and youth, children and schoolchildren. There are no significant differences by the extent of influence between generalist and specialist CSOs.

CSOs can face influence through a multitude of ways. Sometimes influences can affect their day-to-day operations, while some can impact a particular event or activity carried out by the organization. In the case of Maldives, there have been events where state influence has directly impacted the independent functioning of the CSO, as well as its operations.

A relevant case on state power and influence in the context of Maldives in recent political history was the sudden dissolution of numerous CSOs by the then parent governing body. In the run-up to the 2013 elections held at the end of the year, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced the dissolution of nearly 70 percent (approximately 1,300 of 1,853) of the country’s registered CSOs, citing the failure of adherence to reporting requirements and electing executive committees on 18 March 2013.⁵⁰ The Ministry asserted that just 200 CSOs had complied with reporting and governance requirements. This move was viewed by several CSOs such as CIVICUS, the Voice of Women and the Maldives NGO Federation as a part of a campaign to suppress civic action and political activism leading up to the 2013 presidential elections.⁵¹

This led to the global civil society alliance, CIVICUS, together with the Voice of Women and the Maldives NGO Federation (a not-for-profit, non-governmental network of CSOs) to raise concerns over the criteria used to dissolve a large number of CSOs while others continued activities. And they advocated for free and fair elections in 2013 by urging the government to put in place appropriate measures, and to retract the statement to dissolve the CSOs.⁵²

According to a statement by CIVICUS, this unprecedented announcement by MoYSCE “to arbitrarily dissolve civil society organizations would be in violation of Article 30(b) of the Constitution of the Maldives which guarantees the right to form associations and societies and the right to participate in them for economic, social, educational and cultural purposes. In line with Articles 42 and 43 of the Maldivian Constitution, the government must ensure judicial oversight by an independent and impartial court of any executive decision to dissolve CSOs. The government must also immediately communicate the grounds for its decision in each and every case, citing clear examples.”⁵³

⁵⁰ CIVICUS (2013). “Maldives: Stop the harassment of NGOs.” Media releases.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

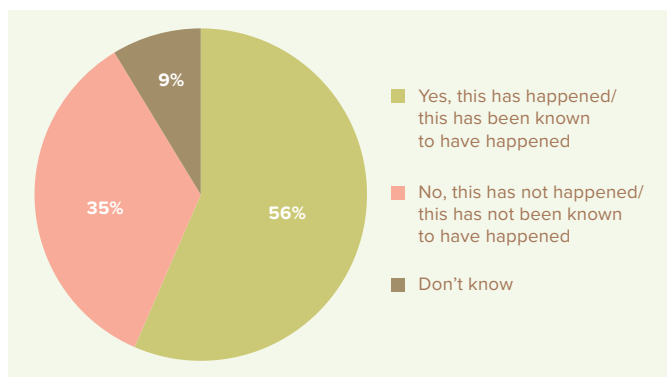
⁵³ Ibid.

Such a case of the government’s exercise of arbitrary power is not isolated. There have been other cases in which the Maldivian government has previously shut down the operations of CSOs arbitrarily, confiscated funds, and dissolved them without due process, ultimately violating the constitutional guarantees on the right of association, the right to fair administrative action that adheres to basic fairness and procedural propriety.⁵⁴ These arbitrary measures set an undue precedent of constitutional rights such as freedom of association and freedom of expression being impaired.⁵⁵

8.1.2 Influence from political parties and groups

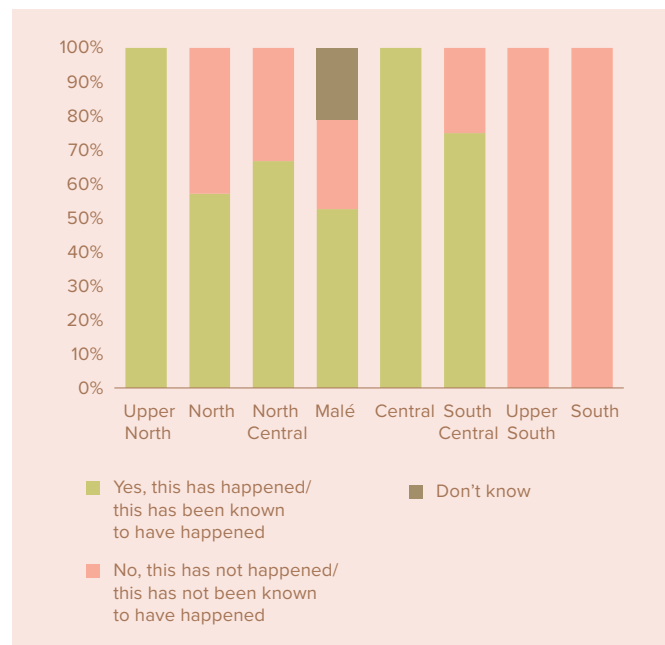
More than half of the CSOs, 57 per cent, and the two unregistered NGOs reported that they faced influence from political parties and groups or have known it to happen (and 35 percent reported to have faced none of such influences).

Figure 55. Faced influence from political parties



Apart from the South and Upper South Regions, CSOs (more than half) in all other regions reported having faced influence from political parties or known it to happen. Notably, all respondents from the Upper North and Central Regions reported such influences.

Figure 56. Influence from political parties by region



The negative impact of rising political influences across the country has been highlighted by the civil and political rights activist CSO, Transparency Maldives (TM), which maintains that the growth, recognition and prominence of political parties has increased local political tensions and polarization, resulting in divisions within the community due to differences in opinion, despite the fact that everyone's ultimate objective is the good of the society.⁵⁶ This concern is corroborated with views of several island council stakeholders consulted during this study.

This view has been further corroborated by some stakeholders who provided more information about the nature and result of such influences. The rise of political parties and polarization on certain islands is also mirrored in the fragmentation of CSOs. What was once competitiveness between two districts has turned into political rivalry, hindering the outcomes and effectiveness of civil society activities and impeding collaborative efforts. As a result, social rifts and ideological differences become more entrenched, threatening community unity and social cohesion, which is critical in ensuring that the community is active, inclusive and resilient.

According to the respondents, CSOs that operate at an international level face influence from political parties.

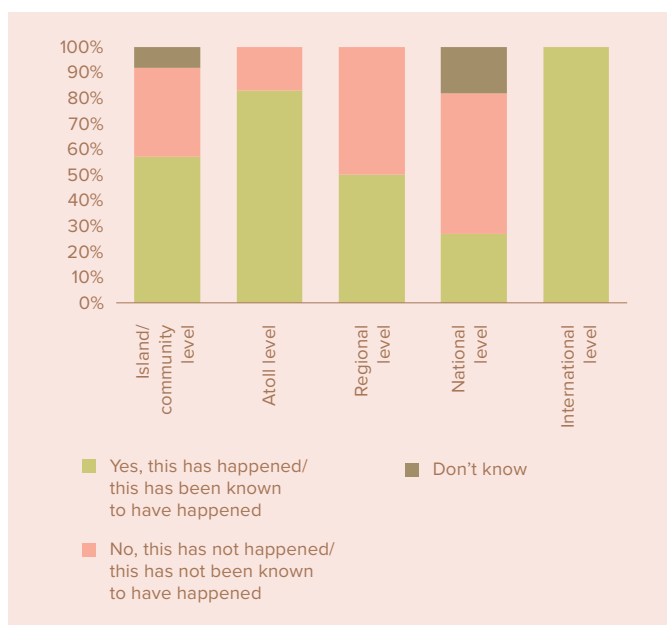
⁵⁴ International Federation of Human Rights (FDHR) (2020). “One year since the arbitrary ban of Maldivian rights group the Maldivian Democracy Network”, Statement. Maldives. 19 December.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Transparency Maldives (2017). “Sallaa: The Importance and Role of Civil Society”. Issue No. 9, 07/2017.

The study found CSOs operating at island level and atoll level were in a similar position. Among CSOs operating at a national level, 27 percent reported that they faced influence from political parties. Some discussions with island councils indicated that there are political or personal disagreements between two CSOs, as well as a lack of collaborative spirit among CSOs. Discussions also underlined the significance of putting away such political rhetoric and being more community oriented in order to increase the CSO sector's reputation and public trust in it.

Figure 57. Influence of political parties on CSOs by geographical scope



8.2 Maintaining independence

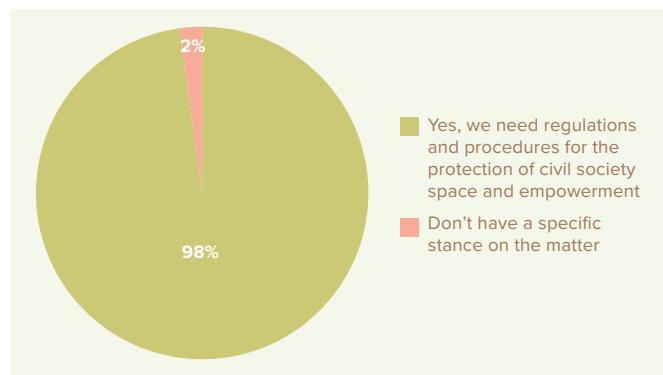
Another factor that undermines CSO credibility is poor management of conflicts between CSOs and external stakeholders, including the state, and conflict management within the CSOs themselves. The methods employed by CSOs to manage and resolve conflicts will also ensure the timely delivery of the CSO's objectives, as well as their overall effectiveness. CSOs generally believe that conflict management should be regulated with mechanisms within the regulatory framework to resolve conflicts.

8.2.1 Influence from political parties and groups

CSOs believe that one of the solutions to increase their credibility and public confidence in CSOs is to operate

in a regulated environment—and that regulations and state-enforced rules are important for the protection of civil society space and empowerment. There is almost a unanimous agreement among CSOs on the need for regulations. As per the survey findings, 98 percent of the CSOs and the two unregistered organizations felt there is a need for regulations and procedures, while the remaining 2 percent has no particular view on the matter.

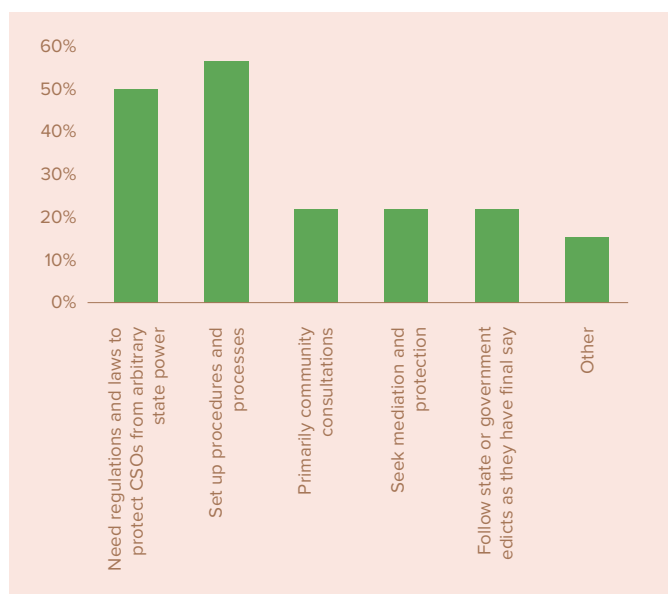
Figure 58. CSOs' perception on the need for regulation



8.2.2 Managing conflict and disagreement with external stakeholders

While all CSOs agree with regulation, there are varying responses on how regulatory mechanisms should be used to manage conflicts. Findings of the survey showed that 50 percent of the respondents cited the need for regulations and laws to protect CSOs from arbitrary state power and 57 percent cited the need to set up procedures and processes on how to deal with conflict situations between CSOs and external stakeholders, including the state. Slightly more than 20 percent of the CSOs agree that community consultations with affected persons, communities and specialists should be held to decide whether an activity is justified or not, and that seeking mediation and protection (from specialists or police) and following government edicts are ways that regulations can deal with conflict management. Other suggestions from CSOs include following set procedures, customizing policies for CSOs, involving CSOs in “meaningful work” and policymaking, consolidating the role of CSOs and liquidating inactive CSOs.

Figure 59. CSOs' perception on the roles of regulation

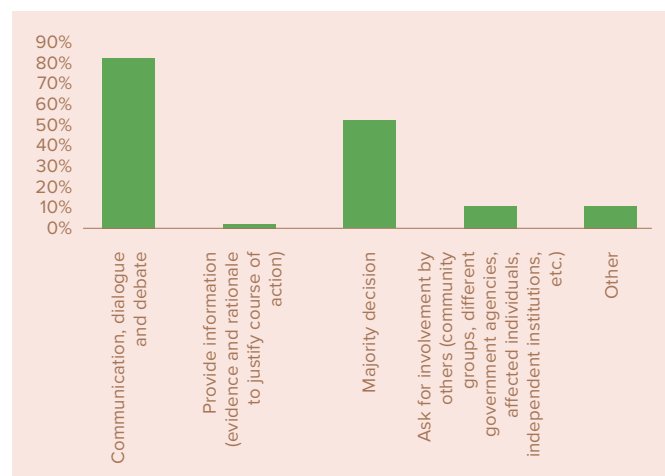


In gauging how CSOs perceive the need for regulation, it was crucial to understand where unregistered movements stood on the matter. Both groups interviewed in this study stated that they believe that regulations and state-enforced rules are important for the protection of civil society space and empowerment, citing reasons such as needing laws and regulations to protect CSOs from arbitrary state power and the need to set up procedures and processes for how to deal with such situations. One stated that regulation is useful for seeking mediation with and protection, from stakeholders and/or authorities. Therefore, it could be understood that their choice for not formally registering, as discussed earlier, is not rooted in a mistrust or a disbelief in regulation but rather due to capacity and resource constraints.

8.2.3 Managing conflicts and disagreements within CSOs

The most popular means to resolve conflicts within CSOs are communication, dialogue and debate, and resolution by a majority decision. Most of the CSOs, 83 percent, believe that communication, dialogue and debate will be effective in resolving internal conflicts while 52 percent of the CSOs also opt for a majority decision. Meanwhile, 11 percent of the CSOs reported other options such as working with community groups, government agencies, affected individuals and independent institutions in resolving conflicts.

Figure 60. Conflict resolution mechanisms within CSOs



Inquiring about conflict management methods employed in unregistered movements allows deeper insight into the practices and the principles of unregistered CSOs, which have a lesser degree of institutionalization due to the lack of legal requirements and reporting responsibilities. Both CSOs highlighted methods such as communication, dialogue, debate and the provision of information such as evidence and rationale to justify the course of action. One of them, as an organization with more members and volunteer involvement, also opted for methods such as a majority decision while the other highlighted involving a third party such as community groups, different government agencies, affected individuals, independent institutions, etc. to comment on and mediate conflict. In general, the findings and reporting by CSOs demonstrate that preferred democratic practices in conflict management promoted transparency in conflict management processes.

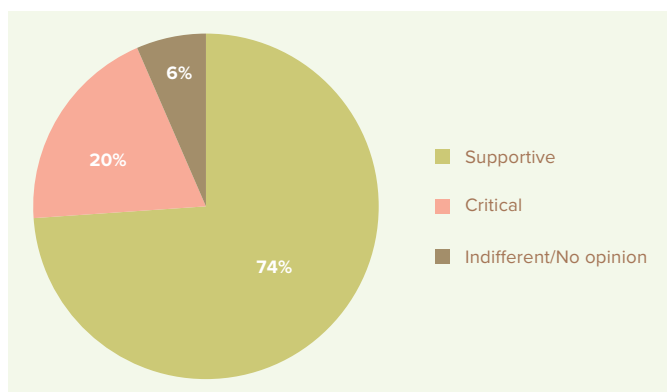
8.3 Ensuring credibility and public confidence

Ultimately, the perception of the community and their acceptance of civil society activity in society is a crucial indication of whether the civil society sector is in fact responding to the needs and concerns of the community. Accordingly, this section assesses the general view of the community, how CSOs believe the community perceived them, how to improve CSO credibility and public confidence, and the degree of transparency among CSOs in Maldives.

8.3.1 Community perception of CSOs

CSOs reported in the majority, 74 percent, that the general public is supportive of their work, while 20 percent believe that the community is critical of their work, and 6 percent believe the public is indifferent or has no opinion.

Figure 61. CSO views on community perception of them



Stakeholders who work closely with CSOs think that CSOs have a positive impact on the community and generally hold a positive view of them. One of the unregistered CSOs believed that the community was supportive of the CSO sector, while the other, which had already highlighted difficulties in getting public support and involvement said they had no opinion.

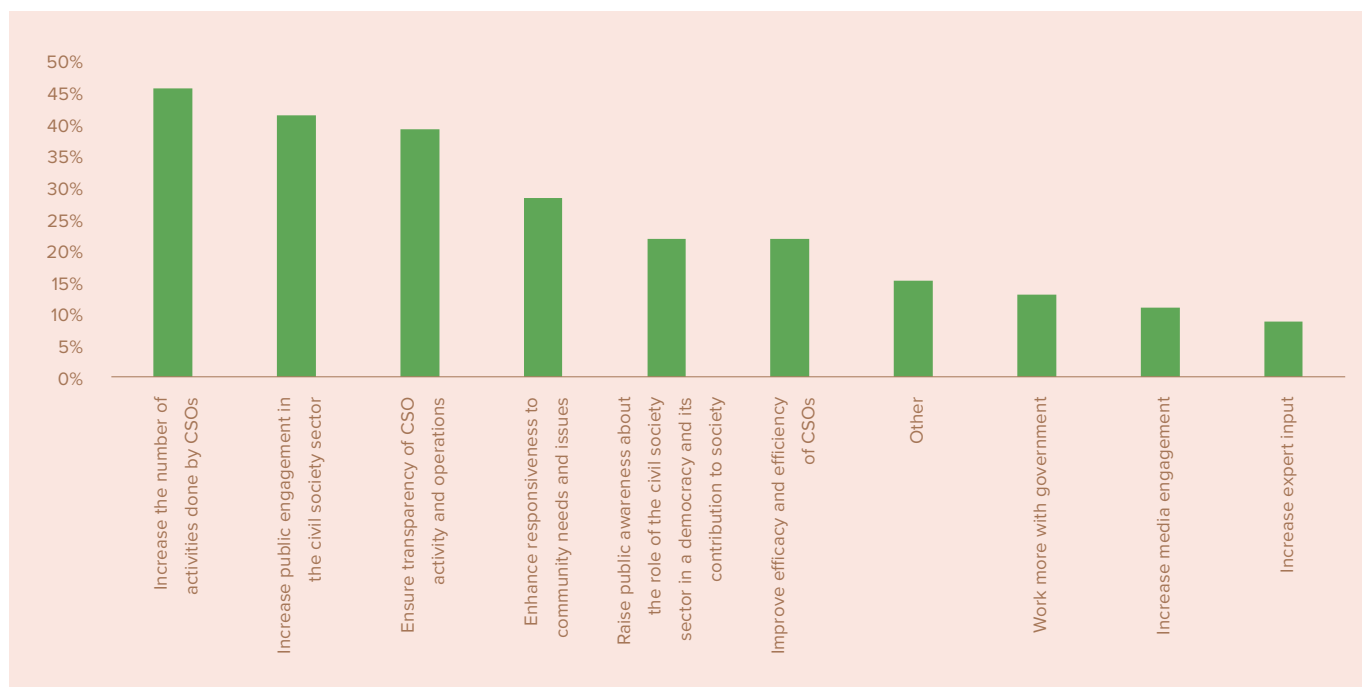
There were mixed reviews of CSOs from the focus group discussions with the councils, WDCs and youth groups. Some groups believe that CSOs contribute positively to the community. Other groups think that CSOs can be viewed by the community as divisive. This may be in reference to competition between some CSOs in small communities when they try to operate in the same sphere,

and also differences stemming from other factors in the community such as political or ideological differences.

8.3.2 Improving credibility and public confidence

CSOs have clear ideas on how their credibility and public confidence in them can be strengthened. More than 40 percent of the CSOs believe that they need to increase their visibility and engagement in the public through increasing the number of their activities and public engagement. A share of 39 percent of CSOs believe that increasing transparency of their activities and operations will increase public confidence in them. A further 28 percent of the CSOs said that enhancing responsiveness to community needs and issues will increase credibility.

Figure 62. Methods of increasing public confidence in CSOs and CSOs' credibility



Other suggestions from CSOs to improve their credibility and public confidence in them include:

- Working with the public
- Empowering CSOs
- Less involvement in politics
- Service delivery
- Involve CSOs in policymaking
- Equality among CSOs by policymakers

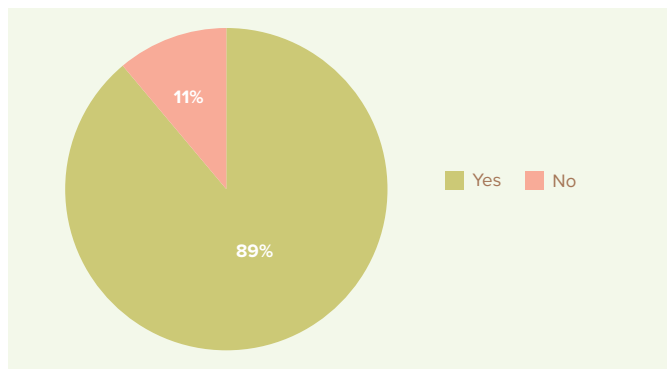
When unregistered movements were polled on ways of improving public trust in the sector, one emphasized the need for improving responsiveness to community needs and challenges. In fact, several focus group discussions revealed that women and councils are concerned that women-oriented programmes and initiatives with a social development focus are not being effectively implemented in their communities. The other unregistered CSO remarked that public understanding of the significance of civil society in a democracy and its contribution to society should be strengthened, and both CSOs emphasized

the need for enhancing transparency of CSO activity and operations, and increasing expert input. Stakeholders and the public generally agree with this view of CSOs. Stakeholders and the public believe that the credibility of CSOs can be increased by building the capacity of CSOs and through more programmes and activities.

8.3.3 Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are other key points highlighted by CSOs to strengthen their credibility and public confidence in them. Transparency in the CSO sector refers to transparency with respect to their activities, performance and financial matters. More than 40 percent of the CSOs believe that they need to increase their visibility and engagement with the public through increasing the number of activities and their public engagement. Just less than 40 percent of CSOs believe that increasing the transparency of their activities and operations will increase public confidence in them. Another 28 percent of the CSOs cited enhancing responsiveness to community needs and issues. However, 11 percent of the CSOs report that they do not share information with members and the community in a transparent manner.

Figure 63. Information sharing regarding CSO programmes

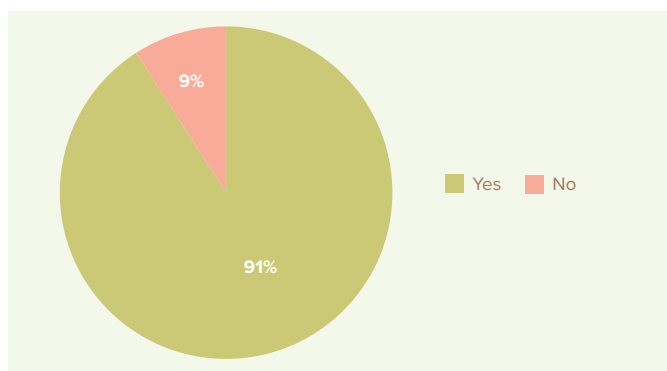


When information is shared, CSOs use the following ways to share information with members of the CSO and the community:

- Viber and other instant messaging (IM) groups
- Websites
- Meetings
- Word of mouth
- Social media
- Annual reports
- Phone and email
- AGMs

CSOs are more transparent in sharing information about finances with members than in sharing information about programmes. As per the findings, 91 percent of the CSOs share financial information with members in a transparent manner.

Figure 64. Information sharing with members regarding CSO finances



CSOs use the following ways to share financial information with members:

- Viber and other IM groups
- Websites
- Meetings
- Social media
- Annual reports
- Phone and email
- Annual general meetings
- CSO Notice Board
- Shared Google Drive sheets.

Both unregistered groups said that they share information about their activities to the general public transparently and via social media, and share financial information transparently with the members of their organization. The one group, with fewer members and lesser organizational institutionalism, stated that they share financial information through internal discussions while the larger and more institutionalized group with more members stated that they shared financial information with members via social media as well.

Transparency is essential for establishing systems of accountability and ensuring the legitimacy of civil society operations. CSOs, being non-profit and non-governmental, frequently have legal perks and privileges, such as exemption from paying taxes. However, the danger of CSOs abusing their position, such as siphoning funds or evading taxes, cannot be overlooked. All of these factors are reasons to ensure that CSOs are regulated under a robust legal framework.

9 REGULATION AND GOVERNANCE OF CSOS

This chapter discusses the knowledge, practical aspects and perceptions of CSOs with respect to the regulatory and governance environment of the CSO sector.

Regulating CSOs is a heavily debated topic. On the one hand, regulating CSOs can or may be viewed as hindrances to the freedom of association. A government may use both CSO laws and regulatory enforcement actions to maintain and expand political control over its citizenry, weakening civil society space.⁵⁷ This is especially true when governments' hold on power is weak and fragile. Studies have found that states could potentially "close spaces" for effective and independent civil society functioning by enacting regulatory restrictions on areas such as foreign funding for CSOs and limits on the rights of freedom of association, assembly and expression.⁵⁸

On the other hand, proponents of regulations for CSOs argue that regulations are required in the CSO sector to formally recognize CSOs, establish the standards for CSO operations, maintain ethical and moral standards, and sustain the credibility of and public confidence in the sector. Regulations will also protect CSOs from being abused and from arbitrary state power and other influences. While CSOs play an important role in a democratic society, the government has a role in shaping the civil society space. Governments set the rules of the game. Laws, regulations and assistance schemes set by the government influence the formation, development and institutionalization of social movements.⁵⁹

With the rise in prominence, diversity and activities of CSOs globally, regulation of CSOs can help to ensure that certain safeguards are kept in place for the public's welfare. As discussed earlier in this report, CSOs operate outside of the state and outside of the market. They have specific roles and responsibilities and also enjoy certain privileges such as tax exemption and donor funding. Therefore, regulation provides a formal mechanism by which civil society as well as public authorities can better understand their roles, responsibilities and discretion. That being said, regulation is only effective if the legislative framework surrounding it is robust, as in order for civil society actors to perform effectively in promoting fundamental rights, they need to be able to exercise their rights fully and without unnecessary or arbitrary restrictions.⁶⁰ In fact, it was highlighted in stakeholder

consultations that any imposition of regulations, even for the purposes of classification, should not impinge on any constitutional and fundamental rights such as freedom of expression.

It is therefore important to understand the regulatory and governance environment for CSOs, how it is established and how CSOs understand this environment. It is also crucial to understand if CSOs think that the regulatory environment helps or hinders their engagement. This report has already outlined the regulatory framework for CSOs. This chapter examines CSOs' familiarity and perception of the rules and regulations governing the sector, and how they view ease of compliance with various structural, organizational and legal requirements imposed by laws and regulations. The chapter will also examine how CSOs should be governed and regulated, as the country moves towards a more decentralized governance structure.

9.1 Familiarity with rules and regulations

Survey findings shows that 72 percent of the CSOs reported that they are familiar with the national or local rules and regulations that pertain to their organization's work, while 28 percent reported that they are not familiar with them, a significant share.

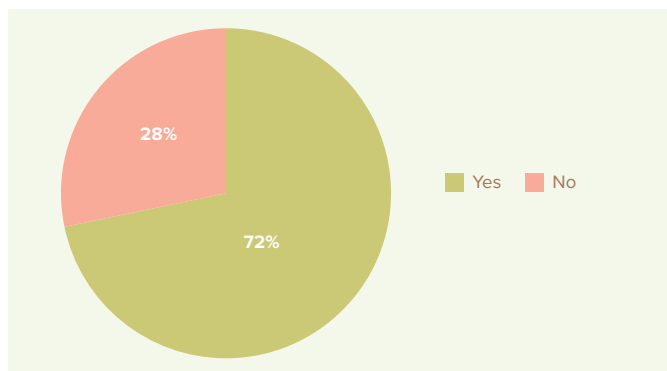
⁵⁷ DeMattee, Anthony James (2020). "Domesticating Civil Society: How and Why Governments Use Laws to Regulate CSOs". September. Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation. Indiana University.

⁵⁸ Cooper, R. (2018). *What is Civil Society, its role and value in 2018?* K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

⁵⁹ Pekkanen, Robert. (2003). "Molding Japanese Civil Society: State-Structured Incentives and the Patterning of Civil Society." *The state of civil society in Japan*: 116–134.

⁶⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2017). *Challenges facing civil society organisations working on human rights in the EU*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Figure 65. CSO familiarity with relevant laws and regulations



Further details on CSOs’ familiarity with legal and regulatory requirements were obtained by enquiring about the relevant laws and regulations that apply to the CSO sector. Interestingly, only 64 percent of the respondents stated that the Associations’ Act applied to them. While this is a slight increase from the 59 percent reported in the 2011 study, this figure is of concern: there are legal obligations under the Associations’ Act for all registered CSOs, and it could be expected that all or nearly all registered CSOs would know that the Act is applicable to them.

Nevertheless, the survey findings suggested that CSOs which are engaged in a specific type or area of activity may find relevant Acts and regulations important. To this end, 48 percent of the CSOs find that laws and regulations are relevant to the activities carried out by them. For example, a CSO focusing on Dhivehi language would consider the Act on prioritizing Dhivehi language as an important piece of legislation that is relevant to their work.

Comparing responses to this question between specialist and generalist CSOs, there is no significant difference in their finding specific laws related to their activities as relevant. Specialist CSOs’ response to this option was lower than generalist CSOs’. As per the findings, 30 percent of the CSOs responded that the Constitution is relevant and 36 percent of the CSOs responded that all laws are relevant.

The survey findings also revealed that CSOs’ familiarity with and awareness of the applicability of the Constitution has increased significantly since 2011; the previous study revealed that only one CSO considered the recent constitutional framework applicable to CSOs.⁶¹ The Constitution imposes certain legal obligations on them (for example, being non-discriminatory and refraining from fostering intolerance) and offers them rights and protections (e.g. of their

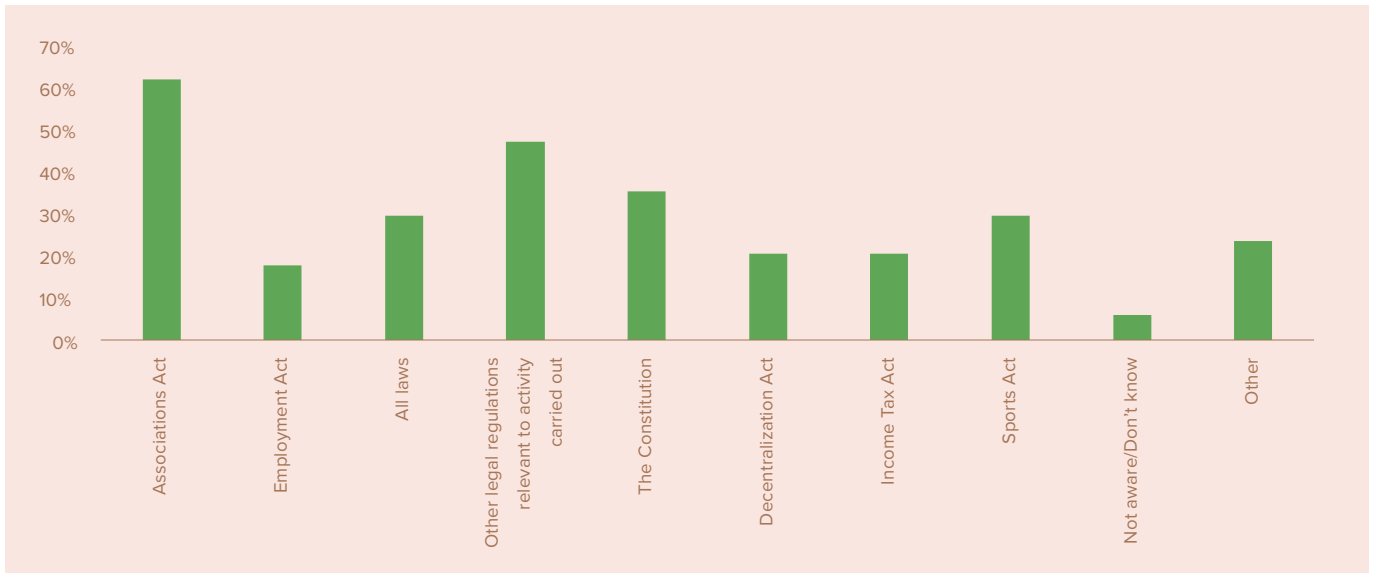
fundamental right to form associations and of being able to appeal unfair administrative decisions). The same trend applies to the proportion of CSOs who stated all laws are applicable; the previous study showed only 10 CSOs believed so.⁶² While this statement is technically true, it is not useful for evaluating more specific elements of legal understanding or compliance, nor does it help identify areas of the legal and regulatory framework which directly relate to or impact CSOs’ behaviour and functioning.

Other notable regulatory instruments discussed during the survey include the Sports Act, Decentralization Act and Income Tax Act. As discussed earlier in the legal review section of this report, the Sports Act and Income Tax Act have clauses that directly affect CSOs. For example, while the Sports Act affects how CSOs are registered and regulated, the Income Tax Act can be an avenue that CSOs can use to facilitate receiving donations and tap into Corporate Social Responsibility funds from businesses. The Decentralization Act also opens new opportunities to CSOs and affects the way that CSOs interact with authorities. However, less than 30 percent of the CSOs stated that these acts applied to them.

⁶¹ UNDP Maldives (2011). *Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society*.

⁶² Ibid.

Figure 66. CSO familiarity with specific laws and regulations

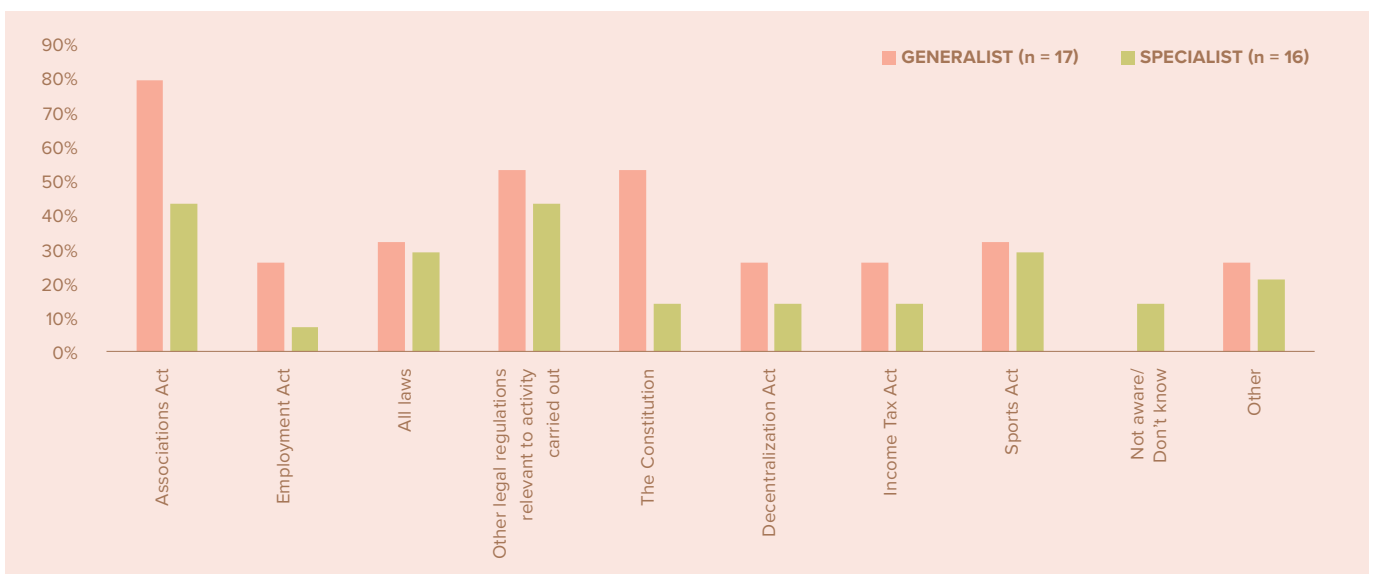


Other laws that CSOs reported having relevance to them and their specific areas of work include:

- Crime prevention regulations
- Transport-related laws
- Environment-related laws
- Laws related to social issues
- The Broadcasting Law
- Regulations related to local governance
- Laws related to subject matters of the CSO (e.g. the Dhivehi Language Law, environmental laws, the animal rights act).

Familiarity with specific laws and regulations varies between generalist and specialist CSOs, with the former generally more aware of applicable laws and regulations (see Figure 67).

Figure 67. Generalist vs specialist CSO familiarity with specific laws and regulations



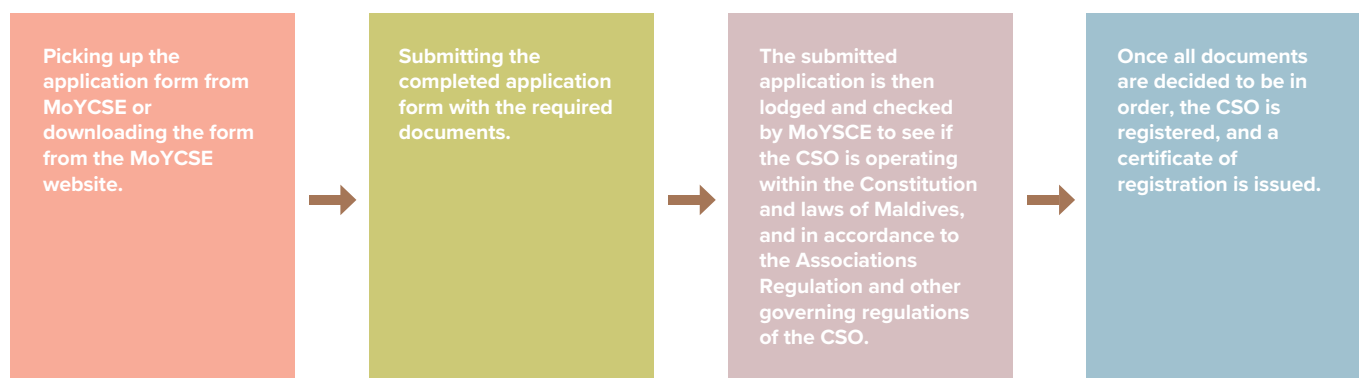
9.2 Ease of compliance with structural, organizational and legal requirements

The legal and regulatory requirements applying to CSOs aim to institutionalize the processes for the government to work with CSOs and to provide legal status to the organizations. To achieve this, CSOs are registered as per the Associations Act and relevant regulations, the registry is maintained with updated information, annual reports

are lodged with the regulator, and complaints are dealt with.

The registration process comprises the following main steps as seen in Figure 68:

Figure 68. CSO registration process



As being able to comply with a law or regulation depends on its ease of compliance, the same is true for CSO-related laws, regulations and procedures. That is, in order to achieve a higher degree of compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, CSOs need to find them or

perceive them to be easy to comply with. This section will look at various aspects of structural, organizational and legal requirements and their ease of compliance as perceived by CSOs.

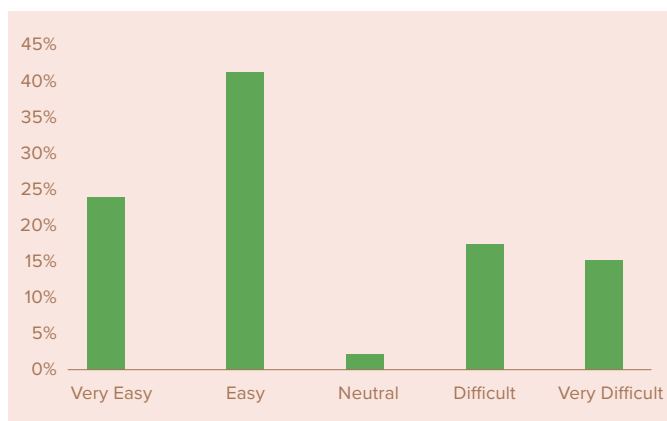
Table 14. Generalist vs specialist CSO familiarity with specific laws and regulations

	VERY EASY	EASY	NEUTRAL	DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT	NOT APPLICABLE/ DON'T KNOW
Registration of the CSO	24%	41%	2%	17%	15%	0%
Access to information and advice	4%	39%	4%	35%	15%	2%
Obtaining permits, approvals and other legal documents	7%	37%	4%	35%	17%	0%
Getting funding from government	0%	2%	2%	27%	53%	16%
Liaising with other agencies and institutions	17%	50%	11%	15%	7%	0%
Management of complaints and grievances	11%	37%	9%	15%	11%	17%
To carry out annual general meetings	22%	50%	7%	20%	2%	0%
Meeting the annual reporting requirements	20%	43%	7%	22%	4%	4%
Accessing regulatory information	13%	52%	11%	20%	4%	0%
Approval of foreign financial assistance	0%	13%	7%	16%	7%	58%
Deregistering CSOs	9%	9%	4%	4%	2%	71%

9.2.1 Registration

According to the survey, 65 percent of the CSOs stated that it is very easy or easy to form a CSO in Maldives. This suggests that about two thirds of the CSOs have sufficient information regarding the registration process and documentation requirements to register a CSO. However, 33 percent of the CSOs reported that they find the registration process difficult or very difficult. One of the unregistered CSOs found registration non-applicable and the other said that they found it to be very difficult. It may be useful to find what difficulties CSOs found in trying to register and then improve the registration process. Two suggestions are the electronic submission of the application with necessary documents, and guiding the application through the completion process with necessary additional information. At the time of writing this report, MoYSCE is preparing to launch a digital portal for CSOs and is in the stage of CSO verification. It is expected that difficulties in submissions for registration will be eased with the launch of this portal.

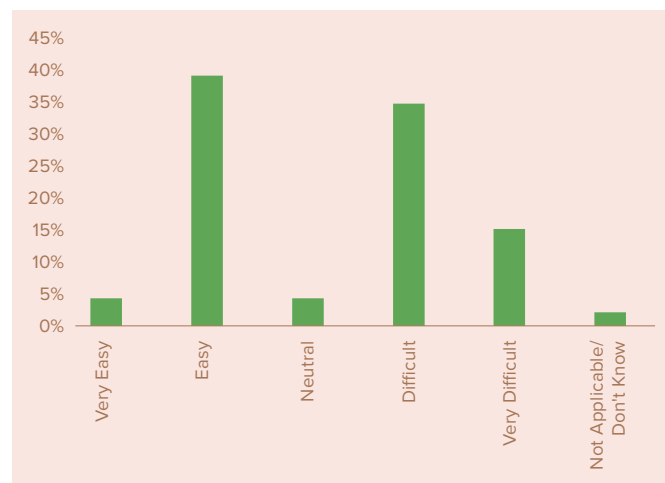
Figure 69. CSO perception of the registration process



9.2.2 Access to information and advice

CSOs need information and advice from authorities and stakeholders to carry out their programmes. The effectiveness of the CSO and their capacity can depend on access to information and advice and the liaison roles of authorities and stakeholders. The survey found that 43 percent of the CSOs find it easy to access information and advice, while 50 percent of the CSOs find it difficult or very difficult. One unregistered CSO felt neutral; the other found it difficult to access information.

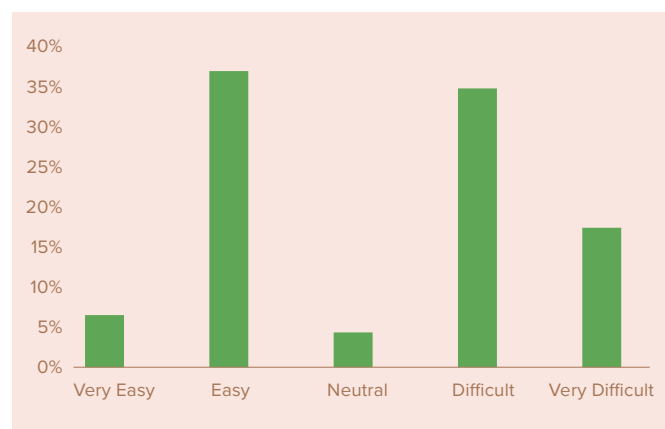
Figure 70. CSO perception on access to information and advice



9.2.3 Obtaining permits, approvals and other legal documents

Permits, approvals and other legal documents are sometimes necessary to carry out certain programmes and activities of the CSO. Timely and conveniently obtaining such permits, approvals and documents will enable CSOs to carry out the activities efficiently and effectively. This relates to permits and approvals issued by various government offices as well as documents issued and required by other stakeholders. The survey found that 43 percent of the CSOs stated that it is easy or very easy to obtain the permits, approvals and legal documents required while 52 percent of the CSOs found it difficult or very difficult.

Figure 71. CSO perception on obtaining permits, approvals and other legal documents

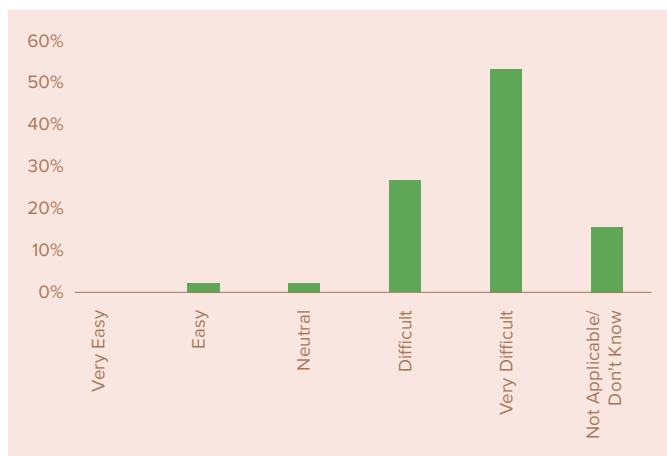


9.2.4 Getting funding from government

Getting finance is a commonly cited difficulty by CSOs. Getting funding from the government is no exception. No CSO stated that it is “very easy” to get funds from the government while only 2 percent of the CSOs reported that it is easy and a further 2 percent stayed neutral on the issue. Meanwhile, 27 percent reported that it is difficult to get funds from the government and 53 percent of the CSOs stated that it is very difficult. Both unregistered groups said it was difficult.

It is recommended that more funding be made available from the government and that to get funding, CSOs may need to align their work with the goals and plans of the government. It may also be a useful measure for MoYSCE or a federation of CSOs to pool funds from businesses to assist member CSOs in carrying out programmes and activities.

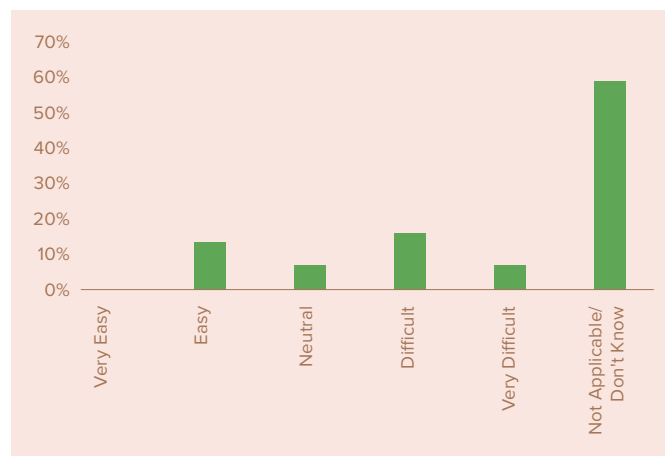
Figure 72. CSO perception on getting funds from the government



9.2.4.1 Approval of foreign financial assistance

Most CSOs have no experience of trying to get approval of foreign financial assistance, and only 42 percent of the CSOs stated an opinion on efforts to approve foreign financial assistance. CSOs who responded to this question have a contrasting experience as 20 percent reported that it is easy or they have a neutral opinion while 22 percent stated that it is difficult to get approval for foreign financial assistance. CSOs that work at the international level find it generally easy to get approval for foreign financial assistance, while those at the island, atoll and regional levels found it more difficult.

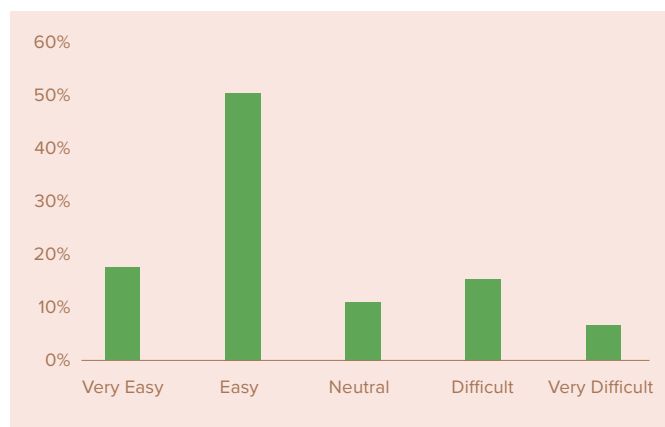
Figure 73. CSO perception on obtaining approval for foreign financial assistance



9.2.5 Liaising with other agencies and institutions

Liaising with other agencies and institutions is an area where CSOs have a positive experience. More than two thirds of the CSOs find it very easy or easy to liaise with other agencies and institutions, while only 22 percent of the CSOs find it either difficult or very difficult. One unregistered movement said they found it easy; the other, which had already highlighted a lack of governmental and institutional support, said they found it difficult.

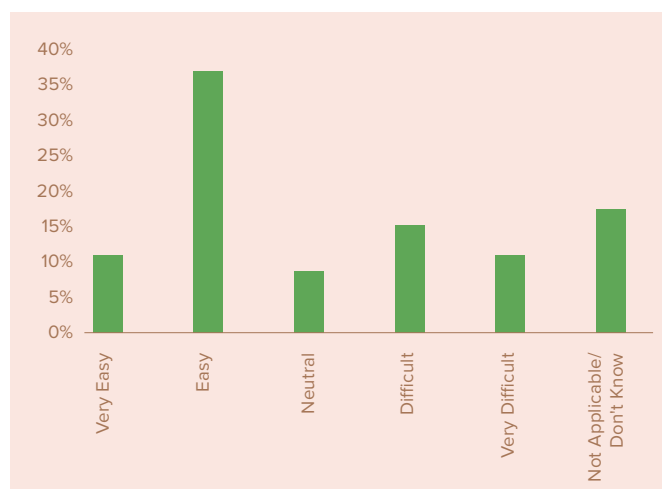
Figure 74. CSO perception on liaising with other agencies and institutions



9.2.6 Management of complaints and grievances

The current process of managing grievances and complaints by CSOs to MoYSCE can be done via email. Due to the increasing prominence of online interactions as a result of COVID-19, MoYSCE stated that they have been able to respond and follow up such inquiries within 24 hours. As per the survey findings, 48 percent of the CSOs find the mechanisms to manage complaints and grievances either easy or very easy. It is found difficult or very difficult by 26 percent of the CSOs.

Figure 75. CSO perception on process of managing complaints and grievances



Notably, CSOs engaged at the international level reported that managing complaints and grievances were very difficult while over half of national-level CSOs said that this was easy. Regional-level CSOs' perception was divided between easy and neutral; however, a significant portion of atoll-level CSOs found it difficult to manage complaints and grievances. Moreover, the perceptions of CSOs operating at the island/community level were highly varied, though most CSOs stated that the management of complaints and grievances was easy.

Table 15. CSO perception on managing complaints and grievances by geographical scope

GEOGRAPHY	VERY EASY	EASY	NEUTRAL	DIFFICULT	VERY DIFFICULT	NOT APPLICABLE/DON'T KNOW
Island/Community Level	9%	39%	9%	13%	9%	22%
Atoll Level	17%	17%	0%	50%	0%	17%
Regional Level	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
National Level	18%	55%	9%	9%	0%	9%
International Level	0%	0%	0%	0%	75%	25%
Total	11%	37%	9%	15%	11%	17%

9.2.7 Carrying out annual general meetings

More than 70 percent of the CSOs find it easy to carry out annual general meetings (AGMs), while 22 percent of the CSOs find it difficult. It is notable that those who prepare annual work plans find it easy to carry out AGMs compared with those who do not: a reflection of the ability of a CSO to organize their work.

Figure 76. CSO perception on ease of carrying out AGMs

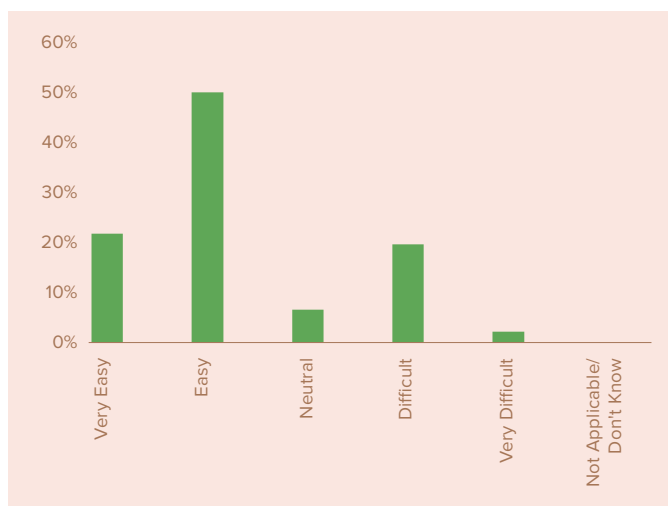
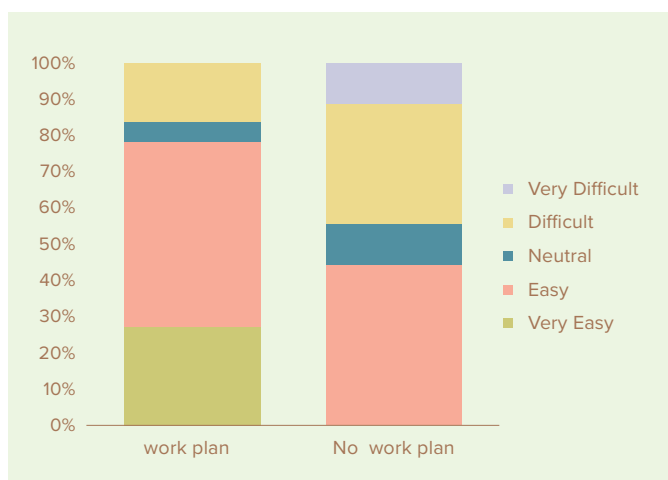


Figure 77. CSO perception of difficulty of carrying out AGMs, CSOs which have and do not have annual work plans



9.2.8 Meeting annual reporting requirements

The annual deadline for CSOs to submit their annual reports is before the end of March of each year and within 30 days of it having been approved at the AGM (Article 28 of the Act and Article 27 and 28 of the Regulation).

The survey found that 57 percent of the respondents submitted annual reports of either 2018 or 2019 to MoYSCE and 43 percent did not submit one. Those who submitted found it generally easy to comply with the reporting requirements. It is also interesting to note that among those who did not submit, 30 percent of the CSOs reported meeting the reporting requirement as easy.

It was found that the more organized the CSO's operations, the easier the CSO found it to comply with reporting requirements. More than 70 percent of the CSOs which prepared annual plans and programmes found it easy to meet the reporting requirements, while 67 percent of the CSOs which did not prepare the plans found it difficult to comply. Thus, developing tools and guides to assist CSOs in preparing annual plans and monitoring them will likely assist them to later comply with reporting requirements.

Figure 78. CSO perception on ease of meeting annual reporting requirements

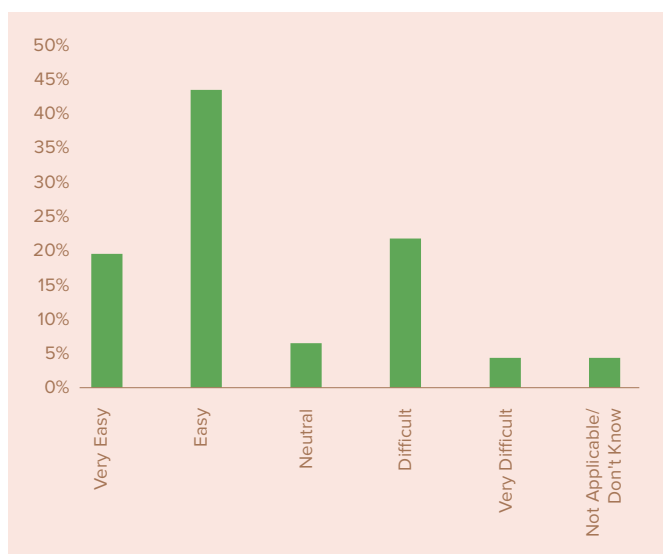


Figure 79. Ease of meeting annual reporting requirements, CSOs which have and do not have annual work plans

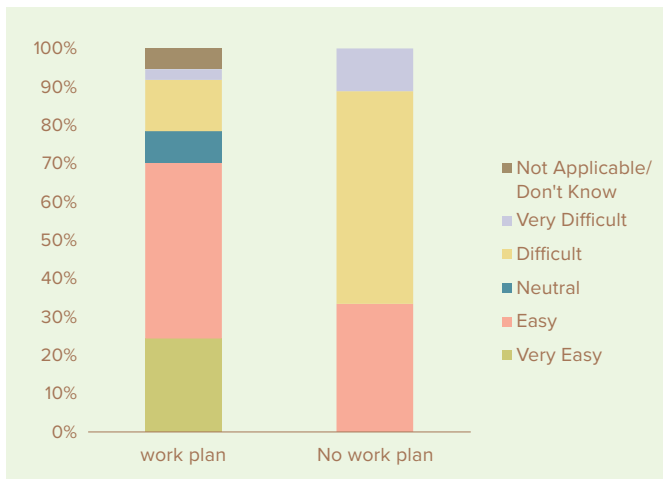
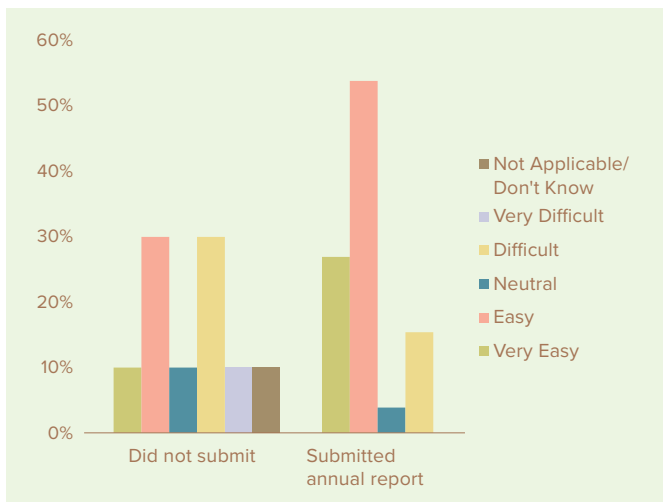


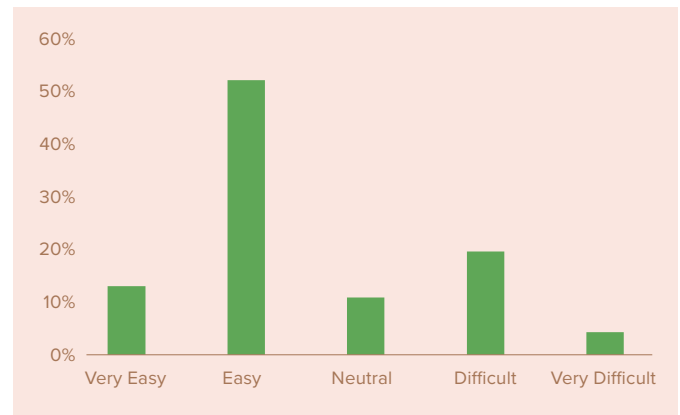
Figure 80. Ease of meeting annual reporting requirements, CSOs which did or did not submit annual reports



9.2.9 Accessing regulatory information

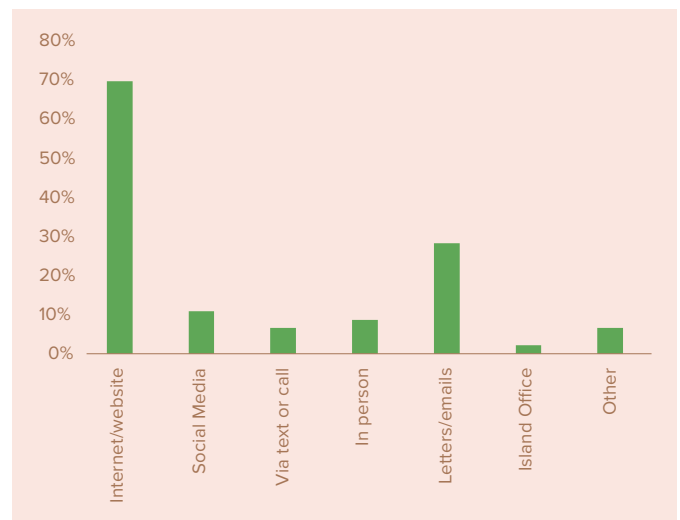
The Associations Act and the Regulation on Associations 2015/R-180 are available on the MoYSCE website, and the responses suggest that 70 percent of the CSOs preferred the website as their first source of information. However, 24 percent of the CSOs stated that access to regulatory information is difficult or very difficult. Accessing regulatory information is easier for CSOs operating at the international level compared to other levels, indicating that the more exposed CSOs are to the regulatory environment, the easier they find it to access regulatory information.

Figure 81. CSO perception on ease of accessing regulatory information



When CSOs were asked their preferred medium to receive regulatory information, the most popular medium was the internet or websites (70 percent). Letters and emails are the second most popular option (28 percent). Compared to the previous study, more CSOs prefer a written form of communication, in comparison with communication over the phone, in person or a visit to an office. Information via social media is a growing preferred medium as well.

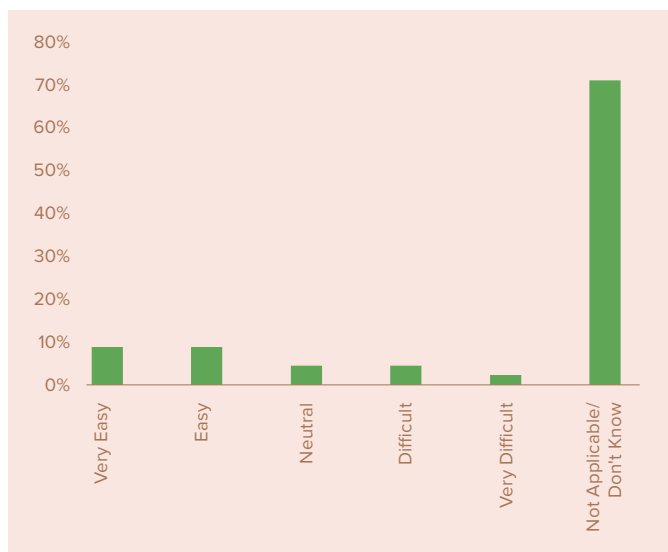
Figure 82. Preferred modes of receiving information



9.2.10 Deregistration

Most CSOs (70 percent) have no opinion on the deregistration of the CSOs, as active CSOs may not have thought about the deregistration process. Among those who had an opinion on the difficulty of the deregistration process, more CSOs found the process easy than difficult.

Figure 83. CSO perception on ease of deregistering

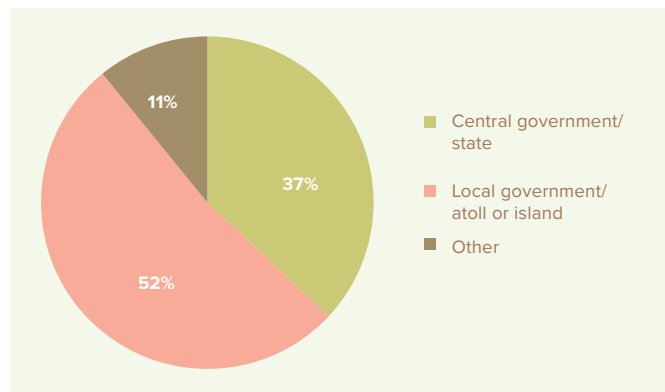


This question did not apply to unregistered groups, nor did several other questions. While one group stated that issues such as managing complaints and grievances, carrying out annual general meetings, meeting the annual reporting requirements, accessing regulatory information, obtaining approval for foreign financial assistance and deregistering CSOs were not applicable to them, the other group said they found management of complaints and grievances, carrying out annual general meetings, and accessing regulatory information fairly easy and were neutral on issues such as meeting any annual reporting requirements, getting approval for foreign financial assistance and naturally, on deregistering.

9.3 Perceptions on the regulation of CSOs

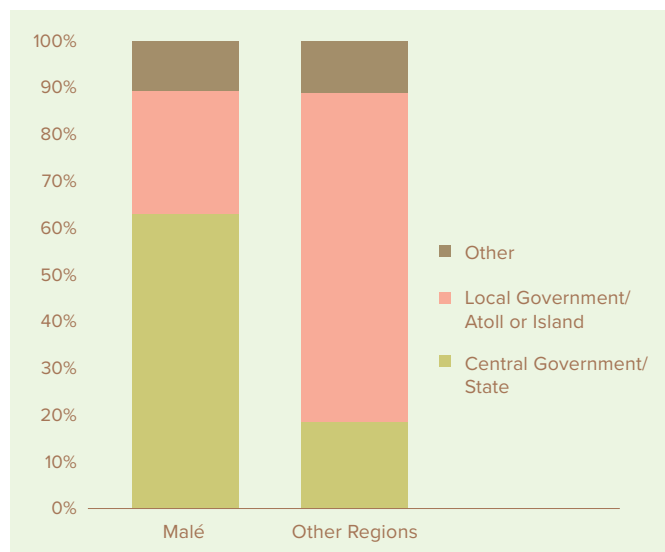
With the government’s increasing administrative and fiscal decentralization, CSOs view that the regulation of CSOs will move in a similar direction. There is strong advocacy from CSOs to decentralize the regulation of CSOs as 52 percent believe that local governments (either island council or atoll council) should be responsible for regulating CSOs, compared with 37 percent who believe that the central government shall regulate CSOs. The proportion of CSOs who prefer central regulation remains more or less the same when comparing the 2011 study (39 percent) with this study (37 percent).

Figure 84. CSO perceptions on best regulatory and governing body



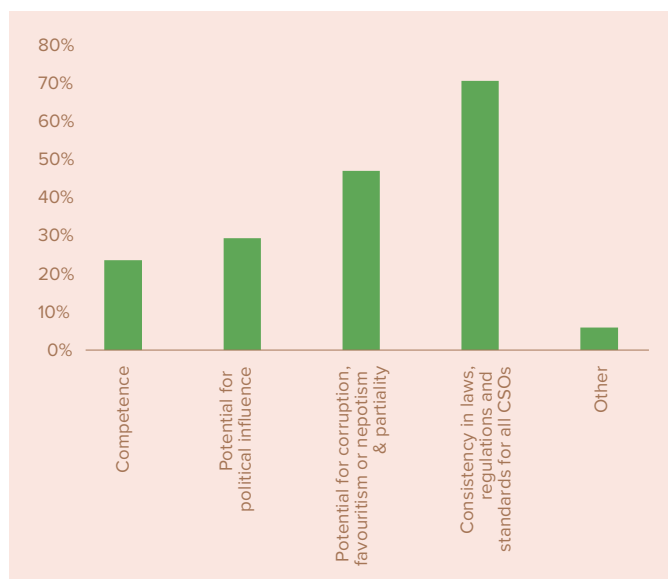
There is significant variation in the responses depending on the location of the CSO. The majority of Malé-based CSOs, 63 per cent, prefer being regulated by the central government compared with only 19 percent of the CSOs based in the islands.

Figure 85. CSOs’ preference for regulatory and governing body by region



There are compelling factors why each of the groups prefers where to best place regulatory powers. Those who prefer being regulated by the central government, 70 per cent, mostly cited consistency in laws, regulations and standards for all CSOs as the main reason to be regulated by the central government. Both unregistered groups preferred being regulated by the central government for the same reason. Other reasons provided by the CSOs include preventing the potential for corruption, favouritism, nepotism and partiality (47 percent), reducing the potential for political influence (29 percent), and competence in the central government (24 percent).

Figure 86. Reasons for supporting central governance



CSOs that prefer local governments to regulate the sector believe this brings higher efficiency to the sector and that they can work more closely with the regulator. While 83 percent of these CSOs cited ease of access as the main reason for their preference for regulation by local governments, more than 40 percent also chose knowledge of context and the CSO, and efficiency in services. One of the major grievances of island-based CSOs is that the central government focuses too much on Malé.

Figure 87. Reasons for supporting decentralized governance



In terms of the perception of stakeholders on where regulatory powers should reside, the majority agreed that CSOs should be regulated under a decentralized form of governance, and expressed their support for improving the autonomy and agency of local communities. The benefits of a decentralized approach were recognized, including ease of access, understanding of the island's context, efficiency in monitoring and assessment, and a lack of bureaucracy, which can effectively help empower CSOs. However, stakeholders, notably WDCs and island councils, were honest in saying that since the current councils were relatively young and had not had much experience in their election cycle to interact with CSOs, they did not yet have the necessary know-how to govern CSOs. As a result, councils are unable to assist CSOs effectively and lack the capacity to monitor and engage CSOs, thus compromising the CSO sector in its wider mission in promoting active, resilient and inclusive communities.

Some alternative suggestions for regulating the CSO sector came from the stakeholder consultations as well as the in- depth interviews carried out with CSOs. These included:

- **Joint governance by central government, local councils and CSOs:** This could be facilitated through a council or a body that represents the central government, local councils and the CSOs. However, this joint council would be a central body.
- **Impartial body related to CSOs:** This could be a federation of CSOs that sets regulations by itself, as found in some areas of professional work (such as the bar council, medical councils and accountants' association).
- **A separate institution regulating CSOs:** An independent institution governed by the law. This would also be a central body.
- **By the Atoll council:** Atoll councils can be more effective in ensuring uniform governance, while also being close enough to CSOs to understand the context of the community.
- **A hybrid system:** Governance based on geographical scope and level of institutionalization, where island- and community-based CSOs can be better governed by island councils, but those with a national focus or targeting the whole population would be governed by the central government.

10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study proposes the following recommendations to support Maldivian CSOs to increase their activities and strengthen their capabilities, based on analysis and data from CSOs, stakeholders and the community. Improving internal management and efficiencies, resource management and capabilities, capacity, knowledge generation and trainings, collaboration and partnership efforts are all vital for CSOs to contribute to an active, resilient and inclusive community. Moreover, ensuring that the CSO sector holds public confidence and credibility among the community is highly important to make the necessary space for their effective functioning. In addition, gaps in the decentralized system and the regulatory framework need to be improved to ensure a better governance system in which the CSO sector can access and participate in the development process of the community. Accordingly, the study proposes the following recommendations:

10.1 Internal management and efficiencies

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the internal, structural, institutional and organizational management processes, planning processes and efficiencies:

- 1 | Assist in the development of CSOs' technical and institutional capabilities through frequent training programmes, feedback and technical assistance to improve their internal management and efficiency.
- 2 | Provide CSOs with the essential direction and understanding of the necessity of having a strong ideological and structural basis; CSOs in general, and especially start-up CSOs, should be guided in defining a clear scope of activity, objectives, purpose, vision, organizational structure, and so on.
- 3 | Provide CSOs with information and guidance on self-managed CSO accountability mechanisms or self-regulation by focusing on areas such as how to develop a consultative design process; public information disclosure requirements; monitoring

and verification of compliance; and some form of sanctioning non-compliance.

- 4 | Provide guidance to CSOs on developing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to help them keep track of internal management procedures and assess the organization's growth trajectory.
- 5 | The government regulatory body to ensure frequent refreshers and need-based guidance on how to satisfy national regulatory standards in order to increase responsibility, accountability and legitimacy.
- 6 | Stakeholders to ensure that relevant information is supplied in a timely and understandable manner and educate CSOs on how to access this information and stay up to date.
- 7 | Create and deliver training on successful administrative operations and other organizational features.

10.2 Resource and capacity constraints

The following recommendations are proposed regarding minimizing resource constraints and increasing the capacity of CSOs:

- 1 | Donor agencies to focus on developing a funding mechanism that is responsive to development initiatives initiated and led by CSOs which may or may not align with provider or host country government priorities, in order to facilitate more innovative collaborative efforts.
- 2 | Funding sources to be made accessible to the civil society sector, including movements and organizations that are not technically recognized as CSOs, unregistered movements or those who do not otherwise fit some of the fundamental financing requirements of providers.

- 3 | Create resource centres that are available to both registered and unregistered movements and offer training, libraries, information technology and other services.
- 4 | Ensure that enough working space is provided for CSOs throughout the country. This might take the shape of designated places at youth centres and community centres.
- 5 | Educate and guide CSOs on how to increase their financial autonomy by implementing self-financing activities such as generating money through merit-based activities as well as on how to strengthen capacity, covering topics such as where to go for funding, how to generate funds internally, and what options are accessible to them on a national and international scale.
- 6 | Educate CSOs on identifying specialist and required human resources as well as volunteer retention strategies through reward-based methods such as recognition, participation certificates and motivation, as well as participation-based methods such as increasing training and capacity-development opportunities, events, volunteer programmes and volunteer-focused activities such as picnics and recreational activities.
- 7 | Concentrate capacity-building efforts primarily on assisting and empowering CSOs with financial management.
- 8 | Develop and provide project development, concept paper development and proposal writing training.
- 2 | Increase the capability and availability of institutionalized, inclusive and accessible multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces.
- 3 | Create resources and/or training opportunities to support more meaningful multi-stakeholder collaboration, such as skills development in participatory methods, communication, conflict resolution, consensus building, negotiation and preparatory measures such as stakeholder relationship mapping and analysis.
- 4 | Provide guidance to CSOs on building M&E processes to show to the many stakeholders to whom they are accountable that their activities are creating the desired changes.
- 5 | Assess the interaction and relationships between such stakeholders and CSOs, and increase CSO engagement with government, councils, political parties, the private sector, media and other institutions.
- 6 | Improve collaboration and participation with government agencies in development and other community-based projects, particular in areas with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 7 | Provide more accessible information and chances to interact with the private sector, which provides opportunities for a variety of CSOs, with transparent mechanisms to collaborate with CSOs. At the same time, find mechanisms to increase the number of corporate social responsibility activities and public involvement by the private sector.
- 8 | Enhance cross-CSO collaboration by putting in place a framework and toolkit for various stakeholders to integrate CSOs and their participation in various planning and execution projects which can later also be used for M&E purposes.

10.3 Resource and capacity constraints

The following recommendations are proposed to further strengthen the collaborative efforts, partnerships and networks between CSOs, stakeholders and the broader community:

- 1 | Create avenues for collaboration between CSOs and political parties such as through engaging CSOs as actors to monitor and observe political processes.

10.4 Independence, credibility and public confidence

To maintain independence from donor, government and political party influence, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1 | Use standardized agreements or a set of provisions made by a regulatory body that can be used by CSOs for guidance purposes, that protects the interests of CSOs.
- 2 | Carry out due diligence assessments, especially focused on areas such as gender equality, human rights and ethical compliance by CSOs.
- 3 | Publish organizational objectives, policies and procedures and strictly adhere to them in all interactions, communication and decision-making.
- 4 | Increase the revenue-generating capacity of CSOs.
- 5 | Build negotiation skills in CSOs through skills-development training programmes targeted towards CSOs.
- 6 | Accept funds only when the funds being received are in line with the principles and values of the CSO.
- 7 | Publish details of grants and funds received from political parties, political figures, government and other donors. Provide details on the use of funds.
- 8 | Advise CSOs to refrain from engaging in political activities.
- 9 | Familiarize CSOs with responsibilities for financial disclosure and for disclosing certain types of funding received in their annual reports and the studying of their annual reports every year by the regulator.

To improve transparency and accountability and increase the credibility of and public confidence in CSOs, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1 | Increase the number of activities carried out by CSOs that are effective and inclusive of the needs of the community.
- 2 | Use innovative methods to identify the needs of the community and carry out a preliminary needs analysis to better target the programmes to community needs.
- 3 | Publish annual reports, programme reports and financial reports on CSOs' websites and make them easy to access.
- 4 | Increase collaboration between CSOs, as the display of unity will increase public confidence in CSOs.
- 5 | Publish annual calendars of activities on CSO websites.

10.5 Conflict management

To strengthen conflict management, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1 | Include conflict management and resolution in the standard training programmes targeted towards CSOs by the government and MoYSCE. Run these programmes on a regular basis across Maldives.
- 2 | Hold regular meetings of the executive committees and encourage dialogue and debate.
- 3 | Use technological mediums such as social media groups and discussion forums to encourage more communication, dialogue and debate.
- 4 | Increase awareness of the role and values of CSOs to their members and the public through various means.
- 5 | Develop and disseminate standard procedures on how to deal with conflicts.
- 6 | Regulators to release guidebooks on how to deal with conflict situations.

10.6 Regulation and governance

The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen the regulation and governance of CSOs:

- 1 | Establish seamless mechanisms for CSOs to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, even if CSOs are unaware of all the requirements. Create forms and portals for CSOs to submit reports, applications and information, preferably with the help of technology, to comply with any requirements.
- 2 | Develop guidelines and handbooks that simplify legal language and outline the operational procedures to comply with the legal and regulatory requirements.
- 3 | Expand government programmes to fund the activities of the CSOs. Establish clear rules and procedures for CSOs to access government funds, supported by policy.
- 4 | Strengthen the planning function of CSOs, with readily available tools and templates that can be used by CSOs to make plans and do monitoring and evaluation.
- 5 | Prepare a single repository of laws, regulations, policies, procedures and guides for CSOs to access legal, regulatory and operational information.
- 6 | Decentralize some functions related to CSOs to local governments. For example, monitoring of CSO activities can be devolved to councils and the central government can use local governments to ensure that CSOs comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- 7 | MoYSCE to find ways for island-based CSOs to access services from the regulator in a convenient and timely manner.
- 8 | Run funding schemes and training programmes that target island-based CSOs.

11 CONCLUSION

The Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society (2022) aims to gain an understanding of Maldives' civil society sector with a thorough examination of the current context of the civil society sector and the impact of sociopolitical changes that have occurred over the last 10 years. The study looked at the responsibilities, operations and principles of CSOs, as well as the difficulties and challenges encountered by CSOs and other players in the sector. The study consulted with stakeholders to identify community members' needs and perceptions of CSO roles and activities, with the goal of ultimately providing recommendations on how to improve engagement between CSOs and the community and the most effective modalities for donor agencies and government institutions to engage with CSOs.

The study included four major components to acquire this information: a desk review, a categorization survey, in-depth interviews and stakeholder consultations. Firstly, the desk review involved the study and review of various legislative and policy documents, reports and academic literature on the topic. Secondly, the categorization survey served as a tool for content analysis and mapping, based on various criteria to provide a general overview of the layout of Maldives' civil society sector. Thirdly, the in-depth interviews allowed the study to delve much deeper into the internal processes, roles, principles, factors affecting their operations, and competencies and capability. This included assessing the availability and accessibility of resources, as well as opportunities and challenges. Fourthly, the stakeholder consultations provided helpful insight into the perspectives of the community and stakeholders, allowing for better understanding of the data supplied by CSOs and contributing to learning how the civil society sector's credibility, confidence and governance may be enhanced.

The desk review supplied essential background information on the topic. The analysis of several pieces of legislation, including the Associations Act and the Decentralization Act, provided significant information for understanding the enabling environment in which CSOs can function. The desk review also provided an understanding of the various classifications of CSOs based on international best practices and norms, for example, the International Classification of Non-Profit Organizations and other criteria such as categorizing organizations based on their nature, level of institutionalization, development functions and client group. This, together with the criteria used in the previous study, aided in the development of the

methodology and survey instrument for the categorization survey and the classification of CSOs based on its findings.

A content analysis of the registration documents accessible from MoYSCE was also carried out as part of the desk review process to better understand the landscape of the CSO sector in Maldives. These registration documents provide information on the CSOs that re-registered themselves during the recent audit process launched by MoYSCE, which was primarily intended to determine the active CSOs in the country. More than 600 CSOs provided information, broad focus areas and registration details during this process, which were evaluated and summarized to understand the current CSO landscape in Maldives.

The categorization process also brought to light several concerns that affect the whole sector. One critical problem is the use of terminology that is inconsistent in describing kinds of organizations and their functions, but is used interchangeably. Stakeholders emphasized the legislative framework's shortcomings in terms of definitions and classifications, highlighting the issue of combining NGOs, sports groups and clubs under one roof, which creates logical flaws given that the nature, functions, opportunities, accessibilities and challenges differ for different types. The extent of institutionalization in terms of harmonizing their functions with their ideological foundations, on the other hand, cannot be assessed. Because categorization based on the kind or character of the organization does not adequately reflect the context of the Maldivian civil society space, the study classified CSOs based on their focus area, geographical scope, target beneficiaries and broad functions.

To ensure a criterion that is applicable to the context of Maldives, the categorization survey served to build on the broad categories used in the MoYSCE registry and as such, adopted the 25 focus areas derived from the previous study for comparative purposes. A significant number of organizations were involved in more than one focus area. The study classified these organizations as generalist or specialized in nature, discovering that 45 percent of CSOs were specialists and 55 percent were generalists. Almost all of the focus areas demonstrated the presence of both generalist and expert engagement. The greater number of generalist CSOs also indicates that CSOs are more focused on community/island development. However, a broader trend may be noted

in that the proportion of registered specialty CSOs has increased in the previous three years, indicating that civil society may be concentrating their efforts to respond to gaps with the greatest need.

When CSOs were categorized based on geographical scope and coverage, the data indicated that more than half, 52 percent, worked at the island/community level, while 33 percent operated at the national level. The data revealed a reasonably balanced mix of generalist and specialist CSOs operating at the island level. There was no clear difference at the national level, but more specialist than generalist CSOs were found to be working at the international level.

When CSOs were categorized based on target beneficiaries, who they aimed their activities towards, the survey found that a little over half, 51 percent, of the respondents generally focused on the whole population. Youth came in a close second with 48 percent of CSOs focusing on them, while 22 percent of CSOs targeted a specific island or atoll, and 21 percent focused on women. The target beneficiaries with the lowest focus were journalists at 1 percent, and prisoners, former prisoners and detainees at 2 percent.

Another popular method for categorizing civil society groups is based on their function in development. In this regard, the assessment revealed that 'development and advancement of their respective target groups' and 'community-level advocacy and awareness raising' represented the largest shares of CSOs. In general, the study discovered greater engagement in practically all of the functions indicated in the initial iteration of this study.

Following categorization, data were gathered to offer a basic summary of CSO features. CSO income, membership base, degree of activity and need for aid were all investigated. Individual donations, domestic sponsors and fundraising initiatives were the primary sources of funding for CSOs. It was discovered that domestic sponsors and subscriptions were the primary sources of funding for specialized CSOs, but generalist CSOs earned more income from fundraising, occasional membership gifts and a broader variety of sources than specialist CSOs. In terms of income size, a notable finding is that, compared to 2011, the share of CSOs operating with earnings less than MVR 50,000 per year or no income has increased.

The membership and volunteer bases were also assessed. Given the labour-intensive nature of civil society activities, measuring people's engagement in CSOs is useful. According to the statistics, the share of organizations with

fewer than 100 members has somewhat reduced, while those with more than 100 members has slightly grown. This growth reflects a steadily rising membership base and people's participation; yet, the changes are not large over a 10-year period. A rise in the average membership base reflects an increase in the number of persons involved in civil society, as well as the overall expansion of the sector and its contributions.

The degree of CSO activity was also evaluated in order to improve the overall understanding of the civil society space and to generally better comprehend CSO contributions. The majority of CSOs reported carrying out 1 to 5 activities in the previous year, while 23 percent reported carrying out 6 to 10 activities. Some CSOs were quite active in the previous year, with 10 percent reporting 11 to 25 actions and 10 percent reporting having done more. However, 17 percent of CSOs reported that they had not carried out any activity in the previous year. It is worth noting that, as a result of COVID-19, many CSOs' routine operations came to a halt, as many mobilized and offered to help with relief efforts at the request of authorities.

A major point of inquiry of this study was to understand the needs and challenges of CSOs. Therefore, an inquiry was made in the categorization survey to gauge the general needs of the CSOs. A large majority, 85 percent, of CSOs stated that they required financial assistance, and 36 percent indicated that they required administrative assistance. Some CSOs also reported that they required public relations assistance (18 percent) and assistance in governance (13 percent). A total of 30 percent of CSOs also stated 'other' assistance was required, with the most notable specification being needing a working space.

The in-depth study investigated elements of planning, management and institutional efficiency in order to better understand the roles, operations, principles, capacity needs, administrative and other difficulties, accessibility, opportunities and key governance considerations. The survey discovered that 61 percent had developed an annual work plan, 43 percent had prepared a Strategic Action Plan, 80 percent had prepared all yearly reports, 72 percent had prepared an annual programme, 50 percent had established an annual budget, and 54 percent had prepared an activity-based budget.

The survey also queried if the scope of activity for CSOs was clearly defined and accompanied by guidelines. According to the findings, the majority of CSOs have vision and purpose statements, a clear organizational structure and stated fundamental values, as well as a code of conduct. The study found the majority of the CSOs opted for democratic processes in relation to institutional

mechanisms such as the election of Executive Committee members.

CSO issues and competencies can only be understood by addressing the resources, limits and possibilities for growth that CSOs have available to them. As a result, the availability of human resources, financial resources and training opportunities were evaluated. Difficulties in obtaining finance and lack of human resources were two of the most significant challenges raised by practically all CSOs and stakeholders throughout the various stages of this study.

In terms of CSOs' human resources, one of the most important issues addressed in this study is volunteer retention. CSOs' main ideas for volunteer retention include reward-based methods, participation-based methods and volunteer-focused activities. When data were disaggregated by gender, the study discovered that women were usually less active in CSOs. When the study looked at financial resources, it revealed that financial limits were the most significant barrier for CSOs in their effective and efficient operation. In terms of training, 19 of the 46 CSOs said that they had no training programmes in the previous two years. Given that so many CSOs had gotten no training in the previous two years, the research also looked at CSO training needs. Half of the CSOs, 50 percent, would like to receive training on fundraising or finance-related topics, while 41 percent want more subject-matter training. Collaborative efforts between CSOs, government, donors and private institutions were also investigated. The study found that collaborative efforts needed to be strengthened in all areas.

CSOs were asked about the impact of government, donors and political parties on their credibility, independence and public trust. The response was mixed. The effect of political parties on CSOs working at the island/community level was recognized through numerous stakeholder consultations and by CSOs. The vast majority of CSOs agreed on the necessity of regulation, notably in ensuring the sector's credibility and legitimacy, as well as in protecting CSOs from arbitrary governmental authority. Most CSOs and stakeholders agreed that the community's opinion of CSOs was usually good. The report also emphasized the necessity of openness and accountability in improving credibility and public trust.

In terms of regulation and governance, most CSOs and stakeholders agreed that a decentralized form of governance is preferable, citing positive factors such as understanding of local context and ease of reach, as well as the absence of the bureaucracy that comes with central government.

Over the course of this study, several challenges were encountered, especially in collecting the required data and information. Having to collect all the data and information via online means due to restrictions related to COVID-19 led to an overall low response rate throughout the study. The other main issue was the non-responsiveness of some CSOs. Despite several attempts to contact CSOs, the research team was unable to get data from the whole sample frame. One of the most difficult issues in this area was identifying and obtaining data from unregistered movements. The survey team's capacity to contact unregistered movements in a representative manner was hampered by the lack of a systematic process to identify the number of unregistered CSOs. Nonetheless, the interviews with the unregistered organizations contacted through this study gave valuable information into their activities, management and perspectives.

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13 ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of stakeholders interviewed in the inception stage

STAKEHOLDER	TYPE OF INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment (MoYSCE)	Government Ministry
Transparency Maldives (TM)	CSO
UNDP Maldives	Development Agency
Community Development Initiative (CODI)	CSO

Annex 2. List of documents reviewed for this study

DOCUMENT	YEAR PUBLISHED
<i>Legislation</i>	
Associations Act 1/2003	2003
Sports Act 30/2015	2015
Income Tax Act 25/2019	2019
Decentralization Act 7/2010	2010
<i>Academic literature and studies</i>	
Explaining Civil Society Development: A Social Origins Approach	2017
Background Paper: How should we classify civil society? A review of mainstream and alternative approaches	2008
A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific	2015
Working with civil society: Findings from surveys and consultations – OECD	2020
CSOs, Policy Influence, and Evidence Use: A Short Survey	2006
Stand with Civil Society: Best Practices	2014
<i>Other documents/reports of relevance</i>	
Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society Space 2011 (first iteration of this study)	2011
National Strategic Action Plan 2019–2023	2019
The importance and role of NGOs	2017
Strengthening the interaction between civil society and the parliament: Position Paper	2015
Youth Vulnerability in the Maldives Report	2019

Annex 3. Sample for in-depth interviews

REGION	ATOLL	TOTAL NO. OF CSOs BY ATOLL (CATEGORIZATION SAMPLE)	TOTAL NO. OF CSOs BY REGION	TOTAL NO. OF CSOs BY REGION
Upper North Region	Haa Alif	17	50	6
	Haa Dhaalu	19		
	Shaviyani	14		
North Region	Noonu	27	88	11
	Raa	17		
	Baa	27		
	Lhaviyani	17		
North Central Region	Malé	299	299	36
	Kaafu	17		
	Alif Alif	10		
	Alif Dhaal	10		
	Vaavu	5		
Central Region	Meemu	12	27	3
	Faafu	9		
	Dhaalu	6		
South Central Region	Thaa	17	42	5
	Laamu	25		
Upper South Region	Gaafu Alif	15	30	4
	Gaafu Dhaalu	15		
South Region	Gnaviyani	13	29	3
	Addu City	16		
Total		607	607	73

Annex 4. List of islands selected for stakeholder consultations

REGIONS	SELECTED ISLANDS	CENSUS POPULATION (2014)
Upper North Region	Ha. Baarah	1,215
North Region	B. Kamadhoo	886
Malé	Malé	153,904
North Central Region	V. Fulidhoo	372
Central Region	Th. Guraidhoo	1,738
South Central Region	L. Gan	3,080
Upper South Region	Ga. Villingili	2,837
South Region	S. Hithadhoo	11,129

Annex 5. Sample sizes and response rates by region for in-depth interviews

REGIONS	SAMPLE	RESPONDENTS	% RESPONDED
Malé	36	19	53%
Upper North	6	6	100%
North	11	7	64%
North Central	5	3	60%
Central	3	1	33%
South Central	5	4	80%
Upper South	4	3	75%
South	3	3	100%
Total	73	46	63%

Annex 6: List of stakeholders approached for the key informant interviews

STAKEHOLDER	REMARKS	FOCAL POINT
Government Authorities		
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment	Interviewed during pre-inception	Registrar of CSOs
Ministry of Gender and Family	Interviewed	State Minister, Deputy Director Generals
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology	Interviewed	Environmental Analyst, Director, Assistance Director, Legal Officer
Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure	Interviewed	Senior Planning Analyst and Members of the National Planning Department
Local Government Authority	Interviewed	Senior Planning Officer, Advocate – project management, Advocate – public finance, Planning Officer
Ministry of Home Affairs	Interview was requested	N/A
President's Office	Interview was requested	N/A
National Drug Agency	Interview was requested	N/A
Development agencies		
UNDP Maldives	Interviewed during pre-inception	
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Interviewed	Programme Manager
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)	Interviewed	Country representative
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Interviewed	ADB country office members (team leader for Maldives, project leaders)
Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)	Interviewed	Country representative
UN Resident Coordinators Office	Interview was requested	N/A
UNICEF	Interview was requested	N/A
UNFPA	Interview was requested	N/A
International Republican Institute (IRI)	Interview was requested	N/A
USAID	Interview was requested	N/A
Private sector		
Dhiraagu	Interviewed	Corporate Services Director, CSR Manager
BML	Interview was requested	N/A
Ooredoo	Interview was requested	N/A
Political parties		
MDP	Interviewed	Social Protection Committee
PPM	Interview was requested	N/A
JP	Interview was requested	N/A

Annex 6: List of stakeholders approached for the key informant interviews

STAKEHOLDER	REMARKS	FOCAL POINT
Island councils		
B. Kamadhoo	Interviewed	Island Council Members
V. Fulidhoo	Interviewed	Island Council Members
Th. Guraidhoo	Interviewed	Island Council Members
Ga. Villingili	Interviewed	Island Council Members
Addu City	Interviewed	Island Council Members
Ha. Baarah	Interview was requested	N/A
Malé	Interview was requested	N/A
L. Gan	Interview was requested	N/A

Annex 7. List of stakeholders approached for the FDGs

STAKEHOLDERS	WOMEN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES	YOUTH GROUPS
Ha. Baarah	Interviewed	Interview was requested
B. Kamadhoo	Interviewed	Interview was requested
Malé	Interviewed	Interview was requested
V. Fulidhoo	Interviewed	Interviewed
Th. Guraidhoo	Interviewed	Interviewed
L. Gan	Interviewed	Interview was requested
Ga. Villingili	Interviewed	Interview was requested
S. Hithadhoo	Interview was requested	Interview was requested
M. Dhiggaru ⁶³	N/A	Interviewed

⁶³ While Dhiggaru was not an island originally selected in the sample frame for the stakeholder consultations component of the study, the survey team found that the qualitative data derived from a similar focus group held for youth in the island for another project provided some very useful insights that could be relevant for this study. Therefore, M. Dhiggaru was included here with the permission of those who participated.

Annex 8: Methodological limitations and mitigation measures adopted

CHALLENGE OR LIMITATION	MITIGATION MEASURES ADOPTED
<p>Travel and other restrictions due to COVID-19 – Due to which all interviews and consultation meetings during the data collection process needed to be held online. Face-to-face interviews and meetings are preferred in such research as it will improve the quality of data as well as ensure a better participation rate.</p>	<p>Numerous efforts were made to ensure participation and responses to the survey. This included follow-up calls, emails and social media posts to reach out to as many CSOs as possible.</p>
<p>Issues in the sample frame provided by MoYSCE – Several phone numbers in the CSO list were either switched off, unresponsive, disconnected, incorrect or belonged to CSOs that were no longer active.</p>	<p>Enumerators tried to reach CSOs on multiple attempts, eventually considering those who failed to respond as unresponsive for the in-depth interviews. In regard to the categorization survey, enumerators also called to obtain email addresses of those that were missing and survey links were then forwarded to the found email addresses.</p>
<p>Sample bias – There was a lack of a formal mechanism to determine the number of unregistered CSOs and hence estimate the number of active CSOs around the country. As such, it was not possible to directly reach out to any CSOs that were not in the registry. Even those who were directly reached were a limited number given that several entries in the registry documents were either missing or incorrect.</p>	<p>In the efforts to reach as many unregistered CSOs as possible, the survey link to the categorization survey was shared on social media and personal contacts were also employed.</p> <p>Councils were also questioned about any possible unregistered movements in their respective islands.</p>
<p>Lack of responsiveness – The study overall observed a generally low level of responsiveness in all components.</p>	<p>Councils were sent the link to the categorization survey in order to forward them to the CSOs on their island. MoYSCE's assistance was obtained in sending the link directly to 200 CSOs, and enumerators also actively took part in calling available emails from the registration documents and administering the survey on the call itself where possible. More specifically, for the in-depth interviews, enumerators called repeatedly, and CSOs that were not reached were replaced in the sample.</p>
<p>Self-reporting narratives – The study was mainly based on self-reported narratives provided by CSOs and on opinions provided by stakeholders and other key figures. It is expected that organizations may, to some extent, attempt to downplay negative aspects and promote positive ones.</p>	<p>Given the possibility of underreporting or inflating positive information and downplaying negative information, the data derived were triangulated with other data and qualitative input to verify their validity and find any supportive arguments.</p>
<p>Recruiting enumerators and retaining them throughout the survey period was problematic as verifying enumerator availability was difficult.</p>	<p>When the minimum required number of enumerators was available, the team commenced data collection due to time constraints. While there were issues of attendance and commitment to the survey period, the team continued working with those who were available.</p> <p>Enumerators and their work were monitored daily, with the Riyan team providing guidance and assistance, as well as handling CSO inquiries about the survey.</p>

NO.	QUESTION	މަސަލާ	ސަވަލު
INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY			
27	Do you have any of the policies/SOPs listed below in your CSO?	<p>އިތުރު ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރޭގައި ފާހަގަ ކުރެވޭ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ.</p>	27
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Code of Conduct b. Sexual Harassment c. Gender Equality d. Quality Assurance e. Grievance Policy f. General Safety Policy g. Non-Discrimination Policy h. Environmental Policy i. Disciplinary Policy j. Prohibited Activities k. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy l. Other (Please specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ހ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ށ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ނ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ރ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ބ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ޅ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ކ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. އ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ވ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. މ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ދ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. 	
28	What is the method and frequency of elections of the Executive Committee in your organization?	<p>އިތުރު ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރޭގައި ފާހަގަ ކުރެވޭ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ.</p>	28
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Elected by voting (no time-frame specified) b. Elected annually by voting amongst members c. Elected every two years by voting amongst members d. Elected every three years by voting amongst members e. Appointed by CEO f. Executive committee members nominate one another g. Proposes own name based on interest and accepted by committee h. Other (please specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ހ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ށ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ނ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ރ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ބ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ޅ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ކ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. އ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ވ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. މ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. ދ. ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ. 	
29	Has your organization carried out any formal capacity/needs assessments of your organization?	<p>އިތުރު ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރޭގައި ފާހަގަ ކުރެވޭ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ.</p>	29
30	Do you have any informal mechanisms to assess your organization's needs and challenges?	<p>އިތުރު ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރޭގައި ފާހަގަ ކުރެވޭ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތެރެއިން ތިޔަބޭނުން ކުރާ ސަވަލުތަކުގެ ތަން ބަޔާން ކުރުމަށް ފޯމު ފުރިހަމަ ކުރުމަށް ފަހު ފޮނުވާލެވޭނެއެވެ.</p>	30

HUMAN RESOURCES

31
31

31 Please provide the details of human resources available in your organization?

31
31

Number of executive members/founders?

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

Number of total members?
Fee Paying:

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

Non-fee paying:

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

External volunteers:

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

Employees total
Full-time

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

Part-time

31
31

- Male:
- Female:

31
31

32 What are the capacities and competencies of human resources based on qualification in your organization?

32
32

- a. Grade 1 to 7
- b. O level (8 to 10)
- c. A level (11 to 12)
- d. Diploma
- e. Degree or higher
- f. Not specified

32
32

ACCESS TO TRAINING

دسترسی به آموزش

41 What are the types of training your organization has received in the last year or two years?

41 چه نوع آموزشهایی در یک سال یا دو سال گذشته به سازمان شما داده شده است؟

- a. NGO development and institutional development
- b. Project management
- c. Logistics management
- d. Project development, concept paper development and proposal writing
- e. Subject related
- f. Strategy related (TOT, CB, Media)
- g. Fundraising/finance related
- h. Technical expertise on carrying out capacity/needs assessment
- i. Other (please specify)
- j. No training in last year

- ا. توسعه سازمانهای غیرانتفاعی و توسعه نهادی
- ب. مدیریت پروژه
- ج. مدیریت لجستیک
- د. توسعه پروژه، توسعه مقاله مفهومی و نوشتن پروپوزال
- ه. مرتبط با موضوع
- و. مرتبط با استراتژی (TOT، CB، رسانه)
- ز. مرتبط با تأمین مالی/مالیه
- ح. تخصص فنی در انجام ارزیابی ظرفیت/نیاز
- ط. سایر (لطفاً مشخص کنید)
- ی. هیچ آموزش در سال گذشته

42 What are the training needs for your organization currently?

42 چه نیاهای آموزشی برای سازمان شما در حال حاضر وجود دارد؟

- a. NGO development and institutional development
- b. Project management
- c. Logistics management
- d. Project development, concept paper development and proposal writing
- e. Subject related
- f. Strategy related (TOT, CB, Media)
- g. Fundraising/finance related
- h. Technical expertise on carrying out capacity/needs assessment
- i. Other (please specify)

- ا. توسعه سازمانهای غیرانتفاعی و توسعه نهادی
- ب. مدیریت پروژه
- ج. مدیریت لجستیک
- د. توسعه پروژه، توسعه مقاله مفهومی و نوشتن پروپوزال
- ه. مرتبط با موضوع
- و. مرتبط با استراتژی (TOT، CB، رسانه)
- ز. مرتبط با تأمین مالی/مالیه
- ح. تخصص فنی در انجام ارزیابی ظرفیت/نیاز
- ط. سایر (لطفاً مشخص کنید)

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

منابع مالی و تأمین مالی

43 What are your main sources of funding?

43 چه منابع اصلی تأمین مالی برای شما وجود دارد؟

- a. Membership fees
- b. Grants and funding won from proposals
- c. Government allocated funding
- d. Individual donations
- e. Own fundraising activities
- f. Occasional membership donations
- g. Business donors
- h. Sponsors
- i. No Income
- j. Others (please specify)

- ا. هزینه عضویت
- ب. کمک‌های مالی و تأمین مالی از پروپوزالها
- ج. کمک‌های مالی اختصاصی دولتی
- د. کمک‌های مالی انفرادی
- ه. فعالیت‌های تأمین مالی داخلی
- و. کمک‌های مالی از اعضای سازمان
- ز. کمک‌های مالی از بخش خصوصی
- ح. حامیان
- ط. هیچ درآمد
- ی. سایر (لطفاً مشخص کنید)

NO.	QUESTION	דפוס	סדר
WOMEN DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES		וועדות פיתוח נשים	
1	Have you ever worked with CSOs? If not, why?	האם עבדתם פעם עם ארגונים חברתיים? אם לא, למה לא?	1
2	How often does the WDC collaborate with CSOs?	כיצד לעיתים קרובות מתאחדות וועדות הפיתוח עם ארגונים חברתיים?	2
3	What types of projects does the WDC usually collaborate on with CSOs?	אילו סוגי פרויקטים מתאחדות וועדות הפיתוח בדרך כלל עם ארגונים חברתיים?	3
4	How much do women get involved in CSO activities on the island?	כמה נשים מעורבות בפעילויות של ארגונים חברתיים באי?	4
5	Is there any specific programme that CSOs have done for women in the last two years?	האם יש תוכנית ספציפית שארגונים חברתיים ביצעו בשביל נשים בשנתיים האחרונות?	5
6	What are the areas that need to be improved in order to ensure that CSOs can cater to their community in a better and more efficient manner?	אילו תחומים צריכים להשתפר כדי להבטיח שארגונים חברתיים יוכלו לשרת את קהילתם בצורה טובה ויעילה יותר?	6
7	Where do you believe that regulatory powers for the CSO sector should lie?	איפה לדעתכם צריכה להיות סמכות הרגולציה בתחום הארגונים החברתיים?	7
8	What do you believe is the perception of the community towards CSOs in general?	איך לדעתכם נראה תפיסת הקהילה כלפי ארגונים חברתיים באופן כללי?	8
9	How do you suggest credibility and public confidence can be improved in the CSO sector?	כיצד לדעתכם ניתן לשפר את האמינות והאמון הציבורי בתחום הארגונים החברתיים?	9



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