



CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT

**Enhancing Participatory Democracy in
Namibia (EPDN) Project**

Graham Hopwood and Rakkell Andreas

October 2020

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Civil Society Mapping exercise for the Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) project is to provide an overview of the current civil society landscape.

The mapping report seeks to place civil society in both its historical and current political contexts (**Section 2**). **Section 3** looks at government and parliament relations with civil society in the recent past. The current strengths and weaknesses of the civil society landscape are considered in **Section 4**.

The report goes on to profile 25 key CSOs (in **Sections 5 and 6**) that have the potential to engage with parliament and key government bodies over the period of the period of the EPDN project (2020-2025). The profiles summarise these CSOs' capacity for policy analysis, advocacy, rights promotion and policy dialogue. Where CSOs have track records of engaging with parliament, ministries and state agencies these are outlined. The assessments of each CSO also include constraints and limitations affecting their work.

For the purposes of this report we have defined civil society as formal Namibian non-profit organisations that work in the interests of citizens. This is a narrower understanding than the now common definition of civil society as almost any group that is not part of government and not commercial. This broad sweep definition is inclusive of a wide array of organisations such as labour unions, professional associations, cultural groups and sports clubs. The stricter definition enables the report to focus on organisations (what were once commonly called non-governmental organisations) that have the clear potential to engage with parliament and government on policy and legislative matters.

2. Development of Civil Society Since 1990

Prior to independence the objectives of most civil society groups were bound together with the aims of the liberation struggle. As a result, many had close links to the liberation movement, Swapo, and some were regarded as proxies for the liberation movement.

In the 1980s churches, trade unions, the student movement, women's organisations and other community groups played a crucial role in galvanising popular support inside Namibia for the cause of independence. The work of these organisations was often overtly political and after independence many of these groups found it difficult to adapt to the different conditions and re-orientate their work towards community development and critical engagement with the new government. In addition, many of the leaders of these organisations joined the government, creating a brain drain for civil society at a time when it needed visionary leaders to take up the challenge of building a new post-apartheid society.

Much of the funding that had been channelled to pre-independence civil society was specifically linked to achieving the end of apartheid and South Africa's occupation of Namibia. As soon as independence was achieved in March 1990, many donors shifted their focus to supporting the development programmes of the new government and there was an inevitable funding crisis in civil society. By the end of 1991 for example, the **Council of Churches in Namibia** (CCN) was retrenching a large proportion of its staff as international support came to an end or was vastly reduced.

Several of the organisations linked to the liberation struggle wrestled with issues of autonomy, sustainability, and allegiance. The **Namibia National Students Organisation** (Nanso) decided to disaffiliate from Swapo in 1990 and has since had a haphazard existence that has seen the student movement enter periods of dormancy.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

The trade union federation, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), debated disaffiliating from Swapo, but ultimately decided it would gain greater benefits from retaining its close links to the ruling party. The CCN was never formally allied to Swapo, but when it did strike an independent stance, such as on the issue of Swapo's former detainees, it found itself coming under strong attack from some parts of the ruling party. Partly due to the loss of funding, the CCN remains Namibia's ecumenical body but is now a shadow of its former self.

Despite the reduction in funding, through much of the 1990s most donors were still willing to support the core costs of CSOs - which meant that organisations that did survive the independence transition were able to operate sustainably and with permanent, albeit small, staff teams. The relative success of the UN-supervised transition in 1989-90, which passed off remarkably peacefully, meant that the new Namibia's prospects were seen as very positive by the international community. Namibia was not a conflict-riven basket case and the policy of national reconciliation had set the stage for a peaceful future. One consequence of this was that donors turned to other graver situations around the world and Namibia started to slip down their priority list. Scandinavian donors in particular gradually excluded Namibia from funding opportunities from the late 1990s onwards. South Africa's democratisation in 1994 meant there was a new focus for the same funders who had backed Namibia's anti-apartheid cause and inevitably many of the funding agencies that had been key into the anti-apartheid struggle began to downscale their Namibian commitments and sometimes focus completely on South Africa.

Types of organisations

In Namibia CSOs operate under the following categories:

Voluntary associations - These are membership based and only need to have a constitution. There are no registration requirements

Trusts - The trust deed is a formal legal document registered with the Master of the High Court. Trusts are not membership-based but are governed by a board of trustees.

Section 21 companies - These are companies not for gain that operate under Namibia's Companies Act. Reporting on the company's financial management is required. These agencies are required to register with the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA).

Welfare organisations - These are registered by the Ministry of Health. They should already have a legal status and be can be Section 21 companies, trusts, or voluntary associations.

Some of the organisations that played a crucial role in the last years of the independence struggle adapted to the new conditions and continued to be mainstays of the civil society scene - for example the public interest law firm the **Legal Assistance Centre** (LAC) and the women's organisation **Sister Namibia**. Others formed soon after independence such as the **Namibia Institute for Democracy** (NID) which was founded in 1991. By the mid-1990s, new organisations were emerging including a number of organisations involved in Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) projects, several HIV/AIDS groups, and NGOs like **Women's Action for Development** (WAD) and the **Katutura Youth Enterprise Centre** (Kayec). Most emerging CSOs were citizen-based responses seeking to address socio-economic challenges and were not obviously politically aligned.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Those CSOs that were closely aligned to government (such as the **Namibia National Women's Organisation** (Nanawo)) and to the ruling party (such as the **Pan-Afrikan Centre of Namibia**) tended to fade away or become only sporadically active after achieving some national prominence.

In the 1990s and later, civil society's composition and level of activity tended to be heavily influenced by the availability of funding. In the late 1990s, when CBNRM began to be a buzz term, there was an upsurge in the number of organisations working in the field of environment and nature conservation. After the turn of the century, there was a noticeable increase in the number of organisations working in the health sector, with most focussing on the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some 25% of civil society organisations were working in the field of HIV/AIDS in 2012, according to the NID Guide to Civil Society in Namibia. This amount of activity has since reduced due to funding reductions, particularly from the UN Global Fund to Fight AIDs, TB and Malaria.

Other sectors - like gender, human rights, democracy and governance - have seen a noticeable drop off in donor support over the years. This is linked to shifting donor priorities and Namibia's relatively good governance and human rights record. Another crucial factor that limited donor funding was the World Bank's decision in 2009 to categorise Namibia as an upper-middle income country. A further factor which affected CSO operations was a fundamental change in the way donors disbursed funds post the year 2000. Up until that point many donors were willing to fund directly staff salaries plus office rents and infrastructure costs. By the mid 2000s most donors working in Namibia had switched to funding projects only which made it difficult for CSOs to maintain permanent staff and office bases. The reduction in effective organisations in the rights and governance sector has resulted in civil society struggling to fulfil one of its most important functions - holding government to account.

Initially, most leading CSOs were united under the banner of the **Namibia Non-Governmental Organisations Forum** (Nangof), which was founded in 1991. At first the organisation was stable and proved to be a useful umbrella for civil society focussing on networking, capacity building and advocacy. But since the early 1990s, Nangof has gone through various stages of revival and collapse. In 2007, it was transformed into a trust and thereafter received considerable funding from the European Union (EU). As a trust, Nangof advocated for a conducive legal framework for CSOs, facilitated access to funding, assisted with capacity building, and coordinated the sharing of information among CSOs. The trust served as an important contact point for government and was able to represent Namibian CSOs when required, such as at UN consultations. Trustees, representing various member CSOs, served on a revolving basis and this seemed to work effectively for several years.

From 2012 Nangof worked in tandem with the Civil Society Foundation of Namibia (CSFN) which also received EU funding which it then disbursed to a variety of mainly grassroots community organisations based outside Windhoek. However, by mid-2016 Nangof was closing its doors and the CSFN was also winding up its business following reported difficulties with accessing further EU funds. Since then, Nangof has operated fitfully and with only short-term funding for specific activities. The lack of a functional umbrella body has caused problems for civil society in that government has no obvious point of contact for civil society and it has been difficult, at times, for civil society to present a united front and to send clearly legitimate representatives to various gatherings, including important international fora.

Civil society entered a new era from 2014 onwards. This period saw the growth of social movements, albeit mostly embryonic, and higher levels of activism, engagement and sometimes confrontation with the authorities. A turning point was civil society opposition to constitutional changes introduced in mid 2014 (described in more detail in Section 3).

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Since then, despite a lack of coordination by an umbrella body, CSOs have been increasingly active in engaging government and sometimes parliament. There have also been more examples of civil society militancy over issues like urban housing, land reform and gender-based violence. Most rights and governance related bodies are grouped together under the **Action Coalition**, which was formed in 2012 to advocate for an Access to Information (ATI) law. Since then Action has taken on other rights-related issues including lobbying for changes to Namibia's draft whistleblowing law and speaking out on regional human rights abuses, such as in Zimbabwe.

Another example of CSO collaboration on a single issue is the **Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition** which was recently revived after initially launching its campaigns more than a decade ago. The movement, which brings together the unions, churches and several prominent CSOs, wants to see Namibia introduce a universal basic income grant to be paid on a monthly basis. Although government has sounded sympathetic to the idea over the years, thus far the BIG proposal has not gained much political traction. Government's fiscal situation means that government is unlikely to consider a BIG in the near future.

Many high-profile CSOs are primarily Windhoek-based and lack grassroots constituencies. There are few CSOs that are active in communities across the country while little is known about local grassroots initiatives which often operate in isolation from broader civil society.

As of 2020, civil society activities are often robust and effective but overall CSOs are not coordinated (except within some sectors). Both viability and sustainability remain constant concerns.

3. Government and Parliament Relations with Civil Society

Since 2016 the Namibian economy has been in recession. The situation is likely to be seriously worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. As of the last national labour survey in 2018, some 33% of the labour force and 46% of the youth (under 35) were jobless. A prolonged drought has hampered agricultural production, with as many as 700,000 people in need of food aid in 2019. Government's ability to respond to these challenges had been limited by its fiscal position - with public debt rising to above 50% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019 and expected to pass the 75% mark in 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic. There is no immediate prospect of economic recovery although good rains in 2020 did ease the crop and grazing situations.

The adverse economic conditions and persistent drought, compounded by a major corruption scandal in 2019 (known as Fishrot), contributed to losses by the ruling Swapo Party in the November 2019 elections. Swapo is also expected to lose support in the 2020 local and regional elections.

In view of these economic and political developments, civil society's role has become more important than ever - both in terms of the services CSOs can provide and their fundamental role in holding the authorities to account.

Despite the economic and political turbulence of the past few years, the civic space for civil society activity remains open. CSOs are able to form and operate largely without impediment. There is no official registration system for CSOs. This means it is difficult to estimate the actual size of civil society. The best recent estimate comes from a database being developed by **CIVIC +264** which lists 225 active organisations countrywide.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

The most recent Guide to the Civil Society in Namibia published by the NID¹ in 2019 listed 147 CSOs in total in the following sectors:

Sector	No. of CSOs	% of total
Agriculture	3	2
Arts & Culture	4	3
Children	13	9
Disability	9	6
Education/General	58	39
Environment	7	5
Gender	9	6
Health	27	18
Human rights/ Democracy	17	12

Namibia has thus far not joined the recent trend of placing bureaucratic controls on CSOs by forcing them to register with the government or face penalties. Instead CSOs are free to register as trusts with the Master of the High Court or as companies not for gain with the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA). CSOs offering certain public education or health services must also register either as welfare organisations with the Ministry of Health and Social Services or as educational institutions with the Ministry of Education. Although some CSOs complain of overly bureaucratic and slow procedures to register and update details as a trust, there have been no reports of CSOs being blocked from setting up or operating.

This open approach does not mean that there have not been tensions in the civil society-government relationship. The Civic Organisations Partnership Policy (COPP)² first published in 2005 envisaged a law to regulate civil society and a voluntary registration system. This was rejected at the time by CSOs under the Nangof umbrella as they mistrusted government's intentions and felt COPP could be a forerunner to attempts to control civil society.

In the foreword to COPP, the then Director General of the National Planning Commission (NPC), Helmut Angula, recognised that CSOs "play a vital role in providing links to local communities and increasing social capital through the interventions they sponsor.

¹<https://www.nid.org.na/guide-to-civil-namibia>

² <https://www.npc.gov.na/downloads/policies%20by%20year/2005/Government%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Namibia%20Civic%20Organizations%20Partnership%20Policy.pdf>

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

They have undertaken commendable work since independence in funding and implementing development programmes and projects in specific and cross-cutting sectors, at local, regional, national and international levels. Thus, their valuable contribution to national development is widely recognised.”

However, Angula also acknowledged that “government and NGO collaboration has been somewhat ineffective, being limited to just a few NGOs. This may be due to the lack of clear guidelines on partnership and because NGOs and civil society in general remain weak and divided and have seldom been able to present a common front on issues affecting them.”

Only recently, has government, via the NPC, sought to revive the partnership policy. Although some meetings have taken place between civil society, the NPC and the Ombudsman’s Office over the past two years, little progress had been made by mid 2020. The NPC does maintain a civil society desk but there is little meaningful contact with CSOs emanating from the NPC.

The civil society-government relationship has been somewhat ad hoc in recent years. CSOs are sometimes invited to consultation sessions on policies, laws and plans by ministries and agencies but there is no overall or consistent approach. Invitations are often delivered late or are unrealistic (for example, asking a short-staffed CSO to send delegates to a week-long workshop). Government has no standard approach to involving CSOs in policy formation. This is complicated by the fact that there is no umbrella body through which government can work to identify and engage relevant CSOs.

The potential role and contribution of civil society have barely featured in important national documents like the Fifth National Development Plan (2017-22) and the Harambee Prosperity Plan (2016-2020). The country’s Vision 2030 document, which was adopted in 2004, expresses the hope that by 2030 “the democratic principle of popular participation is well-entrenched in Namibian society. All political parties are active; civil society is vibrant; and mature, investigative and free media entities are in operation.”

Civil society organisations are regarded with suspicion by some political leaders and parts of government. Following the 2014 formation of the civil society coalition – My Constitution My Decision – which opposed constitutional changes, the President and some top officials became more outspoken about the political role of some CSOs. In the end, the My Constitution My Decision coalition faded from prominence after constitutional changes seeking the enlargement of parliament and the creation of a vice-president role were passed by parliament despite objections. During the same period, the **Affirmative Repositioning** (AR) movement emerged to focus attention on the twin issues of housing and urban land. AR has been more directly confrontational in its rhetoric and tactics than conventional CSOs.

Adding to the tension was government’s decision in 2011 to implement the Research, Science and Technology Act which several CSOs felt was unconstitutional. The Act and its regulations place controls on who can undertake research in Namibia. After negotiations with the Ministry of Education failed to resolve the dispute – the LAC together with the **Institute for Public Policy Research** (IPPR) and The Namibian newspaper brought a case in the High Court to have several aspects of the law declared unconstitutional. The case has now dragged on in the High Court for several years without resolution. As a result, the Act has not been fully implemented and the research environment remains relatively unimpeded.

There are instances of CSOs constructively contributing to policy- and law-making processes. An example of a CSO that has had a strong influence on law development is the LAC’s work through its Gender Research and Advocacy Programme (GRAP).

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

GRAP has played an important and influential role in developing a number of laws including the Combating of Rape Act (2000), Combating of Domestic Violence (2003), Maintenance Act (2003), Children's Status Act (2004) and the Child Care and Protection Act (2015). The LAC has also assisted in annotating parliament's online repository of legislation.

The Action Coalition participated in government-organised workshops to discuss a draft ATI law and made submissions regarding the development of the law (eventually tabled in parliament in early 2020). The Action Coalition, in 2017, was successful in lobbying for some changes to the Whistleblower Protection law while it was being debated in the National Assembly. In 2011 the IPPR and several other CSOs made submissions and spoke at a public hearing on the Statistics Bill organised by a National Council standing committee. The National Council agreed to most of the recommended changes and the bill was later amended by the National Assembly.

In 2016, civil society led by the LAC, succeeded in getting the National Council to reject the Namibian Citizenship Amendment Bill after the Council held a public hearing. The LAC and several lawyers argued that the Bill was unconstitutional. As a result, the Bill, which had sought to bar the children of non-Namibian parents who are in Namibia on temporary permits from being entitled to Namibian citizenship by birth, was dropped completely.

The IPPR, through its Finnish-funded Democracy Report project, has analysed bills and other legislative issues and produced regular newsletters on parliamentary issues for more than ten years. The publications are published online and distributed in hard copy at parliament. However, in general there has been a lack of response and interest among MPs. The National Assembly has worked with the IPPR on several presentations and workshops. In June 2017, IPPR held a workshop for parliamentarians and civil society actors under the theme 'Tools for Building an Effective Women's Caucus'. The IPPR has promoted the idea of an all-party Women's Caucus that could include both houses of parliament. In April 2018, IPPR held a workshop with parliamentarians on Gender Responsive Budgeting in Namibia.

Most of the above examples refer to CSOs intervening at a quite late stage in the legislative process - when the Bill is being debated in either the National Assembly or the National Council. It would be far better if civil society was consulted earlier in the process so that any major issues could be pointed out before draft laws were tabled. If proposed bills were published for comment before tabling, some of these last-minute interventions could be avoided and bills would likely be of a higher quality.

CSOs can submit petitions to parliament requesting MPs to act on certain concerns. A petition can be delivered to the Secretary of the National Assembly who can pass it on to a relevant standing committee. In practice, very few petitions from CSOs have been submitted

Although virtually all proposed legislation emanates from the Executive, the AR movement did prepare their own bill on the land issue. Called the Land Indigenization Bill, the draft law was submitted to the Speaker of the National Assembly in March 2019 and again just over a year later. The bill, which seeks to regulate land ownership by foreign nationals in Namibia, has been referred to the Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs.

Standing committees in both the National Assembly and National Council have only rarely collaborated with CSOs. This is partly because, historically, few bills and motions are referred to standing committees. This may change in the new National Assembly, sworn in in March 2020, as the opposition are more likely to push for certain laws and other issues to be referred to committees.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

The fact that a major law, the Access to Information bill, was referred to the National Assembly's Information, Communication Technology, and Innovation Committee in early 2020 is an indicator that committees will be busy considering more laws and substantive issues in the future.

Committees do not often request expert presentations from CSOs or seek consultations on relevant issues. When this does happen, the initiative often comes from civil society. For example, the National Assembly's Committee on Information, Communication Technology, and Innovation consulted the Action Coalition in September 2019 to discuss the African Commission's Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa.

4. Strengths and Weaknesses

Most Namibian non-governmental organisations face major problems accessing funding. As a result, the typical CSO operation is a small team of two or three full-time staff at the most with part-time staff or consultants carrying out much of the programme work. Due to limited financing options, many CSOs have funding horizons of around six months to a year after which their viability is often in doubt. Even well-known CSOs have experienced periods of dormancy in the last few years due to gaps in funding. The fact that many CSOs are dependent on project funding often with timelines of less than a year means that these organisations end up focussing on short-term goals and fail to do any meaningful longer-term strategising.

The uncertainty about sources of funding adds to the job insecurity in the sector and therefore a shortage of relevant skills and knowledge. It is often the case that CSOs are not able to provide long-term contracts (more than 12 months) and benefits such as pensions and medical insurance. Using volunteers and unpaid interns has become a common practice. It is impossible for the sector to compete with the public sector and private sector in terms of employment benefits.

One of the consequences of the scenario outlined above is that CSOs often struggle to employ administrators, accountants, and bookkeepers due to the limited amounts of funding that can be used for core costs. This in turn undermines CSO efficiency and governance standards. The process becomes a vicious circle as many CSOs lack the expertise to both apply for and administer larger grants - where reporting requirements can be time-consuming. In addition, as a result of these administrative deficits, some CSOs find it difficult to ensure they have up-to-date audited financials (which are usually a requirement for larger funding applications).

Options for funding beyond traditional, mostly Western donors are limited. Namibia's private sector does sometimes offer support but mostly for softer, non-controversial projects that are essentially branding exercises. Some companies do not trust CSO's abilities to manage funds and therefore prefer to put a portion of their profits into their own corporate social responsibility projects or back government-related initiatives. The notion of Namibian philanthropy has not developed over the years and there are no known examples of 'angel investors' backing CSOs.

The gradual reduction in funding since the 1990s is due to a combination of factors: Namibia's progress in terms of establishing peace, stability and democracy; Namibia's status as an 'upper-middle income country' (according to the World Bank); the global economic downturn since 2008; the election of conservative, less outward-looking governments in some traditional donor countries; and Western nations turning to other priorities including costly interventions in countries like Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya and more recently having to deal with the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees and migrants.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Namibian civil society groups have argued that Namibia still requires international support for a number of reasons, including the vast income disparities between the rich elite and the vast majority of the population who are poor as evidenced in Namibia's Gini-coefficient of 0.56 – one of the highest in the world.

In addition, Namibia's democracy is still in its developing stage while corruption, human rights abuses (particularly violence against women and children), and other governance-related problems appear to be worsening.

Most CSOs are headquartered in Windhoek with very few having enough resources to open regional offices. Although it is clear that civil society organisations are active in all 14 regions, not much is known about the nature and activities of these non-state actors.

According to successive editions of the CSO Sustainability Index for Namibia³, the prospects for building sustainable, well-funded CSOs are poor and probably getting worse. Financial viability, organisational capacity and sectoral infrastructure were the worst performing pillars in the 2018 CSO Sustainability Index for Namibia.

There are very few training opportunities specifically geared for civil society organisations. According to the 2018 CSO Sustainability Index, there are no dedicated resource centres or intermediary support organizations serving Namibian CSOs.

The only sustained programme of assistance for civil society in recent times was the 'Action for becoming a credible CSO in Namibian communities'⁴ programme funded by the EU and run by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung between 2016 and 2019. The project focused on CSOs outside Windhoek – in Erongo, Hardap, Omaheke, Oshikoto and Otjozondjupa regions. The project did cover working with parliament as well as capacity building and training for selected CSOs and the production of training materials.

Project leaders met with several National Assembly Standing Committees in early 2019 – including the ones dealing with Human Resources and Community Development; Management of Natural Resources; and Gender Equality, Social Development and Family Affairs. The committees were briefed to the project's activities and the need to work with CSOs where possible. Also, in 2019, project leaders met with the then Vice Chairperson of the National Council, Bernard Sibalatani to brief him on the project and later with National Council MPs. Further consultations were held with the National Council's Standing Committees.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation, a German political foundation, offers dedicated office space and meeting rooms to partner CSOs, including NID, IPPR, and the **Economic Association of Namibia** (EAN). Occasionally, donors do provide training days for their partners – for example, the Embassy of Finland has done this in the past – on issues like financial management. The only CSO to have recently offered such services is the NID, which has also published various guides on CSO management and organizational ethics⁵.

Most NGOs are headquartered in Windhoek with very few having enough resources to open regional offices. Although it is clear that CSOs are active in all 14 regions, very little is known about the nature and activities of these non-state actors. Through work on its database, CIVIC +264 is gradually picking up more details on active regional CSOs.

The absence of a functioning umbrella body for CSOs (as outlined previously) has also led to government sometimes bypassing the need to consult and involve civil society in policy formation and drafting of bills.

3 The 2018 CSO Sustainability Index for Namibia. https://ippr.org/na/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CSOS18_Namibia_final.pdf

4 <https://www.kas.de/en/web/namibia/strengthening-csos-and-las-in-namibian-communities-en->

5 <https://www.nid.org/na/publications/ngo-management-training>

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Given all the above factors, it is perhaps surprising that CSOs have become more effective in their advocacy and also improved their public image over the last few years. By forming alliances and coordinating in sectors, such as Action on democracy-related issues and BIG on poverty, some CSOs have been able to ensure high visibility and have increased their options for engaging with and lobbying various government bodies and parliament. In addition, many of the organisations in these alliances are becoming adept at using social media to reach out to their constituencies and to spread their key messages.

Namibia's media environment, recognised as the free-est in Africa by Reporters Without Borders, has also enabled civil society to gain positive coverage from both state and private media outlets.

In addition, the growth of social movements such as AR (on land and housing) and **#MeToo** and **#ShutItAllDown** on gender equality, gender-based violence and femicide has led to a new era of protest - in which mainly young people are taking to the streets to raise key issues.

Overall, then one can see much potential for civil society to increase its influence on policy and legislative issues in the coming years despite the financial and other difficulties many organisations face.

5. Identifying 25 Key CSOs

Using the definition of a CSO we set out at the beginning of this report, we have selected 25 formal Namibian non-profit organisations that work in the interests of citizens and also effective coalitions and alliances they are part of.

The selected CSOs should be dynamic, working in the area of enhancing participatory democracy and also have the capacity to help parliament to strengthen oversight of public policies and programmes in general and with particular reference to education/skills and rural development; social accountability and school management; land reform and development; and community-based natural resource management.

It is important to note that there are other civil society actors that are not included here but who may be important formal or informal partners for the EPDN project in the future. These include the German political foundations which do support a range of Namibian CSOs but also occasionally organise their own events or work in tandem with their Namibian partners on projects.

In addition, there are a number of social movements that the EPDN project should be aware of. The AR movement has styled itself as a social movement pressing for land and housing rights. In 2020, it registered to take part in the local and regional elections as a residents' association. While this is not the same as being a full-blown political party, it does seem that AR is now operating more like a party than a CSO. Other examples of recent social movements include **#MeToo** and **#ShutItAllDown**. Both of these groups are focussed on gender-related issues with the latter becoming especially prominent in October 2020 when it organised a series of protests over Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) and femicide.

There are also a number of groups working on issues related to the 1904-08 genocide. These are focussed on the affected communities and their claims for restorative justice through reparations and land redistribution. These include the **Ovaherero Genocide Foundation**, the **Genocide Survivors Project**, and the **Nama Genocide Technical Committee**.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Another area of civil society activity worthy of further investigation is the work of the churches. Few church bodies work alongside other CSOs – recent examples would be the **ELCRN Desk for Social Responsibility** (on the land reform issue) and the **Church Alliance for Orphans** (Cafo) on the impact of HIV/AIDS. But the potential for collaboration with government and parliament is great either via individual denominations or the CCN.

6. Profiles of 25 Key CSOs and Coalitions/Alliances

1. Nangof Trust

Nangof, according to its mandate, should be an umbrella body for all Namibia's CSOs including community-based organisations and faith-based groups.

Originally known as the Namibia Non-governmental Organisations Forum, the Nangof Trust (which it became in 2007) has struggled to fill its role as an umbrella body for several years. Nangof is currently run by a volunteer coordinator, Pauline Dempers, who also heads a small human rights organisation called Breaking the Wall of Silence. Nangof's last elected Chairperson, Sandi Tjaronda, still acts as a spokesperson for the trust. Tjaronda is also the Executive Director of the Namibia Network of Aids Service Organisations (Nanaso). Nangof's offices in Windhoek West closed in 2016 after the trust ran into problems with its EU funding. Since then there have been intermittent efforts to resolve issues with the EU.

Government and state agencies still turn to Nangof when they need representation at certain meetings or on certain bodies. There is a Nangof WhatsApp group through which such nominations are sometimes decided. However, there are no reporting mechanisms or regular meetings to discuss such matters. Sometimes, the lack of coordination fuelled by Nangof's demise means that civil society is not represented on important bodies. For example, the Anti-Corruption Commission complained that the Nangof representative did not turn up to meetings of the National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee between 2017 and 2019. As a result, there was no reporting back to broader civil society about the activities of a crucial body.

The only Nangof sectoral committee that continued its work after 2016 was its working group on land reform.

Since 2018, several meetings of CSO representatives and Nangof principals have been held under the auspices of the Office of the Ombudsman to look at the possible revitalisation of the trust. However, the talks have proved inconclusive. As of mid-2020, Nangof was operating in ad hoc manner, as it has done since 2016. Some issues relating to its past funding by the EU remained unresolved. Nangof has no website and its Facebook page had not been updated since 2015.

2. CIVIC +264

CIVIC +264, also known as the Civil Society Information Centre, is a voluntary association, set up in 2019 by five CSOs – the Legal Assistance Centre, the Namibia institute for Democracy, the Namibia Media Trust, the Institute for Public Policy Research, and Citizens for an Accountable and Transparent Society. CIVIC +264's mission is to create an organisation that will focus on information sharing among CSOs.

CIVIC+264's initial activities were the development and maintenance of a database of active CSOs, the setting up a website with the aim of enhancing communication to and between CSOs, and the monitoring and sharing of developments in civil society, government and the donor community that are relevant to civil society in Namibia.

CIVIC +264 has been slow to get off the ground and, partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, had not yet been publicly launched by mid-2020. The organisation is funded by the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) and in early 2020 appointed a Coordinator, Carola Engelbrecht. The organisation's website is <http://www.civic264.org.na>. CIVIC + 264 is busy developing its database of active CSOs. CIVIC +264 has a small office base within the House of Democracy in Windhoek, where the HSF also has its national office. As yet it CIVIC +264 not active on social media.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

CIVIC +264 has been careful not to tread on ground traditionally occupied by Nangof and does not claim to be representative of Namibian civil society. However, in the absence of a functioning umbrella body, it is gradually becoming the first point of contact for government and other official bodies when they need to consult civil society.

3. Action Coalition

Action Coalition was established in 2012 and has gradually developed into a significant formation on the civil society scene - especially relating to governance, democracy and human rights matters. The main purpose of Action is to campaign for a comprehensive legal framework that guarantees Namibian citizens the right to access to information. As an alliance of leading CSOs, Action has also raised its voice on a range of related policy, freedom of expression and political issues - ranging from cybersecurity to human rights in Zimbabwe.

As of 2020, the Coalition had 11 members who are bound together by a memorandum of understanding. The members are the AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA); Citizens for an Accountable and Transparent Society (CATS); MyDigitalBridge Foundation; Editors' Forum of Namibia (EFN); Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR); Internet Society Namibia (ISOC); Legal Assistance Centre (LAC); Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA); Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID); Namibia Media Trust (NMT) and Sister Namibia. Members meet regularly to steer the activities of the Coalition.

The Action Secretariat is based in the offices of the Namibia Media Trust (NMT). For the past two years it has been funded by the Embassy of Finland.

The Coalition has been successful, albeit over a protracted period, in lobbying government to introduce an Access to Information law (tabled in early 2020). It has also worked with parliament holding a consultative meeting on the African Commission's Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa in September 2019. It seems likely that Action will play key role in any parliamentary hearings and consultations held on ATI and related issues in the future.

ACTION has also been involved in civic education around ATI issues inclusive of holding community consultations and broadcasting on community radio stations. The Coalition utilises social media (mainly Facebook and Twitter) to get across its key messages. Action's website is <https://action-namibia.org/about-action/>

4. Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition

The Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition was re-activated in 2020 in the midst of the economic fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic. Its aim is to reduce the level of poverty in Namibia by getting government to introduce a monthly universal grant. Since its relaunch in September 2020, the Coalition has been advocating for a monthly cash transfer of N\$500 to everyone aged between 19 and 59. Much of the Coalition's case for the grant come from a 2009 pilot project it conducted at the eastern community of Otjivero.

The relaunched Coalition has been led by the Economic and Social Justice Trust and the Desk for Social Development of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN).

The BIG Coalition was initially launched over 15 years ago with the backing of the CCN, the NUNW, and Nangof among others. The Coalition faded from the civil society scene after government failed to respond positively to its Otjivero pilot study but hopes for the introduction of a BIG were revived after President Hage Geingob said he supported the idea in 2014. Since then the BIG concept also received backing from the Minister of Poverty Eradication Bishop Zephania Kameeta, who served from 2015 to 2020. Government's internal investigations of a BIG's viability are said to have concluded that the financial burden it would place on government coffers was too great.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

The Coalition does place the spotlight on the broader issue of poverty in Namibia and the need for effective policy responses. The 2020 Coalition consists of CCN, NUNW, Nangof, the Church Alliance for Orphans, Y-Fem, the Legal Assistance Centre, the Namibia Institute for Democracy, the Women's Leadership Centre, LaRRI, Rise Namibia, the Namibia Diverse Women's Association, KAYEC, NDT, Namibia Rural Women Assembly, and Breaking the Wall of Silence among others.

The Coalition recently relaunched its website at <http://www.bignam.org/> and has its Facebook page.

5. Namibia Network of Aids Service Organisations (Nanaso)

Nanaso is a network of CSOs working in the areas of HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and related diseases. Nanaso aims to maximise information flows across the network and from the network to other agencies engaged in tackling HIV/AIDS. The network has also established a central source of information, the Nanaso/SAFAIDS Resource Centre. Nanaso assists all its members to maximise the impact of their work through capacity-building programmes. The network seeks to represent its members nationally and internationally; bring together common groupings to increase impact for advocacy programmes; and support leaders in HIV/AIDS engagements. Nanaso also helps smaller CSOs with raising funds.

Nanaso was formed in the 1990s and had a high national profile over ten years ago. Since then, not much has been heard of the network which has been backed by the UN Global Fund. Currently, its website is not available and its Facebook page has not been updated since 2014.

Nanaso remains the most important networking body in the health sector and a means to reach out to smaller AIDS Service Organisations which form its membership.

6. Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)

The LAC is one of Namibia's long-standing and most high-profile CSOs having been established in 1988. The LAC exists to protect the human rights of all Namibians. The LAC works in five broad areas: Litigation Information and Advice Education and Training Research Law Reform and Advocacy. The LAC has 15 permanent staff plus several interns, candidate legal practitioners and consultants.

As mentioned in section 2 of the report the LAC has a strong track record of working with government on the development of bills (often through the Law Reform and Development Commission). It is involved in advocacy, participating in committee activity, provision of information on pending bills, providing annotated laws for the Parliamentary website

On land issues the LAC has made recommendations for law reform in respect of communal land reform; resettlement; and land expropriation, as well as giving a presentation at the national land conference in 2018. Much of this work is done through the LAC's Land, Environment and Development (LEAD) project. LEAD also undertakes capacity training in regard to wildlife crime, the Traditional Authorities Act, and illegal fencing, etc.

Over the past five years the LAC has been commissioned to draft bills and regulations for government, provide comments on other bills and regulations, prepare training materials for service providers, and train of groups such as social workers, clerks of court, police and magistrates. It has formed a unique public-private partnership with the Ministry of Justice whereby government purchased co-copyright in two legal databases (Namlex and Namlex Appendix) from LAC.

Despite being well-established as a CSO, the LAC also faces funding challenges and has to deal with regular fluctuations in support. There is also a need for more young lawyers to commit to undertake civil society work

The work of the LAC is overseen by the Legal Assistance Trust. The LAC has a well-managed website - <http://www.lac.org.na> - as well as social media pages on Facebook and Twitter. Since 2010, the LAC's Director has been Toni Hancox.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

The LAC has also been instrumental in ensuring public awareness on Covid-19 regulations during the State of Emergency period. It also recently promoted a pro-choice line in the debate about sexual reproductive rights in Namibia.

7. Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)

NID was founded in 1991 and is committed to promoting democracy in Namibia. NID implements a range of civic education programmes, civil society training, and anti-corruption projects. These programmes aim to strengthen civil society and the public's capacity to interact with government at all levels in an informed manner, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to provide opportunities for the exchange of public opinion and the support of public debate.

Currently the NID has a limited staff complement and is headed by Executive Director Naita Hishoono. From 2016 to 2018, the NID was mostly dormant due to funding constraints but has since revived its programme of activities. The NID is one of the few CSOs working on elections and often has its own team of observers at Namibian elections.

The NID is a Section 21 company and is governed by a Board of Directors. The NID has an active social media presence on Facebook and also regularly updates its website - <https://www.nid.org.na> - to share information on its projects and publications.

8. Namibia Media Trust (NMT)

The NMT's activities include advocacy and policy interventions to promote media freedom, free expression and access to information in Namibia and beyond. A key NMT objective is to generally further the principles of press freedom and freedom of expression as well as access to information.

The Trust is the owner of The Namibian newspaper and its Chairperson is the founding editor of the newspaper - Gwen Lister. The NMT has a staff complement of four. The trust runs a range of training courses for journalists and sometimes civil society activists as well as producing information materials and regular broadcasts on freedom of expression issues. The NMT also hosts the Secretariat for the ACTION coalition and is founding member of CIVIC+264. The NMT has been a key advocate for access to information legislation. The Trust is also sometimes requested by government to submit opinions on other ICT-related policies and laws under review. The trust has not been actively engaged with parliament, except occasionally through the Action Coalition.

9. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)

The IPPR is a Section 21 company with a mission to deliver independent, analytical, critical yet constructive research on social, political and economic issues that affect development in Namibia. Launched in April 2001, the IPPR was established in the belief that development is best promoted through free and critical debate informed by quality research. The research produced by the IPPR has a strong focus on democracy and governance issues, but the organisation also covers economic and other policy issues.

The IPPR has two permanent staff - an Executive Director and an Administrator - and a team of around 10 part-time research associates. Recent donors include the Embassy of Finland, the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (Osisa), the International Budget Partnership, the US Embassy, the British High Commission, and FHI 360, among others.

The IPPR has an active social media presence and its website is regularly updated. The Institute is part of the ACTION Coalition as well as a member of CIVIC+264.

The IPPR's Democracy Report project focuses on monitoring the work of parliament. The current project, running through to the end of 2021, provides regular updates on developments at parliament and analyses major pieces of legislation and other issues that are relevant to the legislature. In the past the project has held workshops, training sessions, and presentations for MPs.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

IPPR also makes submissions to government consultative processes on a range of issues as well liaising with governments offices, for example the Ministry of Finance on budget transparency. The Institute has compiled the annual Civil Society Sustainability Index for Namibia since 2017.

10. Economic and Social Justice Trust (ESJT)

The Economic and Social Justice Trust (ESJT) was formed in 2013 by a group of activists to promote struggles for economic and social justice. The objective of the Trust is to enhance and promote the social and economic rights of Namibians. In 2018 the ESJT led environmental and labour activists in opposing offshore phosphate mining in Namibia. In particular, the trust wanted the government to set aside an environmental clearance certificate granted to a company that intended to mine phosphate deposits off the coast. The trust gained more prominence in 2020 when it emerged as the leading organization backing the introduction of a Basic Income Grant. The ESJT rallied other CSOs to revive the BIG Coalition and to sought to raise the profile of the campaign through media coverage and social media activity. The ESJT has its own Facebook page. The main activists in ESJT are veteran labour commentator Herbert Jauch and Rinaani Musutua.

11. Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI)

LaRRI is a research and education institute established in 1998, committed to the overall political and economic independence of all working people in Namibia and beyond. The institute fights for a fair, just social and economic Namibian society through labour research, education, and lobbying and advocacy. It is closely linked to the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW).

The range of issues it covers are potentially wide and include environmental justice, mining, fishing, and farming, land issues, and gender equality, among others. However, its research output has declined in recent years. The Institute is funded by the Africa Groups of Sweden and the Olof Palme Institute. LaRRI is a member of the BIG Coalition.

While it occasionally contributes to public discourse on labour issues and the economy, LaRRI's activities seem to have wound down. It does remain the main CSO resource on labour-related matters, however.

12. Namibia Chamber of Environment (NCE)

NCE is an umbrella Association that provides a forum and mouthpiece for the broader environmental sector that can lobby government and other stakeholders, raise funds for its members and represent the sector.

The NCE offers 8 programmes to its members; membership support, national facilitation, advocacy, environmental policy research, environmental environment, training and mentorship, fund raising and grants making.

13. Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)

The NNF is Namibia's leading conservation and sustainable development organisation. The NNF promotes sustainable development, the conservation of biological diversity and natural ecosystems as well as the wise and ethical use of natural resources for the benefit of all Namibians both present and future. NNF has four key programme areas, namely - Consultancy Services, Project Management and Support, Funding Opportunities and Financial Management.

The NNF has extensive experience and expertise in financial management and provides financial Management services to a range of community and conservation related projects - <https://www.nnf.org.na/>

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

14. Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO)

NACSO is an association comprising eight CSOs and the University of Namibia, founded in 1996. The NACSO Constitution sets out the principles for a partnership of institutions, both government and NGO (including parastatal, community, business and other sectors), that closely collaborate to practice, promote, and support community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) activities in Namibia. NACSO is a voluntary association, with the aims of promoting, supporting and furthering the development of community-based approaches to the wise and sustainable management of natural resources, thereby striving to advance rural development and livelihoods, to promote biodiversity conservation, and to empower communities through capacity building and good governance to determine their own long-term destinies.

Natural resource management requires accurate monitoring. We need to know how much wildlife there is, and whether species are increasing or declining. The CBNRM Programme has introduced innovative methodologies for counting wildlife, and over the years has added other data vital to conservation: vegetation counts, information about conservancy governance, and data used to calculate the improvement in livelihoods through conservation.

There is a substantial risk of reduced funding to CBNRM activities due to a reduction of donor support to Namibia, which is seen as an upper-middle income country, at a time when more conservancies are being formed, some of which have large conservation potential, but lower potential for financial sustainability.

15. Namibia Development Trust (NDT)

NDT is a CSO founded in 1987 by different civil society organisations to channel aid from the European Commission to “victims of apartheid”. It later transformed itself in playing an active role in community development. NDT works with historically marginalised rural and urban communities to build their power to act for social change, through capacity-building initiatives. Their core work is rural organisational capacity building these organisations are community-based organisations, conservancies and cooperatives. Their commitment is towards the power of people to organise themselves for development. Their driving ideology is that if people are in control of their own socio-economic future than development will always be people centred and be initiated from the bottom up.

NDT's core work is rural organisational capacity building for organisations, conservancies and cooperatives. It is one of the few CSOs with strong links to rural communities and as such can provide a conduit to important rural development work that otherwise parliament may not know about.

16. Society for Family Health (SFH)

SFH is a leading public health CSO involved in empowering communities through health promotion interventions aimed at reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes in Namibia. Its activities include; the Military Action Prevention Program (MAPP), HIV prevention amongst sex workers as well as adolescent girls and young women, community-based malaria prevention, access to HIV prevention, care and treatment by key populations and school-based water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives.

17. Positive Vibes Namibia (PVN)

Positive Vibes (PVN) became a fully Namibian trust in 2008 and is a Linking Organisation (LO) for the International HiV/AIDS Alliance based in the UK but remains an autonomous entity in Namibia.

PVN works across 17 countries in Africa with main offices in Namibia and South Africa, to support hundreds of community organisations.

PVN aligns itself with the interests of groups, organisations and movements of people whose human rights (in particular, the right to health) are unjustly limited or denied. PVN has a strong focus on work with LGBT+ people, sex workers and people living with HIV (PLHIV), and adolescent girls & young women. - <https://positivevibes.org>

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

18. Sister Namibia

Sister Namibia was founded in 1989 as a feminist, women's rights organisation that uses media to raise awareness on issues that affect women in Namibia. Sister works for a society that challenges all forms of discrimination and champions fair and inclusive practices through constant dialogue, critique and response to current issues.

Over the years its main activity has been to produce a regular magazine (originally a monthly) highlighting issues that affect women. More recently it has been an important supporter of the #ShutITAllDown movement - particularly in terms of coming up with specific recommendations of policy and practical reform which could reduce GBV risks.

19. Women's Action for Development (WAD)

Women Action for Development was found in 1994 with the aim of becoming the leading socio-economic and socio-political empowering agent in Namibia. WAD follows a two-pronged programme, namely the socio-economic and socio-political empowerment of rural women and men. WAD also offers training in skills empowerment programmes as well as Human Rights awareness. See <https://www.wad.org.na>

The organisation has been mainly sponsored by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung since its establishment and is operational in all 14 regions of the country. Other key donors that have supported WAD include the European Union as well as several business partners.

20. Regain Trust

Regain is a registered non-profit trust established in 2015 with the aim of working towards addressing all forms of discrimination against women and children with the overall goal of promoting gender equality in Namibia. The Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Regain Trust, with funding from the EU, are implementing a three-year project aimed at strengthening and contributing towards national efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to the high rates of Gender based violence and learner pregnancies in Namibia by working across the Khomas, Erongo and Omusati regions. The project has an aim to work closely with government ministries such as Gender Equality, Health, and Education.

21. Out-Right Namibia (ORN)

ORN was founded in 2010, to be a united movement of sexually and gender diverse people that champions the attainment of legal and social justice in a free, safe and healthy.

Out-Right Namibia came out of the Rainbow Project (TRP) which was a community response to homophobic statements emanating from high echelons of government after independence. ORN provides a range of services including legal help, a clinic, the provision of safe houses, and counselling. The organisation is also actively involved in seeking legal reforms that include LGBTQI+ people and remove discrimination. As such ORN is advocating for the scrapping of apartheid-era statues such as the sodomy law as well as the Immoral Practices Act. ORN also campaigns for the amendment of existing legislation, such as the Labour Act and the Domestic Violence Act to be more inclusive.

22. Physically Active Youth (PAY)

PAY's holistic youth development model rests on three pillars: 1. Quality education which embraces totality of a child's potentials: body, mind, spirit and affects; 2. sports which change lives by breaking down barriers, changing attitudes and including the excluded; 3. Life skills which defend the value of self and others, instils equality, fosters holistic wellbeing and promotes environmental sustainability.

PAY's vision is to nationalise the PAY model and render the programme operational in all 14 regions of Namibia. PAY was founded in 2005. Its programmes include: elite cycling, robotics class, writers room, coding academy, and competitive soccer. See <https://paynamibia.org>

PAY has worked with the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as well as the Ministry of Sport, Youth and National Service.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

23. Internet Society - Namibia Chapter (ISOC)

The Internet Society Namibia Chapter (ISOC) was officially launched in November 2017 as a not-for-profit association with a mission to promote the development of the Internet as a global technical infrastructure, a resource to enrich people's lives, and a force for good in society.

ISOC membership is free of charge and represents multiple stakeholders within Namibia's Internet ecosystem. ISOC has an up-to-date website - <https://internetsociety.na> - and is active on Facebook and Twitter.

24. Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)

The Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) is a network of 605 saving schemes with 20,400 members throughout the country. Community savings have been used to secure land, and to leverage additional government contributions, enabling the groups to build over 3,488 houses and secured land for roughly 6,230 families. The Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG) supports the SDFN.

The SDFN is one of only a handful of genuinely grassroots-based national CSOs and is active in communities across the country. SDFN's aim is to improve the lives of the poor by securing affordable land and shelter and improving the living conditions of those excluded from commercial housing and financial processes, using a community-driven approach. It does this primarily by assisting with housing construction and helping communities to set up savings schemes. Housing is a political hot potato in Namibia, particularly since the emergence of the AR movement, but SDFN has managed to stay out of the politics and focus on service delivery instead. It is a logical partner for both government and parliament.

25. Namibian Rural Women's Assembly (NRWA)

The Namibian Rural Women's Assembly (NRWA) has a relatively low profile and is closely linked to the NDT. It is borne out of a regional movement of rural women's assemblies and constitutes the Namibian chapter.

NRWA aims to strengthen the self-organisation of rural women and works for improved rural livelihoods.

Rarely for a Namibian CSO, the NRWA is active across all regions and has two focal persons in each region. Financially, it has been supported by the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (Osisa) since 2016. The first phase of funding, implemented by NDT, was to "strengthen and enhance the sustainability of the self-organisation by women in order to maximise their agency in influencing policies." The second phase of Osisa funding had similar aims and recently came to an end. The NRWA is based at the Windhoek office of the NDT and is run by and administrator, Melanie Gaoses. Patricia Gurubes, based in Mariental, is the NRWA's National Coordinator and Chairperson. The NRWA has an up-to-date website - <https://www.namibianruralwomensassembly.org/> - and a Facebook page.

Although the work of the NRWA has largely gone under the radar in terms of having a national profile, it has established structures and communication channels and definitely remains a possible contact point for parliament seeking to reach out to grassroots rural women involved in civil society.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

7. Conclusions

- -The CSO scene is not as weak as it first seems as there are a range of organisations working across a range of important sectors.
- However, aside from certain sectors, civil society lacks overall coordination and communication between many CSOs is poor or non-existent.
- In addition, many CSOs have capacity and skills issues which affect their ability to perform but also to govern themselves (few produce annual narrative reports that are up to date, while hardly any publish audited accounts).
- CIVIC +264 may be able to provide links and contacts with most active CSOs but it cannot fulfil the functions of an umbrella body as per the role played by Nangof when it was functioning optimally.
- While CSOs mostly focus on their primary mandates a few do offer training such as NID, NMT and NDT that could benefit other CSOs.
- In general, there is a lack of training capacity and no dedicated organisations to assist with training for CSOs.
- There are great opportunities for the EPDN programme to build links some of the active, dynamic and credible CSOs listed here as well as the few sectoral bodies that are effective such as Action and the BIG Coalition.
- Many CSOs have little track record of working with parliament but that does not mean they are not interested in collaborating. There are certainly natural fits between the mandates of various CSOs and the role of some standing committees, for example.
- There is a need to create civil society desks or contact points within key government agencies such as the NPC and both houses of parliament. This will ease communication and allow links to develop.

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Bibliography

Publications

Blaauw, L & Letsholo, S. 2009. Chapter 10: Namibia in Kadima, D & Booysen, S (eds.) Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa 1989-2009: 20 years of Multi-party Democracy. Johannesburg: EISA
<https://www.eisa.org/wep/namcso.htm>

Gruzd, S & Hopwood G. 2019. Spotlighting Governance Challenges in Namibia. Johannesburg; SAIIA
<https://www.africaportal.org/publications/spotlighting-governance-challenges-lessons-namibia/>

Iheme, B. 2009. Reformist Leaders and Civil Society: The Legal and Regulatory Framework for Civic Organisations in Namibia. International Journal for Not for Profit Law.
<https://www.icnl.org/resources/research/ijnl/the-legal-and-regulatory-framework-for-civic-organizations-in-namibia>

Institute for Public Policy Research. 2018. 2017 Civil Society Organisation Sustainability Index, For Sub-Saharan Africa: Namibia.
<https://ippr.org.na/publication/civil-society-sustainability-index-findings-on-namibia/>

Institute for Public Policy Research 2019. 2018 Civil Society Organisation Sustainability Index, For Sub-Saharan Africa: Namibia.
<https://ippr.org.na/publication/namibia-civil-society-sustainability/>

Institute for Public Policy Research. 2020. 2019 Civil Society Organisation Sustainability Index, For Sub-Saharan Africa: Namibia.
<https://ippr.org.na/publication/civil-society-sustainability-index-namibia/>

Keulder, c (ed.). 2010. State, Society and Democracy: A Reader in Namibian Politics. Windhoek: Macmillan/KAS
https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=1e50a5e1-4cbd-7287-8fdb-6523a7b71e0c&groupId=252038

Kossler, R & Weiland, H. 2016. The Significance of Civil Society for Development Cooperation with Namibia Report to the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. Freiburg: Arnold Bergstraesser Institut
https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=37f3c3c3-6d88-3760-bfd1-e72d1215964c&groupId=252038

Legal Assistance Centre. 2007. Advocacy in Action: A Guide to Influencing Decision-making in Namibia
<https://www.lac.org.na/projects/grap/Pdf/advguide07.pdf>

National Planning Commission. 2005. Government of the Republic of Namibia Civic Organisations Partnership Policy.
<https://www.npc.gov.na/downloads/policies%20by%20year/2005/Government%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Namibia%20Civic%20Organizations%20Partnership%20Policy.pdf>

Marowa, R & Hishoono, N. 2018. Guide to Namibian Civil Society 3rd Edition. Windhoek: Namibia Institute for Democracy
https://www.nid.org.na/images/pdf/ngo_management_training/Guide_to_civil_society_Vol3.pdf

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Websites

Civil Society Information Centre: Welcome to CIVIC +264

<https://www.civic264.org.na/>

Namibia: Civil society and indigenous people's organisations advocating for equality of land rights

http://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/civil-society-organizations/en/?country_iso3=NAM

Commonwealth Network: Namibia - Find Civil Society Expertise

<https://www.commonwealthofnations.org/sectors-namibia/civil-society/>

Civil society's engagement for better nutrition - the case of Namibia

https://www.rural21.com/english/news/detail/article/civil-societys-engagement-for-better-nutrition-the-case-of-namibia.html?no_cache=1

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Appendix 1:

Civil Society Mapping - Summary Matrix - 25 Key CSOs

Each parameter is marked out of 10 with 0 being no capacity/engagement and 10 being excellent capacity/engagement. The overall score indicates the capacity of the CSO for working with the EPDN project

Name	Staffing capacity	Financial management, reporting capacity	Parliament engagement	Government engagement	CSO engagement	Training on advocacy/comms capacity	Overall
1. Nangof	1	2	4	5	5	3	20/60
2. CIVIC +264*	4	6	1	4	7	6	28/60
3. Action Coalition	7	8	5	7	9	7	43/60
4. BIG Coalition**	4	4	3	4	8	5	28/60
5. Nanaso	5	6	4	5	3	3	26/60
6. LAC	8	7	7	9	7	7	45/60
7. NID	6	6	5	6	7	7	37/60
8. Namibia Media Trust	7	8	5	7	7	8	42/60
9. IPPR	6	7	7	6	8	5	39/60
10. Economic & Social Justice Trust	3	4	4	6	7	6	30/60
11. LaRRI	6	5	4	5	3	6	29/60
12. NCE	7	8	6	8	5	5	39/60
13. NNF	8	8	5	6	3	5	35/60
14. NACSO	7	7	4	5	7	6	36/60
15. NDT	7	7	6	7	7	7	41/60
16. Society for Family Health	7	8	2	6	5	6	34/60
17. Positive Vibes	5	6	4	5	6	7	33/60
18. Sister Namibia	5	5	4	6	6	6	32/60
19. WAD	7	7	6	7	4	5	36/60
20. Regain Trust	7	7	6	8	5	6	39/60
21. Out-Right Namibia	6	7	5	5	6	6	35/60
22. PAY	7	5	2	6	4	7	29/60
23. ISOC	6	6	6	7	6	6	37/60
24. SDFN	8	8	5	8	4	4	37/60
25. NWRA	5	7	3	3	3	2	23/60

* CIVIC +264 has only existed for a year and is yet to be formally launched

** BIG Coalition was only revived in mid-2020

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Appendix 2:

Contact Database of 25 Key CSOs/Coalitions/Alliances

Name of Civil Society Organisation	Sector/Coalition	Main Contact Person (s)	Contact Details	Website/ Social Media Handles
1. Namibia NGO Forum Trust (NANGOF)	Umbrella/Overall	Ms Pauline Dempers	Email:survivor.july89@yahoo.com	Facebook page, last updated July 2015. See https://www.facebook.com/nangoforumtrust/
2. CIVIC +264	Umbrella/Overall	Ms Carola Engelbrecht	Email: carola@mweb.com.na	http://www.civic264.org.na/
3. ACTION Coalition	Advocacy	Ms Zoe Titus Strategic Coordinator zoe@action-namibia.org	E-mail: info@action-namibia.org	www.action-namibia.org
4. BIG Coalition	Advocacy	Mr Petrus Khariseb- Coordinator	E-mail: pkhariseb@gmail.com	http://www.bignam.org/
5. Namibia Network of AIDS Service Organisation (NANASO)	Health	Mr Sandi Tjaronda	Email: s.tjaronda@nanaso.com	https://www.facebook.com/Namibia-Network-of-AIDS-Service-Organisation-NANASO-1423392647872875/
6. Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)	Human rights/ ACTION/BIG	Ms Toni Hancox	Email: thancox@lac.org.na	http://www.lac.org.na/
7. Namibia Institute for Democracy (NID)	Democracy/ ACTION/BIG	Ms Naita Hishoono	Email: naitahishoono@gmail.com	https://www.nid.org.na/
8. Namibia Media Trust (NMT)	Human rights/ ACTION	Ms Zoe Titus	Email: zoe@nmt.africa	https://www.nmt.africa/
9. Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)	Governance/ ACTION	Mr Graham Hopwood	Email: director@ippr.org.na	http://www.ippr.org.na/
10. Economic and Social Justice Trust (ESJT)	Economic justice/ BIG	Rinaani Musutua	Email: rinaanim@yahoo.com	https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Economic-Social-Justice-Trust-446252952607063
11. Labour Resource and Research Institute (LaRRI)	Labour and Economic justice	Dr Michael Akuupa	Email: akuupa@larri-namibia.org	https://larri-namibia.org/
12. Namibia Chamber of Environment (NCE)	Environment	Mr Chris Brown		https://n-c-e.org/

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Name of Civil Society Organisation	Sector/Coalition	Main Contact Person (s)	Contact Details	Website/ Social Media Handles
13. Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)	Environment	Mr Angus Middleton	Email: info@nnf.org.na	https://www.nnf.org.na/
14. Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO)	Conservation & Conservancies	Ms Maxi Pia Louis	Email: officemanager@nacso.org.na	http://www.nacso.org.na/
15. Namibia Development Trust (NDT)	Rural development/ Environment	Mr Ronnie Dempers	Email: ronny@ndt.org.na	Website under construction but domain is registered. http://www.ndt.org.na/
16. Society for Family Health (SFH)	Health	Ms Taimi Amaambo	Email: t.amaambo@sfh.org.na	http://sfh.org.na/
17. Positive Vibes-Namibia	Health	Ms Esther Taapopi	Email: abigail@positivevibes.org	https://positivevibes.org/
18. Sister Namibia	Gender	Ms Laura Sassman Ms Elsarien Katiti-Media Office	Telephone: +264 61230618 E-mail: director@sisternamibia.org	https://www.facebook.com/SisterNamibia/
19. Women's Action for Development (WAD)	Gender	Mr Salatiel Shinedima	Email: salatiel@wad.org.na	https://www.wad.org.na/
20. Regain Trust	Gender/GBV	Mr James Itana	Email: pm@regain-trust.org	https://www.regain-trust.org/
21. OutRight Namibia	LGBT+	Mr. Friedel Dausab	Email: director@outrightnamibia.org.na	https://outrightinternational.org/region/namibia https://www.facebook.com/OutRightNamORN/
22. Physically Active Youth (PAY)	Education and Skills	Ms Thuba Sibanda,	E-mail: info@paynamibia.org	https://paynamibia.org/
23. Internet Society- Namibia Chapter (ISOC)	ICT	Ms Nashilongo Gervasius	Email: ngervasius@gmail.com	https://internetsociety.na/
24. Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN)	Housing	Ms. Edith Mbanga	Email: nhag@iway.na	https://sdfn.weebly.com/
25. Namibian Rural Women's Assembly (NRWA)	Rural Women	Ms Melanie Gaoses	Email: mgaoses@gmail.com	https://www.namibianruralwomensassembly.org/

CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING REPORT:

Enhancing Participatory Democracy in Namibia (EPDN) Project

Social Movements

Name of Civil Society Organisation	Sector/ Coalition	Main Contact Person (s)	Contact Details	Website/ Social Media Handles
Affirmative Repositioning Movement (AR)	Social Justice and Economic Freedom Advocacy	Dr Job Amupanda	Email:ithanapenehafo@gmail.com	https://www.facebook.com/Affirmative-Repositioning-719967848132816/
#MeToo	Social Justice and Gender		Email:advocacy@metoonamibia.org	https://twitter.com/metoonamibia?lang=en
#ShutItAllDown	Social Justice and Gender	Bertha Tobias	Cell:0812424022	