The Kenya
Civil Society Organisations
STANDARDS

Viwango

Towards Civil Society Excellence

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Compiled and Edited by

Viwango Team

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Table of Contents

*There can be no friendship without confidence
and no confidence without integrity.'*

Dr. Samuel Johnson 1709 – 1784
An English Critic, Poet and Essayist

Acronyms

AAIK	Action Aid International Kenya
AED	Academy for Educational Development
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
CRECO	Constitution & Reforms Education Consortium
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSOYA	Civil Society Organisation of the Year Award
EAAG	East Africa Association of Grant Makers
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
KCDF	Kenya Community Development Fund
KCS-CSP	Kenya Civil Society Competence and Sustainability Programme
KSIX	Kenya Social Investment Exchange
NGOYA	NGO of the Year Award
OCAT	Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool
OA	Organisational Assessment
OD	Organisational Development
PEN	Poverty Eradication Network
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Foreword

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Kenya play a significant role in the development and growth of their citizenry. In Kenya, CSOs have been at the forefront of fighting injustice, poverty and underdevelopment. For these reasons, CSOs are seen as a driving force for change and the voice of the people, an alternative voice to governments and private sector.   To sustain and maintain their leadership role, CSOs are constantly evolving often with great, visionary leadership principles. However, at the same time, issues of poor governance and accountability have challenged their credibility and as a result, weakened their potential positive impact on society.

Awakening from such a realisation, some CSOs are engaging in self-regulation with the ultimate aim of enhancing both their image and impact through the use of voluntary Codes of Practice, Standards and Assessment Tools. Through these three important tools, CSOs are expected to increase their competences, become more sustainable and make even bigger contributions to Kenya society.

Through the application of these tools, it is intended that Kenyan CSOs will continuously improve their: legal and statutory requirements; organisational identity; work programming and planning; management systems and policies; resource mobilisation and resource utilisation; partnership and external relations; and organisational leadership, governance and culture.

'Viwango,' is a new organisation responsible for driving forward a new agenda to professionalise and improve the credibility and integrity of civil society organisations in Kenya.

'Viwango' was started by a group of national and international CSOs working in Kenya in March 2009. The founding organisations are: Academy For Educational Development (AED), Action Aid International Kenya (AAIK), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), ALLAVIDA/ Kenya Social Investment Exchange (KSIX), Constitution & Reform Education Consortium (CRECO), East African Association of Grant Makers (EAAG), International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), Oxfam GB Kenya Programme, Pact Kenya, Peace and Development Network Trust (PeaceNet), Plan International Kenya, Poverty Eradication Network (PEN), and VSO Jitolee.

 'Viwango' is the *Kiswahili word for* 'Standards.'

Gerald Mwangi Walterfang
CEO, Viwango

Acknowledgements

'Viwango' wishes to acknowledge the rich input of many Civil Society Organisations, their leaders and staff, who voluntarily contributed their time and resources to the development of the Kenya CSO Code of Practice, Kenya CSO Standards and Kenya CSO OCA Tool.

In particular, 'Viwango' would like to thank the following organisations for sharing their invaluable organisational development materials that have informed these three OD tools: Academy for Educational Development (AED)-CAP Program, Constitution & Reforms Education Consortium (CRECO), East African Association of Grant-Makers (EAAG), International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)-East Africa Regional Office, PACT Kenya, and the Poverty Eradication Network (PEN).

Special gratitude goes to the CSOs and their leaders who served on the two committees that provided leadership to the Kenya Civil Society Competence and Sustainability (KCS-CSP), the pre-curser to 'Viwango,' and the members of their Steering and Technical Development Sub-Committees, who worked tirelessly over three years to provide managerial and technical oversight to the production of the three documents.

'Viwango's sincere appreciation goes to the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and supported by UK aid from the Department For International Development (DFID), for providing the primary financing for KCS-CSP over a period of five years, and to Action Aid International Kenya (AAIK), Oxfam GB- Kenya and

Introduction

The Kenya CSO Standards have been developed by and for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) through the Kenya Civil Society Competence and Sustainability Programme (KCS-CSP), a collaborative programme involving more than 20 CSOs and CSO Networks in a process that included both national and regional level consultations in Kenya. KCS-CSP was funded by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) with supplementary contributions in cash and kind from all the participating CSOs.

Standards set out what are widely accepted as good principles or guidelines in a given area. According to ISO/IEC Guide 2(1996), a standards document is established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

KCS-CSP brought together a number of discrete and independent initiatives whose objectives were to enhance the competence, credibility and sustainability of CSOs initiatives and to promote acceptable standards and practices within the civil society sector.

The Kenya CSO Standards is one of three booklets that have been produced and should be read and used in tandem. The second booklet, the Kenya CSO Code of Practice defines a set of principles, values, rules of ethical behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures and systems of an

organisation. The third booklet, the Kenya CSO OCA Tool, provides a process that helps CSOs to reflect and measure at a particular moment in time how they are performing against the set standards and practices to determine a plan for self-improvement.

By signing up to the Code of Practice, adhering to the set quality Standards and using the OCA Tool organisations will experience continuous improvement. It is also expected that production of these three booklets will act as a catalyst for CSOs' quest for excellence, quality programming, organisational sustainability and greater recognition.

Overview of the Civil Society Sector

There is growing agreement among observers that civil society, civic culture, and social capital are all important for strengthening democracy and enabling conflict resolution. Concern about civil society, however, is not only relevant to Kenya but to the world at large. Demands on CSOs have been further complicated by their expanding roles in the sphere of social development and change.

While much civil society work has historically been focused on local problems, CSOs now increasingly work at national and trans-national levels as well and are engaged in all socio-economic and political sectors of society. In order to remain relevant and responsive to an ever changing environment witnessed by CSOs, there is need for standards that are understood and practiced by all sector actors. The diversity of the sector is recognised, for example, in CSO size, focus, location and geographical coverage. At the same time, organisations may be the same size with similar missions, but their organisational culture or practices may not be the same. Therefore a common understanding around standards becomes more critical to the integrity of the civil society sector.

One of the most complex challenges facing CSOs today is the question of their legitimacy and accountability as social actors to key stakeholders. Similarly, challenges to the capacity of CSOs have emerged as they have begun to play increasingly vital roles in development and governance processes at local, national and international levels.

Identity of the Civil Society Sector

Civil society organisations have evolved as one of the ways in which people come together to influence what goes on in their lives. Collectively, CSOs represent a fourth social dimension which complements government, the profit-making sector (business) and families as institutions which influence trends in governance, resource management, culture and practice. Irrespective of the legal framework or context under which they are registered or operate, CSOs are characterised by their membership, organisational values, mission or purpose, mandate and organisational culture.

They include what are loosely categorised as Community-Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Faith-Based Organisations, self-help groups, Trusts, Foundations, clubs and welfare societies. Their motives and interests are similarly diverse and may include a desire to enhance social welfare, improve service delivery, reinforce collective identity, facilitate collective action or influence policy. The scope and lifespan of CSOs also vary. Some CSOs operate at grassroots others at national and international levels. The mandates of some CSOs extend to only a few years and others exist for several decades.

As one of the platforms for citizen organisation, representation and expression, CSOs are an integral part of democratic societies. Depending on the circumstances, their mission may require them to challenge existing cultural or social norms, and power relations. For this reason, citizens often expect CSOs which do not ascribe to any partisan political or profit agenda to serve as oversight

over government and business, and as champions of the disadvantaged. The extent to which a CSO may meet these expectations will, depend on its mission and mandate.

Clearly, it is not possible to assign a universal description of all CSOs. However, collectively they can be distinguished from other types of government or business organisations on the basis of similar norms and practices related to their:

- Legal identity
- Institutional identity
- Governance structure and systems
- Development orientation
- Management orientation and practices
- Sources of funding and human resources
- Systems for distribution/sharing of resources
- Leadership and culture

Rationale for the Kenya CSO Code of Practice and Standards

The development of the Kenya CSO Code of Practice and Standards was inspired by the realisation of a need to have harmonised CSOs standards and ethical principles that would guide the work of civil society organisations in Kenya. According to a study conducted by PEN (2007) "Enhancing the Competence and Sustainability of High Quality CSOs in Kenya", there was agreement among civil society leaders on the need to establish clear standards and qualities for CSOs, promote best practices, provide holistic capacity building and establish mechanism for ensuring compliance.

The purpose of the Kenya CSO Standards is to provide an ethical framework that guides CSOs in improving their internal functioning, external relations and their programming. The practices can also be used to improve the quality of their governance and management. This includes providing a guide to board members, management and staff and all individuals involved in the work of the organisation.

By nurturing and inspiring a culture of continuous improvement to deliver superior value to the relevant constituencies, CSOs will achieve greater relevance, recognition, and higher results, and enhance their sustainability. This will also encourage the Kenyan citizens to give to causes they espouse, as well as assist development partners in identifying which CSOs deserve support.

In essence, CSOs will effectively increase their performance hence creating greater opportunities for partnerships with other institutions such as development partners, researchers, government, and the private sector. Subsequently, the right of CSOs to judge and hold others accountable will be reinforced through demonstrated, superior standards of practice and performance.

Proposed Standards

Standards describe a minimum level of performance. Standards provide benchmarks and targets intended to stimulate a process of quality improvement, upholding of common values and higher levels of accomplishment.

The following standards are proposed as benchmarks against which different types of CSOs may agree to collectively assess their performance, determine and undertake improvements needed to achieve desired outcomes. They will facilitate performance reviews that should be carried out regularly for the purpose of self and continuous improvement. The results could also be used for an award scheme or a national certification exercise to showcase national best practice.

Due to constantly changing global and local conditions, there will be need for continuous review of the standards to ensure that they remain relevant and motivating.
The proposed standards for CSOs in Kenya have been categorized as follows:

1. Legal and Statutory Requirements

2. Identity

3. Governance

4. Work Planning and Programming

5. Management Systems and Policies

6. Resource Mobilization and Resource Utilization

7. Partnerships and External Relations

8. Organisational Culture and Leadership

Standard 1

Legal and Statutory Requirements

1.1 Recognition or Legal Registration by a Mandated Body or Authority

The CSO is recognized by the constituency it serves or is registered with the relevant national registration authority as provided for under the Kenyan law.

1.2 A Document that States its Objects, Structure and Rules of Operation

The CSO has documents that define use of funds, the composition, term limit and mandate of the board, membership, change of membership, and other governance issues including organisational structure, elections, audits and dissolution. A mechanism for reviewing the written document exists. This document can be in the form of a Constitution, a Memorandum of Understanding, and or a Code of Conduct.

Organisational practices are in place that demonstrate compliance and adherence to the governance structure.

1.3 The CSO Adheres to Legal and Statutory Requirements

The CSO demonstrates compliance with all legal and statutory reporting requirements.

Standard 2

Identity

2.1 A Written and Shared Vision and Mission Statement, Values and Objectives

The CSO's vision, mission and values are clearly stated and written in all its key documents. Its vision, mission, values and objectives are shared and expressed in a manner that is easy for all to understand and identify with. The mission, values and objectives guide the organisation and are communicated to all members and other stakeholders as well as the general public.

Mechanisms exist to review the vision, mission and objectives of the organisation.

The thematic areas of work, the related activities, and the relationship to all development partners are clear.

2.2 Identifiable Physical Office and Address

The CSO has an office from which it runs its operations; and the office has both a physical address (e.g. a street/ road/ plot number) and a correspondence address (e.g. a postal box, e-mail or any other).

The physical address is made public through inclusion on the letterhead, or any correspondence material including invoices, receipt books, business cards or other commonly used items.

2.3 Name

The organisation has a name that identifies it and differentiates it from other organisations. The name is known by all its members and appears in all its correspondences.

2.4 The CSO is Not Affiliated to Political Parties

The CSO does not represent the interests of political parties and is seen to represent the interests of the wider public and the common good.

Standard 3

Governance

3.1 Has Clearly Laid-down Structures for Governance and Accountability

The CSO has a board, or governing committee that holds accountable its staff and other relevant stakeholders. The board or committee has the overall oversight and responsibility for major decisions.

The board or governing committee decisions are binding- when made in meetings with a quorum; or, as provided for in the constitution in exceptional circumstances. The board consults widely and makes decisions in a participatory way.

Guidelines exist on formulation of policies that guide the organisation and its governance.

Regular meetings are held as prescribed by the constitution and operational requirements to ensure the optimal realization of the goals and objectives of the organisation. All meetings including annual general meetings are documented and these shared with relevant stakeholders. The organisation prioritizes board and member development.

The board or governing committee takes responsibility for leadership and accountability through oversight and review of organisational practices; management systems and culture. The management team is responsible for day-to-day operational matters. The reporting lines for staff are clear.

Mechanisms exist to check the effectiveness of the board and change of membership.

Mechanisms exist to support staff performance and their fit with the organisation.

3.2 Members of the Board or Committee are Elected or Co-opted in Accordance with the Legal Status of the CSO

The CSO's board, committee or any other governing body has majority of its members elected and may have a few appointed individuals. Members have attributes or qualities that strengthen the CSO.

The members mandate is limited to the period set out by the constitution unless re-elected or re-appointed to office after expiry of the current term. Board members are elected or appointed in a manner acceptable to the majority of constituents or as provided for in the constitution.

3.3 Has Clearly Set Membership Criteria, Roles and Responsibilities

A criteria or basis for selection of board and governing committee members exists and is adhered to in the structure of the CSO. The criteria outline how all the relevant stakeholders' interests are accommodated in the board. It demonstrates how the community are involved in the governance and leadership of the organisation.

The functions of the board and the management are separate. There is clarity on communication by the board and other parts of the organisation and relevant publics.

In the case of membership organisations there is evidence that members are involved in setting the direction and adjustment of key strategies.

3.4 Has a Conflict of Interest Policy that is Documented and is Adhered to

The board, staff and members subscribe to the conflict of interest policy and sign a conflict of interest statement that demonstrates their compliance.

There is a code of conduct and evidence of adherence to the code of conduct or organisation rules and, ethics that guides the organisation.

3.5 CSO has Policies and Structures for Managing Conflict Within the Organisation

The CSO has policies and procedures for managing internal conflict to ensure that it does not threaten the survival of the organisation.

Standard 4

Work Programming and Planning

4.1 CSO has an Organisational Strategic Plan Developed in a Participatory and Inclusive Manner

The CSO has a Strategic Plan developed in a participatory and inclusive manner. All relevant stakeholders are consulted and involved in the process as needed. The Strategic Plan is understood by the CSO members and is available for public information.

4.2 Has a Well Developed and Budgeted Work Plan to Inform Implementation

The CSO has a work plan highlighting the objectives, strategies, activities, performance indicators, activity linked budget, timelines for implementation, assumptions, responsible persons for performance and means of performance verification.

The work plan is shared with members, relevant stakeholders especially the board or governing committee, staff members, government agencies, beneficiaries and donors to ensure effective implementation and accountability. There is evidence of capacity to plan and implement programmes. There is a framework for the implementation of work plans and its review.

The work plan implementation is monitored regularly and further resources committed upon demonstration of good performance from the activity implemented. Regular, timely and accurate reporting on progress to the responsible team/person/authority is done before further resources are sought or committed.

The work of the CSO is distinct and avoids duplication of effort by seeking collaboration with other relevant organisations.

Adjustments are made on the planned activities and resource allocation based on reliable evidence gathered.

4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation System

The CSO has a stated intent, policy and system for monitoring; evaluation and researching evidence - based interventions. The policy encourages the identification and documentation of best practices, lessons learned opportunities, innovations, challenges and solutions, to inform or guide programme and project design and implementation.

The CSO has a monitoring and evaluation plan that guides and informs the operations of the organisation. The organisation considers the effects and impact of its programmes and activities and adjusts appropriately based on reviews and lessons learned.

The policy and plan are reviewed regularly and shared as appropriate for planning, resource mobilization and programme implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation is a function of the members, management, staff, the board, actively involving participation of all programme partners.
The organisation shares its findings with others in the sector and learns from best practice. Lessons learned are used for improving resource mobilization and program interventions or activities.

4.4 Produces and Shares with its Stakeholders Comprehensive Reports as Per Statutory and Operational Requirements

Reports are prepared and shared with stakeholders highlighting the character of the organisation, its operations and activities.

Both financial and narrative reports are available for scrutiny by any relevant stakeholder including donors and government agencies.

4.5 Has a Clear and Established Feedback Mechanisms for its Stakeholders

The CSO has established and functional feedback procedures that encourages 'talk back' including the soliciting and receipt of views, opinion, ideas, and suggestions for improvement as well as receiving and responding to complaints. The mechanism is secure and trustworthy enough to encourage all feedback without undue risk or harm to anyone. Communication flows between all parts and levels of the organisation.

4.6 Systems Exist for Management of Information and for Reviewing Performance

The CSO has systems in place to manage information and knowledge. Systems exist for reflection, reviewing performance and auditing the work of the organisation.

4.7 Has Programmes and Activities that are Relevant; Encourage Participation; Ownership; and, Demonstrate Impact

The CSO programmes and activities are cost effective; managed efficiently and fit within the strategic plan, stated goals and objectives.

There is evidence of programme relevance; stakeholders' involvement in strategic planning; community ownership; and empowerment. There is a system for assessing and evaluating the impact of programme activities.

The work of the organisation is aligned to the national; district or divisional development plans. The CSO also contributes to the global development agenda.

Standard 5

Management Systems and Policies

5.1 The CSO has Policies that are Equitable and Non-Discriminatory

The CSO has internal policies and procedures that ensure gender equity, and upholds the rights of minorities against unfair practices and discrimination with regard to opportunities for employment, remuneration, training, and promotion.

5.2 Human Resource Management

The CSO has a well developed policy, guidelines, procedures and human capacity development plan for its human resources; its membership and relevant stakeholders who are key to its success and operational excellence. The target for capacity building is informed by a needs assessment.

The information on what, who, when and where the knowledge and skills can be accessed from is clearly available to ensure linkages between training and other educational resources and skills needed for effective performance at all levels of the CSO.

5.3 Administration

The CSO has well documented internal administrative policies and procedures that govern its operations. The members, board and the staff know and practise these policies. They are responsible for the policies and procedures to be applied in the course of conducting the CSO work.

The policies are reviewed regularly so as to bring them in line with the prevailing conditions in a changing environment.

5.4 Financial Management

The CSO keeps accurate and clear financial records of all its transactions and financial commitments.

The CSO keeps a written record of all cash and non-cash transactions that are entered into in the course of its work. These records are well maintained and available for scrutiny by any relevant stakeholders including government agencies and donors.

The financial and non-financial records are kept up-to-date, including detailed records of income and expenditure (cash book) and banking records. Financial accounting systems exist and are regularly checked for effectiveness.

The CSO keeps a properly managed bank account and related instruments. The CSO operates well kept bank account(s), with licensed financial institutions. The CSO adheres to the rules and regulations of the financial institution and banking requirements.

The material account is only used for organisational (not private) transactions, and that any transactions affecting the account including banking and withdrawals are properly authorized and documented, in accordance with written procedures.

The books of accounts are audited by a certified, independent person or firm. The CSO implements the audit report recommendations.

The CSO has its books of accounts and audits prepared annually by a certified auditor or firm of auditors. The audited accounts and reports are accessible to the stakeholders and public as required.

5.5 Fixed Asset Management

The CSO has written procedures to guide the acquisition, maintenance, management and disposal of material assets including animals, land, utensils and agricultural implements and products, vehicles, information communications technology equipment, tools, furniture, fittings, etc. These procedures are documented. They are in operation and are communicated to the board and all levels of staff.

The organisation maintains a fixed assets register. This register includes among others, vehicles, fittings, equipment, furniture, and land. The register is regularly updated, in accordance with accepted auditing practices. The register is kept securely by one given the due responsibility and availed on request for scrutiny by authorized relevant stakeholders.

5.6 Clear and Documented Procedure for Purchases and Procurement

The CSO has written procedures to guide different levels of procurement. The CSO maintains a clear and written documentation of the inventory management.

5.7 Quality Service Provision

The CSO has systems to ensure quality service provision to all stakeholders.

Standard 6

Resource Mobilisation and Resource Utilisation

6.1 The CSO Only Solicits and Accepts Resources from Partners for Projects which are in Alignment with its Stated Mission

The CSO only solicits for resources: financial and non financial; or, receives funds for implementation of programmes in line with its stated mission and strategy or plan. The CSO only seeks strategic resource partnerships.

The CSO has a resource mobilisation strategy that guides it in raising financial and non-financial resources. All resources received are used for the intended purpose.

The CSO actively researches and maps out donors who subscribe to its vision, mission, goals, and objectives. If part of a network then the CSO mobilises resources that enable it to be an effective and resourceful network member. The CSO upholds principles of ethical resource mobilization which govern and determine sources of funds; methods used; communication style adopted; and is in line with its values.

The CSO is transparent in resource mobilisation and accountable in the use of resources. Conflict of interest is avoided in the mobilisation of resources.

6.2 Accountability and Proper Utilization of Resources

The CSO demonstrates accountable and proper utilization of resources as agreed.

The CSO maintains sound systems that ensure that resources are effectively, efficiently and transparently allocated and managed.

The CSO reports in a timely manner to donors and other relevant stakeholders.

6.3 Has Developed Mechanisms to Link Resources to Performance

The CSO has systems that assess and link the use of resources to expected results.

The CSO has a well developed monitoring and evaluation policy framework to facilitate the appraisal and linkage of the deployed resources with the current and long term programme performance.

The CSO regularly reviews reporting requirements and data in order to improve the development of appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools.

6.4 Organisational Sustainability

The CSO has mechanisms in place to diversify the sources of its resources. The CSO has a policy on reserves and endowments.

The CSO actively and innovatively seeks to get a balance between internal and external resources.

The community is actively involved in the mobilisation of resources to meet the strategic objectives of the organisation.

The CSO has systems and processes that allow for organisational change; and that enable communities to sustain operations in the event that the organisation no longer exists.

6.5 Organisational Credibility

The CSO actively seeks to build credibility by being visible; branding or presenting itself appropriately; creating a positive image of itself and its work.

Standard 7

Partnerships and External Relations

7.1 The CSO has a Policy that Encourages Healthy Networking with Others in its Operating Environment

The CSO has a statement of intent or policy of encouraging healthy and productive networking with other actors in its operating environment. This is to encourage learning and adoption of best practices and to create a culture of resource sharing with positive collaboration and synergy for all.

The CSO cooperates with other actors on common agendas; e.g. advocacy for policies governing the sector. This should however not limit, prevent or stifle healthy competition that allows individual growth and improvement in the sector and a continuous search for quality and operational excellence.

7.2 The CSO has Policies to Develop Useful Partnerships and Manage External Relationships

The CSO has policies and procedures in place to enable it cultivate and grow useful relationships with all its development partners and other organisations.

The CSO partners and networks with like-minded organisations and complements their activities. The CSO learns from the experiences of networking and collaboration with other organisations.

7.3 The CSO has Clear Guidelines that Proactively Prevent and Address Unhealthy Competition Among its Close/Immediate Publics

The CSO has guidelines that it applies to encourage fair treatment of all its members and stakeholders without compromising its purpose for existence.

The roles and responsibilities of all are spelt out and adhered to in the implementation of the organisation's governance and operational mandate. These roles and responsibilities are reviewed and communicated as necessary for the optimal realization of the organisation's mission, set goals and objectives.

Where a CSO is a network it strives to represent the collective voice of the organisation without bias to any one segment of the organisation. Guidelines and polices are clear on the roles and responsibilities of each actor. Mechanisms are in place to ensure consultations, review and provision of relevant information on these guidelines and policies as necessary across the network.

7.4 The CSO has Clear Guidelines to Address Conflicts between the Organisation and Others

The CSO has a policy and procedures for managing and resolving conflict between itself and others.

7.5 The CSO has a Database of the Organisation and all Stakeholders

The CSO maintains a regularly updated database. The database provides information on its members; staff and their competencies; donors; current and previous projects; reports and other key documents. This is intended to facilitate sharing of information for programme planning and implementation. Except for confidential information which should be protected, any other information that could contribute to the greater good of society should be available for public viewing and use as needed.

Standard 8

Organisational Culture and Leadership

8.1 Learning, Reflection and Sharing of Knowledge

The CSO has systems for management of information. This includes identification and documentation of key lessons, opportunities and innovations. Systems exist for participatory monitoring and evaluation. Individual learning activities complement organisational learning and inform strategy or plans. The organisation shares its findings and good practices with others in the sector.

The lessons learned are documented and used for policy development influencing; programme planning, programme activities and resource mobilization.

8.2 Openness and Responsiveness

The CSO has existing systems, policies and procedures that encourage openness, trust, transparency and accountability to all stakeholders. The CSO detects and responds to changes in its internal and external environment.

8.3 Affiliation and Belonging

The organisation actively identifies with other like-minded organisations.

8.4 Leadership

The CSO's leader's style of working with stakeholders is one that encourages individuals to participate.

Processes and procedures exist which encourage stakeholders to make informed decisions.

A secure and reliable, and trustworthy feedback mechanism exists to encourage feedback from all stakeholders without exposing them to undue risk and harm.

A consensus-building approach is displayed at all levels of leadership in the organisation.

8.5 Ethics

Organisational conduct and practice are guided by values and beliefs consistent with social, cultural and professional norms.

The CSO has a code of ethics that governs its operations or subscribes to an existing code of ethics or principles of governance and operations, including respect for all human rights.

8.6 Diversity

The CSO recognizes and actively accepts the diversity that exists amongst its stakeholders. The CSO has policies and systems in place that support, enhance, and sustain diversity.

Implementation of CSO Standards in Kenya

The development of Standards for CSOs in Kenya was inspired by the need to have harmonised minimum CSO standards that organisations could aspire towards; use for self improvement and have been recognised by the sector and other stakeholders. The long term benefits from the implementation of sector wide standards includes: improved programming, better organisational governance, integrity, improved service delivery to society and better image of the civil society sector.

For standards to be embraced and adopted by various civil society players there has to be involvement and regular consultation in their development; refinement and implementation. There is need to recognize the diverse nature of the sector and individual CSO characteristics including size, resource base, capability and culture, and any predictable challenges these will have on the successful implementation of the agreed standards. It is important to acknowledge that even CSOs in the same category, may share certain basic class characteristics yet face different challenges in the adoption and implementation of the agreed standards.

Some CSOs lack the drive and resources to undertake continuous improvement initiatives and will need to be encouraged by other stakeholders including peers to meet the minimum standard.

Lack of a clear legislative and policy framework for this important sector has impacted a common registration

regime leading to several government bodies and ministries registering and regulating different aspects of the sector. The lack of a common registration and accepted definition of what constitutes civil society organisations in the country may very well prove an impediment to the implementation of the proposed standards. Also the large number of unregistered civil society organisations in the country will remain a challenge. There is need to advocate for a change in the legal and registration framework in the country to facilitate progressive regulation of this key sector of the Kenyan economy, and especially through adoption of common standards and code of practice.

Some players in the sector may resist standards implementation, especially when they regard them as a challenge to their power base and control. Anecdotal evidence indicates that there has been an invasion of the CSO and NGO sector, particularly in the recent times, by "joy riders" who lack an understanding of the ethos of the sector and who, in certain instances, have brought to it, negative cultures and practices. In their attempt to serve self interest, they may very well stand in the way of the smooth adoption and implementation of the standards, especially when they view a streamlined sector as a threat. Innovative ways have to be found by the team mandated to drive the rollout of these standards to bring such characters to the fore, and further reach out to other leaders of the various CSOs with the object of embracing and driving the right internal organisational culture for successful implementation.

Presence of sectoral standards without committed champions to drive their adoption internally and externally may lead to poor results. To achieve the desired results, calls are made for both adequate resources and committed agents to articulate and nurture the culture of change necessary to raise the level of practice and performance within the CSO sector. It is the obligation of the CSO sector to make this happen while contributing towards the growth of the national economy.

List of Contributors

1. Academy For Educational Development (AED)

2. Action Aid International Kenya (AAIK)

3. Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)

4. ALLAVIDA / Kenya Social Investment Exchange (KSIX)

5. Constitution & Reform Education Consortium (CRECO)

6. East African Association of Grant Makers (EAAG)

7. International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR)

8. Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF)

9. Oxfam GB Kenya Programme

10. PACT Kenya

11. Peace and Development Network Trust (PeaceNet)

12. Plan International Kenya

13. Poverty Eradication Network (PEN)

14. VSO Jitolee

15. SISA Centre for Corporate Partnership

Network Contributors

Over 350 CSOs and networks in over 12 regions representing all the 8 provinces of Kenya (now 47 counties) were consulted.

Notes

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