# Evaluation of 2012-16 **Commonwealth Foundation** Strategy

## Final Report

**Cowan Coventry, 5 September 2016**

# Acknowledgment

The Consultant would like to express his thanks to the Foundation staff and the Evaluation Steering Group for their openness and patience during the evaluation. Requests for information and clarification have been met promptly and efficiently, and opinions opening and frankly expressed. Many thanks also to the Foundation's partners and collaborators across the world whose willingness gave their time generously to the evaluation is testimony to the high regard in which they value their relationship to the Foundation.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AWG | African Working Group |
| BCLT | British Centre for Literary Translation |
| CARIBLIT | Caribbean Literary Action Group |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community |
| CCEM | Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers |
| CCHM | Commonwealth Health Ministerial Meeting |
| CCO | Cross-cutting outcomes |
| CCWG | Caribbean Civil Society Working Group |
| CHOGM | Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting |
| CHPA | Commonwealth Health Professionals Association |
| COTED | Council for Trade and Economic Development |
| CPDC | Caribbean Policy Development Centre |
| CPF | Commonwealth Peoples Forum |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| CSSP | Commonwealth Short Story Prize |
| DFID | Department for International Development, UK |
| DTC | Dhaka Translation Centre |
| EAC | East Africa Community |
| EACSOF | East African Civil Society Organizations' Forum |
| EASSI | Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EJN | Economic Justice Network |
| ETR | End of Tem Review |
| IGO | Inter-governmental Organisation |
| LGBTI | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and/or Intersex |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| OA | Outcome Area |
| OECD/DAC | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee |
| OPF | Outcome Performance Framework |
| PATT | Participatory and Transparency Tool |
| PIANGO | Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations |
| PoA | Plan of Action |
| SAAYE | Southern African Alliance on Youth Employment |
| SADC-CNGO | Southern Africa Development Community Council-Council of NGOs |
| SAMOA | SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action |
| SATUCC | Southern Africa Trade Union Coordination Council |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SIDS | Small Island Developing States |
| STO | Short-term Outcome |
| ToR | Terms of Reference |
| TWN | Third World Network |
| UHC | Universal Health Cover |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| WACSI | West Africa Civil Society Institute |
| WACSOF | West Africa Civil Society Forum |

# Executive Summary

1. The Foundation has made good progress in putting together the building blocks of a successful strategy. It has developed good policy and performance frameworks; established competent teams that have gained the respect of partners for their professionalism and approach to partnership; developed a wide range of programme activities in line with the strategy; and demonstrated some early signs of results. This should give the Foundation confidence to build on the lessons of its early programming to develop a tighter focus and play to its strengths in the next strategy period. Sustainable Development Goal 16 provides an opportunity for it to do that, and the time is right to initiate a strategic dialogue with the Commonwealth Secretariat on the complementary roles they can play as inter-governmental organisations in delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development..

*Commonwealth Writers*

1. The Commonwealth Writers programme has evolved during the strategy period from a focus on increasing the capacity of CSOs to contribute to participatory governance through creative expression to supporting the creative sectors to enable 'less heard voices' to be heard in public discourse. Commonwealth Writers has helped to mainstream narratives relevant to marginalised populations by disseminating the work of emerging writers through the publication of short stories, anthologies and other creative products on its website and other platforms. There is little evidence that these creative products contribute to participatory governance e.g. in terms of policy influence. The programme should continue to focus on inspiring and connecting storytellers to enable less-heard voices influence public discourse.

2. The Commonwealth Short Story Prize was launched to reach out to 'less- heard" voices" by increasing the number and diversity of entries from new emerging writers across the Commonwealth. The initiative was welcomed by nearly all collaborators and the number of entries and countries involved in the Prize has increased significantly since 2012. While the total number of entries has stabilised since 2014, the programme's outreach activities have helped to increase the number of translated entries and first-time authors who have been short-listed. Short-listed entries dealing with the realities of life facing marginal or vulnerable populations are being given a wider audience through Granta and other public platforms. A priority should be to continue to try to increase the number and quality of entries from smaller and underrepresented states.

3. The partnership approach of Commonwealth Writers and its development support was much valued by collaborators. "Commonwealth Writers" is seen as a strong 'brand'. It has succeeded in building an international reputation in cultural circles but faces two

challenges in the next strategy period. The first is to develop a more strategic, focused approach so as to plan and follow through on initiatives during the strategy period to have a lasting impact. The second is to demonstrate its achievements by developing appropriate metrics for its different activities, and gathering data systematically and reporting in line with these.

*Capacity development*

4. The primary focus of the programme is at a regional level. The Foundation has supported the capacity development of four regional civil society platforms during the strategy period – in the Caribbean, West Africa, East and Southern Africa - with different levels of success. It helped to establish and supported the Caribbean Civil Society Working Group (CCWG) which is developing a policy position on sustainable energy that will be considered at the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED). It has also recently helped to establish the Southern African Alliance on Youth Employment (SAAYE) which is in the early stages of developing a policy position on youth employment. Institutional weaknesses affecting the legitimacy and representativeness of the regional civil society consultative bodies in West and East Africa have hindered progress. Regional partners considered the regional approach appropriate but several emphasised that it needs to be complemented by national level engagement.

5. The Foundation has had more immediate success in its role in 'catalysing' new regional civil society platforms than it has had in resolving entrenched, institutional challenges in West and East Africa. This raises the issue of whether the Foundation - as a comparatively small, long distance funder - is able to resolve such embedded issues despite its unique role as an inter-governmental organisation (IGO).

6. The Foundation has sought to facilitate South-South learning as part of the programme. The Partner Learning Exchange, held in association with the Commonwealth Peoples Forum (CPF), is highly regarded by partners. However, the inter-regional initiative to support knowledge sharing and collaboration on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway between Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (PIANGO) in the Pacific has made little progress to date and it is unclear whether or how it will proceed.

*Constructive engagement*

7. The Foundation has supported civil society engagement with global, Commonwealth, regional and national levels of governance. The Foundation's status as an Inter-governmental organisation (IGO) was reported as 'opening doors' to give civil society access to other IGOs although access does not equate with influence. There are a number of

successful examples of this. These include the discussions of African CSOs with member state Permanent Representatives in New York prior to the UN discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals; the initial and planned meetings of CCWG with COTED in the Caribbean; the policy work of Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) with the East Africa Community (EAC); and the unprecedented small group meetings with Commonwealth Ministers at the Commonwealth Peoples' Forum (CPF) in 2015. However, these advances have not been accompanied by more formalised commitments to civil society consultation by the regional and Commonwealth governance bodies.

8. Some respondents queried the effectiveness of civil society engagement with policy-making processes in the Commonwealth. There is little evidence that current arrangements for civil society engagement in Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and Commonwealth Inter-Ministerial meetings is likely to result in substantive policy influence at Commonwealth and subsequently at national level. The time may be appropriate for the Foundation to review with the Commonwealth Secretariat how civil society might effectively engage with Commonwealth governance for and processes.

9. It is open to question whether the Foundation, with its limited resources, can work effectively with civil society at all its current levels. A more strategic approach to national-level engagement could be achieved by seeking a closer synergy with the Grants programme. It should review the breadth of support to civil society on the different levels of governance so that it can focus its support where it is likely to have a demonstrable impact of peoples' lives.

*Knowledge Management*

10. Knowledge-sharing plays a pivotal role in the Foundation's interpretation of its mission. The Foundation has put in place the key elements of a learning culture – incorporating learning in reporting templates, establishing web-based knowledge resources; experimenting with knowledge products; and promoting learning exchanges that have been highly rated by partners. Most staff perceive the Foundation to offer a learning environment although there is a need for more informal, peer learning opportunities. Partners e.g. grantees, would like a more systematic approach to 'harvesting ' and sharing learning on participatory governance in so that it can feed into project/programme development.

11. The Foundation has also produced and disseminated some knowledge products. It has developed and used the Participatory and Transparency Tool (PATT) which has been positively received by partners and is currently developing a new Network Assessment tool. Three Commonwealth Insights on participatory governance have been

published and five case studies form the Grants programme have recently been produced.

12. The Foundation should consider identifying a learning agenda in association with its new strategic objectives to provide a focus for real-time and historical learning that feeds into programme development and implementation.

*Cross-Cutting Outcomes*

13. The Strategy commitment to three Cross-Cutting Outcomes (CCO) - respect for culture, environment and gender equity - has been insufficiently integrated into organisational systems and processes to enable to the Foundation to report on their progress. A Toolkit on mainstreaming CCOs was produced in 2014 but no mechanism has been put in place to systematically review and implement these commitments. CCOs are not adequately incorporated into planning and reporting templates, although the Grants programme has made some progress in this area. The Foundation should ensure systems are in place to enable it to monitor and report on CCOs if they feature in the new strategy

14. An informal staff lead on gender has led some staff workshops gender-related issues that have contributed to staff acknowledging a growing awareness of gender equity issues in staff surveys. There remains a need, however, to incorporate gender-related issues more systematically in Foundation programmes.

*The Grants Programme*

15. 40 grants were awarded during the evaluation period only a handful of which has been completed. The internal project scoring system is applied only to completed grants. It should be adapted to provide a summary overview of portfolio performance in the Annual Report. Nonetheless a significant proportion of grants reviewed show progress at outcome level. Many of these outcomes were within the direct 'sphere of influence of the project e.g. increased awareness or skills of target populations. There are fewer examples of outcomes in terms of responsive governance although there are some early examples of civil society constructively engaging at national and local level.

16. The Grants programme is efficiently administered and provides diligent scrutiny of and feedback on project narrative and financial reporting. Project oversight is conducted with an ethos of partnership and flexibility which partners value highly. Grantees report that the grantee induction workshop and staff feedback on reporting have improved their capacity to monitor, implement and report on their projects. Grantees would like more knowledge-sharing opportunities whether on-line or face-to-face. Lessons learned could be better distilled and shared with grantees during the project cycle so that projects can

benefit from the experience of others. There is scope also to better communicate project achievements and learning through a more systematic approach to communications.

17. Most projects engage with decision-makers at national or local level. The impact of the Grants programme could be increased by redefining more clearly how awarded grants at a national level supplements the work of the Outcome Area programmes; issuing more focused Calls for Proposals; and improving the synergy between awarded grants, and between the Grants and Outcome Area programmes.

*A More Effective Foundation*

*18.* The Foundation's theory of change forms the basis of its Outcome Performance Framework (OPF). The new strategy should include a theory of change that incorporates all programme areas contributing to outcomes, including the Grants programme. Short-term Outcomes should be realistic to achieve within the strategy period. The OPF has been frequently revised, and there has been some discontinuity between the OPF and annual reporting. A more systematic approach to reporting to work plan indicators would provide a more robust framework of accountability for the Foundation, while not being incompatible with shorter and more readable annual reports.

19. While the Civil Society Engagement Strategy sets out a theoretical framework for the Outcome Area programmes, they would benefit from a more systematic approach to programme development. This is currently being developed and should enable the Foundation to design, implement and monitor its programme initiatives more transparently and effectively.

20. There is considerable overlap in the work of the Outcome Area 2 and 3 teams, particularly at regional level where there some risk of duplication of effort. The Foundation should consider how best to deploy the two teams once the programmatic objectives of the new strategy are clarified.

*Conclusions*

21. Partners affirm that the Foundation's principal objective of participatory governance remains relevant although they are more equivocal about how best and what level civil society can most effectively engage with governance. A key challenge will be how best to focus its programme objectives so as to enable civil society to bring about change through constructive engagement. More focused strategic objectives would improve the Foundation's effectiveness by ensuring objectives are commensurate with available resources; enabling the Foundation to follow through on initiatives during the strategy period and beyond; and facilitating more effective knowledge sharing. It will

be a challenge for the Foundation to make strategic choices to improve impact while managing the expectation that it spreads its work across member states.

22. Key stakeholders suggested that the new strategy should align itself with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDG 16 focus on "Inclusive Societies" is compatible with its current focus on participatory governance and would encourage the potential for strategic partnerships. A number of factors suggest that the time is also right for the Foundation to initiate a strategic dialogue with the Commonwealth Secretariat on their complementary roles in delivering Agenda 2030 - in particular, the definition of civil society and its role in promoting more responsive, accountable institutions.

## Summary of Recommendations

*Commonwealth Writers*

1. Develop a performance framework for Commonwealth Writers with appropriate metrics at outcome and output level for different types of platforms and activities.

2. Develop an outline, three to four-year programme of work for the next strategy period that provides focus, synergy and follow through to its activities.

3. Review the relationship of Commonwealth Writers to the Foundation's theory of change to focus on the contribution of less-heard voices to public discourse rather than its contribution to participatory governance.

4. Revise and update Commonwealth Writers Social Media Strategy and incorporate in planning and reporting systems.

5. Adopt a more systematic approach to making connections i.e. building a network of cultural practitioners that facilitates the exchange of skills and experiences.

*Capacity Development*

6. Adopt a more systematic approach to monitoring the effectiveness of capacity development approaches and documenting and sharing the lessons learned.

7. Reflect on the support to date to regional civil society platforms, including its relationship with local implementing partners, and prioritise support where it is most likely to lead to lasting change

*Constructive Engagement*

8. Include global networking activities in annual work plans and reports

9. Review the status of civil society engagement in Commonwealth fora in strategic discussions with Secretariat

10. Strategise support to civil society engagement with governance to include greater synergy with the Grants programme at national level.

*Knowledge Management*

11. Develop a more systematic approach to knowledge capture and dissemination

12. Establish a prompt/reminder system to ensure knowledge resources e.g. mission reports are posted on Cornerstone.

13. Develop a 'learning for improvement' agenda in association with the new strategic objectives

*Cross –Cutting Outcomes*

14. Develop a more systematic framework to monitor and report on cross-cutting outcomes in the new strategy.

*Grants Programme*

15. Adapt project performance ratings system for annual portfolio reporting.

16. Redefine the role of the Grants Programme to more explicitly test new approaches and harvest learning key to the achievement of outcomes

17. Issue more focused Calls for Proposals to maximise learning and synergy with Outcome Areas.

18. Include guidance on data gathering tools in M&E induction workshop.

19. Develop a knowledge sharing strategy to include ongoing learning and peer exchange throughout the project life cycle.

20. Develop a communications plan to ensure the regular production of compelling stories in different formats of project achievements

*A More Effective Foundation*

21. Develop a more comprehensive theory of change that includes all programmes contributing to outcomes.

22. Plan the outline of four year programmes in the new strategy with Short-term Outcomes that are achievable within the period.

23. Report annually to work plan indicators and ensure that systems and processes are in place to gather data in line with these.

24. Review the organisation of OA2 and 3 to deliver the new strategy objectives.

25. Monitor experiences of unsuccessful grant applicants to inform application process.

*Conclusions*

26. Explore alignment of new strategic objectives with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 at indicator level

27. Initiate a strategic dialogue with Commonwealth Secretariat on complementary roles re. Agenda 2030, in particular SDG 16.

# 1 Introduction

**Purpose and Scope of Evaluation**

The overall purpose of this evaluation is to evaluate the work of the Commonwealth Foundation during the 2012-16 Strategy period (subsequently extended to 2017). In addition, the evaluation has three complementary purposes[1]:

- *Learning*: Provide lessons to feed into the consultations on the new Commonwealth Foundation strategy to be launched in July 2017. The ToR make specific reference to lessons regarding the Foundation's future Logic Model[2] or Theory of Change; the shape and modalities of its programmes; and the Foundation's own organisation and ways of working, including its planning, monitoring, assessment and knowledge sharing processes.

- *Accountability*: Provide the basis for the Foundation to be accountable to its Board of Governance and Executive Committee for the achievements of its programmes and projects, and of the quality of organisational support associated with those.

- *Communications:* Identify for a wider audience some of the key issues and findings of the evaluation in relation to the Foundation's outcomes of creative expression, capacity development and constructive engagement with governance.

The primary objective of the Foundation's work is to promote the participation of civil society in effective, responsive and accountable governance. In pursuit of this objective the Foundation supports four Outcome Area programmes – Creative Expression, Capacity Development, Constructive Engagement and Knowledge Management - and a Grants Programme which is aligned to those Outcome Areas. The evaluation will review the performance of the Outcome Area and Grants programmes during the strategy period, and the support offered by the Foundation to these programmes.

The primary users of the evaluation will be Foundation management, staff and governance. However, the perspectives of the Foundation's civil society partners have played an important part in shaping the findings of the evaluation. The evaluation, therefore, will produce a short communications brief with the final report that will identify key findings, issues and learning relevant to civil society partners and other stakeholders in the sector.

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[1] See Annex A for Terms of Reference
[2] In this report, the Logic Model referred to is derived from the 2015-16 Work Plan (pp 9,10) and the Theory of Change refers to that found in the "Civil Society Engagement Strategy" 2014 p23.

**Evaluation Approach**

The evaluation approach has consisted on the following steps which will be described in more detail below:

- Develop an Evaluation Theory of Change that incorporates the pathways to change envisaged in the 2012-16 strategy;

- Develop an Evaluation Framework which reflects the key assumptions of this theory of change; incorporates the evaluation questions of the ToR; and is cross-referenced to the OECD/DAC criteria;

- Gather data from multiple sources in line with the Evaluation Framework;

- Analyse and present findings in line with the Evaluation theory of change and the current version of the Foundation's performance framework :

- Draw conclusions in accordance with the relevant OECD/DAC criteria

- ***Develop an Evaluation Theory of Change***

The 2012-16 strategy includes a Logic Model with an Ultimate Outcome of "*more effective, responsible and accountable governance with the participation of civil society*". The two Intermediate Outcomes in the original Model were conflated into one in January 2014 - "*enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance* – supported by five Short-term Outcomes i.e.

1. *Increased public dialogue through creative expression*
2. *Enhanced capacity of regional CSOs and networks/alliances to engage in participatory governance*
3. *Enhanced interaction between regional CSOs and networks/alliances and institutions in governance*
4. *Enhanced knowledge management for more effective participatory governance*
5. A more effective Commonwealth Foundation.

The body of work in support of each of these Short-term Outcomes is referred to as an Outcome Area (OA) programme. The 2012-16 Strategy refers to the Grants Programme being aligned to the Foundation's Intermediate Outcomes and supplementing the four outward-facing Short-term Outcomes but is not included in the Foundation's Logic Model or Theory of Change.

The Foundation's Logic Model has been revised as its programmes have evolved during the strategy period. During the Inception phase the evaluation developed an "Evaluation Theory of Change" to gather data and present the

findings on the evaluation. The Evaluation Theory of Change represented below made a number of revisions to the Foundation's Logic Model in order to provide a more comprehensive analytical framework. These are:

- The Short-term Outcome of "A More Effective Foundation" was presented as a 'domain of change' early in the results chain. Both Outcome Area programmes and the Grants programme are represented as contributing to externally-focused Short-term Outcomes.

- The outputs from the 2015-16 Work Plan were introduced and linked to the Short-term Outcomes.

- The Short-term Outcome on Knowledge Management is visualised as contributing to the other Short-term Outcomes, as is the case in the Foundation Theory of Change (but not in the Logic Model).

- The three cross-cutting outcome areas from the 2012-17 Strategy are incorporated i.e. Gender Equality; Environmental Sustainability; and Cultural respect and understanding.

*Figure 1: Evaluation Theory of Change*
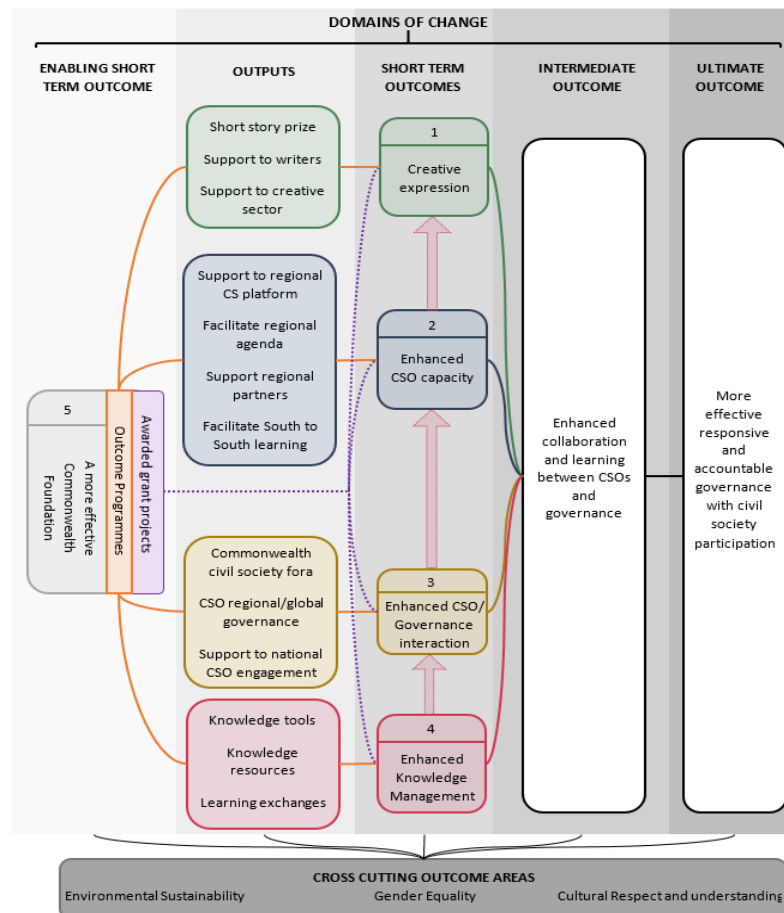


This theory of change makes two key assumptions associated with two 'domains of change', one internal, and the other external. These are that:

- The Foundation provides relevant, efficient and effective support to its programme and project partners that contributes to the success of their activities. (Enabling Outcome)
- The successful delivery of these activities contributes to creative expression in support of public dialogue; enhanced civil society capacity and engagement with governance; and enhanced knowledge sharing (Short-term Outcomes).

- *Develop an Evaluation Framework to test key assumptions of the theory of change*

These two domains of change are incorporated into the Evaluation Framework (see Annex F) to differentiate between the relevance and effectiveness of the Foundation's support and the relevance and effectiveness of the programmes and projects supported. The lines of enquiry were derived from the evaluation questions of the ToR. The Cross–Cutting Outcomes have been mainstreamed in the lines of enquiry of both domains of change.

- *Gather data in line with the Evaluation Framework*

The evaluation gathered both quantitative and qualitative data in line with the Evaluation framework through the following methods:

- *Document review*

The evaluation conducted a review of documentary sources prior to stakeholder interviews[3]. This offered some initial insight into the programmes, policy frameworks and ways of working of the Foundation. Subsequent requests for documentary evidence were met promptly by Foundation staff. The evaluation reviewed MoUs/Partnership Agreements; work plans; Interim reports; Mission Reports, and audio visual materials in relation to the Outcome Area programmes. In addition, it conducted a more detailed documentary review of 20 awarded grants (see Annex H for details of sample). Grants Programme projects were grouped under each Short-term Outcome (see Annex G) to provide an overview of how awarded grants contribute to each Short-term Outcome

- *Partner survey*

A survey of both Outcome Areas and Grant Programme partners was conducted in March/ April 2016 to elicit partners' perceptions of the support they have received from the Foundation[4]. Given the distinctiveness of the Commonwealth Writers programme it was decided not to include their stakeholders in the survey since many of the questions would not be appropriate to their experience of the Foundation.

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[3] See Annex B for a selected Bibliography
[4] A summary analysis of the survey findings (with some redaction to protect anonymity) can be found in Annex D.

The survey population consisted on 28 Grants Programme partner organisations (43% of sample) and 27 partner organisations identified by the Capacity Development and Governance programmes (42%). 10 organisations (15%) were partners of both. An initial email was sent on 15 March 2016 inviting 72 respondents (63 organisations) to participate in the survey, followed by two reminders. 30 complete responses had been received when the survey closed on 6th April 2106 - a 42% response rate.[5] Two thirds of the competed responses were from Grants Programme partners.

- *Stakeholder interviews*

Interview formats (see Annex D) were derived from the evaluation questions of the ToR and referenced to the OECD/DAC criteria. Approximately 60 stakeholders were interviewed including three members of the Governance, four members of the Commonwealth Secretariat, 9 staff members, 28 Outcome Area programme partners; 13 Grants Programme partners; and five key respondents[6]. The sample of grantees selected for interview was made in consultation with the Grants team using the stage of project cycle and geographic location as sampling criteria[7]. Most stakeholders were consulted individually using the interview format while staff at Marlborough House were usually consulted through team discussions.

- *Regional visit*

Although the ToR envisaged visits to two regions, it was decided by the Steering Group that a visit to the Caribbean region only would be sufficient. The visit was planned in May 2106 to coincide with a series of national policy consultations, organised by Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) in association with national members of the Caribbean Civil Society Working Group (CCWG), on the issue of sustainable energy. The consultant was able to participate in the CWCG national consultation on sustainable energy in Grenada and to visit a Grants programme project site in Trinidad and Tobago. This enabled the evaluator to develop at first hand an understanding of partner perceptions of the achievements of the programme and project; the relevance and effectiveness of the Foundation's 'modus operandi' and support to partners in the region.

- *Analyse and present findings in line with Performance framework*

The evaluation has based its analysis of and report on the Foundation's performance to the 2012-16 Strategy on its Outcome Performance Framework (OPF), last revised in January 2014. This details the anticipated results of the strategy by outcome, indicators, and their means of verification. Some

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[5] Of the 30, only 2 responses are clearly from the same partner organisation; therefore we calculate an organisational response rate of 46%.
[6] See Annex C for list of people consulted.
[7] See Annex H

elements of the OPF have been revised in the annual work plans since 2104 but the OPF itself has not been updated[8].

For example, since 2014 the Outcome Area programmes have identified one or two year milestones on a rolling basis to monitor progress. Each milestone had a number of indicators associated with it for monitoring and reporting purposes. In consultation with the Steering Group, the evaluation identified milestones as the most appropriate level at which to assess programme performance, assuming that the 2015/16 Annual Report would report to milestones rather than outputs as in previous years. This, in the main, proved not to be the case. The report will, therefore, review Outcome Area programme performance in Section 2 to outputs but draw conclusions according to the milestones in the 2105/16 work plan.

Following the field visit the evaluation triangulated data from the different sources to evaluate performance and identify learning in relation to each outcome. An analysis of initial findings was presented and discussed at a staff meeting on 11th July 2016, and the comments received were incorporated into this draft report.

**Limitations of the approach**

Three limitations to the evaluation approach should be acknowledged:

- The work Commonwealth Writers programme, presents a special challenge in terms of its 'evaluability'. The portfolio of work is much more heterogeneous than the other programmes with a more diverse range of stakeholders and activities. There are fewer instances of institutional partnerships based on performance frameworks or log frames, as can be found in the other programmes.

- The decision to conduct only one field visit reduced the opportunity to validate the work of the Foundation at first hand. However, the evaluation took steps to extensively interview programme stakeholders. Nearly all the principal partners of the Outcome Area programmes were interviewed and nearly half the Grantees during the strategy period were interviewed.

- In some cases, systems had not been put in place to gather data to milestones for reporting purposes, making it difficult for the evaluation to review performance at that level.

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[8] A comparison of the key elements of the 2014 OPF and the 2015/16 planning format can be seen in Annex G

## 2  Outcome Area Programmes

This Section will review the achievements of each Outcome Area programme in relation to its planned outputs, draw conclusions on its performance to current milestones, and make recommendations where appropriate.

### 2.1. Commonwealth Writers

The Commonwealth Foundation has had a mandate to support arts and culture since 1979. Until 2012 this consisted of a diverse set of cultural activities with the annual Commonwealth Writers' Prize as its fulcrum. The 2012-2016 Strategic Plan reconceptualised the Foundation's work on the arts as the Creative Expression programme in line with the overall objective of the Foundation to support civil society's contribution to more effective and responsive governance.

While internally documents mostly refer to the Creative Expression programme, a Commonwealth Writers website was set up in 2012 as a separate 'brand' for the Foundation's cultural work. The cultural work of the Foundation is better known in the creative sectors as Commonwealth Writers. The evaluation will use the term Commonwealth Writers when referring to the Creative Expression programme.

*"The Foundation has made a mark and achieved a certain degree of visibility and niche status in its work in culture. Culture is recognised as an enabler of participatory governance and sustainable development."*

*Civil Society Engagement Strategy p14*

Since 2012 the Foundation has developed different Logic Models for the programme in an attempt to align it with its Intermediate Outcome of *"enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and Governance"*. This has remained unchanged throughout the strategy period. However, there was a significant change to the 2014 Short-term Outcome for the programme *"increase the capacity of CSOs to use creative expression for participatory governance"* in the 2015/16 Annual Work Plan when it was revised to become *"increased public dialogue through creative expression"*. The 2015/16 Milestone is more specifically defined as a *"unique contribution to public discourse by the creative sectors with a focus on less- heard voices"*.

These changes indicate a shift in focus in the programme (conceptually if not practically) from the role of CSOs in participatory governance to the role of the creative sectors in amplifying less-heard voices in public discourse. It also reflects the challenges the programme has had in aligning itself to the participatory governance paradigm. The current milestone and indicators for the programme can be seen below.

| Milestone | Indicator |
|---|---|
| Unique contribution to public discourse by the creative sectors with a focus on less- heard voices | *# of publications (print, online and other media) of stories by previously unpublished writers and other storytellers* |
| | *Public interaction with new publications and productions in media and online forums* |
| | *Activity on social media around new publications and productions (shares, interactions)* |
| | *Diversity in audience participation in activities* |

This section will review programme activities under the revised outputs of the 2015/16 performance framework before drawing some conclusions on its performance to milestone and making some recommendations. The current activities[9] of the programme are grouped under two outputs:

- The delivery of the Commonwealth Short Story prize, and
- Development support to writers and other story tellers.

- *Commonwealth Short Story Prize*:

The Foundation managed the high-profile Commonwealth Writers Prize for 25 years until it was re-launched as the Commonwealth Short Story Prize in 2012. The aim was to broaden the reach and scope of the Prize by awarding a prize in each of the Commonwealth's five regions in addition to an overall prize. The new Prize is seen as unique[10] as it:

- Unearths new voices and gets them heard across the world;

- Encourages new voices to be translated to English so that they are more widely read;

- Has a global reach with entries and judges from all over the word;

- Promotes new writers through workshops and outreach activities;

- Recognises languages and communities otherwise neglected;

- Is the only short story prize that rewards regional and international winners.

The re-launch of the Prize was a bold move to build on the profile of a well-established prize to reach out to 'less heard" voices in the Commonwealth. The refocusing of the Prize was welcomed by nearly all respondents; only two respondents commented on the new Prize having a lower profile and status to the Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

The 2016 Prize attracted 3,778 entries from 47 countries and, for the first time, was open to entries written in Swahili, Bengali and Portuguese. It also attracted an increased number (40) of translated entries in addition to 13 Swahili and 24 Bengali entries.

Nonetheless the programme has a mixed record in meeting some of its 2015/16 targets for the Prize:

- The number of translated entries significantly exceeded the target:

- The quality of entries from South Asia demonstrably improved as was evidenced by seven entries from the region being shortlisted in 2016 in contrast to two in 2015:

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[9] The programme's activities have been extensive and not all will be referred to in the following analysis. These include e.g. *Commonwealth Writers conversations* at the Hay Festival, participation in the 2013 Commonwealth People's Forum in Sri Lanka, and in the 6th World Summit of Culture at Santiago, Chile in 2014.
[10] Derived from application to Sigrid Rausing Trust, July 2015

- The 2015 short-listed stories were published on-line by Granta and/or in the regions;

- The total number of entries did not meet the target of 4,500 and was slightly less than in 2014/15;

- Entries from the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean did not meet the target. Entries from the former increased slightly and decreased from the latter;

- Fundraising for the Prize has yet to reach its target of £75,000.00.

The growth in the number of entries and countries involved in the Prize indicates its growing penetration across the Commonwealth (see Figure 2). The greatest growth in entries has been in Africa – a 260% increase since 2012. In 2016 three countries - Nigeria, UK and India - accounted for more than half the entries to the Prize. Nigeria alone submitted more than quarter of the entries. The number of applications from small island states has grown moderately but the number of applications from the Pacific as a whole (the vast majority of which are from Australia and New Zealand) has declined. This indicates a need for continuing outreach work to target the smaller nations, particularly in the Pacific.

*Figure 2: Growth in entries to the Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2012-16*
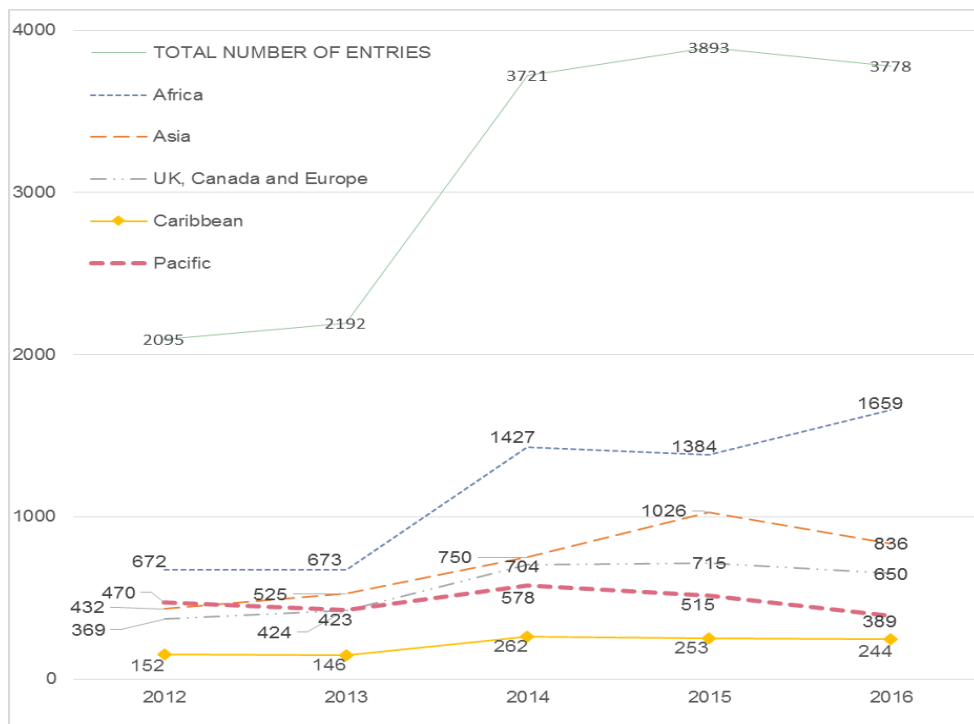


The correlation between the activities of Commonwealth Writers and an increase in entries is not always straightforward. The short story workshop in Dhaka in 2012 and subsequent activities have driven up entries from Bangladesh. Similarly contacts with Maltese writers during the 2015 CPF have

increased those entries from that country. Most recently, an author from Kiribati who participated in a Commonwealth Writers Prose workshop held in the Pacific in 2015 submitted an entry to the 2016 Prize, the first from that country. Targeting a local source with good networks to publicise the Prize through email, blogs, social media or a radio programme can also result in a marked increase in entries from a country e.g. in Brunei in 2105,

The programme has enabled short-listed stories to reach a wider audience in number of ways. Granta, in recent years, has published each of the five regional winners on-line. Prize winners and entrants are publicised via the Commonwealth Writers website through "Conversations" and Podcasts. Commonwealth Writers team tracks media coverage of the Prize in the UK and international media as an indicator of how it contributes to public discourse, although this is not included in the Annual Report. The themes of many of the stories deal with the realities of life facing marginalised and/or vulnerable populations across the Commonwealth i.e. "less-heard voices". The 2016 shortlist, for example, included stories on patriarchy in Pakistan, genocide in Rwanda, terrorism in Bangladesh, domestic violence. It would be of particular interest, in line with the rationale for the new Prize, to track and report on how the Prize enables local writers to broaden their audiences and explore sensitive issues in the media in five regions of the Commonwealth.

A positive initiative is that the 2016 Prize judges will mentor the work of regional winners subsequent to their awards. This can help strengthen a network of writers who themselves might become a resource for other emerging writers (see Recommendation 5).

- ***Development Support to writers/ storytellers***

Commonwealth Writers has offered development support to cultural practitioners through a wide range of activities. These will be reviewed under the following outputs in the 2015/16 theories of change. Some of these activities e.g. craft support to translators, editors and prose writers, can be seen as outreach activities that feed into the Commonwealth Short Story prize.

- *Translation (Fiction/Non-Fiction)*

Craft support to translators is seen as supporting 'less-heard voices' by strengthening translation and editing skills in languages that have been under represented in literary translation. To date this has primarily focused on establishing a network of Bangla-to-English translators to promote contemporary writing from Bangladesh. Commonwealth Writers, in partnership with PEN, British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) and the Dhaka Translation Centre (DTC), organised a translation workshop in November 2014. This was followed by a mentoring programme and a second workshop. The intention was to publish an anthology of Bangla stories translated by participants in the workshops at Hay Dhaka festival in 2015. The anthology has been delayed by various factors but is due to be published in the near future as

the "Book of Dhaka". There are plans to partner again with PEN to hold a Swahili translation workshop in Dar es Salaam in 2016.

- *Editing and Prose (Fiction/Non-Fiction)*

Commonwealth Writers has supported four workshops - in the Caribbean, Africa, Pacific and Malta - to strengthen the skills and establish local networks of new writers and editors.

The first of these activities was support to the creation of the Caribbean Literature Action Group, CARIBLIT. CARIBLIT was launched in 2012, in partnership with the British Council and NGC Bocas Literary Festival, to help to develop a literary publishing infrastructure in the Caribbean, and to promote Caribbean writers to the rest of the world. CARIBLIT has contributed to the development of a new Caribbean imprint - Peekash Press in the USA and Peepal Tree Press in the UK, – which in 2014 jointly published *Pepperpot*, an anthology of some of the best entries from the region for the 2013 Commonwealth Short Story Prize.

A second workshop on editing fiction, organised by Bocas Festival in Guyana in January 2106, provides evidence of on-going support to story tellers in the region. However, a local respondent[11] cites the difficulty of sustaining the momentum of a network dispersed across the region so that it can move from *"a network of purpose into a network of practice"*. CARIBLIT remains a loose collection of people working towards building a regional publishing industry. Its current priorities include developing Peekash as an independent publisher and maintaining the CARIBLIT website[12].

Commonwealth Writers, in partnership with the Africa Writers Trust, in June 2014 also supported two workshops on editing and creative non-fiction in East Africa, another region with little publishing infrastructure. These gave rise to the publication of a collection of creative non-fiction from across Africa, "Safe House", in an attempt to reach a wider global audience with 'untold stories'.

The programme has also held short story workshops for emerging writers in the Pacific Islands in 2014, following a low number of entries from the region for the 2013 Commonwealth Short Story Prize, and in Gozo, Malta in August 2015. Commonwealth Short Story Prize entries from the Pacific increased significantly in 2014 but have subsequently declined. Neither of these workshops has been accompanied by a subsequent publication.

- *On-line Prose (Fiction/Non-Fiction)*

The Commonwealth Writers social media strategy[13] envisages growing an online community of cultural practitioners through its social channels, and using the website as the 'backbone' of that activity by hosting quality content through

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[11] Interview with Commonwealth Writers partner
[12] See http://www.cariblit.org/
[13] A specific Social Media Strategy for Commonwealth Writers was updated in June 2005. A Social Communications Strategy for the Foundation was produced in October 2014.

targeted and open calls. The aim is not to target growth per se e.g. in terms of website 'hits', but to build a network of 'influencers' online and offline in each region[14].

To date, the website has posted fiction and non-fiction content on the website through an on-line blog. It has also hosted *10x10 podcasts*, a series of 10 minute podcasts of conversations with published writers. In 2015-16 Commonwealth Writers began a new drive to encourage and develop writers to publish examples of their work on the website through a combination of targeted and open calls. Commonwealth Writers cites[15] writers as reporting that the process has helped to develop their skills and access further opportunities. An offshoot of this process has been the development of a new online platform on the website – *adda: a gathering of stories* – which provides a space for writers and readers to talk to each other and for the dissemination less-heard fiction and non-fiction.

The 2015/16 Annual Report reports an increased visibility and popularity of the website with a 47% increase in the number of visitors to the website over the previous 10 months and 35% increase in the number of websites linking back to Commonwealth Writers. More detailed analytics on the popularity of different content on the website was not available to the evaluation at the time of writing.

- *Film (Scriptwriting)*

Commonwealth Writers has also supported emerging writers and film makers to develop their scriptwriting and directing skills, and translate their ideas on to screen. The Commonwealth Shorts project (2012-14) supported a production lab in 2013 for five international filmmakers and eight emerging filmmakers from wider Pacific region. This culminated in a series of short films that explored issues such as migration, LGBTI, and Indigenous Rights which were subsequently screened locally in the five different countries. The 2015/16 Annual report highlights two examples of these short films on 'untold stories' going on to raise awareness among a wider audience:

- *Passage* the short film about migration by Kareem Mortimer, from the Bahamas, has been developed into a full-length feature film, *Cargo*. Commonwealth Writers was invited to provide technical support for the development of the film script.

- Lisa Harewood from Barbados has developed her short film *Auntie* into an online oral history project which spans the Caribbean, Canada and the UK www.barrelstories.com. This follows an overwhelming interest in her film which explores the fates of children, their parents and informal carers in a context of migration

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[14] Ibid p1
[15] 2015/16 Annual Report p47

The programme has since conducted a mapping exercise on the film industry in Pacific Islands and plans to hold Commonwealth Shorts II in the Pacific in 2016-2017.

- *Radio Production*

Commonwealth Writers has supported two workshops for women in Bangladesh in 2014 and 2015 with the aim of producing a radio programme highlighting women's' issues. The workshops focused on developing skills relevant to radio production such as interviewing, writing, sound editing and editorial decision-making skills. The project was organised, in partnership with Naripokko, a prominent women's group, and DRIK, a multi-media agency, to produce a radio magazine or soap opera as a popular format to communicate to a wide audience. The intention was to establish a regular weekly radio programme made by and targeted at women that would raise awareness of and encourage public dialogue on women's issues such as forced and early marriage. More ambitiously it was hoped that the programmes would lead to policy conversations with Government/CSOs, and increase job opportunities for trainee female producers and sound engineers. Workshop participants designed and produced a half-hour programme – *Nokshi Kotha* – which it hopes to use to raise funds for a weekly magazine programme.

**Conclusions**

*Milestone: Unique contribution to public discourse by the creative sectors with a focus on less well heard voices*

2012-16 has been a period of largely successful experimentation for the programme although the diversity of initiatives seems to have been driven by an impulse "to go from nothing to something[16]" rather than strategy. The 2015/16 Annual Report did not explicitly report to the milestone indicators but it is possible to illustrate some progress:

- *Unpublished authors*. There is no data on the number of print and on-line publications by previously unpublished authors. However, three of the five 2016 CSSP regional prize winners were previously unpublished authors, and the fourth was published only in her university publication. There is no milestone indicator for the Short Story Prize (although there is at output level) despite its significance as an innovation during the strategy period.

- *Public interaction with new publications*. The indicator refers to social media interactions and shares e.g. in relation to the Commonwealth Writers Facebook page. This data, which would illustrate how widely Commonwealth Writers content is being disseminated on social media, was not available to the evaluation.

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[16] Creative Expression Team discussion, March 2016

- *Social media activity*. This refers to the number of interactions and shares of new publications and productions. More generally there is evidence of a significant increase in the exposure of the Commonwealth Writers in media exposure in the last year. Twitter followers have more than doubled in two years from 5488 in August 2014 to 11,234 in Jul y 2016. Facebook fans have also increased (see Figure 3).

- *Diversity of audiences*. This refers to the diversity of the on-line audience of Commonwealth Writers, for example, in terms of Facebook users. The evaluation was not able to access data on Facebook users but the graph below illustrates how the number of Facebook 'likes' of Commonwealth Writers has nearly doubled in the last two years. Interestingly the same three countries - Nigeria, India and UK – appear to predominate (nearly half) as Facebook fans of Commonwealth Writers as they do in the entries to the CSSP. It is not known whether the 2015/16 target of achieving 1,000+ Facebook users in five countries additional to these 'top three' was met.

*Figure 3: Growth of Commonwealth Writers Facebook fans July 2014-July 2016*



Commonwealth Writers faces a challenge, given the range, nature and diversity of the activities, in defining how it can best demonstrate the lasting success of its work. In order to improve the 'evaluability' of the programme Commonwealth Writers it will be necessary to:

- Identify appropriate indicators to monitor progress on less heard voices in public discourse;

- Identify appropriate metrics for different activities e.g. skills acquisition; use of skills; social networking, and platforms e.g. on-line, print publishing; social media, film, radio etc.

- Gather data systematically to these metrics

- Report in line with chosen metrics.

*Recommendation 1: Develop a performance framework for Commonwealth Writers with appropriate metrics at outcome and output level for different types of platforms and activities.*

The current focus and approach of Commonwealth Writers on "less heard voices" was supported by all relevant respondents while acknowledging that this is open to interpretation. For example, the concept could refer to supporting emerging voices to engage in international markets through translation; supporting stories that explore sensitive issues through film or short stories; or supporting the voices of poor or marginalised sections of the population e.g. through popular radio production.

Nearly all respondents interviewed were very positive about the support received from the Foundation and about the role and contribution of the two long standing members of staff. There were also converging views among respondents on the distinctive offer from Commonwealth Writers in the cultural field. "Commonwealth Writers" was seen as a strong brand that has succeeded in building an international reputation in cultural circles.

While the role and support of Commonwealth Writers was much valued by respondents, several commented on the activity-based nature of the support. While recognising that Commonwealth Writers may not be able to offer ongoing support, it was suggested that it should plan not annually but over a three or four year time horizon in order to follow through on established initiatives. This will require a more strategic, focused, and programmatic approach which should not preclude the capacity to be flexible and responsive to opportunity. Some respondents suggested that Commonwealth Writers should focus its efforts on where it has the strongest distinctive competence and most successful partnerships, though no clear consensus emerged on where this might be. A key challenge facing Commonwealth Writers in the next strategy period will to develop a more transparent, strategic framework for its activities that enables it to have a lasting, demonstrable impact in supporting 'less heard voices'.

*Recommendation 2: Develop an outline, three to four year programme of work for the next strategy period that provides focus, synergy and follow through to its activities.*

To meet that challenge the Foundation must resolve the ambiguity at the heart of the role of Commonwealth Writers within the organisation's theory of change. Is it to support the creative expression of civil society in participatory governance? Or is it, for example, to inspire and connect story tellers across the Commonwealth to amplify less heard voices in public discourse? This dilemma is illustrated by the metrics included in the programme's 2016 theory of change. These tend to fall into two categories:

- *Public discourse* e.g. "untold" stories reaching new audiences and entering mainstream dialogue through a variety of platforms.

- *Policy dialogue* e.g. potential for policy dialogue e.g. with Ministries of Culture, triggered by creative products; writers engaged in policy conversations with Governments and/or CSOs as a direct result of creative products.

Commonwealth Writers has helped to mainstream narratives relevant to marginalised populations into public discourse by disseminating the work of emerging writers through the publication of short stories, anthologies and other creative products on the Commonwealth Writers website and other platforms. There is no evidence to date, however, of these creative products leading to the policy engagement of writers/ editors with relevant decision-makers. Indeed it is questionable whether this should be an expectation of the programme. To increase the likelihood of fiction/non-fiction facilitating policy dialogue would require more of 'Communications for Development' approach that builds the capacity of CSOs and social movements, to give creative expression to the voices of marginalised citizens in policy debates.

This would be more complementary to its work on capacity development and constructive engagement but would be a radically new approach, requiring a different skills set among the team and new partners. There is no significant support for such a departure among staff and stakeholders, so the programme should focus on becoming more successful in doing what it currently does i.e. inspiring and connecting storytellers to enable less heard voices influence public discourse. The Commonwealth Writers' vision of *"inspiring and connecting storytellers across the world….to bring about change"* resonates with the ethos and values of the Commonwealth in making connections across cultures and continents. In programme terms, the aim to grow an on-line community through its social channels and social media is relevant, contemporary interpretation of this vision and merits a separate work stream in the new strategy and annual work plans.

*Recommendation 3: Review the relationship of Commonwealth Writers to the Foundation's theory of change to focus on the contribution of less-heard voices to public discourse rather than its contribution to participatory governance.*

This highlights the need for a clear, current social media strategy that sets out the rationale of the approach, target audiences, preferred platform and metrics to monitor and performance. The status of the Social Media Strategy drafted in 2015 which includes much of the above is not clear and the content is not fully reflected in the programme's work planning and reporting[17]. The strategy should be revised and updated, and its implementation included in work planning and reporting so that this important dimension of the programme can be adequately monitored.

*Recommendation 4: Revise and update Commonwealth Writers Social Media Strategy and incorporate in planning and reporting systems.*

Several respondents said they would appreciate more contact with Commonwealth Writers partners involved in same creative sectors, including in a mentoring capacity. The programme has successfully offered mentoring in the past e.g. the 2015/16 non-fiction anthology mentorship scheme, and 2016 Commonwealth Short Story Prize judges will mentor shortlisted authors. A more

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[17] Commonwealth Writers Social Media Strategy, Darshan Sanghrajka June 2015

systematic approach to building a network of cultural practitioners and facilitating the exchange of skills would fit well with the concept of connecting story tellers. There are some relevant examples of such an approach to network building and mentoring. The Commonwealth Secretariat set up Commonwealth Connects a few years ago to allow accredited Commonwealth organisations and partners to securely collaborate online but is not clear whether this is functioning[18]. The Chevening Scholarships was mentioned by one respondent as a successful example of pro-actively developing a supportive network of practitioners.

*Recommendation 5: Adopt a more systematic approach to making connections i.e. building a network of cultural practitioners that facilitates the exchange of skills and experiences.*

## 2.2. Capacity Development

The Capacity Development and Constructive Engagement teams work closely together to develop civil society capacity to contribute to participatory governance. The Capacity Development programme had three milestones in the 2015/16 work plan.

| Milestone | Indicator |
|---|---|
| Civil Society capacity strengthened by developing robust regional and national platforms and mechanisms. | *Level of constituency building for policy development in each regional CSO.s* |
| Development agendas and action plans formulated. | *# of regional agendas and action plans developed.* |
| Increased south – south learning. | *# of significant cases of knowledge from another region applied.* |

The primary focus of the programme is at a regional level although it aspires to work at national level also. The Foundation has supported the capacity development of four regional platforms during the strategy period – in the Caribbean, West Africa, East and Southern Africa - with different levels of success. It is in the preliminary stages of investigating how it might engage with civil society platform/s in Asia and Pacific regions.

Local implementing partners play a key role in delivering capacity development in line with the Capacity Development Strategy which emphasizes the importance of locating capacity development in context.  For example, the Foundation has entered into partnership agreements with CPDC in the Caribbean and WACSI in West Africa to deliver capacity development to CCWG and WACSOF respectively. The approach is to draw upon local resources to develop the capacity of the regional platforms and facilitate experiential

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[18] See more at: http://thecommonwealth.org/commonwealth-connects#sthash.6tZzBwPS.dpuf

learning. The added value of the Foundation as a partner is to provide feedback and facilitate learning and exchange between partners.

- *Caribbean*

The Foundation has supported the formation of a new civil society platform, the Civil Society Consultative Working Group (CCWG) as a mechanism for civil society to engage with CARICOM. CCWG was formed in May 2014 through a transparent, managed process with civil society representatives from six Caribbean countries. In October 2014 the Group decided to focus on 'sustainable energy for all' as its first policy issue, with a focus on affordable energy and the growth of renewable energy, CCWG has been involved in initial discussions with CARICOM on this issue since late 2015 and attended the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meeting on Sustainable Development and Energy in November 2015.

It should be pointed out that few members of CCWG have advocacy experience or expertise and none have a background in sustainable energy. In the last two years CPDC, the Foundation's implementing partner, has focused on developing the capacity of the CCWG to advocate on the issue. It has organised two regional workshops on policy advocacy, two workshops on policy research, and a workshop on leadership. During 2016 CPDC has supported CCWG members to develop overviews of national energy policy (by drawing in external expertise) and to conduct national policy dialogues on sustainable energy for all. The aim is to develop a regional policy position paper by July 2016 which CARICOM is committed to submitting at the next COTED meeting in November 2016.

The experience of developing a new regional network to interface with regional governance on policy issues raises some interesting issues. These include:

- The development of a new civil society network with very diverse members, many of whom have little or no policy background, requires a very considerable investment in their capacity development;

- The lack of internal expertise in the network on the policy issue raises the question of its suitability and credibility in advocating on the issue;

- This, in turn, highlights the role of the Foundation, the implementing partner and their roles in relation to the regional platform. In particular, how interventionist should the Foundation be in quality assuring the processes it supports?

- CWCG has no official status with CARICOM although CPDC (itself a membership organisation) has had observer status in relation to trade issues. Who will fulfil a representational role with CARICOM?

- *West Africa*

In West Africa the Foundation has worked to strengthen the West Africa Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), the regional civil society consultative body set up by the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS). The Foundation signed a partnership agreement in January 2015 with its implementing partner WACSI to develop the capacity of civil society in the region, a central element of which was the institutional strengthening of WACSOF itself.

From the outset the Foundation recognised numerous institutional weaknesses in WACSOF and supported WACSI to develop a plan to conduct a series of capacity development activities with WACSOF during 2015-2017 .A number of these activities have taken place including the introduction of annual activity plans; biannual regular Exco meetings; a renewed MoU with ECOWAS; the development of a resource mobilisation plan; and capacity assessments of national CSO platforms. A number of activities remain pending including convening a West Africa Peoples Forum of civil society representatives.

The Foundation has a number of unresolved concerns regarding its ongoing support for strengthening WACSOF. WACSI has recently assessed the weaknesses of national platforms and their relationship to the WACSOF Secretariat, and WACSOF's leadership challenges remain. In addition, WACSOF has lost its core funding from and its preferential status with ECOWAS and new regional networks have emerged interested in negotiating agreements with ECOWAS The Foundation is exploring the possibility of bringing together relevant stakeholders to consider how West African CSOs can most effectively engage with ECOWAS.

- *East Africa*

The Foundation's capacity development support to the East African Civil Society Organizations' Forum (EACSOF), the main civil society consultative mechanism with the East African Community (EAC), has also had a chequered history. The team initially supported EACSOF in 2014 in a strategic planning process in each of the five member countries. However, a new General Secretary was elected at the 2014 AGM through a process which has since been questioned. Since then the Foundation has worked with EACSOF to address a number of governance issues related to its legitimacy and effectiveness as a regional civil society platform. In association with this, the Foundation supported broad civil society attendance at the EACSOF General Council meeting and AGM in March 2016. The AGM demanded greater accountability of EACSOF's leadership and established a task force to conduct national consultations on the EACSOF constitution and implementation of the recently drafted strategic plan. The next AGM in March 2017 will consider the results of the national consultations and elect new members to the General Council. It is to be expected that the capacity development team will review its future support to EACSOF at that stage.

-   *Southern Africa*

More recently the Foundation's has sought to identify a suitable regional civil society platform to support In Southern Africa. The Foundation's initial attempts to discuss a way forward with the Southern Africa Development Community Council- Council of NGOs (SADC-CNGO) did not bear fruit. It has had, therefore, to find another route to support civil society capacity development at a regional level.

In 2015 the Foundation formed a partnership with the Economic Justice Network (EJN). EJN is a member of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA). FOCCISA, in turn, is one of the three member organisations of Apex Alliance, along with SADC-CNGO and the Southern African Trade Unions Coordination Council (SATUCC). The Apex Alliance plays a facilitating role for civil society from 12 countries in the region to engage on policy issues with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) through the Southern African Civil Society Forum (CSF) which meets annually in parallel to the SADC Summit of Heads of State. In contrast to the other regional partnerships, therefore, the Foundation's partnership with EJN is a further step removed from the regional civil society platform.

EJN presented youth employment as a policy priority to the Southern Africa CSF held in August 2015. The issue was included in the CSF declaration to the SADC Summit and EJN was tasked to develop an action plan. The Southern African Alliance on Youth Employment (SAAYE) was formally established in February 2016 at a follow up meeting in Namibia of CSOs from the region, co-facilitated by the Foundation to take the issue forward. SAAYE is in the process of mapping other networks with which it might collaborate on promoting youth employment as a policy issue.

-   *Small Island Developing states*

In response to calls for greater collaboration between small island states at the Third International Conference on SIDS in 2015, the capacity development team supported the establishment of a Small Island Developing States (SIDS) CSO inter-regional partnership between the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations (PIANGO) and CPDC in the Caribbean. The intention was that the partnership would pursue the policy agenda of the SAMOA Pathway by conducting a stakeholder mapping to identify what other CSOs should be involved; what technical assistance is available in each region; and how to encourage greater buy-in to the Pathway.

Although CPDC and PIANGO have submitted proposals to follow up the Barbados workshop, the Foundation is currently reassessing its support to this initiative. An option under consideration is to support national-level activities in one of the SIDS regions to demonstrate how the SAMOA pathway provisions can be integrated into national planning processes and the SDGs.

## Conclusions

*Milestone 1: Civil Society capacity strengthened by developing robust regional and national platforms and mechanisms.*

The Foundation has used a variety of approaches to strengthen the capacity of the four regional civil society platforms as illustrated below:

*Figure 4: Foundation capacity development support by region*

| CWCG | WACSOF | SAAYE | EACSOF |
|---|---|---|---|
| Preliminary workshop (catalysing CCWG) | Capacity assessments of national platforms | Exploratory meetings to catalyse SAAYE | Strategic planning process to identify national and regional policy priorities |
| 2 policy research | Review of governance and institutional structure | Launch of SAAYE, facilitating discussion on its identity | |
| 2 policy advocacy | | | Review of governance and governing instruments |
| 1 leadership | Assessment of Secretariat needs for effectiveness – policies, procedures | | |
| Review of strategic inquiry process | | | |
| Review of national consultation design pre and post consultations | Financial resources/ sustainability review and recommendations | | |

As can be observed, most of the capacity development support has been focused on 'catalysing' the formation of regional platforms (CCWG and SAAYE) or on their organisational strengthening (WACSOF and EACSOF). The Foundation has supported policy-related capacity development only in the Caribbean. This is the only region where national CSO platform members have directly benefitted from capacity development support. During the field visit to the Caribbean, both the CARICOM and local CSO respondents highlighted that the regional initiative needs to be supplemented by national-level advocacy with governments to be effective.

*"The Foundation will ……. ensure that partners receive comprehensive and cohesive coaching for ongoing CD rather than a series of disjointed "training" interventions……….."*

*Source: Capacity Development Framework p5*

Capacity development is central to the Foundation's work with civil society and its approach is by no means restricted to formal trainings. It would benefit the Capacity Development team to monitor the effectiveness and of the capacity development initiatives it supports and systematically document the lessons learned. This has relevance to the Constructive Engagement team also. The recent round of national policy consultations in the Caribbean, for example, was a big investment by the Foundation and similar exercises may be conducted in the future. Developing an inclusive process of policy development that results in a focused agenda for policy advocacy is a challenge in itself. Planning to conduct both real-time learning and a synthesis of lessons learned would help inform the exercise as it evolves and future similar consultation processes.

*Recommendation 6: Adopt a more systematic approach to monitoring the effectiveness of capacity development approaches and documenting and sharing the lessons learned.*

The Foundation has developed and used the Participatory and Transparency Tool (PATT) as means of monitoring the strengthened capacity of the regional platforms. The intent is to use the tool to establish a baseline and monitor the representativeness and constituency building of the regional civil society platforms it supports. Several partners commented favourably on the PATT as a means of monitoring the evolution of their network and a number have adopted it for their own work.

*Figure 5: Results by region of the PATT*

| Organisational Capacity | Exploring | Engaging | Analysing | Strategizing | Response |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CCWG | Baseline 2013/14 | | Progress 2015/16 | Target 2016 | |
| WACSOF | | | Baseline 2104/15 | | |
| SAAYE | Baseline 2015/16 | | Target 2016/17 | | |

| Constituency building | Speaking for | Raising Awareness | Consulting | Empowering | Partnership |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CCWG | Baseline 2013/14 | | Progress 2015/18 | Target 2016/17 | |
| WACSOF | | Baseline 2015 | | | |
| SAAYE | | Baseline 2015/16 | Target 2016/17 | | |

The team has not been able to demonstrate the anticipated progress in strengthening regional civil society platforms through the use of the PATT. The 2015/16 work plan anticipated that two platforms would reach the Empowering level of constituency and representation building. This has not been achieved but the use of the PATT substantiates progress with CCWG in the Caribbean. Baselines have been established in Southern and West Africa but the tool has yet to be used to monitor progress. A baseline for EACSOF using PATT is be to be established at the next AGM in March 2017.

In the circumstances the milestone indicator may have been overly ambitious. In the Caribbean and Southern Africa it was effectively starting from scratch. In the cases of West and East Africa, it has sought to support civil society platforms beset with institutional weaknesses. Whatever the nature of the regional civil society platform it is likely that it will require medium to long term support to become an effective, representative and accountable policy network/platform.

The Foundation should take the opportunity in the new strategy development process to reflect on its experience of working with regional civil society

platforms. In particular, it should identify what have been the factors which have contributed to progress to date and prioritise its efforts where lasting changes might be achieved. There is some evidence to suggest that that is where it has supported 'independent' regional civil society platforms without a formalised relationship with regional governance. It would also be useful to reflect on the lessons learned from its preferred modus operandi of working through local implementing partners, in particular how local capacity development initiatives can be quality assured.

*Recommendation 7: Reflect on the support to date to regional civil society platforms, including its relationship with local implementing partners, and prioritise support where it is most likely to lead to lasting change.*

⊙ *Milestone 2: Development agendas and action plans formulated*

The team planned to have supported draft regional agendas in the Caribbean and West Africa during 205/16. A policy development process on sustainable energy has been mapped out and is underway in the Caribbean although this might not be without its challenges before being formalised as an 'agenda'. (See Section 3) In Southern Africa SAAYE is in the early stages of mapping potential stakeholders for the Alliance and wider research needs on employment issues.

⊙ *Milestone 3: Increased South-South learning*

The 2015/16 target for this indicator was to support two cases of knowledge sharing across regions. The partnership between PIANGO and CPDC has been the main initiative of the team to support knowledge sharing and collaboration at inter-regional level. The initiative has made little progress to date and the Foundation is reviewing whether/ how it will proceed in 2016/17. It is not clear why the initiative has not made more progress. One factor may be the logistical, financial obstacles to promoting horizontal exchange among small island states which has been recognised in other initiative such as CARIBLIT[19].

## 2.3. Constructive engagement

The Constructive Engagement programme supports civil society engagement with decision makers at different levels - at global platforms, in Commonwealth Ministerial processes, and with regional and national governance. This section will review programme activities at each level before reviewing performance to milestones in the Conclusions.

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[19] Partner interview

| Milestone | Indicator |
|---|---|
| CSOs have improved access to and credible opportunity to engage with policy makers | *Key recommendations made that are included in the IIG output document* |
| | *Proportion of government representation at civil society stakeholder forums* |
| Increased commitment by regional IIGs to engage with CSOs | *# of interactions between CSOs and IIGs at the regional level* |
| Select government Ministry(ies) put in place or improve mechanisms/ processes to engage with CSOs on policy issues | *# of institutionalised policy processes in IIGs that require or mandate CSO inputs* |

- *Global platforms*

Perhaps the most notable initiative of the team at global level was to support African CSO input to the UN Sustainable Development Goals discussions in New York in 2014. The Foundation supported a number of African CSOs, under the umbrella of the Africa Working Group (AWG), to develop a preparatory position and to engage with their governments through the respective Permanent Representatives in New York and at the African Union prior to the UN discussions. AWG members cited[20] these discussions as being very positive - leading in some cases to on-going contact with government officials. One partner commented that the occasion provided an opportunity for high-level dialogue with his government which would have been almost impossible in his own national context.

The Foundation participates in a number of other global fora but not necessarily as part of the programme – for example, the International Civil Society weeks organised by Civicus; an event organised by the Berlin-based International Civil Society Centre in 2015; and attendance at the annual OECD Forum. The purpose of participating in such events is more to keep up to date with current trends, network and raise the profile of the Foundation than to engage in policy discussions. This is a valid networking role but should be included in annual work plans to make such networking more transparent.

*Recommendation 8: Include global networking activities in annual work plans and reports.*

- *Commonwealth*

The biggest, and probably most important, opportunity for civil society to engage with Commonwealth leaders that the Foundation supports is the Commonwealth People's Forum (CPF), held biennially in the run up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The CPF is a big investment for the Foundation. The 2016 CPF involved 332 civil society representatives from 44 countries –-101 of which were sponsored by the Foundation.

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[20] Partner interviews

The aim of the CPF is to provide an opportunity for civil society partners to share knowledge and experience and to participate in policy discussions. The conclusions of these discussions are formalised in a declaration[21] with a view to influencing the CHOGM Communique. Respondents who attended the CPF valued the event more as an opportunity to network with other CSOs than as a platform to engage with Commonwealth policy makers. However, the Foundation facilitated three interfaces with Commonwealth leaders at the CPF in Malta 2105 i.e.

- A policy dialogue on LGBTI rights, chaired by Baroness Verma, DFID Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, between civil society representatives and representatives from the governments of Malta and Australia.

- A policy dialogue on a *'transformative shift in education'* following on from the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers meeting in the Bahamas (see below) which brought together civil society representatives with representatives of the governments of Malta, The Bahamas and The Seychelles.

- An interesting initiative of the Foundation was to invite three candidates for the position of Commonwealth Secretary General to a debate with civil society representatives - a small step towards greater openness in the role of civil society in Commonwealth processes.

In the health sector the Foundation supports the accredited civil society organisation, the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance (CHPA), to organise a Civil Society Forum in advance of the annual Commonwealth Health Ministerial Meeting (CHMM). The aim is that civil society recommendations influence Commonwealth Ministerial positions on health issues. In order to ensure an inclusive and evidence-based process, it has supported a wide range of health-related CSOs to participate in the Forum and has sponsored research on health issues related to policy objectives. In preparation for the 2015 Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting, the Foundation and the CHPA also hosted a roundtable for Commonwealth High Commissioners to discuss the importance of health in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Foundation has also supported CSO participation in the Civil Society Forum at the three yearly of the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (CCEM) in 2012 and 2015. The Civil Society Forum issues a statement following each meeting - mostly recently in 2015 on Education & Sustainable Development in Small States. The Foundation also held a well-attended roundtable with High Commissioners and selected CSOs in March 2016 to follow up the policy statements on education that emerged at the CPF in 2015.

The Foundation has, for several years, supported civil society participation in the post-Beijing agenda and, in particular, civil society input into a

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[21] See, for example, *CPF 2015 Malta Declaration on Governance for Resilience*

Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality. Since 2012 it has supported civil society participation in the Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG), established in 2005 to monitor the implementation of the PoA. The formalisation of civil society engagement with Commonwealth Ministries in monitoring the PoA was recognised as a breakthrough at the time. Four regional civil society representatives or 'gender focal points' have been supported by the Foundation to participate in the CGPMG. This takes place annually in association with the United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York, and every three years in association with the Commonwealth meeting of Ministries for Women's Affairs.

The last meeting of the CGPMG in March 2016 considered the conclusions of an End of Term Review (ETR). The ETR recommended that there be no follow-up PoA since the arrangement had been largely ineffectual due to the Commonwealth lacking the basic elements to monitor state compliance with the PoA. The CGPMG de facto had acted as a forum for discussion and knowledge sharing more than a mechanism of accountability. The ETR recommended that the Commonwealth select some key targets and indicators from SDG 5 and to allocate the resources to adequately monitor activities in support of these. It is not clear how the Foundation will support civil society engagement on gender equality issues at Commonwealth level in the future. The gender focal points interviewed were clear that, although the work of the CCPMG had not been effective in terms of monitoring, civil society engagement with Commonwealth Ministry meetings should be protected.

- *Regional*

*Caribbean.* The team have been involved in supporting the Caribbean Civil Society Working Group (CCWG) in preparing for its future policy engagement with CARCIOM. The team has supported seven national policy consultations on sustainable energy that have involved a wide range of stakeholders including CSOs, private sector and national and regional governance. A positive feature of the process is that the Energy Unit of CARICOM intends to use the recommendations from the consultations to feed into the Caribbean sustainable energy road map strategy to be discussed at the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meeting in November 2016.

*West Africa.* The team, along with Oxfam Novib, supported a four day workshop in December 2104 with over 50 civil society delegates representing 13 ECOWAS countries to develop a strategy to engage with ECOWAS and national governments on achieving the ECOWAS vision 2020. This produced a number of quite general recommendations in a communiqué. However, ECOWAS has since opened up other spaces for consultation with other civil society platforms. This has prompted the team to reconsider its current strategy of support to WACSOF and how best to support civil society engagement with ECOWAS.

*East Africa.* The Foundation has also been working on gender with the Eastern Africa Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), a

registered sub-regional civil society organization in Eastern Africa. Despite endorsing several international commitments related to women, the East African Community (EAC) currently lacks a regional legal framework on gender equality that is binding on member states. The team has supported EASSI to compile evidence to support the introduction of a Gender Equality Bill, and national consultations on the Bill with the aim of enhancing ownership by civil society. A draft EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill has gone through its first reading in the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) as a Private Members Bill. However, the Council observed that the Bill is not anchored in a policy and has directed the EAC to fast track a draft Gender Policy to inform the Bill[22].

- *National*

The programme has also supported a small number of initiatives to enable civil society to engage in national policy processes. These are support to:

- The Energy Forum in Sri Lanka to develop a Consumers' Charter for Sustainable Energy in consultation with civil society.

- The Third World Network (TWN) to facilitate a policy dialogue on Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Malaysia, in particular on access to affordable medicines.

- The African Working Group (AWG) to work with Cameroon and Tanzania governments to develop a collaborative framework for the incorporation of the SDGs into National Development Plans.

Each of these initiatives links back to the previous work of the Foundation. For example, the work on UHC follows on from the issue being highlighted at the Civil Society Forum at the CHMM in May 2015. What is less clear is how each of these fits into a more strategic framework and rationale for national-level work and how it will add synergy to work at other levels.

**Conclusions**

 *Milestone 1: CSOs have improved access to and credible opportunity to engage with policy makers.*

The indicators for this milestone are the inclusion of civil society recommendations in IGO documents and the proportion of government representatives at Civil Society Forums. The evaluation has no data on the latter but there is some evidence of the former albeit somewhat weak. The 2015/26 Annual Report cites a rather general statement in the CHOGM Communique on '*the need to protect individuals from all forms of violence and discrimination*' as an example of a civil society contribution to governance. The

*"The Foundation, building on insights gained through CSO engagement with previous and new work, will seek to engage select National government Ministries to test sustained policy dialogue for change."*

2015/16 Work Plan p41

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[22] See http://www.eassi.org/news

first reading of the draft Gender Bill in East Africa perhaps provides more substantive evidence of civil society input into a governance document.

While the evidence of substantive civil society influence on IGO policy documents in weak, there are a number of examples of the *improved engagement* of CSOs with policy makers. These include the discussions of African CSOs with member state representatives on the Sustainable Development Goals; the unprecedented small group meetings with Commonwealth Ministers at CPF 2015; the policy work of EASSI with the EAC; and the initial and planned meetings of CCWG with COTED in the Caribbean. As noted elsewhere, institutional weaknesses in the West and East Africa civil society platforms have impeded improved civil society engagement with regional governance, and work with the SAAYE in Southern Africa is still in its early stages. Respondents from the programme frequently referred to the Foundation's status as an IGO 'opening doors' to give civil society access to other IGOs, although access does not equate with influence.

A number of respondents, for example, queried the effectiveness of supporting civil society engagement with policy-making processes in the Commonwealth. This refers to the nature of civil society engagement with CHOGM, Inter-Ministerial meetings, and the status of the Commonwealth itself. The Commonwealth can facilitate Inter-Ministerial agreements but has no mandate to hold member states accountable to implement agreements though it can provide technical support and cooperation in support of these[23].

With the exception of the CGPMG, whose future is uncertain, civil society engagement at Commonwealth governance meetings is through a Civil Society Forum as an adjunct to the meeting. The Constructive Engagement team are well aware of the limitations of this model of engagement. The 2015/16 Work Plan[24] summarises learning from the 18CCEM and 2013 CPF on the effectiveness of Civil Society Fora and sets out seven requirements for genuine dialogue between civil society and IGOs. In relation to the CCEM, these included the recommendations that the roles and outputs of the forum should be formalised and the forum itself should be integral and not an adjunct to the CCEM.

There is little evidence that current arrangements for civil society engagement in CHOGM and Commonwealth Inter-Ministerial meetings is likely to result in substantive policy influence at IGO and subsequently national level. A frustration expressed by some respondents was the lack of policy continuity in Inter-Ministerial meetings, making it difficult to hold an Inter-Ministerial meeting accountable for the commitments made at the previous meeting. The pattern of roundtable meetings with High Commissioners might prove to be a more effective follow up mechanism.

The Foundation might take advantage of the Secretariat's current strategy development to raise the issue of the status of civil society engagement in

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[23] The DFID 2013 Multi-lateral Aid Review (MAR) noted the Secretariat had made little or no progress in meeting development objectives.
[24] 2015/16 Work Plan p 42

Commonwealth processes. For example, the 25th CHOGM to be hosted by the UK government in 2018 may be a unique opportunity to pilot a new modus operandi for the CPF.

*Recommendation 9: Review the status of civil society engagement in Commonwealth fora in strategic discussions with Secretariat.*

It is open to question whether the Foundation, with its limited resources, can work effectively at global, Commonwealth, regional and national level. Stakeholders frequently acknowledged that the most likely level for civil society to bring about substantive change through constructive engagement is at national level, as the Grants programme is beginning to illustrate (see Section 3). It is impractical for the Constructive Engagement programme to support work at national level on a large scale. This argues for a more strategic, programmatic rationale for work at this level and a closer synergy between the Grants programme and the international objectives of the Outcome Area programmes (see section 5)

*Recommendation 10: Strategise support to civil society engagement with governance to include greater synergy with the Grants programme at national level.*

*Milestone 2: Increased commitment by regional IIGs to engage with CSOs.*

This indicator refers to regional IGOs making an institutional commitment to engage with CSOs. The 2015/16 Work Plan has a target of a minimum of one CSO/IGO meeting per year in each region. The commitment by CARICOM to involve civil society in the COTED meeting in November 2016 would fall into that category, although this might be a one-off, issue specific commitment. ECOWAS is reviewing its institutional interface with civil society in West Africa but there is no evidence that is the result of the Foundation's work with WACSOF.

*Milestone 3: Select government Ministry(ies) put in place or improve mechanisms/ processes to engage with CSOs on policy issues.*

The indicator for this milestone refers to institutionalised processes that mandate CSO inputs/consultations. The role of CSOs in the CCPMG in monitoring the implementation of Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality would be an example but the CCPMG is to be discontinued. No new examples during the strategy period of formal commitments by IGOs or governments to formally consult with civil society are known to the evaluation.

## 2.4. Knowledge Management

Knowledge-sharing plays a pivotal role in the Foundation's interpretation of its mission and forms the fourth Outcome Area. A Learning and Communication Strategy was produced in December 2014 sets out a vision of how the

*"The Foundation is strategically guided by knowledge management, both as a key programming strategy and a distinct area of focus."*

*Learning and Communications Strategy p3*

Foundation will build a learning culture and promote internal and external knowledge sharing. However, a lack of staff continuity may have hampered the Foundation in taking this work forward.

The 2015/16 Work Plan amalgamated the milestone indicators under the short-term outcome. This Section will review performance to outputs before summarising their contribution to the Short-term Outcome.

| Short-term Outcome | Indicator |
|---|---|
| Enhanced knowledge management for more effective participatory governance | *CSO rating of knowledge sharing on participatory governance* |
| | *# of Foundation-documented knowledge resources that have been used, replicated or documented* |
| | *Staff assessment of internal knowledge sharing and collaboration* |
| | *# and % grants and scale of their reach which have successfully contributed to the short term outcome* |

- *Knowledge sharing processes and systems*

The foundation has made a number of advances in improving internal knowledge-sharing systems and processes. Structured staff meetings are held three times a year in association with the planning and reporting cycle to further collaboration and learning. "Lessons learned" has been incorporated into key templates e.g. for Grants Assessment, Mission Reports and Annual Reports. While this has generated useful insight, there is not yet a satisfactory system in place to ensure that learning is distilled and disseminated in 'real time' so that it can contribute to improved performance. Several grant holders, for example, welcomed lesson-learning being part of the reporting process but queried what happened to this learning and how it could be more productively shared between projects.

*Recommendation 11: Develop a more systematic approach to knowledge capture and dissemination*

*Cornerstone* is the Foundation's internal knowledge platform where key documents are stored. The 2015/16 Annual Report describes this as fully utilised by all staff. At the outset of the evaluation, however, documentation was not being kept up to date although this has since improved. *Knowledge Hub,* which hosts a variety of knowledge products on the Foundation website, is also not sufficiently up to date. When recently reviewed by the evaluation, the most recently posted content in most categories was some months old (the last speech posted was in November 2013). An on-line conference space *Yammer* was established but is reported as not having taken off. The evidence from recent staff surveys is that staff want ready access to knowledge-based content on the website but the new Knowledge Management Manager will need to ensure that staff are motivated to keep these resource-bases up to date with current content.

*Recommendation 12: Establish a prompt/reminder system to ensure knowledge resources are posted on Cornerstone.*

- *The development and dissemination of knowledge products*

The principal knowledge-based product the Foundation has developed and promoted has been Participatory and Transparency Tool (PATT). This, as we have seen, has been used widely and shared with partners in a variety of settings, and positively received and adopted. The Foundation is currently in the process of developing a new Network Assessment Tool which may be combined with elements of the PATT to more clearly identify what needs to be done for networks to progress in their development.

Three Commonwealth Insights on participatory governance have been produced – on Constructive Engagement, the SAMOA Pathway and Resilience. The last of these is in the form of ten policy briefs for civil society. These Insights are broadly targeted at CSOs and mostly distributed on-line. The Foundation has recently commissioned five short case studies on Awarded Grants projects. These have yet to be posted on the website.

- *The facilitation of learning exchanges*

The Foundation has organized two "Partners' Learning Exchanges" during the strategy period – in 2014 and 2015. The 2015 exchange was organized in the run up to the CPF and the Foundation intends to make it an annual event. Following the recommendation of the 2014 meeting, the 2015 exchange focused on monitoring, evaluation, learning, and leadership. Participants rated the experience highly in a feedback survey[25]. This was confirmed by those participants interviewed who were enthusiastic about both the content and the opportunity to network, although some expressed a preference for more peer learning.

Internally, there has been little attempt to facilitate ongoing learning exchange between Outcome Area and the Grants Programme, or within the Grants programme itself. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.

## Conclusion

Some of the building blocks of a learning culture have been put in place – incorporating learning in reporting templates, establishing web-based knowledge resources; experimenting with knowledge products; and promoting learning exchanges for partners. However, there is evidence that both Outcome Area and Grants programme partners would like more opportunities for peer-based learning and knowledge sharing[26]. The Foundation also recognises there is scope for it to better use the learning it is generating[27], by distilling and

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[25] Commonwealth Peoples Forum 2015 Delegate survey
[26] See Evaluation partner survey analysis
[27] See 2015/16 Annual Report p54

disseminating learning in a timely fashion so that it can feed into programme development and decision-making more generally.

The Short-term Outcome has four indicators in the 2015/16 work plan. The evaluation found no mechanism in place to monitor and collect data on the first two of these:

- *CSO rating of knowledge sharing*: The evaluation found no data gathered to this indicator. A question on knowledge-sharing was not, for example, included in the 2016 survey of grantees. However, nearly 90% of partner respondents in the evaluation partner survey reported that the Foundation support received was relevant or very relevant to knowledge sharing.

- *Use of Foundation knowledge resources*: The evaluation found no data to this indicator – for example, on the distribution and use of the Commonwealth Insights.

- *Staff assessment of internal knowledge sharing*: There is some evidence that most staff perceive the Foundation to be a learning environment although there is a desire for more informal opportunities for peer exchange and review[28]. Staff suggestions to encourage even more of a learning culture include more informal opportunities for staff to share and review current work; more peer review of programme concept notes; and more mission briefings and debriefings.

- *Contribution of grants to outcome*: One Awarded Grant was considered to contribute to enhanced knowledge management - *"Promoting fair trade networks in Africa"* managed by the Shared Interest Foundation.

The Foundation's aspiration to facilitate knowledge-sharing internally and externally among partners might be facilitated by identifying a learning agenda in association with its new strategic objectives. Once these are clearly defined, a learning agenda for both learning exchange and the production of knowledge products can be identified by asking "What would be helpful to know in order to implement this successfully?" This could be done collaboratively with partners and provide a focus for both real time and historical learning that feeds into programming.

*Recommendation 13: Develop an agenda for 'learning for improvement' in association with the new strategic objectives.*

## 2.5. Cross-Cutting Outcomes

The 2102-16 Strategic Plan outlined three Cross-cutting Outcomes (CCOs) to be mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the Foundation's programming – gender equality, environmental sustainability, and cultural

*"These three areas will remain in focus throughout project implementation, with indicators that will demonstrate the extent to which progress is being made. Evidence of these outcomes will be monitored …."*

*S2012/16 Strategic Plan p24*

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[28] Staff survey May 2016. 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the Foundation proves platforms for knowledge sharing and collaboration.

respect and understanding. This Section will focus on how well the CCOs have been integrated into the Foundation's internal planning, monitoring and programming systems. Programme initiatives relevant to, for example, gender equality such as support to the CGPMG and EASSI have been discussed earlier.

The Strategy commits to integrating the CCOs in project implementation and monitoring. In January 2014 the Foundation produced a Toolkit on mainstreaming CCOs which sets out a number of key questions when developing or reviewing a project. However, no mechanism seems to have put in place to systematically review and operationalise the Toolkit or the commitment to gender mainstreaming.

The CCOs are not operationalised in the same way as the Short-term Objectives. They do not have a discrete work plan but, as cross-cutting issues, are referenced textually under each of the STOs in the Annual Work Plan. These references are generally insufficiently specific to provide a framework for monitoring and reporting on programme performance to the CCOs. Annual Reports do not specifically address the CCOs in the same way as the Outcome Areas. The programme performance frameworks do not, for example, include gender-related indicators.

The integration of the CCOs into programme documents is most obvious in the Grants Programme. The full grant application form (though not the preliminary application) requires applicants to describe how the project will address the three cross-cutting areas. The Grant Project Appraisal format for ongoing reporting on the project contains a field for the grantee to describe the project's contribution to the CCOs. However, the M&E workshop for new grantees does not seem to include any reference to the CCOs nor do the Guidance Notes on Logframes Guidance offer guidance, for example, on the use, of gender-related indicators[29].

The Mission Reports of Outcome Area programmes includes a field on "contribution to STOs" but not CCOs. Other programming documents e.g. concept notes, MoUs etc reviewed contained no reference to CCOs.

The Foundation has sought to take forward its commitment to gender equality through the appointment of an informal lead for gender equality. No lead responsibility has been assigned for the other two CCOs. The approach has been to build staff awareness of gender-related issues in programming rather than, for example, formalising gender-related indicators. The Outcome Area and Grants team met in August 2015 to discuss how gender might be integrated in the Foundation and the suggestions were included in some notes on a 'Gender Integration Strategy' notes. There is evidence that this and subsequent follow

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[29] One grantee interviewed explicitly requested more guidance on mainstreaming gender in project development and monitoring.

up meetings have had some modest results although some staff have expressed a desire to make more progress on integrating gender into work processes.[30]

**Conclusion**

The commitment to Cross-Cutting Outcomes in the 2016/17 strategy is insufficiently integrated into planning and reporting systems and processes to enable to the Foundation to report on their progress. This may reflect a decision not to develop performance frameworks and indicators for the CCOs. However, in their absence there is less 'push' for the organisation to take them forward and it is difficult to measure and report on their progress. If the new strategy contains a commitment to cross-cutting issues or outcomes, the Foundation should ensure systems are in place to enable it to monitor and report on these commitments.

The Foundation has invested more in raising staff awareness of gender equality issues. The incorporation of a gender-related question in the staff survey is to be welcomed as way of monitoring staff awareness. It is not a substitute for mainstreaming a commitment to gender equity into the Foundation's programming and, for example, incorporating gender disaggregated data in its reporting where appropriate.

*Recommendation 14: Develop a more systematic framework to monitor and report on cross-cutting outcomes in the new strategy.*

# 3  Grants Programme

The Grants Programme is responsible for approximately half of the Foundations' programme-related budget. It had awarded 40 grants during the strategy period at the time of the evaluation and has a high profile with key stakeholders such as DFID, FCO and Board members who are represented on the Grants Committee. The Programme reports annually at output level although one of these refers to its contribution to Outcomes. This Section will review its performance to the three outputs in the 2015/16 work plan and draw some general conclusions about its overall performance. Section 4 will review separately the administration of the programme.

- **Alignment with and contribution to Short-term Outcomes**

Awarded grants are expected to contribute to one or more Short-term Outcomes. Projects are formally referenced to the relevant Outcome Area/s at appraisal stage but there is little follow-up in exploring possible synergies between Awarded grants and the Outcome Area programmes. The 2015/16 Work plan includes an indicator and target for the number and percentage of grants contributing to the STOs but this is not reported on in the 2015/16 Annual Report. In collaboration with the Grants team, the evaluation plotted

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[30] 7 of 13 respondents in the May 2106 Staff Survey agreed that their perception of gender had changed as a result of their participation in the gender integration process.

each project under the STO to which it was thought principally to contribute as means of providing an overview of the contribution of awarded grants to the STOs.[31]

*Figure 6: Contribution of Awarded Grants to Short-term Outcomes*

| Region | OA1 | OA2 | OA3 | OA4 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 4 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 20 |
| Asia | | 13 | 2 | | 15 |
| Caribbean | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Pacific | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Europe | | 1 | | | 1 |
| **Total** | **4** | **26** | **8** | **1** | **40** |

The exercise indicated that nearly all grants were awarded to projects in Africa and Asia and that two thirds of the grants contribute principally to the Capacity Development programme. This mapping exercise was not an exact science but two initial observations are that the Caribbean and Pacific regions would seem to be under-represented and there are perhaps fewer grants contributing to Constructive Engagement that might be anticipated.

For example, the evaluation partner survey (see Figure 7) found that 83% of grantees reported their project engaging with decision-makers. While 46% of these were at local level, 33% were at national level and 17% at regional level. Grantees cited some interesting examples of local engagement with decision-makers e.g. at a local level to upgrade slums in Colombo, and at a national level on HIV and TB policy in Kenya. This suggests a level of grantee engagement with decision-makers that could more effectively supplement the Outcome Area programmes.

*Figure 7: Support to engagement with decision-makers at different levels[32].*

| | N | % | GRANT | PROGRAMME |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Supports engagement with decision makers** | 19 | 83% | 13 | 6 |
| **Does not support engagement with decision-makers** | 4 | 17% | 4 | |
| | | | | |
| **At what level?** | | | | |
| • local level | 11 | 52% | 11 | |
| • National level | 10 | 48% | 8 | 2 |
| • Regional Level | 9 | 43% | 4 | 5 |
| • Global level | 2 | 10% | 1 | 1 |

It is difficult to summarise the overall contribution performance of the Grants Programme to the Short-term Outcomes. The Grants team has developed a system to score the performance of a project, once completed, in relation to its contribution to STOs, its project and knowledge management, and whether

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[31] See Inception Report, Annex for full description.
[32] Evaluation partner survey analysis Q14,15

it has integrated the cross cutting themes. The evaluation has not been able to draw upon this system since only a few projects have been completed and fully reported on. However, the scoring system could be easily adapted to enable the Foundation to report annually on overall portfolio performance.[33] Projects could be graded accordingly on receipt of annual reports and an evaluative overview of the Grants portfolio could be included in Annual Reports.

*Recommendation 15: Adapt project performance ratings system for annual portfolio reporting.*

All 20 Grant Project Appraisals reviewed reported at output and Short-term Outcome level although projects were still being implemented. It was not possible to review each report against project Log frames and indicators. However, a significant proportion of the projects reviewed reported progress at outcome level in a variety of ways e.g.

- *Increased awareness or understanding* – for example, of government officials of natural resource stewardship systems (Pacos Trust, Malaysia); of state and on-state actors of national Cultural Policy in Ghana (CEFOELAC); of duty bearers on child labour issues in India (Global March Against Labour); of women with regard to their rights in Pakistan (Aware Girls/Peace Direct); and of government on the need for mental health reform in Botswana and Seychelles (CHPA);

- *Acquisition of skills and knowledge* e.g. in participatory governance approaches in Africa (Health Poverty Action); in advocacy to reform cultural policy in Ghana (CEFOELAC); of vulnerable farmers in sustainable livelihood activities and how to take action to secure basic services in Pakistan ( HIDA); and in documenting and monitoring HIV-related rights violations in Kenya (KELIN);

- *Strengthened organisational capacity* e.g. CBO networks working with Victims affected by violence in Kenya (REDRESS); of communities to manage community contracts and saving schemes in Sri Lanka (Reall); and of HIV-related networks in Kenya (KELIN);

- *Delivery of product or services by partner* e.g. improved delivery of membership support services to Fair-Trade networks in Africa (Shared Interest Foundation); production and dissemination of HIV/AIDS related radio programmes in South Africa (Children's Radio Foundation)

- *More responsive government* e.g. more responsive government services to needs of vulnerable children in Ghana (Afrikids); and policy recommendations taken up by CSOs and considered by decision-makers in Africa (PEN in Africa);

The evaluation has two observations on the above i.e.

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[33] The DFID CSCF, for example, used the DFID scoring system to monitor the Fund performance. Project performance was graded annually according to outputs during the lifetime of the project and outcomes on completion, and scores were aggregated at portfolio level each year.

- The majority of short-term outcomes reported on are comparatively modest in their level of ambition e.g. increased awareness of skills as a direct result of project activities. Comparatively few commit to changes in the policy or practices of decision-makers as a result of increased awareness or understanding. This is not surprising for projects of two-three years duration.

- The strength of evidence in support of the outcomes reported is variable. This highlights the importance of choosing appropriate indicators and at being familiar with relevant data gathering tools. At least one grantee, for example, used the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) tool to monitor changes in awareness project. It would be helpful for such tools to be introduced at the M&E workshop and the experience of using them shared with other projects.

Although it is not possible to summarise the performance of the overall grants portfolio, it is possible to illustrate civil society engagement with decision-makers national and local level. The EMPOWER project below illustrates effective engagement at national level:

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*EMPOWER: National level engagement in Malaysia*

*The Foundation is supporting the CSO EMPOWER in Malaysia to improve the ability of civil society organisations to continuously and systematically monitor the implementation of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations and provide evidence- based input into the different stages of the UPR process. This involves developing and implementing a monitoring framework so that CSOs can track progress towards the implementation of UPR recommendations. The project reports a growing constructive relationship between CSOs and government institutions on the UPR process, and attributes this the Foundation's IGO status which was helpful as an entry point for engaging with the government. The project also reports that its relationship with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials has warmed due to the interest of the High Commissioner in London.*

Source: Grantee interview

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An interesting dimension to the above is how the interest in the project of the High Commissioner in London facilitated access to government officials in Kuala Lumpur. More frequently, awarded grants are directly engaged with decision-makers at local or district level, as in the following case in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

> *Reall (Homeless International): Municipal level engagement in Sri Lanka*
>
> *The communities work hand-in-hand with the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) to upgrade urban slums in Colombo. The CMC is part of the project steering committee and match funds slum improvements. The communities make 'community contract' (CC) with the CMC who provide technical support to ensure the building is done to the required level. Community contracts empower communities to lead on their own development; decide on priorities; provide labour or contract skilled workers; and oversee the completion of works. Communities are trained to fundraise and advocate for other rights such as land rights. The community contract method has been adopted by the CMC. Communities …. have established a network of community leaders in the Colombo slums to advocate for their needs.*
>
> Source: Evaluation Partner survey (edited)

- **Development of grantee M&E capacity**

The decision to invest early in the grant cycle in developing the capacity of grantees to implement, monitor and report on their projects was well judged. If grantees are smaller, and less likely to have much in-house M&E support, much depends on the finalisation of the project design i.e. developing and agreeing a practical performance framework that the grantee feels confident in implementing.

The Foundation has held four M&E workshops for new grantees since 2013. These are rated highly by most grantees[34] who report that they have helped them to develop the intervention logics for the projects; improved their capacity to monitor their projects and develop M&E plans; and to monitor and report on the project's achievements. Grantee suggestions for future workshops include a knowledge-sharing module; more good practice examples from past and current projects; and effective communications. An interesting suggestion was also to provide short on-line 'refresher' video tutorials e.g. for project staff who couldn't attend the workshop[35].

This substantial initial investment is supplemented by good quality feedback on grantee reporting by the Grants team. Most grantees interviewed reported that the guidance and feedback they received on their reports from the team had helped to improve their capacity to both implement and report on their projects[36]. However, resources have not been available to date to enable the team to visit projects that are facing identified challenges, and offer direct guidance and support. This will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.

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[34] Sources: 2016 Grantee survey; workshop evaluation reports; grantee interviews and evaluation partner survey.
[35] Source: 2016 Grantee survey
[36] Sources: as above. A number of respondents to the 2016 Grantee survey (4 out of 27) found the financial guidance less than clear.

- **Knowledge sharing on the grants programme**

The Grants Programme 2015/16 work plan highlights the importance of documenting and disseminating good practice, and communicating project results to target audiences. Progress has been limited on this output. This may due to the small number of projects completed during the strategy period. The Foundation website at the time of writing provides factual summaries on awarded grants but no case study material on completed grants is available on the site.

A number of stakeholders, including members of its governance, suggested that the Foundation could communicate the achievements of awarded grants, and their contribution to outcomes, more effectively. There have been some positive developments recently. The Grants Programme is more prominently placed in the 2015/16 Annual Report and grants project contributions to STOs are more clearly described. Five communications case studies from Grants programme projects have been produced. Short, compelling case studies like these posted on the website, including in audio-visual formats, would also help communicate the achievements and learning of the Grants programme to external stakeholders.

Grant partners are asked to identify key project lessons in their reporting to the Foundation. Several grant partners interviewed asked how this learning was harvested and commented that they could see no result from it. There does not seem to be a process to identify key learning from reports, to provide feedback to partners; and develop and pursue an emerging learning agenda from the portfolio. This is an opportunity missed to learn from project experience to improve future project design and implementation.

Grants partners expressed a widespread desire, in interview and through the evaluation partner survey, for more contact with other grantees to access and share knowledge. Partners' suggestions include more support for networking and learning exchange between projects, including study visits; exchange programmes; and an on-line platform for to peer sharing of knowledge, resources and experiences[37]. It is worth noting that Grantees are not invited to the main knowledge-sharing forum of the Foundation, the Partners Learning Exchange held in association with the CPF[38].

## Conclusions

A significant proportion of grants reviewed show progress at outcome level. Many project outcomes are pitched within their sphere of influence as a result of their outputs e.g. increased awareness of skills of target populations. There are fewer examples of outcomes in terms of responsive governance although

*"The Foundation may want to facilitate communication between cohort grantees for experience sharing and peer learning and also to help the cohort to emerge as a network that can continue to collaborate in future".*

Source: 2016 Grantee survey

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[37] See Evaluation partner survey analysis
[38] All 11 CSOs participating in the 2015 Learning Exchange in Malta were associated with the Outcome Area programmes.

there some early examples of civil society constructively engaging at national and local level.

The Grants programme does not feature in the Foundation's Logic Model or theory of change[39]. This is an oversight since Awarded Grants are formally aligned to Short-term Outcomes and there evidence that, for example, the vast majority of awarded grants involve engagement with decision-makers at local and/or national level.

The Grants programme is well managed and monitored and supports a body of work that is potentially complimentary to the Outcome Area programmes. It is a small grants programme whose overall impact could be increased by improving the synergy between awarded grants, and between the Grants and Outcome Area programmes[40]. This would be assisted by better defining outcomes in the new strategy and rethinking the role of awarded grants in relation to the broader programmes. The current focus of the programme on innovation and replication could be thought through in more detail. Awarded grants projects, for example, could become more like 'learning laboratories' to pilot new approaches and identify learning relevant to the Foundation's new strategic objectives. In principle, there is no reason why, for example, why the Grants and Outcome Area programmes could share not only the same outcomes abut also some indicators in a new performance framework.

*Recommendation 16: Redefine the role of the Grants Programme to more explicitly test new approaches and harvest learning key to the achievement of outcomes.*

*"The combined power o f a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately .*

*"http://dictionary.cam bridge.org/dictionary/e nglish/synergy*

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*Example: Focused Calls for Proposals on SDG 16*

*SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies*

*Target 16.6:  Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*
*Call for projects that:*
- *Support citizen participation for greater transparency of public plans, budgets or expenditures at municipal or national level*
- *Support citizen participation in promoting improved access to and delivery of basic social services in poor communities or regions*

*Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*
*Call for projects that:*
- *Support the participation of poor and marginalised people in local development plans and related budgets.*
- *Support the increased representation of women in local decision-making bodies e.g. village, district or municipal councils.*

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[39] See 2015/16 Work Plan pp9,10 and Civil Society Engagement Strategy p 23
[40] The 2015/16 Annual Work Plan acknowledges that the Grants Programme could be used more strategically in support of Outcome Areas.

This would benefit from more targeted Calls for Proposals in line with the new strategic focus. Calls should remain comparatively open so as not to discourage smaller CSOs or encourage 'mission drift. However, Calls could be managed more explicitly to ensure programme synergy with Outcome Areas. One grantee pointed out that more focussed annual Calls would result in annual cohorts of projects with much in common and with the potential to learn from each other. The following[41] illustrates how this might be done in relation to SDG16.

*Recommendation 17: Issue more focused Calls for Proposals to maximise learning and synergy with Outcome Areas.*

It was noticeable that much of the staff commentary on reports focused on encouraging partners to substantiate the evidence base for claimed achievements. Most project partners are comparatively small CSOs with a reduced M&E capacity. It might be useful to include some guidance on data gathering tools in the M&E workshop so that from the outset partners have both appropriate indicators and the tools to gather data on them.

*Recommendation 18: Include guidance on data gathering tools in M&E induction workshop and Foundation website.*

The focus on "innovation, sharing of replicable models, and the promotion of good practice in citizen participation in governance"[42] implies a pro-active culture of learning for improvement. However, opportunities for ongoing learning after the introductory M&E workshop are limited. Some grantees[43] suggested updated trainings would them to keep the project on course. 'Real-time' learning could be facilitated within the Grants programme by feeding back learning from project reports (and future validation visits) on a regular basis through newsletters or on the website, to enable learning from one project can inform the design and/or implementation of another[44].

*Recommendation 19: Develop a knowledge sharing strategy to include ongoing learning and peer exchange throughout the project life cycle.*

The Grants programme is likely to retain a high profile with key stakeholders. The programme should ensure that it continues to communicate internally and externally the achievements of awarded grants through an ongoing series of case studies in written and audio-visual formats. This will require a more pro-active communications strategy. For example, potential communications projects could be identified at an early stage and project staff trained and/or encouraged to document the progress of the project through e.g. oral or audio-visual testimonies using mobile telephony.

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[41] This example is derived from a discussion on SDG16 indicators in the UNDP publication *"Goal 16 : The indicators we want: Virtual Network Sourcebook on Measuring Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions"*
[42] 2015/16 Annual Work Plan p 61
[43] Evaluation partner survey
[44] See the more ambitious knowledge-based IDB on-line platform Nexso created with this objective in mind https://www.nexso.org

*Recommendation 20: Develop a communications plan to ensure the regular production of compelling stories in different formats of project achievements.*

# 4  A More Effective Foundation

The evaluation did not review directly the five service areas - Executive, Finance, Human Resources, Operations and Communications – under this enabling outcome. Rather this Section will focus on the support functions highlighted in the ToR i.e. planning, monitoring, assessment and knowledge sharing processes, as they affect the delivery of the Foundation's programmes.

The Foundation developed a theory of change for the organisation in September 2013 and an Outcome Performance Framework (OPF) in January 2014. The evaluation has noted that Cross-cutting Outcomes and the Grants programme are not included in the Foundation's theory of change, yet both are outcome oriented. A theory of change that includes both these elements would provide a more comprehensive conceptual model of how the Foundations intends to achieve the changes it envisages in its strategy - for example, the Grants programme contributing to constructive engagement at local and national level - and would encourage greater synergy between the different 'pathways to change'.

*Recommendation 21: Develop a more comprehensive theory of change that includes all programmes contributing to outcomes.*

While the OPF provided a framework for annual planning and reporting, there have been frequent revisions to key elements including the introduction of milestones. The Foundation's performance framework currently incorporates four levels of outcome, if milestones are considered outcomes. The Foundation has the opportunity with the new strategy to plan the outline of four-year programmes and to identify a set of Short-term Outcomes, with appropriate indicators, that are realistic for the Foundation to achieve within that period. This should obviate the need for milestones although annual targets may be appropriate in most cases.

*Recommendation 22: Plan the outline of four year programmes in the new strategy with Short-term Outcomes that are achievable within the period.*

The evaluation found some discontinuity between the OPF, annual work plans and annual reporting. The 2015/16 Annual Report, in the main, did not report directly to milestones, as might be expected at the end of a strategy period, nor did it report systematically to the indicators at milestone and output level. In some cases, systems were not in place to gather data to the indicators. The Foundation should adopt a more systematic approach to reporting to the work plan indicators of the performance framework as this would provide a more

robust framework for its accountability to the Board. This should not be incompatible with the production of shorter, more readable annual reports.[45]

*Recommendation 23: Report annually to work plan indicators and ensure that systems and processes are in place to gather data in line with these.*

## Programmes

The 2012-16 strategy required a new approach to programming that is still evolving. The Civil Society Engagement Strategy sets out a theoretical framework for development for the Capacity Development and Constructive Engagement programmes (less so Creative Expression). Nonetheless, the evaluation found it difficult sometimes to identify the rationale for and process of programme development in the three externally focused Outcome Areas, Some specific initiatives are well-documented e.g. the development of a regional civil society platform in the Caribbean, but in other cases e.g. the rationale for national-level work in Outcome Area 3, it is less clear from the documents what the framework for engagement is. The recent initiative of the Foundation to develop a more explicit, formalised approach to programming in the Outcome Areas is to be welcomed.

Capacity development and engagement with governance are not necessarily sequential processes. There is considerable overlap between the work of the Outcome Area 2 and 3 teams, particularly at regional level, and a risk of some duplication of effort. It is not unusual for members of both teams to have contact with the same partners. In the case of the Caribbean, for example, the implementing partner expressed a preference for more consistency and continuity with regard to its relationship with Foundation staff.[46] A clearer system of individual accountability for specific aspects of the programmes might be beneficial and attractive to partners. The Foundation should reconsider how best to organise the staff deployed to the two teams once the strategic objectives of its programmes under the new Strategy have been clarified.

*Recommendation 24: Review the organisation of OA2 and 3 to deliver the new strategy objectives.*

## Grants

The Foundation implements a two-tier approach to grants appraisal. Applicants are invited to submit an initial application form on-line along with a draft project log frame. Short-listed applicants are then invited to submit a more detailed project proposal most of which are approved. The evaluation found the appraisal and approval process to be efficiently and transparently administered i.e. the communication of Calls, application templates, short-listing and final selection procedures. The grant appraisal and approval process

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*" Provide a clear framework for the consistent application of programme and project management...able to transform high-level descriptions of proposed outcomes and outputs.... into rigorous and achievable projects."*

*Programme and Project Management enhancement at CF*

*Project Initiation Document, 21st January 2016.*

*"The Commonwealth Foundation is the best partner because of the way it partners. It does not patronise; it does not condescend. It doesn't expect to know what needs to be done. It works with you to set goals, and how to achieve and monitor those goals. It is a real partner because you do not feel it will abandon you if you face a challenge. Rather it is willing to work with you to overcome the challenge. It should continue to do what it does, document its partnership model and share it with other Foundations."*

*Source: Partner interview*

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[45] Members of governance interviewed, while generally happy with the quality of reporting, expressed a preference for shorter, jargon-free reports.
[46] Seven Foundation staff members participated in different national consultations in the Caribbean, for example.

through the Internal Review Committee (IRC) and Grants Committee is robust and transparent. The Grant disbursement system is also seen as efficient by Grantees[47].

However, the programme's outreach strategy has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of grant applications[48]. The 2015 Call, for example, attracted around 800 grant applications. 25 were selected to submit a full application of which 15 approved. Given a high application to approval ratio (53:1 in 2015) the programme should monitor unsuccessful applications to ensure that the application process e.g. by requiring a preliminary logic model and to be made on-line, does not represent a 'barrier to entry' to smaller CSOs,

*Recommendation 25: Monitor experiences of unsuccessful grant applicants to inform application process.*

The document review showed evidence of diligent oversight by the Grants team of financial and narrative reports through requests for clarification and verification of results, and data reported. This was confirmed in partner interviews where nearly all partners appreciated having a dedicated staff member to correspond with and the level of attention paid to their reporting. The responsiveness and flexibility in response to proven changes in context was also much appreciated. Moreover, the ethos of partnership in which this dialogue was conducted was valued highly.

Several partners interviewed thought the reporting requirements to be unduly complex and demanding for the size of the grant (and often the size of the grant-holder). In relation to this, the evaluation noted some examples of partners failing to meet reporting deadlines. The team is currently developing a risk management system (red, green and amber) to monitor and respond to reporting or project implementation concerns.

To date the Grants programme has not had a dedicated M&E budget, Project implementation has been monitored only at long distance which has limited its ability to address any project challenges in a timely fashion. The decision to approve 5% of the grants budget to enable the team to provide further support to projects is to be welcomed[49]. This will enable the team conduct outreach work in the Pacific and make 'validation visits' when projects are deemed to:

- Show evidence for good performance and demonstrate a potential for good practice which can be captured as case study material; or
- Not be performing as planned and are at risk of not being successfully completed.

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[47] 2016 Grantee survey
[48] The 2015/16 Annual Report reports a 290% increase in grant applications over the previous year.
[49] Field visits by Foundation staff featured among grantee suggestions in the Evaluation partner survey.

# 5  Conclusions

This Section will draw some conclusions to the evaluation questions under the OECD/DAC criteria in the Evaluation Framework.

## *Relevance*

The Foundation's principal objective of supporting civil society to constructively engage with governance institutions was considered by partners and other stakeholders to be of continued relevance to their contexts even where civil society relations with governance are problematic.[50] Several partners mentioned that it was particularly relevant in light of a perceived reduction in donor support to civil society and, in particular, fewer opportunities for smaller CSOs to access funding. While the Foundation's overall objective continues to be relevant, the difficulty of programmes in reporting to short-term outcomes and milestones indicates the need for the Foundation to pitch short-term outcomes at a realistic level to form the basis of programme accountability.

Stakeholder views on the appropriate level of engagement with governance were more equivocal. The purpose and desired outputs of the Foundation's engagement with global institutions needs further clarity. Civil society engagement in Commonwealth fora was recognised by a number of partners as having only an indirect and limited impact on the policy and practise of national governments. A similar argument was sometimes expressed with regard to regional governance institutions, although stakeholders involved confirmed the relevance of civil society engagement with governance at this level. Most partners interviewed identified the national level as the opportunity for civil society to most effectively engage with government with a view to policy influence, while acknowledging the difficulty of an organisation of the Foundation's size working at national level across the spread of the Commonwealth.

A key challenge in the new strategy will be to prioritise the breadth and level of engagement of the work it supports so as to "sustain momentum and a sense of community of practice…"[51] in line with its new strategic objectives. This should be done holistically i.e. planning for the Outcome Area and Grants Programmes to work together in more explicit complementarity

The Commonwealth Writers programme remains a special case. Stakeholders affirmed the relevance of supporting 'less-heard voices' contributing to public discourse as the focus of the programme. There is some evidence to support this but there is little evidence of the work of the programme directly engaging with governance or, for example, contributing to policy change.  There is quite a gap in a results chain between public discourse, engagement with governance and policy change. It would be advisable for the Foundation to continue to play

*"….recognition of the importance of broad-based collaboration and networks and at a regional, south-south, pan-Commonwealth and global levels, **one challenge identified time and again was the ability to sustain momentum** and a sense of community of practice…"*

*Civil Society Engagement Strategy p15*

*"Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels."*

https://sustainabled evelopment.un.org

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[50] Nearly 90% of respondents in the partner survey reported their programmes/projects being very relevant/relevant to each of the outcome areas.
[51] Civil Society Engagement Strategy p15

to its programme's strengths. Organising the Foundation's strategic objectives in line with Agenda 2030 under the overall outcome of an "Inclusive Society" (see below) may provide a conceptual framework and theory of change better suited to incorporate the Commonwealth Writers programme. .

Key stakeholders, including members of the Board, suggested that the new Foundation strategy would best retain its relevance by referencing itself to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This could provide a framework for programme synergy within the Foundation and beyond. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on "Inclusive Societies" was frequently quoted as the SDG most relevant to the current and future focus of the Foundation's work. SDG 16 has twelve targets, the most relevant of which to the Foundation are perhaps:

- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

These SDG targets correspond broadly to the Ultimate Outcome in the Foundation's OPF. SDG 16 is arguably the broadest and most difficult to measure of the SDGs. The UN has developed some provisional indicators for the SDG as a global outcome[52], and there is a growing literature on how SDG indicators might form part of a M&E framework and disaggregated at lower levels[53]. One option is for the Foundation to develop its own indicators compatible with the SDG 16 targets at national, regional and commonwealth levels.

*Recommendation 26: Explore alignment of new strategic objectives with 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG16 at indicator level.*

Most bi-and multi-lateral develop agencies, including perhaps the Commonwealth Secretariat, are likely to reference their future priorities to the 2030 Agenda. Key stakeholders shared the view that there is scope for the Foundation and the Secretariat to consult on how they might complement each other's efforts in working towards the 2030 Agenda. A number of factors indicate that the 'time is ripe' for the Foundation to explore what synergies might be developed with the Secretariat i.e.

- The development of a unitary business case by DFID in September 2106 for continued funding to the Commonwealth under a shared outcome should act as a prompt for both institutions to explore complimentary roles within one performance framework.

- The development of new strategic plans by both institutions in 2016/17 offers an opportunity to reappraise these complementary roles.

- The appointment of a new Secretary General offers an opportunity to initiate a fresh dialogue.

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[52] http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Virtual%20Network%20on%20Goal%2016%20indicators%20-%20Indicators%20we%20want%20Report.pdf
[53] See http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/150320-SDSN-Indicator-Report.pdf

Some key stakeholders, including Board members, commented that the Secretariat insufficiently appreciated the Foundation's status as an IGO in its relationship with the Foundation. Nonetheless, Secretariat officials interviewed during the evaluation were positive about contact to date with Foundation staff (although this has been episodic in some cases) and open to discussing greater collaboration with the Foundation.

There is a case, therefore, for the Foundation to initiate a strategic dialogue with the Secretariat on the Agenda 2030 to discuss future complementary roles. Such an initiative might benefit from the support of key stakeholders on the Foundation's Board. This would be an opportunity to refresh discussions on related issues such as the role and concept of civil society - in particular, the role and status of accredited civil society organisations in the Commonwealth (which is in theory under review) – and opportunities for synergy in shared thematic areas such as youth, human rights and gender

*Recommendation 27: Initiate a strategic dialogue with Commonwealth Secretariat on complementary roles re. Agenda 2030, in particular SDG16*

### Effectiveness

There is some evidence of the Outcome Area and Grants programme contributing to the Intermediate Outcome of *"enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance"*[54], although this is less evident in the case of the Commonwealth Writers. Notable examples include the discussions of African CSOs with member state representatives on the Sustainable Development Goals; the unprecedented small group meetings with Commonwealth Ministers at CPF 2015; the policy work of EASSI with the EAC; and the initial and planned meetings of CCWG with COTED in the Caribbean. These examples all illustrate the role of the Foundation as a catalyst or interlocutor between civil society and governance.

The creation and development of the regional civil society platform CCWG is the most obvious example of capacity development support in policy research and advocacy in preparation for constructive engagement with regional governance. Work with the SAAYE in Southern Africa is still in its early stages and investment in the organisational strengthening of regional civil platforms in East and West Africa have yet to yield results in terms of constructive engagement. Work at a national level is still in progress. The experience of work with the four regional platforms suggests that the Foundation has made more progress where it has been instrumental in establishing and strengthening a new platform than it has in seeking to strengthen pre-established platforms with historical weaknesses.

These different experiences suggest that support to the regional platforms will be required during the next strategy period and beyond. It is questionable

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[54] 2015/16 work plan

whether the Foundation with its limited resources can continue to support all four regions to good effect. It will be important, therefore, in the new strategy to sharpen its programme focus with a view to ensuring the sustainability of its support in the medium term. One option would be to focus its efforts on those regions where there is some evidence to date that its support will bring about some lasting changes over the next strategy period.

A question remains over the effectiveness of civil society engagement in Commonwealth fora. Although the CPF in 2015 made some notable advances in opening up new interfaces with governance representatives, the opportunity for substantive policy engagement with CHOGM are limited. The limitations of the education and health Civil Society Fora at Commonwealth Inter-Ministerial Meetings are also recognised by the Foundation and other stakeholders. The CGPMG was found to be ineffectual in a recent evaluation and is unlikely to be continued. The Foundation should seek to negotiate improved 'terms of engagement' for civil society at Commonwealth fora if it is to facilitate substantive collaboration and learning between CSOs and Commonwealth governance institutions.

The majority of Grants programme projects reviewed showed signs of progress at outcome level. A minority have suffered delays in implementation. Three main factors have presented challenges to the progress of Grants programme projects. These are:

- *Security*: Some projects reported that security issues had affected the project. For example, [55] threats to the Chair of the Board of the CSO partner in Pakistan forced her to leave the district.

- *Lack of preliminary studies*: In two cases, projects had run into difficulty through an absence of prior research. In one case[56], the project was focused on enhancing the awareness of local duty-bearers on environmental issues only to discover that there was no functioning local governance in the project areas. The project had not conducted any assessment of community priorities in project areas and subsequently changed its focus. (It should be pointed out that the CSO in question was not experienced in working on governance issues, illustrating the kind of difficulty experienced when CSO develops a project outside its main area of competence). Another example is a project having to reorient itself as a result of insufficiently mapping relevant local stakeholders[57].

- *Multi-country projects*: There was some evidence that projects working in more than one country face special challenges. In one case[58] the project manager reported that the project did not progress as planned unless she was in situ to drive the project forward. Another project[59] cited the logistical and practical difficulties in providing ongoing

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[55] Peace Direct/ Aware Girls project in Pakistan.
[56] TARA project in India
[57] ETI project in South Africa
[58] Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives project in Botswana and Seychelles.
[59] Global March Against Child Labour project in Asia

project management across three countries. The experience of both projects highlights the challenges of managing multi-country projects on a comparatively small grant, and the importance of in situ project management to a project's success.

One factor would seem to be particularly important in enabling projects to progress quickly and deal with emerging challenges i.e.

- *A previous track record*: Two projects[60] reviewed showed evidence of prior experience of similar projects and an experienced project manager enabling a project to "make a running start" and avoid unnecessary pitfalls. This is clearly important in a small grant project over two or three years. Local knowledge and credibility, for example, is particularly important if the project is dealing with sensitive issues or dynamics. The fact that AfriKids was able to second an experienced project manager to the project was significant. It may be appropriate to ask CSOs to describe relevant prior experience in the project area at the application stage (see Challenges above).

Redefining the role of the Grants programme and aligning it closely with the Foundations strategic priorities would enable it to more effectively supplement international work with national level initiatives. A stronger sense of focus within the Foundations strategic objectives would help to ensure its overall effectiveness by better aligning all programme resources to clear programme objectives; enabling the Foundation to follow through on initiatives during the strategy period and beyond; and by more effective knowledge sharing and improvement through learning.

There is an expectation that the work of the Foundation will be broadly representative of the Commonwealth members, and the Grants programme is the primary focus for this concern. The Foundation is a comparatively small funding partner and it will be very difficult for it to satisfy the conflicting imperatives of spreading its work across member states and achieving impact through making strategic choices in its programming. To achieve greater focus and synergy in its programmes the Foundation would need to raise the issue of these conflicting imperatives with its Board as part of the strategy development process. Ideally the issue would be resolved by accepting that the Commonwealth Institutions as a whole are mandated to be broadly representative of member states while a smaller IGO such as the Foundation requires greater strategic focus to successfully implement its mission.

## *Efficiency*

*"It provides a foot in the door in the corridors of power"*

Source: Outcome Area programme partner interview

The Foundation's status as an IGO is a key element of its comparative advantage for Outcome Area 2 and 3. Its IGO status enables it to act as unique interlocutor in facilitating civil society access to and engagement with governance whether that be at regional level with CARICOM, or at

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[60] AfriKids project in Ghana and the Pacos Trust project in Malaysia

Commonwealth level at the Civil Society Forum or globally at the SIDS conference in St Lucia on the SAMOA Pathway. Its IGO status is less of a distinctive advantage in relation to the Commonwealth Writers and Grants programmes, although there are individual instances of its influence in these programmes also (see, for example, EMPOWER in Malaysia). One key stakeholder suggested that the Foundation could use its IGO status to exercise more leverage with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

More generally, partner interviews indicate two key elements to the Foundation's comparative advantage as a funding partner:

*Status and brand*

- The Commonwealth brand adds weight to a partnership by helping to facilitate civil society access to and dialogue with governance, and access to broader networks.

*Partnership approach*

- Its respectful and flexible approach to partnership is highly valued. In addition, Foundation staff are seen to add value through their technical expertise in some areas e.g. PATT, and their ability to help partners to clarify and conceptualise the programmes.

The Foundation has shown considerable flexibility in adapting to changes in context. This is reflected at a conceptual level in the ongoing changes to its Logic Models - although the rationale for these changes could be better documented ,and the OPF itself continuously updated. Grants programme partners commented favourably on the Foundation's flexibility regarding changes to project log frames and work plans if changes in context can be shown to justify it. The Outcome Area programmes have also been able to review and adapt their approach to working with regional civil society platforms – for example, in relation to choice of implementing partner in Southern Africa, or reappraisal of its approach in West Africa as a result of performance.

Although the Foundation has made considerable progress in implementing its Learning and Communications Strategy, there is room for improvement in the Foundation's approach to knowledge sharing in two key areas:

- How it supports more regular, agile knowledge sharing process with staff and partners.

- How it harvests, distils and shares learning internally and with partners on an ongoing basis;

The Foundation links its approach to knowledge management to its results-based agenda. Further progress in both these areas will enable the Foundation to learn from experience in 'real time' to further improve the performance of its programmes.

The Foundation has developed a performance framework with which to monitor the progress of its strategy. This has been operationalised in its approach to work planning although annual reports do not correspond directly to the performance indicators of the work plans. The assessment and monitoring processes of the Grants programme are of a high standard. The Outcome Area programmes would benefit from a more systematic approach to programme development and implementation, which is in hand. A key lesson for the Foundation, at both programme and organisational level, is to choose the performance indicators of its work plan carefully and ensure that the systems and processes are in place to enable it to report directly to these.

The 2012-16 strategy period has been a period of appointing new staff, forming teams and developing new programmes and systems. Referencing the new strategy to Agenda 2030 should allow the Foundation to preserve some continuity in its programming while reappraising how its structures, systems and ways of working might best deliver new strategic objectives. Structure and ways of working should follow strategy. If the Foundations chooses to frame its objectives under the SDG 16 on Inclusive Societies this would give it an opportunity to review how it can best organise OA2 and 3 staff resources to contribute to the SDG. The operating principles for such a reorganisation might include, for example, reference to the SDG indicator, geography or level of engagement, in order to provide continuity of contact with partners and consolidate of staff expertise.

In summary, during 2012-16 the Foundation has made good progress in putting together the building blocks of a successful strategy. It has developed good policy and performance frameworks; established competent teams that have gained the respect of partners for their professionalism and approach to partnership; developed a wide range of programme activities in line with the strategy; and demonstrated some early signs of results.

This should give the Foundation confidence to build on the lessons of its early programming to develop a tighter focus and play to its strengths in the next strategy period. This will require it to address and resolve the conflicting imperatives of achieving impact through strategic choices with spreading its work across member states

# Annex A: Terms of Reference (edited)

**Purposes and users of the evaluation**

The Commonwealth Foundation is approaching the penultimate year of the period covered by the Strategic Plan. It will begin consultations for a new Strategic Plan in June 2016. These consultations and the planning that follows will need to be informed by an evaluation of the Foundation's work up to then. This is one of the principal purposes of the 2012-2017 strategy evaluation. It will inform decisions, among others, about

- The Logic Model or Theory of Change that will steer the Foundation's work over the next strategy period
- The targets, shape and modalities of the programmes that the organisation will deliver in pursuit of the changes in those models
- The shape of the organisation and its ways of working, including its planning, monitoring, assessment and learning processes.

A second purpose is to provide accountability to the Foundation's principal stakeholders, in particular its Board of Governors and Executive Committee.

Finally the evaluation will help to identify for a wider audience some of the issues involved in pursuing outcomes similar to those in the Foundation's current strategy.

The principal users of the evaluation will be Foundation management and staff, the Board of Governors and Executive Committee, and programme partners.

**Scope of work**

The evaluation will principally cover the Foundation's programmes. It will also offer insights for optimisation of its internal "enabling" services such as planning, monitoring, communications, knowledge management and human resources.

**Key evaluation perspectives and questions**

The evaluation of the Foundation will focus on the following broad perspectives:

1. Relevance of its work to its mission, internal complementarity of its programmes, and its complementarity with other actors in the same or similar fields.

2. Effectiveness of its work in achieving planned results, having positive impacts and promoting their sustainability.

3. Efficiency and effectiveness of its activities and internal processes, including planning, monitoring, assessment, learning and leveraging knowledge. The following paragraphs offer examples of evaluation questions for each of these perspectives.

Relevance and complementarity

- To what extent are the Foundation's principal programme objectives in line with its mission and realistic?
- To what extent are its various programmes designed and implemented to complement each other?
- Do the Foundation's principal programme objectives address an unmet need?
- Is the breadth of the Foundation's work appropriate, bearing in mind its size and resources?
- To what extent and how does the Foundation ensure synergy with other participatory governance work?
- How do different stakeholder groups perceive the Foundation in terms of its relevance to their objectives?
- To what extent and in what ways should the Foundation adjust its principal objectives in a future strategy to make it more relevant and complementary?

Results effectiveness, impact and sustainability

- To what extent has the Foundation achieved its objectives as set out in its strategy, theory of change and annual work plans?
- What are the main factors that have helped the Foundation achieve its objectives?
- What factors have significantly impeded the Foundation from achieving its objectives?
- Are there significant unplanned outcomes – positive or negative - to which the
- Foundation has made a strong contribution? What are the main factors that have driven these outcomes?
- How sustainable are the positive outcomes to which the Foundation has strongly contributed?

Efficiency and process effectiveness

- How effective is the Foundation in researching and scoping its programme work?
- How effective are the Foundation's planning, monitoring and assessment processes?
- How effective has the Foundation been in working with its cross-cutting outcomes?
- How effective is the Foundation in learning from its performance and operating context and adapting its priorities and ways of working in response?
- To what extent does the Foundation share knowledge with partners and other stakeholders?
- What should be done to adjust and improve the Foundation's structures and processes to become more effective?

The evaluator will work with the Steering Group ……. to further refine and assign priorities to these questions and to finalize the approach to answering them.

## Annex B: Selected Bibliography

**Policies**

Commonwealth Foundation strategy plan 2102-16

An Actionable strategy for smarter digital and social communications for the Commonwealth Writers brand, Darshan Sanghrajka, October 2014

Programme and Project management enhancement: project initiation document, January 2016

Gender Integration Strategy (undated)

Mainstreaming Cross-Cutting Outcomes: A toolkit, January 2014

Outcome performance Framework, January 2014

Capacity Development Framework January 2014

 Civil Society Engagement strategy , updated March 2015

Learning and Communications strategy, November 2014

**Foundation Work plans and Reports**

2012-13, 2013-4, 2014-15, 2015-16 Annual Reports

Additional Submission to DFID for 2014/15 Annual Report

2015-16, 2016-17 Work Plans/

Minutes of Board of Governors 2012-2014/ Annual work planning notes for Executive Committee 2015

**Programme documents**

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Synopsis of CWCG Selection Process

Concept Note: CPDC project support to Caribbean civil society for enhanced participatory governance project: national policy dialogues, March 2016-08-03

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The Africa CSO Working Group on post 2015/SDGs: Summary Report, August 2014.

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Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development; Report, May 2014

**Surveys**

Staff Integration and Knowledge sharing survey, March 2015

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Commonwealth People's Forum Delegate Survey, December 2015

**CPF**

Review of Commonwealth Foundation Civil Society Advisory Committee (CSAC), May 2015

CPF Mission Document 2015

**Commonwealth Writers**

Mission Rep0-2014-16rts

CSSP Coverage Tracker 2-15CW Non-fiction Anthology mentorship report, Jan 2016-08-02

Commonwealth Writers Social Media Strategy, Darshan Sanghrajka June 2015

Synopsis of on-line activities of CW, Darshan Sanghrajka, April 2016

Mid-Year Review January 2016-08-02

CSSP Fundraising applications to Hilton Hotels (August 2011) Sigrid Rausing Trust )July 2015) and

**Knowledge Management**

2015 Partner Learning Exchange: Concept Note, internal review and delegate feedback

Participation and Transparency Tool (PATT)

Commonwealth Insights

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# Annex C: People consulted

| Name | Organisation | Position |
|---|---|---|
| **Governance** | | |
| Sir Anand Satayanand | Board | Chair |
| Marie-Pierre Lloyd | Executive Committee | Foremer Chair |
| Duncan Howitt | Grants Committee | Chair |
| **Commonwealth Secretariat** | | |
| Josephine Ojiambo | Secretariat | DSG |
| Gary Dunn | Secretariat | DSG |
| Katherine Ellis | Youth Section | Head |
| Karen MacKenzie | Human Rights Section | Head |
| **Key respondents** | | |
| Marion Villanueva | | Former Governance advisor |
| Neelam Banga | DFID | |
| Martin Niblett | DFID | |
| Lisa Thomas | FCO | |
| Niebert  Blair | CARICOM | Project Officer, Energy |
| **Commonwealth Writers** | | |
| Lisa Harewood | | Filmmaker |
| Darshan Sanghrajka | Superbeing Labs | Founder |
| Goretti Kyomuhendo | African Writers Trust | Director |
| Ella Alfrey | 2013 CSS P | Chair |
| Fred D'Aguilar | 2015 CSSP | Judge |
| Firdous Azim | 2016 CSSP | Judge |
| Sadaf Saas | Naripokkho | |
| Nicholas Laughlin | Bocas Literary Festival | Programme Manager |
| Louise Swan | English PEN | Head of Programmes |
| Martin Nancarrow | BBC Radio Drama | Executive Producer |
| Sunila Galapatti | | Former Commonwealth Writers |
| **Programmes** | | |
| Jill Iliffe | Commonwealth Nurses Federation | Executive Secretary |
| Rafsanjani Kano | WACSOF | Acting General Secretary |
| Nana Asantewa Afadzinu | WACSI | Executive Director |
| Bukelwa Voko | Economic Justice Network | Project Officer |
| Malcolm Damon | Economic Justice Network | Executive Director |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Siotame Drew Havea | PIANGO | Chairperson |
| Sangeeta Shashikant | Third World Network | Researcher |
| Raja Sengupta | Third World Network | Researcher |
| Hazel Brown | Network of NGOs of T&T for the Advancement of Women | Coordinator |
| Masiiwa Rusare | African Monitor | Programme Manager |
| Karin Fernando | CEPA | Senior Research Professional |
| Arjuna Seraviratne | Energy Forum | Project Coordinator |
| Paul Okumu | Africa Platform | Head of Secretariat |
| Anthony Haas | CCE | Director |
| Patrick Dunkwu | CEFOELAC | Programme Manager |
| Shantal Munro Knight | CPDC | Senior Programme Officer |
| Sandra Ferguson | ART | Secretary General |

**Grants Programme**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mike Rahfaldht | Childrens' Radio Foundation | Executive Director |
| Deepika Mital | Global March Against Child Labour | Officer in Charge |
| Allan Maleche | KELIN | Executive Director |
| Ruari Nolan | Peace Direct | Head of Research |
| Yasmin Masidi | EMPOWER | Programme Manager |
| Kate Odell | Shared Interest | Project Manager |
| Ama Atteen | AfriKids | Head of Grants |
| Hannah Bruce | ETI | Acting Category Leader |
| Gordon John Thomas | Pacos Trust | Executive Director |
| Mayuk Hajra | TARA | Project Officer |
| Sarah Edwards | Health Poverty Action | Head of Policy & Campaigns |
| Sandra Singh | CALGA | Former Project Manager |
| Rubadiri Victor | CALGA | Project Manager |

## Annex D: Interview formats

**Interview format for Civil Society partners**

| | **A more effective Foundation** | **Criterion** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | How does the Foundation add value to your programme/project efforts? Please provide specific example/s. | Efficiency |
| 2. | How effective is the Foundation in learning from its performance and operating context and adapting its priorities and ways of working in response? Please provide a specific example. | Efficiency |
| 3. | How relevant are the Foundation's assessment, monitoring and reporting systems to your own systems? Please explain why. | Relevance |
| 4. | To what extent does the Foundation share knowledge with partners and other stakeholders? Please provide a specific example. | Efficiency |
| 5. | How might Foundation support have been organised and/or managed differently to better support your project/programmes? | Efficiency |
| 6. | How might the Foundation adjust its own programme objectives to become more relevant to your context and achieve greater synergy in the work it supports? | Relevance |
| 7. | What lessons have you learned from your project/programme experiences relevant to the Foundations objectives? | Efficiency |
| | **Programme impact** | |
| 8. | How relevant is the focus of the Foundations objectives to your own context? Please explain why. Are they meeting an unmet need? | Relevance |
| 9. | To what extent has your programme/project achieved its objectives to date? Please provide a specific example/s. | Effectiveness |
| 10. | To what extent has Foundation support and/or your programme/project contributed to gender equality, environmental sustainability and respect for cultural diversity? Please provide a specific example/s. | Effectiveness |
| 11. | To what extent has the work supported by the Foundation complemented other work of your organisation or work of other organisations with whom you work? Please provide a specific example. | Efficiency |
| 12. | Are there significant unplanned outcomes – positive or negative - to which the Foundation has made a strong contribution? What factors have driven these outcomes? | Effectiveness |
| 13 | What factors, both internal to the Foundation and external, have contributed to/impeded your project/programme achieving its objectives? | Effectiveness |
| 14 | How sustainable are the positive outcomes to which the Foundation has strongly contributed? | Effectiveness |
| 15 | What factors have contributed to, or impeded CSOs or target groups successfully engaging in decision-making to influence policy and practice? | Effectiveness |
| 16 | How has Foundation support contributed to the financial and organisational sustainability of your organisation? Please provide a specific example. | Effectiveness |

**Interview format for Foundation Staff, Governance and Key Respondents**

| | **A more effective Foundation** | **Criterion** |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | What are the elements of the Foundations' comparative advantage as a funder/partner of civil society engagement with governance in the Global South? | Efficiency |
| 2. | How des the Foundation add value to the work of its civil society partners? Please provide specific example/s. | Efficiency |
| 3. | How effective is the Foundation in learning from its performance and operating context and adapting its priorities and ways of working in response? Please provide a specific example. | Efficiency |
| 4. | How effective is the Foundation in researching and scoping its programme work? | Efficiency |
| 5. | How effective are the Foundation's planning, monitoring and assessment processes? Please explain why. | Relevance |
| 6. | To what extent does the Foundation share knowledge with partners and other stakeholders? Please provide a specific example. | Efficiency |
| 7. | How effective has the Foundation been in promoting gender equity, environmental sustainability and respect for cultures? | Efficiency |
| 8. | How effective is the Foundation in learning from experience and adapting its priorities and ways of working in response? | Efficiency |
| 9. | What lessons have you learned from Foundation project/programmes relevant to future Foundations objectives? | Efficiency |
| 10. | How can the Foundation adjust and improve its systems, structures and ways of working to be more effective? Please give specific example/s. | Efficiency |

| | **Programme impact** | |
|---|---|---|
| 11. | To what extent has the Foundation achieved its objectives as set out in its strategy, theory of change and annual work plans? Please provide a specific example/s. | Effectiveness |
| 12. | To what extent has he Foundation contributed to gender equality, environmental sustainability and respect for cultural diversity? Please provide specific example/s. | Effectiveness |
| 13. | What internal and external factors have helped / impeded the Foundation in achieving its objectives? Please provide a specific example/s. | Effectiveness |
| 14. | How sustainable are the positive outcomes to which the Foundation has strongly contributed? | Effectiveness |
| 15. | Are there significant unplanned outcomes – positive or negative - to which the Foundation has made a strong contribution? What factors have driven these outcomes? | Effectiveness |
| 16. | To what extent do the Foundation's programme objectives continue to be relevant and in line with its mission? Please explain why. | Relevance |
| 17. | Is the breadth of the Foundation's work appropriate bearing in mind its size and resources? | Relevance |
| 18. | To what extent do the Foundations programmes complement each other or achieve synergy with the work of other organisations? Please give a specific example. | Relevance |
| 19. | How might the Foundation adjust its principal objectives in a future strategy to make them more relevant and complementary? | Relevance |

# Annex E: Partner survey analysis

### Key points

- 42% response rate (though two thirds from Grants Programme partners).
- Nearly 9 in 10 respondents reported their programmes/projects being very relevant/relevant to each of the outcome areas, with the exception of stimulating creative thinking and expression, where 6 in 10 reported relevance. Grants Programme partners were slightly less likely to perceive their programmes as relevant to outcome areas.
- 85% of respondents report Foundation support for capacity development in their organisations. Capacity development was rated good or very good by most respondents across all types of capacity development support. Grant Programme partners universally affirm the value of the introductory M&E workshop. Outcome Area programme partners report a more diverse set of capacity development activities. Outcome Area partners report higher levels of non-financial support compared to Grants Programme partners and rate the quality of capacity development activities slightly higher.
- 83% of respondents report Foundation support to engage with decision-makers. Outcome Area programme partners report engaging with decision-makers at national and regional level; none at local level. Outcome Area programme partners cite engagement with regional bodies such as CARICOM and ECOWAS. Grant Programme partners engage mostly at local and national level. Grants programme revealed some interesting examples of local engagement with decision-makers e.g. to upgrade slums in Colombo and at a national level e.g. on HIV and TB policy in Kenya.
- Respondents made a number of interesting suggestions for the future:

    Recommendations from Outcome Areas partners include:
    - Longer-term programme support to including financial, institutional and technical assistance;
    - Support for learning and sharing among partners across continents; and
    - More follow up with local NGOs involved in regional initiatives and support for their involvement in policy discussions.

    Grants Programme partners emphasised more support for networking and learning exchange between projects, including study visits; exchange programmes; and an on-line platform for to peer sharing of knowledge, resources and experiences. Other ideas included:
    - Updated trainings to help partners assess project progress and keep the project on course;
    - Visits by Foundation staff to projects to enable them have first-hand knowledge of the work and/or conduct evaluations of project impact;
    - More capacity building sessions with partners e.g. at regional level; and
    - Collation of success stories and case studies for the Foundation's website.

### Survey response

In total, 72 respondents 63 organisations were invited to participate in the survey. An initial email was sent on 15 March 2016, and a first reminder on 22 March 2016. A final reminder was sent on 1 April 2016 and the survey closed on the 6 April. 30 complete responses were received, of which 28 reported receiving funding from the Commonwealth Foundation.[61]

**Q5: Funding via open call (awarded grants) or programme partnership channels**

|  | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Awarded Grant** | 20 | 71% | 20 | |
| **Programme Partnership** | 8 | 29% | | 8 |
| **Grand Total** | **28** | | **20** | **8** |

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[61] Of the 30, only 2 responses are clearly from the same partner organisation; therefore we calculate an organisational response rate of 46%.

The analysis that follows is based on the 28 respondents in receipt of funding from the Commonwealth Foundation. It is further split between awarded grant and programme funding modalities.

### Organisation profile

- 4 in 10 organisations described themselves as **national NGOs**. 1 in 10 were local NGOs and another 1 in 10 were INGOs. The remainder were spread across a variety of different organisation types. No organisations described themselves as mainly social movements or professional associations.

**Q1: Main organisation type (self-described)**

|  | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **National NGO** | 11 | 39% | 9 | 2 |
| **Other (please specify)** |  |  |  |  |
| *-  Of which INGO* | 4 | 14% | 3 | 1 |
| *- Of which other* | 4 | 14% | 1 | 3 |
| **Local NGO** | 3 | 11% | 3 |  |
| **Community-based Organisation** | 1 | 4% | 1 | - |
| **Faith-based NGO** | 1 | 4% |  | 1 |
| **Media Organisation** | 1 | 4% | 1 |  |
| **Membership organisation** | 1 | 4% |  | 1 |
| **Network** | 1 | 4% |  | 1 |
| **Policy/Research NGO** | 1 | 4% | 1 |  |
| **Grand Total** | 28 | 100% | 20 | 8 |

- Respondents were overwhelmingly from **established organisations**: over two-thirds were established more than 10 years ago, and only 1 organisation that responded was established within the last 5 years.

**Q2: Length of time organisation has been established**

|  | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **In the last 5 years** | 1 | 4% | 1 |  |
| **In the last 10 years** | 8 | 29% | 6 | 2 |
| **More than 10 years ago** | 19 | 68% | 13 | 6 |
| **Grand Total** | 28 | 100% | 20 | 8 |

- 40 percent of respondents were based in **Africa**, one third in **Asia**. The remainder are spread between Americas/Caribbean, Europe and the Pacific.

**Q3: Geographic region**

| | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CWF Funded | % | (1) Grant | (2) Programme |
| **Africa** | 11 | 39% | 8 | 3 |
| **Americas and Caribbean** | 3 | 11% | | 3 |
| **Asia** | 9 | 32% | 8 | 1 |
| **Europe** | 3 | 11% | 3 | |
| **Pacific** | 1 | 4% | 1 | |
| **Grand Total** | 27 | 100% | 20 | 7 |

- There were a higher number of **female** respondents than male (we do not know whether or not this is reflective of overall population of CWF grantees or not).

**Q20: Gender of respondent**

| | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | CWF Funded | % | (1) Grant | (2) Programme |
| **Female** | 12 | 43% | 7 | 5 |
| **Male** | 9 | 32% | 8 | 1 |
| **Prefer not to say** | 3 | 11% | 3 | |
| **Not answered** | 4 | 14% | 2 | 2 |
| **Total** | 28 | 100% | 20 | 8 |

### Foundation support

- Two thirds report funding via the grants programme and one third via programme partnership. A majority of organisations reported receiving funding for more than one year, with 40 per cent receiving funding for 3 years or more.

**Q6: Duration of Commonwealth Foundation Funding**

| | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1 year** | 5 | 18% | 4 | 1 |
| **2 years** | 7 | 25% | 5 | 2 |
| **3 years or more** | 11 | 39% | 8 | 3 |
| **Programme / project completed** | 5 | 18% | 3 | 2 |
| **Grand Total** | 28 | 100% | 20 | 8 |

- Organisations reported that the support they received from the Foundation was relevant across multiple outcome areas. Strengthening the capacity of civil society and enabling constructive dialogue were seen to have the highest relevance to the support received. Stimulating creative thinking was perceived to have less relevance than other outcome areas.
  In general, Outcome Areas partners reported higher relevance across all the outcome areas when compared with Grant Programme partners.

**Q7: Relevance of support to programmatic outcomes**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Grant (1+2) | Programme (1+2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ← Relevance | | | | | |
| Stimulating creative thinking and expression | 29% | 28% | 39% | 4% | 55% | 63% |
| Strengthening the capacity of civil society | 75% | 18% | 7% | 0% | 90% | 100% |
| Enabling constructive dialogue between CSOs and policy makers | 71% | 14% | 14% | 0% | 80% | 100% |
| Sharing Knowledge and lessons learned | 59% | 30% | 11% | 0% | 80% | 100% |

1= Very Relevant, 2= Relevant, 3=Fairly Relevant, 4=Not relevant at all

- Organisations reported receiving multiple types of support from the foundation, in addition to funding. Capacity development and partnership/accompaniment was reported more frequently than peer networking or access to decision making fora.
  In general, Outcome Areas partners reported higher levels of non-financial support of all kinds, when compared with Grant Programme partners

**Q8: Support received in addition to funding**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Grant (1+2) | Programme (1+2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ← Amount of support | | | | | |
| Partnership/accompaniment | 25% | 35% | 11% | 29% | 50% | 88% |
| Capacity development | 30% | 33% | 26% | 11% | 55% | 75% |
| Peer networking | 16% | 28% | 24% | 32% | 30% | 63% |
| Access to decision-making fora | 12% | 27% | 28% | 25% | 25% | 63% |

1= A great deal, 2=A Lot, 3=A little, 4=Not at all

### Outputs and outcomes of support

- 85 per cent of respondents report that **the foundation has supported capacity development** in their organisations.

**Q6: Has the foundation reported capacity development in your organisation?**

| | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | 4 | 15% | 3 | 1 |
| Yes | 23 | 85% | 17 | 6 |
| Grand Total | 27 | 100% | 20 | 7 |

- **Capacity development was rated good or very good** by most respondents across all types of capacity development support. Only a handful of negative views were recorded.

- There is little distinction between the types of activity in terms of perceived quality, although fewer respondents rated coaching and mentoring as very good, and more respondents rated learning by doing as very good compared to other activities. Outcome Areas partners rated the quality of capacity development activities slightly higher than Grant Programme partners.

**Q11: How would you rate the capacity development that the foundation has provided?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | N/A | # | Grant (1+2) | Programme (1+2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ← Higher rating | | | | | | | |
| Formal training | 29% | 38% | 8% | 0% | 25% | 24 | 85% | 100% |
| Awareness raising | 27% | 36% | 4% | 4% | 27% | 22 | 82% | 100% |
| Coaching/mentoring | 18% | 40% | 4% | 0% | 26% | 22 | 100% | 75% |
| Peer-to-peer learning | 29% | 20% | 9% | 4% | 17% | 23 | 79% | 100% |
| Learning by doing | 46% | 33% | 0% | 0% | 21% | 24 | 100% | 100% |
| Other | 0% | 0% | 0% | 11% | 89% | 9 | - | 0% |

1= Very Good, 2=Good, 3=Poor 4=Very Poor

- Only 6 organisations rated any capacity development activity "poor" or "very poor" – the comments provided by these organisations indicates a variety of reasons, rather than a single systematic cause for this.

| Comments on Q19 - "what the CWF could do better/differently" for those orgs giving any poor/very poor rating. |
|---|
| It is preferable if the foundation can run update trainings to help us assess our programme for the past year and to help facilitate our programmes in the coming years. |
| Been more flexible in the outcomes; provided linkages with policy makers known to them |
| I think the Foundation could provide more opportunities beyond the initial meeting of grantees to sustain networking and sharing among partners. |
| More funding |
| From all indications, the Commonwealth did its best to enable the achievement of agreed goals and contributed effectively to building the partnership. They should keep this up. |
| Reduce the level of bureaucracy |

- Most respondents (83%) report that the **Foundation has supported organisations to engage with decision-makers**, with engagement reported at local, national and regional levels. Less engagement was reported at global level. It is notable that Outcome Areas partners do not report engaging with decision-makers at local level, and a larger number work at regional (supra-national) level compared with Grant Programme partners.

**Q14, 15: Support to engage with decision-makers at different levels**

| | N | % | Grant | Programme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Supports engagement with decision makers | 19 | 83% | 13 | 6 |
| Does not support engagement with decision-makers | 4 | 17% | 4 | |
| | | | | |
| At what level? | | | | |
| • local level | 11 | 52% | 11 | |
| • National level | 10 | 48% | 8 | 2 |
| • Regional Level | 9 | 43% | 4 | 5 |
| • Global level | 2 | 10% | 1 | 1 |

- The survey also asked respondents to distinguish the type of policy influence that their projects had support civil society to achieve (in terms of influencing debate, development, adoption and/or implementation). Fewer respondents answered this question, and overall there was little distinction between the types of influencing. While this may suggest support across the policy cycle, it may also indicate that respondents didn't fully understand the question.

**Q16: How has your project/programme supported civil society to engage with decision-makers?**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Grant (1+2) | Programme (1+2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Influencing debate on a policy or practice | 35% | 55% | 5% | 5% | 88% | 100% |
| Influencing the development of a policy or practice | 53% | 26% | 16% | 5% | 71% | 100% |
| Influencing the adoption of a policy or practice | 55% | 25% | 5% | 15% | 80% | 80% |
| Influencing the effective implementation of a policy or practice | 57% | 19% | 14% | 10% | 75% | 80% |

1= Very often, 2=Sometimes, 3=Seldom, 4=Never

## Annex F: Evaluation Framework

| Criterion<br><br>Domain of change | Line of enquiry | Data Sources |
|---|---|---|
| **Relevance** | | |
| **More effective Foundation** | To what extent are the Foundation's principal programme objectives in line with its mission and realistic? | Monitoring data, field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |
| | To what extent are its various programmes designed and implemented to complement each other? | Document review, interviews. |
| | Do the Foundation's principal programme objectives address an unmet need? | Field visit, interviews, Partner survey |
| | Is the breadth of the Foundation's work appropriate, bearing in mind its size and resources? | Document review, interviews. |
| | To what extent does the Foundation ensure synergy with other participatory governance work? | Document review, interviews. |
| | How do different stakeholder groups perceive the Foundation in terms of its relevance to their objectives? | Field visit, interviews, Partner survey |
| | How should the Foundation adjust its principal objectives in a future strategy to make it more relevant and complementary? | Field visit, interviews |
| **Results, effectiveness, impact and sustainability** | | |
| **More effective Foundation** | What factors have helped / impeded the Foundation in achieving its objectives? | Monitoring data, field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |
| **Programme outcome** | To what extent has the Foundation achieved its objectives as set out in its strategy, theory of change and annual work plans? | Monitoring data, field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |

| | Are there significant unplanned outcomes – positive or negative - to which the Foundation has made a strong contribution? What factors have driven these outcomes? | Monitoring data, field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |
|---|---|---|
| | How sustainable are the positive outcomes to which the Foundation has strongly contributed? | Monitoring data, field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |
| **Efficiency** | | |
| **More effective Foundation** | What are the elements of the Foundations' comparative advantage as a funder of civil society engagement with governance in the Global South? | Document review, interviews, |
| | How effective is the Foundation in researching and scoping its programme work? | Document review, interviews, |
| | How effective are the Foundation's planning, monitoring and assessment processes? | Monitoring data, document review, interviews. |
| | How effective has the Foundation been in working with its cross-cutting outcomes? | Document review, interviews, field visits |
| | How effective is the Foundation in learning from its performance and operating context and adapting its priorities and ways of working in response? | Document review, interviews, |
| | To what extent does the Foundation share knowledge with partners and other stakeholders? | Field visit, document review, interviews, Partner survey |
| | How might the Foundation adjust its structures, systems and ways of working to become more effective? | Interviews, Partner survey |

# Annex G: Revised Outcome Performance Framework

| | Results | Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| **Ultimate Outcome** | More effective, responsive and accountable governance with Civil Society participation | # of new policies or laws adopted and implemented which have been influenced substantially by recommendations developed by regional CSOs/networks/alliances |
| | | % constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances reporting improvements in governance as a result of CSO participation |
| **I O (2014)** | Increased collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance (IIG | % of constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances reporting significant increases in constructive collaboration with IIGs |
| | | % IIGs reporting significant increases in constructive collaboration with constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances |
| | | # of discrete sets of policy recommendations inserted into policymaking processes following IIG dialogue with constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances |
| | | % constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances reporting greater understanding of and competence in participatory governance resulting from dialogue with IIGs |
| | | % IIGs reporting greater understanding of and competence in participatory governance resulting from dialogue with constituents of regional CSOs and members of CSO networks/alliances |
| **I O (2015/16 Work plan)** | Enhanced collaboration and learning between CSOs and institutions in governance | |
| **SO1 (2014)** | Strengthened ability of CSOs to use creative expression for participatory governance | # cultural practitioner communities actively exchanging knowledge and experience of the use of creative expression for participatory governance |
| | | # CSOs adopting, or making more effective use of, creative expression for participatory governance |
| | | # and % grants - and scale of their reach – which have successfully contributed to the short term outcome |
| **SO1 (2015/16 Work plan)** | Increased public dialogue through creative expression | # Civil society actors connecting to issues raised following creative work supported by Commonwealth Writers |
| | | # and % of grants – and scale of their reach – which have successfully contributed to the STO |
| **Milestone** | Unique contributions to public discourse by the creative sectors with focus on less heard voices | # of publications (print, online and other media) of stories by previously unpublished writers and other storytellers |
| | | Public interaction with new publications and productions in media and online forums |
| | | Activity on social media around new publications and productions (shares, interactions) |
| | | Diversity in audience participation in activities |
| **SO2 (2014)** | Enhanced capacity of regional CSOs and networks/alliances to engage in participatory governance | # and % of regional CSOs and their constituents engaged in policy development |
| | | # and % of regional CSOs engaged in developing policy advocacy strategies |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | # of policy areas where policy is being developed by regional CSOs |
| | | # of policy areas where policy advocacy strategy is being developed by regional CSOs |
| | | # and % grants - and scale of their reach – which have successfully contributed to the short term outcome |
| **SO2 (2015/16 Work plan)** | Enhanced capacity of regional CSOs and networks/alliances to engage in participatory governance | Level of effectiveness of each regional CSOs |
| | | # of policy areas where policy advocacy strategy is being developed by regional CSOs and constituents |
| | | # of policy areas where policy is being developed by regional CSOs and constituents |
| **Milestone** | Civil Society capacity strengthened by developing robust regional and national platforms and mechanisms | Level of constituency building for policy development in each regional CSOs |
| **Milestone** | Development agendas and action plans formulated | # of regional agendas and action plans developed |
| **Milestone** | Increased south – south learning | # of significant cases of knowledge from another region applied. |
| **SO3 (2014)** | Enhanced interaction between regional CSOs, networks/alliances and institutions in governance | # of substantive meetings between regional CSO networks / alliances and IIGs following CF brokerage |
| | | # of IIGs that engage constructively with CSOs within one year of CF support to the IIGs |
| | | # and % grants - and scale of their reach – which have successfully contributed to the short term outcome |
| **SO3 (2015/16 Work plan)** | Enhanced interaction between civil society networks/alliances and institutions in governance | # substantive meetings between regional CSOs, networks / alliances and institutions in governance inspired by the CPF and Ministerial meetings following CF brokerage |
| | | Level of engagement between CSOs and IIGs |
| | | # of national IIGs that engage constructively for the first time with CSOs after Foundation intervention |
| **Milestone** | CSOs have improved access to and credible opportunity to engage with policy makers | Key recommendations made that are included in the IIG output document |
| | | Proportion of government representation at civil society stakeholder forums |
| **Milestone** | Increased commitment by regional IIGs to engage with CSOs | # of interactions between CSOs and IIGs at the regional level |
| **Milestone** | Select government Ministry(ies) put in place or improve mechanisms/ processes to engage with CSOs on policy issues | # of institutionalised policy processes in IIGs that require or mandate CSO inputs |
| | | # of mandated CSO representation in IIG policy meetings / consultations |

# Annex H: Grants Portfolio sample

X Completed X Grant awarded 2103 █ Grant awarded 2014 X Grant awarded 2015

| Region | SO1 | SO2 | SO3 | S04 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | Giving a voice to young people with HIV and AIDS in South Africa (Childrens Radio Foundation) X<br><br>Promoting cultural industries in Ghana through multi-stakeholder participation (CEFOELAC)<br><br>Strengthening the PEN Africa network for civil society engagement (PEN international) 2,3<br><br>Giving a voice to women in Rwanda (KEMIT) 3 | Supporting women farmers to withstand environmental shocks in Ghana (FoE Ghana) X<br><br>Eradicating the Spirit Child Phenomenon in Ghana (AfriKids) X<br>Enhancing gender responsive policies in Kenya (IED) 3 X<br><br>Promoting the integration of refugee communities in South Africa (Lawyers for Human Rights)<br><br>Improving health service delivery for women living with HIV and AIDS in East Africa (ICWEA) 3<br><br>Enhancing national dialogues on justice in Kenya (REDRESS)3<br><br>Upholding the rights of young disabled people in Mozambique (Disability and Development partners) 3 X<br><br>Sharing best practices on health service governance in (Africa Health Poverty Action) 3 X<br><br>Strengthening women's voices to advocate for women's land rights in Southern Africa (AmWA) 1 | Influencing policy on HIV and AIDS in Kenya (KELIN) 2 X<br><br>Improving labour rights for South African farm workers (ETI) 2 X<br><br>Reforming mental health legislation in Botswana and Seychelles (Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation)2<br><br>Improving youth participation in public policymaking in Ghana (YES Ghana) 2<br><br>Making the Post-2015 agenda work for gender equality in Southern Africa (Gender Links, South Africa) 2<br><br>Strengthening the voice of older people in South Africa (HAI) 2 | Promoting fair trade networks in Africa (Shared Interest Foundation) 2 X |
| Asia | | Supporting rural entrepreneurs for social change in Pakistan (Hope International)<br><br>Forging civil society action against child domestic labour in Asia (Global March Against Child Labour 3,4 X<br><br>Strengthening women's participation in governance in Pakistan (Peace Direct/Aware Girls) X<br><br>Upholding gender equality legislation in Pakistan (CAMP) 3 | Ensuring health and safety for workers in the Bangladesh and Sri Lanka garment industries (War on Want UK) 2<br><br>Promoting community-led governance solutions in Sri Lanka (LJSSS) X | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Fostering cooperation for sustainable development in India (TARA) X | | |
| | | Promoting the recognition of carers in India (Carers Worldwide) 3 | | |
| | | Enhancing participatory governance in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka (ESDF) 3 | | |
| | | Monitoring the improvement of human rights in Malaysia (EMPOWER) 3 X | | |
| | | Promoting community solutions in upgrading settlements in Colombo, Sri Lanka (Homeless International) 3 | | |
| | | Strengthening indigenous stewardship of natural resources in Sabah, Malaysia (PACOS Trust) 3 X | | |
| | | Strengthening the role of Civil Society Organisations in the Maldives (Transparency Maldives) 3 | | |
| | | Increasing access to finance for women and young people in Bangladesh (Anglican Alliance) X | | |
| Caribbean | | Enabling Caribbean women farmers' participation in the Green economy (CPDC) | | |
| | | Participatory dialogue on fiscal policy in the Caribbean (ILE) | | |
| | | Fostering a democratic culture in schools and local communities in the Caribbean (CALGA) 3 | | |
| Pacific | | Promoting awareness of the media's role in Tonga (CCE) | | |
| Europe | | Empowering women living in institutional settings in Malta (JRS) 3 X | | |

## Annex I: Schedule of activities

| Key activities | Feb | March | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Delivery of draft Inception Report | 18 | | | | | | | |
| Inception Meeting | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Delivery of Inception Report | | 4 | | | | | | |
| Review of existing data | | | | | | | | |
| Survey implementation and analysis | | | | | | | | |
| Stakeholder interviews | | | | | | | | |
| Regional/Country Visits | | | | | | | | |
| Interim Progress report/Prompts for reflection | | | w/b 4 | | | | | |
| Presentation of initial findings (London) | | | | | | 4 | | |
| Delivery of draft final report | | | | | | 27 | | |
| Delivery of final report and communications brief | | | | | | | | 5 |