

REPORT ON THE ASSESSMENT OF GAPS AND NEEDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS CSOs IN ETHIOPIA



CSRC

Civil Society Resource Center



Prepared by

Abera Hailemariam Weldeyesus (BA, LL. B and MA)

Assistant Researcher

Kurabachew Tirfesa Dabesa

(LL. B and LL. M)

Coordinated by

Seife Ayalew

Amen Taye

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACLP	African Civic Leadership Program
ACSO	Agency for Civil Society Organization
APAP	Action Professionals Association for the People
CRDA	Christian Relief Development Association
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSP	Charities and Societies Proclamation
EHRCO	Ethiopian Human Rights Council
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Democratic Front
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEB	National Election Board
NGOs	Non-governmental Organization/s
NSA	None-state Actors
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

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Executive Summary

Organizations engaged in human rights promotion and protection appeared in the civil society landscaper immediately after the downfall of the military dictatorship. The first batch of rights organizations were established in 1991. Up until the coming into force of the Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09, the number of civil society organizations had been slowly but steadily increasing. An imposing blanket prohibition on human rights organizations, that access more than 10 percent of their income from foreign sources, coerced them to change their identity. Consequently, while considerable human rights organization changed their mandate, others were dissolved. A handful of them, who had survived the onslaught, were on survival mode. Following the enactment of the Organization of Civil Society Proclamation No 1113/ 19, a considerable number of human rights organizations have been established and their number is increasing by the day.

Human rights organizations that have been operational, before the coming into force of the charities and societies, lacked the necessary institutional capacity to effectively run human rights programs as they were underfunded. The purpose of the needs assessment is to assess and identify the capacity and needs of existing human rights organizations, concerning knowledge and skills, and use the findings of the assessment to design a project to address the identified gaps.

Using a stratified sampling technique, five strata - political rights, socio-economic rights, women rights, vulnerable groups, and voter education - were created. Out of the total 150 organizations, 45 organizations (30%) were selected through stratified random sampling. Survey questions were sent to the 45 respondents, of which 21 survey questions were returned. Using the semi-structured interview guide, interviews were conducted with major donors, CSSP and CSSF-3.

Although there is a difference in the distributions among national, regional, and local organizations, it is not exaggerated. By and large, the spread of the organizations that participated in the study across national, regional, and local levels is equitable.

More than half of the organizations out of the total study of participants have 5 years (+) operational experience. There is a huge difference in the distributions of CSOs across various fields of human rights. From among the total study of participants, organizations working on women's rights constitute the highest number. Findings also show the majority of human rights organizations are engaged in awareness-raising activities.

In terms of staffing, more than half of the total respondents operate with less than 5 full-time staff members, while some operate solely with one person. Also, the majority of the respondents do not have adequate knowledge of human rights. Knowledge gaps on the

legal regime governing civil society organizations are quite visible among a considerable number of respondents.

While more than half of the respondents lack the requisite knowledge of project management, close to half of the total respondents also lack the necessary skills to carry out human rights research. Even the remaining half of the respondents who rated their research skills as “Good” are far from being skillful as one may expect.

The majority of the respondents rated their knowledge of management and leadership skills as Good or Excellent, while slightly higher than a third of the total respondents rated theirs as fair or poor. On the other hand, the sector is being accused of internal democracy, nepotism, and founder syndrome, stemming partly if not entirely, from lack of knowledge of democratic leadership as well as attitude.

The Majority of the respondents rated their knowledge and skills on impact assessment as good or excellent. While findings of the survey show positive results, in practice, human rights project impact assessments have remained the most challenging area in the sphere of project management. Likewise, the level of knowledge and skills of the majority of the respondents on strategic planning and advocacy is low. Inadequate knowledge and skill on the usage of social media among the respondents is widespread. Equally, unable to tap resources through constituency building endeavors is another shared weakness among the respondents. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents rated their knowledge and skills on monitoring and evaluation as fair, good, and excellent. Except for a third of the total respondents, the majority of them do have report writing skills. Moreover, almost all study participants responded that they complete projects within the given time frame.

The level of cooperation and networking among various stakeholders is rated as good or excellent. Yet, facts on the ground show that the level of cooperation and networking is far from being ideal.

The study revealed human rights CSOs are facing multiple challenges such as cultural values and religious precepts, giving little heed to human rights support, the politicization of human rights activities, weaknesses on the part of human rights organizations in broadening their constituency base to use for resource mobilizations, and a lack of knowledge and skill on fund raising just to name a few.

Introduction

The African Civic leadership Program (ACLP) is conducting a Needs Assessment Study to inform the development of the Executive Civil Society Leadership Program (ECSLP) which aims at supporting Ethiopian CSOs. The objective of this survey is to collect data, to identify knowledge and skill gaps among the leadership and staff of human rights CSOs/NGOs in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating human rights projects and programs. It also aims to identify problem areas in advocacy and lobbying, not to mention, skills in funding proposal writing, funding solicitations, narrative and financial report writing, as well skills in conducting impact assessments.

This needs assessment report consists of four parts. While part one discusses the literature review, part two dwells on the methodology used in the conduct of the assessment. Part three deals with data presentation, and analysis. Part Four presents the conclusion and recommendations.

Part One

Background

1.1. Introduction

“The African Civic Leadership Program (hereinafter, ACLP) is a US-based non-profit organization established in March 2016. ACLP implemented its flagship fellowship program with partners drawn from public and private universities, local and international civil society organizations, and grassroots organizations working to advance the cause of social justice and public interest law. ACLP now focuses on several different areas, such as institutional capacity-building training, advocacy, and action-oriented research on a wide range of issues. ACLP creates a platform for young leaders and community activists to exchange innovative ideas, approaches, and best practices to address the most pertinent social justice issues in Africa. This platform allows young people to contribute to community service and take leadership roles in the civil society sector through active and assertive engagement with community-based projects relating to a wide range of issues pertinent to their respective communities.”¹

ACLP envisions a dynamic, efficacious, and highly skilled civil society sector across the African continent. In an effort to realize its mission, the program is interested in Civil Society Organizations (hereinafter, CSOs) working on human rights fields in Ethiopia. CSOs have, by and large, played an important role in addressing societal issues and promoting issues of public interest in Ethiopia. They have been involved in both service delivery and advocacy, though the latter had often placed them at odds with the government particularly on issues involving human rights and democratization.

1.2. Overview of CSO /NGO-in Ethiopia

1.2.1. Defining the Concept - CSO

Like many social science concepts, there is no universally agreed definition for the notion of civil society and its attribute. As Ulrich Beck (2001: 15), cited in CIVICUS Civil Society Index Paper Series Vol. 2 Issue, aptly observed, “The most precise statement one can make about civil society is that it is an extraordinarily vague idea.”² Some equate the concept

¹ African Civic Leadership Program, available at <https://www.africancivicleadership.org/about/> accessed on 6 January 2021

² CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Assessing and strengthening Civil Society Worldwide. A participatory Needs-Assessment and Action Planning Tool for Civil Society, Civil Society Index Paper Series Vo2 Issue 1 pp.11

only with non-governmental organizations alone, while others attribute the term to formal entities precluding CBOs cooperatives, etc. The European Union on its part uses a much broader term: *None-state Actors (NSA)*, which is defined as “entities that include economic and social partners, including non-governmental organizations, trade union organizations, cooperatives and civil society entities outside the government structure.”³ Equally, the World Bank defines Civil society as “the wide array of non-governmental and not for profit organizations that have a presence in public life, express the interests and values of their members and others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.”⁴ CIVICUS on the other hand defined civil society as “the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market where people associate to advance common interests!”⁵ The CIVICUS’s definition of civil society is employed for this assessment.

1.2.2. A brief history of NGOs/CSOs

Ethiopia's long history as a feudal monarchy and its subjugation by a brutal and doctrinaire Marxist regime have left most structures of civil society stunted.”⁶ CSOs began to emerge in Ethiopia during the 1930s as a factor of urbanization and economic development⁷. During the reign of the monarchy “professional groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and National Bar Association, played somewhat credible roles, and enjoyed relative autonomy.”⁸ The autonomy of these associations came to an end during the 17 years of the military dictatorship since these “organizations effectively become tools of the state or ceased operations entirely. Many of those remaining in existence lost credibility, professionalism, and, ultimately, many claims to legitimacy.”⁹ By the time the Derg collapsed in 1991, virtually all civil society entities had been co-opted or barred from meaningful existence by the regime¹⁰. Generally, civil society entities in Ethiopia “were slow to take root under the empire and then severely restricted during the Derg period (1974-91)”¹¹. Also, trustworthy local NGOs barely existed. Equally, “other civil society entities had fared no better as professional associations, trade unions, the media, academia, the private business sector, and the like were ruthlessly suppressed and their leaders forced into

³ William Emilio Cerritelli Akalewold Bantirgu Raya Abagodu, Yntiso Gebre2008. pp.1

⁴ The World Bank *Civil Society* available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/partners/civil-society/overview#:~:text=The%20World%20Bank%20Group%20works,political%2C%20scientific%2C%20religious%20or%20philanthropic> accessed on 7 January 2021.

⁵ CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Assessing and strengthening Civil Society Worldwide. A participatory Needs-Assessment and Action Planning Tool for Civil Society, Civil Society Index Paper Series Vo2 Issue 1 pp. 13

⁶ Jeffrey Clark (2000) *Civil Society, NGOs, and Development in Ethiopia: A Snapshot View* pp. 4

⁷ Ibid, pp. 4

⁸ ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Jeffrey Clark (2000) *Civil Society, NGOs, and Development in Ethiopia: A Snapshot View* pp.1

¹¹ ibid

exile, imprisoned, or executed”¹². On the other hand, more traditional national NGOs first formed in Ethiopia in the 1960s but emerged as potentially significant players in the nation's development only after 1991¹³. Yet, the local NGOs established immediately after the downfall of the military regime were “ill-prepared to have much impact. With few resources, untrained staff, and limited exposure to the nonprofit world, many demonstrated minimal comprehension of their proper role.”¹⁴ After a slow start, the NGO community has demonstrated an expansion in size and impact, as well as in sector coherence.¹⁵

In terms of areas of engagement, food security, health, and education are the common objectives of many vocational training programs and are a common priority as well. Microenterprise credit schemes are also increasingly numerous. Some NGOs have gender issues on their priority lists, although the effectiveness of such efforts is often hard to discern¹⁶. Later, human rights organizations began to appear in the civil society landscape.

On the other hand, international NGOs “trace their Ethiopian roots to catastrophic famine crises of 1973-74 and 1984-85”. The NGOs of those years were overwhelmingly focused on emergency relief operations and were largely foreign entities. Local church-affiliated agencies also played a very significant role in these operations¹⁷. One government survey from 1994 declared that only a little more than one-fifth of NGO activities in the country were centered on long-term development objectives¹⁸. It was in the 90s that the Guidelines for NGO Operations were put into place and the government began to more closely monitor and direct the work of NGOs¹⁹/ agenda facing the nation²⁰.

Since the mid-70s, the NGO sector in Ethiopia has been slowly but steadily evolving from relief operations, to rehabilitation, to service delivery, to development and advocacy. Despite this positive trend, “the sector as a whole suffers from fragmentation” along social, political, and ethnic lines and encouraged a perception of NGOs as extraneous to the daunting development agenda facing the nation²¹.

1.2.3. A brief history of human rights organizations in Ethiopia

As mentioned elsewhere in this report immediately after the downfall of the military regime, the first batch of human rights organizations emerged in Ethiopia. The distinctive

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Jeffrey Clark (2000) *Civil Society, NGOs, and Development in Ethiopia: A Snapshot View* pp. 7-8

¹⁴ *ibid* pp.5-6

¹⁵ Jeffrey Clark (2000) *Civil Society, NGOs, and Development in Ethiopia: A Snapshot View* pp. 8

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ *ibid*, pp.6

¹⁹ *ibid*

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ CRDA, “Assessment of the Operating Environment for CSOs/NGOs in Ethiopia”, (2006), pp. 6-7

characteristic of these organizations is their departure from the traditional interventions of NGOs such as relief and rehabilitation, service delivery, or infrastructure development to embrace the soft components of NGOs/CSOs interventions such as “promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance”²². In about a decade, “the number of CSOs/NGOs established with good governance, democracy, human rights, and peace building objectives stood at 120. In addition, other organizations with a core focus on service delivery started to take up human rights, democracy, and good governance issues as integral components and frameworks adopting human rights-based approaches for their activities”²³.

The first batch of rights organizations was established in 1991. For instance, A-Bu-Gi-Da (otherwise named the Ethiopian Congress for Democracy) was the first organization among others which was established in June 1991 with the objective of teaching basic civic education and leadership skills to young people immediately after the Ethiopian People Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized political power. A couple of months later, the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) was established in October 1991, with the objective of monitoring human rights abuses and providing legal assistance to victims of human rights abuses. The Anti-Red Terror Committee was one more organization that was established in 1991 and set the objective of representing “victims and families of victims of torture and human rights abuses perpetrated by the Red Terror under the rule of ousted dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam.”²⁴. Another human-rights-oriented entity, established in 1991, was the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. The latter used to work closely “with the Anti-Red Terror Committee, to collect information for use by the Special Prosecutor's Office”²⁵. Human Rights and Peace Center - Addis Ababa University was also established in 1991 to promote, among other things, “human rights through teaching human rights law and international humanitarian law; preparation of teaching materials, manuals and publications dealing with human rights law and humanitarian law; training of personnel through seminars, conferences, workshops and training sessions”²⁶. The last organization established in 1991 was the Ad-Hoc Committee on Peace. The latter set the objectives “to mediate ethnic conflicts and clashes in Ethiopia”²⁷. Forum-84 was also established in 1991 to create awareness of human rights and conduct electoral and civic education. Also, the

²² Pro-just Research and Training Center PLC (2020) Report of the Needs Assessment Conducted Prior to the Implementation of the Project “Building Organizational Capacity of CSOs for Effective Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Ethiopia pp.16-17 (unpublished)

²³ibid

²⁴ The Status of Human Rights Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa Ethiopia, available at <https://www.google.com/search?q=The+Status+of+Human+Rights+Organizations+in+Sub-Saharan+Africa+Ethiopia&oq=The+Status+of+Human+Rights+Organizations+in+Sub-Saharan+Africa+Ethiopia&aqs=chrome..69i57.838j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> accessed on 7 January 2021.

²⁵ ibid

²⁶ ibid

²⁷ ibid

Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (set up in 1992) “documents human rights abuses that were perpetrated”²⁸ under the military dictatorship. Inter-Africa Group, “a regional organization working on countries in the Horn of Africa, namely, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti”²⁹, was established in 1991 and aimed to serve as the “Centre for Dialogue on Humanitarian Peace and Development Issues in the Horn of Africa”³⁰. Two prominent human rights organizations, Action Professionals' Association for the People (APAP) and Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), were established in the early 1990s. While APAP was established in 1993 with the objectives of providing legal services to the marginalized or otherwise disadvantaged sections of the society, EWLA was established in 1995 to promote the economic, political, social, and legal rights of women and ensure full protection of their rights under the Constitution.

1.2.4. CSOs involvement in human rights promotions and protections in pre- and post-Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09

A. Advocacy NGOs in Pre-charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09

The downfall of the military government ushered in a new area for the exercise of freedom of association, which was guaranteed later under the 1995 FDRE Constitution. The coming into force of the Constitution has created an enabling environment for the proliferation of NGOs/CSOs in general and rights organizations in particular. Moreover, the improvement in the regulatory framework, or more particularly, “the formulation of NGOs operation guideline (1995) and the registration mandate given to the Ministry of Justice (1997)”³¹ also attributed to the surge of human rights organizations from none to 120 “organizations (identified as Civic Association) working countrywide”³². These organizations have been engaged in a wide range of activities to realize their objectives. Some of the activities include, “promoting public awareness, promoting access to justice, building the capacities of government bodies (especially the justice sector), and lobbying for changes in policies and laws”³³. Concerning policy advocacy, their contributions are evident in several areas. “Harmonization of the country’s laws to international and regional human rights standards”³⁴. The law reform processes that produced the Revised Family Code (2000), the Labor Proclamation (2003), and the Criminal Law (2006), are only a few of their

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ CRDA (2006) Assessment of the Operating Environment for CSO/NGOs in Ethiopia pp.7

³² *ibid*

³³ Desalegn Rahmeto, Akalewold Bantirgu and Yoseph Endeshaw, “CSOs/NGOs in Ethiopia: Partners in Development and Good Governance” (2008), A Report Prepared for the Ad hoc CSOs/NGOs Task Force; 79-81

³⁴ Pro-just Research and Training Center PLC (2020) Report of the Needs Assessment Conducted Prior to the Implementation of the Project “Building Organizational Capacity of CSOs for Effective Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Ethiopia pp.17 (unpublished)

achievements. They were also involved in policies and action plan development processes such as “gender and women’s rights, children and disability issues”³⁵. Unfortunately, following the promulgation of the charities and societies proclamation No.621/09, this encouraging trend was disrupted. However, even within these stifling legal environments, some advocacy organizations had continued to make their contribution. The development and adoption of Ethiopia’s UPR reports and NHRAP’s³⁶ is a case in point. It is worth noting that the issues that the government wanted to limit the CSOs’ involvement in, were human rights activities, and did so using legal, political, and administrative means. This was noticeable even before the coming into force of the restrictive charities and societies proclamation. A considerable number of advocacy organizations have been walking on a tight rope as a result. Human rights, rule of law, and democratization issues have always been points of contention between the regime in power and civil society organizations³⁷. The National Election Board’s (NEB) decision that denied accreditation for CSOs who applied for observing the 2005 general elections is a classic example of this assertion.

B. The status of advocacy/human rights organizations in post Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09

The history of civil society’s engagement policy advocacy, human rights promotion, and protection is very brief compared to other interventions. As mentioned elsewhere, before 1991 the focus of the civil society sector, in particular, NGOs, “[have] been on relief activities associated with the aftermath of natural disasters such as drought and delivery of services to fill gaps in the national system”³⁸. Advocacy organizations appeared in the civil society landscape much later, after the change in government took place in the early 1990s. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) “saw the transformation of the whole sector in terms of size and diversity. The fundamental changes in the political context of the country, as well as the more permissive legal and regulatory environment, engendered [...] the proliferation of ‘advocacy NGOs’ in the first years of the 90s”³⁹. As one study revealed that before the coming into force of the Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09, there were “120 organizations (identified as Civic Associations) working countrywide in awareness-raising on civic rights and obligations, Human Rights, the Rule of Law, Civic and Voters Education”⁴⁰.

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ *Ibid*

³⁸ Pro-just Research and Training Center PLC (2020) Report of the Needs Assessment Conducted Prior to the Implementation of the Project “Building Organizational Capacity of CSOs for Effective Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Ethiopia pp.17 (unpublished)

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ William Emilio Cerritelli, Akalewold Bantirgu, Raya Abagodu (2008) UPDATED MAPPING STUDY OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN ETHIOPIA Volume I Main Report

The restrictive proclamation, and the subsidiary legislations, imposed restrictions on Ethiopian charities and societies that drastically changed the legal, institutional and operational environment to the detriment of the civil society sector, in general, and advocacy organizations engaged in human rights and related activities in particular. The restrictive provisions inhibit the establishment and operations of human rights CSOs, impose stringent requirements - nearly impossible to comply with - to access foreign funding, unduly deny the right to appeal on administrative decisions, impose vague and arbitrary criminal sanctions, unjust and onerous bureaucratic hurdles and so on.

The restrictive laws coerced advocacy NGOs either to relinquish their original mandate – to embrace a new identity and engage in development and service delivery - or to shut down. The direct consequence of the restrictive law was rendering CSOs, working in the fields of human rights, dysfunctional. Only a handful of advocacy organizations have survived the onslaught of the law and continued, to this date, to undertake some advocacy works under the guise of service delivery. Even then, these organizations have been on survival mode since the promulgation of the Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09, as they lost many of their core staff, reduced their areas and scale of operation, and significantly cut the number of their beneficiaries. In short, the CSP severely impacted local human rights organizations' institutional capacity, undermined their programs and activities, and jeopardized their viability. The promulgation of Proclamation No 621/09 had been a devastating blow to advocacy organizations and had severely impacted their institutional capacity, programs and activities, undermining the viability of these organizations for the foreseeable future.

1.2.5. The Coming into force of Organizations of Civil Society Proclamation No. 1113/2019 and Change in the Civil Society Landscape

Given the political, economic, and legislative reforms currently under way in Ethiopia, enacting a new civil society law, which is consistent with the rights to freedom of association as well as creates an enabling environment for the establishment and operation of civil society organizations, is imperative. In line with this, the government passed the CSOs friendly Proclamation No.1113/2019, repealing the restrictive Charities and Societies Proclamation No 621/09. Taking advantage of the new legislation, new CSOs focusing on human rights, governance, and elections are mushrooming. Existing CSOs also are busy amending their statute to include human rights as well. The new law has paved the way for the proliferation of new CSOs, of which, a considerable amount of them are to engage in the field of human rights, democratization, and governance. Despite this positive trend, the newly established and existing CSOs - including professional associations and grassroots advocacy organizations - are grappling with a lack of funding. The newly established CSOs are even unable to access core funding that could cover the costs of setting up offices including office rent, buying office furniture, and equipment, utilities, and

communication. The problem is further exacerbated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further constrained funding access. Equally, the newly established human rights organizations lack the necessary knowledge and skill on human rights project management and expertise on how to develop a human rights program, especially designing projects, soliciting funds, implementing projects, and monitoring and evaluating to assess the impact. It is noteworthy that the aforementioned problems are also visible among organizations that have been operational for years.

Part Two

Objectives and Methodology

2.1. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to assess and identify knowledge and skill gaps of CSOs working in the fields of human rights in Ethiopia and use study findings to develop capacity-building programs targeting human rights organizations.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- a) To conduct a needs assessment to provide baseline information, and an overview analysis of the capacity, strengths, and weaknesses of the local human rights CSOs;
- b) Identifying core areas of technical and substantive knowledge gaps, areas of interventions, and priority areas among Ethiopian civil society organizations;
- c) To identify and analyze gaps in leadership skills, project design, and project cycle management, strategic planning, ethics of advocacy and activism, social media and communications, constituency building, etc.;
- d) To propose a set of recommendations that could serve as an input for ESCLP curriculum development.

2.2. Methodology

Different methods were in use to carry out the needs assessment. One of the methods used in the assessment was to undertake a desk review. The single most important reason for conducting a desk review is to know what others have done on civil society in general, and human rights organizations in particular, and gain a broader understanding of the situation of human rights organizations in Ethiopia. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the conduct of the needs assessment. Accordingly, survey questions (**See Annex I**) were prepared and administered to participants who were selected from among the study population through a stratified random sampling technique/method. Similarly, the semi-structured interview guide (**See Annex II**) has been developed and administered to major donors' representatives. In effect, a combination of quantitative and qualitative information has been obtained from CSOs working on human rights and representatives of major donors, notably Civil Society Support Programme 2 (CSSP 2) and Civil Society Fund III.

2.1.1. Data Collection Methods

In a bid to make baseline information on human rights organizations – such as the needs, knowledge, and skill gaps – readily available, the researchers acquired information from primary and secondary sources. Accordingly, the researchers conducted two key informant interviews and administered questionnaires online to 45 respondents who were selected from among a total of 150 existing and newly registered human rights CSOs, human rights networks/ consortiums working in human rights fields. Of the 45 questionnaires collected, 20 were completed and returned. Closed survey questions were designed to capture issues about human rights organizations' needs, knowledge, and skills. The advantage of the closed survey for the respondents is that it provides alternative answers and is easy for respondents to pick what they think is the right answer. Equally, for researchers, it significantly reduces unanswered questions, not to mention easing the organizations of data and analysis. The research has also drawn on available published and unpublished research reports that informed the assessment.

2.1.2. Sampling Method

ACLP provided the researchers with a list consisting of 150 existing and newly registered CSOs working in the human rights field. Although these organizations fall under a generic category of human rights, their area of engagements or specialization varies. Some are engaged in gender equality and women empowerment, while others are involved in addressing child rights and vulnerable groups' issues. Still, others work on governance and democracy, socio-economic rights, etc. A stratified random sampling method is selected to ensure the participation of a diverse set of CSOs from the 150 organizations which constitute the study population.

A stratified random sampling method has been chosen to involve a diverse set of CSOs from the study population. The stratification method focused on rights-based and advocacy organizations, notably CSOs engaged in voter and civic education, CSOs working to address socio-economic rights, labor rights, and children and vulnerable groups as a stratum. To achieve this end, the study population was clustered into five stratum, notably, voter and civic education, gender equality and women empowerment, socio-economic rights, labor rights, and children and vulnerable groups. Since the assessment has an exploratory nature, the researchers, out of the total study population, randomly selected 30% from each stratum, i.e., 45 respondents. When it comes to the selection of study participants for a key informant interview, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique as the latter accords discretion to researchers to select study participants whom they think have information on the theme under investigation.

2.1.3. Method of Analysis

The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis in exploring the gaps and needs of the CSOs. The data collected is analyzed both conceptually and empirically. The latter focuses mainly on establishing the cause and effect through critical analysis and interpretation of facts and figures. The empirical analysis works well for data collected via survey, whereas conceptual analysis is employed for information gathered through key informant interviews thereby looking into common patterns of the skill and knowledge gaps.

2.1.4. Ethical Consideration

All the contact persons of organizations who were selected as respondents were informed about the objectives of the assessment. They were also informed that the ethical rules of confidentiality and anonymity will be respected. They were also notified that the survey questionnaires will be sent to them via email if, and only if, they consent to participate in the study. After exhausting the foregoing steps, the questionnaires were distributed to the respondents.

2.1.5. Limitations

The researchers faced challenges while collecting data. The first challenge was the contact address, particularly the email and phone number of the contact persons on the list provided to us by CLCV, as they were incorrect. The other challenge was that the CSOs contact persons had either left the organization or were unwilling to participate in the survey. To adhere to the Covid-19 protocol, the approach followed to reach out to these NGOs was via phone and email. The process was first to give phone calls to the contact person of the selected organization, followed by verification of the email address of the selected organization contact person and secure their consent for participating in the study. The moment the person gives their consent, the survey questionnaire will be sent via email. Sticking to this procedure, the survey questionnaires were sent to the 45 randomly selected participants and 16 participants returned the completed questionnaires. A gentle reminder was sent to those who were not able to return the completed questionnaires. Following the reminder, four more respondents completed and returned the questionnaire. Since the assignment is time-bound, the researchers had to write the needs assessment report based on the available data.

Part Three

Data Presentation, Discussion, and Analysis

3.1. Data Presentation

3.1.1. Introduction

A Survey Questionnaire was designed to gauge the knowledge and skill gaps among the leadership and staff of human rights CSOs/NGOs in the designing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of human rights projects, advocacy and lobbying, as well as preparation of funding proposals, narrative and financial reports, and skills on conducting impact assessments. The respondents were accorded the right to remain anonymous concerning their names and addresses, though almost all of them preferred otherwise. Close-ended questions asking respondents to choose from a distinct set of pre-defined responses were prepared and circulated to a total of 45 respondents who were selected through a stratified sampling method via email. Of these, 20 questionnaires (46.66%) were returned.

The survey questionnaire comprises three parts. While the first part consists of a set of questions seeking general information, notably, name and address of the organization, name, and position of the respondent, and phone number of the respondent (which is optional), the second part contains questions requesting background information such as the type of the organization, geographic scope of operation, operation period, field of operation, and the number of staff. The last part of the survey questionnaire involves questions probing specific issues such as the knowledge and skill of the staff members. This part of the study report is devoted to data presentation and analysis.

3.1.2. Respondents' Organizational Background and Profile

i. Organizational type

Table 1: Number and percentage of respondents based on the type of their organization.

Type of Organization	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Local NGO	16	80%
Society	2	10%
Professional association	1	5%
Any other	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Out of 20 CSOs that filled out the survey questionnaire, 16 (80%) of the organizations responded that they belong to local NGOs, while 2 CSOs (10%) identified as a society, 1 CSO (5%) identified as a professional association and 1 (5%) organization (right-based organization) identified as “any other”. One can easily infer from the above data that most of the organizations belong to local NGOs.

ii. The geographic scope of operation

These local CSOs operate in different geographic areas, which could be classified as community-based, regional or national. For this study, CSOs operating in more than two regions are understood to operate at a national level.

Table 2: geographic scope of operation

Scope of operation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Community (Local)	5	25%
Regional	6	30%
National	9	45%
Skipped	0	0%

Total	20	100%
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It is to be noted that some of the respondents have chosen community (local) and regional geographic scope at the same time. As a result, the total number exceeds the actual number of the respondents. The above table shows that 5 (25%), 6(30%), 9 (45%) of the total respondents answered that their scope of operations is at a community (local), regional, and national level respectively. From the above data, it can be inferred that close to half of the organizations, 9 (45%), operate at a national level.

As can be seen from the above table - the scope of operation - more than a third of the respondents operate at a national level, 1/4 of them operate at a local level and a little less than 1/3 of them operate at a regional level. Even if the geographic scope of operations of the organizations is not fair and equitable, the difference between national and regional and local is not exaggerated.

iii. The operational life of the Organization

Some of the organizations who participated in this study have been in operation for a fairly long time while others are new. The assessment involved both newly registered organizations and organizations that have been in operation for some time. Respondents were asked for how long their organizations have been operating in the sector.

Table 3: operational life of the respondents' organization

Operational life	Number of Respondents	Percentage
< 1 year	4	20%
1-3 years	3	15%
3-6 years	1	5%
> 6 years	12	60%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The above table shows that 4 CSOs (20%) were registered quite recently, while another 4 CSOs (20%) responded that they have less than 1 year of operational experience. 3 CSOs

(15%) have been operating between 1-3 years and only 1 (5%) organization responded between 3-6 years.

iv. Field of Operation

Table 4: field of operation of the respondent CSOs

Field of Operation	Number of Respondents
Socio-economic rights	9
Labor rights	1
Child rights	8
Women rights	13
Political rights (governance etc.)	5
Voter education	4
Any other	7
Skipped	0
Total	47 ⁴¹

The above table shows the distribution of organizations selected through a stratified sampling method across different human rights fields. Accordingly, 13 organizations, which constitute 65% of the total sample, are engaged in women’s rights while 9 out of 47 organizations (19.14%) are involved in socio-economic rights. While 8 organizations (17.02%) are engaged in child rights, 5 CSOs, which constitute 10.63% of the total sampled organizations, are involved in political rights (governance, etc.), and 4 organizations (8.51 %) are working on voter education. 7 organizations (14.89%) that fall under “any other” are engaged in other human rights fields such as health, education, elderly rights, civic education, charity, and empowerment of other vulnerable groups.

⁴¹ It has to be noted that as far as this question is concerned, the respondents were allowed to indicate all areas of their engagement from the availed choices and hence, the total response exceeds the total number of respondents.

v. *Major activities of the organization*

Table 5: major activities of the organization

Major Activities	Number of Respondents
Awareness-raising	18
Human rights monitoring	4
Research and Advocacy	10
Service (legal aid)	4
Other	3
Skipped	0
Total	39 ⁴²

Out of the total organizations who were selected as a study population, the majority of them, accounting for 18 respondents, are engaged in awareness-raising, while 10 organizations are engaged in research and advocacy activities. 4 organizations are engaged in human rights and legal aid service respectively and 3 more organizations marked “other”.

vi. *Current full-time employee(s) of the organization*

The number of professional employees in an organization is a treasured asset for the implementation of projects in a timely and effective manner. It is not uncommon to hear that huge human rights projects are run by one or two technical staff, and a few support staff and this has a detrimental effect on project implementation. Most of them are operating with a skeleton crew. A few of them are, practically, a one-man show. It is no wonder that almost all CSOs in the human rights field do not have designated monitoring and evaluation officers.

⁴² Ibid

Table 6: Number of full-time employees in respondent organizations

Full-time employee/s	Number of Respondents	Percentage
only 1	2	10%
2-5	8	40%
6-9	3	15%
≥10	6	30%
Skipped	1	5%
Total	20	100%

While 8 (40 %) out of the total respondents said they are operating with 2- 5 full-time employees, 6 (30%) respondents said they have more than 10 full-time employees. 3 (15%) respondents also answered that their organizations have full-time staff ranging from 6-9. Interestingly, two of the respondents said that their respective organizations are run by a single staff, presumably, the founders of the organizations.

3.1.3. Knowledge and Skill of the CSO Leaders and Staff

i. Knowledge on core international human rights instruments

Table 7: knowledge on core international human rights (HRs) instruments

Knowledge on core HRs Treaties	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	0	0%
Good	5	25%
Fair	9	45%
Poor	3	15%
I don't know	2	10%
Skipped	1	5%
Total	20	100%

As can be inferred from the above data, none of the respondents claimed to have excellent knowledge of the core international human rights instruments. While 5 respondents, accounting for 25%, acknowledge that their employees' knowledge of such instruments is "Good", 9 respondents (45%) rated their knowledge as "Fair" and 3 more respondents rated their human rights knowledge as "Poor".

ii. Knowledge of the CSO governing Laws

Table 8: Knowledge on the CSO Proclamation and the directives

Knowledge on the Proclamation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	2	10%
Good	11	55%
Fair	4	20%
Poor	1	5%
I don't know	2	20%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The majority of respondents (55%) rated their knowledge of Proclamation No. 1113/2019 as "Good". 2 respondents (10%) rated their knowledge as "Excellent." While 4 (20%) respondents rated their knowledge of the law as "Fair", only 1 respondent, accounting for 5%, rated their knowledge as "Poor". As can be deduced from the above data, more than half of the respondents have average knowledge of civil society law, while the knowledge of slightly less than half of the respondents is below the average.

iii. Knowledge and skill in project management

Table 9: Knowledge and skill in project management

Knowledge on project management	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	2	10%
Good	7	35%
Fair	9	45%
Poor	1	5%
I Don't know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The foregoing data shows that 9 (45%) respondents rated their knowledge on project management as "Fair", while 7 (35%) respondents rated their knowledge as "Good." Only 2 (10%) respondents rated their knowledge of project management as "Excellent." While 1 (5%) respondent rated their knowledge as "Poor", and one more respondent (5%) said, "I don't know". While respondents who rated their knowledge of project management Good and Excellent accounts for less than half of the total respondents, the remaining respondents constitute more than half of the total respondents.

iv. Organization's employee(s) research skills

Table 10: employees research skills

Employees research skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	1	5%
Good	10	50%
Fair	6	30%
Poor	3	15%
I don't know	0	0%

Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

As can be seen from the above table, 10 (50%) out of 20 respondents rated their research skills “Good”, while 6 of them (30%) rated “Fair”. Similarly, 3 respondents (15%) rated poor and only 1 respondent, which constitutes 5% of the total respondents, rated their research skills as “Excellent.”

v. Skill in communications, planning and continuous learning

Table 11: Skill in communications, planning and continuous learning

Communication Skill	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	1	5%
Good	11	55%
Fair	4	20%
Poor	3	15%
I don't know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

As far as communication, planning, and continuous learning skills are concerned, 11 respondents (55%) rated their skills as “Good”, followed by 4 (20%) respondents rating their skills as “Fair” and 3 respondents, constituting 15%, rating their skills as “Poor”. Only 1 respondent, accounting for 5%, rated their knowledge as “Excellent.”

vi. Management and leadership skill

Table 12: management and leadership skill of the leaders and staff of the organizations

Knowledge on core HRs Treaties	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	2	10%
Good	11	55%
Fair	4	20%
Poor	1	5%
don't know	1	5%
Skipped	1	5%
Total	20	100%

As can be seen from the above table 11, respondents, accounting for 55%, rated their knowledge as “Good”, while 2 (10%) respondents rated their knowledge and leadership skills as “Excellent”. 4 (20%) respondents rated their management and leadership skills as “Fair”, while 1 (5%) respondent rated “Poor” and 1 more respondent answered, “I don’t know”.

vii. Strategic planning and advocacy skill

Table 13: employees’ skill in strategic planning and advocacy skill

Strategic planning and advocacy	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	4	20%
Good	2	10%
Fair	10	50%
Poor	3	15%
I don't know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%

Total	20	20%
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Of the respondents who were asked to rate their skills on the development of strategic planning, 4 (20%) rated “Excellent”, 2 (10%) respondents rated “Good”, 10 (50%) respondents rated “Fair”, 3 (15%) respondents rated “Poor” and 1 (5%) respondent answered, “I don’t know”.

viii. Social media usage and constituency building

Table 14: social media usage and constituency building

Social media usage and Constituency building	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	0	0%
Good	6	30%
Fair	8	40%
Poor	5	25%
I don’t know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Out of the study participants, 8 (40%) respondents rated their usage of social media and constituency building as “Fair”, 6 (30%) respondents rated theirs as “Good”, 5 (25%) respondents rated their skills as “Poor” and 1 (5%) respondent answered, “I don’t know”. None of the respondents rated their knowledge as “Excellent”.

ix. Monitoring and evaluating human rights projects

Table 15: Monitoring and evaluating(M&E) human rights projects

Skills in M&E HRs Projects	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	1	5%
Good	6	30%
Fair	8	40%
Poor	4	20%
I don't know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

As can be observed from the above data, 8 respondents, accounting for 40% of the total respondents, rated their knowledge and skills on monitoring and evaluation as “Fair”, while 6 respondents, constituting 30%, rated “Good”. 4 (20%) respondents rated their monitoring and evaluation knowledge “Poor” and 1(5%) respondent said, “I don't know”.

x. Skills in soliciting and raising funds

Table 16: Skill in soliciting and raising funds

Fundraising	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	0	0%
Good	6	30%
Fair	7	35%
Poor	6	30%
I don't know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%

Total	20	100%
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As can be seen from the above table, 6 (30%) of the respondents rated their fund-raising skills as “Good”, 7 (35) respondents rated “Fair”, and 6 (30%) respondents rated their fund-raising skills “Poor” and 1(5%) respondent answered, “I don’t know”. None of the respondents rated their knowledge as “Excellent”.

xi. Report writing skill

Table 17: staffs’ skill in writing narrative and financial reports

Report-writing skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	2	10%
Good	10	50%
Fair	4	20%
Poor	3	15%
I don’t know	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The above table shows that 10 respondents, accounting for 50% out of the total study participants, rated their report writing skills as “Good”, while only 2 (10%) respondents rated their report writing skills as “Excellent”. 4 (20%) respondents rated “Fair”, 3 (15%) respondents rated “Poor” and 1 respondent said, “I don’t know”.

xii. Impact assessment knowledge and skill

Table 18: Impact assessment knowledge and skill

Impact Assessment Skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	2	10%
Good	12	60%
Fair	3	15%
Poor	1	5%
I don't know	2	10%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The above table shows that 12 (60%) respondents rated their impact assessment knowledge and skill “Good”, while 2 (10%) respondents rated “Excellent”. 3 (15%) respondents rated as “Fair”, 1 (5%) respondent rated “Poor”, and 2 (10%) respondents said, “I don’t know”.

xiii. Level of cooperation and networking

Table 19: level of cooperation and networking

Cooperation and networking	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	4	20%
Good	11	55%
Fair	1	5%
Poor	2	10%
I don't know	2	10%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

As can be observed from the above table, 11 respondents, accounting for 55% of the total study participants, rated the level of *cooperation and networking* as “Good”, while 4 (20%) respondents rated “Excellent”. 1 (5%) respondent rated “Fair”, 2 (10%) respondents rated their *level of cooperation and networking* “Poor”, and another 2 (10%) respondents answered, “I don’t know”.

xiv. Need-based project designing

Table 20: Needs assessment before developing a project

Needs assessment before developing a project	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	25%
Agree	14	70%
Disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
N/A	0	0%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

As can be seen from the above table, 14 (70%) respondents agree on the conduct of a *needs assessment before developing a project* while 5 (25%) participants relayed that they strongly agree on the conduct of a *needs assessment before developing a project*. Only 1 (5%) respondent disagreed.

xv. Timely completion of Projects

Table 21: Timely completion of projects

Timely completion of projects	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	9	45%
Agree	9	45%
Disagree	1	5%
Strongly disagree	1	5%
N/A	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100

The research participants are asked whether projects are implemented with the initial time frame without extension. Out of all of the participants, 18 (90%) organizations agree and strongly agree on timely completion of projects and the remaining number of respondents (2) disagree and strongly disagree with the statement.

xvi. Seeking feedback from beneficiaries

Table 22: Seeking feedback from beneficiaries

Seeking feedback from beneficiaries	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	7	35%
Agree	9	45%
Disagree	2	10%
Strongly disagree	1	5%
N/A	1	5%
Skipped	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The respondents are asked their opinion on whether the organization should regularly seek feedback from project beneficiaries in its project design. Around 80% of the respondents have agreed or strongly agreed on the assertion, while a total of 15% disagree and strongly disagree. The majority of CSOs seek feedback from beneficiaries.

xvii. Key areas of improvement

The respondents are finally asked to outline their organizational key areas of improvement in project designing, fundraising, implementation, and evaluation. The majority of the respondents demanded intensive capacity-building training in the following areas:

- Project designing;
- Fundraising and soliciting;
- Project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation;
- Local resource mobilization;
- Designing and reviewing a strategic plan;
- Motivating volunteers;
- Efficient and timely completion of projects;
- Concepts of CSO and governing laws;
- Communication and media usage;
- Personnel/ Human resources administration and management;
- Developing project proposals based on innovative and beneficiaries needs assessment;
- Report writing;
- Revising working documents/manuals/guidelines;
- Refresher training on project cycle management;
- Evidence-based policy advocacy;

3.2. Data Analysis

3.2.1. Organizational Background and Profile

i. Organizational type

A civil society, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, is defined as “the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the market, where people associate to advance common interests”. It embraces community-based organizations and village associations, environmental groups, women’s rights groups, farmers’ associations, faith-based organizations, labor unions, co-operatives, professional associations, chambers of commerce, independent research institutes, and the not-for-profit media⁴³. They are involved in diverse areas including relief and rehabilitation, service delivery, infrastructural development, environmental protection, peace building, defending the rights and interests of their members, and advocating for policy and institutional reforms at local, regional, and international levels. More often than not, the concept of ‘NGO’ is used interchangeably with ‘CSO’. NGOs are only one trait of civil society, but not a substitute for the latter. NGOs are “subsets of CSOs involved in development cooperation, albeit often one with no clear boundaries. Constituency-based organizations, such as trade unions or professional associations, for example, often do not self-identify as NGOs, but rather as CSOs”⁴⁴. On the other hand, according to the CSO Proclamation, a “civil society organization (CSO)” is any non-governmental, non-partisan, not-for-profit entity, established by two or more persons, voluntarily and registered to carry out any lawful purpose⁴⁵. There are many sub-types of CSOs, including local and foreign CSOs, professional associations, mass-based societies, consortia, and charitable entities, though the sub-types appear to be subject to largely the same rules relating to inurement, proprietary interest, dissolution, activities, and taxes⁴⁶. The research participants were asked to define the type of organization they were running.

⁴³ NGOs and CSOs: Note on the terminology, available at www.asia-pacific.undp.org › UNDP-CH03 Annexes accessed on 19 January 2021, pp. 123

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Organizations of Civil Society Proclamation No 1113/2019, Federal Negarit Gazette, 25th year No. 3, 12th March 2019, Article 2 (1).

⁴⁶ Non-Profit Law in Ethiopia available at <https://www.cof.org/country-notes/nonprofit-law-ethiopia> accessed on 22 January, 2021

ii. The geographic scope of operation

Findings of the assessment indicate that more than a third of the respondents operate at a national level, while 1/4 of them operate at a local level and a little less than 1/3 of them operate at a regional level. Based on the findings of the assessment, there seems to be an equitable spread of organizations on the national, regional, and local levels, implying that the difference among national, regional, and local is not exaggerated.

iii. The operational life of the Organization

While there are CSOs who have been operational for more than half a century, equally, there are scores of newly formed and registered CSOs following the new legislation. The study attempted to bring onboard both the older and the newly registered organizations. Findings of the study show that more than half of the total respondents (60%) have been operational for 5 years and up.

3.2.2. Field of Operation, activities, and staff

i. Field of operation

In Ethiopia, CSOs operate in a wide range of fields. Since the assessment targeted organizations engaged in different human rights fields, participants of the study were clustered into 5 groups, i.e., organizations working on political rights, voter education, socio-economic rights, labor rights, child rights, women's rights, and the rights of vulnerable groups. Based on this classification, out of 120 organizations, 45 were selected using stratified sampling, and survey questions were distributed to them. Out of the 45 respondents, 20 respondents filled out and returned the questionnaires.

Findings of the assessment show that there is a huge difference in the distributions of CSOs across various fields of human rights. While organizations working on women's rights stand at a total of 13 (27.65%) - which is the highest total - only 1 (2.12%) organization is found to be engaged in labor rights. Findings of the study further revealed that organizations focusing on socio-economic rights and child rights are ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively. Organizations that marked "Any other" stood 4th.

ii. Major activities of the organization

Findings of the assessment show that awareness-raising, and research and advocacy activities are the top two areas of engagement for the majority of human rights organizations selected as the study population.

iii. Current full-time employee(s) of the organization

As can be inferred from the findings of the assessment, less than half of the organizations operate with more than 5 full-time staff. Equally, more than half of the total organizations that participated in the survey operate with less than 5 full-time staff, not to mention the organizations that are operating solely with one person. Among the organizations who claimed to have employed a relatively higher number might have brought on board more support staff than technical staff. Based on the findings above, most of the organizations are understaffed. The lesser the number of technical staff the greater the risk of compromising the quality of project designing and implementation.

3.2.3. Knowledge and Skill of the CSO Leaders and Staff

i. Knowledge of core international human rights instruments

The International Bill of Human Rights has been supplemented with a number of more specific binding instruments, which include both substantive human rights norms as implementing provisions for complaints, reporting and inquiry procedures, and other matters⁴⁷. ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC, CAT, CERD, CRMW, CRPD, and CED are referred to as “core human rights treaties.” There are also other human rights instruments adopted by the UN and its specialized agencies. Knowledge of the nine core conventions is a bare minimum for human rights organizations in their respective specialty areas.

One of the interviews noted that “human rights skill is critical”⁴⁸. The interviewee remarked that “in view of the proposals I reviewed, it seems that there is little knowledge on the basics of human rights. Human rights projects developed and submitted by organizations show that they are at the rudimentary knowledge of human rights”⁴⁹. Similarly, another interviewee who participated in the study observed that

There is a huge human rights knowledge gap among these organizations. This huge gap partly stems from the fact that the sector has been dominated by service rendering thinking and practice. Consequently, the number of human rights organizations was very small. The experience was also very limited, and training and other opportunities were also limited as well. The complexity of the nature of the program, which deals, among other things, with the perception and the stifling of a legal environment, keeps CSOs/NGOs away from human rights and embrace service delivery. These days you do not see creativity and [innovation] - once the defining

⁴⁷ United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians*, Inter-parliamentarian Union (2016) pp 43.

⁴⁸ Interview with Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia on 29 December 2020

⁴⁹ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

characteristics of the sector. There is a huge gap in knowledge and skill. The basics of proposal writing skills are missing. Lack of problem analysis is a widespread problem. Poor planning is another deficiency. Results and activities are confused. Extra efforts have been made to refine the project proposals which were selected to be awarded. The problems are even far worse concerning human rights projects. What we did was select the better proposals and worked jointly with the project holder organizations to improve the quality of the projects and enhance their capacity⁵⁰.

In the same way, the findings of the survey show that the majority of the respondents do not have adequate knowledge of human rights. Embarking on human rights without having the necessary knowledge on the subject matter will be absurd, to say the least. You cannot teach what you do not know. We urge CSOs working in the human rights field to have adequate knowledge of core human rights instruments through short and long-term training.

ii. Knowledge on CSOs governing Laws

On March 12, 2019, the government of Ethiopia enacted the *Organization of Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113/2019*. Employees of civil society organizations, including respondents, are required to know the governing laws of *Proclamation No. 1113/2019* and directives to act under the law that governs the sector. The survey results show that the knowledge gap on the legal regime, governing civil society organizations, is quite visible among a considerable number of respondents. This gap can, and should, be filled through training on civil society laws.

iii. Knowledge and skill in project management

Managing human rights projects requires thorough knowledge, skill, and experience in project management, including the skill and knowledge on initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, closing, and evaluating the project using different tools, sets of skills, methodologies, and techniques. Understanding how to successfully manage a human rights project is even more important to human rights organizations that operate using meager resources.

Regarding the level of knowledge and skill on project management among human rights organizations, one of the interviewees remarked that,

⁵⁰ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

“We see here two things. Conventional project management, financial management, a project development process, and an organizations’ implementation capacity can be pigeonholed under one category since it can easily be assessed using a pre-established criterion. The second one is a subject matter category. Human rights projects deal with soft components. Since experts have already deserted human rights organizations due to the restrictive charities and societies law, we could not assess their capacity in developing human rights projects. We evaluated the relevance of the project idea, i.e., we evaluated whether the project idea is relevant or not.”⁵¹

The interview further opined that “regarding implementation, we evaluated the performance of the 23 projects and the findings of the evaluation show that their performance is on the average 6% and budget utilization is on the average 5.4%. The assessment results are very low, but it is attributable to COVID-19.”⁵²

Another interviewee commented on human rights organizations’ project management knowledge and skills.

“Although there is still a concern, they are better in implementation. In some organizations, implementation is compromised. There is a clear sign of fraud in some organizations which puts the integrity of the sector under question mark. An additional problem observed is that implementation is output-oriented, although few organizations performed well. One of the successful experiences is that one organization in Dese, targeting women prisoners with their children, conducted a study and found that there is no policy on women imprisoned with their children or [those who] give birth to children while in custody. The organization drafted a policy and submitted it to the Amhara regional state council which was approved. Similarly, another organization in Dire Dawa also convinced leaders of the city administration [that] substance abuse is [an] illness, and lobbied for budget allocation to treat them in hospitals and clinics, and it succeeded. One more organization also convinced the leaders of the *Idir* in amending the statute, to take social sanction on *Idir* members who perpetrated Gender-Based Violence (GBV).”⁵³

The survey results show that more than half of the respondent lacks the requisite knowledge and skills on project management. Similarly, findings of the interviews conducted indicate that, except for a few organizations that achieved concrete results in

⁵¹ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

their interventions, the majority of the projects are output-oriented and give little head to outcomes and impact of the project. Desertion of skilled human resources, and inadequate knowledge on project cycle management on the part of the remaining staff, are identified as the major challenges in project implementation. Upgrading the knowledge and skills of existing staff through on-job training on project cycle management, and retaining them, helps alleviate the problem.

iv. Research knowledge and skills

The research skills of the employees working in CSOs engaged in the human rights field are not only an indispensable asset for organizations to thrive and accomplish their missions, but also a determining factor for the quality of the project proposals, and human rights research, as well as for advocacy work. In line with this, survey findings indicated that almost half of the respondents are lacking the requisite skills to carry out human rights research. Even the remaining half of the respondents, who rated their research skills as “Good”, are far from being skillful as can reasonably be expected. Lack of adequate research skills undermines the efforts of human rights organizations in many ways. It will affect the quality of the project proposal and thereby undermine the prospect of winning funds in highly competitive funding awards. Proficiency in research skills is a prerequisite for the technical staff of human rights organizations who are conducting high-quality human research and advocacy works as well. Consequently, organizing training to enhance the research skills of the staff of human rights organizations is not a matter of choice but that of necessity if these organizations are to effectively carry out human rights activities.

v. Skill in communications, planning, and continuous learning

Effective communication skills are fundamental for the successful implementation of human rights projects. Communication skills (including oral and written communication), grant writing, collaboration, presentation, facilitating group discussion, social media management, usage of technology (notably, commonly used programs in fundraising including Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Office, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Word) are some among the long list of skills needed for fund raising⁵⁴.

The ability to think about, and successfully manage, activities with the help of any available resources to achieve specific goals, is known as one’s planning skills⁵⁵. Planning is a roadmap that guides us on how to complete a task before attempting to begin it.

⁵⁴ Skills Fundraisers Need to Be Competitive Job Candidates <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/list-of-fundraiser-skills-2062419>

⁵⁵ Planning, available at <https://www.cleverism.com/skills-and-tools/planning/> accessed on 21 January 2021.

Continuous learning is the process of learning new skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis. This can come in many forms, from formal course taking, to casual social learning. It involves self-initiative and taking on challenges. Continuous learning can also take place within an organization, or it can be personal, such as in lifelong learning⁵⁶. Learning activities, especially learning from experience and action learning (learning by doing), are the most common ways to develop one's skill in project management, particularly for employees who have never attended such courses. As can be inferred from findings of the assessment, more than half of the respondents rated their communications, planning, continuous learning skills, and knowledge as "Good" and "Excellent", while slightly less than half of the respondents rated themselves below good. Knowledge and skill gaps in communications, planning, and continuous learning are observable among a significant number of respondents which should be addressed through short and long-term capacity-building interventions.

vi. Management and leadership skill

Vision, curiosity, emotional intelligence, communication, and accountability are some of the key management and leadership skills, among others. Time management and delegation are also critical in effective management. These key roles are essential for the efficient and effective implementation of projects.

In one of the interviews observed,

"Founders' syndrome is not uncommon in the NGO/CSO sector. Leaders are expected to be [democratic] and lead by example. This is what we call democratic leadership. The simplest test for being a democrat is how you treat your family back home and your staff in [the] office. It is an open secret that the sector is being accused of [a] lack of internal democracy. I am not quite sure how many of them have read the basics of human rights. Hiring one's relative or ethnic affiliation is not uncommon in the sector. Downward accountability to their beneficiaries is also missing. Education may address the knowledge gap but does little in changing deeply rooted values. The solution is new blood"⁵⁷.

Findings of the survey show that the majority of the respondents (65%) rated their knowledge and skills on *management and leadership* as "Good" or "Excellent", while slightly more than a third of the total respondents rated "Fair" and "Poor". It is worthwhile to note that to have knowledge and skills in management and

⁵⁶ Continuous Learning, available at <https://www.valamis.com/hub/continuous-learning> accessed on 21 January 2021.

⁵⁷ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

leadership is one thing but to become an effective leader who has a major impact on not only the team they manage but also their organization is another. As can be inferred from the study findings, a lack of internal democracy, a lack of downward accountability to beneficiaries, and nepotism are identified as the markers of the sector which calls for a complete sectoral overhaul. On the other hand, the findings of the survey revealed slightly less than half of the respondents lack the necessary knowledge and skills on management and leadership which needs due attention.

vii. Strategic planning and advocacy skill

A strategic plan is a document used to communicate the organization's goals, the actions needed to achieve those goals, and all of the other critical elements developed during the planning exercise⁵⁸. Advocacy is not a one-off event, but a set of activities aimed at achieving a change that is aligned with your organization's vision. Strategy is the pattern of activities to be followed by an organization in pursuit of its long-term purpose. For effective human rights project implementation, a clear advocacy strategy should be developed.

The interview result is consistent with the foregoing assertion

“What makes advocacy work in Ethiopia a challenging undertaking, is that the thinking behind the government policy which purports all interventions should be geared towards fulfilling basic needs. Moreover, the political culture discourages holding the government accountable as a duty bearer. The underpinning of the political culture is just *‘feed me I will not challenge the government’*. While NGOs in Ethiopia are perceived as a good entity for a handout, in other countries NGOs mount pressure on governments. A CSO's/NGO's role is not to substitute the government role in delivering services to the public, but [to] create social movements and serve as the voice of society. For instance, debt reduction is the result of CSO advocacy efforts. Following the political reform, some movements are observed in social media. Human rights advocacy, and advocacy for law reforms are being encouraged by society and [the] government. Using the space created through the changes in the regulatory framework, CSOs can enhance their digitalized capacity to use for advocacy works. Nowadays, everyone has a mobile phone. Using mobile phones, CSOs can create online social movements and can build their constituency. They can communicate with

⁵⁸ Strategic Planning Basics <https://balancedscorecard.org/strategic-planning-basics/>

the people they claim to represent and assess the needs of the people and create [a] strong base”⁵⁹.

The interviewee further opined, “Advocacy work entails the collaborative effort of the government and other stakeholders including development partners, and the private sector. Work should be done and efforts [should] be made to bring skill, knowledge, and [an attitude] change. Organizations have not developed knowledge, skills, and methods for putting in place accountable systems and policy.”⁶⁰

Similarly, another interviewee espoused,

“Advocacy is one important approach/strategy in human rights interventions. The question is whether there is conceptual clarity on the subject matter. To briefly state where, when, and if an advocacy strategy is implemented. The first one is when there is a policy but the policy is weak and you may need to improve it. The second one is when there is no policy and you want to put in place [a] new policy. The third situation is when there is a need to remove an existing policy and replace [with a] new one. The last one is when you have a policy in place but the policy is not implemented. If organizations start with a problem analysis beforehand, they will be on track. In practice, organizations do not know where the gap is. Secondly, to engage in policy advocacy, one has to know the entry points, notably, international and regional human rights instruments and standards, the constitution, relevant legislations. In the absence of these, you cannot carry out effective advocacy work”⁶¹.

Findings of the assessment show that only 1/3 of the respondents have a high level of knowledge and skill on strategic planning, while the majority of them have a low level of knowledge and skill on strategic planning as well as advocacy, which has a negative bearing on setting clear goals, objectives, strategies, realistic plans and activities, with clear output, outcome, and impact for the organizations they are working for. Poorly prepared strategic plans yield little results. Findings further show that organizations in practice do not know where the gap is. Lack of knowledge on international and regional human rights instruments and standards, the constitution, and relevant legislation is obvious. In the absence of knowledge of the gaps and knowledge of human rights instruments, it is difficult, if not impossible, to carry out effective advocacy work.

⁵⁹ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

viii. Social media usage and constituency building

Social media is a dynamic online medium that has changed the way we work. Unlike traditional media, social media offers wider opportunities to collect and share news, communicate with audiences and advocate for change in highly interactive, global, social networks. Equally, constituency building is instrumental in strengthening the capacity of organizations to contribute to national and regional agendas by debating and influencing policy, participating in priority settings, and proposing projects that can be undertaken at different stages and places.

One study participant said, "IT approach, organizing zoom meetings, and media engagements are critical to reaching as many people as possible. Using simplified scripts promote human rights through video dramas and other electronic media tools."

Another study participant remarked,

There is what you call 'community conversation methodology' which can be used for various purposes. For CSOs to be effective it is necessary to build the confidence of the community. It is imperative to address this problem. It is critical to encourage people to speak out. It is necessary to educate the general public using the media many are connected with. *Chilot* TV program has created legal awareness. Afterward, other approaches to reach people can be considered"⁶².

Findings of the survey show that owing to inadequate knowledge and skill of usage of social media and constituency building, organizations have not benefited from the simplest and most cost-effective global mediums of communication, as well as an immense resource to be accessed through constituency building.

ix. Monitoring and evaluating human rights projects

Monitoring is the systematic and routine collection of information from projects and programs for four main purposes: to learn from experiences and improve practices and activities in the future; have internal and external accountability of the resources used and the results obtained; make informed decisions on the future of the initiative, and promote empowerment of beneficiaries of the initiative⁶³. On the other hand, evaluation is referred to as systematically and objectively as possible, a completed project or program (or a phase of an ongoing project or program that has been completed). Evaluations appraise

⁶² Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

⁶³ What is monitoring and evaluation (M&E), available at <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/toolkit/monitoring-and-evaluation/what-monitoring-and-evaluation-me> accessed on 13 January 2021

data and information that inform strategic decisions, thus improving the project or program in the future⁶⁴.

One study participant identified the inherent problems of human rights projects concerning monitoring and evaluation:

“Although some improvements are observed, human rights projects have inherent problems to track and gauge changes, as changes in [the] human rights sphere is a long-term endeavor. Thus, we have to craft concrete indicators. The challenge for measuring changes stems from the nature of human rights work which takes a long gestation period and failure to craft proper indicators for measuring human rights work. The other reason is, unlike other projects, human rights work only contributes to changes that take place in human rights situations, but it is difficult to single out the attribution of particular human rights interventions. To alleviate the problem, planning skills [are] required. Nowadays, in Ethiopia, monitoring and evaluations are being offered as a course. [To] start offering the course is one thing. Human rights projects require human rights monitoring and evaluation skills. Changes in human rights are the result of collaborative efforts of many actors and cannot be achieved single-handedly. Since they deal with [the] human mind, attitude and culture, as well as a state institutional setup, human rights projects should not be designed for two years, like agricultural and housing projects, but for a longer period of time”⁶⁵.

Another study participant also highlighted the challenges of human rights organizations on monitoring and evaluation. “Our partners’ interventions are not ripe for evaluation and I cannot tell you the results. [However], the major limitation is that they are activity-based and are limited to output level. The role of human rights organizations is not attribution but contribution. It is difficult for human rights organizations to show their attribution. In human rights interventions, contributions can be made and can also be shown where it is achieved if the interventions are connected with outcomes”⁶⁶.

While the aggregate result of the respondents who rated their knowledge and skill on monitoring and evaluation as “Fair”, “Good” and “Poor” holds 90%, only 1 respondent rated their knowledge as “Excellent”. This shows the need for monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

⁶⁴Ibid

⁶⁵ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

⁶⁶ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

training and is critical for the successful implementation and closure of a project. In addition, the findings of the assessment revealed several challenges associated with M&E of human rights project results. One of the inherent problems in tracking and gauging human rights interventions is the nature of human rights work, which requires a long period of gestation to yield results. Failure to craft proper indicators for measuring human rights works is yet another formidable challenge for monitoring and evaluating human rights projects. The study also identified the difficulty of singling out the attribution of particular human rights intervention, as the role of human rights organizations is solely contribution. The assessment also made public human rights projects require human rights monitoring and evaluation skills and the carefully crafted indicator suitable to gauge, solely, human rights work.

x. Skills in soliciting /raising funds

It is not an easy task for human rights organizations to find the right funders that share their cause and aspirations. Accessing information on specific issues which is critical for writing project proposals, meeting deadlines, funding cycles and requirements are some of the challenges. Lack of fund-raising skills is an equally formidable challenge for many CSOs including human rights organizations. One study indicated that “constrained access to all the necessary resources for availing and accessing human rights services to their ultimate beneficiaries”⁶⁷ is one of the daunting challenges of human rights CSOs. A resource constraint is “influencing consequential engagement of CSOs in human rights promotion and protection [...] it is also making it difficult for most members of the sector to resourcefully design, execute as well as monitor and evaluate projects in the area of human rights”⁶⁸.

One study participant also shared his observation on the knowledge and skills gaps in fundraising.

“This is not only the problem of human rights organizations alone. Others also suffer from this problem. There is complete reliance on external funding. In the project proposal format template we use, there is a section on *Sustainability*. All funding applicants state that the project will be sustainable after the closure of the program. But in reality, what we observed is the demise of organizations at the closure of the projects. They threaten us by saying unless the CSF-grant continues it is not only the projects, [but] even the organizations themselves, [that] will face the risk of dissolution”⁶⁹.

⁶⁷ Pro-just p.30

⁶⁸ Pro-just p.30

⁶⁹ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

The interviewee further pointed out the challenges that organizations encounter

“There were organizations who attempted to engage in domestic resource mobilization, but they encountered challenges. There is no evidence regarding the engagement of human rights organizations in tele-tome or any other fundraising activities. Organizations engaged in infrastructures such as road, school, and clinic building projects have [a] better chance to mobilize domestic resources. Since our culture of solidarity is based on religious precepts, many people view feeding the hungry and giving [water] to the thirsty are the two very obvious works of mercy and redemption. So, our culture gives little heed to human rights support. The other reason [is that] our political culture has been discouraging those who have the interest to finance human rights organizations for fear of government retaliation. The absence of the necessary capacity for resource mobilizations is one more reason for [the] low level of domestic resource mobilization. In other countries, a fundraiser is a key position. Here in Ethiopia fundraiser is not recognized as a position in any organization. Even if organizations want to hire a fundraiser, you do not find a qualified person in the labor market. Training on fundraising skills should be offered in Ethiopia”⁷⁰.

The other interviewee also shared his observations on human rights CSOs fundraising knowledge and skills

“CSOs are dependent on foreign aid. What is absurd is that, on one hand, you claim a human rights organization but you do not mobilize resources. Newly established organizations are in a vicious cycle. The donor policy opts for funding experienced organizations. They do not support new organizations because they are new. If new organizations do not access funds on the ground of newness, then they will never implement projects. Unless this vicious circle ends there is no way for new organizations to fund and implement projects”⁷¹.

The interviewee also raised one more challenge inhibiting human rights organizations to embark on local fundraising.

“The private sector shies away from supporting human rights organizations as human rights activities are often politicized. The absence of a culture of

⁷⁰ Beruk K. Negash Technical, Monitoring & Evaluation Manager CSF-III Ethiopia interview on 29 December 2020

⁷¹ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

supporting human rights organizations is another challenge. For human rights organizations, one way of ensuring their sustainability is widening their membership base. If they create networks of people who support their idea it would strengthen their local resource base”⁷².

The survey results show that the majority of the respondents’ knowledge and skills on fundraising is either “Fair” or “Poor”. The assessment results revealed that there is no evidence to show that there is an involvement of human rights organizations in tele-tome or any other fundraising activities. Findings of the assessment further identified a number of challenges hindering local resource mobilization, including an absence of the culture of supporting human rights organizations, fear of government retaliation among those who have the interest to finance human rights organizations, shying away of the private sector from supporting human rights organizations due to politicization of human rights activities and absence of the necessary capacity on resource mobilizations on the part of human rights organizations. As things stand now, CSOs in general and human rights organizations, in particular, are fully dependent on foreign aid. Donors’ money is the lifeblood for almost all human rights organizations. If the donor funds dry up, they hardly survive a year on their own. The way out from this murky situation is to devise a strategy for alternative sources of funding that helps them to gradually reduce dependency on foreign funding. Certainly, addressing most of the challenges mentioned above may take some time and require cultural and attitudinal changes. But the skill and knowledge gap on fundraising can be addressed through training.

xi. Report writing skills

Writing a successful report requires planning, thorough research, knowledge of human rights instruments, and concise language. Usually, human rights project requires both narrative and financial midterm and final reporting. Donors require a minimum of quarterly, bi-annual, and annual reports, as well as consolidated reports at the closure of the project. Reports are the mechanism organizations give to their funders where they show how they spent the money they received and share their success stories and the challenges they faced during project implementation. Findings of the assessment revealed that slightly higher than 1/3 of the total respondents lack report writing skills. This entails tailor-made training using USID, EU, UNDP reporting templates.

xii. Impact assessment knowledge and skill

Human rights project impact assessments entail a process for identifying, understanding, assessing, and addressing how the planned activities, in general, and specific interventions, in particular, impacted beneficiaries. The impact is quite different from output, outcome,

⁷² *ibid*

and result as it has long-term elements within it. In the context of human rights, measuring the contributions of particular organizations is a challenge for a couple of reasons. One, human rights interventions deal with attitude, cultural norms, and perceptions that require a fairly longer timeline to change, therefore, it is difficult to see the impact of a particular project like infrastructural projects. As state and non-state actors participate in human rights-related activities - although with a varying degree - it is difficult to measure the impact of a particular organization's intervention. Findings of the survey show a majority of the respondents rated their impact assessment knowledge and skills as "Good" or "Excellent", meaning that they have adequate knowledge and skills on impact assessments. Equally, important findings of the assessment show that close to 1/3 of the total respondents lack the necessary knowledge and skills on impact assessment. Organizing training, targeting those who lack adequate knowledge, needs to be considered.

xiii. Level of cooperation and networking

Civil society groups and organizations form networks to pursue aspirations for sustainable development and democratic governance that they cannot achieve alone⁷³. Networks can enhance the power and influence of citizens' voices in advocating for policies and improving governance. Networks can also link service providers to exchange information and resources, or to develop coordinated delivery systems⁷⁴. Civil society networks have become partners of choice for many international development agencies seeking to maximize the reach, scale, and impacts of their programs⁷⁵. If human rights CSOs are to function well and bring about sustainable change, their level of cooperation with governmental organizations, NGOs, and donors must be decisive without losing their vision and mission.

Findings of the assessment indicate that most of the respondents rated the *level of cooperation and networking* as "Good" or "Excellent", while 1/4 of the study participants rated "Fair" or "Poor". On the other hand, it is observed that the major challenge of the sector "is fragmentation which is dominated by individual survival and competition, which understate resource sharing and collaborative efforts"⁷⁶. Regardless of the survey result which shows positive responses from the majority of the study participants, the level of cooperation and networking is far from being ideal. The sector has to go a long way to fill existing gaps by identifying causes, undermining collaborative efforts, and devising mechanisms to stamp out the problem.

⁷³ Academy for International Development, *Supporting Civil Society Networks*, (2005) pp. 5

⁷⁴ id

⁷⁵ id

⁷⁶ Debebe Hailegebriel Team Leader –CSSP-2 interview on 31 December 2020

xiv. Needs-based project designing

Projects are meant to change societal problems in whole or part. Understanding the root cause and prioritizing problems is a viable approach in project development. Furthermore, an easy way of implementation presupposes prior identification and assessment of the need of potential beneficiaries. This again requires some level of knowledge and skills. Findings of the assessment show that almost all respondents either agree or strongly agree on the need to conduct needs assessments before developing a project.

xv. Timely completion of Projects

More often than not, there are critical assumptions in human rights projects, related to the political, economic, and social situation of a country or specific region or locality, that determines the success or failure of a project. If the assumptions are presumed to detrimentally affect the project implementation, then it could be delayed or may be suspended for some time. If the worst comes, it could be aborted altogether. On the other hand, delays could also happen due to poor planning and preparation, as well as a lack of foresight.

Findings of the assessment show almost all respondents, which constitute 90 % of the total study participants, agree or strongly agree on the timely completion of projects. Only an insignificant number of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This implies that most organizations accomplish their projects without delay.

xvi. Seeking feedback from beneficiaries

Obtaining feedback from beneficiaries is quite important, not only to assess the impact of the project intervention but also to learn from experiences and bring together the best practices. It is also an extension and expression of the organization's value towards the community it serves. Findings of the assessment show that the majority of the respondents (80%) answered that they seek feedback from beneficiaries. This is an encouraging sign that should be maintained. It is to be noted that what matters most isn't collecting feedback from the beneficiaries, but turning the feedback into timely and appropriate action.

Part Four

Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

The findings of the assessment do show a difference in the observed distributions of organizations on the national, regional, and local levels; however, the difference is not exaggerated.

The findings also show that more than half of the organizations have a minimum of 5 years of operational experience. The assessment results also show that there is a huge difference in the distribution of CSOs across various fields of human rights, as organizations working on women's rights constitute the highest number. The findings also show that a majority of human rights organizations are engaged in awareness-raising activities.

More than half of the total respondents in the survey indicated that they operate with less than 5 full-time staff, not to mention, organizations that are operating solely with one person. The majority of the respondents do not have adequate knowledge of human rights. Likewise, knowledge gaps on the legal regime governing civil society organizations are quite visible among a considerable number of respondents. While more than half of the respondents lack the requisite knowledge of project management, close to half of the respondents are lacking the requisite skills to carry out human rights research. Even the remaining half of the respondents who rated their research skills as "Good" are far from being skillful as expected.

The majority of the respondents rated their knowledge of management and leadership skills as "Good" or "Excellent", while slightly higher than a third of the total respondents rated as "Fair" or "Poor". However, as mentioned earlier, it is an open secret that the sector is being accused of internal democracy, nepotism, and founder syndrome, stemming partly from a lack of knowledge on democratic leadership, and partly from attitude.

The majority of the respondents rated their impact assessment knowledge and skills as "Good" or "Excellent", implying that they have adequate knowledge and skills on impact assessment. Although the survey results are positive, in practice, assessing the impact of human rights projects has remained the most challenging area in project management that needs further research. The study also revealed that the majority of the respondents have a low level of knowledge and skill in strategic planning and advocacy.

The findings also show that owing to the inadequate knowledge and skill on the usage of social media, human rights organizations have been unable to benefit from the simplest and most cost-effective global medium of communication. Equally, they also failed to tap resources that can be obtained through constituency building efforts. The majority of the respondents rated their knowledge and skill on monitoring and evaluation as fair, good, and excellent.

The study also revealed that human rights CSOs are facing multiple challenges, including cultural values and religious precepts, giving little heed to human rights support, the politicization of human rights activities, weaknesses on the part of human rights organization in broadening their constituency base for resource mobilizations, and a lack of knowledge and skills on fundraising. The findings of the assessment also revealed that the majority of respondents claimed to have report writing skills and that only slightly higher than 1/3 of the total respondents lack report writing skills. Also, almost all respondents agree or strongly agree on the timely completion of projects.

The level of cooperation and networking among various stakeholders is rated as “Good” or “Excellent”. Yet, facts on the ground show that the level of cooperation and networking is far from being ideal. Also, almost all respondents agree or strongly agree on the timely completion of projects.

4.2. Recommendations

The findings of the study brought to the limelight, the various capacity needs of study participant organizations. A long list of training items (see the recommendations) is identified by respondents to enhance the institutional capacity of human rights organizations. The following interventions are recommended to address the identified gaps.

- Various human rights treaties and standards
- Project designing and management
- human rights research,
- Fundraising and soliciting;
- Human rights project monitoring and evaluation;
- Local resource mobilization;
- Designing and reviewing strategic plans;
- Motivating volunteers;
- Concepts of CSO and governing laws;
- Communication and media usage;

- Managing non-governmental/ human rights organizations
- Evidence-based policy advocacy;
- Constituency building
- Fundraising
- Personnel/ Human resources administration and management
- Report writing;

Annex

Annex I – Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire

First of all, let me thank you for taking our 20 minutes survey.

The African Civic leadership Program (ACLP) is conducting a Needs Assessment Study to inform the development of the Executive Civil Society Leadership Program (ECSLP) which aims at supporting Ethiopian CSOs. The objective of this survey is to collect data so as to identify knowledge and skill gaps among the leadership and staff of human rights CSOs/NGOs in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation of human rights projects and programs, as well as advocacy and lobbying not to mention skills on funding proposal writing, funding solicitations, narrative and financial report writing, as well skills on conducting impact assessment.

Anonymity is right but we appreciate it if you could disclose who you are, the name of the organization you work for, and your position. Note that the information you provide will remain confidential and be used solely for this study. *(mark "X" on the appropriate choice)*

Part I – General Information

Name of the Organization	
Address of the Organization	
Name and Position of the respondent	
Phone number	

Part II – Background Information

2.1. What is the type of your organization?

Local NGO Society Professional association
other

2.2. What is the organization's geographical scope of operation?

Community (Local) Regional National

2.3. How many years has the organization been operating?

< 1 year 1-3 years 3-6 years > 6 years

2.4. What is the focus area of your organization in human rights field? (*note: indicate all sectors of your engagement*)

Socio-economic right labor rights Child rights women right
Political rights (governance etc) Voter educa

Specify, if other(s) _____

2.5. What are the major activities of your organization? (*note: indicate all activities of your engagement*)

Awareness raisin Human rights Monito Research and Advoca
Service (legal aid)

Specify, if other(s) _____

2.6. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) research skills?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

2.7. How many full-time employee(s) is/are currently working in your organization?

only 1 2-5 6-9 ≥10

Part III – Specific Information

3.1. How do you rate the level of your organization's employee (s) knowledge on core international human rights instruments like UDHR, ICCPR, ICESCR, CRC, CEDAW, and so on?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.2. How do you rate the level of your organization's employee (s) knowledge on the Organizations of Civil Societies Proclamation No. 1113/2019, and subsequently issued directives?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.3. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) knowledge and skill on project design and project cycle management?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.4. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in communications (speaking and writing), planning, and continuous learning?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.5. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) management and leadership skills?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.6. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) strategic planning and advocacy skills?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.7. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in using social media and constituency building?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.8. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in monitoring and evaluating human rights projects?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.9. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in soliciting and raising funds?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.10. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in writing narrative and financial reports?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.11. How do you rate your organization's employee(s) skill in assessing the impact of their intervention?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.12. How do you rate the level of cooperation and networking with different stakeholders (governmental institutions, NGOs, donors, media, and beneficiaries)?

Excellent Good Fair Poor I don't know

3.13. What is the level of your agreement on the statement "the programs/projects are developed/designed after thorough needs assessment"?

Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree No

3.14. What is the level of your agreement on the statement "projects are timely implemented in your organization; with no extension"?

Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree No

3.15. What is the level of your agreement on the statement "the organization regularly seeks feedback from project beneficiaries in its program/project design?"

Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree No

3.16. Finally, please outline/list what you see as your organization's key areas of improvement in project designing, fund raising, implementation and evaluation?

Thanks for helping us out.

Annex II – Interview Guide

Interview Guide

The African Civic leadership Program (ACLP) is conducting a Needs Assessment Study to inform the development of the Executive Civil Society Leadership Program (ECSLP) which aims at supporting Ethiopian CSOs. The objective of this survey is to collect data so as to identify knowledge and skill gaps among the leadership and staff of human rights CSOs/NGOs in designing, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of human rights projects and programs, as well as advocacy and lobbying not to mention skills on funding proposal writing, funding solicitations, narrative and financial report writing, as well skills on conducting impact assessment.

Thank you in advance for taking your time to participate in the interview

1. Have you ever supported human rights project?
2. How many projects are you currently financing in total? Could you please tell me the proportion of human rights projects?
3. How do you assess the project management competency of recipients of human rights projects in terms of effective planning, execution, and closure of projects? (with no extension cost)
4. How do you assess human rights NGOs' fundraising skills? What do you think are their limitations with respect to fundraising? What do you suggest to overcome this?
5. What is your assessment on the monitoring and evaluation system of human rights NGOs? What do you think is the major limitation? What will you suggest to address these problems or improve monitoring and evaluation system of human rights NGOs?
6. How do you assess the advocacy knowledge and skills of human rights NGOs? What do you think are the major gaps? What remedies would you suggest to improve their knowledge and skills so as to develop advocacy plan and effectively utilize advocacy tools?
7. How do you assess knowledge of organizations (their staff and leadership) knowledge of human rights, particularly their exposure to different human rights conventions and treaties?
8. How do you assess human rights NGOs' (leaders and staff alike) knowledge and skills on non-profit leadership? If you think this is a challenge, what will you suggest to addressing this problem?

9. Do you think human rights monitoring training skills are important for human rights NGOs engaged in human rights?

10. Do you think (adult education methodology) non-formal education skill is relevant for human rights NGOs engaged in human rights educations?