

Scoping study

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Analysing the relationship
between domestic
resource mobilisation and
civic space:
Results of a scoping study



Civic Engagement Alliance



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a response to political and funding pressures, civil society organisations (CSOs) in many parts of the world are seeking to diversify their funding and strengthen their local support base. A growing number of international organisations and funders are supporting CSOs in this. ‘Domestic resource mobilisation’ is a key strategy for these CSOs (see box 1 for definitions of key terms).

But does domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) improve the operating environment for civil society? Does it have an impact on ‘civic space’?

This report offers findings from a scoping study carried out by INTRAC with the financial support of the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) through the Wilde Ganzen Foundation. Driven by the above concerns, we set out to explore the existing evidence base, to identify evidence gaps, and to consider how to address those gaps.

Methods and questions

The study was guided by the following overarching question: *What is the evidence that generating resources and support from domestic sources expands the space for CSOs to advocate for citizens’ rights?*

It sought to unpack the following assumptions: if CSOs can mobilise more support locally, then their legitimacy in the eyes of local populations, duty-bearers and power-holders will be increased. CSOs will therefore be better placed to advocate on behalf of citizens and to hold those with power to account. This should have a positive effect on civic space. We recognised the complexities in these assumptions, the multiple variables that affect CSO activities and impact, and the challenges inherent in the core concepts.

Our approach was desk-based, involving an in-depth review of academic literature and publicly-available reports on civil society, domestic resource mobilisation, CSO legitimacy, advocacy, and civic space. We also drew on fresh primary data from a mid-term evaluation of the Change the Game Academy (CtGA), a programme initiated by Wilde Ganzen Foundation, including case studies from Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India and Kenya. We undertook interviews with three of the local consultants involved in this mid-term evaluation.

Findings

In addition to the four case studies from the CtGA review, we examined around 100 empirical studies addressing our areas of interest. Many of these focused on specific country contexts or compared experiences across countries.

We drew five distinctive findings:

- 1. The mobilisation of domestic resources enhances CSOs’ legitimacy and credibility at the grassroots by increasing downward accountability.** There is evidence that through different DRM channels, including volunteerism, community philanthropy and local fundraising, CSOs become more responsive to the needs and priorities of the people that they are seeking to support. However, this does depend to some extent on the issues that CSOs are addressing.
- 2. The mobilisation of domestic resources can improve the relationship between CSOs, government officials and the private sector.** We found evidence that closer ties with governments (local and national) and the private sector can improve CSO credibility, build relationships, and create opportunities for CSOs to influence policy and practice.
- 3. CSOs use domestic resource mobilisation as a platform for engaging citizens and opening spaces for collective action.** There is evidence that DRM can increase civic participation and demands for social accountability. However, many CSOs use DRM to enhance their service delivery functions, so they do not necessarily use DRM to advocate on broader citizen rights.

4. **Political actors, including government officials, seem to be more receptive towards CSOs with a local support base, but it depends on the context and the functions of CSOs.** There is mixed evidence on the receptiveness of duty-bearers and power-holders to CSOs that raise resources domestically. While DRM can improve the image of CSOs in the eyes of government officials, it appears to be the functions that CSOs perform rather than the origin of support that determines receptiveness. This is an area where there are gaps in the evidence base.
5. **DRM has the potential of having unintended and negative effects on the credibility and accountability of CSOs due to mission drift, co-optation and alternative dependencies.** While overall the findings suggest that DRM could have positive impacts on civic space, the relationships are indirect and complex, and it is equally possible for DRM to have negative effects on civic space if CSOs refrain from critiquing those with power in order to ensure access to support and resources.

Recommendations for practice

- DRM has significant positive benefits for CSOs, and efforts to increase it should continue. Support should be provided in particular to help CSOs to navigate the hard choices and trade-offs that can come with DRM.
- External funding will remain important for many CSOs. Donors should provide incentives and funding in ways that enable CSOs to strike a balance between external and local support, and that enable CSOs to build up their local legitimacy.

Areas for further research

This scoping study identified the following weaknesses in the literature and evidence base:

- Further research is required on the processes by which CSO credibility and legitimacy affect civic space both positively and negatively.
- In-depth, comparative research is required on the receptiveness of political actors towards CSOs with or without a local base, and on the underlying factors that affect political actors' receptiveness. The evidence base on this issue was particularly weak.
- Longitudinal research is needed on whether and how CSOs that mobilise domestic resources champion the rights of citizens, and whether their strategies for engaging communities and political actors change over time as their local support base grows.
- Further study is required on what CSOs use domestic resources and support for in practice.

BOX 1: KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Domestic Resource Mobilisation

In this report, domestic resource mobilisation refers to the generation by civil society organisations (CSOs) of financial and non-financial support from sources within the local or national sphere. These sources may be private or public, originating from individuals or institutions. Domestic resources might include money, voluntary time and labour, information, material assets, in-kind contributions, communications, knowledge and expertise. They might also include less tangible types of support in the form of influence, status, reputation, authority, networks and relationships. We differentiate these domestic resources from ‘external resources’, i.e. financial or non-financial support from external or foreign actors.

Note that the concept of ‘domestic resource mobilisation’ is used in broader development discourse to refer to the generation and collection by governments of public revenue through taxation and fees, which are then used to finance public activities and services (World Bank 2018).

Civil Society Organisation (CSO)

We define civil society from an associational perspective as a “dense network of voluntary associations and citizens organisations that help to sustain community relations in a way that generates trust and cooperation between citizens and a high level of civic engagement and participation” (Newton, 2001: 201). Civil society creates the conditions for social integration, advocacy, public awareness and democratic stability. The conceptualisation of CSOs in this report encompasses non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social movements, interest groups, online discussion groups, coalitions and networks, professional associations, faith-based organisations and community-based organisations (CBOs). Note that in the report we may use the term NGO rather than CSO based on the source that we are referencing.

Civic Space

Civic space is defined as the place that civil society actors (individuals, formal and informal groups) occupy within society; it encompasses the conditions that affect the ability of civil society actors to operate and their relationship with stakeholders including the state, the private sector and the general public (OHCHR, 2014). For Douglass et al. (2002) civic space allows people from diverse backgrounds and origins to come together without overt control or dominance from government, private and commercial interests. The CIVICUS Monitor (2019) defines civic space as “the bedrock of any open and democratic society. When civic space is open, citizens and civil society organisations are able to organise, participate and communicate without hindrance. In doing so, they are able to claim their rights and influence the political and social structures around them. This can only happen when a state holds by its duty to protect its citizens and respects and facilitates their fundamental rights to associate, assemble peacefully and freely express views and opinions.”

Advocacy

Advocacy is defined as conscious efforts by CSOs to undertake activities that aim to change or influence public opinions, policies and decisions of local and national governments through the active participation of citizens to promote collective interests (Almog-Bar and Schmid, 2014). Advocacy is also understood from a normative and descriptive perspective and involves the use of direct, indirect, legislative, progressive, and policy advocacy. Advocacy by CSOs also includes awareness raising, capacity building and public education at the national and local levels.

2 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Faced with political and funding pressures, civil society organisations (CSOs) in many parts of the world are seeking to diversify their funding and strengthen their local support base. But does this ‘domestic resource mobilisation’ (see box 1) improve the operating environment for civil society? Does it have an impact on ‘civic space’?

These are the questions that motivated this scoping study, carried out by INTRAC with the financial support of the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) through the Wilde Ganzen Foundation.¹ We set out to explore the existing evidence base on this issue, to identify evidence gaps, and to consider how to address those gaps.

This report presents the findings of the scoping study, including recommendations for practice and areas for further study. We aim to provide civil society actors working at international and national levels on civic space and domestic resource mobilisation with insights and ideas for future action.

2.1 Background to the study

Over the past decade, CSOs have come under pressure due to complex shifts in the funding and political landscapes. The international aid system in low and middle income countries has changed considerably. This has created uncertainty and exposed those CSOs that emerged out of the aid system or that have been dependent on external donor funding to financial vulnerability, which has negatively affected their sustainability. Many CSOs in lower and middle-income countries are experiencing aid reduction, changing donor priorities and funding patterns (Appe, 2017; Kumi, 2017a; Hayman and Lewis, 2018; Pratt 2016).

Coupled with this, CSOs are increasingly facing restrictive government regulations which seek to curtail their influence, access to external funding, and political space in general (Christensen and Weinstein, 2013; Van der Borgh and Terwindt, 2014; Carothers and Brechenmacher, 2015; Dupuy et al., 2016). Dependence on external donor funding or support from international NGOs often leads to asymmetrical power relations, upward accountability, and loss of legitimacy as CSOs become closer to donors rather than their intended beneficiaries. This in turn can affect local ownership and organisational sustainability (Banks et al., 2015), while also offering arguments for some governments to close down civic space (Christensen and Weinstein, 2013; CIVICUS, 2018).

Domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) has been proposed as one option for CSOs to address these accountability, legitimacy, dependency and sustainability challenges (Pandya et al., 2016; Pandya and Ron, 2017; Wiggers, 2016).

2.2 The underlying assumptions

The scoping study aimed to examine a number of assumptions that underpin the work of international organisations working on domestic resource mobilisation as a means of strengthening civil society. Key ideas behind DRM are that it helps CSOs to spread their financial risk as they seek to diversify their funding sources, including in light of reductions in foreign aid. It also creates opportunities for CSOs to become closer to their beneficiaries and more responsive to their needs, rather than following the demands and priorities of donors (Wiggers, 2016). This should help in shifting power to local communities by making intended beneficiaries become the ‘deciders of their own faith’ (Hodgson and Knight, 2012; Hodgson et al., 2019).

¹ The Civic Engagement Alliance is a joint collaboration between 11 Dutch non-governmental organizations in partnership with and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The partnership runs between 2016 and 2020. The CEA partners with southern civil society organizations that advocate for inclusive development. See: <https://civicengagementalliance.org/>. The CEA is building the capacity of CSOs and civic groups to raise funds within their own countries and improve their organisational sustainability. This is done through the Change the Game Academy, a training programme initiated by the Wilde Ganzen Foundation together with several southern partners (see: <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/>)

The core assumption is that CSOs that mobilise more domestic resources and support will have greater legitimacy and credibility with local populations, duty-bearers and power-holders. This legitimacy will put them in a better position to advocate for the rights of citizens and ensure that those rights are upheld by holding political actors and duty-bearers to account. In turn, this should have a positive effect on civic space by strengthening social capital and ensuring broad-based support for fundamental freedoms.

However, empirical evidence on these assumptions remains relatively limited. While the body of emerging literature on DRM by CSOs offers some useful insights, we wanted to explore further what the literature has to offer on the relationship between DRM and civic space more specifically. The findings of this scoping research should therefore contribute to the emerging discussion of how DRM influences and shapes CSOs' accountability, legitimacy, power dynamics and relationships. In particular, the research findings speak to the discussion of alternative funding routes and CSOs' shrinking space.

2.3 Research questions

The research is guided by the central question: What is the evidence that generating resources and support from domestic sources expands the space for CSOs to advocate for citizens' rights? Aside from this, it also seeks to answer the following sub-questions:

1. Is there evidence of a connection between domestic resource mobilisation and civic space?
2. To what extent do CSOs use domestic resource mobilisation as a platform to engage in dialogue on citizen rights?
3. Is there evidence that political actors are receptive to CSOs with a local support base?
4. Are political actors more receptive to CSOs with a local support base than to those without a local support base?

2.4 Methods

The purpose of the scoping study was not to conduct in-depth primary research but to explore the existing evidence base related to the above research questions, to examine what sort of research had been conducted and with what results, and to consider what a future research agenda might look like in light of any knowledge gaps revealed.

The approach was desk-based, and relied on two key sources of information: a literature review and an analysis of new evidence from four countries emerging from a review of the Change the Game Academy conducted between October 2018 and January 2019 (see box 2).

Literature review

The research started with a desk review of the existing literature on domestic resource mobilisation and civic space by CSOs. The review drew on relevant literature from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, working papers and research reports. The target electronic databases included Springer, Scopus, Elsevier, Google Scholar and Google. Databases were searched from 1999 to 2019 in all fields using the terms: (domestic resource mobilisation or local resources for CSOs, NGOs, non-profit organisations or resource mobilisation for CSOs, NGOs, non-profit organisations) AND (civic space or CSOs, NGOs, non-profit organisations, accountability, legitimacy, civic engagement or political actors' receptivity).

The databases were screened using the following inclusion criteria. First, the study had to be academic, policy-oriented or practitioner-focused. Second, it had to contain empirical evidence (i.e. primary or secondary qualitative or quantitative data) on local or national CSOs with particular emphasis on the Global South or developing countries. Third, it had to focus on civil society (e.g. CSOs, NGOs, non-profit organisations, voluntary associations, networks and coalitions, social movements and faith-based organisations), civic space (political, regulation, legitimacy and accountability) and advocacy issues (social, policy and human rights). Studies that

were purely theoretical or speculative in nature and were not relevant to civil society were excluded from the review. We were interested in themes such as resource mobilisation and local fundraising, philanthropy, civic action and engagement, political space, legal and regulatory frameworks for CSOs, CSOs' accountability and legitimacy, CSOs' lobby and advocacy strategies and tactics. There were no disciplinary boundaries so the review brings together insights from development studies, social movement studies, anthropology, political science, public administration and non-profit studies.

Evidence from Change the Game Academy mid-term evaluation

This study also draws on a review of qualitative and quantitative data from the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the Change the Game Academy (CtGA) including baseline and follow-up survey data of CtGA participants, the synthesis report and country case study reports from India, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Ethiopia. We also participated in a validation webinar with the MTE team and carried out semi-structured interviews with three of the local consultants who undertook the MTE in Burkina Faso, India and Ethiopia in order to interrogate certain issues that were not explored in the MTE but were relevant to this scoping study.

BOX 2: MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE CHANGE THE GAME ACADEMY

The Change the Game Academy (CtGA) programme aims to empower self-help groups (SHGs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) all over the world, but especially in low- and middle-income countries, to learn to raise funds locally (through courses on Local Fundraising) and to mobilise other kinds of support (through courses on Mobilising Support, which relate to lobbying and advocacy). CtGA builds on Wilde Ganzen Foundation's Action for Children programme, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2015. CtGA is a collaboration between Wilde Ganzen Foundation and national partners, who take full ownership of the CtGA in their countries.

CtGA uses a blended-learning approach: a combination of online and classroom learning. However, the online learning can also be done without taking a classroom course, and the online learning is not available yet in all countries. In October 2018, the classroom courses were available in eight countries (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda).

Wilde Ganzen Foundation is also a member of the Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA), a joint programme of seven Dutch NGOs (led by ICCO) with their Southern partners, funded by the Dutch Government from 2016-2020. As part of this Strategic Partnership, NGOs, CBOs and SHGs in eight countries (four of which are also Wilde Ganzen Foundation national partner countries) have been trained through the CtGA methodology. Wilde Ganzen Foundation plans to roll out the CtGA further during the remainder of the programme.

Between October 2018 and January 2019, INTRAC undertook a mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the CtGA programme covering the period 2016-2018. The aims were:

1. To provide an objective assessment of the support to CtGA to CBOs, SHGs and NGOs: to what extent does the Academy contribute to an increase in the capacity to raise funds locally or engage in lobbying and advocacy? What is the CtGA's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability?
2. To provide insight and learning into success factors and barriers, as well as lessons learned and recommendations for the rest of the implementation period.

The MTE involved country studies in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India and Kenya, as well as a review of monitoring data (pre- and post-training assessments) collected from trained participants.

The mid-term evaluation report is [available online](#) from the Change the Game Academy.

2.5 Limitations

A primary reason for this scoping study was to test out the possibilities of doing research on this very multi-faceted and complex topic. There are numerous factors that affect the ability of CSOs to advocate for citizen rights and to influence civic space. Likewise there are numerous factors that affect their capacity to raise resources locally and to use those for bringing about social change. These include political, legislative, socio-economic, and institutional issues within the socio-political contexts that CSOs operate in; and internal organisational issues, such as CSO governance, leadership, size, structure, strategies, capacities, relationships and networks.

We recognise these complexities, but do not seek in this study to cover all the possible explanations and potential causal linkages between domestic resource mobilisation and civic space.

We also recognise that there may be bodies of literature that we have not explored because of our inclusion and exclusion criteria. For example, there may be studies by organisations that we did not identify, or materials on broader civil society actors, including professional or labour associations and faith-based organisations that might contain insights.

2.6 Report structure

The remaining sections of the report are organised as follows. Section 3 provides a broad overview of the literature on DRM in relation to the funding of civil society and civic space. This sets the ground for presenting more focused findings on the interconnections between different aspects of DRM and civic space in Section 4. This is followed by discussion of DRM as a platform for promoting citizen rights in Section 5. Next, the findings on the receptivity of political actors to CSOs in relation to DRM are presented in Section 6. The last section (Section 7) provides our conclusions, reflections on the identified gaps in knowledge, and recommendations for practice.

3 CIVIC SPACE, FOREIGN FUNDING AND DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In this section we highlight some key debates in the literature on the connections between funding sources for CSOs and civic space. Firstly, we identified a body of work on restrictions on foreign funding which are partly fuelled by concerns about dependency of CSOs on external sources of support. This relates to a second area which focuses on the links between funding sources and the legitimacy of CSOs. Thirdly, we consider a growing number of studies that look at local resource mobilisation as a response to these challenges, and outline the evidence on how CSOs are mobilising support from local and domestic sources.

3.1 The problem of foreign funding for CSOs

In the last few years, there have been some significant changes in the operating environment for CSOs. In many countries, CSOs have been under pressure from governments following the introduction of restrictive laws and policies aimed at curtailing CSOs' access to foreign funds and also at limiting their influence (Christensen and Weinstein, 2013; Carothers and Brechenmacher, 2015). According to Dupuy et al. (2016), between 2003 and 2012, 39 low and middle-income countries introduced restrictive financial laws to limit foreign funding for local CSOs. Christensen and Weinstein (2013) also found that among 98 countries, 39 countries restricted foreign funding to CSOs while 12 countries prohibited them from receiving external donor support. For instance, in Angola and Equatorial Guinea, authorisation is required from government before local NGOs are allowed to seek external donor funding.

Similarly in Uzbekistan, foreign-funded NGOs need approval from a commission established by the Cabinet of Ministers, while all foreign funds must be paid through the state-owned national bank for government scrutiny (Carothers and Brechenmacher, 2015). In Ethiopia, the Charities and Societies Proclamation prohibits Ethiopian charities and societies from receiving more than 10% of their funding from external donors, and places restrictions on advocacy and lobbying activities (USAID, 2018; Tezera, 2019).² The Zimbabwean government has outlawed foreign funded NGOs from undertaking voter-education related activities (Christensen and Weinstein, 2013). In the Andean region, countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia have implemented restrictive policies that limit and weaken space for CSOs (Appe and Barragán, 2017). The aim of such restrictive laws is to push back the activities of CSOs through mechanisms like vilification and harassment. By doing so, governments undermine the local legitimacy of CSOs (van der Borgh and Terwindt, 2012; Carothers and Brechenmacher, 2015). The global umbrella organisation for CSOs, CIVICUS, through its Monitor programme that tracks changes to civic space in real time, reports that 109 countries have closed, repressed or obstructed civic space (CIVICUS, 2019).³

The crackdown on CSOs' space has been fuelled partly by their real or perceived dependence on external donor funding. In the Global South, many CSOs are highly dependent on external donor funding which accounts for a high proportion of their annual budgets (Ron et al., 2016; Parks, 2008). In a survey of human rights-based CSOs in 60 countries, Ron et al. (2016) found that among their sample of 128 informants, about 80% indicated that most human rights CSOs received substantial amount of support from external donors. The same can be said of Cambodia where 75% of a sample of 312 NGOs received substantial support from external donors in the form of grants and donations (Khieng and Dahles, 2015a). This follows Parks (2008) who highlighted a few years earlier that most advocacy CSOs in Cambodia, Philippines and Thailand were almost entirely dependent on external donor funding. Similarly, in Ghana, Kumi (2017b) found that CSOs are heavily dependent on external donor funding which accounts for about 80-90% of their annual budget. Empirical evidence from Liberia further suggests that CSOs are reliant on project-based funding from external donors (Krawczyk, 2018).

BOX 3: DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY LEGITIMACY

We follow Suchman (1995:574) and define legitimacy as “a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. We therefore consider legitimacy as a social construct which makes it highly contested, negotiated and shaped by the ability of CSOs to conform to dominant discourses within their operating environment. A socially constructed understanding of legitimacy emphasises the role played by CSOs in shaping their legitimatisation processes through strategies such as being accountable and transparent to stakeholders (see Lister, 2003).

Legitimacy can be considered to exist in four forms: normative, pragmatic, moral and cognitive. Normative legitimacy relates to acceptable norms, values and standards. Pragmatic legitimacy concerns conforming to demands for services or meeting the needs of beneficiaries. Moral legitimacy refers to whether an organisation is doing the right thing. Finally cognitive legitimacy is based on whether goals and objectives are considered socially acceptable and desirable). For detailed studies on CSO legitimacy, see Walton et al. (2016) and Lister (2003).

² Note, however, that revisions to the Charities law in Ethiopia in 2019 may relax the limitations set on CSOs in regard to lobbying and advocacy.

³ The CIVICUS Monitor provides real-time updates on civic space: <https://monitor.civicus.org/>

3.2 Funding sources and CSO legitimacy

The prevailing preoccupation in the literature about CSO dependence on foreign funding is that it leads to CSOs being accountable to external donors rather than their intended beneficiaries. This can negatively affect their linkages and their ability to mobilise grassroots support (Banks et al., 2015). The result is a legitimacy and credibility crisis for CSOs (see box 3).

CSOs' dependence on external funding has led to accusations that they undermine government powers and national interests (Christensen and Weinstein, 2013; Pandya and Ron, 2017; Dupuy et al. 2016). Particularly in politically restrictive countries such as Ethiopia, Venezuela and Russia, foreign funded CSOs are accused of serving foreign interests and undermining state sovereignty (Dupuy et al., 2016; Gill, 2017; Moser and Skripchenko, 2018). The argument advanced is that the interests of foreign-funded CSOs may not converge with government goals and this provides avenues for destabilising social stability, development and domestic politics. In Russia, the government in 2012 introduced the 'foreign agents' law that requires foreign-funded NGOs to register as foreign agents. The law limits CSOs' civic space and operations by undermining their legitimacy and identity. It seeks further to fuel negative public perception, suspicions and distrust among the Russian public. This is a demonstration of the hostility of the government towards foreign-funded NGOs (Moser and Skripchenko, 2018). With the introduction of the law, foreign-funded NGOs find it difficult interacting with government officials and other stakeholders. It has affected their resource mobilisation strategies, collaboration with peer NGOs, and their ability to engage in active advocacy which negatively influences civic space (Tysiachniouk et al., 2018).

Gill (2017) discusses how the Venezuelan government used the notion of national sovereignty in restricting the operations of NGOs by introducing the Law for the Defense of Political Sovereignty and National Self-Determination (LDPS) in 2010. By doing so, the government maintained that foreign-funded NGOs are mechanisms for destabilising a democratically-elected government. Therefore maintaining national sovereignty takes precedence over the promotion of political rights. In Kenya, there has also been an anti-CSO public relations narrative, where CSOs have been accused of speaking for their foreign masters or been equated with terrorism. The threat of terrorism is therefore used as an avenue for limiting democratic rights and restrictions of civic space (Wood, 2016).

In the case of Sri Lanka, Nepal and Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Walton (2013) notes that the rise of anti-NGO discourses was caused in part by NGOs' association with political agendas of Western countries. Sri Lankan NGOs in peace building initiatives faced accusations and criticisms by nationalist political groups that they posed a threat to state sovereignty. Engagement with foreign-funding has also led to NGOs being elite-dominated, western-oriented and professionalised in nature. NGOs in OPT were accused of being distant from intended beneficiaries and undermining efforts to resist Israeli occupation. Thus, NGOs' engagement with foreign funding damaged their credibility and legitimacy because of their increased professionalisation and depoliticisation of peacebuilding strategies (Walton, 2013).

These concerns resonate with empirical evidence about the negative implications of foreign funding for NGOs in Ethiopia (Dupuy et al., 2015). Foreign funding is considered responsible for undermining local grassroots mobilisation and accountability among Nicaraguan CSOs (Chahim and Prakash, 2014). In countries like Bangladesh, dependence on foreign funding by professionalised NGOs created tension with traditional or grassroots groups because of the tendency for these NGOs to crowd-out the latter (Hayman et al., 2013). Professionalisation associated with foreign funding has therefore led to accusations that CSOs are run by out-of-touch elites with little connection to the grassroots and who fail to connect their programmes with broader social movements. This creates a negative perception among stakeholders, including political actors. Consequently, civic space is affected (Oxfam, 2018).

Foreign funding for CSOs can also reinforce rather than challenge existing asymmetrical power structures associated with top-down service delivery models in development practice (Mathie et al., 2017). This often leads to accusations that CSOs are distant from their intended beneficiaries,

which consequently affects development effectiveness because of the absence of ownership by local communities (Mathie et al., 2017).

In some contexts, dependence on foreign funding has resulted in local communities becoming less receptive to the operations of NGOs. As Jamal and Baldwin (2019:93) observe among the Pashtun community in Afghanistan and Pakistan, NGOs are perceived by community members as an extension of western military forces and they often refer to them as “smiling western invaders”. Consequently, communities and political actors are suspicious of their work which makes them less receptive to their development interventions. Foreign-funded NGOs are further accused of weakening Islamic belief and moral values, which is seen to damage the social fabric of communities.

In the same vein, Bano (2008), in a survey of Pakistani NGOs, found that dependence on foreign funding eroded the public legitimacy of NGOs. She argues that NGO leaders were more interested in material aspirations than the mobilisation of community support. She found that NGOs were dominated by foreign educated elites rather than grassroots people. Consequently, they were unable to mobilise and sustain their membership which affected organisational performance. Moreover, foreign funding for NGOs has detrimental effects on their ability to form partnership with government officials. In her 2018 work on state-NGO relations in Pakistan, Bano (2018) observed that foreign funding provides opportunities for NGOs to by-pass lower level government officials rather than helping them change their ways of working. By doing so, foreign funding encouraged NGOs to use ‘short-cuts’ (i.e. offering material incentives for collaboration).

However, there is also a line of argument in the literature that many local CSOs prefer funding from external donors rather than domestic resources because it gives them independence and alternative sources of legitimacy because of their links to international systems and structures. As Ron et al. (2016:35) document in their analysis of funding for human rights organisations, many have failed to change local philanthropic styles because they consider external donor funding as easier, quicker and more cost-effective than local fundraising. A similar perspective is shared among leaders of human rights NGOs in Mexico City who argue that it is less difficult to get foreign funding compared to local resources (Absar et al., 2017). Moreover, CSOs that are able to reach international audiences are able to put pressure on their governments through the boomerang effect. Their access to international audiences enables them to name and shame governments, especially those found to be violating human rights and international norms (Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

3.3 The rise of domestic resource mobilisation as solution

Concerns about CSOs’ resource dependency, accountability and legitimacy in light of the changing nature of development aid and shrinking civic space has led to a growing interest in domestic resource mobilisation and reconfigurations of power in development, with a renewed emphasis on community-driven and grassroots initiatives (Hodgson and Knight, 2012; Pandya and Ron, 2017; Ron et al., 2016; Open Global Rights, 2019; Hodgson et al., 2019). This is not a new issue but is certainly receiving greater attention in the literature and in practice.

Many CSOs in the Global South are therefore mobilising domestic resources through corporate philanthropy, membership fees, local and national government funding, income generating activities, local philanthropists and high net-worth individuals, individual donations and community philanthropy as a way of reducing their dependency on external donor funding, as well as ensuring their organisational and sectoral sustainability (Bailey, 1999; Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Kumi, 2017b; Arhin et al., 2018).

Empirical evidence from Cambodia, Mexico, Brazil, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Senegal suggest that CSOs are actively mobilising local resources and support for their operations (Sarr, 2006; Pradjasto and Saptaningrum, 2006; Khieng and Dahles, 2015a; Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Absar et al., 2017; Godfrey et al., 2017; Wasif and Prakash, 2017). For example, in Cambodia, Khieng and Dahles (2015a) found that among a sample of 312 NGOs, 21% and 4% raised funds from earned income and government respectively. For human rights organisations in Mexico City, Absar et al.

(2017:9) found that 29% and 44% of 34 human rights leaders reported raising funding from the public and state government in Mexico respectively. In Mexico City, the authors argue that many of their respondents favoured domestic resources from government, the general public and businesses compared to external donors. In addition, as Pradjasto and Saptaningrum (2006) observed among the Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Bali (AMA Bali) in Indonesia, although the NGO had limited access to donor funding, it was able to raise enough membership fees that covered about 40-50% of their programme costs which enabled the organisation to organise cultural performance shows. This helped the organisation to determine its own advocacy priorities, hence it was perceived as a legitimate organisation by its beneficiaries.

Attracting volunteer support and individual donations (material resources in-cash or in-kind) is an important resource mobilisation strategy employed by CSOs. Individual donations, including fundraising from the diaspora, membership subscriptions, payment for participation in gala dinners and concerts, play a vital role in the financial and non-financial sustainability of CSOs. For example, in the case of Turkish CSOs, Çarkoğlu and Aytaç (2016) found that individual donations accounted for about 40% and 39% of the total revenues for associations and new foundations, making donations the highest source of income for CSOs. In Lebanon, AbouAssi (2015) also highlights that individual donations including diaspora remittances contribute to one-fifth of NGOs' revenues. To this end, evidence from the literature suggests an increase in individual donations for CSOs. Zsimova and Kolosnitsyna (2018) in their study of giving patterns among Russians found that about 32.3% directly gave donations to support NGOs. Similarly, in the case of Ghana, Kumi (2017a) reports of NGOs' increasing engagement with individual donations as a mechanism for ensuring their financial sustainability.

However, while donations are an important source, existing studies highlight that individuals often prefer giving directly to needy people or family members rather than through intermediary organisations such as NGOs. Reasons for this include reciprocity, lack of trust and accountability, and the irregular nature of giving (Çarkoğlu and Aytaç, 2016; Mersiyanova et al., 2015). Individual donations are a means for expressing solidarity in addressing the needs of society. For example, in Russia, Mersiyanova et al. (2015) found that about 80% of the population gave donations directly to support the needy in society while only 11% gave directly to charitable organisations, including CSOs. In Mexico, García-Colín (2016) also observed that about 62.8 % of respondents reported giving directly to beneficiaries while 32.7% of respondents choose intermediaries such as CSOs. Nonetheless, individual donations afford NGOs some level of autonomy by being able to turn down funding from institutional donors whose interests do not align to those of the organisation. For instance, Renoir and Guttentag (2018) highlight that CSOs in Mexico, Colombia and Philippines are able to turn down offers from institutional donors whose interests do not align with their organisational mission. An example is the Kalimudan Foundation (KFI) in the Philippines which has maintained strong relationships with the grassroots by relying on individual donations and contributions rather than accessing external donor funding. This demonstrates the importance of individual donations in protecting the autonomy and independence of CSOs.

Directly related to the above, community philanthropy constitutes an important aspect of individual giving. Community philanthropy is extremely diverse, comprising of hometown associations which serve as channels for individuals to contribute to the development of their communities (Hodgson and Pond, 2018). Existing studies have documented the ability of community members to better address their needs by mobilising their own resources through such collective endeavours (Hodgson and Pond, 2018; Hodgson et al., 2019).

The empirical evidence from the CtGA monitoring data is consistent with these findings from the literature. Evidence from the baseline survey indicates that the percentage of organisations participating in the CtGA that reported receiving local and national funding were 39% and 15% respectively compared to 47% for foreign funding. The disaggregated data shows a mixed picture; CSOs in Burkina Faso were more dependent on foreign funding (83%) than in India (26%). About 61% of the Indian CSOs mobilised local funding compared to 6% for Burkina Faso (James, 2019).

The variations across the four CtGA case study countries are a useful reminder of how context can affect the ability of CSOs to mobilise domestic resources. CSOs in India, for example, were found to mobilise more domestic resources compared to their counterparts in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Kenya. The differences might be explained by the nature of the philanthropic sector in each country. India has a well-developed and matured philanthropic sector characterised by the rise of corporate philanthropy and high-net worth individuals (Godfrey et al., 2017), as well as a high number of individuals (i.e. 191 million) donating money and volunteering (CAF, 2018).

Although CSOs mobilise domestic resources, their contributions to annual budgets can be very small. Only 12% of participating organisations in CtGA at baseline reported receiving between 75-100% of their funding from local or national sources. At the same time, 15% of organisations reported not receiving funding from domestic sources (James, 2019). Other studies also suggest that because it is often seen to be relatively easier to raise funding from external donors, many CSOs have not prioritised volunteering in their resource mobilisation strategies (see, for example, Bailey (1999)).

A final observation from the literature returns to the political operating context for CSOs. We found a study, for example, that showed how in Egypt, DRM is hindered by legal and structural challenges which makes local constituents unwilling to support CSOs for fear of retribution by a government that considers especially human rights organisations as a threat to their power. For this reason, supporting local CSOs is regarded as a risky business for individuals and can make domestic resource mobilisation a counter-productive venture (Baoumi, 2016).

The literature on this point is contested, however. While some authors suggest that political repression hinders DRM, Ron et al. (2016) maintain that relying on political repression in explaining the inability of CSOs to mobilise local funds and support is inadequate. They argue that in countries like Morocco and Mexico with repressive governments, none of the respondents to their survey mentioned repression as the underlying reason for not donating to human rights-based CSOs.

In summary, the empirical evidence from the literature and the MTE clearly demonstrates that CSOs are mobilising domestic resources albeit sometimes on a limited scale. A key limitation that we observed in existing studies is that they often fail to quantify the percentage of domestic resources to the annual budget of CSOs. This does not allow for trend analysis in CSOs' domestic resource mobilisation. Existing studies often rely on the perception of leaders who may underplay domestic resources, or struggle to quantify in-kind support such as volunteering time or material assets.

4 DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND HOW IT AFFECTS CSO RELATIONSHIPS

Given the rise in interest in DRM, and the connections made to CSO legitimacy and accountability, what evidence is there of a link between DRM and civic space? In other words what evidence is there that DRM affects the roles and relationships between CSOs and other actors in their operating context? And how do these interactions impact on the broader environment for citizens and civil society?

This section summarises in more detail the literature and evidence we found on these questions. Firstly we present the links between domestic resources and the legitimacy and credibility of CSOs at the grassroots level. We then consider how different aspects of DRM affect CSO relationships nationally and sub-nationally looking at individual giving, government links, corporate philanthropy, and CSO engagement in commercial activities.

4.1 Domestic resources and grassroots legitimacy

As outlined in the previous section, one reason the mobilisation of domestic resources has assumed new urgency is because of its potential to promote downward accountability, or the extent to which CSOs answer to the priorities and needs of the people they represent or support (their intended beneficiaries). This in turn enhances the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. We find that this idea is supported by the existing evidence and literature.

Starting with evidence from the Change the Game Academy review, evidence from Burkina Faso indicates that the legitimacy and credibility of some CSOs has been enhanced because of their engagement with community members in the implementation of projects (Nikiema, 2019). Similar accounts were also reported in Ethiopia where fundraising activities by Self-Help Groups (SHG) and Cluster Level Associations (CLA) have strengthened the legitimacy of participating organisations through local-buy in and ownership of programmes (Tezera, 2019). These empirical findings are consistent with the existing literature (see Nabacwa, 2010; Andrews, 2014; Absar et al., 2017).

In the case of the Mexican Zapatista Movement (MZA), Andrews (2014) found that NGOs that supported the movement prioritised the needs of their beneficiaries rather than following the demands of donors when the Movement demanded more oversight and involvement in project planning and management. They sought alternative domestic resources from beneficiaries to support their activities, tailoring their projects to meet beneficiary needs, which increased their moral legitimacy. This created a sense of local ownership which also enhanced the public legitimacy of MZA. Similarly, Kumi (2017a) observes among Ghanaian NGOs that the mobilisation of domestic resources provides them with an opportunity to redeem their lost image in a context where they are perceived as being a creation of donors.

Domestic resource mobilisation therefore has the potential of promoting a strong relationship between NGOs and their intended beneficiaries (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003; Kanti-Bandyopadhyay, 2013; Mathie et al., 2017). For human rights organisations, mobilising local resources and support from ordinary citizens helps in strengthening ties, deepening local accountability and prioritising the needs of beneficiaries. This improves their pragmatic legitimacy in the eyes of local populations (Ron et al., 2016).

The legitimacy of an organisation also influences its capacity to mobilise revenue and engage with its external environment (Ron et al., 2016; Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003). In their empirical study on the relationship between financial capacity and revenue concentration among non-profits, Chikoto and Neely (2014) found legitimacy to be positively associated with revenue diversification. In a similar vein, in an analysis of 429 Chinese grassroots NGOs, Zhu et al. (2018) observed that legitimacy increases the amount of revenue mobilised and also improves NGOs' financial health and stability. With regards to crowdfunding by NGOs, legitimacy and worthiness are crucial instruments for mobilising domestic donors. CSOs are only able to mobilise domestic resources when they demonstrate the legitimacy of their behaviour and the worthiness of their cause. This also depends on the amount of trust individuals have in them (Zhou, 2018).

Trust also emerged in the Change the Game Academy case studies, where public mistrust was considered to affect the ability of CSOs to mobilise domestic resources in Burkina Faso (Nikiema, 2019). Trust is influenced by public perception about the activities undertaken by CSOs, and hence trust can be undermined if CSOs undertake activities that the public might not consider to be legitimate. For instance, in the case of Cameroonian local human rights organisations campaigning on LGBTI rights, Nkom (2013) argues that many people consider homosexuality as a crime and therefore are unwilling to donate resources to support their activities. Local CSOs have therefore failed to mobilise enough domestic support because of their inability to convince local constituents that their activities are meaningful and worth supporting. Nkom (2013) stated that "no one wants to finance what they see as a crime. So, there was little possibility of any local funding to support my work."

Similarly, as Baisley (2015:391) documents in Ghana, LGBT rights-based organisations are highly dependent on external donor funding rather than local resources because their activities are perceived as “un-African, un-Ghanaian, and unbiblical or ungodly.” For this reason, it could be argued that the extent of a CSO’s ability to mobilise domestic resources depends in part on public perceptions whether their activities are considered as legitimate or illegitimate. This directly speaks to the multi-faceted nature of CSO legitimacy. Hudson (2001) therefore argues that it is rare for an NGO to be perceived as legitimate by all its stakeholders. While some CSOs may be perceived as legitimate by their external or foreign donors due to the nature of their activities, the same organisations might be seen by locals as illegitimate. Hence, LGBT advocacy organisations in countries like Ghana, Malaysia and Singapore are able to mobilise foreign funding because their activities are perceived as legitimate in the eyes of those donors (Baisley, 2015; Ng, 2018), but might struggle with mobilising local resources.

4.2 DRM and relationships at local, community and individual levels

How can DRM strategies then strengthen the legitimacy of CSOs at the grassroots, and how does this impact on civic space?

Our study revealed that mobilising individual support through volunteerism and donations seems to have a high potential of promoting community ownership through downward accountability. This in turn enhances the credibility of CSOs because they are more likely to directly address the needs of beneficiaries. The findings further indicate that among DRM routes, volunteerism has the potential of opening up civic space because of its ability to promote civic engagement through citizen participation in the activities of CSOs while upholding community interests. Volunteers play important roles in the sustainability of CSOs because of their contributions to human and financial resources, as Pallas and Nguyen’s (2018) study of Vietnamese CSOs facing donor withdrawal and aid reduction showed, but the mobilisation of volunteers also opens up spaces for engagement between CSOs and their intended beneficiaries (Renoir and Guttentag, 2018). It creates a sense of awareness and local ownership of development programmes initiated by CSOs. For example, in the Philippines, Renoir and Guttentag (2018) found that Pailig Development Foundation Inc. involved community members in their programmes by providing trainings which helped volunteers to directly support programme implementation through the provision of funding or in-kind support such as man-power. In the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Jeunesse à l’Oeuvre de la Charité et du Développement (JOCHADEV) has sustained its operations entirely on support from volunteers.

Mobilising local constituents and their assets to address their own development underpins the community foundation movement; it ensures ownership of development interventions as community members become co-investors rather than beneficiaries of interventions. This creates a great sense of care and ownership which in turn fosters the emergence of horizontal accountability that is built on trust and transparency (Hodgson and Pond, 2018). In addition, it creates opportunities for shifting power over resource allocation and decision-making directly to the grassroots (Hodgson and Knight, 2012; Hodgson and Pond, 2018).

Evidence from the Philippines, Ethiopia and South Africa indicates that asset-based community development and citizen-led development has the potential of advancing social capital, and strengthening opportunities for collective action by building the capacity of community members. The authors suggest that citizen-led development provides citizens with ‘power to’ (creating new forms of activities), ‘power with’ (relationships that emerge from collaborations) and ‘power within’ (a person’s own capacity and self-worth) (Mathie et al., 2017). In the case of Ethiopia, for example, NGOs work with local marketing associations to develop a producer-led value chain for their products (Mathie et al., 2017). Similarly, in Sudan, Avdeenko and Gilligan (2015) report how community development initiatives led to increased civic participation and improvement in relationships with government officials. By working collectively, citizens were able to provide public goods within their decentralised governance structures. In Ghana, Baldwin et al. (2016) found that community-based development approaches made citizens more engaged in local governance structures. Evidence from Nepal further suggests that the mobilisation of local

resources by the Tewa Foundation conferred legitimacy on the organisation because of the breakdown in hierarchical power structures as minorities within the community were able to interact with the majority through joint service provision (Knight, 2012).

The evidence from the literature therefore suggests that local giving or community philanthropy can ensure the sustainability of development interventions and increase local ownership and accountability (Knight, 2012; Renoir and Guttentag, 2018; Hodgson et al., 2019). As the case of Makutano Community Development Association in Kenya demonstrates, the legitimacy of the organisation was enhanced because of its ability to develop programmes jointly with community members in addition to being accountable to community leaders (Knight, 2012). To this end, mobilisation of community support is an important resource for building the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. When members are involved in programmes undertaken by CSOs, they are more responsive to local needs, which also improves the perception of community members about CSOs (Renoir and Guttentag, 2018).

Nevertheless, the literature also highlights that despite these benefits, community-driven development has the potential of reinforcing elite capture and reducing the capacity of community members when there are competing interests. This can result in the exclusion of the voices of minority and marginalised groups (Platteau, 2004; Hodgson et al., 2019). Political pressures and control by local benefactors can serve as a hindrance for CSOs in mobilising local support. This in turn can render them “accountable to a small rich elite within their countries, rather than to the population at large. More local funding, in these cases, leads to less rather than more autonomy for local rights groups” (Ron et al., 2016: 402).

4.3 DRM and relationships with government officials

Our study found evidence that mobilising local resources and support (both financial and non-financial) can enhance the relationship between CSOs and government officials. This is partly linked to funding flows from national and local government to CSOs.

Although in many developing countries, direct central government funding for CSOs remains relatively limited because most governments do not allocate a proportion of their annual budget to support the activities of CSOs (Khieng and Dahles, 2015a), there are often opportunities for CSOs to secure public funding particularly from local government authorities and institutions. Government funding constitutes an important source of domestic resources for many local CSOs in countries like India and Brazil (Goswami and Tandon, 2013; Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Harrison, 2017).

Government resources are particularly significant for CSOs engaged in service delivery activities in countries experiencing aid reduction and donor withdrawal (CIVICUS, 2015; Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Appe, 2017). For example, the contribution of national, regional or municipal governments to the annual budget of Chilean CSOs is about 70%, earmarked mostly for social projects in health or poverty reduction (Pousadela and Cruz, 2016:610). In India, Harrison (2017) also found that state and national government schemes served as the main source of funding for NGOs in Birbhum and Purulia districts. In Niger and Burundi, the national government shares their development funds with CSOs at the request of donors while the South African government has established funding streams to support the activities of CSOs. For CSOs in Kenya, there are opportunities for some to mobilise resources from the Parliamentary Funding and National Government Affirmative Fund to undertake drug abuse and community outreach activities (USAID, 2018).

The evidence from the Change the Game Academy case studies is consistent with the literature. In India, CSOs developed strong and good relationships with the Department of Agriculture and local communities. By mobilising the support of government institutions, Assam Mahila Samata Society (AMSS) was able to secure funding of INR 80,000 for organic farming for women groups. In Burkina Faso, the improved relationship resulted in CSOs benefitting from government support such as the allocation of plots of land for building their headquarters. In Kenya, CSOs like the HAKI Group have developed strong relationships with county government which has helped them to

get bursary support for school children and also raise local funds for disability issues. The Cerebral Palsy Society of Kenya (CPSK) has accessed devolved funds from the county government (Pratt and Lewis, 2019).

The literature emphasises that the relationship between local governments and CSOs is varied, multidimensional and complex in nature. In their analysis of state-NGO relations in Ghana, Bawole and Hossain (2015) found that these relationships exist on a continuum ranging from superficial and suspicious cordiality to convenient and cautious partnership. They assert that NGOs that have good working relationships with government officials are also able to mobilise non-financial resources to undertake their work. This allows them to jointly implement projects, deliver on some project outcomes and also use facilities provided by local government agencies. Similarly, in the case of CSOs in Brazil, Marchesini da Costa (2018) documents how relationships with local government authorities guarantee trust and legitimacy for their activities as they are able to develop and identify contacts and areas for further engagements. Yuen (2018) examined the institutional embeddedness of Chinese CSOs and their ability to engage in 'service activism'. She argues that CSOs located closer to local government officers were better able to advocate for the provision of service delivery than those located further away. For this reason, their involvement in service delivery provided opportunities to engage in advocacy.

We also found that CSOs adopted varied tactics in their relationships with government authorities. A group of studies looking at associations between government funding and CSO advocacy based on regression and cross-sectional data from countries such as the United States, China, Austria and Australia found that government funding influences the advocacy posture of CSOs, with signs of them becoming less confrontational and more politically sophisticated and collaborative in nature (Chavez, 2004; Neumayr et al., 2015; Mosley, 2012; Lu, 2018). This finding is further supported by Verschuere and De Corte (2015) who argue that CSOs which received funding from government were more likely to use softer advocacy strategies such as insider tactics or contacts with government officials. Onyx et al. (2010) show that CSO managers focused on building and gaining trust with government officials rather than identifying flaws and openly criticising authorities. Williamson and Rodd (2016) also observe the use of relationship building with government officials as a mechanism for influencing policies in Nigeria.

The empirical evidence from the literature therefore suggests that securing resources from government can be an incentive for advocacy among CSOs because it also helps them in establishing credibility (Lu, 2018). Furthermore, the use of formal and informal relationships as part of DRM strategies can help CSOs to influence government policies.

Some of these studies show that there can be a credibility dividend that comes from closer ties with government. For example, in her analysis of informal relationships between NGOs and government officials in India, Harrison (2017) highlights that more people were likely to attend NGO public meetings because of the presence of politicians and government officials. This was influenced by the perception that government officials had the power to address community needs discussed during such meetings. Moreover, government officials endorsing the work of NGOs also enhanced their credibility with the grassroots because officials introduced NGO leaders to local village leaders which resulted in acceptance of NGO programmes. This opened up opportunities for NGOs to engage meaningfully with their beneficiaries.

However, as we will explore further in section 6, context really makes a difference and while these findings might show how CSOs can build and use social capital in positive ways with government to create opportunities to advance their activities, there can be negative implications also. Various analysts identify that reliance on government resources can create alternative dependency and co-optation of CSOs which can result in 'advocacy chills' and discrimination in funding arrangements (Doyle, 2018). Access to government funding therefore also has the potential of weakening CSO advocacy activities with a subsequent negative impact on civic space. Spicer et al. (2011) observed that dependency on government funding made CSOs in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia reluctant to openly criticise their government for fear of losing funding. A similar situation is reported by Arvidson et al. (2018) who claim that CSOs in Sweden held back

criticisms against the state and municipal government so as not to risk their economic support. A similar account of how government funding negatively affects advocacy activities of CSOs has been highlighted in Jordan (Abdel-Samad, 2017).

Government funding has just as much potential as external funding to result in mission drift as CSOs may end up fulfilling the interests of government rather than intended beneficiaries. Receiving government support can make CSOs shift their focus from advocacy towards service delivery and also exposes them to vulnerability in the political climate (Pousadela and Cruz, 2016). CSOs can be accused of being ‘government puppets’ if they are seen to fulfil the interests and agenda of government. A perceived reduction in CSO autonomy to advocate on behalf of their beneficiaries negatively affects their credibility and legitimacy at grassroots level (Mosley, 2012; Arvidson et al., 2018).

In summary, there are very different arguments to consider from the literature when assessing how resource mobilisation from government affects civic space. It has the potential of improving civic space as relationship building with government officials can provide opportunities for CSOs to advocate for citizens’ rights, hence increasing their legitimacy. At the same time, some authors (e.g. Mosley, 2012; Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Abdel-Samad, 2017) have argued that over-reliance on government funding might weaken civic space due to potential mission drift, alternative dependency and co-optation in order to ensure their organisational survival.

4.4 Engaging with corporate philanthropy

As with governments, a key alternative source of revenue and non-financial support for CSOs is the corporate sector.⁴ We found another angle in the recent literature on the configuration of civic space that focuses on the struggles and collaborations between civic actors and businesses (see, for example, Baur and Schmitz, 2012; Christensen and Weinstein, 2013; Dupuy et al., 2016). Recent years have seen a rise in interactions between CSOs and corporate organisations as the latter engage in strategic philanthropy through corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the aim of satisfying their stakeholders while performing social and economic responsibilities (Austin and Seitanidi, 2012). This is driven in part by the interests of corporate organisations in establishing their own credibility and legitimacy through CSR and corporate philanthropy (Baur and Schmitz, 2012; Godfrey, 2017). By doing so, their motivations are influenced by a mixture of self-interest and altruism. In some contexts the distinction between corporate giving and the interests of company owners is difficult (Hemingway and Maclagan, 2004). Likewise, corporate-sponsored and oriented NGOs – which Shamir (2004) calls ‘MaNGOs’ (Market Non-Governmental Organisations) – can seek to shape notions of social responsibility and social change in the interests of corporate organisations. They help in disseminating and actualising the vision of social responsibility espoused by companies while benefitting from their civil society identity.

Suárez and Hwang (2013) emphasised the importance of in-kind donations from businesses in fostering stronger relationships between CSOs and their beneficiaries because it helps in improving the services rendered. By partnering with businesses, CSOs serve as brokers of resources. In this sense, it enhances the image and reputation of CSOs as their clients perceive them as responsive organisations. However, empirical evidence from Ghana suggests that CSR initiatives are often used as mechanisms for enhancing the brand and reputation of corporate organisations rather than the promotion of development. For this reason, many corporate organisations prefer establishing their own foundations to undertake their CSR rather than using the services of CSOs (Kumi, 2017a; Mohammed et al., 2019). More importantly, they tend to focus on short-term visible projects that enhance their brand rather than investment in organisational

⁴ Note that in this section we focus on corporate philanthropy, i.e. resources that come directly from corporate organisations through their own accounts or foundations, as opposed to direct giving from their owners in the form of private philanthropy or philanthropic foundations set up by wealthy individuals or families. We did not come across a specific body of literature on family foundations and other forms of philanthropic or private foundations relative to our questions, which may be a result of the inclusion criteria we used. This may be a gap to be explored further. We recognise, however, that company founders often have influence over corporate philanthropy,

governance structures of CSOs. In addition, the priorities of many corporate organisations are social programmes, and they are unwilling to support advocacy CSOs.

Many CSR schemes are voluntary in nature and in many countries there is an absence of legal or policy frameworks that compel companies to engage in CSR. Nevertheless, the relationship between CSOs and corporate organisations has advanced with the evolution of CSR practices, where both parties recognise each other as an important stakeholder with the potential to influence or be influenced by the other. CSOs create possibilities for the strategic interests of corporate organisations to be aligned with societal expectations of businesses.

We therefore see considerable evidence that CSOs are actively seeking partnership with corporate organisations as part of their DRM strategies. This is not a new phenomenon, however. In the late 1990s Bailey (1999), writing on Brazil, found that the private sector became a significant funder of environmental and social programmes, disbursing about US\$ 70 million worth of funding for schools. This has increased over time. Pousadela and Cruz (2016), for example, demonstrate the promotion of CSR codes by CSOs among private companies. They argue that in Colombia and Venezuela, due to the scarcity of foreign aid, many CSOs are more dependent on corporate funding. In the area of peacebuilding for instance, many CSOs receive corporate support to undertake their activities. Godfrey et al. (2017) document the rise of corporate philanthropy among Indian companies following the introduction of the Indian Companies Act 2013 which mandates corporate organisations to donate at least 2% of their net profits towards CSR. They maintain that corporate philanthropy in India is a mixture of new and old philanthropic acts because it contains elements of socio-cultural and religious giving practices and CSR practices.

The literature on NGO-corporate collaborations (e.g. Baur and Palazzo, 2011; Baur and Schmitz, 2012) is consistent with the evidence from the Change the Game Academy in India and Kenya which suggests an increase in corporate philanthropy (Pratt and Lewis, 2019).

But how does this growing relationship impact on civic space? Corporate philanthropy, just like government funding, has the potential of positively and negatively affecting the legitimacy and credibility of CSOs. On the one hand, corporate philanthropy can provide financial resources for CSOs and serve as an avenue for CSOs to change the operational practices of companies through cooperative actions. This should have positive benefits for society. Through their partnership with businesses, CSOs are able to earn credibility in the eyes of other stakeholders, which can strengthen their legitimacy and provide leverage for the opening up of civic space (Herlin, 2015).

On the other hand, however, CSOs have been accused of tainting their values and selling their souls to companies where they align their interests to businesses rather than the communities they purport to represent. This negatively affects their relationship and engagement with community members (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). Baur and Schmitz (2012) argue that collaboration between NGOs and businesses increases the likelihood of co-optation and loss of independence and autonomy. They maintain that NGOs will align their interests to corporate organisations, such as through corporate sponsoring, which can compromise their independence, legitimacy and credibility. As illustrated in the case of an educational NGO in India, CSR coordinators often interfered in the selection of projects to be implemented which had a negative effect on the ability of the NGO to scale up its operations (Guha, 2019).

4.5 CSO commercial activities and the impact on civic space

Engagement in commercial activities offers another avenue for CSOs to diversify their funding and raise resources domestically. Our study revealed that while discussion of commercial activities among CSOs has received considerable attention in the literature (e.g. Gras and Mendoza-Abarca, 2014; Maier et al. 2016; Khieng and Dahles, 2015a; Hailey and Salway, 2016), this has primarily focused on the implications for CSO sustainability and delivery of their missions (Khieng and Dahles, 2015b; Buxton, 2017). CSO links with social enterprise in particular is a growing area of study. Through social enterprises, CSOs raise commercial income or utilise the market to mitigate social problems (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Hailey and Salway, 2016; Kravchenko and Moskvina, 2018).

CSOs are raising financial resources through programme service fees, sale of products, endowments and consultancy services (Pousadela and Cruz, 2016; Arhin et al., 2018; Kravchenko and Moskvina, 2018; Pallas and Nguyen, 2018). Mobilising commercial revenues helps in spreading risks, improving organisational autonomy and independence, and reducing financial vulnerability during uncertain periods (Frumkin and Keating, 2011). It offers opportunities for CSOs to access and accumulate resources and to be more resilient to shocks.

On the other hand, according to Gras and Mendoza-Abarca (2014), high levels of commercial activities by non-profits have negative implications for their organisational survival. They found that organisations that raise more than half of their budget from commercial activities were prone to facing financial hazards and had higher rates of disbandment. They argued that pursuing higher commercial income exposed non-profits to market risk, lack of a business perspective, mission drift, and legitimacy loss.

In general, we found that the relationship between CSO engagement in commercial activities and civic space has not been extensively studied, in particular the potential positive aspects. There is considerable discussion of how commercial activities can have negative effects on CSO legitimacy, depending on how market-based income is pursued, but the processes through which this occurs have not been extensively studied or researched. The arguments that exist are similar to those set out in previous sections, notably around mission drift and skewed accountability. Self-interest and commercial objectives have the potential of overpowering the social mandate of CSOs, compelling them to focus more on commercially viable and profitable ventures rather than those with social impact. In a study of financial sustainability initiatives among NGOs in Bangladesh, Devine (2003) found that they prioritised their commercial interests over the needs of their members which created uncertainty in their relationships with beneficiaries. He maintains that while commercial revenues helped NGOs to reduce their dependence on donor resources, the poor had become benefactors as part of measures to ensure NGOs' financial sustainability. Other authors have also highlighted how NGOs' engagement in commercial activities such as micro credit schemes and social enterprise can become a means for their own survival at the expense of their beneficiaries (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Pratt, 2016; D'Espallier et al., 2017). Beneficiaries with limited financial capacity may have difficulties paying for services provided by CSOs which can result in exclusion. This has the potential of affecting CSO relationships with intended beneficiaries (Eikenberry and Kluver, 2004; Ebrahim et al., 2014). Battilana and Dorado (2010) highlight how mission drift from commercialisation can cause tensions within organisations, as well as lack of stakeholder support for their activities. Furthermore, there is a potential of commercial sources of resources weakening the justification for CSOs to raise donations from community members (see Young et al., 2010).

4.6 Concluding remarks on DRM and Civic Space

In summary, the findings from the review of the literature and the Change the Game Academy data suggest the existence of an indirect relationship between DRM and civic space. The mobilisation of domestic resources has the potential of enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs by increasing downward accountability to intended beneficiaries. DRM can make CSOs more responsive to the needs of beneficiaries which increases their participation and sense of ownership in projects. This should be a positive factor in opening up civic space by encouraging civic engagement and a demand for civic freedoms. The findings suggest that among the domestic resource mobilisation routes, volunteering and community philanthropy would appear to have the highest potential of expanding civic space because of its ability to promote local ownership and accountability.

In addition, the evidence suggests that local resources from government and corporate organisations can enhance relationships between CSOs, government officials and private sector actors. This provides an opportunity for CSOs to influence the agenda of government and corporate organisations.

However, DRM also has the potential of resulting in alternative dependency, mission drift and co-optation which is likely to negatively affect the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. This is because NGOs risk prioritising their organisational survival to the detriment of the needs of their beneficiaries.

5 USING DOMESTIC RESOURCES TO CHAMPION CITIZEN RIGHTS

If DRM has the potential to strengthen local ownership of development, and to improve the legitimacy and credibility of CSOs in the eyes of local people, power-holders and other stakeholders, then the deeper question embedded in the assumptions we are testing is whether CSOs actually use this new support and these relationships to expand and nurture civic space. In other words, we need to dig deeper on the question of whether CSOs use DRM to promote and champion citizen rights, and whether this in turn helps to improve civic space more broadly.

In this section we present the findings on our second research question: ‘To what extent do CSOs use domestic resource mobilisation as a platform to engage in dialogue on citizen rights?’ Overall we do find some evidence, albeit not extensive, that DRM can address levels of civic engagement, can have the benefit of raising awareness of citizen rights, and can open opportunities for citizens to demand accountability of government officials (Mikuš, 2015; Danković and Pickering, 2017; Ron et al., 2016; Harrison, 2017).

5.1 The potential for using DRM to champion citizen rights

The empirical evidence from the Change the Game Academy data largely supports the claims that DRM can enhance civic engagement and activism (Pratt and Lewis, 2019). By having domestically determined goals and activities, CSOs are more likely to generate public acceptance for their programmes. The findings from Kenya, for instance, suggest that CSOs are able to mobilise their constituents to demand accountability from duty-bearers, including government and private actors. As part of the Kared Fod Women Development Program, there has been an increased engagement between community members in Migori, Homabay and Siaya Counties and other stakeholders, such as government officials. This has resulted in improved civic engagement where citizens were mobilised for the construction of a resource centre (Ogara and Okumu, 2019). Another example comes from India where the Sanghamitra Zila Federation has developed relationships with village level governance structures to address social problems confronting their society. The organisation also helps in educating community members of their rights and entitlements which increases the ability of community members to lobby for their needs from government officials (Kanti-Bandyopadhyay and Borah, 2019).

The consultant from India in an interview further highlighted that CSOs play important roles in helping community members to voice their concerns and hold local government authorities to account. The Sanghamitra Zila Federation, a partner of ICCO Cooperation, has been able to work in partnership with local government officials to raise awareness on women’s rights. This led to several campaigns against child marriage. In addition, they advocated for the rights of women by working with community members and the Panchayat (village council) to address issues such as dowry related violence. The mobilisation of support from the local Panchayat therefore enhanced the ability of CSOs to educate community members, raise awareness and also advocate for the rights of citizens.

In Ethiopia, CSOs have promoted civic engagement through the participation of people with disability (PWD), youth, community leaders, and the destitute in decision making. Consequently, there has been an increased awareness of their needs by government officials. CSOs have mobilised communities to advocate for the rights of their members and to influence government

officials to ensure the provision of infrastructure such as roads and bridges. Civic engagement has also been enhanced as the Cluster Level Associations (CLAs) are able to reconnect with drop-out members and make them active participants (Tezera, 2019).

These examples from case studies in Kenya, India and Ethiopia indicate that CSOs are using domestic resource mobilisation results and skills to engage and promote citizens' rights, particularly at the sub-national level (the evidence from the case studies about the ability of CSOs to influence national government levels was less strong). They show that an improved relationship with community members can strengthen CSOs to better advocate for the rights of citizens.⁵ In addition, an improved relationship with local government brings governance closer to community members which creates opportunities for real rather than remote engagement. Exploring possibilities for DRM therefore appears to have the potential of creating opportunities for opening up civic space where CSOs are actively able to engage with local constituents in advancing their goals and mission.

Evidence from the literature further suggests that CSOs, such as trade unions, are able to advocate for citizens' rights through their mobilisation of local support. For instance, the Kampala City Traders Association mobilised its members to advocate against the government of Uganda through strikes (Kabahinda, 2013). Similar evidence has been found in countries like India, Indonesia and Cambodia (Kanti-Bandyopadhyay, 2013).

5.2 Self-imposed and structural limitations

However, despite the potential of DRM to serve as a platform for advocating for citizens' rights, for many CSOs, their advocacy and civic engagement efforts are primarily associated with service provision. For example, the consultant for Burkina Faso emphasised that CSOs were mobilising local resources (financial and non-financial) for community development such as supporting orphans, school dropouts and paying for school fees of children, rather than advocating for citizens' rights. In India, despite the rise of individual and corporate philanthropy, givers mainly focus on service delivery rather than advocacy for human rights issues. Thus, the promotion of broader social justice is not necessarily a priority for many domestic donors and CSOs:

“Generally, CSOs are mobilising local resources for community project implementation. They are not in the view of using these resources to voice or advocate for citizens' rights. As you know, it is new in our context and it is only in the CtGA that some organisations are beginning to get used to domestic resources. They are still learning how to mobilise local resources. So, this might come with time maybe in five years, they might begin strategizing to see how they can voice for citizens' rights. But for now, they are using it [domestic resources] for community development.” (Local consultant for Burkina Faso, interview, 6th February 2019)

“But in a democratic setup where CSOs and intermediary community groups try to hold government institutions accountable for their civic, political or developmental rights, there you will find lesser domestic support..... Even among middle-and upper-class citizens, most of them are willing to give to CSOs but they are not willing to support any social movements or advocacy-based organisations. Their funding does not contribute to structural changes in power relations or making political systems accountable. Those kinds of support are not available to CSOs.” (Local consultant for India, interview, 12th February 2019)

The above statements demonstrate the challenges associated with a reliance on domestic resources in advocating for citizen's rights. The consultants further explained that many advocacy CSOs are therefore still dependent on foreign funding in undertaking their human rights issues.

These findings resonate with the points made earlier in this paper, and that are reiterated by author such as Ron et al. (2016) who observed that many domestic donors in Bangladesh and

⁵ It is important to note that in Ethiopia, CSO cannot carry out advocacy explicitly on citizen rights. However, under the revised Charity Law (2019) they will be able to advocate on citizens' rights. Ethiopia is a clear case when the changing political context can work in favour of civil society.

India prefer channelling their funds to CSOs to undertake service delivery projects such as the building of schools or tangible services like the provision of food, shelter and clothes. They argue that for most local donors, the activities by human rights organisations are perceived as alien, hence their unwillingness to support such causes. Evidence in the literature further suggests that many middle-class individuals and corporate organisations have a preference for donating towards concrete projects and programmes' rather than supporting advocacy-based and human rights organisations (Wiggers, 2016: 623; Absar et al., 2017; Mohammed et al., 2019).

In summary, it would appear that CSOs that are investing in DRM are advocating for citizen rights to some extent, but we need to be wary of drawing broader conclusions about the impact on the bigger picture of civic space.

6 DRM AND THE RESPONSIVENESS OF POLITICAL ACTORS

The final question motivating our study is whether governments and political actors, that is power-holders who have a significant effect on civic space, show signs of receptiveness towards CSOs that have a clear local support base. While much of the literature and evidence presented so far offers useful insights from which some conclusions can be drawn or inferred on this question, we identified a gap in terms of studies that explicitly attempt to interrogate in depth how political actors and government officials are influenced in practice by the resource base of CSOs. In this section we set out our findings in this respect.

6.1 How political actors respond to CSOs with a local support base

The mid-term evaluation of Change the Game Academy did not address this question of receptiveness explicitly, but data from Burkina Faso and Ethiopia suggest that political actors are more receptive to CSOs who mobilise domestic resources. In Ethiopia, the consultant observed that when CSOs are able to mobilise local resources as stipulated by the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Proclamation in 2009, government officials perceive such CSOs as more accountable to government and their intended beneficiaries. They are also seen to be less prone to external influences and are allowed to undertake lobby and advocacy activities once government officials understand the nature of the work undertaken by the CSO. Mobilisation of domestic resources therefore creates a positive perception that such CSOs are closer to the grassroots, which enhances their legitimacy in the eyes of government officials:

“At some point the local government is more receptive towards CSOs that mobilise domestic resources because the government can hold them accountable as they are mobilising resources from their local communities. Once they understand the activities undertaken by the CSOs, they are receptive...So definitely, government is more engaged with CSOs that mobilise local resources.” (Local consultant for Ethiopia, interview, 6th February 2019)

Similar evidence comes from Burkina Faso. For instance, the Union of Association of People with Disabilities has benefitted from financial and non-financial resources provided by local government officials:

“Before the training, it was not possible for us to have resources except foreign funding. Since the training we were able to mobilize resources at local level and we always have something in the box. Better, we were able to obtain from the local authorities a land for the construction of our headquarters and all this thanks to the project.” (Nikiema, 2019: 25)

Furthermore, due to their ability to mobilise local support, CSOs are invited to meetings and programmes organised by government officials. DRM is an important component of the National Development Plan of Burkina Faso, with the government aiming to mobilise about 66% of

resources locally. Informed by this, CSOs who mobilise local resources are perceived by political actors as contributing to the achievement of the National Development Plan which makes government officials more receptive in their engagement with such CSOs. Again, CSOs' close connections with the grassroots through DRM makes them 'highly valued' by intended beneficiaries and government officials which gives them pragmatic legitimacy. Engagements with the grassroots therefore provide opportunities for CSOs to win government favour.

This resonates with accounts in the literature. For example, Nabacwa's study (2010) on gender-focused NGOs in Uganda showed how they engaged with the grassroots in order to win government favour. According to Oxfam (2018), for CSOs to mobilise public support during crackdowns, they must be recognised as legitimate actors with strong ties to citizens. This will help them to undertake initiatives that reflect the needs and struggles of citizens. It also speaks to the importance of CSOs practising transformational changes such as accountability, mobilising people, and involving constituents within their governance structures as a way of reducing the likelihood of government accusations against CSOs.

Our study therefore indicates that there is some evidence that political actors are more receptive towards CSOs with a local support base because mobilising local resources enhances CSO accountability to government officials and to beneficiaries. This in turn helps political actors to perceive CSOs as legitimate and credible organisations within their political context.

6.2 Responsiveness based on function: service delivery versus advocacy

Nonetheless, as highlighted in previous sections, the evidence does suggest that political actors are more receptive to service delivery CSOs than to human rights or advocacy-based organisations which seek to challenge the power of government. This would imply that receptiveness to CSOs is based more on the nature of their work than the source of their resources. During interviews, the consultants emphasised that in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and India, CSOs who mobilise domestic resources but engage in advocacy activities which seek to challenge existing power structures with government officials have lower levels of receptivity. For example:

"The only thing is that you shouldn't be doing anything which will challenge the local government officials' interests. As long as you do not challenge the power structure at the local level, you're okay. But the moment you challenge the local level power structure, then whether you mobilise resources locally or internationally, you will be challenged too. If there are local resources and CSOs start challenging government policies and programmes, asking questions, they will be equally hated. So, it's not the source of funding but the kind of work that you do that determines whether political actors are receptive or not." (Local consultant for India, interview, 12th February 2019)

The above statement resonates with empirical evidence from Tanzania and Nepal which suggests that restriction of civic space is common among advocacy CSOs focusing on, for example, land rights, governance and defending human rights. Here, engagement in advocacy-related activities has created mistrust and negativity among political actors (CIVICUS, 2017). In Botswana and Liberia, advocating for issues such as the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) is barred even if organisations mobilise domestic resources and support (USAID, 2018). In the case of India, although Greenpeace India mobilises about 70% of its resources domestically, the organisation is accused of harming the country's economic interests. The Indian government has therefore frozen Greenpeace's account and prevented them from receiving foreign funding (Guardian, 2015; Matejova et al., 2018). These examples clearly demonstrate that irrespective of the source of funding, when CSOs engage in advocacy activities that challenge government officials, the latter may be less receptive, although we should be careful to distinguish between the national and sub-national levels of government as the situation can vary considerably.

6.3 Responsiveness to CSOs without a local support base

To push the above reflection further, we need to ask ourselves whether political actors are more receptive towards CSOs with a local support than to those without local support. In other words,

do political actors make a distinction between CSOs that mobilise local resources and those that are dependent on external donor funding for their operations? The findings in this study suggest that although political actors seem less receptive towards CSOs without a local support base, or indeed can be very hostile towards CSOs that are viewed as foreign-funded, existing studies often fail to differentiate the receptivity of political actors towards CSOs which do or do not mobilise resources domestically. Thus, comparative studies on political actors' receptivity towards CSOs with or without local support are relatively limited which represents a key gap in knowledge.

This is rendered more complex by the degree of nuance required for different contexts. Burkina Faso offers a good example here. On the one hand, government is keen to promote domestic resource mobilisation as part its national development strategy. On the other hand, the local consultant for Burkina Faso observed that government officials also welcome the ability of CSOs to bring in resources from outside the country to promote development which helps in attaining the government's poverty reduction and social objectives. This in turn can improve receptiveness of political actors and government officials towards CSOs:

Even if you're able to bring in the resources from outside and do good work, which is, you're in the good books of the local officials, then whether the money is sourced locally or from outside, that does not matter. And critically what happens then is, when the money comes from abroad, the quantity is higher and therefore the scale of operations might be slightly larger. And of course, that can also support the elected officials because the beneficiaries are their constituents who they represent. And this happens in a situation where the local government officials are resource-starved and if they get some additional resources from outside, whoever brings the resources to the community, it still helps them and they are more receptive to you (Local consultant for Burkina Faso, interview, 12th February 2019).

Hence, in environments where aid dependency is high or where a range of local-international partnerships provide mutual benefits, CSOs can be perceived as legitimate based on their ability to attract foreign support which benefits local authorities. In such contexts, it is possible for CSOs to forge closer relationships with political actors. Similar empirical accounts have been highlighted among CSOs in Burundi and Ghana (Bawole and Hossain, 2015; Popplewell, 2018).

6.4 Concluding remarks on responsiveness

In summary, our study indicates that although in some contexts political actors are less receptive to foreign-funded CSOs for reasons such as protection of national interests and sovereignty, there is some empirical evidence from the Change the Game Academy review and other sources to suggest that political actors are more receptive to CSOs with a domestic support base than to those without a domestic support base. The extent to which government officials are receptive to locally-funded CSOs appears to be highly context-specific (including the type of political regime, the levels of democracy, and the nature of political settlements - i.e. cohesion or competition of interests and ideas among political actors), and depends on a large range of CSO organisational and institutional factors (which we have not explored in this study), including the nature of activities undertaken by CSOs and their ability to overcome hostilities and initial lack of understanding on the part of government officials. It would appear that governments are often less receptive towards advocacy-based CSOs irrespective of their funding source (i.e. domestic or foreign) compared to their service-delivery counterparts.

Much of the existing literature that highlights the negative implications of foreign funding for CSOs fails to explore the extent to which political actors are receptive to CSOs that mobilise domestic resources and support for their activities. This is a significant gap in knowledge which warrants future research. Such research would require a primary, comparative study with a large sample of respondents at the local and national levels in different contexts, including political actors, government officials, CSOs and community members to examine in depth their perspectives on political actors' receptiveness to CSOs. This would help in understanding the underlying factors and reasons, as well as the extent to which mobilising local support influences and shapes political actors' receptivity.

7 CONCLUSION

Through a review of literature and empirical data from the Change the Game Academy, we tackled the following question: ‘What is the evidence that generating resources and support from domestic sources expands the space for CSOs to advocate for citizens’ rights?’ Here we summarise key findings, recommendations for practice, and ideas for addressing evidence gaps.

Firstly, it is worth recapping the limitations of the study. There are a great many variables that affect the effectiveness of CSOs, factors that are internal to the organisation (leadership, management, strategies, capacities, capabilities, and networks, etc.), and external, related to the local, national and international operating context. This study did not seek to assess the causal connections between domestic resource mobilisation and civic space, which would require a thorough analysis of these multiple variables. More importantly, DRM is primarily focused on the organisation, while civic space relates to a society-wide phenomenon. Individual CSOs might seek to influence civic space but real change requires a collective endeavour involving multiple actors. Recognising this complexity, the study was established to scope the knowledge and evidence base as a precursor to more in-depth research.

7.1 Key findings

We identified five distinctive findings in relation to domestic resource mobilisation, civic space and advocacy for citizens’ rights.

The mobilisation of domestic resources enhances CSOs’ legitimacy and credibility at the grassroots by increasing downward accountability.

Mobilisation of domestic resources was found to open up civic space by making CSOs more responsive to the needs and priorities of intended beneficiaries. The involvement of people and communities in project conceptualisation, planning, designing and implementation deepens ties and creates a sense of local ownership and local buy-in which enhances civic engagement. Individual donations and community philanthropy would appear to have the highest potential of influencing CSO impact on civic space. Volunteerism can promote civic engagement and uphold community interests, while individual donations can enhance CSOs’ autonomy and independence, and ensure self-sufficiency. Community philanthropy through citizen-led development also enhances local ownership, accountability and credibility, and improves relationships between CSOs and local communities.

However, we identified a challenge for CSOs working on issues that are not widely supported by local communities or not considered legitimate issues for CSOs to address, such as LGBTI issues.

Hence, CSOs need to actively reflect on and seek to improve their local legitimacy and credibility as they build up their DRM capacity.

The mobilisation of domestic resources can improve the relationship between CSOs, government officials and the private sector.

This research found that CSOs have mobilised financial and non-financial resources from local and national government, which has led to increased trust, acceptance and support for the activities of CSOs within their political context. Improved relationships have created opportunities to raise awareness on citizens’ rights. In politically restrictive environments, the study found that DRM can enhance the credibility of CSOs when their activities are endorsed by government officials, particularly at local levels.

The study further highlights that the emergence of corporate social responsibility has created opportunities for CSOs to work with the private sector where these are seeking to align their strategic interests with societal expectations. CSOs have therefore used their improved relationship to influence the private sector about the needs of community members.

CSOs use domestic resource mobilisation as a platform for engaging citizens and opening spaces for collective action.

DRM enables CSOs to engage with people and communities on their needs. This enables CSOs to raise awareness and educate citizens on their rights, which helps them in turn to demand accountability and transparency from government officials. The mobilisation of domestic resources helps in increasing participation from minority and vulnerable groups by breaking down hierarchical power structures.

However, the study also found that in some contexts, CSOs are more likely to mobilise domestic resources to undertake service delivery functions, rather than to engage in advocacy activities aimed at promoting structural changes in society. Therefore, those working on DRM need to be wary of assuming that CSOs that engage in DRM will use their new support bases to engage in advocacy activities or proactively seek to push for the opening of civic space.

Political actors, including government officials, seem to be more receptive towards CSOs with a local support base, but it depends on the context and the functions of CSOs.

Overall, the findings point to mixed evidence on the receptivity of political actors to CSOs that are engaging in more domestic resource mobilisation. There is limited evidence that differentiates the receptivity of political actors towards CSOs with or without a local support base.

Even in politically restrictive environments, the study found that the mobilisation of local resources can improve the image and perception of CSOs in the eyes of government officials. This appears to be because CSOs with a local support base are perceived to be more accountable, credible and responsive to the needs and priorities of their intended beneficiaries. On the other hand, foreign-funded CSOs are easily accused of undermining national interests and state sovereignty.

Given the desire of many lower- and middle-income countries like Burkina Faso to wean themselves off donor dependency, CSOs that mobilise local resources are perceived by government officials as contributing to the achievement of their national development plans. This enables them to build a positive reputation with government officials, hence creating opportunities for engagement and receptivity.

Nevertheless, the extent of political actors' receptivity to CSOs with a local support base is context-specific. In many aid-dependent countries, foreign-funded CSOs perform service delivery functions which benefit political actors. The findings also suggest that political actors are more receptive to service delivery CSOs than to advocacy and human rights-based organisations irrespective of their funding source. To this end, it appears to be the functions performed by CSOs rather than their resource mobilisation routes that determine the extent of receptivity by political actors.

DRM has the potential of having unintended and negative effects on the credibility and accountability of CSOs due to mission drift, co-optation and alternative dependencies.

The dynamics identified above should have positive benefits for opening civic space. However, they need to be tempered. The study highlights that there is a complex relationship between DRM and civic space. The mobilisation of resources from government, corporate philanthropy and commercial activities may result in mission drift, dependency on these actors (rather than external actors) and co-optation, which consequently can affect the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. Government funding can result in an 'advocacy chill' where CSOs refrain from criticising the government and may shift their priorities away from advocacy towards service delivery functions. DRM from the public, such as individual donations and community philanthropy, also has the potential of reinforcing existing structural power dynamics through elite capture, which may result in CSOs serving the interests of the rich and powerful in society. This can negatively affect the accountability and autonomy of CSOs.

The findings in this scoping study therefore indicate that DRM can serve as both an asset and a hindrance for CSOs, with potentially negative consequences for broader civic space.

7.2 Recommendations for practice

Based on the findings from this research, we make the following overarching recommendations.⁶

Firstly, there is an argument for strengthening efforts towards domestic resource mobilisation as a mechanism for addressing the sustainability, credibility and legitimacy crises faced by CSOs, because of its potential to promote downward accountability to beneficiaries and to strengthen relationships with other stakeholders in society. This calls for creative thinking by CSOs to focus on domestic resource mobilisation in a holistic way, recognising the need to also build trust and demonstrate transparency and accountability towards beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

In particular, CSOs need to consider how to strengthen trust when they are working on issues that communities might find socially uncomfortable. They also need to be aware of the potential negative consequences of DRM. They have to gain a solid understanding of these issues in their context, and ensure that they are able to navigate effectively the hard choices and trade-offs.

Secondly, local and international supporters of DRM need to continue their work, investing over the long term in changing attitudes and organisational cultures, as well as building acceptance and receptiveness among local and national stakeholders. For many CSOs external donor funding will remain an important resource, as will non-financial support such as network access and international advocacy. Striking the balance within a funding and support portfolio is critical, and donors should provide incentives such as matched funding and unrestricted funding to enable CSOs to develop their self-sufficiency and local profile.

7.3 Areas for further Research

This scoping study identified several weaknesses in the literature and evidence base which should be addressed:

1. Future research should focus specifically on how the mobilisation of domestic resources enhances or negatively affects the credibility and legitimacy of CSOs. Existing studies do not sufficiently explore the processes by which CSO credibility and legitimacy affect civic space both positively and negatively.
2. Comparative research is required on the receptiveness of political actors towards CSOs with or without a local base, and on the underlying factors that affect political actors' receptiveness. This would require a comparative qualitative study across different countries and organisations to develop a nuanced understanding of this issue, analysing the wide-ranging variables that affect social mobilisation. Such a study should involve a range of CSOs, government officials, political actors, businesses, community members, and external donors. The research might focus on a range of CSOs (e.g. advocacy-based and service-delivery; CSOs actively working on DRM and those that are not; highly donor dependent and less-donor dependent CSOs; small, medium and large-sized CSOs; local, national CSOs and INGOs).
3. Further research is needed on whether and how CSOs that mobilise domestic resources champion the rights of citizens, and whether their strategies for engaging communities and political actors change over time as their local support base grows. This would require a longitudinal study to examine change over time and to understand whether mobilising more domestic resources enables or constrains the ability of CSOs to become champions of citizens' rights. Such research might also look in more detail at the role of individual philanthropists or family foundations in the global South with a specific interest in human rights.
4. A final area for further study is on what CSOs use domestic resources and support for, i.e. for more focused projects, core functions, advocacy, or outreach work. Does DRM offer greater flexibility in practice?

⁶ A more detailed set of recommendations specific to the Change the Game Academy is made in the mid-term evaluation report.

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