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NIRAS Sweden AB

End of Project Evaluation of “The Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia Project (2018 to 2022)”

Final Report



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**Final Report
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**Criana Connal
Annica Holmberg
Khazike Sakala
Mabuchi Bruno M’tonga
Christina Paabøl Thomsen**

Authors: Criana Connal, Annica Holmberg, Khazike Sakala,
Mabuchi Bruno M'tonga, Christina Paabøl Thomsen

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SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Visiting address: Rissneleden 110, 174 57 Sundbyberg

Postal address: Box 2025, SE-174 02 Sundbyberg, Sweden

Telephone: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64

E-mail: sida@sida.se Web: sida.se/en

Table of contents

Table of contents	i
Abbreviations and Acronyms	iii
Preface	v
Executive Summary	vi
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Overview of the Civil Society Support Project	2
2 Context of the CSSP and Mapping Grant Partners	4
2.1 The Partner's Landscape	4
2.2 Mapping Grant Partners and their Projects	8
3 Grant Management	11
3.1 Responsiveness of AAZ's grant management to grant partners' needs	11
3.2 Capacity building that meets grant partners' needs	13
3.3 Efficient grant management	14
3.4 Partners' access to resources	15
3.5 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	15
3.6 Change management by AAZ and Grant Partners	17
3.7 Feedback mechanisms influence AAZ's management strategies	18
3.8 Risk assessment and mitigation measures	18
4 Four Contribution Stories	20
4.1 Digital #Youth Vote Project: "We filled the space with a lot of voices"	20
4.2 Lawyers for Human Rights Project: Successful but "not a good experience"	24
4.3 The 'Strengthening Implementation of Legal and Policy Regulations on Mining and Environment Project': "It was a great project that lasted only a short while"	28
4.4 The community Action Voice (CAVE) Project: "our platform should be replicated"	32
4.5 Uncertain pathways to sustained change	36
5 Deep Dive Analysis	40
5.1 Innovations: Four activities	40
5.2 The importance of collective action	42

5.3 The importance of power dynamics.....	45
5.4 The importance of anchoring.....	48
6 Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	52
6.1 Conclusions and lessons learned	52
6.2 Recommendations.....	55
Annex 1 – Terms of Reference.....	59
Annex 2 – Technical Annex	74
Annex 3 – Lessons learned from the evaluation.....	83
Annex 4 – Mapping of grants	87
Annex 5 – Analysis of the responses to the survey	90
Annex 6 – Hub management.....	97
Annex 7 – “Nested” Theories of Change	99
Annex 8 – Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights-Based Approaches in the CSSP.....	105

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA/AAZ	ActionAid/ActionAid Zambia
ACA	Alliance for Community Action
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CFNZ	Care for Nature Zambia
COF	Chapter One Foundation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
DAAG	District Advocacy Action Group
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GE	Gender Equality
GP	Grant Partner
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRC	Human Rights Commission
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
IT/ICT	Information Technology/Information Communication Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMMD	Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development
MS-TDC	MS-Training Centre for Development
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
OH	Outcome Harvesting
I/NGO	International/Non-Governmental Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NHC	Neighbourhood Health Committees
PAT	Partnership Accountability Team
PAAGZ	People's Action for Accountability and Good
PFM	Public Financial Management
PIU	Primary Intended Users
RICAP	Rise Community Aid Programme
RBM	Results-Based Management
SAC	State Audit Commission
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
WDC	Ward Development Committee
WRO	Women's Rights Organisations

Preface

The Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka commissioned this evaluation of the End of Project Evaluation of ‘The Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia’, funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and implemented by ActionAid Zambia. The evaluation was undertaken between March 2022 and July 2022.

The independent evaluation team consisted of:

- Criana Connal, Team Leader
- Annica Holmberg, Senior Evaluator, Thematic Expert Gender equality, Human Rights and Democracy
- Khazike Sakala, Evaluator, Governance and Public Service Delivery Specialist
- Mabuchi Bruno Mtonga, Evaluator, CSOs, Natural Resource Management, Climate Justice Specialist
- Christina Paabøl Thomsen, Evaluator, Research Assistant

The NIRAS Project Manager was responsible for ensuring compliance with NIRAS’s Quality Assurance system. Quality Assurance was undertaken to ensure that the evaluation fulfils Sida’s requirements and the OECD-DAC quality standards for development evaluation.

- Emelie Pellby, NIRAS Project Manager
- Ted Kliet, External Quality Assurance Advisor

NIRAS and the evaluation team would like to thank Pezo Mateo-Phiri at the Embassy of Sweden, and Mattias Lindgren and Sarah Gharbi at the Evaluation Department at Sida who managed the evaluation. A special thanks to the staff at ActionAid Zambia and the sub-grantee partners who contributed to the evaluation with their time and support.

The findings and recommendations of the report represent NIRAS and the evaluation team’s assessment and should not be taken as expressions of the Embassy’s or ActionAid Zambia’s policies or opinions.

Executive Summary

This end of project evaluation report explores the extent to which ActionAid Zambia (AAZ) has strengthened civil society in Zambia through the project ‘*Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia*’ (CSSP) financed by the Embassy of Sweden in Zambia under a four-year cooperation agreement. AAZ has supported Zambian organisations with project funding (sub-grants) and with capacity development of the grant partners.

The goal of the CSSP was to ‘*increase citizens’ awareness and demand for human rights in Zambia*’ and was aligned with the five priorities in AAZ’s Country Programme, namely women’s and girls’ socio-economic empowerment; civic participation and state accountability; resilient livelihoods and climate justice; transformative women-led emergency preparedness; and youth engagement and empowerment.

Project expected outcomes

1. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs to enhance citizens’ civic participation and state accountability for *improved governance and public service delivery* in Zambia;
2. To strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) and citizen’s role in promoting transparency and accountability in *public finance management and institutional governance systems*;
3. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs and citizens in holding government accountable for the *enforcement of policies and regulations for sustainable Natural Resource management and climate justice*;
4. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs and citizens to demand for improved policies and programmes that *promote inclusiveness and accessibility of health services*; and
5. To increase institutional capacity, compliance and accountability among CSOs in Zambia.

The evaluation process was different from standard evaluations and has not been structured along the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. Based on the request from the Evaluation Unit at Sida, the project performance as a funding modality was assessed through a qualitative analysis with focus on source criticism. The evaluation team used mixed methods: a review of relevant documents, an online survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, four case studies and deep dive analyses on the contribution stories, to assess key areas of special interest to Sida. Data generated by one method was used to corroborate data produced through other methods, to ensure coherent narratives of grant management and sub-grant performance were built on solid, cross-substantiated evidence. The report includes annexes explaining in detail

the methodology, the lessons learned, results from the mapping and survey, among other issues.

Sida's key areas of special interest:

- a) Could the overall portfolio of grants be improved? If so, how?
- b) Are there issues in the grant management process at the AAZ that could, and should, be fixed?
- c) Is the balance between capacity building of the grant partners' (GPs) versus GPs' project implementation optimal?
- d) How does the new innovative modalities (short term grants, emergency grants, grants to individual activist) compare to the more traditional modalities?

The CSSP has been implemented in a context of *shrinking space* for CSOs and citizen participation combined with *repressive government practices* and serious clampdown on human rights defenders. Advocacy work and interventions targeting corruption took place in *a hostile environment*, with an uncertain *decentralisation progress* and *fragmented environmental and climate change governance*. Rights-holders face huge barriers to *accessing basic health services*, and women's rights are contested and undermined by a broad range of factors. In addition to this complex context, resources for civil society are scarce and the competition high between CSOs.

The report presents findings from the assessment of the grant management (chapter 3) based on desk review, survey, and interviews, the four case studies (chapter 4) based on desk reviews and multiple stakeholder interviews, and the deep dives on selected contribution stories (chapter 5). In this executive summary we focus on the main conclusions and lessons learned.

An overall finding is that grant partners and community members alike experienced various types of positive change in the ways in which they live and work. Both AAZ and the Embassy of Sweden expressed pride over what the project has accomplished through the support to Zambian civil society, leading to shifts in power, increased mobilisation, and a stronger voice of organised rights-holders. The Embassy appreciated AAZ's boldness and radical work with young people and was happy with how the project created synergies with other Sida supported sector contributions.

The evaluation found the portfolio of sub-grants reasonable given Sida's priority strategies (empowering citizens with knowledge of human rights, democracy, rule of law, health rights and climate justice) and that the selection of partners responded well to the Zambian context. However, with almost 50% of grants focusing on civic participation, the other thematic areas were somewhat underrepresented. Similarly, the mix of grant types favoured Standard Grants, which meant that the potential of having diverse grants was not fulfilled and the much-needed support to smaller and 'start-up' CSOs not sufficiently applied.

The CSSP could have been more adaptive to contextual change across the CSO landscape. It focused on specific challenges emerging out of the period leading up to the August 2021 elections which left other emerging issues behind, e.g., weak accountability in use of the Constituency Development Fund and the climate justice

bill. On civic participation, more focus could be paid in the future on the space and voice of women citizens, particularly of rural women.

The evaluation found that AAZ grant management system is well described in the Grants Manual. AAZ has performed well in terms of the flexibility and transparency towards grant partners (though smaller CSOs and individual human rights defenders did not have the same access to information on the grant application) of their management practices, as well as their support of some CSOs in strengthening partnerships. However, gender mainstreaming in grant management was found to be close to non-existent, and the grant management did not reflect a satisfactory level of practice of rights-based principles.

Knowledge management, monitoring, evaluation and learning, were also areas found to be weak. This was partly explained by high staff turnover. Furthermore, while the CSSP was embedded in the structure of the country programme, which enabled synergies and value-for-money, unclear roles and responsibilities between the project management and the overall country management created confusion and loss of focus according to interviewed staff.

The AAZ Scoring Sheet to assess the quality of grant proposals contains important features, but is used with no differences across the different types of grants (Standard, Community Action and Capacity Building grants). The Social Movement Grants do not appear to feature in the scoring process. While AAZ evaluated the project design (which is the purpose of the scoring sheet) the evaluation did not find strong evidence of assessment of the projects' performance in terms of results. Tools for the qualitative measurements of results to support outcome harvesting, and the mainstreaming of gender and HRBA at project level, were missing.

The four contribution stories demonstrated successfully implemented projects but did not bring credible stories of sustainable change. Although other grant partners reported their satisfaction with the institutional capacity building provided by AAZ, the main weakness in the four cases is that these grant partners did not receive the strategic capacity development they required from AAZ. Grant partners assumed that capacity building support would be provided; and the risk associated with this support not being provided was flagged by both Sida as well as AAZ themselves. The mix of capacity building and project activities was well designed in the planning stage but was not applied in practice, mainly due to staff turnover at AAZ but also as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Innovative' grant-making modalities compare relatively well with 'traditional' modalities. A longer project duration, a broader geographical coverage, and an expansion of partnerships with other CSOs would have benefitted the supported projects and enhanced the effectiveness of both kinds of grant modalities. Relatedly, the activities implemented under the #BeHeardZambia project - the CSSP's only individual grant - highlight two key factors: the importance of committed anchors/mentors for individual human rights defenders and smaller CSOs/CBOs; and the power relationships (between the grantee, the anchor and the grant provider) that underpin the practice of anchoring.

In terms of **conclusions**, overall, there is a need to focus on longer-term outcomes. There are several dimensions to the ‘innovative’ grant-making modality. As a flexible modality, it targets (i) new types of CSOs; (ii) CBOs which want to grow as organisations; (iii) unregistered social movements and networks, grassroots groups; and (iv) individuals who cannot qualify for traditional grants as well as emergency responses to contextual change by established CSOs. If it is not clearly conceptualised, such a complex modality risks prioritising ‘flexibility’ over the *quality of grant support*. Equally, the quality and sustainability of the grant support is driven by CSOs’ understanding of civic space and their role in it and their willingness to deliver their own work. In follow up project cycles, it will be important to continue ‘growing’ CSOs’ willingness to deliver.

Finally, AAZ’s application of gender mainstreaming and human rights-based approach (HRBA), has room for much improvement. The case studies demonstrate that AAZ selected partners which were strong in their application of the rights-based principles; but they were themselves less well articulated in gender mainstreaming and in the promotion of gender equality, as well as how rights-based principles were applied in the grant management and in the partnership with the grantees.

If AAZ and Sida choose to continue their partnership in a further cycle, it will be important that the partners move away from a business-as-usual-approach to grant-making and embrace a more learning-centred adaptive programming approach to achieving results, committing to longer-term programming rather than relatively short-term project cycles. This depends on both partners’ willingness to adjust their ways of working in the context of challenging civic spaces. In summary, we **recommend** they do this in the following ways (see Chapter 6 for the full text):

1. Think longer term. AAZ and Sida should reflect on the scope of the CSSP as a programme not a project, and carefully conceptualise it as such. The transition for AAZ from implementer to grant-maker is an incremental one. The partners should focus on one of three options:

- a) Increase the demand and supply of Capacity Development Grants and Coalition/Network Building Grants, across the existing thematic areas.
- b) Provide ‘flexible’ grants that target CSOs and individual HRDs who are not eligible for ‘traditional’ grants, as well as particularly innovative projects across a range of thematic areas. The focus here would be on Social Movement Grants accompanied by clear guidance and systematic ‘learning-by-doing’ training and support for applicants/successful grantees.
- c) Co-create a pilot programme for the CSSP, combining *a small number* of ‘traditional’ and ‘flexible’ grants in a portfolio of grants with a *narrower thematic focus*.

In each case, the programme budget must include adequate funding for training, anchoring/mentoring, and longer-term capacity development activities, depending on the choice of option (a), (b) and (c).

2. Aim for clarity. AAZ should update the Grants Manual, tailoring it to the agreed scope of the CSSP. For example, the Manual should:

- a) **Include** an updated conceptual framework, classifying not only the types of grants and thematic areas but also types of partners and types of target groups.

- b) **Sharpen** the concept of Social Movement Grants, defining assessment criteria and clarifying how these grants work.
- c) **Prioritise** a process where high-performing start-up CSOs, CBOs and grassroots coalitions are supported in second-applications.

3. Move beyond ‘grants = money’. It is critically important that grants are recognised as more than simply providing and managing funds. The Grants Manual for ActionAid in Zambia should be accompanied by modules for:

- a) Specific guidance on training available for AAZ staff and their grant partners, including a detailed a capacity building schedule/workplan.
- b) Specific guidance to assess grant partners capacity development needs.
- c) Specific guidance on ‘anchoring’, including benchmarks to assess the quality of anchors.

4. Recognise that the CSSP is only as good as its people. If Sweden is in a position to commit to financing the CSSP over several cycles, AAZ should match this by (i) committing to an internal human resource capacity analysis; and (ii) producing a costed staff plan for management, operational and technical resources.

5. Don’t just monitor activities, evaluate and learn. Whatever the chosen option, AAZ and Sida need to invest more time and resources in monitoring, evaluation and learning. Specifically, the following should be considered.

- In the case of the options above (recommendation 1), particularly if partners choose to rigorously pilot a ‘model CSSP’, it will be important to move beyond the routine monitoring of activities and end-line evaluations. AAZ and Sida should jointly engage third-party services for ‘real-time’ data collection, or other developmental evaluation methods to augment AAZ’s outcome harvesting.
- In all cases, AAZ and Sida should agree on, commit to and implement a ‘learn-and-adapt’ plan.
- Key performance indicators should be accompanied by benchmarks to measure the quality of the grant-manager’s performance, as well as the performance of grantees’ projects.
- Providing training in project design, monitoring and reporting across *all grant partners* is a pre-requisite for CSSP’s success.’

6. Take action on feminist strategies. AAZ and Sida should work together to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all steps of grant management (in practice not only on paper); in addition, it is important that CSSP partners select partners and projects to better reflect the priorities of feminist and women rights organisations in Zambia.

7. Work together to understand how contexts matter. Building on evaluation findings, AAZ and Sida should jointly organise a Round Table(s) of CSOs in Zambia to discuss conflict-related factors which influenced the performance of the CSSP, and their work in general. Central for these discussions would be the use of power analyses, including the power relations between CSOs (between well-established CSOs, between the latter and smaller CSOs, and between CSOs and individual activists) in terms of their willingness to ‘speak with one view’ in advocating for change: who coordinates change and who leads?

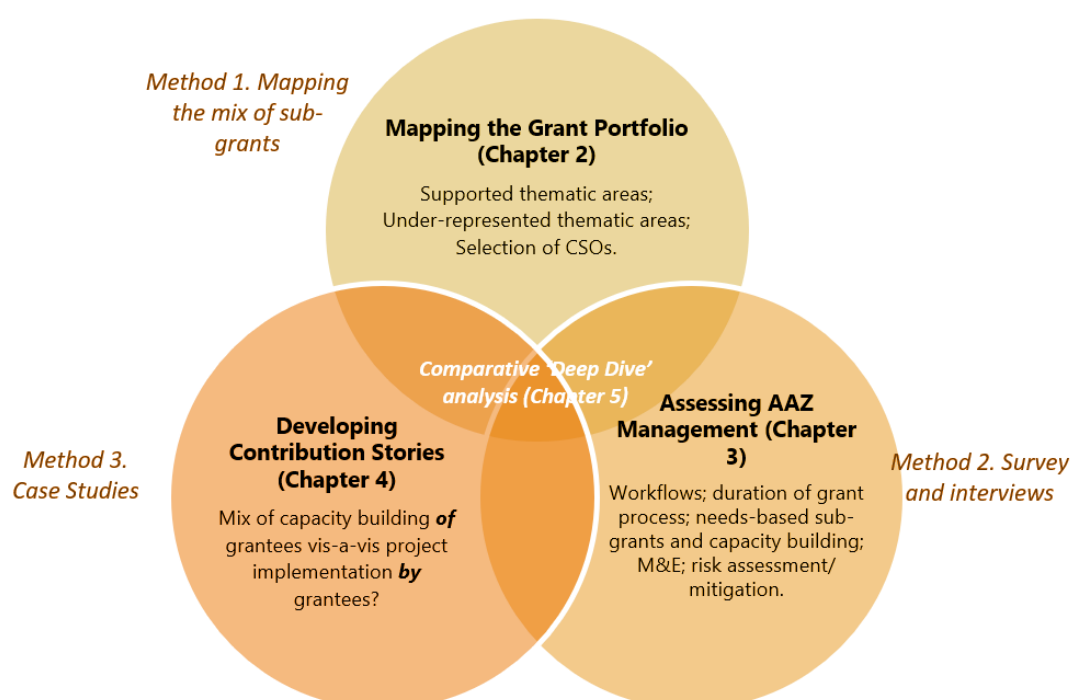
1 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report explores the extent to which ActionAid Zambia (AAZ) has strengthened civil society in Zambia through a civil society project financed by the Embassy of Sweden in Zambia under a four-year cooperation agreement. Through the project, called ‘*Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia*’, AAZ supported Zambian organisations with project funding (sub-grants); throughout this report we refer to project as ‘CSSP’. AAZ 's main role was to manage the grants and to support the capacity development of the grant partners.

As illustrated by **Figure 1** below, the evaluation team used mixed methods (a review of relevant documents, an online survey, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) to assess key areas of special interest to Sida. In our analyses we drew on data generated by one method to corroborate data produced through other methods, to ensure coherent narratives of grant management and sub-grant performance were built on solid, cross-substantiated evidence. Thus, a quote from a single respondent, for instance, should not be read as a unique opinion; rather it is illustrative of a generalised view distilled across several data sources.

Figure 1. Mixed methods and analysis framework



As flagged in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation ([Annex 1](#)), the areas of special interest are listed below. These reflect the structure of this report.

- The **portfolio of grants**; could the portfolio be improved and how? We explore this in **Chapter 2**.
- Issues in the **grant management process** that could, and should, be fixed; see **Chapter 3**.
- We explore the **balance between capacity building of grant partners and implementation of interventions by the partners** in **Chapter 4**.
- A comparison of ‘**innovative**’ grants (i.e., rapid-response grants to tackle urgent issues) and the more ‘**traditional**’ grant modalities; see **Chapter 5**.

We present our conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations in **Chapter 6**.

In addition to mapping grant partners, analysing the results of our survey of grant partners’ views of AAZ’s grant management practices, we drew up four case studies to assess the contribution of AAZ’s capacity building support to the performance of partners’ sub-grant projects. Finally, we conducted ‘deep dive’ analyses for a detailed investigation of critical issues across the four ‘Contribution Stories’. A Technical Methodological Brief is found in [Annex 2](#). Our evaluation process was of special interest to the Evaluation Unit in Sida Headquarters, as it represents a departure from Sida’s usual evaluation requirements; ‘lessons learned from this evaluation’ is found in [Annex 3](#).

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY SUPPORT PROJECT

The goal of the project was to ‘*increase citizens awareness and demand for human rights in Zambia*’ and was aligned with the five priorities in AAZ’s Country Programme, namely women’s and girls’ socio-economic empowerment; civic participation and state accountability; resilient livelihoods and climate justice; transformative women-led emergency preparedness; and youth engagement and empowerment (AAZ, 2018a). The project had five outcomes:

1. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs to enhance citizens’ civic participation and state accountability for *improved governance and public service delivery* in Zambia;
2. To strengthen CSOs and citizen’s role in promoting transparency and accountability in *public finance management and institutional governance systems*;
3. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs and citizens in holding government accountable for the *enforcement of policies and regulations for sustainable Natural Resource management and climate justice*;
4. To strengthen the capacity of CSOs and citizens to demand for improved policies and programmes that *promote inclusiveness and accessibility of health services*; and
5. To increase institutional capacity, compliance and accountability among CSOs in Zambia (AAZ, 2018a).

The project design drew on lessons learned from ActionAid offices in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Sweden and the United Kingdom, who all managed comparable projects, as well as building on previous programming in Zambia

(AAZ, 2018a). AAZ aimed to work in two ways within the project framework. First, AAZ managed sub-grants to grant partners at national, provincial / district and community levels; these sub-grants financed both the projects/activities of the partners, as well as their capacity building. Second, AAZ intended to provide institutional capacity building, coordination and knowledge sharing, ‘using the human rights-based approach to support, build knowledge and skills of collective agencies of CSOs that spearhead evidence-based lobbying and advocacy to shift power in favour of the poor and marginalised’ (AAZ, 2018a).

The CSSP was the main channel for the Embassy’s support to CSOs in Zambia (Sida 2018c). Sweden’s contribution is particularly aligned with the first strategy area in its Strategy for Development Cooperation with Zambia (2018-2022), ‘*Human Rights, Democracy, Rule of Law and Gender Equality*’. However, the project was designed to have synergies with other strategy areas, such as empowering citizens with knowledge of human rights, including health rights, as well as environmental justice. While 22% of Sida’s funding was designated as core support for the CSSP (helping to meet administrative costs and fill human resource gaps of AAZ, including CSSP programmes), 80% of these funds supported the grants themselves.

In 2020, an additional SEK 2,500,000, to support human rights-based interventions and domestic election monitoring in the run-up to the General and Presidential Elections in Zambia, was added to the contribution, bringing the total budget for the project up to 46.5 million Swedish Krona. In 2021, Sweden’s contribution to AAZ’s overall country programme was 23.55%. AAZ’s other donors include AAZ International, AAZ UK, AAZ Denmark; the European Union; Comic Relief; GIZ, and pooled funding for AAZ’s child Sponsorship Programme (from Italy, Greece, UK) through the Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ).

The project covered Eastern, Southern, Muchinga, Luapula, North-Western and Western Provinces while Lusaka and the Copperbelt provinces were also targeted to complement already existing interventions.

2 Context of the CSSP and Mapping Grant Partners

2.1 THE PARTNER'S LANDSCAPE

The CSSP's external contexts are critically important drivers and inhibitors of change. The design and implementation of grant partners' projects, including our four case studies, was shaped by a landscape marked by seven key features.

1. *Shrinking space for CSOs and citizen participation.* Although Zambia has for a long time been considered politically stable, and despite national policies and legislation being in place, the political climate in Zambia during project implementation has been increasingly threatening to CSOs, evidenced by 'a negative slide in international governance rankings' (AAZ, 2016; COF, 2020a). A wide range of factors contribute to the 'shrinking democratic space in today's Zambia, particularly economic discrimination as well as legal harassment' (AAZ, 2019). Chapter One Foundation (COF) noted high levels of political intolerance and political interference in decision making, aimed at protecting self-serving political and economic interests (COF, 2020a). Meanwhile, citizens in mining communities in Luapula Province, 'do not participate actively in governance Programmes for fear of being intimidated and attacked by those who hold political power' (CFNZ, 2019a). The Mines and Minerals Development Act recognises the role of communities when establishing mines. But a lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms in the way mining is conducted has led to both foreign and local investors conducting their work without following processes which promote citizen participation such as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In such a context, the work of one of the case study partners, Care for Nature Zambia, has led to positive change: As one project beneficiary put it: *"Before the project, we were unaware of our rights, but today we are aware, we learned we are quite strong. Previously, we would simply wake up to find our fields dug up, but we now know what channels to follow when such things happen"* (FGD: Tuyafwe).

Box 1. The fight 'against democratic retreat'

In 2019, the Zambian government introduced the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Bill. No.10 of 2019. The Bill aimed at weakening oversight of the Executive by the legislature, judiciary and other state institutions that provide checks and balances. It also threatened to 'change the Electoral system to make it easier for the incumbent to win the 2021 presidential election and to hold on to power through gerrymandering'. Various CSOs took up the 'fight against democratic retreat' including AAZ and several of its grant partners.

"What we are seeing in the country right now is an environment in which there is a complete denigration of the enjoyment of rights that Zambians were able to enjoy some years back. The human rights environment is going backwards. We also have a government that is of the view that rights should be granted or enjoyed at the government's pleasure".

In December 2020, the battle against Bill. 10 ended in the National Assembly where the ruling party sponsors of the Bill failed to win the necessary two-thirds support from members of parliament. While this 'was undoubtedly a win for democracy', it also illustrated 'a failure on the part of democratic institutions to effectively guard against democratic decline and the episode also showed how thin the margin can get between democracy winning and losing.' However, the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act 'continues to severely limit freedoms of speech, consciousness and expression'. The Act has been challenged in the courts of law but is currently still enforceable.

Source: Kalala, 2021; Laura Miti, quoted in Amnesty International, 2021; ACA, 2021a; <https://misa.org/blog/zambias-newly-enacted-cybercrime-law-challenged-in-court/>.

2. Repressive government practices. In the run-up to the recent elections, government officials and police were empowered by law to arbitrarily block public rallies of opposition political parties as well as CSOs' meetings (see **Box 1**, above). Meanwhile, there was a clampdown on human rights defenders (HRDs), including journalists, trade unionists, environmental activists, and women's rights campaigners; CSOs were labelled 'anti-government' and their staff became vulnerable to arbitrary or unlawful detention and harassment (AAZ, 2018; COF, 2020a).

Introduced in March 2021, ahead of the August 2021 election, the 'draconian' Cyber Security and Cyber Act No. 2 of 2021 was passed to counter digital crimes, defined as "*a crime committed in, by or with the assistance of the simulated environment or state of connection or association with electronic communications or networks including the internet*". The law was seen as seeking to curtail freedom of expression, free speech and censor private media, enabling the government to use state resources and law enforcement to crack down on citizens that expressed themselves against the ruling party. A petition was filed in the High Court by five CSOs calling for a declaration that *Sections 15, 27, 28, 29, 30* (on surveillance and intercepting communications) and *Section 39* (requiring service providers to collect personal information) be declared unconstitutional and struck off the statute books (AAZ, 2018; ACA, 2021a).

3. Anti-corruption interventions take place in a hostile environment. Decades-long 'endemic' corruption in Zambia has held back anti-corruption alliances and networks (AAZ, 2020a). Analyses of the Anti-Corruption Act of 2012 and the Public Procurement Act of 2008 point out that *'the fight against corruption goes beyond putting in place [a] robust legal framework, the role of political players is critical' and 'a clear lack of political will to support enforcement [and] procurement regulations means that are easily circumvented or ignored with impunity [leading] to loss of colossal sums of public funds'* (AAZ, 2012). At the same time, 'citizens' participation is key in the struggle for a transparent and corruption-free society' as well as social justice'; [o]ne corrupt act has the potential to collapse systems of governance and spiral into loss of lives if left unchallenged' (see **Box 2**).

Box 2. Corruption must be fought by the people, with the people and for the people

An analysis of the 2020 report of the Office of the Auditor General on the utilisation of the Covid-19 funds raised issues such as ‘a lack of transparency on how much was received, blatant disregard of the law, abuse of the emergency situation, and the need for continuous monitoring’. Meanwhile a recent Financial Intelligence Centre report showed that a sum of K6.1 billion was lost due to corruption by civil servants.

Corruption has continued to be a challenge at provincial level, too, with recent cases involving ministers for Infrastructure Development, and Community Development and Social Services; the lack of decentralised offices in the provinces are among the drivers of corruption as people prefer to mind their own business or pay for quick services than bear the costs of travelling to licensing offices in Lusaka.

The #BeHeardZambia project was ‘premised on the understanding that, with glaring levels of corruption and a population that was seen as increasingly disillusioned with the electoral process ... citizens were losing faith in the institutions of governance; [...] corruption must be fought and must be fought by the people, with the people and for the people [a]nd the best way to fight this corruption is to equip the people, capacitate them and mobilise them against corrupt tendencies’.

Source: AAZ, 2021; COF, 2020a, CFNZ, 2019a; ACA/Fumba Chama, 2021.

4. Uncertain progress in decentralisation. Introduced in 1995, the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a mechanism for decentralised government financing. Proven abuse of the CDF by parliamentarians and elected councillors seeking to advance their own agendas has been reported by CSOs such as [Transparency International Zambia \(TIZ\)](#). A campaign by CSOs, the public, some members of parliament and elected officials resulted in enactment of the [Constituency Development Act No. 11 of 2018](#) and the subsequent release of the 2022 Constituency Development Fund Guidelines by the Ministry of Local Government. Following the August 2021 election, the CDF allocation per constituency increased from K1.6 million to K25.7million. However, CSOs such as Alliance for Community Action (ACA) [raised concerns](#) – based on weak past performance reported in the external Audit of Local Authorities - about the capacity for Local Councils to manage these huge sums of money. The United Party for National Development (UPND) government nevertheless believes that this significant increase is an opportunity to make service delivery more people-led, community-led and community-centred.

5. Fragmented environmental and climate change governance. Zambia remains prone to droughts, crop disease and floods, with major impacts on food security and public health. Deforestation due to unregulated agricultural land use and human settlement (Zambia’s population is rapidly increasing), has resulted in the decline in soil fertility; this in turn has led to a decrease in food production, ‘contributing to prevailing extreme poverty in most of Zambia’s rural communities’ (AAZ, 2018). Meanwhile, Zambia’s wildlife faces the challenge of illegal trade and poaching. The National Adaptation Programme of Action is an attempt to respond to climate change. But policy to enhance climate justice remains fragmented across different government mandates which makes implementation and enforcement weak. Of particular concern is the enforcement of regulations in the extractives sector, ‘where mining investment has resulted in land grabs and displacements without due consideration of the rights of local people especially women’ (AAZ, 2018).

6. Barriers to accessing basic health services. Access to quality health care has been stated as a ‘huge challenge’ especially among women and young people who face diverse physical (especially in disaster prone areas), financial and social barriers to

essential health care (AAZ, 2018). Underlying these barriers are institutional challenges in health service provision (see **Box 3**).

Box 3. Limitations to people's participation in demanding accountable health service delivery

Some of the factors that affect the way people of Chilanga participate in governance and accountability processes in healthcare service delivery at community level are:

Inadequate accountability mechanisms. Accountability mechanisms set up by the state such as the Police Public Complaints Authority, Legal Aid Board, and Victim Support Unit, meant to create spaces for accountability interactions with citizens, are not functional at district level. Few citizens know about and use these structures.

Uneven access to health information. Women, young people and people with disabilities for instance, have limited access to information on sexual reproductive health & rights (SRHR), nutrition and HIV information. Particularly young people lack access to comprehensive sexuality education. There is generally lack of vertical flow of information from civic leaders.

Hierarchical and patriarchal social and cultural relations. Cultural norms, compounded by religious beliefs, teach people to respect elders and to some extent fear those in authority. Constructive criticism of authority figures is often taken as being combative and rebellious. Discriminatory attitudes by nurses and health workers based on gender stereotypical norms towards young people seeking information SRHR and unmarried pregnant girls inhibit access to quality health care.

Source: RICAP, 2021a.

7. Multiple factors undermining women's rights. Despite formal commitments to national, regional and global women's human rights instruments, sexual violence and gender-based violence (GBV) are prevalent in Zambia, and women and girls, particularly in rural areas, continue to be disadvantaged in relation to education and access to public services; limited access to sexual and reproductive health services has a particularly negative effect on adolescent girls and young women's lives, leading to unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions. The fight against the harmful practice of early and forced child marriage has seen a backlash during the Covid-19 pandemic. Women face severe barriers to ownership of material assets, including land titles. Since most farmers in Zambia are women, they are also more exposed to the negative effects of climatic change conditions, environmental degradation in rural areas and loss of biodiversity. Equally, access to loans and credits continue to be a major challenge for women entrepreneurs. All these factors negatively affect women's economic empowerment and political participation, which in the 2021 election saw a downturn despite the advocacy efforts led by women's rights organisations (WRO) and the Ministry of Gender prior and during the last elections.

8. Scarce resources drives competition between CSOs. The civil society arena in Zambia is fragmented, where CSOs which oppose government policy being perceived as supporting political opposition parties (COF, 2020a). At the same time, shifting donor priorities, coupled with the lack of a predictable source of core funding, and the project-focused and short-term nature of funding arrangements, have weakened CSOs' efforts to 'set their own agenda and to develop their institutional capacity and technical expertise as well as attract, retain and invest in human resources' (AAZ, 2018). There is consensus amongst AAZ management, the Project Accountability Team (PAT) members (see 3.8), and grant partners that the nature of civil society in Zambia, as in other countries, is "*fundamentally competitive*". Moreover, as some CSOs convert from international non-government to national non-government status, "*competing for scarce resources has always been the case and is likely to be the case for some time*" (KII: PAT). Notably, a risk identified by both AAZ and Sida at the start of the project

is that ‘due to donor funding modalities that unwittingly encourage competition rather than cooperation among CSOs, partners may be unwilling to participate in thematic clusters intended to strengthen synergies’ (AAZ, 2018a; Sida, 2018a).

2.2 MAPPING GRANT PARTNERS AND THEIR PROJECTS

Against the backdrop outlined above, the project established a range of grants to meet ‘the varying needs and capacities of different CSOs [to] ensure inclusiveness and diversity amongst the CSOs that receive the grant’ (Sida, 2018a). During the evaluation, we mapped the priority thematic areas for the various types of grants provided as well as the types of grant partners and their target groups. The mapping results are outlined below and diagrams illustrating our key findings are found in [Annex 4](#).

THEMATIC AREAS AND TYPES OF GRANTS

Grants were provided in four **thematic areas** in line with priority strategies in AAZ’s Country Programme and Sida’s Strategy for Development Cooperation with Zambia. Findings from our mapping of the 51 grant partners show that the majority of grants were provided in the area of civic participation (25), followed by natural resource management (13), health services (9), and public finance management (PFM) (3). ‘Litigation/Innovation’ was an additional thematic area introduced as a ‘pilot’ in 2020, explaining why only one grant was awarded in this area.

In the period under review, the **types of grants provided** by AAZ were *Standard Grants*, *Community Action Grants*, *Innovation Grants* (a description of the purposes of these grants is found in Annex VII, AAZ, 2018a). A fourth and critically important category of grants is *Social Movement Grants*, including grants to individuals.

However, the eligibility criteria for Social Movement Grants are sketchy. Applicants should be ‘self-motivated’ youth and women movements, CSO coalitions and individual human rights defenders (HRDs) ‘with the desire for advocacy, campaigning in the context of emerging social economic and political issues’ (AAZ, 2018b). A main criterion appears to be the applicants’ response to ‘*urgent policy and human rights issues*’ (AAZ, 2018a). The mapping of grant partners shows that while 30 Standard Grants were awarded, only 1 Individual Grant was awarded; 10 Social Movement Grants and 10 Community Action Grants were awarded.

2.2.1 Key findings

Rigid and restrictive assessment criteria. While the Grants Manual gives guidance on criteria, “*it is quite a rigid document and needs to be updated so it’s less restrictive and we can bring the smaller organisations on board like the grassroots ones or start-ups*” (KII: Grants Manager). Mid-way through the project cycle, “*we found most grants, about 60%, going to well established CSOs, about 20% going for Community Action and only one or two for Social Movement and one Innovation grant*” (KII: Former Grants Manager). This picture did not change much during implementation.

Low demand for Capacity Development Grants. In addition to the four types of grants discussed above, AAZ offered grants for Coordination/Networking and Capacity

Building (to strengthen the organisations' own systems) but *“although the supply was there, the demand was not”* and few applicants submitted proposals for these types of grants (KII: AAZ Staff). Two CSOs received Capacity Building Grants: Network of Zambian People Living with HIV and AIDS and YWCA-Mongu.

Social Movement Grants are critically important. These provide much-needed support to *“those CBOs who are remote, or start-ups, or individuals, and most of them are not registered or they don't have financial policies or audit reports which are our criteria for other grant types – we can't leave them out”*; but the application and evaluation process for Social Movement Grants is *“a challenge because there is no standardisation and no fixed timeline”* (KII: Grants Manager)

Social Movement Grants are not well-understood. The former grants manager had some interesting insights. First, the concept of Social Movement Grants was not well-understood by applicants: *“these grants were needs-based [so left deliberately open] and not-advertised [so their scope was not defined] and were meant for collective action [again, left open] to provide a rapid response to specific issues”*; Second, while CBOs have the most potential for collective action, *“grassroot organisations often don't meet the criteria for, so the grant-funding modality doesn't really enable collective action”*. Third, the 'fit' between the Social Movement Grant concept, the grant modality and CSOs' profiles was not clear: *“Smaller CSOs are fighting for funding so they don't take time to review themselves and think of how they fit with a Social Movement Grant - they say, 'let's just apply and see if we get lucky'”* (KII: Former Grants Manager).

TYPES OF GRANT PARTNERS AND TYPES OF TARGET GROUPS

In the AAZ Grants Manual, **grant partners** are broadly classified in terms of their geographical location, institutional capacity, and access to donor funding. The three categories are: (i) National level CSOs (urban, formally registered, with strong program and financial management systems and the ability to fund raise and management multiple donor funding); (ii) Provincial/District-level CSOs (urban/peri-urban, formally registered with medium to strong program and financial management systems; 'the majority of CSOs fall under this category and the recipients of funds/sub-grants mobilised at national level'); and (iii) Community based organisations (CBOs) (rural and not in most cases formally registered; with relatively low reporting and financial management capacity, limited systems in place, and limited capacity to fundraise and limited access to donor funding (AAZ, 2018b).

These three groups are further differentiated in AAZ's proposal submitted to Sida in 2018, which describes the types of grant partners as: 'well established CSOs; umbrella and network organisations; CSO coalitions; youth movements; women movements; faith-based organisations (FBOs); community-based organisations (CBOs); community initiatives; individual HRDs; individual advocates' (AAZ, 2018a). An additional type of grant partner, as suggested by the AAZ team is 'Social Movements'; note, in this evaluation we engaged with CSOs which received Social Movement Grants. We did not engage with Social Movement grant partners per se.

In the mapping exercise conducted during this evaluation, the evaluation team in consultation with AAZ staff classified grant partners in four groups: CSOs (i.e., Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in civic participation), NGOs working in other areas; FBOs; and CBOs (see **Annex 4**).

2.2.2 Key findings

Differences between types of grant partners is unclear. Generally, any mapping of the terrain of ‘civil society’ is problematic; the landscape is constantly shifting as the environmental contexts change (WEF, 2013). AAZ’s classification of grant partners reflects this challenge. The conceptual differences are not clear between, for instance, CSO coalitions (which AAZ did not fund in any case) and youth movements, or CBOs (which are classified by AAZ based on the organisation’s capacities) and community initiatives, or individual human rights defenders and individual advocates. While AAZ staff themselves *“understand who our partners are, it may be necessary to do this mapping for outsiders”* (KII: AAZ staff).

Similarly unclear differences for target groups. The project was an opportunity to “see the patterns of exclusion of small-scale farmers, youth and women working in small-scale mining; community members accessing quality health services and young people participating in voter education, working on the principle of leave no one behind in terms of civic participation” (KII: AAZ leadership). Yet, as above, the mapping suggests an overlap between target groups.

Few women’s rights organisations (WROs). Zambia has a diverse and vibrant women’s movement engaged in advocacy work both at local and national levels. WROs, including all male CSOs fighting against GBV and promoting women’s rights, have strong focus on access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), ending S/GBV and child marriage, women’s economic empowerment and political participation, as well as climate change mitigation and resilience. We note that only three of the AAZ grant partners are WROs, and all of them are large national CSOs.

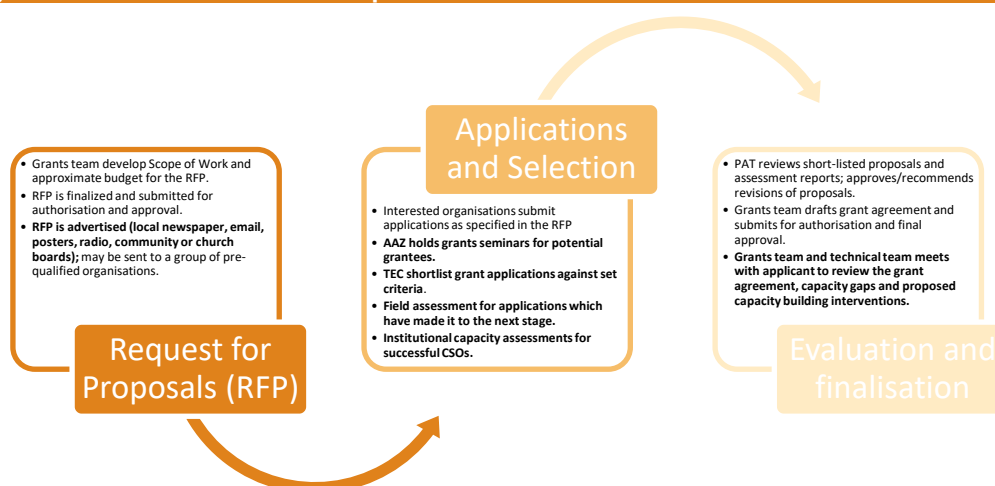
‘Start up’ CBOs may fall through the cracks. Interestingly, a “larger CSO” can be distinguished from “established CBOs who are usually registered through the Council and are well known in communities and the traditional gatekeepers in those communities” but there is a “tension between targeting already-existing CBOs, on the one hand, and those CBOs who need to expand and grow”; the latter may fall through the cracks of the current classification (KII: AAZ leadership).

‘Boss’ implementers. Well-established CSOs access large Standard Grants to work in rural areas and, functioning as ‘boss’ CSOs, implement through local CBOs. But “these community-based groups complain you should have just given this money to us” (KII: AAZ leadership). A recommendation of AAZ’s own evaluation of the country programme is to work more with CBOs that are firmly rooted in communities (AAZ, 2018a).

3 Grant Management

Figure 2 shows the workflow for competitive grants (Standard, Community Action and Innovation Grants). In the case of non-competitive grants (Social Movement Grants), AAZ received unsolicited applications, or developed a call for proposals, or a known organisation and/or specific activity of interest; these proposals were assessed by the grants team, based on the organisation's previous experience. If the application was authorised by the senior leadership team, it was passed to the PAT for approval or rejection/revision.

Figure 2. Workflow for Competitive Grants



Note. Problem areas in the workflow are highlighted bold and these, among other issues, are discussed below. The discussion draws on the results of an online survey of 24 grant partners (with responses from 18 partner organisations of which 16.7% are based and work in rural areas, 50% in urban areas, and 33.3% describing themselves as both rural and urban). Below, we summarise the survey findings (the full survey results and quantitative analysis are found in [Annex 5](#)), substantiated by including illustrative quotes from follow-up interviews. **Note**, given the small size of the sample, which elaborated in Section C of [Annex 2](#), our analysis is primarily qualitative and learning focused.

3.1 RESPONSIVENESS OF AAZ'S GRANT MANAGEMENT TO GRANT PARTNERS' NEEDS

Satisfaction was high (83 %) among the respondents. Grants enabled partners to “build on what we were already doing with the use of other funds” (KII: GP). AAZ's flexibility as a partner was appreciated; “we were free to express ourselves, allowed to change certain dynamics, and they accommodated the views of our partner CSO on the ground” (KII: GP).

While partners appreciated opportunities to function as an anchor - *“it was the first time that we managed grants on behalf of another organisation, it can be described as on-the-job training”* – problems arose for smaller CSOs when the anchor organisations’ financial policies were different from those of AAZ. Some partners benefitted from *“opportunities to collaborate with AAZ”* as a result of the granting process, but for others, their direct association with AAZ – a recognised human rights organisation – meant that *“we were branded as anti-government”* (KII: GP).

Delayed disbursements. AAZ’s Grants Manual stipulates that funds shall be disbursed in tranches on a quarterly basis but may be deferred if quarterly project performance and financial reports, including reconciliation statements of previous disbursements, are incomplete or unacceptable. A well-established CSO receiving Standard Grants reported that *“disbursement of the funds was done within the stipulated time as long as all documents from the partner organisation like ourselves was [sic] submitted on time”* (KII: GP). But delayed disbursement was the main challenge experienced in the case of smaller grants (16,6% of the respondents highlighted the delays), in part because of incomplete financial reports submitted by grant partners. But for one grant partner *“there was a lot of waiting, and non-communication”* on the part of AAZ; notably, although other grantees we consulted received the full grant, when this particular partner finally received the funds, they were only 51.7% of the approved grant (KII: GP). For another smaller CSO, *“a six-month project ended up taking nine months to complete, with most periods lacking activities”* (KII: GP).

Delayed funding had a negative effect on the projects. A survey respondent commented that because of delayed funding, the project could not be expanded, *“the project only focused on three wards out of seventeen”* (Online Survey). In another partner’s case, *“the grant was for 6 months but AAZ would delay up to a month [so] the project schedule suffered”*, activities were implemented in only two of three Provinces and a requested no-cost extension was denied (KII: GP). Again, delayed disbursements for another partner meant that *“funding comes towards the end of the quarter, so you have to squeeze your programming and you have to compromise on your deliverables”* (KII: GP). Relatedly, delays in the disbursement of funds under the no-cost extension left sub-grantees only two months in which to implement; *“if people are implementing at such speed you crash [...] at the end of the day, what are we achieving?”* (KII: Sida).

Weak communication during implementation. While AAZ was clearly in email communication with some grantees, for many other grant partners the communication ‘culture’ was frustrating. An individual HRD’s perspective was that *“the only time I got emails or calls from them was if they wanted to tick the ‘monitoring box’, or they would generally call you to say we are sending you report templates etc. that’s when they would get in touch with you”*; after writing many times to AAZ regarding disbursements and extensions with no response, this particular grant partner tried to communicate through their anchor organisation but AAZ *“remained unresponsive”* (KII: GP). This view was substantiated by other sub-grantees. Little communication from AAZ meant that a smaller CSO’s efforts to grow as an organisation were stymied: *“we were almost becoming a double orphan”* (KII: GP).

Abruptly changing deadlines. A further challenge was when dates for submission were brought forward at short notice, diverging from the agreed contractual dates: *“The deadlines would almost always fall on a Sunday but then they would write to you during the week to say all the reports must be submitted on a Friday - we found this unfair because two days is a lot of time when you are reporting”* (KII: GP).

3.2 CAPACITY BUILDING THAT MEETS GRANT PARTNERS' NEEDS

Many partners (55 %) agreed with the statement that the training provided met their needs. But individual comments in the survey, as well as the partners we interviewed, **tell a different story.** 22 % stated that the AAZ capacity building did not meet their needs, while another 22 % maintained neutral. While AAZ provided institutional capacity building and training in agro-ecology, some grant partners stated that ‘there were no capacity building activities undertaken’ (Online Survey). A point raised time and again was the need for AAZ to fulfil *“their capacity building role for organisations that are still in their infancy* (KII: GP).

Gaps in the capacity building provided by AAZ. An established partner CSO appreciated AAZ’s thematic training in agro-ecology and natural resources as well as *“a lot of inter-district reviews which allowed us to learn lessons on how other projects were doing”* (KII: GP). However, smaller CSOs who responded to the online survey identified the following gaps, for example: development of a strategic plan (as the duration of the grant was short); organisational/institutional development; technical support in monitoring and evaluation (M&E); community awareness raising on local government revenue and expenditure.

Support for developing proposals. As several smaller CSOs mentioned, *“we were advised on how to improve our proposal”* (KII: GP). However, the Grants Manual mentions the need for ‘grants seminars for potential grantees to provide an overview of the grants applications process and advice on submitting a winning proposal’ (AAZ, 2018b). Although inception workshops were held to orient partners, it is not clear that specific proposal development seminars took place; workshops were ‘rushed as everything appeared like there was not enough time’ (Online Survey); advice on proposals was limited to field visits by hub managers *“where and when possible”* (KII: Grants Manager). We discuss hub management in more detail in [Annex 6](#).

Identification of capacity gaps. The identification of capacity gaps took place through pre-award field assessments, as well as review of quarterly reports and AAZ has an organisational capacity assessment tool in place. However, while the Grants Manual specifies that institutional assessments of shortlisted candidates will be undertaken by an independent consultancy firm, *“this did not happen for sub-granting under Sida support during 2021 though I’m not sure about previous years”* (KII: Grants Manager).

3.3 EFFICIENT GRANT MANAGEMENT

A majority of respondents (just over 70%) found AAZ's grant management to be efficient. However, vast majority of the respondents, 14 organisations (77.8%), also found **that the time requirement of the granting process was unduly long.**

This said, one respondent noted that 'due diligence on the part of the donor requires time in order to avoid shortcomings at implementation time'; and the 'time requirement allows both the grantee and the funder to fully appreciate and create synergy that is necessary during the project cycle' (Online Survey).

Staff turnover. On the one hand, "Sida gave us adequate staff to support the sub-granting processes for a three-year programme" (KII: AAZ Leadership). On the other hand, the project was found to be short-staffed: "we did not have enough people and time to build capacity: we held a pre-award training but this was only three days for partners to understand what we were doing, as well as get training in M&E and financial reporting" (KII: Former Grants Manager). There is strong consensus across individuals and organisations that the high turnover of staff was a major challenge, which "disoriented and destabilised" the project (KII: AAZ Leadership). This was in part because "technically sound staff in sub-granting are not easy to find in a country like Zambia"; and because technical staff were "poached" by employers offering better wages, where AAZ struggles to maintain competitive wages. But a key driver of staff turnover identified by many staff interviewed during the evaluation appears to have been short-term contracts. The actual duration of contracts remains unclear: while some staff mentioned the challenge of one-year contracts, AAZ management asserted that project staff were given 3-year contracts and that they could not commit to contracts beyond the life of the project. The impact of staff turnover on financial management was felt by Sida's finance controller: "we keep repeating ourselves - teaching the same ideas to different people - over and again"; after examining the last financial report Sida found that although AAZ had overspent on key budget lines, they were "not sure where the overspending came from, it was clear that they were not following their budgets properly" (KII: Sida; Sida, 2021b).

Inefficient knowledge management, handover, and institutional memory. Related to the issue of high staff turnover, "*handover of documentation has been a problem and our institutional memory was limited to individual emails*" (KII: Grants Manager). However, a digitised Contract Management System is now in place. Nevertheless, as was the case for other key positions in the AAZ management team, the M&E department experienced staff turnover and limited handover; the present M&E manager has been in the job for six months and "*when I joined the previous M&E expert had only been there for one month*" (KII: M&E department). Sida's finance controller mentions that without a well-referenced archiving system "*you had to constantly remind them of the money they've spent*" (KII: Sida).

Few field assessments of applications. Being hamstrung in terms of manpower to conduct field visits, AAZ brought in the Project Accountability Team (PAT) to fill gaps: "*I was one of the few who went to do a field assessment*" (FGD: PAT).

3.4 PARTNERS' ACCESS TO RESOURCES

A majority of survey respondents agreed with the statement that it was easy to access the grants. For larger grants, “selection was very competitive, open and fair and grants were given on merit, and everything was efficient and did not take a lot of time” (KII: GP). For smaller CSOs, too, there was a “*high level of transparency in the application process; we were chosen even though our proposal was not perfect*” (KII: GP). In one respondent’s case, “we were approached to apply for this grant by AAZ [because we] were already working with women and the application and assessment process was smooth” (KII: GP).

Limited access to information for smaller CSOs. “*Information sharing so that smaller CSOs are aware of the opportunities is very important*” (FGD: PAT). Yet access to requests for proposals (RFPs) is a challenge for smaller CSOs. As internet connectivity in rural areas limits the ‘reach’ of the RFP and members of smaller CSOs may not be able to access/read newspapers, the grants team relies on hub-managers to share information on the advertised RFP. But even so “*the RPF doesn’t reach all potential candidates, they struggle to send emails and late submissions of applications have been a problem*” (KII: Grants Manager). This view is echoed by individual comments made by respondents in the online survey.

Limited size/duration of social movement grants. For a well-established CSO, “*time was short to implement the activities related to the mass movement*” (KII: GP). The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (Improved State Accountability and Human Rights Project) requested termination because they did not agree with the funding amount (AAZ, 2019b; KII: Grants Manager). For smaller CSOs the size of the grant was also problematic. For example, while one project’s scope covered illicit mining and environmental issues which affect the entire province, “*the initiative was only conducted in 5 areas and we were only able to reach out to a handful of citizens directly which we felt was insufficient and called into question the relevance of our efforts*” (KII: GP).

3.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

AAZ’s two-tier monitoring system combines a review of partners’ quarterly reports with physical monitoring visits by hub managers, which are supposed to be ‘conducted at each GP premise a minimum of four times a year’ (AAZ, 2018b).

The M&E system was perceived as effective by 46% of the GPs; a Lusaka-based grant partner benefitted from six monitoring visits and “*they were very effective and they conducted one-on-one interviews to gain insight on the finance aspect*” (KII: GP). **But 29% of the GPs had a negative/less positive experience** and individuals’ responses suggest that project monitoring appears to have been a real challenge given AAZ’s own capacity gaps; “*AAZ needed to continuously provide capacity building in monitoring to its partners; but we forgive them for not doing this because at that time AAZ was not in a position to build another organisation’s capacity*” (KII: GP).

Few monitoring visits. Several grant partners said there were no physical or virtual monitoring visits during the life of the project to verify or check on the progress of activities by AAZ; there was “*zero monitoring*” (KII: GP). “*We did not have any site*

visit for these projects, they only did the initial organisational capacity assessment - the pre-grant and there was a central workshop for all grantees, it is more of a rules sharing meeting; an introductory workshop to the grant partners and the grant management system” (KII: GP). For some, this was particularly disappointing: “we are a growing organisation and we want to get to where other NGOs are but this relationship was not beneficial in adding to the growth of the organisation” (KII: GP).

The PAT highlighted gaps in monitoring on the ground – *“only about 20% of grant partners were visited”* – as well as gaps in the documentation shared with the team (FGD: PAT). In addition, several of well-established CSO partners flagged this issue: *“AAZ visited us long after the project had been completed and closed (after approximately 7 months), requesting that we gather community members for a consultative meeting, which was kind of tricky from our side as we lacked finances to meet their required transport allowance, lodging, and meals” (KII: GP).*

Feedback on quarterly reports. While grant partners submitted quarterly reports and these were reviewed by AAZ staff and the PAT, a common criticism was the lack of AAZ’s feedback – or reluctant feedback – to partners on these reports. As one partner put it: *“quarterly progress reports were never reviewed nor did we receive any feedback after sending them these reports, apart from on the finance side” (KII: GP).* Several partners echoed these complaints: *“we had to request it several times before they could provide it to us”*; *“while the finance department was on point”*, this was not the case for programming feedback (KIIs: GP).

Inadequate budget for M&E. While we were not able to verify the specific budget allocation for M&E, the M&E budget was described as *“not really very adequate”*, which inevitably limited field monitoring visits (KII: M&E department). Although the Grants Manual states that AAZ would adapt existing monitoring tools and processes in collaboration with grantees, who would undergo a self-assessment and pre-assessment exercise as the baseline for the project, the evaluation team found no documented evidence of these tools; *“AAZ did not share the monitoring tools till the end of the project” (AAZ, 2018b; KII: GP).*

Delayed development of digitised management information system (MIS). A MIS was intended to be set up at the outset of the project (AAZ, 2018a). Although, an external consultant initiated this, the MIS is currently a work in progress. The system is intended to integrate *“tools to track the indicators based on the monitoring inputs from different partners”* and tools for outcome harvesting (KII: M&E). The MIS will also enable grants managers identify gaps in partners’ capacities: *“Our system captures first report submissions by partners, then we do a review and identify what are their capacity needs, and then based on those findings we will conduct multiple visits to strengthen their capacity on site; each partner will use digitised data collection tools using (KOBO collect) and android phones, which feed into our main system for analysis, and will have their own dashboard that they are going to manage” (KII: M&E department).* Notably, this description is almost entirely a repeat of what was supposed to happen (but did not) at the outset of project, as outlined in AAZ’s proposal submitted in 2018.

3.6 CHANGE MANAGEMENT BY AAZ AND GRANT PARTNERS

Reprogramming in response to unexpected change.¹ On the positive side, several partners inevitably adapted to the ‘new normal brought about by Covid-19, with support from AAZ. *“It was more of the approach that changed whilst the scope of the project remained the same”* (KII: GP). A well-established grant partner said that *“as long as we implemented within the agreed budget, AAZ had no problem, they would only ask for justifications if we suggested any changes within the budget”*. However, the case of an individual human rights defender was problematic; its mentor pre-financed some activities but it is not known if these monies were recovered; the individual himself incurred debts (e.g., booking venues) and these were not reimbursed through the granting modality.

Overambitious results framework. While the project has a robust results framework and monitoring matrix, the timeframe within which these results are expected to be achieved is not realistic.

This is acknowledged by AAZ staff: *“we noted that when we just came in; the outcomes are clear but need to be sharpened; we are tracking too many results”* (KII: M&E department). In addition, better use of outcome mapping methods, with the close involvement of Social Movement grant partners, could add an important qualitative dimension to AAZ’s analysis of monitoring data: *“good monitoring is more than policing”* (KII: M&E department).

No documented change management process. The hub manager is a critical link in the chain of the change-management process; *“we are the first one to communicate the change that is needed, so the country office can take action”* (KII: Hub Manager). But the evaluation team found no evidence of a documented change management process, including accountability for decisions to change project direction.

Little evidence of learn-and-adapt processes. As part of a planned ‘*participatory review and reflection process*’, AAZ staff claim that *“annual reflection sessions”*, including ‘check-in’ sessions for the CSSP, took place; and *“the project’s performance in terms of reach and capacity changes among CSOs”* (KII: AAZ Head of Programmes). Indeed, *“there should be a way to nurture the relationship beyond the grants and the project being implemented; there should be meetings outside the project just to share and discuss generally some of the challenges in the country”* (KII: GP). The team found no documented evidence of these annual reflection sessions.

¹ The Grants Manual makes a distinction between ‘amendments’ (related to budgets) and ‘reprogramming’ in terms of ‘changing the scope (i.e., adding or deleting goals and/or objectives, and/or changing key interventions) to ensure the continued effective and efficient use of grant funding made available’ (AAZ, 2018b).

3.7 FEEDBACK MECHANISMS INFLUENCE AAZ'S MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

No formal feedback channels. AAZ did not set up formal channels for information/feedback/complaint for unsuccessful and successful applicants alike; *“there are no formal mechanisms apart from the clauses contained in the grant - there is no policy or set out grievance procedure”* (KII: GP). While two partners reported that they were sent a form requesting feedback about their experience working with AAZ, most were *“not aware of any formal feedback mechanism apart from email”*; *“the grant agreement has standard procedures but no specific mechanisms for feedback”* (KIIs: GP). Similarly, informal feedback channels were limited to phone calls and chats during workshops. This was problematic for grant partners - *“we felt abandoned right after the grant was signed”* (KII: GP) - as well as for AAZ. From the AAZ management's perspective, *“we had little confidentiality; although the final selection was made by the independent PAT, we were under pressure from a lot of people who knew AAZ saying ‘why are we left out’ and some went straight to Sida saying AAZ were favouring some over others”* (KII: Former Grants Manager). Following our interviews with AAZ staff, the reasons why AAZ did not set up such formal feedback channels are unclear.

Little communication after the grant period. The relationship between AAZ and the Rise Community Aid Programme (RICAP) was described by some staff as *“superficial”*; *“it was more of a financial relationship and a programmatic one did not exist”* (KII: GP). Some partners also raised the issue of the “tone” of communication with AAZ leadership, as well as the risk that *“the reputation of organisations can be destroyed if you are not part of certain meetings”* between AAZ leadership and Sida (KII: GP). In the words of another partner *“a communication breakdown occurred between ourselves and AAZ [and] even after the project was completed, AAZ took an inordinate length of time to respond to us; we lost the finance person we had hired to another organisation as a result and had to do the project closeout without a finance officer”* (KII: GP).

3.8 RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Accountability. The Project Accountability Team (PAT) is an additional national internal mechanism used to ensure programme accountability and transparency in the awarding of grants under the CSSP. The team was recruited through an openly advertised process, interviewed by a non-ActionAid selection panel, and was limited to 7 members with a clear added value in a programmatic or technical area. However, overall accountability for the implementation of the project lay with the Country Director, with support from the AAZ senior leadership team.

The PAT played a multi-faceted role.

- Providing both strategic oversight in the grants management (pre-award) processes *“with a view to transparency in the process”* by evaluating the grant proposals selected by the Secretariat – *“we got final versions of the submitted proposals, to*

look at it in its entirety, including the concept and logframe". In the first round of proposals "a lot got rejected but others went for revision, and then we evaluated them again". The "level of rejection was high in the beginning and then went down", suggesting that the PAT was making an important contribution to the grant management process (FGD: PAT).

- Backstopping detailed desk and field assessment of CSOs applicants by the AAZ Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC). While the Terms of Reference indicate that an additional dimension of the PAT's role is providing technical support, the PAT meeting minutes of 5 February 2021 show a strong focus on compliance (AAZ, 2021b).
- Collaborating with the senior leadership team and Sida staff in managing risks by "making sure that organisations understand the risks associated with the grant and make good use of the money in line with Sida's priorities" (KII: AAZ).

However, as suggested in the earlier assessment of the grant management process, **several risks transpired, suggesting that risk management was not effective**. It may be noted that our findings reinforce Sida's own documented risk management (Sida, 2021a; Sida, 2022).

Table 1 below shows risks identified in AAZ's risk matrix (included as an Annex in the project proposal submitted to Sida) and planned mitigation measures as well as links to our previous evaluation findings. Other risks are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

Table 1. Identified risks, risk management and links to evaluation findings

Identified risk (AAZ, 2018a)	Risk management	Link to evaluation finding
4. Weak CSO internal systems.	Assessment of CSOs capacities during inception; capacity building plan and implementation for those CSOs with identified gaps; continuous monitoring and evaluation of projects' implementation.	See 3.2 above: mixed results on capacity building that meets CSO needs.
6. Lack of capacity of AAZ to manage the grant.	A healthy management structure is put in place to supplement the existing AAZ resource; systems and processes will be strengthened as part of building the capacity of AAZ; global finance system and contract management system in place.	See 3.5 and 3.6 above: weak M&E system; no feedback system; no documented change management.
7. High staff turnover and difficulties in adhering staff.	Improvements in the work environment plus continuous dialogue with staff on how to improve AAZ work environment.	See 3.3 above: high staff turnover.
8. Weak CSOs in rural areas and weak participation of marginalised groups.	Capacity development and continuous monitoring of civil society in rural areas with a bias in favour of females among the targeted groups.	See 3.4 above: limited access to grants for rural CBOs; limited follow up.

4 Four Contribution Stories

Below are four case studies of projects implemented by selected AAZ grant partners: the Alliance for Community Action, Chapter One Foundation, Care for Nature Zambia and the Rise Community Action Programme. These partners were purposively selected from a random sample of grant partners on the basis of their accessibility during a tight data collection timeframe (Section C in [Annex 2](#) elaborates our sampling strategy).

In each Contribution Story, we begin with an overview of activities implemented by the grant partners, followed by their views on the capacity building and capacity development support they received (or did not receive) from AAZ, and a brief commentary on the credibility of their project as a Contribution Story. Each case study includes a diagram, entitled Pathways to Change. These are project-level theories of change (micro-ToCs) which are ‘nested’ within AAZ’s overarching Theory of Change (ToC presented in [Annex 7](#)). It is important to note that the micro-ToCs were created by the evaluation team and focus on the process outputs, from output- to outcome-level results; the project’s impact (shaded in yellow) is included in the micro-ToCs as *intended* impact only. We use the nested ToCs as a framework for our overall contribution analysis, in the final section of this chapter (section 4.5).

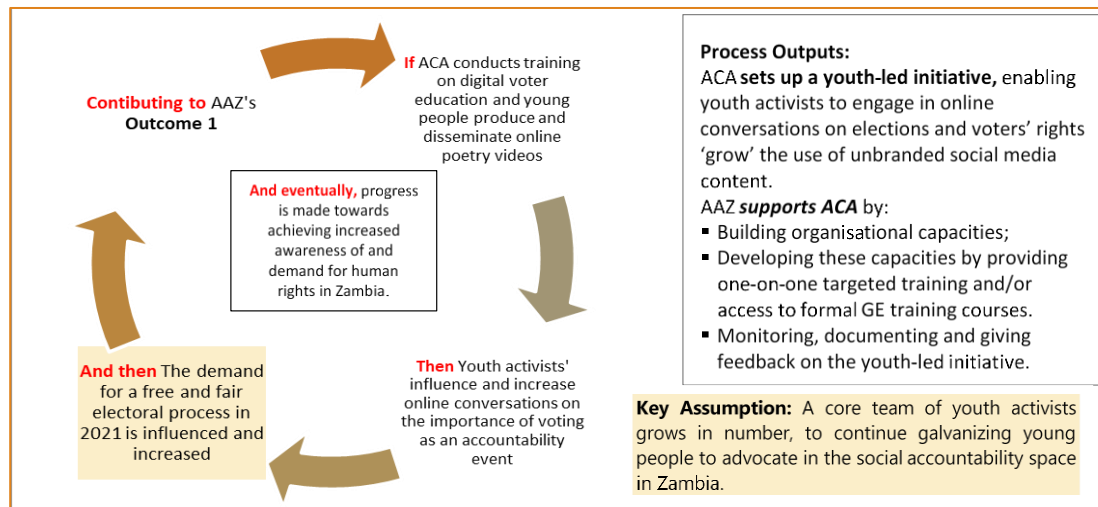
NB. In this section, on request by some respondents, we do not reference any source of quotations.

4.1 DIGITAL #YOUTH VOTE PROJECT: “WE FILLED THE SPACE WITH A LOT OF VOICES”

Alliance for Community Action (ACA) was keen to engage with the evaluation team although most of the project team were no longer employed by ACA and sadly one staff member had contracted the Covid-19 virus and passed away. The Executive Director, Laura Miti, assisted in setting up focus group discussions with youth activists, partner CSOs and a representative of the Human Rights Commission; together, they told a coherent story of a successful project: “*we filled the space with a lot of voices*”. As a well-established CSO which has gained recognition for its innovative and robust strategies in public service accountability monitoring, ACA also served as ‘anchor’ for an individual grantee, Chama Fumba, whose project is discussed in Chapter 5 of this report. In addition, to the Digital #Youth Vote Project, ACA received a larger grant (ZMW 1,496,444) to implement the Ask Health Project, aimed at accountable health service delivery in Southern Province.

ACA is a non-governmental organisation set up in 2013 which works to ‘grow the routine and systematic demand for public resource accountability’, mainstreaming a rights-based approach to public resource monitoring and articulating ‘a vision of a Zambia in which all her citizens enjoy the full and equitable benefit of all her resources’ (ACA, 2021a). ACA received a Standard Grant (ZMW 499,992,69) to implement the **Digital #Youth Vote Project** (January to December 2021) in the thematic area of civic participation in elections. The project’s theory of change (ToC) is illustrated below.

Figure 3. Alliance for Community Action's Intended Pathways to Change



4.1.1 'Stories of change'

The main change which ACA expected to happen was that young people exercise their rights and demand accountability through the ballot; “we wanted to *influence a change in online conversation focusing on young people*”; “our work was regarded as *anti-establishment and at the time the establishment's response to our work was an indicator that our work was doing what we wanted it to - this was basically to have an inquisitive public and more curious young people as well as turning the election into an accountability event*”.

ACA followed a relatively straightforward route in building an online community to collect individual experiences, share young people's realities and prepare them for “offline activism”. A starting point was **development of a training course on online advocacy in voter education**. This included an introduction to a rights-based approach to accountability and the importance of elections in the accountability system; an overview of electoral laws in Zambia, particularly the democratic threats presented by the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act; an introduction to digital tools for advocacy, with a focus on content development for social media; and digital and emotional ‘hygiene’ in a threatening digital environment, including mitigation strategies and use of Virtual Private Networks.

These training materials were used in a **digital training**, conducted in person for 29 young activists from four provinces (15 female and 14 male) some of whom joined the event via the Zoom platform. Trainers were project staff, supported by youth influencers and animators. Participants were drawn from a cadre of young people who had previously been trained by ACA in rights-based approaches during a Youth Insaka (i.e., public forum, traditionally a cultural centre) and ‘selected for their strong media presence’ (ACA, 2021a).

As project resources were available, a second online training covered a further 34 participants.

Throughout much of the project, the core group of 63 trained youth activists created and sustained **online conversations in election advocacy and voter education**, holding discussions on electoral laws, the conduct of candidates, and evaluating performances

on previous campaign promises and so on. The main platform used was Twitter, where topics discussed trended for at least two out of every four weeks following the launch of the projects, and Twitter spaces (live audio discussion platforms) held twice a week from 13 July to 19 August 2020 (see screen shots of trending topics and Twitter spaces in ACA, 2021a). Averaging 40 listeners per space, they featured the Human Rights Commission, Bloggers of Zambia and popular influencers. Examples of topics are *Partisan Politics and 'Cadre-ism'*; *Believe the government reports from the Auditor General (AG) and Financial Intelligence Center (FIC)*; *Voter Education and Safety*; *Election Issues and the Zambia We Chose* (ACA, 2021a).

During election counting, the project also hosted an **online show** (Talk Back), in collaboration with partner CSOs (Bloggers of Zambia, Peoples Action for Accountability and Good Governance Zambia) to keep the conversation going about elections accountability and sharing credible elections information, reaching 30,906 Facebook users (see Facebook links in ACA, 2021a); *"Something was triggered around the youth conversation and it was quite funny in that when you go to the Twitter spaces the influencers would start the conversation, but after a few minutes the people who are following would take over the conversation and be the ones contributing"*. To wrap up the project, the young people did an online **Social Media Blitz** (#HH100Days) on 3 December 2021, coinciding with President Hichilema's 100 days in office to remind him of his electoral promises; *"[t]he project provided a platform that triggered a wave of vested-ness that was so effective and real that it felt physical"*.

In addition, the project encouraged young people to produce **poetry videos** aimed at *"communicating complicated messages in a deep but simple way"* (KII: ACA). A total of 10 poems were written and animated as audio-visual productions (these are all included in ACA's final report), despite delays caused by the third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. An example is 'The Power lies in our Hands by Julyana Phiri, [https://www.facebook.com/a_cazambia/videos/271885699_5072189/](https://www.facebook.com/cazambia/videos/271885699_5072189/) which was viewed by 1085 Facebook users (ACA, 2021a). The poetry videos were used to drive and accompany the online conversations and were played during the Twitter Spaces; *"they were powerful ways for the young influencers who worked on the project to communicate sticky conversions in ways that would draw people into the conversation – the videos brought about an emotional reaction and a sense of pride"*.

During the online conversation process, *"young people were constantly aware of the Cyber Bill and in fear of this being used against them in their advocacy"*; the young activists often faced the fear with humour, jokingly saying *"with the coming of this bill, all of us youths will be in the same Police Cell"*. However, quarterly virtual meetings were an opportunity for ACA to offer advice and guidance; *"if a young person called about a provision they did not understand we would advise them in the context of how we understood it and at some point they were confident in returning to their work"*.

Indeed, the Zoom and Google Meet meetings were so useful, that the youth activists requested the frequency be increased from quarterly to monthly meetings; these were a platform for continuous capacity development as well as for project staff to monitor progress using the social media metric tools and receive feedback from the young people (ACA, 2021a). Notably, as the content generated by the project was deliberately not branded, it entered the public domain and was shared widely to spark conversations

of national interest; *“you would find that people who were not following our immediate circles were sharing the unbranded content, and this was further shared other individuals – this is one of the ways we know we did something good”*.

4.1.2 Contribution to change: capacity building and capacity development

Like the all the grant partners the evaluation team consulted, ACA attended a Financial Procedures and Requirements Workshop to guide financial reporting organised by

Lessons learnt

- The eagerness of the youths to engage in online activism was underestimated.
- Youth can be effective advocates if supplied with timely and accurate information for advocacy.
- Online and offline advocacy can be closely integrated to maximise results.

AAZ. But *“after receiving the grant we did not get any training or capacity support; for us, it was more of a check up on the grants and not about us and our needs”*. In terms of targeted one-on-one training, ACA did not receive any programmatic capacity building support for either the Ask Health of or the Digital #Youth Vote projects; *“we had assessments well before the grant was disbursed and we completed the templates depicting which areas we needed capacity support, for example in gender mainstreaming, but we did not receive any capacity building support related to that”*. In addition, *“we expected to receive organisational support to help us grow as an organisation but there was none”*.

To sustain change, AAZ had planned to create linkages for organisational support between CSOs. The Financial Procedures and Requirements Workshop was seen by ACA as an opportunity for grantees to share information on their projects, *“in case you want to make partnerships with other grantees”*. But beyond this, the grant provider appears to have made little effort to link grant partners to other CSOs with specialised knowledge.

ACA feel they have indeed become more successful at making programming decisions and there has been some learning about grant management processes that has helped the organisation grow. But *“this cannot be attributed to the relationship with AAZ”* (KII: ACA). Rather, ACA suggest that they could make a running start because they had previously received a grant from another provider and were familiar with grant-making processes; *“prior to the previous grant, ACA was more of a co-applicant with bigger organisations - we were not the primary recipient of the grants - but now we are able to directly manage grants and communicate directly with grant partners”*.

4.1.3 A credible contribution story?

The project was largely successful in achieving its main outcome: influencing the 2021 Zambian general election and, arguably, highlighting it as an accountability event. However, there is no evidence that this change took place as a result of capacity building by AAZ. Rather, the project’s success was driven by three main factors.

First, by utilising **online discourse to spark offline activism**, ACA created a space for citizens to voice their concerns and express themselves through the ballot; *“people were speaking up in a period where many were afraid to speak out and suddenly they found they were not the only ones speaking out with more and more voices being heard even from remote parts of the country”*. Second, the emphasis on information-based

posts – youth activists told us how “*we were taught to read, read and read things like reports from the Auditor General and the FIC*” – coupled with the decision to produce **unbranded social media content**, such as trending hashtags #TheyBorrowWePay; #ZambiaAsks; #YouthVote2021; #DebtConcernsMe: “*there are things that we started by ACA that we can now see in the public domain which became part of the electoral discussion*”. Third, the **consistent commitment of young people** to the initiative, which grew exponentially as the 2021 general elections approached; “*by tracking social media users, we were able to see how other young people were influenced by those that we directly influenced ourselves*”.

Interestingly, “*the resistance from the PF [the former ruling party] was an indicator that we were having an impact*”; ACA suggest that although “we have no way of proving it”, users supporting the former government “*would sabotage our content [...] copy our infographics, and grab what we had written and put out and edited it to distort the message*”. However, in the final analysis, as ACA and its stakeholders assert, the project may indeed have contributed to the youth-led voter turnout that characterised the August 2021 general elections, as reflected by the [BBC’s commentary on the importance of the youth vote in Zambia](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58146384) (ACA, 2021a; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58146384>

4.2 LAWYERS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT: SUCCESSFUL BUT “NOT A GOOD EXPERIENCE”

Chapter One Foundation (COF) did not want to feature as an evaluation case study on the grounds that the project staff were no longer employed by the Foundation. Without their assistance, we could not engage with project stakeholders. Nevertheless, we were able to conduct one interview with the Executive Director, in order to substantiate findings from project documentation. Her responses suggest that Chapter One’s experience of working with AAZ was a negative one and this may have affected her willingness to include the grant-supported project as a case study; “*I would not think of going through the same diet and getting funds from them again*”.

Chapter One Foundation (COF) functions as a non-profit legal services social enterprise, set up to ‘promote and protect human rights, human rights defenders, constitutionalism and the rule of law in Zambia primarily through strategic litigation, advocacy and capacity building’ (COF, 2020). The Lawyers for Human Rights project (April 2019 to January 2020) was introduced as a **pilot Innovation Grant** (ZMW 1, 408, 200) - “*the only funding we had when the organisation began, which helped us get off the ground*” - in the thematic area of litigation. The grant enabled COF to implement a range of activities targeting vulnerable communities’ (women, youth, children, political activists and human rights defenders) access to justice. **Figure 4.** below shows how change was expected to happen through the project.

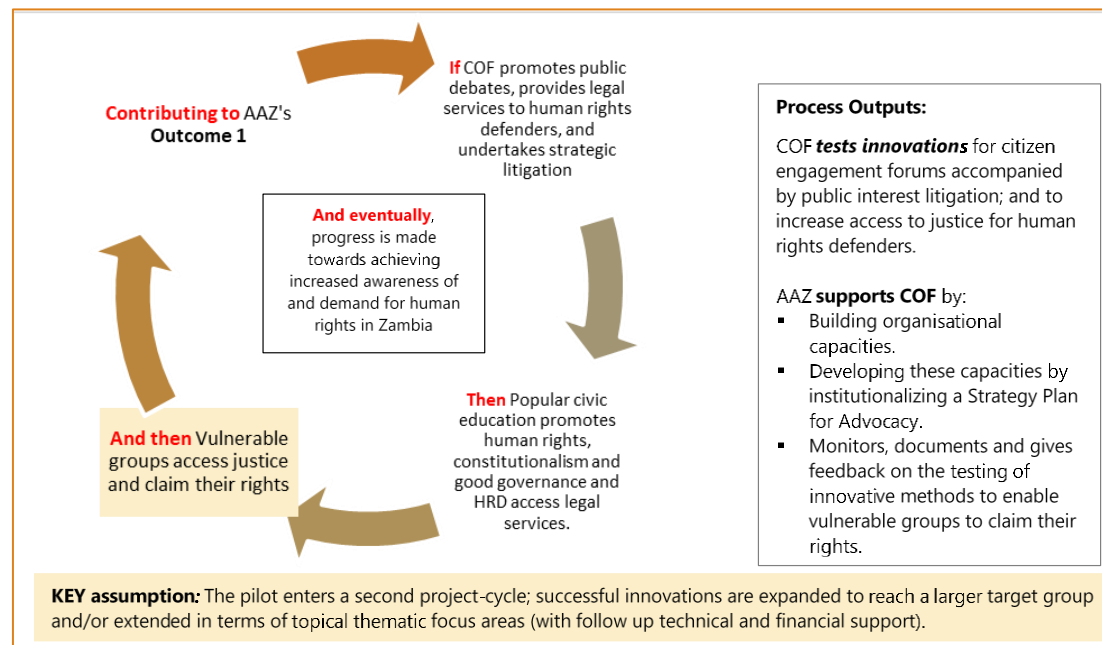
4.2.1 ‘Stories of change’

COF documented several activities as important ‘stories of change’, including the **public debates** they organised to raise awareness of the dangers to Zambia’s democracy presented by the Constitutional Amendment Bill No 10 and to provide members of the public with ‘a safe space for freedom of expression and assembly’ (COF, 2020).

The debates took place in July and September 2019 and January 2020 with these themes: ‘Will the proposed constitutional amendments lead Zambia into a one-party authoritarian state?’; ‘Is democracy in retreat in Zambia?’; and ‘Bill 10, what’s the way forward’. A total of 1067 citizens engaged in the debates and panelists included constitutional lawyers, veteran politicians and freedom fighters, human rights advocates, a former president of the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ), the leader of the opposition party, and a Bill 10 Committee member. The third debate was a ‘boiling pot’ of conflicting views, requiring COF to put on record their non-partisan status, stressing that the debates were ‘meant to create a platform for members of the public and their leaders to engage on critical national issues’ (COF, 2020).

Relatedly, the Foundation engaged in a key **strategic public interest litigation**, challenging the constitutionality of Bill No.10 and suing the Government of The Republic of Zambia on the grounds that the Bill had ‘the potential of creating an even more restricted civic space [...] weakens the systems of accountability and checks and balances in Zambia and vests even more power over the operations of the other arms of government in the Executive’ (COF, 2020; see also Box 1 in chapter 2 of this report). In addition to petitioning for ‘the removal of provisions that erode democracy and good governance’, COF went further than the Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) which also filed a petition, seeking declaratory Court Orders to mandate legal reforms to protect the Constitution (COF, 2020).

Figure 4. Chapter One Foundation’s Pathways to Change



A further ‘story of change’ is the **legal services** offered to a wide range of individual HRDs and political activists. Legal support was provided, for example, to the family of a student that was killed during protests at the University of Zambia in 2018, and to HRDs (including a juvenile) who were arrested on charges of unlawful assembly, assault of a police officer, and publishing ‘fake news’; groups fighting alienation of their land by political cadres were also supported. In most cases the charges were

dropped. COF established a law firm, LCK Chambers, to provide this much-needed legal support; but because the Legal Practitioners Act prevented LCK from taking up unsolicited instructions, the legal services were limited to individual referrals. As a result, COF signed several memoranda of understanding with public institutions and other human rights defenders unable to take up public interest litigation.

These partnerships were intended to promote collaborative efforts to protect human rights in Zambia (COF, 2020). Examples of COF's partners are, the Legal Aid Board, the Human Rights Commission, and the Undikumbukire Project, an NGO that provides legal services to primarily juveniles in conflict with the law (COF, 2020). Subsequently, COF has received requests from various government institutions (e.g., National Assembly, Parliament, and the Zambia Law Development Commission), to make presentations on topics under each institution's mandate; 'these invitations are an indication of the reputation Chapter One has earned in a relatively short period and is testament of the need for an organisation like COF in Zambia' (COF, 2020).

COF also worked on *popular civic education* in various ways. In July 2019, COF partnered with other AAZ grant partners (Alliance for Community Action and Fumba Chama) to organise the Yellow Card Protest outside the Parliament building, a significant event given 'the climate of fear in the Country' (COF, 2020). Campaigns were launched against increased corruption and bad governance, with the #YellowCard becoming the highest trending hashtag in Zambia ever (COF, 2020). COF also participated in the annual Making a Difference conference ('*Problem Solving through Proximity*', September 2019) organised by the Undikumbukire Project to highlight the need for law students to use their law degrees to make a difference in their communities. Following a workshop on safety and security for CSOs in the digital space, organised by Bloggers of Zambia (September 2019), COF held a workshop in January 2020, providing legal information on how HRD's and political activists can protect themselves from attacks.

In addition, a series of *joint civil society press statements* were made with regard to human rights, constitutionalism and the rule of law. For example, in July 2019, a statement was released in support of the condemnation of in Bill No. 10 by the then President of LAZ; another against the President of the Republic of Zambia's negative comments on the Yellow Card Campaign, and a third statement expressing CSOs' alarm at Government's negative reaction to the published Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) Trends Report.

Lessons learnt

- Civic education is a pre-cursor for human rights support. Before individuals can claim their rights, they need to be aware of these rights, but the knowledge is a significant one and needs to be filled by CSOs.
- Collaboration and partnership with government, the primary duty-bearer as regards human rights is key. Beyond litigation, advocacy and network building with both State actors, such as the National Assembly, the Human Rights Commission and the Zambia Law Development Commission have been important.
- As the pioneer of a model law firm that supports HRDs in Zambia, COF learned to be cautious in its approach, navigating the regulations that restrict the ways that legal practitioners operate in Zambia.

4.2.2 Contribution to change: capacity building and capacity development

COF experienced several bottlenecks during project implementation, all of which were major challenges related to AAZ's grant management as identified by other grant

partners (see our analysis in Chapter 3). First, as the Executive Director stated categorically, *“no capacity building was provided”*. Although COF developed all planned institutional policies, (financial, human resource, anti-fraud and procurement), *“this was done without support from AAZ”*.

Second, as was the case for other grant partners, the communication between AAZ and grantees was extremely weak; *“it was really very difficult to get responses ... and getting hold of AAZ personnel, which made working with them hard”*. This was particularly problematic at the close of the pilot project, when unclear terms and conditions regarding no-cost extensions became problematic: *“towards the end of the project we had some remaining funds and AAZ said they would give us a no-cost extension; but the thing is there was nothing about extensions in the grants document, so AAZ said we could pay for activities but no salaries, but I don’t know how we were supposed to pay those salaries and how we were supposed to do things without the people”*. This said, once COF provided the required information, a no-cost extension was indeed granted by AAZ.

Third, regular meetings would have helped COF avoid some of the problems experienced by COF. But in terms of monitoring and feedback by AAZ, *“there was nothing”*. While many other grant partners saw this as a major challenge for both AAZ as well as themselves as grantees, in the case of COF, this gap was even more significant: *“the fact that we were a pilot programme [means] you need to keep very close monitoring of the situation and have regular checks on reporting, so they can see if you are doing the right thing – but there was no continuous monitoring”*.

4.2.3 A credible contribution story?

On the one hand, the Foundation themselves documents the project as having been ‘very successful’. Indeed, as the AAZ Country Director corroborates, *“in a context of a ten-year rule, which was almost turning into more of an autocratic kind of rule, where voices were being silenced, civil society was being polarised and human rights were getting to its lowest, with increasing high levels of poverty as well as corruption, we supported the first set up of a legal defence mechanism through COF, to be able to take public strategic litigation cases in support of human rights defenders, as well as civil society and community members who were coming into conflict with the government by virtue of their work”*.

But - and this is a big ‘but’ – it appears that AAZ and COF were not able to tap the full potential of an apparently successful pilot; *“[w]hen we got the grant, we were told this is a pilot program, which if successful would be extended as a longer-term program; unfortunately, this did not come to pass”*. From the perspective of Executive Director, the grant was, put bluntly, *“not a good experience”*. In terms of capacity development to sustain short-term gains, the above ‘stories of change’ were not taken forward. Without a medium-term Strategic Plan in place, advocacy strategies to promote good governance and social justice (expected Output 1.2) were not developed. In spite of being positively assessed by the anchoring organisation, Caritas, *“the pilot project ended abruptly [and] worse still, we were left with a funding gap which I had to pay for out of my own pocket”*.

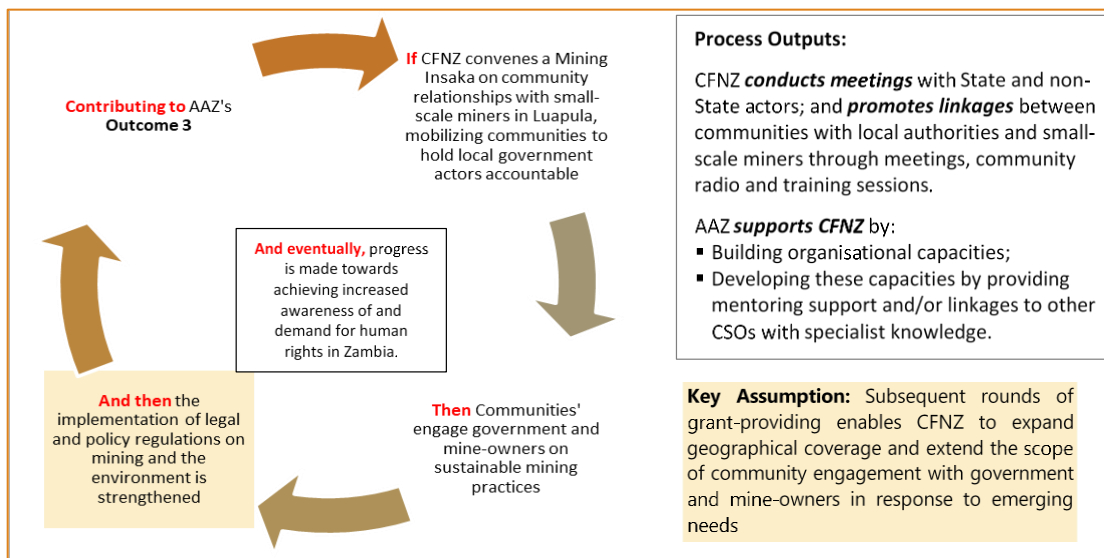
In conclusion, it is uncertain if the project's final outcome 'vulnerable groups access to legal services and claims to their rights' was sustained over time, and if and how the project contributed to AAZ's higher-level outcomes.

4.3 THE 'STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGAL AND POLICY REGULATIONS ON MINING AND ENVIRONMENT PROJECT': "IT WAS A GREAT PROJECT THAT LASTED ONLY A SHORT WHILE"

Care for Nature-Zambia (CFNZ) was highly supportive during the evaluators field visit, in which we spoke with project staff, a range of project rights holders and local government partners from Luapula, Mansa, Masaba, Kapunda and Kapanda, as well as a traditional leader, representative small-scale miners and a partner CSO. We noted that the organisation is small, currently comprising the Chief Executive Officer– with whom we engaged with the most - a Programmes Officer, a Finance Person, and an M&E Officer, whom we did not meet. Consensus among these respondents was that "the project was really good" but "the time was short and the project was small, it did not reach as many people as it could have" (KII: FGD participant).

CFNZ is a registered community-based organisation – formerly known as Worldwide Care for Nature (WWCN) whose mission is to 'build climate smart and flourishing communities through citizen participation in environmental conservation and good governance' in Luapula Province (CFNZ, 2019a). The project (January to July 2019) was financed through a Community Action Grant (ZMW 95,050), aiming to promote transparent and accountable natural resource management in Mansa District with a specific focus on the implementation of mining and environmental regulations. CFNZ followed the theory of change illustrated by **Figure 5**. below.

Figure 5. Care for Nature-Zambia's Pathways to Change



4.3.1 'Stories of change'

CFNZ's project emerged out of an identified gap in the governance power of communities in Mansa: as a traditional leader put it, "things were not going according

to plan, my subjects were not benefiting from mining, and we as traditional leaders had no say over our resources [...] our God-given resources were being exploited by outsiders, leaving the community in a shambles". In response, CFNZ aimed at a key change: community mobilisation to hold government officials accountable; *"this was accomplished, and it has persisted long after the initiative ended"*. This change happened through two pathways, which CFNZ has documented as important 'stories of change'.

First, the **Luapula Mining Insaka** 'improved capacities for communities to engage government and mine owners on best mining practices' (CFNZ, 2019a). By establishing a platform for dialogue between traditional leaders, community meetings, and radio Programmes, CFNZ helped to tackle a lack of transparency and accountability in the way mining is conducted in the province, resulting in conflicts between community members, miners, traditional leaders and government authorities. Following a stakeholder meeting convened by CFNZ, Luapula stakeholders agreed to hold the first Mining Insaka which was held on 5th June 2019 in Mansa with the theme of 'Economic diversification through sustainable mining, leaving no one behind' (CFNZ, 2019a). A key driver of success was CFNZ's 'ability to bring stakeholders together on a single platform, allowing everyone to move at the same time, ensuring that everyone's interests were reflected and approaching issues holistically' [e.g. licensing procedures, environmental degradation, illegal mining, child labour]" (CFNZ, 2019a).

For example, the Insaka also offered a platform for LUSMA an organisation which represents the "voiceless small-scale miners"; "we were able to express our various points of view, especially the issues that women in mining faced". During the Insaka, a charter of demands was created, presenting the changes which all stakeholders wished to see. As a result, "we learned how to teach other people how to do things differently; people used to dig anyhow but now people are aware of the hazards of digging anyhow and this has reduced"; "there is less illegal mining and children and pregnant women are prohibited from going into mining areas"; "our biggest gain is knowledge".

The Insaka has led to unexpected outcomes for CFNZ and its rights holders; "our group has participated in the national Zambia Alternative Mining Indaba in Lusaka, as well as travelling to South Africa and Ghana to participate in the Africa Mining Vision and collaborating with the Southern Africa Resource Watch and the Benchman Foundation" (CFNZ, 2019a). In addition, CFNZ has since collaborated with the Miners' Workers Union and has participated in consultations on Zambia's 8th National Development Plan as well as the revision of the 2015 Mines Act where "we submitted that the ministry of mines should entirely stop issuing mining permits in ecologically sensitive areas; now we hear our views being presented on TV!". The Insaka was also a catalyst for interventions such as the 'Zero Children in Mining initiative', supported by Save the Children in partnership with the Zambia Alliance For Women and the Rural Women Assembly.

A second pathway to change was community mobilisation, aimed at 'women and youths actively demanding and influencing decisions about sustainable mining practices' (CFNZ, 2019a). As part of the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) network, CFNZ collaborated with CSPR in conducting mini-surveys on the effect of

unsafe and environmentally unsustainable mining practices on communities, including land-grabbing, which informed strategies such as sensitisation on the need for legal agreements between an investor and those (often low-income households) who own the land, as well as adequate compensation should the land be given over to mining or the landowner relocated. CNFZ also broadcast community radio programmes to raise awareness of, for example, the Mines and Minerals Development Act, the Environmental Management Act and legislation relating to community development and participation in Extractive Industries Assessment processes; *“this was significant because communities occasionally clashed with the law because they didn’t understand these policies”* (CFNZ 2019a).

Community meetings were held and community radio programmes were broadcast to discuss, for instance, the dangers associated with small-scale mining: *“these miners can’t afford excavators so people were digging manganese manually – people were getting injuries and dying and getting as little as K7 per bucket”*. But because they needed the income community members did not take any steps to engage the mine owners ‘for fear of being chased away from the mines’ (CFNZ 2019a).

Where they previously worked in isolation, communities came together in *Tuyafwe* (self-help) groups, equipped by CNFZ with phones and bicycles, to access information on licensing procedures; *“following the Insaka, it was decided that it would be best if information on mining practices was shared among the communities, so the groups were created to teach people about their rights, one from each village with an equal total number of women and men”*. These groups were also able to access information on extension services from government departments (e.g., agriculture, forestry, fisheries & livestock, cooperatives, and heritage); *“we have learned about livelihood alternatives to mining, like fish farming, keeping pigs and growing tomatoes and sugarcane”*. This said, *“essentials like shovels, wheelbarrows, and fish to start our fishponds were promised by the Ministry of Agriculture but these have not been provided”*.

Lessons learnt

Stakeholders need to work together to hold duty-bearers accountable. This points to a need to:

- *Intensify civic education* so communities can identify their civic space and hold their elected representatives accountable for their actions or failure to deliver on their development promises. As it stands, *the power is with the political and traditional leaders*.
- *Intensify training to promote sustainable mining practices* among artisanal and small-scale miners.

4.3.2 Contribution to change: capacity building and capacity development

As soon as CNFZ was shortlisted as a grantee, AAZ did a capacity assessment, determining that the CBO needed to improve their strategic and business planning capacities; *“despite this we received no assistance”*. CNFZ attended an orientation meeting – although *“this only looked at how to administer the money”* – as well as a workshop on scenario planning, risk management, and shrinking space. But staff say that they received no formal training and did not participate in any academic courses. AAZ did not organise any staff placement nor did they make linkages between CNFZ and other CSOs and *“we, being rural, were not visited by the hub managers”* (although the purpose of decentralised AAZ hubs was primarily to reach smaller, rural CSOs)

(KII: CFNZ). Indeed, *“the strengthening of the proposal, which AAZ assisted us with, is probably the only thing we can call capacity-building”*.

In terms of capacity development, CFNZ has *“continued to use the knowledge we gained from the AAZ project to strengthen the Luapula mining Insaka”*. On the one hand, the grant itself, which financed the Mining Insaka, served as a launch pad for connecting with other stakeholders, *“promoting”* CFNZ from the provincial to the national, and then regional levels; *“in short the grant for the Insaka was a platform for the information flow”*, offering CFNZ an opportunity to grow. Similarly, the AAZ grant has helped leverage follow up funding from Save the Children International: *“we have become more successful as a result of our ability to transition from one project to another based on interactions with the community and support from AAZ”*.

On the other hand, CFNZ expected AAZ to help them strengthen their advocacy and engagement capacities as this is one of their strategic areas of comparative advantage; but again, *“this did not occur”*. The CBO had expected but did not receive institutional capacity building, such as being shown how to register with regulatory bodies (e.g., conduct internal/external audits. Staff speculated that AAZ were planning that a partnership with CFNZ would be built and *“we would be winged off into a larger project where we would now do the strategic plans; but this never happened”*. However, when CFNZ submitted a follow up concept note in response to a second request for proposals issued by AAZ they were rejected on the grounds that they lacked experience in the area: *“this was ludicrous because our plan was for the identical things that they had previously supported”*. A third call for proposals was *“much above our capabilities as they asked for the same things we had hoped they would help with such as audits, strategic plans, and so on”*. CFNZ say they have since begun to address these shortcomings.

4.3.3 A credible contribution story?

“The most important thing that came out of this project and is still living is that it gave birth to the Luapula Mining Insaka”; the Luapula mining Insaka is still operational, meeting annually to continue engaging civic leaders in debates on mining issues and by-laws related to the environment and employment. Yet the recommended actions identified by the annual Insaka depend on follow up by a monitoring task force – a priority recommendation of the first Insaka – which has not been set up. This was mainly because *“the previous regime did not support us”*; *“the task force threatened the mining bureau, hence, they sat on it”*.

Similarly, as explained by a traditional Chief, the project planned to build on the initial mobilisation of Tuyafwe groups, dividing communities into groups under a Chiefdom Trust or Royal Trust – *“where we as chiefs have a mine so that our people have power for inter-mining [sic -intra]”* – accompanied by rights-based community training and sensitisation. Yet the evaluation team found no conclusive evidence that the Tuyafwe groups still exist and the plan to expand such community mobilisation efforts was not put into action; *“miners still simply take over your land, even if you are growing crops, telling the owner they have no say, no authority”*.

While all the people we spoke with asserted that the project had a successful outcome, enabling communities to engage with government and miners on sustainable

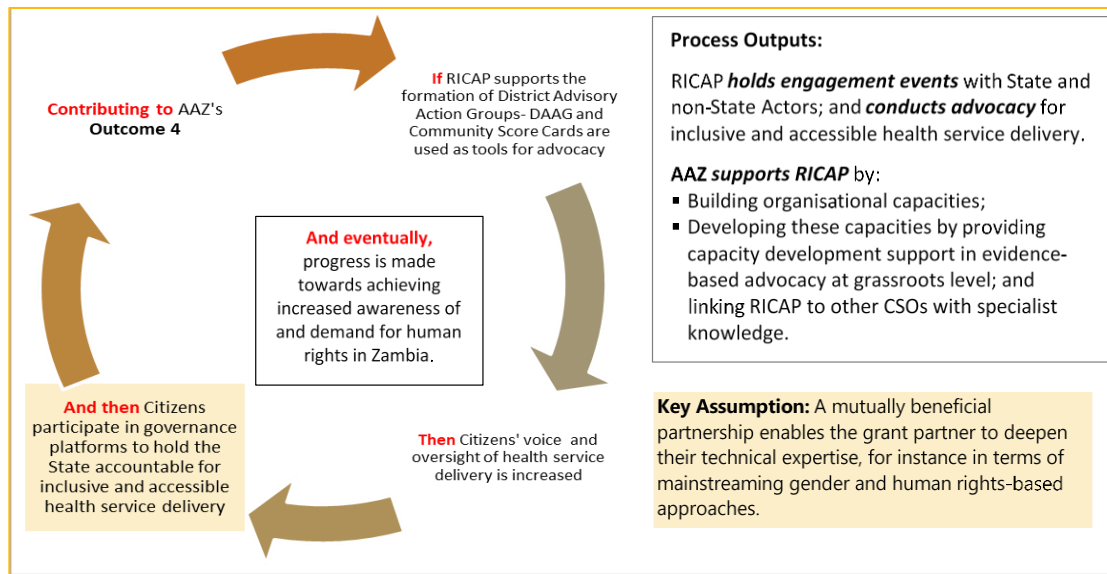
mining practices, CNFZ identified two challenges related to project design, both of which were echoed by the project's stakeholders. First, the project's geographical coverage was narrow, limited to 5 communities in Mansa district although the CNFZ received requests for interventions to address illegal mining and environmental problems from communities across the province. Second, as a result of the project's short duration, *“we left the community half-way baked - just when the community was getting the gist of the project, it was terminated”*. Given these limitations, the project's desired outcome – the strengthened implementation of mining policies and regulations – was simply unrealistic.

4.4 THE COMMUNITY ACTION VOICE (CAVE) PROJECT: “OUR PLATFORM SHOULD BE REPLICATED”

Rise Community Aid Programme (RICAP) engaged with the evaluation team with enthusiasm and thoughtful insight. The project objective was to promote citizens' civic participation and state accountability for improved governance and public service delivery, strengthening the capacity of citizens to demand improved policy implementation and inclusive and accessible health services in seven health facilities. During our field visit, we spoke with project staff, a wide range of project rights holders, including Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHC) and Ward Development Committees (WDC), as well as district level health services decision makers. *“When this project started, we were trying to narrow the gap between service providers and the service users; we were trying change the service users' attitude of “Boma iyanganepe” (this is for the government to handle) and with time we started building their capacity to engage their service providers.”*

RICAP is a community-based organisation working with marginalised groups of people to empower them to have a voice in their own transformation. RICAP implemented the **Community Action Voice (CAVE) project** (July 2019 - October 2021) in Chilanga District, with a Standard Grant (ZMW 1,482,674), aiming at promoting good governance and increasing citizen's awareness and demand for human rights, targeting women, girls, boys, and men rights-holders, persons with disabilities, health sector staff, civic leaders and Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHC) members. **Figure 6** below shows the pathways to change as set out in RICAP's project proposal (RICAP, 2019).

Figure 6. Rise Community Aid Programme's Pathways to Change



4.4.1 'Stories of change'

The CAVE project addressed poor local health services by bridging the gap between local rights-holders and health service providers through two pathways to change: 1. Building on existing structures and organised rights-holders by empowering rights-holders with deeper awareness on their rights and advocacy skills to hold health service providers to account for the delivery of quality, available, accessible, rights-based, and inclusive health services; and, 2. Building trust and engaging in dialogue with service providers through different monitoring methods and dialogue meetings, contributing to change in attitudes and behaviours among service providers on their roles and responsibilities and how to engage with civil society and rights-holder groups. These have resulted in two 'stories of change'

Story 1: The CAVE project engaged with 75 community members of existing local structures such as Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHCs), Safe Motherhood Action Groups, and Ward Development Committees (WDCs). Members of these structures were trusted by the larger community to interact with local authorities and service providers. By exploring and building on their given roles, the project aimed at strengthening their ability to engage with health staff service providers and to voice rights-holders' concerns and to claim good and inclusive health services.

NHC members are present at clinics and health facilities. Through the project they realised that they are service users and appreciated their rights. They were trained in Social Accountability methods and how to strategically engage with service providers. **Members of the WDCs** were also trained in Social Accountability skills resulting in the formation of Community Advocacy Groups and District Advocacy Action Groups (DAAGs) (year 2 of the project). After these trainings, the members later cascaded these skills to other members of their committees. *"One of the spaces we created was dialogue meetings between service providers and service users [...] we wanted to ride on the already existing structures [...] and build their capacities"*.

Story 2: Based on these structures and increased awareness and advocacy skills of the committee and group members, the project enabled the creation of new platforms and opened spaces for dialogue with local duty-bearers and health service providers. The action groups included young rights-holders and groups that had not been engaged in the local structures before. The awareness and skills of the community groups were raised through trainings, community theatre and the practice from using score cards. The project supported the action groups to identify who to speak to on what matters in the health sector, and how to monitor the performance of the health workers through semi-annual community score cards (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). The community monitoring was then discussed at information sharing and policy implementation meetings. The score cards helped both rights-holders and service providers to understand health policies, and to appreciate the value of their roles.

Through both pathways 30 NHC and community health workers were reached at the health facilities. 24 members of WDC trained in advocacy formed the action groups in seven wards. 20 young people were trained in civic engagement and social accountability and 925 persons were reached through drama sessions in the target communities; *“the DAAGs have been equipped with tools to continue the work beyond the project and they are still very active doing this follow up work instigated by themselves. The skills and knowledge the community has acquired is a very important factor for sustenance and longevity”*.

Lessons learnt

- A multi-stakeholder approach is effective in engaging with service providers. The relationship with District Government was key to channelling demands to decision makers, and dialogue between citizens and service providers works best when backed up by locally generated evidence.
- Support to social accountability works particularly well when using community structures and involving women and youth through capacity building leads to a stronger social inclusive space.
- Policy influence takes long, so the CAVE project could only contribute to policy influence processes. Social accountability only thrives when the policies are clearly understood by both service users and providers.

4.4.2 Contribution to change: capacity building and capacity development

Key links in the causal change for the CAVE project were the timely provision of funds and AAZ’s support to partners in addressing their capacity gaps. AAZ’s approach to capacity development consisted of different methods, including tailored support to the partners based on their needs. RICAP attended one AAZ M&E training for all grantees and introduction to outcome harvesting. ICAP utilised AAZ’s template to record and track the progress of results throughout the project cycle. RICAP also attended

Delayed disbursement of funds was a challenge. To keep the project running, RICAP used other funds while waiting for the AAZ grant, as in the case of monthly stipends used to motivate the DAAGs to collect information, as the project could not afford to lose DAAG members.

trainings on “most significant change” and “change story approach” organised by other actors. All these trainings helped RICAP to better effect and monitor change. Outcome harvesting enabled RICAP to recognise and isolate changes brought about by the project. AAZ also provided a generic finance training on grant procedures and compliance in reporting, but it was not tailored to the specific needs of RICAP.

AAZ in evidence-based advocacy at grassroot level were not met. RICAP found themselves relying on resources from other partners. Staff turnover at AAZ delayed the

feedback on narrative and financial reports several times. RICAP was not aware of the hub Office and had expected AAZ to check in on them as a partner and their activities more often. In fact, AAZ did not verify if the RICAP reporting reflected what was happening on the ground.

“We felt abandoned and alone in the partnership. The approach was quite risky as they were not even verifying if what was obtaining on the ground was a true picture. What if we did not exist in reality as an organisation or what if we are not being truthful in what we are reporting to be doing on the ground?”. RICAP’s expectations of support from

RICAP mainly attributed successful project implementation to the capacity building acquired from other organisations, and other calls for proposals that helped them to improve their ongoing projects.

RICAP depended on their own previous experiences, and resources and capacity building from other partners than AAZ. The gained outcome harvesting skills were useful, but the late disbursement of funds would have hampered project

implementation unless RICAP had managed to temporally cover some of the costs.

The relation between AAZ and RICAP was restricted to the grant agreement. The limited engagement with AAZ left little room to influence decisions on the grant making process or to air views on the partnership. In theory several communication channels would allow such dialogue. However, the communication was mainly based on calls and virtual contact, and RICAP met only few AAZ staff.

4.4.3 A credible contribution story?

RICAP successfully supported the formation of DAAGs, and community score cards were used as tools for advocacy (holding engagement events). RICAP managed to support a process that led to engagement events between rights-holders and duty-bearers, leading to increased citizens’ voice and oversight of health service delivery addressed, as well as participation in platforms allowing rights-holders to hold the State to account. The skills acquired through the CAVE project were applied to hold duty-bearers accountable also in other sectors (funded by other grants). While advocacy and social accountability trainings triggered and cemented change, the organisation felt that their research skill gaps were not met; when moving forward, RICAP wants to include evidence generation in future advocacy trainings.

The RICAP case study – as in the other three cases - shows that the role of AAZ was mainly (?) limited to availing funds for the project. The anticipated support for capacity development of RICAP, based on an interactive partner relationship did not materialise. The received trainings were generic to all grant partners with the purpose to guide grantees in how to report to AAZ and not tailored for RICAP and their specific needs. The other methods for capacity development were not applied by AAZ and the communication with RICAP was basically only held virtually and through phone calls. The partnership did not respond to RICAP’s expectation on a mutually beneficial relationship for AAZ’s strategic support and interactive dialogue on the project process. *“They only acknowledged but did not provide the real time feedback and mentoring to improve project reporting and financial accountability. Review of financial reports was only done 3 months ago and if things were not done the correct way there would have*

had more severe consequences". The disbursement of funds was delayed and would have impacted the project implementation severely had RICAP not been able to temporarily use other funds. With the AAZ funding, the project achieved the desired outcome through RICAP's own capacity and technical resources, and trainings provided by other partners to RICAP. *"It was there [the relationship with AAZ)], but it was more superficial' I can imagine after the grant had ended, we can't call them to even say hi"*.

4.5 UNCERTAIN PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINED CHANGE

In conclusion, the grant partners' projects resulted in a variety of **activity-related process outputs** (in italics), which feature in AAZ's results framework.² These process outputs contributed towards the projects' expected outputs (in bold italics).

- *ACA set up a youth-led initiative* for online social media conversations to influence the 2021 general election in Zambia as an ***accountability event*** (official figures put the youth (16-34 years) vote 54% of registered voters)/
- *COF tested an innovative model* for ***legal service provision to HRDs***, accompanied by popular civic education to promote human rights, constitutionalism and good governance.
- *CFNZ conducted meetings and created linkages* between State and non-State actors, enabling ***communities to engage government and mine-owners*** on sustainable mining practices in Mansa District.
- *RICAP held engagement events* to ***increase citizens' voice and oversight of health service delivery*** in Chilanga District.

On the part of AAZ, as stated in the Grants Manual, the grant manager was responsible for delivering five main **capacity building process outputs** to its partners. These are outlined below (AAZ, 2018b).

(1) ***Targeted one-on-one training/coaching*** designed specifically for CSO's based on institutional capacity assessments; this included training on research and analysis on corruption and accountability within state institutions at local and national levels; mechanisms to engage relevant civil, traditional and political structures; public social accountability monitoring; and challenging institutions, structures and powers responsible for deteriorating climate change.

We found that capacity assessments were conducted for some partners, covering finance; grant management, programming and M&E (AAZ, 2021c). In addition, AAZ conducted a study on partners' M&E needs, which identified the need for training in M&E.

² Other expected outputs level results for the CSSP are included in this results framework, such as grant partners' documentation on laws and policies and use of power analysis to mitigate operational risks (AAZ, 2019c). While it is possible that further case study field visits would have confirmed this claim, the evaluation team found no documented evidence of these outputs.

There is documented evidence that AAZ supported development of strategic plans for some partners' - e.g., Network of Zambian People Living with HIV and AIDS (ZNP+, 2019) and Zambia Climate Change Network (ZNCC, 2019) – as well as conducting training in Community-based Natural Resource Management in Chongwe District (AAZd, *undated*). But as the case studies demonstrate, *such targeted training was not provided across all grant partners*.

(2) Formal training through the MS Training Centre for Development (MS-TCD). The MS-TCD, located in Arusha Tanzania (<https://mstcdc.or.tz/>) is a regional hub run by with funds from Denmark, which was intended to provide HRBA and feminist training for AAZ staff and grant partners, as well as producing tools and training materials, using a mix of online and physical training (AAZ, 2018b). While AAZ highlighted the potential for engaging MS-TCD in capacity building support in the context of emerging issues such as accountable Constituency Development Funds (CDF), the evaluation team found *no evidence that grant partners had benefitted from certified training provided by the centre*.

(3) Staff placement: In addition, AAZ intended to utilise staff placement as a coaching method, embedding staff with specific skills in CSOs requiring support in finance, programme management, and M&E.

(4) Organisational linkage support was a further planned capacity building strategy was providing The evaluation team found no evidence that such placement of AAZ-provided expertise took place; as one grant partner put it, “AAZ were short-staffed in themselves” (KII: CFNZ). In Chapter 5, we discuss the challenges associated with linking grant partners to specialist CSOs, to provide mentoring support.

Finally, AAZ had intended to provide support to grassroots organisations through a small network of **(5) Regional Hub Offices** (further detailed findings from regional hub managers are found in [Annex 6](#)). A key function of the hub manager is to identify capacity building needs during a monitoring visit and develop an organisation-specific capacity building plan, providing critically important decentralised support to grass roots organisations; yet, as we found in the case of the North Eastern Province Hub Office, *hub managers do not have a dedicated budget for field visits to grant partners* (KII: Hub Manager NE Province). Both rural-based case study partners said they had *not been visited by the hub manager* covering their districts. We note that grant partners' complaints (as reported by hub managers) corroborate those of respondents to the evaluation's grant management online survey, *i.e., delayed disbursement of funds, no feedback channels, and little or no capacity building support* (AAZ, 2020b).

Analysis of the contribution of process outputs to sustained change

AAZ's capacity building process outputs were considered to be critically important causal links between the grant partners' project outputs and other expected results. According to their results framework, AAZ was expected provide timely grants **and** to train and/or coach grant partners in financial management; M&E and reporting; compliance and mutual accountability. Moreover, AAZ was expected to *develop* longer-term capacity of their partners in research and analysis; civic engagement mechanisms; social accountability monitoring; and climate justice mechanisms.

While it was clear that the AAZ-Sida funded projects resulted in scattered short-term gains, the evaluation team did not find convincingly comprehensive evidence of *sustained change* across the four case studies, in terms of increased awareness and demand for human rights (in various sectors). In the absence of effective capacity building, let alone capacity development, the final outcomes of grant partners' projects were undermined. The exception was the #Digital Youth Vote project, which was specific and timebound. For example, taking a longer-term perspective, it is not certain that CNFZ' was able to resume its efforts to strengthen '*the implementation of legal and policy requirement on mining and the environment*'; or that RICAP continued to increase '*citizen's participation in governance platforms to hold the state accountable for public health service delivery*'; or that COF's expanded '*vulnerable groups access to legal services and claims to their rights*'.

Indeed, while some CBOs have grown over time (see **Box 4**), the smaller CSO we engaged with appears to have lost out; since the project ended, CFNZ has lacked the capacity and resources to conduct monitoring activities; "*we are unable to check the permits for mining manganese or to lobby the new leadership's suspension of licences, which has increased illegal mining, particularly since sugilite, a new mineral discovered recently in the Chembe and Milenge districts, has increased the amount of illegal mining as well as community tensions*" (KII: CFNZ).

Box 4. Copper Rose: a CBO's growth trajectory

Copper Rose Zambia is considered by AAZ to be one of the CSSP's "*high-performing CBOs*". It was founded by two sisters, Natasha and Faith Kaoma, with the purpose of supporting young Zambian women's access to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The organisation empowers young women and girls with knowledge on menstrual hygiene (among other SRHR issues), gives them affordable access to sanitary products and encourages them to continue their education.

In 2016, Copper Rose became a successful recipient of a grant from the Queens Young Leaders Firestarter Initiative. Subsequently, AAZ "*informally*" supported their growth trajectory from being a CBO to a bigger NGO, providing technical support in terms of audit support (through Price Waterhouse Cooper) beyond the requirements of the Sida grant. Together with the training from the ActionAid Global Platform, the grant enabled the Copper Rose to conduct their own trainings on advocacy around sexual reproductive and health and rights in the communities where the organisation is working.

The organisation has continued to use the free space of the Global Platform to hold their volunteer orientation meetings and have been given one-on-one support from the Global Platform team to develop fundraising applications, enabling the organisation to build capacity and to grow as an organisation. This support resulted in presenting a successful funding proposal to Family Planning 2020, which enabled the organisation to double their annual income and allowing them to increase their work and have a greater impact on the lives of young women across Zambia.

Nevertheless, while Copper Rose has grown as a CBO and had an impact on the lives of young women, particularly in higher education institutions, *behaviour change in SRHR is a long slow process when, in Eastern Province Chiefdoms, you can't show a condom to young girls, it's taboo.*" (KII: Hub Manager).

Source: (AAZ, 2018a); <https://copperrosezambia.org/news-impact/>

It is important to note, *as mentioned twice in the ToR*, it is beyond the scope of an evaluation such as this one to ascertain conclusively the extent to which longer term change took place. This said, as we move upwards through the results chain from the micro-ToCs to AAZ's ToC, the pathways to change become even more uncertain. Our findings suggest that without the required capacities to sustain the short-term gains which were made, it is likely that AAZ's intermediate outcomes (see the overarching ToC in **Annex 7**) were undermined. And without robust implementation processes (i.e., the intermediate outcomes contributing to planned outcomes), it is impossible to

validate pathways – or causal linkages – towards AAZ’s outcomes. These included the development of CSO’s capacities to enhance citizens’ civic participation and state accountability for *‘improved governance and public service delivery; or for public finance management and institutional governance systems’*; and *‘for the enforcement of policies and regulations for sustainable Natural Resource management and climate justice’*; and for *‘improved policies and programmes that promote inclusive and accessible to health services’*.

5 Deep Dive Analysis

In this chapter we dive deeper into specific activities implemented by means of the ‘traditional’ grants represented by one (RICAP) of our four case studies vis-à-vis innovative granting modalities represented by two (ACA and CFNZ) cases. In addition, in section 5.4, we bring in a further example of activities implemented under the #BeHeardZambia project, supported by an Individual/Social Movement Grant under the ‘innovative’ grant modality.

NB. In this section, on request by some respondents, we do not reference any source of quotations pertaining to individual respondents.

5.1 INNOVATIONS: FOUR ACTIVITIES

All the project activities implemented by ACA, RICA, CFNZ and Chama Fumba were, in one way or another, innovative; *“for AAZ the project was about innovations in any thematic area to implement in a different way and do something unique”* (KII: AAZ Leadership). This said, it is important to note the different dimensions of ‘innovation’ (see **Box 5**).

Box 5. Flexible funding to support innovation but with a focus on quality not quantity

As Sida’s support for CSOs in Zambia is a hybrid of core support (for well-established CSOs such as AAZ) and flexible funding, for sub-granting, Sida is particularly interested in innovation in its various dimensions. Sub-grant funding aims at:

- New types of CSOs (e.g., social enterprises, like Chapter One Foundation);
- Unregistered social movements and networks, grassroot groups and individuals who cannot qualify for traditional grants;
- CSO emergency responses; *“Sida is interested in agility, being able to respond quickly to the country context”*; and
- CBOs which need to grow as organisations; *“the rationale for flexible funding should be a **trajectory of growth** rather than enabling the same CSOs to repeatedly apply for grants”*.

A key consideration for stakeholders is a focus on quality not quantity; *“there is a fine line between flexibility and **accountability** and part of our role as the PAT was to set parameters for ‘flexibility’ in relation to the **quality** of sub-grant support”*.

Source: Sida, 2021c; interviews with AAZ leadership, Sida, and FGD with the PAT.

During ACA’s Digital #YouthVote Project, **online conversations** changed the way in which young people made decisions related to voting. *“During the previous government we faced offline restrictions because of legislation like the Public Order Act so we ran to the online spaces to address voter apathy, not ending at the action of voting but airing views on why young people needed to vote and on voting on things that actually matter to youth, like health and employment, instead of voting based on your tribe”*. The conversations were an avenue for voices to be heard, *“increasing the demand for participation”*: *it was a bandwagon that people jumped on*” (FGD: Youth Activists).

Success was driven by the ability of the group, with support from ACA, to convert threats into a trigger for change. *“Some of us saw and felt the oppression – like cadres*

intimidating and attacking us in markets - and this sparked the need and interest to see change.” here young people felt they were being “*taunted*” by the previous regime, for example in Kabwata or Matero (ruling party strongholds) this in fact galvanised them to “*constantly talk back to prove that they had power*”; when a protest in a physical space was closed off, young people met in a ‘bush protest’ in an unknown location and broadcast it online across different platforms. Some conversations on topics like corruption, cadre-ism and debt “*spiraled out of control*” with prominent political figures (e.g., Hakainde Hichilema, the current president) joining the conversations, so “*we had to take measures to present a non-partisan front*”. Importantly, the group of youths became self-sustaining: “*we reached a point during the election period where we could have conversations on our own without ACA being involved, and even now individuals carry on*”. A key learning for youth activists has been “*through accountability checks, we are able to keep track not only the current government but if we go back to our laws and reports, we are also able to hold the system accountable*”.

In Kafue, RICAP held information sharing meetings, which “*helped communities understand our rights*”, as well as advocacy trainings, which “*brought out our voices*”. Following these interventions, Neighbourhood Health Committees (NHCs) used a **community scorecards process** to identify specific issues in 10 selected Wards, clustered under scoring benchmarks (e.g., attitudes and behaviour such as male involvement in family planning and antenatal care, infrastructure, and human resources in the health facilities) in each Ward. During Interface Meetings – drawing on established Ward Development Committee meetings - with the District Health Director, the District Commissioner, councillors, health workers, and members of the affected communities zeroed – in on the most pressing problems. Solutions to some of the issues were found during the meetings themselves. For example, the lack of ambulance services for some communities had resulted in tragedy: “*in Kazinva, as they waited for transport after the birth of twins, one died before the ambulance came to the rescue; the decision to provide a second ambulance for the Constituency was made then and there*”. Unfortunately, the second ambulance bought broke down and at the time of writing this report, there is still only one ambulance operating. However, local government authorities “*agreed to the urgency of the issue and are sourcing funds so replace the ambulance*”.

While the main obstacles faced by the District Advocacy Action Group (DAAG) are the resource constraints common to community-based governance structures (finance and transport), a key factor of success was **building on existing civic participation processes**. Where previously “*there used to be a lot of politics at health facilities*”, advocacy fuelled by the community scorecard has helped to ease the relationship between local politicians (Councillors) and service providers; “*it helped to demystify and dismantle political favouritism in service provision*”; “*communities were oppressed by those who belonged to the ruling party before elections but there is now some sanity in the facilities*”.

Unlike the DAAG, formed under RICAP, the **Tuyafwe groups** supported by CFNZ in Luapula were informal, created through unofficial channels and supported by traditional leaders, without the direct involvement of local government. These groups served as spaces of participation for community members to make changes in their

living and working environments. For example, *“after the Luapula Mining Insaka, we had illegal miners who invaded the land of a widow, one Mrs Mubanga. She initiated a protest and we formed the Tubombeko group and we took the matter to the Ministry and they did not help us, so we went to the NGOs [CFNZ and Zambia Land Alliance] who gave us the knowledge we needed to dislodge the miners; the Ministry and the Chief then took action and the miners were moved off the widow’s land”*. The evaluation team spoke with an individual who spurred action by another Tuyafwe group, where, *“the price of minerals was previously determined by the customer, but now it is determined by the seller”*; the group successfully increased pieceworker’s daily earning (from ZMK 3 per bucket of manganese, to ZMK 7) and although *“this price was still low when you think about the labour they do, we handled this by ourselves, without involving local authorities or even the help of the traditional leaders”*.

Successful community action by the Tuyafwe groups was driven by a **rights-centred process** (similar to RICAP’s); beginning by *“raising community members’ awareness and knowledge of their rights, then developing their negotiating skills and mobilising support from the people with power”*.

5.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

Teamwork, community structures, and solidarity of leadership

The consensus across all types of project rights holders is that, by comparison with individual efforts, it is *“more credible”* to engage as a collective group on issues of health, good mining practices, governance and elections. Decision making is influenced through group members’ confidence *“to talk about things without fear”*, strong communication skills (including tact), public speaking skills, and negotiation skills, as well as group members’ previous experience and expertise. Most important are the group’s access to those with power, *“personal connections”*, and ability to leverage relationships with authority.

Collective action was the “best way” to influence decision-making on the youth vote. For the youth activists “teamwork” was a game changer: *“when we had threats from the ruling party we had each other’s backs, the group would justify posts by other youths by backing up with even more credible evidence”*. For the DAAG, working with community structures such as the Ward Development Committees and Neighbourhood Health Committees was extremely effective in mobilising communities *“who usually ‘keep themselves to themselves’”*. For Chief Chimese, the sensitisation they received as a group of traditional leaders was critical, *“building our capacities for caring for our natural resources; we were given knowledge on how to become community members who own mines”*.

More often than not, however, a process of participation in decision making is initiated by an individual and becomes a collective effort. *“The influence started from individuals and the Youth Vote [the digital #Youth Vote project] came in and joined the voices and then it became a collective influence”*.

In the case of the DAAG, the process of civic engagement was further strengthened when health service officers *“provided capacity building to the DAAG to ensure that*

they had the right information before going into the communities"; health facility staff also linked the DAAG to Council bodies such as the District Malaria Council.

Communities' priorities: the views of project partners

Across the board, project partners agreed that the activities they engaged in were *"very relevant"*, *"representing people's priorities"* Community meetings, radio broadcasts and *Tuyafwe* groups were *"an eye-opener for those people in mining communities who did not have a clue about what was happening - people got to know about their rights, how they can use them and where to attain assistance when they needed, so they were able to troop in and report these issues to the District Commissioner or Chief Chimese"*. A key issue is mining licenses; *"license prices are fixed in Lusaka without consideration of the local citizens - we as chiefs do not have a single power to provide licenses on our own land, imagine that!- in most cases, several people apply for the same piece of land or mine, and a poor person is unable to compete with those that are well off because they use the money to influence decisions"*. Other critical information shared among communities in Luapula was *"the basics"*: the necessity of environmental impact assessments and environmental conservation practices, such as the *chitemene* system.

In the case of RICAP's community scorecard process, *"when it comes to health services, almost everyone is affected and almost everybody is a stakeholder – it's a matter of life and death"* (see **Box 6**). The District Health Director told us that the process proved to be an important source of feedback from the service users across Chilanga District, bringing to his attention issues that were not captured by his own staff.

Box 6. Improving the relationship between health service users and providers

The DAAG has played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between health service users and service providers; *"[t]here is a new rapport that allows and fosters buy in from the community and trust through the NHC, who are very close to the communities"*.

On the one hand, *"when we [District Health Director] had problems with funding and people were asked to contribute money for referral systems, or for the necessary supplies during a medical emergency like cholera, they came straight to our offices and raised their concerns!"*. At the same time, where previously community workers were not regarded as significant stakeholders, they now *"push for openness in funds received by the facilities, they are more involved with the WDC in advocacy around funding of different projects, ensuring the needs of the community are taken on board, they write to higher offices to request funds"*.

On the other hand, community members have come to understand the complexity of the roles of health staff and problems the Health service workers faced. As one Ward Development Committee Director put it: *"Once upon a time, the community in Chilanga were up in arms against health centre staff. They said there weren't enough medicines. The absence of doctors which was an issue. They said nurses were very pompous and unfriendly. The community did not understand that the nurses' role is to administer drugs and not to make them and so their anger was directed at the wrong people. The DAAG helped to fill these gaps in understanding, they taught us how to talk to the people, and this has improved the relationship between users and health service providers – it's a significant change."*

Source: Interviews with RICAP stakeholders and project rights holders.

From the perspective of the Human Rights Commission (HRC), facilitators of some discussions, online conversations were not an opportunity for mutually beneficial information-sharing (e.g., the HRC's mandated role, human rights violations and opportunities for redress) but brought insights into a key issue: the need for reform of the Public Order Act. Young people were used to simultaneously spark *"tribal violence"* in the electoral process and shield those who were responsible for such cadre-

ism; *“politicians sent them out to do their dirty work and while their bosses were meeting over drinks, the youths were arrested; they became victims of the Act”*.

Partnership was equally important to Chapter One Foundation (COF), a partner of Alliance for Community Action (ACA) – *“for us the right to vote is the most significant right that Zambians participate in”*; the youth activists’ work fed into a wider pool of *“continuous voter education and other things we were championing”*. Both the HRC and ACA found they *“could amplify the messages that ACA was putting across through the Twitter spaces”*, engaging with youth as constituents for the first time in the case of the HRC.

Learning from good practice”: spearheading change

In the view of the District Health Director, the DAAG is a model platform for communities’ influence on decision-making in health service delivery that could and should be replicated. But this requires leadership for change: a person or department within the district administration *“to spearhead that activity”*. *“Before RICAP came in, we never thought of doing such things [forming the DAAG and developing the community scorecard process; but it was just the lack of motivated people to initiate - people need to be educated on how things can be done: how do you fund activities? How do you coordinate? How do you communicate? How do you move between locations? How do you bring people together? Where do you meet?”*. And the biggest question: *“who is going to champion these ideas?”*.

Similarly, The #Youth Vote model could be replicated for other human rights issues that are relevant to youth. Twitter has been proven to be a suitable space to discuss *“happening issues”* in Zambia, such as employment and SRHR. Equally timely are ongoing lifestyle audits of people in power; *“corruption affects the youth and determines if they will have education, water and any other services - as such if they understand how corruption concerns them it will in turn ensure they participate in the civic space”*. But youth activists and ACA project stakeholders pointed out to the evaluation team that replication of the online conversations model needs to be accompanied by several other processes:

- Deepened advocacy for legislative reform of the Public Order Act, Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act in line with the Bill of Rights, as well as litigation on the lack of diversity in positions of leadership including youth and women;
- Advocacy for continuous voter registration; and for long-term monitoring of elections and electoral spaces, *“not just looking for abuses during the election but to identify human rights issues generally”*.
- Stronger CSOs relationships *“why compete with each other – why not see each other as partners in the development space?”*;
- Intensified dialogue between State and non-State partners; notably, the HRC expressed interest in using an online platforms to target youth: *“we know where to find women and other marginalised groups but the youth are a tricky group to access and online spaces could be one that can be exploited”*.

5.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF POWER DYNAMICS

FORMS OF POWER

While many of the challenges faced by the case study grant partners were external ones, underpinning these are, inevitably, the power dynamics within communities, as well as between communities and government authorities. **Table 2** below unpacks the ‘character of power’ of the activities implemented by ACA, RICAP and CFNZ, as seen through the eyes of project rights holders and stakeholders. This ‘character of power’ underlines the relationship between knowledge – people’s greater understanding of their rights by law – and power; but it also suggests that even when people are equipped with knowledge, structures are slow to change.

Table 2. The ‘character of power’ of grant partners’ project activities.

ACA	RICAP	CFNZ
Visible power: official/formal forums to influence decision-making		
Social media and Zoom.	WDCs (resolutions are submitted to the heads of local authority departments and the District Councillor (“through debates in Full Council Meetings, they may be heard by Parliament”).	Village meeting/court; “if that fails we go to the Chief and if that fails, we turn to NGOs”.
Information enabling participation in decision-making: Documents available online from the Financial Intelligence Centre and the Office of the Auditor General; reports by Transparency International Zambia; and News Diggers “a credible news agency that does investigative journalism”. “The issue of CDF and WDF has stirred conversation amongst the community members, particularly youth”; and Presidential policy pronouncements (e.g. the need for subscription to the national health insurance system (NHIMA) and on Free Education) reach communities through TV/radio/social media. “Information on human rights, which we get from NGOs, and in rare cases, from government institutions”.		
Hidden power: unofficial/informal forums to influence decision-making		
On public transport and in market-places, the workplace, student hostels, and in the home (“I talked to my parents and brothers about how voter apathy takes away their voice and we woke up at 3 am to register to vote!”).	Small ad hoc advocacy groups set up to follow up of WDC resolutions, “to ensure community members’ issues are heard and someone is doing something about it”.	The Tuyafwe Groups themselves; “just making discussions among ourselves without involving local authorities”.
Invisible power		
The most advantaged in the project’s environment are: Rich politicians: “People with money will always have most influence and this was evident in the way all the political parties were nominating their candidates; politicians are recycled because they have accumulated enough wealth and influence to shatter the dreams of youth”. People with access to information, “the rich in most cases”. The government has power over nature”. Religious leaders, especially from the Pentecostal churches, who make prophecies and pronounce winning leaders to influence elections. “The chiefs; they are politicians’ gatekeepers to the communities”. “Village headmen, section leaders, sub-chiefs and chiefs are at an advantage in society compared to other people because they have the power to rule over us”. In the health sector, “youth have become more advantaged as the government is encouraging them to participate in development initiatives, putting in place more youth-targeted initiatives and incentives”.		
The most disadvantaged are: People living in multi-dimensional poverty, notably: those without access to information; those who lack “proper connections to those in positions of influence”; and “those who don’t have ideas”. Women “because naturally, society favours men more than women - it is the way it is”. Church leaders are only influential in their churches and not outside the church. Factors giving a person more influence are: money (“when people are starving they will easily be bought; we heard stories of people selling voters cards”); literacy (“It’s easy to influence illiterate people; that’s why government should invest more in education”); social status, position and title (“how one is perceived has an effect on how they are handled even in health centres”); witchcraft; and political connections.		

POWER PLAYS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES, POLITICAL PARTIES AND CSOS

Political parties, particularly those in power, wield “*enormous power*” in mining communities in Luapula province. With the discovery of a new mineral, sugilite, political party cadres have been grabbing licensed mines “*using savagery*”; in Chembe, for example, *UPND cadres are mining without permits or regard for the landowners [and] they are also vicious enough to beat up police officers who intervene; only the presence of soldiers has restored order.*

Chief Chimese reports that “I was dethroned as a result of political influence; the previous regime took my political power because they believed I supported Harry

Box 7. They make decisions without consulting each other

Legal and policy frameworks that guide how natural resources, including the roles of stakeholders, are in place. But conflicts have arisen because of the ‘*inadequate implementation of laws*’. For example, “*when our land in Kabunda was being abused by miners breaking the law, we had to seek help from CFNZ and Zambia Land Alliance, who helped us advocate through petitions and radio programmes, which reached even Lusaka; as a result, we had the former Minister come to listen to our problem*”.

Nevertheless, both civic and traditional leaders tend to side with investors. “*The problem is that the chief can step in, using his authority; when you talk to the chiefs, they tell you the people are selling land behind our backs but when you talk to the people, they mention things like the chiefs receiving money*”. A case in point is a group of women in Samfya, Kubwe, which acquired “*a huge piece of land through crooked ways*” These small-scale miners started mining “*without proper papers and with losses of lives due to unsafe mining and a high rate of infectious diseases as a result of the prostitution that had become rampant – but to this date the government has failed to resolve this issue; this is because the chief had supported and presented the land to this group*”.

Yet it is the poor and vulnerable members of the community that suffer injustice as they have no representation when they are faced with conflicts. Luapula is one of Zambia's poorest provinces, and high poverty levels in the province have ‘*triggered lawlessness to the point where people are prepared to break the law to make money to survive*’.

“*Poverty is one of the reasons why citizens accept briefcase investors in the province; this is why the Tuyafwe groups look for alternative sources of income to citizens - agriculture, livestock and fisheries, piggery, and so on - to reduce their reliance on mining*”.

CFNZ staff, however, pointed out that vulnerable community members are both victims of mining investments as well as culprits, as ‘*they give away their land to investors because of desperation to get something out of any deal*’. This is primarily because they make decisions without consulting one another. Community members “*lack a unified voice and always work behind one another's backs; when approached by a so-called investor, they will hide from the rest of the team and sell it without consulting anyone, even if it is ancestral land - they will go so far as to obtain land from the chief, sell it, and relocate*”.

Source: CFNZ, 2019a; interviews with CFNZ, project rights holders, and project stakeholders.

Kalaba of the Democratic Party – he is the son my late uncle – and misinterpreted his visits to the palace as political support on my part”. In Kafue, too, political parties are very influential; when people try to hold government accountable for a shortage of medical supplies, for example, “it does not sit well with the political parties; they do not want to hear anything that might affect the party negatively, - even leaders at the district level look for a way to downplay the challenges to make them appear minor, even if there is a big problem”. On the flip side, politicians can at times contribute positively, when engaged on a personal basis; “they would be the ones who would start advocating and approach the higher authorities to have things done right”.

Similarly, while a ruling party generally controls the civic online space, the digital space in Zambia was left open unlike in other countries where social media has been banned; while “*in 2021, the Opposition [UPND] used Twitter and Facebook very effectively, other political parties underestimated the power of social media*”. Indeed, “*we like to joke that the current President was literally downloaded from social media!*” To this extent, “*the online space provided a much safer environment for*

activism as opposed to physical space where you would be tracked and harassed - the digital space provided a safety net of some kind”.

In the case of CFNZ, power plays were a particularly important driver of the relationships between the *Tuyafwe* groups on the one hand, and an immensely powerful extractives industry and the political forces behind it, on the other (see **Box 7** above); *“thanks to CFNZ, we know our rights but all of this is being trampled on by those in positions of higher authority because they are themselves involved in the mining industry”.*

WHAT COULD THE PROJECTS HAVE DONE BETTER?

Rights-holders in the case study projects generally agree that “[t]he power has tilted in favour of the community”. But they also highlight an unmet priority: expanding the coverage and reach of collective action activities (in various thematic areas). This may be done by: *“linking us to other stakeholders outside the project”; helping us reach out physically to those who are not on Twitter through town hall meetings, for instance”; “working hand-in-hand with other CSOs”; “engaging more with government so that they are more involved and respond to us quickly”, particularly in terms of community allocations of funds like the Constituency Development Fund and Ward Development Fund”; and “reaching out to ministries [such as the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Development, and the Ministry of Health] is key”.* From the perspective of project stakeholders – interestingly these echo the views of project rights holders – all the project activities would have benefitted from **sustained engagement with political decision makers**, as suggested above. For instance, CFNZ *“were not as successful as they could have been because the previous regime did not fully support them”.*

However, DAAG members assert that their project “became a collective responsibility; dialogue can bring results, as opposed to situations where people and community members adopt a more confrontational approach”. For NHC and WDC representatives, Interface Meetings became an avenue for information from the bottom to the top; previously Councillors did not want to answer to the community - they used to think we are below them and forgot that they were elected to serve us and not for their own prestige - but through these meetings, communities understood that they had rights and could hold service providers accountable”.

Stakeholders also argue for **more and better partnerships between CSOs and with the media** (particularly print and online journalists). A consolidated list across projects is: Bloggers of Zambia, CSPR, Caritas Zambia, CCMG (Christian Churches Monitoring Group), Mansa District Land Alliance, SACCORD, NGOCC and ACA Youth Advocate for Change, Plan International, the Women’s Lobby; Governance, Elections, Advocacy, Research Services (GEARS) Initiative, People’s Action for Accountability and Good Governance in Zambia (PAAGZ), Transparency International Zambia, and Centre for Trade Dialogue and Development (CTPD). We note that some CSOs proposed as partners for one project were already partners of another project; yet the Sida-financed Civil Society Support Project (CSSP) did not hold an event that brought together both the grant partners as well as the grantees’ CSO partners. Generally, however, stakeholders want to feel engaged as part of the grander

scheme of things; for example, “ACA need to be deliberate about the stakeholder relationships such as with the HRC and build longstanding relationships that they can nurture and have a longer term mutually beneficial relationship with”.

Such partnerships would enable **more and better lobbying of the Government**. Two examples of areas that require collective lobbying are decentralising the issuance of mining licenses (e.g., by local mining bureaux or by setting up Provincial Offices for ministry) and conducting “powerful research on the impact of mining on the environment”; and, in the health sector, endemic problems such as the referral system issue. “When gaps have been identified projects can go further, making connections with stakeholders that can help lobby in that area”.

5.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF ANCHORING

LEVELS OF POWER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF POWER ANALYSIS

In a civil society landscape dominated by well-established CSOs, there are “*territorial issues*” triggered by several levels of decision-making power (FGD: PAT). Youth activists as well as *Tuyafwe* group and DAAG members assert that the biggest influence on decision makers comes from the communities; “*from us, the young people ourselves*”. But project rights holders also feel it is “*local NGOs*”, ACA, CFNZ and RICAP, who are the “*big picture influencers*”. Yet power dynamics are also inherent in grant-making processes. As one AAZ staff member mentioned, “*an analysis of the power dynamics between the grant provider and their partners was very important but was not done*”.

As we have seen in Chapter 3, with limited official or informal communication and feedback mechanisms (i.e., channels of ‘visible’ and ‘hidden’ forms of power) many grant partners found it difficult to influence AAZ’s grant management. Grant partners also highlighted the ‘invisible’ forms of power, which inevitably disadvantage grantees in their relationship with the grant provider.

For example, ACA describes their relationship with AAZ as “horizontal”, a relationship of peers; but in the absence of “formal negotiation spaces where we could raise and discuss concerns [...] the contract is not a negotiated instrument, it is a predetermined one, there is no draft contract for you to comment on, it arrives as is for you to sign” (KII: ACA). In the words of CFNZ, a CBO, “we were naturally compelled to work according to their [AAZ] expectations because they were the ones supplying funds and had a larger say”.

A case in point is the additional funding which CFNZ received from AAZ to convene a Public Forum on Bill No. 10 (CFNZ, 2019b). CFNZ appreciated this funding at the time, seeing it as an important opportunity for citizens to express their views on constitutional amendments, and have since recognised that they have ‘a stronger advocacy voice’ as a result (CFNZ, 2019b). But the additional funding also meant a shift away from their own priorities; “our main focus as an organisation is community action, but we drifted from it to civic engagement”. Notably, this case is disputed by AAZ senior leadership who say they provided funding for this activity to another CSO, which sub-contracted CFNZ, rather than funding CFNZ directly; nevertheless, contradictory evidence was found in the final report submitted to AAZ (CFNZ, 2019a), corroborated by interviews with CFNZ.

The views of grant partners are backed up by PAT members who maintained that CBOs are disadvantaged because AAZ did not support them enough, particularly in terms of monitoring; “the process should be fair and equal across all types of applicants”. The PAT assert that ‘flexible’ funding should enable AAZ and Sida to prioritise collaboration between the stronger organisations and the smaller CSOs as a way of optimising resources; “it is important that the CSOs don’t feel overshadowed”.

Interestingly, the Eastern Province hub manager highlighted the importance of training grant partners in power analysis. This is for two reasons. First, such training reinforces behaviour change in terms of social accountability over time: “we say again and again, it is the government’s job to provide services but there’s also the communities’ responsibility to check that the services are OK; once people do the power analysis, once people understand the power dynamics and the concept of shrinking spaces, they can push back”. Second, training in power analysis is also necessary to ‘foster the belief that working together is more effective than working in isolation’ (AAZ, 2020b). Indeed, power relationships underpin the practice of ‘anchoring’, where a larger organisation and a smaller, less experienced one apply jointly for funding and implement a project together, with the larger CSO serving as a mentor to the smaller organisation (see **Box 8**).

AN EXAMPLE OF ‘ANCHORING’: THE #BEHEARDZAMBIA PROJECT

The #BeHeardZambia Project (July 2019 to January 2021) was implemented by the individual human rights defender and musician, Chama Fumba (also known by his stage name, Pilato), with ACA serving as the project’s anchor/mentor. Using social media and radio talk shows, the project created spaces of participation (Facebook, community and student/university radio stations, such as Yatsani, Byta FM, Hone FM and Radio UNZA FM) to enable Zambian citizens ‘to speak up and demand transparency and accountability in public finance management & institutional governance systems’.

In this way, suggests Pilato, the project subverted ‘visible’ forms of power which use official media, rather than informal channels of communication; “*most of the time leaders use such media to speak to the people but we intended to create the platform for people to ask questions about issues affecting the community*”.

The project also intended to hold Youth Insaka (forums) to “*stir some reactions, but from an informed point of view*”. These ‘hidden’ forms of power were seen as particularly unsettling by State (as well as some non-State) actors. Indeed, on 21 December 2019, following a Youth Insaka in Livingston, which took place under the project banner, #BeHeardZambia, Pilato was charged with unlawful assembly in alleged violation of the Public Order Act. Fellow human rights defenders from the anchor organisation, ACA, drove from Lusaka to Livingstone to try to negotiate for Pilato’s release and were charged with disorderly conduct and assaulting a police officer. On 4th September 2020, all charges against Pilato were dropped and on 7 September 2020, the Livingstone Magistrate Court acquitted his ACA colleagues. Nevertheless, these events forced the project implementers to cancel a Youth Insaka in Lusaka.

While the project's duration was "*too short*" to see longer-term impact, by the close of the initiative the project had successfully engaged young people in a public accountability discourse: "*the demand from the grassroots was a key driver to influencing the decisions at the top; if the people ask for something, that can be in itself an influence on what the people at the top do – people are asking good questions not speaking because they are emotional about something but because they want clarity and answers*". This is evidenced by the project's tracking of social media interactions; An example, which was aired on 5 December 2019 and gained 204,000 views, is: <https://web.facebook.com/pilatoninshi/videos/446702022711772/> (see also, ACA/FC, 2021).

Interestingly, "the lone voice [of the individual which] provided solidarity and leadership" is an example of 'invisible' power play; "there are people who believe their voices don't matter but when there is a Pilato who speaks for them, who is popular and a musician, they feel they have a friend who can represent their interests". But this power is a double-edged sword.

On the one hand, the project positioned Pilato as a "public resource management personality"; following the project Pilato has gone on to establish a non-profit social enterprise, People's Action for Accountability and Good. On the other hand, Pilato's arrest heightened civil society's sense of the security risks around such relatively high-profile social accountability advocacy work. A 'lesson learned' was the need for strong alliances between civic actors and the citizens themselves, to ensure that 'the civic space is made open and free for citizen accountability interventions to be implemented without interference' (ACA/FC, 2021).

POWER DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE GRANTEE, THE ANCHOR AND THE GRANT-PROVIDER

ACA was very instrumental in guiding the project, "*walking [Pilato] through the grant process*". We note that ACA's relationship with Pilato began well before the AAZ grant for #BeHeardZambia (see **Box 8**). For their part, ACA were disappointed that AAZ had not set aside funds to meet their costs as anchor, as they were managing Pilato's grant as well as mentoring him; when requested, "*they refused for us to include any amount for managing or being host – so we practically did it for love.*" Despite ACA's support, Pilato encountered three challenges, also mentioned by other grant partners.

Box 8. The pros and cons of anchoring

The CSO sector in Zambia has seen a lot of anchoring/mentoring in recent years, taken up by FHI 360, Save the Children, We Effect Zambia, and the International Centre for AIDS Care and Treatment Programme. In the case of the CSSP, an example of the mentoring relationship is between Caritas and the smaller Zitukule and the newly introduced COF. The evaluation team found that the main benefit of the anchoring relationship is 'learning by doing' fund management; *"in the process of our helping them, I feel that the Zitukule consortium increased their capacity to handle their resources"*. Similarly, COF was able to put in place its financial and human resource manuals during the process. As a result of anchoring, *"COF and Zitukule were able to stand on their own"*. At the same time, larger organisations also benefit from the anchoring; *"it was the first time for an organisation like CARITAS to manage grants on behalf of another organisation, so it was a learning experience for our finance and accounts departments"*. A major disadvantage was that the mentorship is somewhat one-dimensional. While Zitukule's capacity had been built, this was only in terms of financial management. We found no evidence of either COF or Zitukule receiving mentoring support in programming areas such as proposal development, and project monitoring. Caritas categorically stated that they had not participated in monitoring their mentees' projects. At the same time, the evaluation team did not find evidence of mentoring relationships continuing beyond the period of the AAZ grant (the majority of which lasted less than 24 months). Given this, the transfer and sustainability of programmatic competencies is questionable.

Finally, the experience of other similar programmes suggests that smaller CSOs often move from one anchor to another, with not much change in terms of capacity development. In the experience of an evaluation team member, although the Zambia Local Partners Capacity Building Programme provided 107 local CSOs with anchoring support and 100 of these became official programme partners, many of these merely transitioned as consortium partners to the Zambia-led Prevention Initiative and later joined projects such as the Civil Society Environment Fund-II and the DREAMS projects.

Source: Interviews with anchoring partners; evaluation team member's notes.

First, although Pilato was new to the Social Movement Grant process and to *"this work as an activist"*, AAZ seemed to expect the same level of technical expertise in proposal development implementation and reporting across all grant partners, *"not considering that some people may be in activism due to passion"* (see also Chapter 3). Pilato had also expected that AAZ would take account of his position and of other human rights defenders operating as individual activists but lacking *"technical literacy"* and would help build his capacity in fund management and program implementation skills; but when he officially raised this issue with AAZ, the response was *"not helpful"*.

Second, the delay in disbursement of funds was a problem. Indeed, in the case of the #BeHeardZambia project, the grant was suddenly terminated, mid-way. ACA were *"shocked"* that he did not receive the full grant, considering the project had performed well up to that point; *"we managed everything for him and can guarantee that he did very well on the implementation side and we thought that the disbursement of the next tranche would be routine - but he was kind of dropped without reason or warning to enable him to adjust his program"*.

Relatedly time management was a key constraint: *"this was a six-month project and time could not be compromised; this was not a three- year project where you can easily delay funding by a month – it was supposed to be a rapid response project!"*. Although, the project had a justifiable reason to ask for an extension (Pilato's arrest in Livingstone), this was not granted. All in all, Pilato experienced *"pressure and concern"* throughout the project: *"pressure in that I initially did the planning, reflection and scheduling of activities; and concern in that with the late-coming of funds, it distorted the schedule of activities"*. What could be done better in grant-making for individual human rights defenders? Take measures to make sure grant-managing partners are not antagonistic but cooperative and helpful, who *"share the passion in what you are doing as a grant partner"*.

6 Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

As we have seen in previous chapters, grant partners and community members alike experienced various types of positive change in the ways in which they live and work. Indeed, both AAZ senior management and staff at the Embassy say they are “*proud*” of what the project has accomplished. From AAZ’s perspective, “*we saw shifts in power in terms of mobilisation as well as building the voice of indigenous Zambians to be able to hold power and know how to use this power*” (KII: AAZ Leadership).

Senior Management also appreciated maintaining a good donor relationship with Sweden; where the majority of donor-funded programmes are “*prescriptive and top down, with guidelines which are more guardrails*”, with Sida, “*you co-create the programme and this kind of flexibility and ability to respond to the country context, that makes Sida unique from other support that is available in country*” (KII: Head of Programmes; Leadership). The Embassy, meanwhile, appreciated AAZ as “*courageous and brave, positively radical, in the way they worked with young people during the previous election, for example, or their SRHR work with youth-led organisations who talk about things that are basically taboo, such as LGBTQI rights, in Zambia*” (KII: Sida).

For the Embassy, a particular source of pride is “*having a civil society contribution that created synergies across the Embassy’s work, with the health and environment sectors, for example*” (KII: Sida). Similarly, Sida encouraged their partners to cooperate and collaborate; “*through monthly meeting during the election period we learned how to create synergies and to work together*” (KII: AAZ Leadership). While AAZ felt synergies between the civil society and government, particularly local government could also be created, Sida found that the project was useful as “*a platform for ‘quiet diplomacy and political dialogue between civil society and the government, for instance in discussions with the Ministry of Community Development around a review of the NGO Act’*” (KII: Sida).

6.1 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Below, we present our evaluative conclusions in response to the four main evaluation questions, followed in each case by lessons learned for the way forward.

Conclusion 1. To what extent is the mix of sub-grants reasonable given Sida’s goals and the local context?

We found the portfolio of sub-grants reasonable given Sida’s priority strategies (empowering citizens with knowledge of human rights, democracy, rule of law, health rights and climate justice). However, with almost 50% of grants focusing on civic participation, the other thematic areas were somewhat underrepresented. Similarly, the

mix of grant types was imbalanced in favour of Standard Grants, with relatively few Community Action Grants awarded, only one Individual Grant, and no Capacity Development Grants (due to lack of demand from potential grantees).

Given that Social Movement Grants offer much-needed support to smaller and ‘start-up’ CSOs, it is unfortunate that not more of these types of grants were awarded; this is likely because the scope of such grants were not well understood by potential partners as well as relatively stringent eligibility criteria. While AAZ’s selection of grant partners responded effectively to the Zambian context, we found that the CSSP was less adaptive to contextual change across the CSO landscape than it could have been, as it focused very much on specific challenges emerging out of the period leading up to the August 2021 elections.

Lesson learned: changing contexts, new priorities. The terrain in which CSOs work is always shifting. For example, while the ‘shrinking civic space’ was a priority in 2018, many respondents pointed towards accountable use of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) as a new priority for the country. Others suggest that advocacy for the climate justice bill is a pressing concern. Although the threat of the Cyber Bill continues, *“what has changed is the tolerance level where you have more leeway to do a lot more without having people to come bang on your gate”* (KII: ACA).

Indeed, results of a pan-African survey of public opinion on a range of governance issues highlights the importance of ‘dissatisfied democrats’ in countries such as Zambia; these are citizens who are not only deeply committed to democracy but who also adopt a critical perspective toward their country’s current leaders and institutions (AB, 2019a). At the same time, voluntary civic participation in Zambia today is highest among educated males living in urban settings (AB, 2021). Going forward, a question to ask may be: who are the ‘dissatisfied democrats’ among women in Zambia’s rural communities and how can their voices be better heard?

Underlying this conclusion (and indeed all conclusions) is a reflection on AAZ’s **mainstreaming of gender equality and HRBAs**. Our case studies demonstrate that AAZ selected partners which were strong in their application of the rights-based principles; but they were themselves less well articulated in gender mainstreaming and in the promotion of gender equality (see [Annex 8](#)).

Conclusion 2. To what extent does AAZ’s management need to be improved?

The Grants Manual clearly describes a grants management system, and AAZ performed well in terms of the flexibility and transparency of their management practices, as well as their support of some CSOs in strengthening partnerships. However, it has proven to be weak in critical areas of grant management. Issues are low levels of staff retention and weaknesses in knowledge management, monitoring, evaluation and learning. Other weak points are ensuring equal access to grant application information for smaller CSOs and individual human rights defenders; the application of formal feedback mechanisms; insufficient communication with grant partners during implementation and after the grant period; and a lack of systematic management of risks and change within the programme. Notably, gender mainstreaming in grant management was found to be close to non-existent. The AAZ grant management did not reflect a satisfactory level of practice of rights-based principles (see [Annex 8](#)).

Lesson learned: capacities to perform the role of grants manager. Notwithstanding sub-grantees' appreciation of AAZ's efforts to ensure transparent grant management, several grant partners we spoke with drew attention to the argument that AAZ *themselves* lacked the capacity to perform their role as grants manager. AAZ understandably refute the view but as one partner put it somewhat strongly: "AAZ seem not to have prepared well for the grant; it seems the donor just selected them haphazardly without noting their capacity and without properly assessing them" (KII: GP). At the same time, it seems that the lines of accountability within management structures may have become blurred. On the one hand, embedding the project and project staff in the country programme management structure was a value-for-money strategy (at present, over 90% of staff are funded through projects, primarily the Sida-funded CSSP) as well as a way of bringing coherence between the project and AAZ's country programme. On the other hand, as the former Grants Manager reported, "I understood the project to be primarily my responsibility, but it was one of the biggest projects for AAZ, so everyone wanted to be part of it and when everyone wants to be part of something going on it becomes a mess". Without a frequent and consistent flow of information between senior leadership to middle management and without a clear separation of duties, "there was a lot of confusion, the project lost focus".

Conclusion 3. To what extent is the present funding mix optimal in terms of creating a balance between capacity building of the Grant Partners and project implementation by the Grant Partners?

Overall, we cannot say with certainty that the four contribution stories were credible stories of sustainable change. The main weakness in the four contribution stories is that grant partners did not receive the training, coaching and longer-term capacity development they required from the grant provider. There was a strong assumption across grant partners that capacity building support *would* be provided; and the risk associated with this support not being provided was flagged by both Sida as well as AAZ themselves (AAZ, 2018a) On this basis, the mix of capacity building and project activities was optimal by design but not in practice, limited by AAZ not providing the necessary capacity support as they were supposed to, primarily because of AAZ's own weaknesses (e.g., staff turnover).

Lesson learned: quality not quantity. The CSSP appears to have prioritised a large number of grants rather than the *quality* of grant partners' project results. AAZ has a Scoring Sheet to assess the quality of grant proposals (AAZ, *undated*) in terms of clear objectives, realistic budget, problem statement; clearly identified the rights holders and geographical location These are all important features of a sound proposal. But exactly the same scoring criteria are used across Standard, Community Action and Capacity Building grants; Social Movement Grants do not appear to feature in the scoring process. Moreover, we draw attention to an important distinction between evaluating a GP's project design (which is the purpose of the scoring sheet) and assessing a project's performance in terms of results. While the scoring sheet was used to assess the former, we did not find evidence of tools for two things: the qualitative measurements of results (i.e., benchmarks to assess the quality of outputs and outcomes), to support outcome harvesting; and the mainstreaming of gender and HRBA at project level.

Conclusion 4. How do the new and innovative modalities perform compared to the more traditional modalities?

Innovative' grant-making modalities (e.g., CFNZ and ACA) compare relatively well with 'traditional' modalities (e.g., RICAP). But our comparative deep-dive analysis of the ways in which grant partners' activities were able to influence decision making suggests that, whether they benefit from 'innovative' or 'traditional' modalities, grant partners experienced similar issues; for example: the power dynamics within communities and between communities, political parties and CSOs.

Similarly, partners receiving grants under both 'innovative' and 'traditional' modalities would equally have been more effective in achieving planned results if they had been able to extend their project duration and geographical coverage, as well as expanding their partnerships with other CSOs.

Relatedly, the activities implemented under the #BeHeardZambia project - the CSSP's only individual grant - highlight two important factors: the importance of committed anchors/mentors for individual human rights defenders and smaller CSOs/CBOs; and the power relationships (between the grantee, the anchor and the grant provider) that underpin the practice of anchoring.

Lesson learned: focusing on longer-term outcomes. There are several dimensions to the 'innovative' grant-making modality. As a flexible modality, it targets (i) new types of CSOs; (ii) CBOs which want to grow as organisations; (iii) unregistered social movements and networks, grassroots groups; and (iv) individuals who cannot qualify for traditional grants (e.g., Chama Fumba) as well as emergency responses to contextual change by established CSOs (e.g., ACA). If it is not clearly conceptualised, such a complex modality risks prioritising 'flexibility' over the *quality of grant support*. And if the quality of grant support is not prioritised, a main challenge in the governance sector persists: "*sustainability*" in terms of CSOs' understanding of civic space and their role in it. This is about a willingness to deliver, "*not necessarily because they're benefiting from the grant, not because AAZ or the Embassy wants they do to it but because it is **their** work; AAZ or the Embassy may not be there tomorrow but CSOs are always there, so it's up to them*". In follow up project cycles, it will be important to continue 'growing' CSOs' willingness to deliver. As the hub manager for the Eastern Province put it, rather poetically: "*start by looking at the urgent issues which can be addressed now, and those which need to be seeded and left room to grow; like we would do for the palm tree, which takes long to grow, but it's there in the ground, being watered until it shoots up in time*".

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Our overarching conclusion is that AAZ has not successfully 'cracked' the CSSP, in terms of their performance as grant managers as well as the sustainability of the project's results. But then a complex project such as CSSP is **a hard nut to crack**, involving many different types of grants, grant partners and grant thematic areas. AAZ and Sida may choose to continue their partnership in a further cycle. If they do, it will be important that the partners move away from a business-as-usual-approach to grant-making and embrace a more learning-centred adaptive programming approach to

achieving results, committing to longer-term programming rather than relatively short-term project cycles. This depends on both partners' willingness to adjust their ways of working in the context of challenging civic spaces.

We recommend they do this in the following ways.

2. Aim for greater clarity (related to Conclusion 1). AAZ should update the Grants Manual. For example, the Manual should:

- d) **Include** an updated conceptual framework, classifying not only the types of grants and thematic areas but also types of partners and types of target groups; this is a necessary first step to building a 'map' of CSSP grant partners that is more than a contacts database.
- e) **Sharpen** the concept of Social Movement Grants, defining assessment criteria and clarifying how these grants work (the flexible scheduling of such grants should be rationalised as far as possible, without setting a rigid timeline).
- f) **Prioritise** a process where high-performing start-up CSOs, CBOs and grassroots coalitions (using benchmarks to assess the quality of previous performance as well as the quality of planned interventions) are supported in second-applications.

2. Take action on feminist strategies (also related to Conclusion 1). AAZ and Sida should work together to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all steps of grant management (in practice not only on paper); in addition, it is important that CSSP partners select partners and projects to better reflect the priorities of feminist and women rights organisations in Zambia.

4. Recognise that the CSSP is only as good as its people (related to Conclusion 2). If Sweden is in a position to commit to financing the CSSP over several cycles (e.g., a 10-year period), AAZ should match this by (i) committing to an internal human resource capacity analysis (digging deeper than, for example, the institutional assessment conducted by Price Waterhouse Cooper at the start of the current CSSP); and (ii) producing a costed staff plan for management, operational and technical resources. Specific points to consider in relation to the challenge of high staff turnover:

- a) The budget should include fund allocations for an adequate number of externally recruited core programme staff (with 'permanent' 4-year contracts for agreed key positions).
- b) A dedicated budget should be provided for hub managers to perform their function.
- c) To retain staff, AAZ should identify – in consultation with existing and former staff – a judicious combination of non-financial and financial incentives. Examples offered by evaluation respondents are formal performance recognition award ceremonies, based on staff appraisals; access to professional development short courses; and performance-related salary increments.
- d) Specific measures to monitor and hold AAZ management accountable for staff turnover should be put in place; the mandate of PAT could be expanded to cover human resource issues, with oversight provided by the Board and open channels of communication between the PAT and the Board.

5. Don't just monitor activities, evaluate and learn (also related to Conclusion 2). Whatever the chosen option, AAZ and Sida need to invest more time and resources in monitoring, evaluation and learning. Specifically, the following should be considered.

- In the case of the options above (recommendation 1), particularly if partners choose to rigorously pilot a 'model CSSP', it will be important to move beyond the routine monitoring of activities and end-line evaluations. AAZ and Sida should jointly engage third-party services for 'real-time' data collection, or other developmental evaluation methods to augment AAZ's outcome harvesting³.
- In all cases, AAZ and Sida should agree on, commit to and implement a 'learn-and-adapt' plan (i.e., regular quarterly 'check-in sessions' and semi-annual reviews).
- Key performance indicators should be accompanied by benchmarks to measure the quality of the grant-manager's performance, as well as the performance of grantees' projects.
- Providing training in project design, monitoring and reporting across *all grant partners* is a pre-requisite for CSSP's success.

6. Move beyond 'grants = money' (related to Conclusion 3). It is critically important that grants are recognised as more than simply providing and managing funds. The Grants Manual for ActionAid in Zambia should be accompanied by modules for:

- d) Specific guidance on training available for AAZ staff and their grant partners, including a detailed capacity building schedule/workplan. AAZ may collaborate with their partners in the training centre in Tanzania (MS-TSDC) in developing customised blended (online/offline) training. It is important that AAZ selects relevant types of training which they can actually deliver, rather than simply throwing a number of 'capacity building' methods at grant partners in the hope that 'something sticks'.
- e) Specific guidance (including measurement tools besides the self-assessment form) to assess grant partners capacity development needs.
- f) Specific guidance on 'anchoring' (e.g., by whom, for whom, for what and whether the mentor and mentee are a good 'fit'), including benchmarks to assess the quality of anchors.

7. Think longer term (related to Conclusion 4) AAZ and Sida should reflect on the scope of the CSSP as programme not a project, and carefully conceptualise it as such. The transition for AAZ from implementer to grant-maker is an incremental one. The partners should focus on one of three options:

³ Real-time' evaluation is particularly important should the Embassy want to keep track of AAZ's performance. In 2020, AAZ was chosen [for additional funding] because they have demonstrated the capacity to sub-grant [and] the organisation has sufficient staffing with the right competences and experience needed to undertake the proposed work [...] (Sida, 2020b). This decision was made in good faith at the time, but proved to be a risky one, a risk which might have been mitigated had 'real-time' evaluation data been available.

- d) Increase the demand and supply of Capacity Development Grants and Coalition/Network Building Grants, across the existing thematic areas. The aim would be to enable well established CSOs which have received ‘traditional’ grants in the past to optimise their own potential to (i) provide capacity development support, helping smaller CSOs understand their role in governance processes and achieve longer-term change; and (ii) implement interventions that address the problem of fragmentation and competition in civic spaces in Zambia.
- e) Provide ‘flexible’ grants that target CSOs and individual HRDs who are not eligible for ‘traditional’ grants, as well as particularly innovative projects across a range of thematic areas. The focus here would be on Social Movement Grants (including short-term funding for ‘agile’ emergency responses) accompanied by clear guidance and systematic ‘learning-by-doing’ training and support for applicants/successful grantees.
- f) Co-create a pilot programme for the CSSP, combining *a small number* of ‘traditional’ and ‘flexible’ grants in a portfolio of grants with a *narrower thematic focus*. The aim here would be to design, test and replicate/extend an innovative but workable grant management model which meets the respective needs (e.g., specific staffing, expertise, scheduling timelines and management methods) of two very different grant-making processes. Both AAZ and Sida should recognise that although the scope is narrowed, this option involves more, not less work for the partners.

In each case, the programme budget *must* include adequate funding for training, anchoring/mentoring, and longer-term capacity development activities, depending on the choice of option (a), (b) and (c).

7. Work together to understand how contexts matter (also related to Conclusion 4). Building on evaluation findings, AAZ and Sida should jointly organise a Round Table(s) of CSOs in Zambia to discuss conflict-related factors which influenced the performance of the CSSP, and their work in general. Discussion topics could include, for example: using power analysis as tool to design grant-making programmes and related interventions; and power plays between service users, service providers and political actors in the context of hot topics like the Constituency Development Fund. A persistent challenge which begs discussion is the power relations between CSOs (between well-established CSOs, between the latter and smaller CSOs, and between CSOs and individual activists) in terms of their willingness to ‘speak with one view’ in advocating for change: who coordinates change and who leads?

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference



Terms of Reference for the End of Project Evaluation of “Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia Project,” implemented by ActionAid Zambia.

1. General information

1.1 Background of the ActionAid Zambia and the Sida Project:

ActionAid Zambia (AAZ) is part of the ActionAid Global (AAG) Federation. AAZ’s vision is a just, equitable and sustainable Zambia in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity. AAZ works with the people living in poverty and exclusion, their communities, organisations, activists, social movements and supporters, to address the structural causes of social injustice, gender inequality and poverty. AAZ has been working in Zambia since 1996 with a focus on advocating women’s rights; promoting climate resilient sustainable agricultural practices and sustainable natural resource management for food security and sustainable livelihoods; inclusive governance and advancement of education and youth engagement.

ActionAid Zambia (AAZ) as a country program was established in 2006. Prior to this establishment, ActionAid International in Zambia operated through the NGO Hodi. Currently, AAZ has seven so-called Local Rights Programs (LRPs) in seven districts situated in Northern, Muchinga and Western provinces. They also work through Local Rights program partners in the 10 provinces of Zambia to whom they sub-grant funds. The Local Rights Program are the ActionAid District local offices which were established to implement Child sponsorship programmes at district levels. ActionAid uses deep rooted approach for implementation, Local Rights Program Offices are a conduit for ActionAid implementation at District level where all projects are implemented including coordination and capacity building of local partners and community structures.

AAZ is currently implementing its second *Country Strategy Paper* (CSP) (2018-2022) with a vision to contribute to ‘a just, equitable and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.’ The current CSP is a five-year strategy running up to 2022 and focuses on advancing Social Justice, Gender Equity and Poverty Eradication. This strategy is also part of the ActionAid Global federation 10-year CSP, Action for Global Justice. The implementation of CSP is done through the development and implementation of Annual Plans and Budgets.

1.2 Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

“The Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia Project”. Henceforth we refer to this intervention as *“the project”*.

The project is funded through a 4-year cooperation agreement with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) that AAZ has signed. It is aligned to the CSP priorities, and is intended to provide intermediary support and strengthen the capacity of CSOs and other defenders of human rights in Zambia. The project, whose overall goal is to increase citizens awareness and demand for human rights in Zambia is implemented in Eastern, Southern, Muchinga, Luapula, North-Western and Western Provinces. Lusaka and the Copperbelt provinces are targeted to complement ActionAid Zambia already existing interventions.

AAZ strives to improve governance with a focus on government accountability and responsiveness to the poor and vulnerable sections of society. In order to attain the impact of the Project, AAZ focused on improving the Grant Partners’ effective engagement with government to influence pro-poor policy processes with the aim to ensure;

- Improved CSOs’ access to financial support to effectively engage government at different stages of the policy cycle.
- Improved Grant Partners’ organisational capacities for effective policy engagement
- Enhanced capacity of AAZ to deliver on its mandate to the expectations of various stakeholders.

Overall Project Objective: Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia. This is achieved through the five project outcomes:

- *Outcome 1:* Strengthened CSOs capacity to enhance citizens’ civic participation and state accountability for improved governance and *public service delivery* in Zambia.
- *Outcome 2:* Strengthened CSOs and citizen’s role in promoting transparency and accountability in *public finance management* and institutional governance systems.
- *Outcome 3:* CSOs and citizens have strengthened capacity in holding government accountable in the enforcement of policies and regulations for sustainable *natural resource management* and *climate justice*.

- *Outcome 4:* Access to better health is promoted through strengthened capacity of CSOs and citizens to demand for accountability in the provision of quality *health care*.
- *Outcome 5:* Increased *CSOs institutional capacity*, compliance and accountability among partner Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) in Zambia.

AAZ Implementation approach

AAZ works in two main ways towards their goals. In some cases they implement activities themselves, directly, in line with their Country Strategy Paper. About 20% of Sida's funding is geared towards these direct activities. However, in most cases the AAZ works by sub-granting funds to Grant Partners, which are the ones who do the actual implementation. About 80% of Sida's funding is geared towards these sub-grants, and this funding both support the grants themselves, as well as AAZ's administration of them. The sub-granting, in turn, is both funding the activities of the Grant Partners, as well as their capacity building.

When it comes to the sub-granting, the implementation approach for AAZ is to partner with like minded Civil Society Organisations ranging from small community based organisations to regional, national organisations including individual human rights defenders, CSO coalitions and social movements.

In 2020 AAZ started to use new innovative funding tools, including emergency short term grants (e.g. six months funds), support to individual human rights defenders and local community based organisations.

In the Sida funded project AAZ sub-granted, through 'calls for proposals', CSOs in Southern, Eastern, Western, North Western, Northern, Muchinga, Copperbelt, Luapula and Lusaka provinces to support the implementation of the Grant Ps' projects. Since the inception of the project in 2018, AAZ has sub granted CSOs inline with the Sida funded project's Thematic Areas. The rationale was that the project should not only give funds but also offer capacity building support in the project's thematic areas and institutional capacity building such as financial management. Thus the role of AAZ on the project is to build capacity of implementing CSOs; provide technical support and facilitate for knowledge sharing and learning, coordination to ensure effective CSOs engagement with citizens and duty bearers.

The project has given out grants to civil society organisations working in different areas of governance. The Grant Partners range from small community based organisations to regional and national organisations using different grant modalities (or types of grants).

Sweden's contribution to AAZ

The project was initially planned to run from 2018 to 2021 but Sida has granted a no-cost extension so that it will now end in September, 2022. The AAZ project is the main conduit for the Embassy's CSO support which was designed to have synergies with the other strategy areas in the Swedish Development cooperation strategy with Zambia. In addition to partners applying directly to AAZ, the Embassy does not give direct support

to CSOs anymore, instead all proposals are assessed and appropriate ones forwarded to AAZ.

Sweden's contribution is aligned with the priorities identified in the Strategy for Development Cooperation with Zambia, in particular under the first strategy area "Human Rights, Democracy, Rule of Law and Gender Equality." The project further complements other support areas the Embassy has towards civil society organisations aimed at increasing demand side of accountability by empowering citizens with human rights knowledge on one hand, and working with local authorities and other Government bodies to mobilise resources for development as well as employ inclusive development models. The program is innovative in its approach of using public private partnerships and innovative advocacy methods that promote local ownership of the initiative and sustainability beyond aid."

The total support to the project is SEK 46 500 000.

No independent evaluation has been conducted on the project.

For further information, the intervention proposal is attached as Annex C.

The intervention logic or theory of change of the intervention may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

1.2 Evaluation rationale

Since the project will end in September 2022, the Embassy seeks to assess its performance as a funding modality. This evaluation is important to provide a reflection on the achievements and challenges and weaknesses. The evaluation should also inform a realistic framework for future/successor program and funding.

The Embassy has allowed AAZ to be flexible and innovative in response to changes in the democratic governance environment in Zambia. Therefore, a number of changes have been made to the project over the years. The Embassy therefore, wishes to carry out an end of project evaluation to assess the extent to which the AAZ approach has worked and assess performance in relation to the set objectives. There are also some concrete concerns about some specific issues, such as the Grant Partners' feed-back mechanisms and whether the current mix between capacity building and implementation of the Grant Partners activities is optimal.

The evaluation is intended for learning and the results are meant to serve as key input into future work implemented by AAZ and to inform decision-making regarding future Swedish support to AAZ.

To make the evaluation workable we wish to focus on three key areas that are of special interest for us:

- a) Could the overall portfolio of grants be improved? If so, how?
- b) Are there issues in the grant management process at the AAZ that could, and should, be fixed?
- c) Is the balance between capacity building of the GPs versus GPs' project implementation optimal

- d) How does the new innovative modalities (short term grants, emergency grants, grants to individual activist) compare to the more traditional modalities?

2. The assignment

2.1 Intended users

The primary intended users of the evaluation are AAZ and the Swedish Embassy in Lusaka. The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users. Some of the lessons learned, especially concerning the assessment of the new modalities, could be valuable for a wider audience.

Other stakeholders include the sub-grantees, the Government of Zambia, local authorities in the target districts and other interested cooperation partners. During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The evaluation scope is limited to the project: *The Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen's Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia Project (2018 to 2022)* as elaborated in the attached proposal. It will also take into account its grant partners' work (hereinafter GP-Programmes). It will consider the quality of the GP-Programmes and the AAZ as a funding modality. In addition to the actual project implementation, the evaluation should also assess AAZ's grant management and capacity building interventions thoroughly.

It is expected that the evaluation includes a literature review on the topics of relevance for the evaluation.

The evaluation questions are put under three main headings⁴:

a) The grant portfolio⁵

Here we are interested in a descriptive mapping of the present mix of sub-grants to see if it is reasonable given the goals of Sida and the local context. The questions we are interested in are:

- To which thematic areas has financial support been provided to GPs under this project?
- Are there any thematic areas that are underrepresented given Sida strategies and goals?

⁴ We have chosen to not organise the questions according to the standard DAC criterias, but we indicate the most relevant criteria in footnotes.

⁵ These questions mostly fits under the "relevance" heading.

- How effective has AAZ’s selection of CSO’s been to achieve the expected objectives and results, given the Zambian context of democratic development?

b) The management of AAZ⁶

Here we are interested in getting feed-back from relevant stakeholders to see what areas of improvement they see in the management of AAZ’s activities. If different stakeholders present conflicting views about a topic, then this has to be examined more carefully. Questions we are interested in here are:

- Are there any obvious inefficiencies in the grant management that could, and should, be adjusted?
- How effective is AAZ’s M&E system? How do the M&E conclusions influence AAZ’s strategic and management decisions?
- To what extent do the GPs find the grant management (including implementation period versus set objectives) and capacity development support of AAZ appropriate to respond to their needs?
- Is the time requirement of the granting process unduly long or is it motivated by reasonable management concerns and capacities?
- In which way can GPs influence AAZ’s policies and strategies – is there any feedback mechanisms in place and how does that work?
- What are AAZ’s risk assessment and mitigation measures? Are they reasonable given the context?
- To what extent does the AAZ funding modality (design of grants) facilitate or hinder CSOs’ access to resources?

c) Is the present funding mix optimal in terms of the balance between capacity building of the GPs versus GPs’ project implementation⁷

A substantial amount of the support in the project is going into capacity building activities of the GPs, rather than directly supporting the implementation of the project activities. We are interesting in exploring whether this mix is optimal. To make this doable you might make a selection of a smaller number of GPs and map their capacity building activities during the last couple of years. Then you can map to what extent each of these capacities have added value to the operational work of the GPs, and put that in relation to the cost of these capacity building activities.

When we say “value added” we optimally would be interested of this in terms of the impact of the capacities. However, we realise that this might be hard to achieve within the scope of this evaluation, and for many of the activities it is probably too early to expect any impact anyways. Hence, it might only be possible to analyse this in terms of outcomes, or outputs.

⁶ These questions to some extent fits under the “effectiveness” heading.

⁷ This question to some extent fits under the efficiency heading

Since we are interested in rigorous answer you can choose to focus on a selection of capacity building activities of the chosen GPs and examine these in depth.

d) How does the new innovative modalities perform compared to the more traditional modalities?⁸

Here we are looking at the performance of the various modalities. To make this doable we envision that you have to make a selection of smaller number of activities of the GPs and the AAZ (i.e. activities that the AAZ implement themselves). Optimally we would be interested in the impact of the selected activities, and an analysis of what contributed to any successes or failures. However, we realise that this might be hard to achieve within the scope of this evaluation, and for many of the activities it is probably too early to expect any impact anyways. Hence, it might only be possible to outcomes, and in some cases only outputs.

That being said, we want to examine the effects of the activities as far as possible in the result chain, as long as the causality can be reasonably inferred. We also want to examine the factors affected the performance, and to what extent this can be linked to the modalities. The questions we are interested in here are:

- How have the new and innovative sub-granting modalities performed?
- What has the problems been in achieving the stated goals through the innovative modalities?
- How has the more traditional modalities performed in the same period?
- What has the problems been in achieving the stated goals through the traditional modalities?
- What does the answers to the above say about the relative achievements and problems with the new modalities? Are there any problems in any activities that can be plausibly linked to the characteristics of its modality?

With new and innovative modalities we mean emergency short term grants (e.g. coalition grants and six months funds), support to individual human rights defenders and local community based organisations. With “more traditional modalities” we mean all the other sub-grants, as well as the other activities directly implemented by AAZ under its country strategy paper. We expect at least one selected activity to fall in the last category.

The focus given to the different questions can change during the inception phase in response to insights you gain on data availability, or other methodological opportunities or constraints. Hence, some questions might end up being harder to answer than expected, and then the efforts can be refocused, e.g. by adding another case study. We will show flexibility in response to reasonable methodological concerns in order to assure rigor in the answers.

2.2 Evaluation approach and methods

⁸ These questions mostly fits under the “effectiveness” heading and, to some extent, “impact”.

The evaluator is free to choose suitable specific methodologies, although scientific methodology must be used to ensure reliable conclusions and a high degree of transparency. Sound source criticism must be used. Questions about causality and the impact of contributions relative to other factors and alternative explanations must be analysed carefully.

In the tender the evaluator suggests and justifies an appropriate evaluation design (that includes the methods for inferring conclusions from the data) as well as methods for data collection in the tender (see the call-off inquiry for details). This will be further developed and adjusted in the inception report, in light of any insights gained so far about data availability and methodological constraints. Further adjustments might be made further on, if new opportunities or constraints emerge, and are well argued. Specifically, we will include a “half-time meeting”, sometime during the data collection phase, which will be an opportunity to reflect on any methodological challenges that has emerged. If the need arise, we will be open to minor re-adjustments of the focus.

The evaluators are free to suggest any evaluation design, as long as it is well argued and works towards the goals of the evaluation. Hence, the suggestions below are only suggestions, and if you can argue for a totally different design, that is welcomed. Furthermore, the suggestions below is no indication in what order we expect you to do things. Feel free to suggest any organisation of the evaluation you feel work best for you.

To be able to draw the conclusions (at least for question (a) – about the mix of subgrants – and question (c) – about the performance of the different modalities) we expect you to review the available and relevant evidence. This will include research literature, including peer reviewed journals. With some luck there are relevant research reviews available for some of the topics, or reviews of review.

Question a: Here a desk-study will probably be enough, collecting data on allocations to different sub-grants, complemented with some interviews to assure data quality. However, analysing the relevance of these allocations requires a clear understanding of the context as well as information about how the different activities usually perform.

Question b: this question is mainly concerned with the perceptions of AAZ staff and GPs on potential room for improvements. Hence, interviews with a selection of these will be central, complemented with interviews with some other stakeholders and examination of administrative documents. Critical voices should actively be sought out. The more qualitative interviews could be complemented with a survey of all GPs, if there are questions suitable for this. This could potentially also help in the selection process for the case studies in question c.

Question c: this question requires at least some causal inference, at least implicitly. Here you might select a number of GPs to study their capacity building activities, and among the selected GPs you may select a limited number of their capacity building activities. The selection of capacity building activities should be large enough to draw more general conclusions, but limited enough to allow a rigorous analysis of each case. Exactly how you do this will be decided in the inception phase.

Question d: this question requires at least some causal inference. Hence, this question is potentially the most challenging and is likely to require the most time. You can select a limited number of activities for case studies – exactly how many, and how far in the result chain you will go will be determined in the inception phase. You might use any methodological tools available for causal inference, including theory based tools from, for example, process tracing. This would include tools to exclude alternative causes, to check if plausible mechanisms are present etc. The use of quantitative methods are of course also a possibility, even though the opportunity for this is probably limited in this case.

The evaluators should independently select the cases to study (e.g. for question c and d), even though it might be suitable to get inputs from relevant stakeholders before doing the selection.

In the data collection it is desirable to include respondents that have no stake in the project, and you should actively seek out critical voices. Respondents might include relevant Rights Holders, and duty bearers from targeted institutions/organisations, traditional leaders, and sub-grantees (both successful and unsuccessful) as well as members of the Project Accountability Team as well as other civil society organisations and groups.

It is desirable to inquire, when relevant, how respondents know what they are claiming. If a respondent make a causal claim, that is not sufficient in itself to infer causality, unless they are describing the causes for some of their own decisions.

Given the situation with Covid-19, innovative and flexible approaches/methodologies and methods for remote data collection should be suggested when appropriate and the risk of doing harm managed.

A *gender-responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used⁹.

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilisation-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. Exactly how this will be implemented will be formulated during the inception phase.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

2.3 Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka. The main intended users are the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka and the AAZ. The intended users of the evaluation form a steering group, which has contributed to and agreed on the ToR for this evaluation. The steering group is a decision-making body. It will approve

⁹ See for example UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

the inception report and the final report of the evaluation and evaluate the tenders. The steering group will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluation, as well as in the debriefing/validation workshop where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed. A selection of AAZ's grant partners shall be part of the validation meeting. The steering Committee will consist of representation from the Embassy of Sweden in Lusaka.

As mentioned earlier we will include a "half-time meeting" sometime during the data collection phase. For this meeting the evaluators are expected to present an informal brief (approximately 2 pages) of the status of the evaluations, including any preliminary findings and methodological challenges that has emerged. This will be an opportunity for Sida to come with constructive criticism of the methods used so far, and will help the evaluators to better understand the expectations of Sida, and will help Sida to better understand the methodological challenges experienced by the evaluators. In light of what comes up in this meeting, Sida will be open to minor re-adjustments of the focus.

The evaluation unit at Sida (UTV) will participate in the quality control of the methodologies used to draw the conclusions and will be involved.

2.4 Evaluation quality

All Sida's evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation¹⁰. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation¹¹ and the OECD/DAC Better Criteria for Better Evaluation¹². However, that does not mean that everything has to be expressed on those terms. The important thing is that the report is clear and accessible for the intended audiences.

The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process. This should include a short description of what the quality assurance person will do and when.

2.5 Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. Given the situation with Covid-19, the time and work plan must allow flexibility in implementation. The evaluation shall be carried out from the 4th of March to early June, 2022. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need

¹⁰ OECD/DAC (2010) Quality Standards for Development Evaluation.

¹¹ Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

¹² OECD/DAC (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use.

to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase. The nature of meetings shall be determined by the Covid situation i.e. virtual or physical.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
Start-up meeting/s : Lusaka or Virtual	Embassy of Sweden, AAZ Consultant team	3 rd March, 2022
Draft inception report		28 th March, 2022
Inception meeting: Lusaka or Virtual	AAZ, Embassy of Sweden and Consultancy team.	Tentative: 31 th March, 2022
Comments from intended users to evaluators (alternatively these may be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting)	AAZ, Embassy of Sweden and Consultancy team	Tentative: 4 th April, 2022
Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	4 th April to 12 th May, 2022
Half-time meeting with focus on methodological challenges	Evaluators, Utv, Embassy	Tentative: 22 nd April, 2022
Debriefing/validation workshop (meeting)	Evaluators, Embassy of Sweden, AAZ, Grant partners	13 th May, 2022
Draft evaluation report		Tentative: 20 th May, 2022
Comments from intended users to evaluators		Tentative: 25 th May, 2022
Final evaluation report		3 rd June, 2022
Seminar ¹³ - Lusaka	AAZ, Embassy of Sweden, stakeholders including other cooperating partners	Tentative: 8 th June, 2022, preferably earlier
Technical annex		13 th June, 2022
Lessons learned brief		20 th June, 2022

The Consultant is free to suggest different times in consultation with the end users of the evaluation.

Note that the reporting deviate somewhat from the traditional format. The final report excludes both lessons learned, as well as a number of technical details (e.g. the ToR and the inception report. These will be finalised in two separate documents (the “technical annex” and the “lessons learned brief”). The final report, the technical annex and the lessons learned brief will probably be published together, but the details of this will be decided later on.

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology *including how a utilisation-focused and gender-responsive approach will be ensured*, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design, including an *evaluation matrix* and a *stakeholder mapping/analysis*. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made.

¹³ The Consultant should organise this.

All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have a clear structure and follow the layout format of Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex B). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages.

However, you are not obliged to follow the formulations in the ToR to the letter. The first priority (after ethical concerns) is rather clarity of the conclusions and transparency for the evidence base. Hence, feel free to suggest an unorthodox disposition of the report, if you believe that that can improve these goals.

The key target group for this report is the Embassy staff, and AAZ staff. Additional users include wider stakeholder groups in Zambia and desk officers at Sida in Stockholm. Hence, a certain amount of familiarity with the context can be assumed for the readers.

The final report shall clearly and in detail describe the evaluation methodology, including:

- methods for data collection, such as the criteria for the selection of respondents, and, where relevant, sampling methods
- methods for handling source criticism. This includes an analysis of the potential problems with the sources, such as the biases of the informants, problems of recall, and instances when the respondents cannot be considered primary sources. This also includes the tools that the evaluators used to handle these problems
- methods for data analysis
- the methods for inferring causality shall be described (whenever causal claims are made)

Furthermore, the gender-responsive approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for each finding and conclusion shall be described.

Evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions and be specific, directed to relevant intended users and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term.

The report should be no more than a maximum of 35 pages excluding annexes. If the methods section is extensive, it could be placed in an annex to the report.

Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit/embassy. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation¹⁴. However, that does not mean that everything has to be expressed in those terms. The important thing is that the report is clear and accessible for the intended audiences.

The evaluator shall, upon approval by Sida/Embassy of the final report, insert the report into Sida's template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C) and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication database. The order is placed by sending the approved report to Nordic Morning (sida@atta45.se), with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation: "sakanslag".
5. Type of order: "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas".

Lessons-learned brief

You shall also produce a shorter report that includes any conclusions that is potentially valuable for others than the present Embassy staff and AAZ staff. This could, for example, be any observations about the performance of the modalities, or any other conclusions that might apply outside the immediate context of this evaluation.

The key target group for this report is any one who work with related policy areas, both in Zambia, Sweden or globally. Hence, a certain amount of familiarity with the context cannot be assumed for the readers.

In this report special effort should be made to make it accessible to readers who are not familiar with the Zambian context, or the specifics of the sectors.

The report should be relatively brief, but the length depends on how many lessons learned we can draw from the evaluation, something we cannot know beforehand. As with the main report, however, the evidence base for any conclusion should be transparent.

Technical annex

A technical annex shall be put in a separate pdf. Here you put all the things that are only relevant for the contract management of this evaluation. This includes the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report, the stakeholder mapping/analysis and the Evaluation Matrix.

¹⁴ Sida OECD/DAC (2014) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management.

The annex shall describe how the utilisation-focused approach has been implemented i.e. how intended users have participated in and contributed to the evaluation process and how methodology and methods for data collection have created space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users.

The key target group for this annex is just those commissioning the evaluation, as well as anyone in the future who are tasked with examining Sida's evaluation management. Hence, a certain amount of familiarity with evaluation jargon can be assumed, but it should be readable without knowing all context specific terms.

2.6 Evaluation team qualification

Please refer to the call-off for this.

2.7 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is SEK 1,000,000.

Invoicing and payment shall be managed according to the following: The Consultant may invoice a maximum of 30% of the total amount after approval by the Embassy of the Inception Report and a maximum of 70% after approval by the Embassy of the Final Report and when the assignment is completed.

The contact person at the Swedish Embassy is the Program Manager, Governance and Human Rights. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process. Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by The Program Manager – Governance and Human Rights.

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by The Program Manager – Governance and Human Rights. The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics such as booking interviews, preparing visits, inception meeting and final dissemination seminar among others including any necessary security arrangements.

3. Annexes

Annex A: Data sheet on the evaluation object

Information on the evaluation object (i.e. intervention)	
Title of the evaluation object	ActionAid Zambia: CSO Support
ID no. in PLANIt	11623
Dox no./Archive case no.	UM2018/05261
Activity period (if applicable)	2018 to 2022
Agreed budget (if applicable)	SEK 46,500,000
Main sector	Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality.
Name and type of implementing organisation	NGO
Aid type	Project Support
Swedish strategy	Strategy for Sweden's Development Cooperation in Zambia.

Information on the evaluation assignment	
Commissioning unit/Swedish Embassy	Swedish Embassy in Lusaka
Contact person at unit/Swedish Embassy	Ms. Pezo Phiri – pezo.mateo-phiri@gov.se

Timing of evaluation (mid-term, end-of-programme, ex-post, or other)	End of Program Evaluation
ID no. in PLANIt (if other than above).	

Annex B: Decentralised evaluation report template

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Preface

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. The Evaluated Intervention
3. Findings
4. Evaluative Conclusions
5. Recommendations

Lessons learned will initially be put in a separate pdf, but will be attached to the published report.

Annex C: Project/Programme document

The intervention proposal

Annex 2 – Technical Annex

This annex is accompanied by ‘Lessons learned from the evaluation’, [Annex 3](#).

SECTION A: METHODOLOGY

A1. Evaluation questions

During inception, we slightly revised the evaluation questions presented in the ToR, to sharpen the sub-questions on grant management under evaluation question 2 (EQ 2); the revised questions are found in the Evaluation Design Matrix in Annex 6 of the Inception Report. We also added sub-questions to assess gender equality (GE) and human rights- based approaches (HRBA) during design of the data collection tools. As specified by the ToR, the evaluation questions were not organised under the OECD-DAC criteria headings of ‘relevance’ (EQ 1); ‘effectiveness’ (EQ 2); ‘efficiency/effectiveness’ (EQ 3) and ‘impact’; however, the questions broadly corresponded to these evaluation criteria. The evaluation questions are listed below.

EQ1 and sub-questions: To what extent is the mix of sub-grants reasonable given Sida’s goals and the local context?

- To which thematic areas has financial support been provided to GPs under this project?
- Are there any thematic areas that are underrepresented, given Sida strategies and goals?
- How effective has AAZ’s selection of GPs been in achieving the expected objectives and results, given the Zambian context of democratic development?

EQ2 and sub-questions: To what extent do AAZ’s management activities need to be improved?

- To what extent is AAZ’s grant management (including implementation period versus set objectives) and capacity development support of AAZ appropriate, responding to their GPs’ needs?
- Is the time requirement of the granting process unduly long or does it reflect reasonable management concerns and capacities?
- To what extent does the AAZ funding modality (design of grants) facilitate or hinder CSOs’ access to resources?
- Are there any obvious inefficiencies in the grant management that could, and should, be adjusted?
- How effective is AAZ’s Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system? How do the M&E findings influence AAZ’s strategic and management decisions?
- What are AAZ’s risk assessment and mitigation measures? Are they relevant and reasonable given the context?
- What changed in the project context during implementation (e.g., Covid-19 pandemic, elections, micro-level factors)? How well was change managed by AAZ and by the GPs?

- In which way can GPs influence AAZ’s policies and strategies – are there any feedback mechanisms in place and how do they work?

EQ3 and sub-questions: To what extent is the present funding mix optimal in terms of creating a balance between capacity building of the GPs and project implementation by the GPs?

- To what extent has the project (capacity building and activity implementation by GPs) contributed to selected outcomes?
- To what extent did funding for capacity building activities/GPs’ activities support the identified implementation processes and the strengthening of the CSO overall?

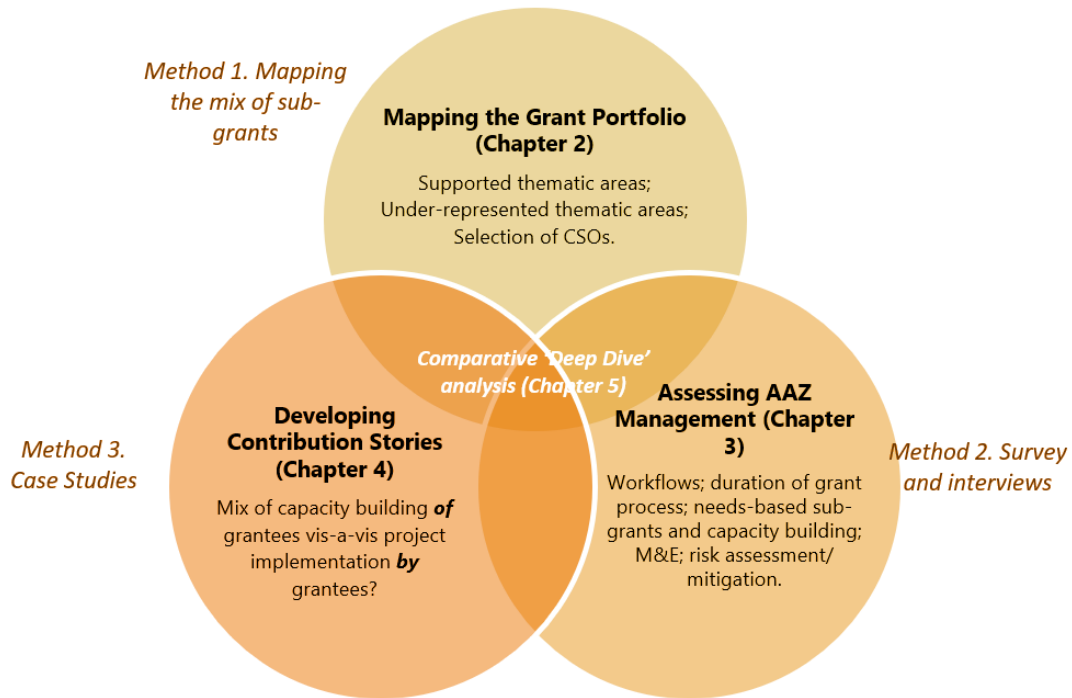
EQ4 and sub-questions: How do the new and innovative modalities perform compared to the more traditional modalities?

- What have the achievements been in achieving planned outputs through the innovative modalities; and through the traditional modalities; and what were the problems?
- What do the answers to the above say about the relative achievements and problems with the new modalities?
- Are there any problems in any activities that can be plausibly linked to the characteristics of the modality of the respective interventions?

A2. Overall Approach

Taking utilisation-focused evaluation as our overall framework, our methodology centred on the actual use of results by the evaluation’s primary intended users (PIU), AAZ and Sida. We made the shift from viewing ourselves, the evaluators, as being the primary decision-makers in the evaluation, to facilitating the decision making of PIUs, in order increase the likelihood that they will use the evaluation results in their own decision- making. To optimise our UfE approach, AAZ and the Embassy set up an *Evaluation Task Force* (see *lessons learned from the evaluation*).

To frame our evaluation, we looked for synergies between the three key areas of interest to the Embassy: the portfolio of grants, AAZ’s management processes, and the balance of capacity building of GPs vis-à-vis implementation of activities by GPs. **Figure 1** illustrates these synergies, as well as offering a ‘snapshot’ (text in italics) of the proposed main assessment methods, which are described in more detail in Section A3, below. In addition, we undertook a comparative ‘deep-dive’ analysis across our case studies, focusing on issues in relation to these three areas (see *lessons learned from the evaluation*).

Figure 1. Evaluation analysis framework and proposed methods

Throughout, we tried to integrate a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and Gender Equality (GE) into the evaluation, in order to contribute to learning about project functioning and improve decision-making on project design. According to the United Nations Evaluation Group, a HR and GE-responsive evaluation has two dimensions: **(i) Result-wise:** it assesses the extent to which the intervention is guided by organisational and system-wide objectives on HR and GE, and has achieved HR and GE results related to these objectives; **(ii) Process-wise:** (a) it examines how and to what extent HR and GE are mainstreamed in the intervention’s programming process, and (b) it applies HRBA and GE mainstreaming principles to the actual evaluation process.

A3. Methods

3.1. Mapping the grant portfolio

Our descriptive mapping of AAZ’s sub-grants began with a rapid desk-based context analysis of the democratic development landscape in Zambia, spotlighting the locations of our local case studies. A list of the documents we reviewed is found in Section B of this annex.

The project’s existing database of grant partners already included details of each grantee’s thematic area of work, namely, Civic Participation (sub-types are Civic Participation & Elections, Civic Participation & Health Services, Civic Participation & Public Finance Management); Health Services; Litigation; Natural Resource Management; and Public Finance Management (PFM).

However, in consultation with AAZ staff, we developed a conceptual framework to map grant partners in slightly more detail. We added two additional mapping criteria: type of CSO (International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), umbrella/network organisations, and individual (human rights) activists) and type of targeted rights holders (*see lessons learned from the evaluation*).

Using this conceptual framework, we mapped all 51 grant partners, highlighting over/underrepresented types of grants, thematic areas, types of CSOs, and target groups of rights holders.

The findings of the mapping exercise, including a brief analysis in light of our rapid context analysis, are presented in **Chapter 2** of the report.

3.2. Assessing AAZ’s management systems and practices

To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of AAZ’s grant management, we conducted a sample survey of AAZ staff and grant partners’ project staff, exploring respondents’ perceptions of the grant management process as well as potential room for improvement. Our sampling strategy and the sample are found in Section C of this annex.

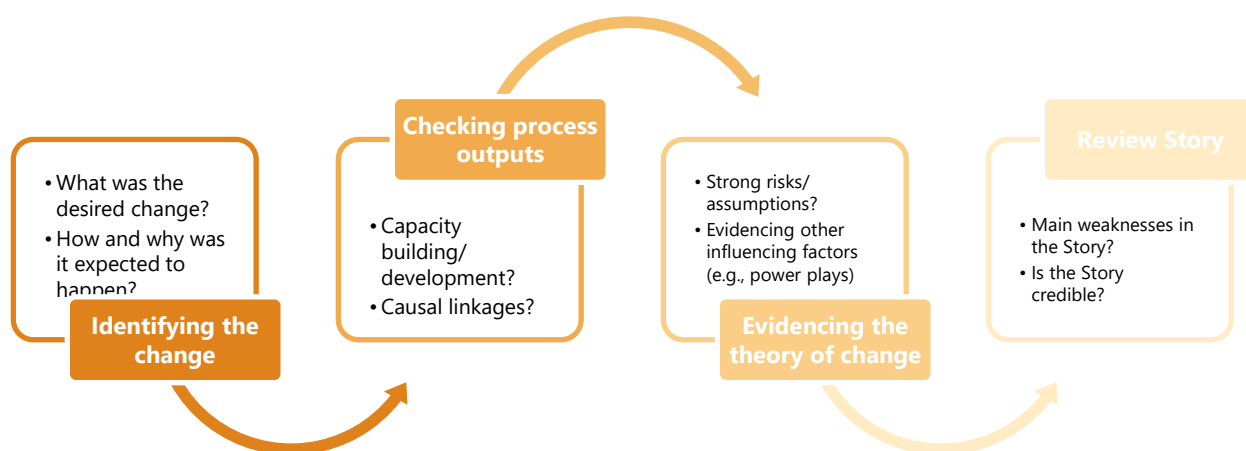
The semi-structured online survey using *Survey Monkey* was sent to 24 grant partners, 12 in Lusaka and 12 outside Lusaka. Of these, 18 responded to the survey which was followed up by in-depth key informant interviews with 10 of these grant partners. In the follow-up interviews, we explored issues such as AAZ’s risk management, feedback mechanisms, and adaptive management (*see lessons learned from the evaluation*).

The findings of the online survey are discussed in **Chapter 3** of the report and our detailed analysis is found in **Annex**.

3.3. Developing Contribution Stories

We conducted 4 case studies in and outside Lusaka (Alliance for Community Action, Care for Nature Zambia, Chapter One Foundation and Rise Community Action Programme), to assess the extent to which the project struck a balance between activities to build capacity of the grantees on the one hand, and activities implemented by partner through grant support, on the other. The case studies followed a contribution analysis process, resulting in ‘Contribution Stories’ which explored the question: Is it reasonable to conclude that the mix of capacity building and operational activities is optimal? **Figure 2** illustrates the contribution analysis process.

Figure 2. The contribution analysis process



We used a mix of methods to produce the Contribution Stories, including the following:

- i. Reviewing grant partners' project reports and related documentation;
- ii. Developing 'micro-level' theories of change for selected activities, including process outputs i.e., the causal linkages between activities and selected outputs; and 'nesting' these 'micro-ToCs' within AAZ's overall ToC (see **Annex**).
- iii. Conducting in-depth KII and gender-sensitive focus group discussions (FGD) with a wide a range of informants during field visits by the evaluation team, seeking out critical voices where feasible.
- iv. Briefly assessing the evidence for each case as a 'Contribution Story' (*see lessons learned from the evaluation*). We applied **source criticism** as much as was feasible, ensuring that critical grant partners' opinions were captured, and corroborating key respondents' views with reference to documentation and the perspectives of rights holders, stakeholders, members of the PAT and PIUs.

Case study respondents included grant partner management and project staff; youth activists who participated in ACA's #YouthVote project; members of *Tuyafwe* groups in Mansa, Luapula Province; members of Neighbourhood Health Committees, Ward Development Committees, and District Advocacy Action Group (DAAG); traditional CSOs; and other key stakeholders such as the Human Rights Commission. The Contribution Stories - followed by a brief analysis of the extent to which an overall ToC for the CSSP is validated - are presented in **Chapter 4** of the report.

3.4. Deep-dive comparative analysis

We undertook a cross-analysis of selected activities conducted by three case study grant partners and one individual human rights defender (HRD), the only recipient of an individual grant, Chama Fumba. As set out in the Inception Report, we had originally intended to conduct the comparative analysis using an adapted process tracing approach. But during planning for data collection, we decided to adjust our methodological focus (*see lessons learned from the evaluation*). This was for two reasons. First, our data collection plan was significantly delayed by a combination of holidays, slow responses from AAZ and their partners, and grant partners' willingness

to engage with the evaluation team. Second, as we mentioned in the Inception Report, *“project implementation is often underpinned by visible, hidden and invisible power dynamics between stakeholders and our hunch is that this is particularly true in the context of a project such as the one under review”*; and evaluation findings thus far had proved our hunch correct.

As a result, we assessed the relative performance of the four grant partners in terms of ‘hot topics’ which arose out of the other evaluation components (the mapping exercise, the survey of grant management practices, and the Contribution Stories). Of particular interest were issues around the ‘character of power’ uncovered by the grant partners’ projects. Using a simplified Power Cube analysis approach (see **Annex 1**), our cross-analysis dived deeper into the ‘spaces of participation’ which were created by grant partners; the ‘forms of power’ (visible, hidden and invisible’) which were evidenced by partners’ activities and the power dynamics between actors at various levels of decision making.¹⁵ As hoped, the deep dives added a complementary dimension to the Contribution Stories.

The deep dive analysis is presented in **Chapter 5** of the report.

SECTION B. LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

AAZ Project Documents

AAZ, 2018a. Technical Proposal submitted to Sida.
 AAZ, 2018b. ActionAid Zambia Grants Manual.
 AAZ, 2019a. Annual Report.
 AAZ, 2019b. Partner Register.
 AAZ, 2019c. Final Revised Results Framework.
 AAZ, 2020a. Annual Report.
 AAZ, 2020b. Hub Management Report: Eastern Province.
 AAZ, 2020c. Review of the Gaps in the Public Procurement Act of 2008.
 AAZ, 2020c. Who cares for the future? Finance Gender Responsive Public Services.
 AAZ, 2021a. Annual Report.
 AAZ, 2021b. Minutes of the PAT Meeting (5 February 2021).
 AAZ, 2021c. Completed Capacity Self-Assessment Form (Caritas Solwezi, 9 August 2021; Centre for Trade and Policy Development, 10 August 2021).
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SECTION C. SAMPLING STRATEGY AND SAMPLE

Our sampling strategy was straightforward. Using the database of GPs provided by AAZ as a sampling frame, we sorted the grant partners (GPs) by location (in Lusaka and outside Lusaka), type of grant and type of thematic area. We then purposively selected Lusaka-based GPs taking into consideration a spread across types of grant and thematic area; we filtered social movement grants by capacity building grant (highest); and filtered standard grants by provision of additional capacity building grant; and duration (longest). For GPs outside Lusaka, we did as above, but also prioritised GPs located in the Northern and North-Western Provinces, as Sida reports that these have received less attention than others. This strategy has produced the following samples.

Sample for assessment of AAZ management:

12 GPs in Lusaka (follow up interviews highlighted in bold)

#	Name of Organisation	Thematic Area	Grant Type
1	Umoto Centre of Culture Zambia	Health Services	Community Action
2	ZAMSOF	Natural Resources	Community Action
3	Chapter One Foundation (COF)	Litigation	Innovative Grant
4	ZITUKULE-Anchored by Caritas Zambia	Civic Participation	Social Movement
5	Zambia Tax platform-Anchored by CSPR	Civic Participation	Social Movement
6	PELUM-Anchored by Caritas Zambia	Natural Resources	Social Movement
7	Fumba Chama (anchored by ACA)	Public Finance	Individual Grant
8	Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)	Civic Participation (Elections)	Standard Grant
9	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR)	Civic Participation	Standard Grant
10	Network of Zambian People living with HIV/AIDS	Health Services	Standard Grant

11	Keepers Foundation of Zambia	Natural Resources	Standard Grant
12	Alliance for Community Action (ACA)	Public Finance & Civic Participation (Elections)	Standard/Individual Grant

12 GPs outside Lusaka (follow up interviews highlighted in bold)

#	Name of Organisation	Thematic Area	Grant Type	Location
1	Kasama Arts Zambia	Civic Participation	Community Action	Kasama (N)
2	Democratic Governance Human Rights Advocates	Civic Participation	Community Action	Kitwe NE Copperbelt
3	Care for Nature Zambia (CFNZ)	Natural Resources	Community Action	Mansa N-Luapula P.
4	Mpulungu Youth Vision Centre	Civic Participation	Community Action	Mpulungu (N)
5	Muchinga Corridors	Health Services	Community Action	Muchinga (NE)
6	Muchinga Corridors	Civic Participation	Community Action	Muchinga
7	Development Education community project	Natural Resources	Community Action	Mufulira NE-Copperbelt
8	Green & Justice	Natural Resources	Community Action	Mufulira
9	Chalimbana River Head Waters Conservation	Natural Resources	Social Movement	Chongwe Lusaka P.
10	Rise Community Aid Programme (RICAP)	Health Services	Standard Grant	Kafue Lusaka P.
11	Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)	PFM & Civic Participation	Standard Grant	Mongu (W)
12	Caritas Solwezi	Civic Participation	Standard Grant	Solwezi (NW)

Sample for Case Studies:

1. Alliance for Community Action (ACA)
2. Chapter One Foundation (COF);
3. Care for Nature Zambia (CFNZ);
4. Rise Community Aid Programme (RICAP).

Sub-sample for cross-analysis deep dives: activities implemented by the above case study grant partners and a recipient of an Individual Grant, Chama Fumba (anchored by ACA). The criteria we used to select activities included the following:

- types of grant modality;
- citizens' participation in XYZ thematic area);
- activity time frame;
- contextual factors; particularly power relations between stakeholders, government policies and climate-change.

Annex 3 – Lessons learned from the evaluation

The evaluation team, and particularly the team lead, learned several lessons from this evaluation.

1. Don't bank on 'Evaluation Task Force' support. In past experience, an evaluation Task Force has proved to be extremely useful in focusing the evaluation on learning, not only engaging primary intended users (PIU) during the data collection design and implementation process but also in building ownership of the evaluation analysis and recommendations. Anticipating the need for close collaboration with AAZ during the evaluation, we moved quickly to initiate the formation of a 'Task Force', comprising staff from AAZ and the Embassy. But we found that although people turned up for online meetings, a Task Force 'on paper' did not translate into collaborative work in practice. Apart from a relatively junior staff member, AAZ were very slow to provide the support we needed; we were drip-fed project documentation and requests for clarification of information in reports were not always responded to (e.g., we never received an answer to the simple question, 'what do you mean by capacity building?').¹⁶

2. Ask: are PIUs on the same page? Although AAZ had developed in the zero draft of the ToR and were part of the entire process until finalisation, from the outset of the evaluation it seemed that the primary intended users were not entirely on the same page regarding the scope of the evaluation. As the minutes (circulated by NIRAS) of various meetings held prior to and during the inception phase show, AAZ and the Embassy had somewhat different views on what was meant by 'innovative grant-making modality', as set out in the ToR. This may be because of patchy institutional memory, as a result of high staff turn-over in AAZ. The lack of clarity threw our deep-dive methodological approach into disarray, as at certain points we were not sure what we were supposed to analyse under Component 4 of the evaluation.

3. Risk management in practice. Sida appraisals prioritise programme/project risk analyses and risk mitigation; neglected and/or half-hearted mitigation *during* the

¹⁶ It is not clear why AAZ staff were reluctant to engage fully with the evaluation. We can only surmise that it may be because of high-staff turnover. This meant, perhaps, that (a) the office was understaffed and the people we engaged with were preoccupied with other tasks; or (b) or people simply did not have the institutional memory required to answer some of our questions. But it could also have been because most of the staff we engaged with seemed to be 'project staff' whose contracts were ending with no guarantee of these being renewed; they had little incentive to engage in a process of learning which would not benefit them.

implementation process is critical. Two examples are the risk of high staff turnover and the risk that AAZ would find it difficult to transition from being direct implementer to intermediary (grant manager). As noted in the evaluation report, these risks did in fact transpire. In both cases, dialogue between the partners and a deliberate ‘change management process were identified mitigation measures which were not particularly effective. In both cases, the evaluation findings come too late to correct the course of the project’s implementation trajectory in its current cycle. A key lesson learned is that a ‘real time’ or developmental evaluation approach benefits high-risk initiatives; they should be embraced as tools for risk management by Sida and their partners.

4. Respondents’ willingness to engage is not a given. Related to the above point, we found engaging with grant partners in an end-line evaluation rather difficult. This was primarily because when grant partners’ projects had ended some time ago, or when the sub-granting process had been difficult, they either could not remember important details, or perhaps chose not to. A reluctance to engage on the part of grant partners also undermined our ‘source criticism’, as respondents were unwilling to speak with the team more than once when we wanted to validate/evidence certain views. Again, a ‘real time’ evaluation approach would probably have uncovered a clearer picture of how change happened.

5. Optimise Theories of Change. As is the case for almost all project/programmes evaluated by this team, result-based design and management of the CSSP was a problem. The intended causal links between grant partners’ outcomes and AAZ outcome are clear (although it was beyond this evaluation’s scope to assess long-term changes) but there was little coherence between AAZ’s results framework and grant partners’ objectives, outputs and activities.

Results-oriented theories of change (ToC) are not for everyone (and they are often simply a narrative paragraph or a pretty picture). But they serve a key function when it comes to adaptive management and learning-oriented evaluations. However, AAZ’s high-level ToC was not helpful as an analytical performance framework for shorter-term grant partners’ projects. At the same time, the inconsistencies between multi-level results made our design of project-level micro-ToCs a real challenge. It would help both Sida’s partners as well as evaluators if ToCs could be built into project/programme design as a pre-requisite for Sweden’s support of risky initiative. It may also be helpful if, as part of the appraisal, Embassy staff verified that the ToC(s) are fit-for-purpose in terms of learning-and adaption.

6. An adequate timeframe for iterative data collection. Overall, the evaluation team found the use of mixed methods useful in generating rich data and the ‘deep dives’ were a helpful platform for a synthetic analysis, driving our conclusions. However, at times the distinction between ‘absence of evidence’ and ‘evidence of absence’ across the range of methods we used was blurred, particularly where these produced conflicting views on the effectiveness of AAZ management practices. On reflection, our analysis of such granular qualitative data would have benefitted from two things. First, a rubric to measure the strength of evidence, such as a RAG (red, amber, green) rating scale (see Table below, which rates the strength of evidence for capacity building received by CFNZ, one of our four cases).

Capacity building strategies (Grants Manual)	Desk Review (CFNZ final report)	Online Survey	Survey follow-up Interviews (CFNZ)	Case study Interview (CFNZ)	FGD (PAT)
Participation in orientation Meeting				Focus on financial administration	
Participation in workshop on risk management					
Institutional strengthening in response to grantees needs		10 agreed; 8 disagreed/neutral; 6 negative comments	Support in developing proposal		
Targeted training	Training on sustainable mining practices		Training in M&E provided by Save the Children		Training to strengthen M&E
Participation in short courses/MSTDC training					
Staff placement					
Linkages to specialist CSOs				Strong requirement	
Support from regional hubs				Never visited	
Staff turnover as a factor limited CB of grantees			Conflicting views		High capacity at beginning of project, not sustained

GREEN Strong positive evidence **RED** Strong negative evidence (evidence of absence) **AMBER** Evidence to some degree/conflicting views **GREY** Insufficient evidence (absence of evidence); Blank: Not asked

Second, sufficient time to revisit data sources in order to verify evidence which was not strong enough to resolve a conflict of respondents' views, and/or to collect additional evidence to strengthen or revise a causal inference; or to determine whether or not the conflict (at a systemic level) is itself the finding. Indeed, because we anticipated that the evaluation timeframe and resources would not have been sufficient for an iterative data collection method such as process tracing, the evaluation team dropped this from our evaluation methodology. In retrospect, where an evaluation is expected to uncover conflicts in stakeholders' views, it is important that both Sida (when developing the ToR) and evaluation team (when proposing a methodology) carefully consider the resources available for iterative data collection and analysis.

7. Embracing learning. Sida evaluations place a lot of emphasis on the importance of learning. Generally, the team consider it important that Embassy staff are as accountable for learning as their partners (and indeed for the performance of projects and programmes).

For example, in the case of the present evaluation, AAZ's lack of gender and HRBA mainstreaming in grant management processes was a major weakness in the CSSP's performance, and we are surprised that this had not been raised earlier by the Embassy (indeed it was not highlighted as a concern in the ToR). We recommend that both partners as well as staff in the Embassy of Sweden take advantage of Sida's resources such as the Help Desk for Gender, as well as the Help Desk for Democracy and Human Rights.

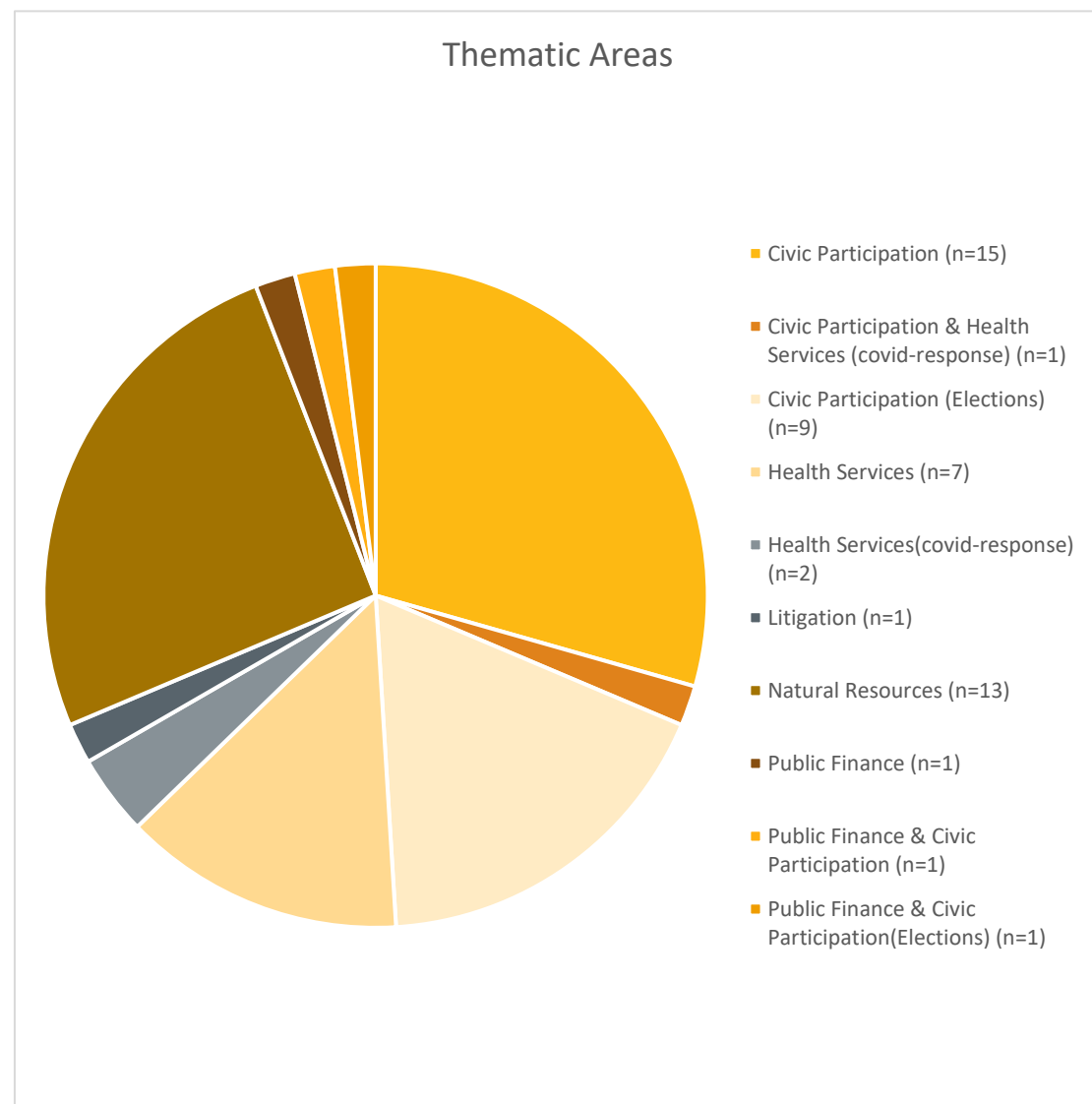
8. Optimising use of a comments matrix. Previous experience shows that evaluands sometimes assume an evaluation is simply a box which their donors are obliged to tick. Consequently, evaluations are always not taken seriously. At the time of reviewing a draft report, critiques - no matter how constructive they are intended to be – are received negatively. This leads to a defensive stance on the part of the evaluand and a lost opportunity for learning. In the case of the present evaluation, the process of using a comments matrix was valuable, allowing AAZ to flag issues requiring discussion and enabling the evaluation team to respond/refine the report.

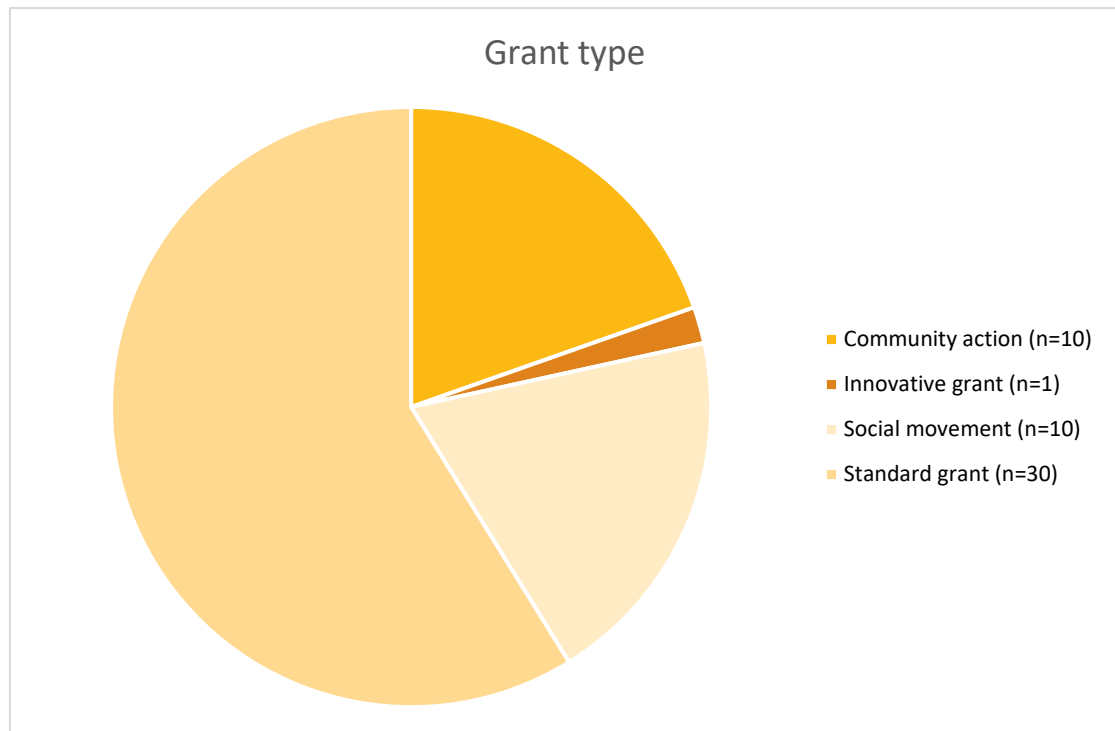
9. Value of adaptive evaluation design. Last but not least, thanks in no small part to Sida's flexibility in terms of adaptive evaluation design, it was possible to fine-tune the methodology – where adjustments were justified and made sense – and strengthen the evaluation.

Annex 4 – Mapping of grants

The following data is based on a mapping of 50 grants provided to grantees by AAZ. The mapping was compiled in close dialogue with AAZ and is based on AAZ's data.

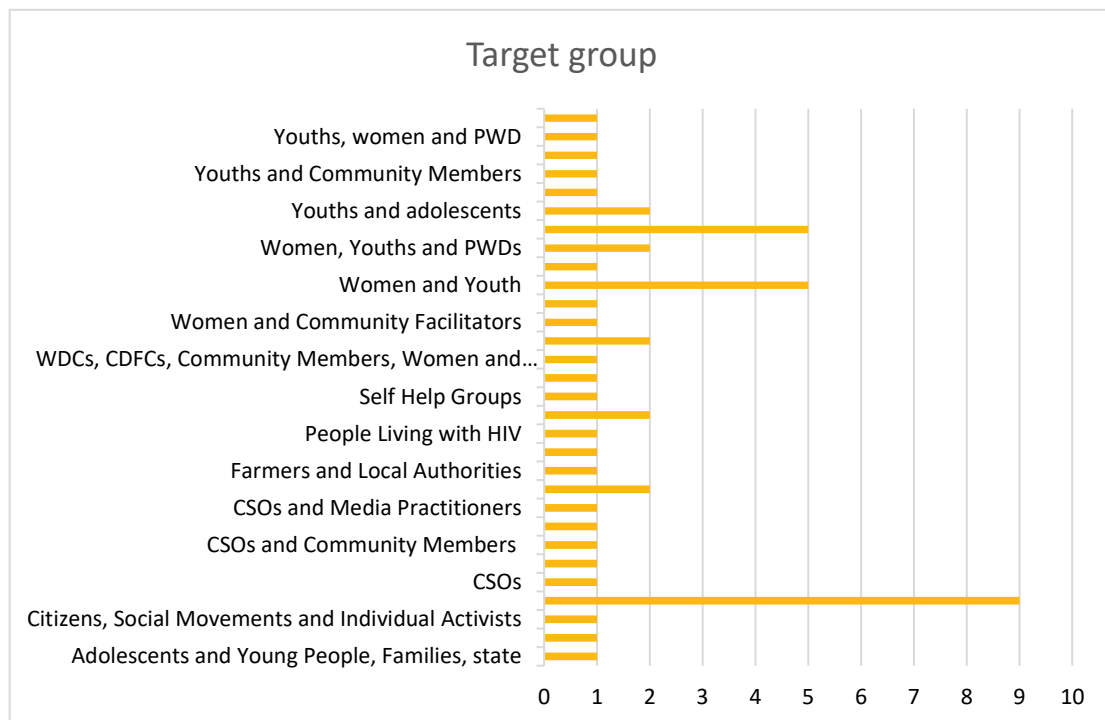
Grants were provided in four thematic areas in line with priority strategies in AAZ's Country Programme and Sida's Strategy for Development Cooperation with Zambia: Civic participation/elections; civic participation in public finance management; natural resources, and health services. 'Litigation' was an additional thematic area introduced as a 'pilot' in 2020; this likely explains why only one grant was awarded in this area.





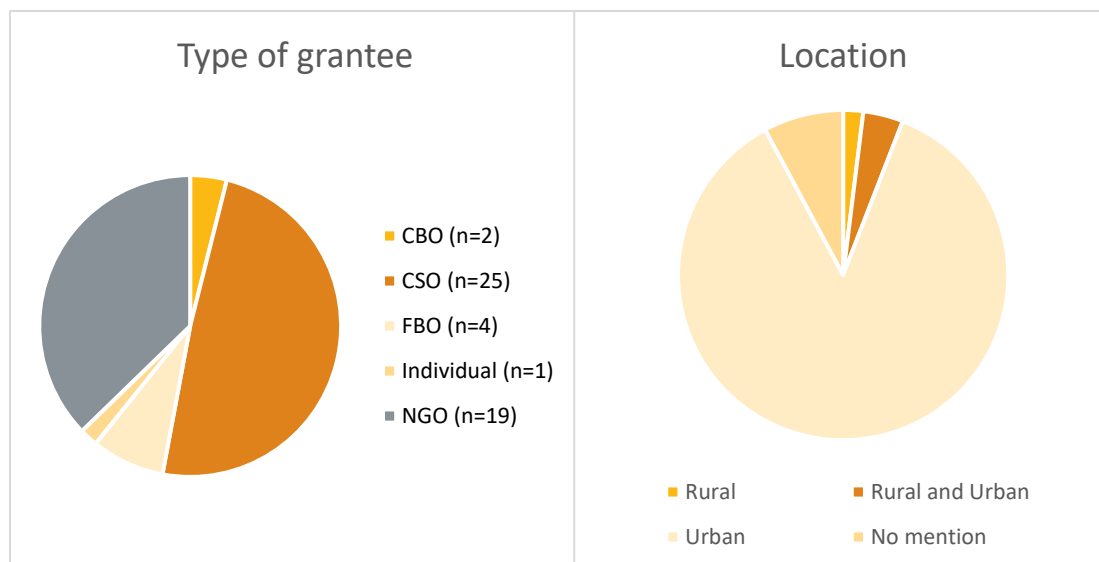
In the period under review, the **types of grants provided** by AAZ were *Standard Grants, Community Action Grants, Innovation Grants*, as well as *social movement grants*. As shown, the standard grant is the most prevalent grant.

A wide range of types of **target groups** were mapped by AAZ staff, drawing on individual grant proposals, as shown below:



For the **type of grantee**, in the mapping exercise conducted during this evaluation AAZ staff classified grant partners in four groups: CSOs (i.e. NGOs working in civic

participation), NGOs (i.e. non-profit organisations working in other areas); FBOs; and CBOs, while the **location** of grantees, according to the mapping, showed that the large majority of grantees are based in urban areas.

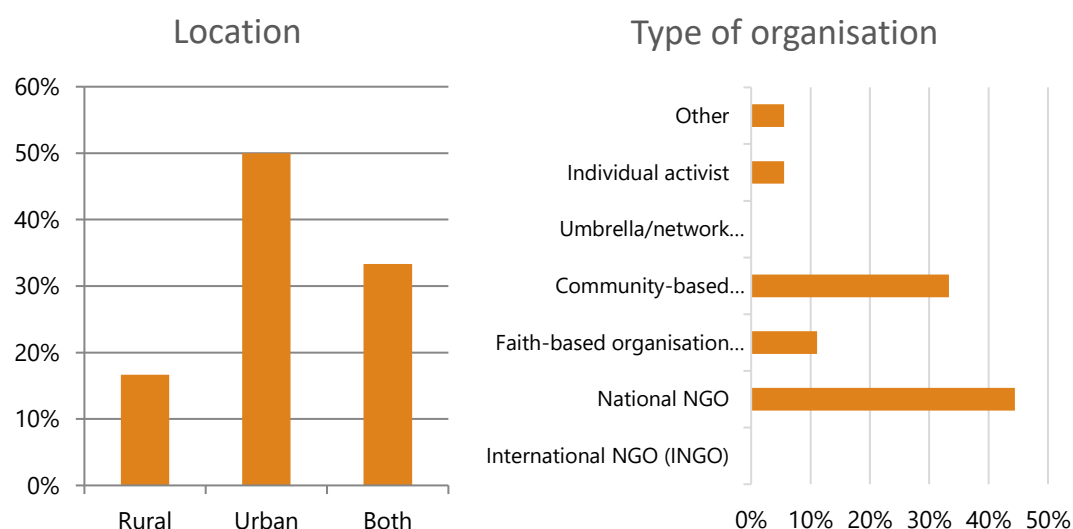


Annex 5 – Analysis of the responses to the survey

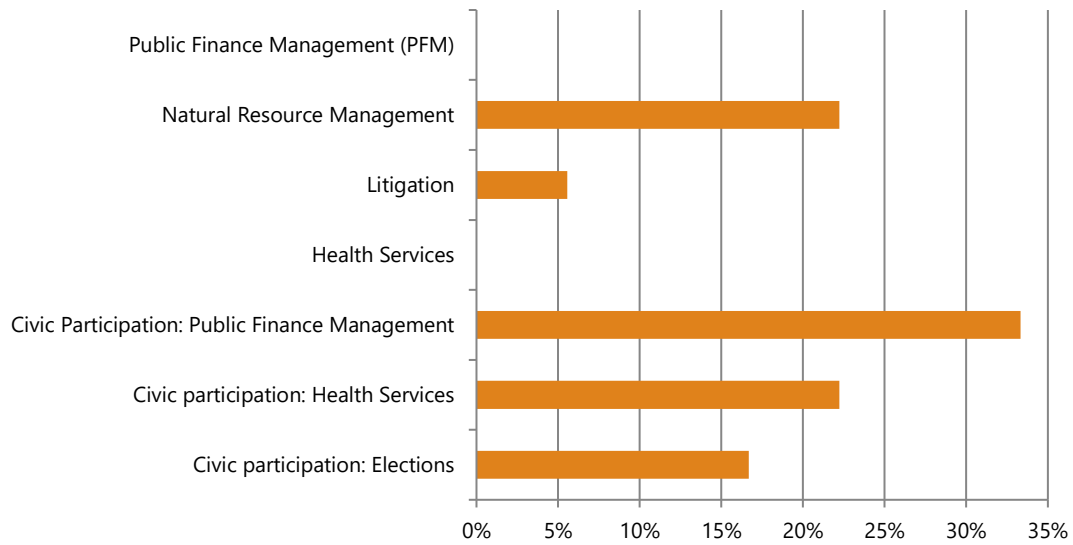
Survey: “Assessing ActionAid Zambia’s management systems and practices”

The analysis is based on responses from 18 grant partner organisations (from a sample of 24 out of 51 organisations) of which 16.67% are based and work in rural areas, 50% in urban areas, and 33.33% as both rural and urban. In this group, 3 organisations (16.67%) had their main thematic focus on civic participation in elections; 4 organisations (22.22%) on civic participation and health services; 6 organisations (33.33%) on civic participation and Public Finance Management; (PFM) 1 on litigation (5.56%) and 4 on Natural Resource Management (NRM) (22.22%).

The responses are represented by GPs and locations that are predominately urban, or mixed urban/rural, and by organisations that are 8 national CSOs (labelled as NGOs) (44.33%) and 6 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) (33.33%). The third category by order is Faith Based Organisations (FBO), representing 2 responses (11.11%). The sample does not include any international CSO or umbrella CSOs, but one response from an individual activist and one national social movement (“other”).

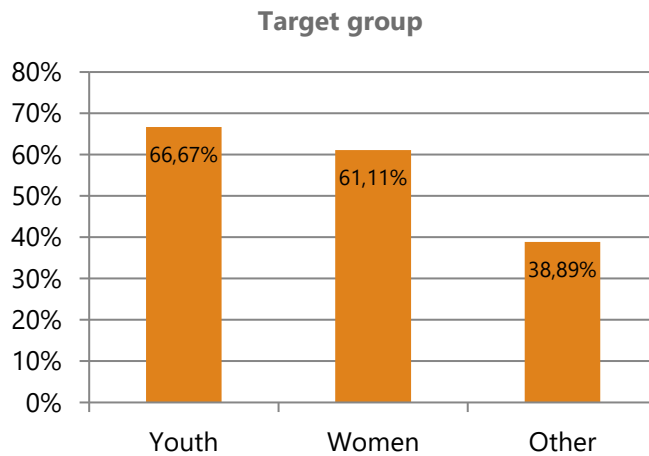


The thematic focus is well spread between four thematic areas with focus on civic participation, namely PFM, health service, NRM, and elections, while the area of litigation is only represented by one organisation.

Main thematic area for the grant received from Action Aid Zambia

The sample targeted mainly young people (12 out of 18 GPs) and women (11 out of 18 GPs). The category “other” is specified next to the diagram.

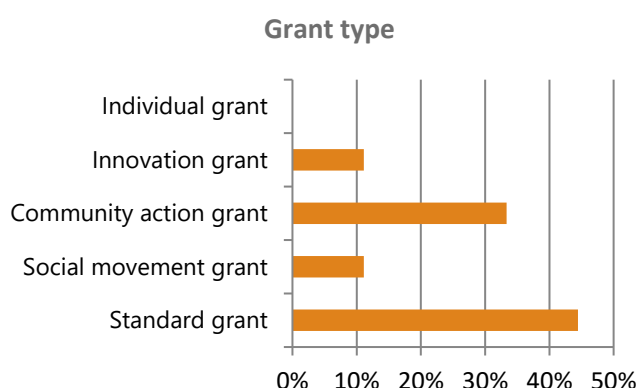
The “other” categories of target groups, as defined by the GP respondents were:



Rural populations (1)
 Men, Women, Youths and
 Persons with Disabilities (1)
 General population (1)
 People with disabilities,
 PLWHA, Government Service
 providers, Members of
 Community Structures (1)
 General members (1)
 Communities (1)
 Youths, Women, Men, Small
 scale farmers, lined
 government Ministries (1)

The GPs responding to the survey benefitted from the following grant types by order: 8 standard grant, 6 community action grant, and 2 social movement grant and 2 innovative grants. None of the responding GPs had received individual grant.

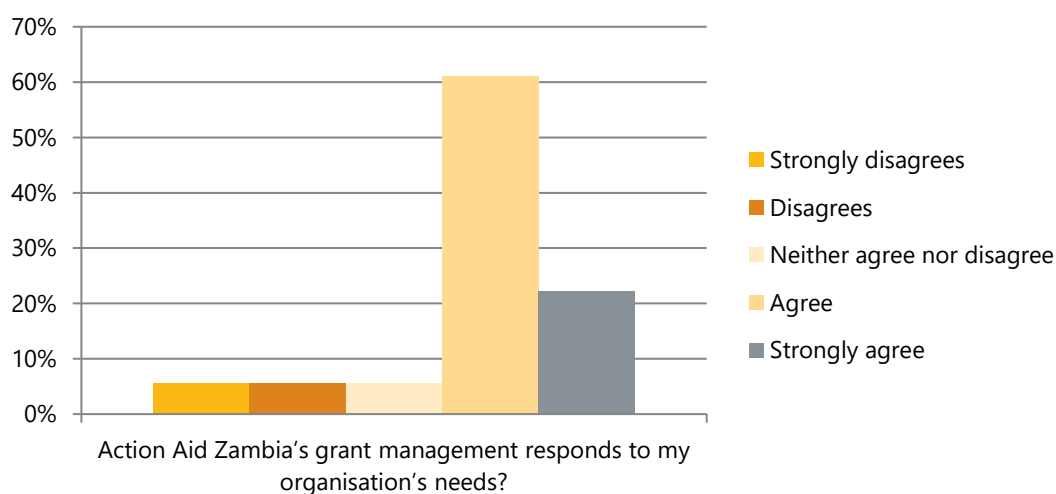
Category	%	No responses
Standard grant	44.44	8
Social movement grant	11.11	2
Community action grant	33.33	6
Innovation grant	11.11	2
Individual grant	0.00%	0



The GPs were asked questions on relevance to the GPs needs, efficiency and effectiveness of AAZ's grant management. The survey responses demonstrate that:

A. 15 GPs, either agreed (11) or strongly agreed (4) with the statement that AAZ's grant management responded to their organisation's needs. 1 strongly disagreed, 1 disagreed and another GP responded that it neither agreed nor disagreed. The satisfaction is thus high among the respondents. However, an issue that is raised in the comments to this question, and repeated under other questions, was the delay in disbursements and the effect this had on the project. Another important remark under this question was the lack of communication or late feedback. On the other hand, one GP responded under another question (E) the AAZ staff was responsive through-out the project cycle.

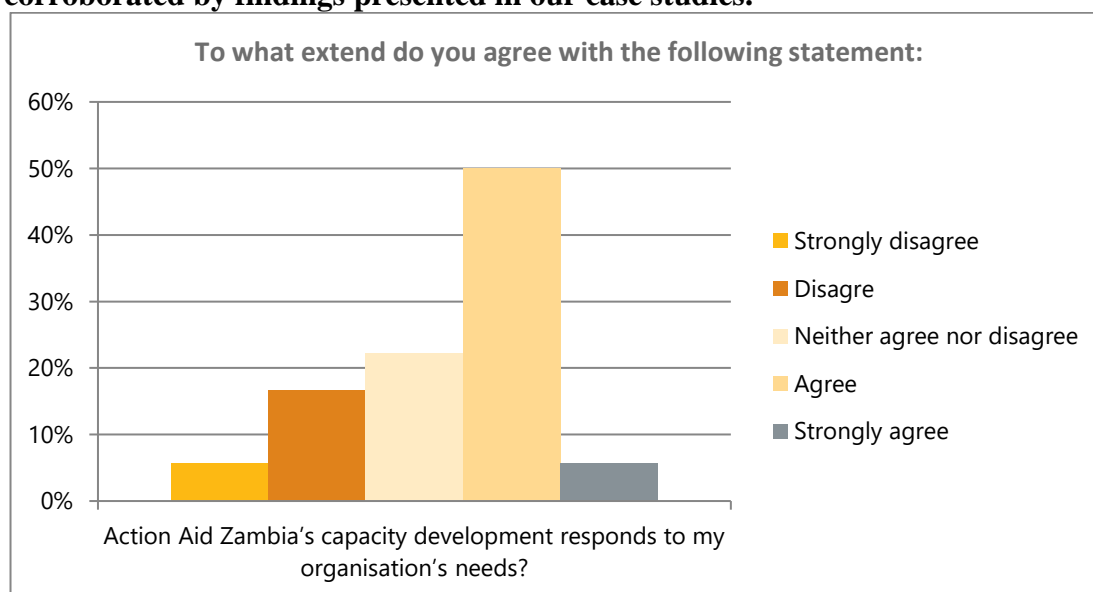
To what extend do you agree with the following statement:



The individual comments to the question if the grant responded to the needs of the organisations were:

• There were some late disbursements and underfunding of agreed budgets. Specifically, there was a delay in disbursing the second portion of funds for the Ask Health Project while the Be Heard Zambia project never received nearly 50% of budgeted funds until the project ended.
• Support to develop strategic plan.
• Delayed to process and release funds and very bad with communication throughout the project. For a 6 months project, sometimes I could wait for over 20 days to get a response and funds for activities.
• Late feedback to reports.
• Feedback meetings to communities after the stakeholders meetings during the launch of the project.
• The grant met our needs in terms of meeting our benchmarks.
• Continuity of the Programme.
• The Project only focused on three wards out of seventeen, thus other areas were not reached due to lack of resources.

B. The GP's showed a slightly more diverse experience on the provided capacity development. 1 GP strongly agreed that the provided capacity development had responded to their organisation's need while 9 agreed, representing a majority of the GPs. However, 1 strongly disagreed, 3 disagreed and 4 had a neutral experience, which might stand for that they did not receive any capacity development, or that it did not bring anything new to the organisation. Six of the individual comments (see below) inform that there was no, or only limited, capacity development support from AAZ. These comments are corroborated by findings presented in our case studies.



The individual comments to the question were:

• Capacity building needs were not addressed as non were extended to the ACA.
• Capacity building and support on monitoring and evaluation activities funds were limited.
• None, we anticipated developing strategic plan but could not due to length of project. The duration was not long enough for us to extend organisation capacity development.
• I attended a number of capacity development workshops prior to the implementation of the project. All of them were rushed as everything appeared like there was not enough time.
• 1. Civil society strengthening 2. Financial gaps to support evidence generation.
• There was no capacity building activities undertaken.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building needs in areas of programming 2. On-site mentorship. 3. Site visits by AAZ staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community sensitisation and community awareness meetings on local stakeholders engagements on revenues and expenditures at local level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We needed more capacity building in organisational development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical support to NZP+ from AAZ in terms of M&E and M&E tools.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay in disbursements of funds

C. A vast majority of the respondents, 14 organisations (77.78%), found the time requirement of the granting process to be unduly long, while four organisations did not find it too long.

The individual comments were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process of time of submitting project proposal and approval of funds were within the timeframe as stipulated in call to proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every organisation has systems that need to be followed or exhausted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was an extended period between application and contraction/disbursement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time requirement allows both the grantee and the funder to fully appreciate and create development synergy that is necessary during the project cycle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation period in the proposal and the date of disbursement is at times delayed by a month and you have to implement activities hastily.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's too long.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is appropriate in that enough time is allocated for processing the grants and developing the proposals by applying.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due diligence on the part of the donor requires time in order to avoid shortcomings at implementation time that could have been avoided prior to grant signing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The granting process is timely and effective.

D. 12 organisations found AAZ's grant management to be efficient (10 agreed with the statement and 2 strongly agreed) equivalent to just over 70%, while five disagreed (4) or strongly disagreed (1), corresponding to slightly under 30%.¹⁷

The comments to the question on efficiency were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We strongly agree in the process which was undertaken was purely transparent and the project close out was maintained with its time frame.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It responded to capacity needs identified during the awarding process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAZ did little to orient partners on grant management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project reached the intended beneficiaries thereby creating demand in other chiefdoms that were not part of the project.

E. 10 GP agreed and 3 strongly agreed with the statement that it was easy to access the grant resources, while 3 disagreed and 1 neither agreed nor disagreed.¹⁸

The comments to the question on the accessibility of the grant resources were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process was highly competitive based on the number of applicants and focus area of specialisation and deeply rooted in the community catchment sites where able to be selected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was difficult for me to access funds within the agreed time. This was also established by my host organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I strongly agree in that we did not have any challenges whenever we requested for the funding for this project and all the procedures were mutually followed before disbursement.

¹⁷ Only 17 GP responded to this question.

¹⁸ As above.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff was responsive throughout the project cycle.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection process was very transparent.

The responses to the two questions above (D and E) indicate that the GPs were not happy with the length of the grant process, and that almost a third of them found the grant management to be inefficient. While the majority found it to be easy to access the grants, 3 (17.65%) of the GPS experienced difficulties. The previous comments on lack of/slow feedback and communication are also related to efficiency and effectiveness.

F. What could ActionAid Zambia do better in relation to access to resources, if anything?

The 13 individual responses to this open-ended question were:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application process for grants can be improved at the assessment level where AAZ gives feedback/queries to applicants. The current procedure suggests that there is a disconnect between the programs and the finance team. This is seen through requests for more information often sent by the finance team being based on seeking information which would be contained in the narrative component of the proposal. The process, therefore, ends up with the budget approvals unduly being delayed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the capacity needs of Community Based Organisation to conduct audit process within the project cycle to make the organisation capable of attracting other support. They also need to invest in Organisation Capacity Development to help enhance sustainability of their partners even outside the AAZ project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the communication between ActionAid and the partners. For social movements, they need a different approach in the granting process and requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Fund processing should be made quicker. 2. Budget flexibility must be enhanced.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the calls and give organisations ample time to work on the proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and Train partners to engage in Domestic resource mobilisation for social accountability and advocacy work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ActionAid Fundraising should work tirelessly and be transparent in their daily executions and publish challenges in their operations to access funds in which partners needs much input deserved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform partners about updates if funds are not available for granting ,I say so because there was a call for proposals last year and we submitted but up-to-date no feedback has been given.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should make it accessible for rural communities to manage the requirements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication and coordination between AAZ officers required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the resource envelope to partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt communication on disbursements in order to avoid delayed implementation of activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need to extend the project, owing to the fact that, there is new government in place and many people are not aware of social policies.

G. The last question in the survey related to the effectiveness of the M&E system used in the grant mechanism. Out of the 17 responses, seven GP agreed, and one strongly agreed that the M&E system had been effective, while four neither agreed nor disagreed, four disagreed and one strongly disagreed. The responses demonstrate that the M&E system was perceived as effective by 46% of the GPs, while 29% of the GPs had a negative/less positive experience. The two individual comments on insufficient orientation (workshop) and the comment on lack of monitoring visits are important to relate to possible similar findings from other collected data.

The respondents shared the following comments under this question:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 1 M&E was done across 3 grants which the ACA received under this fund.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAZ used participatory methodologies of involving key players and beneficiaries in monitoring key activities of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We underwent training on M and E just before the start of the project.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't remember thumbing part of the M and E.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the planning stage of the grant, NN's M&E interfaced with AAZ. This included formation of results framework. and quality benchmarks among others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes though not as expected.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project officers accompanied AAZ M&E team in monitoring and feedback was given promptly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No actual visits were conducted to our organisation for monitoring purposes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAZ M & E had played a very important role into the project implementation and reporting template which made our work ease to even understand the pivotal role and access to information when demand is there to make any Donor who may prompt to understand the utilisation of Funds and request for furthermore works.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together with the M&E team, NN conducted site visits shared documentation that facilitated for the evaluation of project outcomes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For our organisation the visited us and we went through the report and we visited community partners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They made sure that our association involved at every step of evaluation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They did not.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only in 1 orientation workshop. AAZ provided the M&E Template, they could have done better to provide partners with the tools and how to develop and manage database.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have not had chance to interact with the system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAZ made us accountable for every coin disbursed which has really helped my organisation perform in donor funded projects.

The sample is too small to say anything particular on the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the different grants, but it is worth noting that the GPs that had a less positive experience of the grant and how the grant mechanism had been managed represented 1 Community action grant (*strongly disagreed*); and 1 social movement grant (*disagreed/or remained neutral to some questions*). The remaining individual responses that disagreed on some of the statements, also agree on others, why it is not possible to conclude that they had an overall negative perception on the partnership.

Annex 6 – Hub management

Hub managers are intended to provide critically important decentralised support to grass roots organisations, combining monitoring visits ‘at least once a month [and] producing quarterly reports for thematic managers at the country office’, identifying risks and opportunities for the partners to corrective measures, and “*supporting partners in activity implementation as well as providing capacity building in project management and advocacy*” (AAZ, 2020b; KII: hub manager). While hub managers are trained by the head of programmes, “*if I don't have a capacity in an area, I engage my colleagues in the country office, or through outside experts in for instance, proposal writing*” (KII: hub manager).

A key function of the hub manager is to identify capacity building needs during the monitoring visit and develop an organisation-specific capacity building plan; training in ActionAid policies such as the Sexual Harassment Exploitation and Abuse policy seems to be a priority, mentioned by numerous respondents. Generally, hub managers observe capacity gaps in these four areas: institutional development; application of HRBA and Feminist principles in programme implementation; policy analysis and advocacy; and data collection and reporting. Yet the list of needs from grassroots organisations is often impossibly long.

For example, during a visit to the Petauke District Land Alliance the hub manager identified the following capacity building demands: HRBA; policy engagement in specific issues related to SRHR as well as natural resource management; knowledge and skills on governance issues, climate justice, budget tracking and social accountability; and mentorship for report writing (AAZ, 2020b). Unable to respond directly to all these needs, the hub manager focused on using AAZ’s ability to convene stakeholders to raise the issue and empower the CSO to take follow up action; “*first we prioritised their training needs - we landed on engagement with environmental policies - and then I did an activity with them, bringing together like-minded CSOs, government officials, police, etc. to analyse the policies; this was effective because it led a second activity, which they did on their own*” (KII: hub manager).

AAZ currently works through six hubs (Eastern, Western, Northwestern and three Localised Programme Area hubs), and three new regional hubs were set up with Sweden’s support (AAZ, 2018). Moreover, hub managers in face several fundamental challenges. For example, although AAZ management assert that hub offices had a budget allocation, we heard that the NW Province hub did not have a dedicated budget for visiting far-flung projects and that and shared premises limited office-based meetings; “*we need to reach out beyond the network of hub-managers, decentralise even further with money and time to spread out*” (KII: grants manager). Similarly, a concern of the Rural Sport Foundation in Petauke, Eastern Province – ‘a youth organisation which needs attention for it to grow and advance in programming’ – was

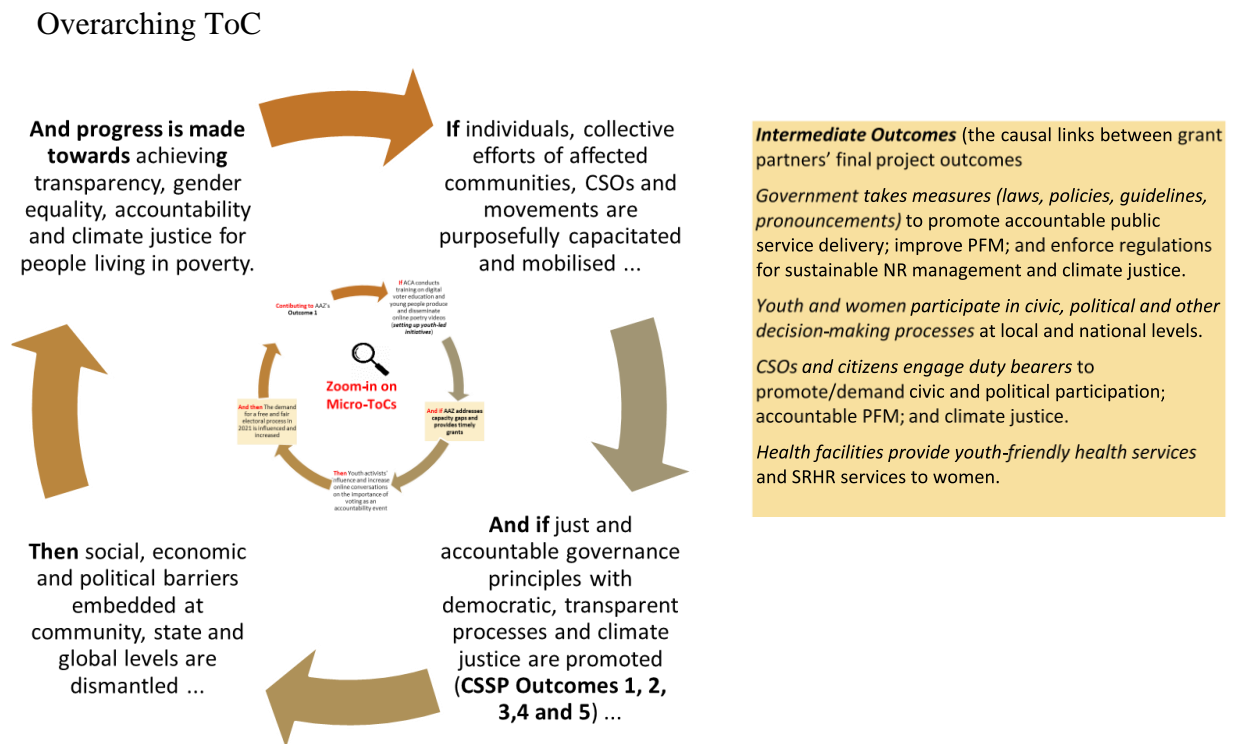
that there ‘was no visitation by the regional office to understand the difficulties the organisation is going through’ (AAZ, 2020b).

General complaints reported for the Eastern Province included the following: fund disbursement is delayed due to ineffective communication; feedback to the reports is not given on time and ‘sometimes there is no feedback at all’; and capacity support to partners is inadequate; partners ‘felt left out’ of Lusaka-based training activities and per diems for these activities mean that ‘mostly people who attend are not the ones implementing the programme’ (AAZ, 2020b).

**Box. Snapshot’ of outcomes for the Northwestern Province
(including AAZ direct implementation)**

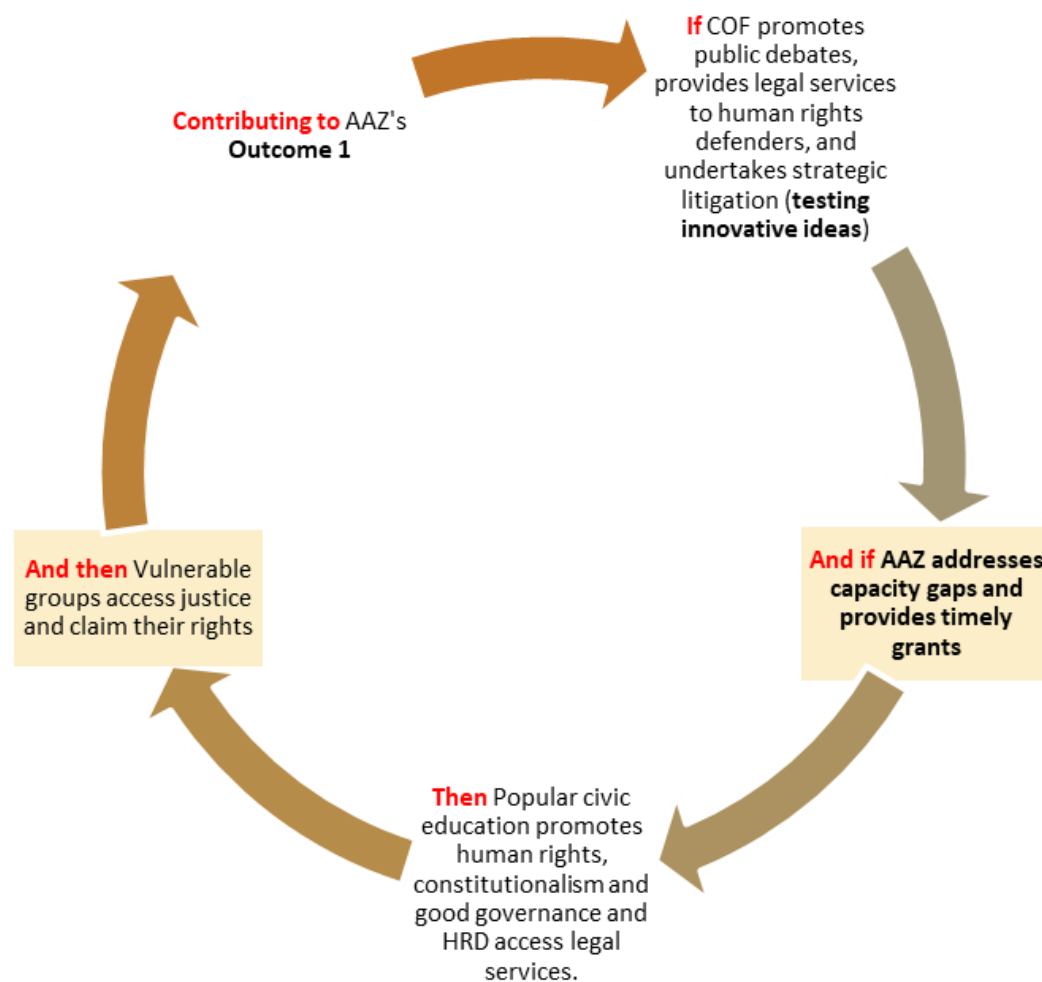
1. Trained 300 community members from 150 villages in Kasempa and Kalumbila in land rights, out of which 70(50 Female and 30 male) lobbied senior chief Kasempa to authorise land mapping to be carried out in the chiefdom for all who own small holdings and farms. 36 have so far been issued with traditional land certificates.
 2. Supported establishment of Paralegal Desks and Community Action Committees in 8 communities of Kasempa to take up reporting land issues in the community.
 3. Trained Ward Development Committees in Chavuma in lobbying and advocacy, the committee in turn lobbied from the local authority for the construction of a Market Shelter in their community which was successfully constructed by the Council.
 4. Trained the Ward Development Committee in Mwinilunga Kanongesha ward in public social accountability monitoring, through this training community members are being recognised as partners in development and are being included in decision making platforms and gatherings such as the District Development Coordinating Committee meetings.
 8. Supporting coordination and being part of the environmental alliance, which saw government respond to one of the recommendations made by the alliance that is the closure of Kasenseli Gold Mine which was being poorly managed. Further the alliance has prompted mining firms being more transparent and engaging more with the community on management of extractives, revenue sharing, and Corporate social responsibility monthly compared to the past years
- Source:** AAZ hub manager, Northwestern Province; outcome mapping database.

Annex 7 – “Nested” Theories of Change

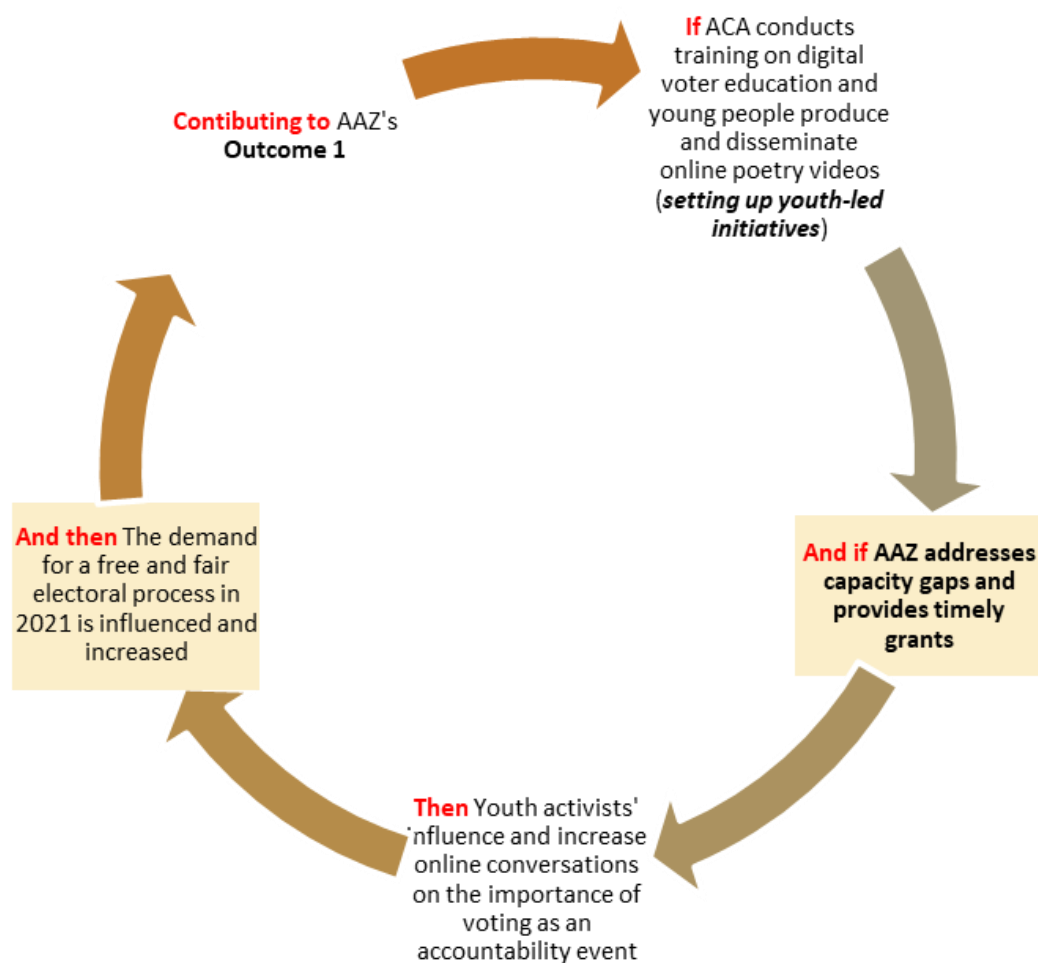


The following are project-level micro-ToCs, which are ‘nested’ with the above overarching ToC.

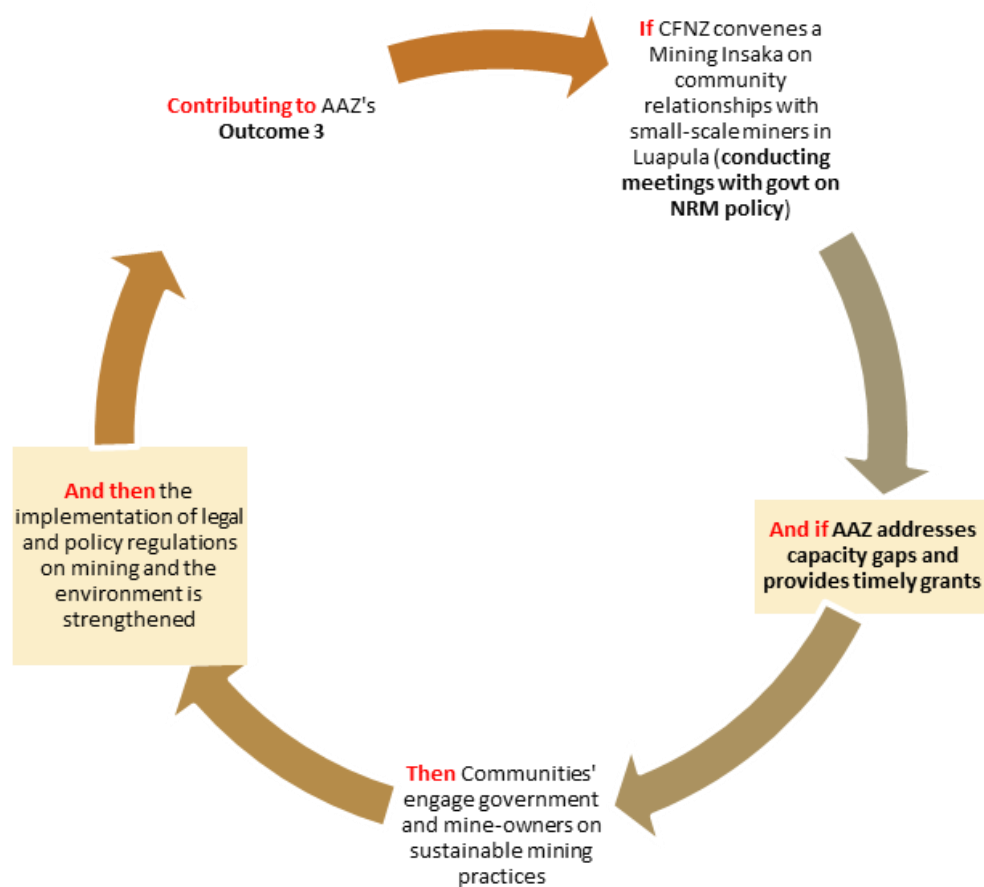
Micro-ToC 1. COF-Lawyers for Human Rights



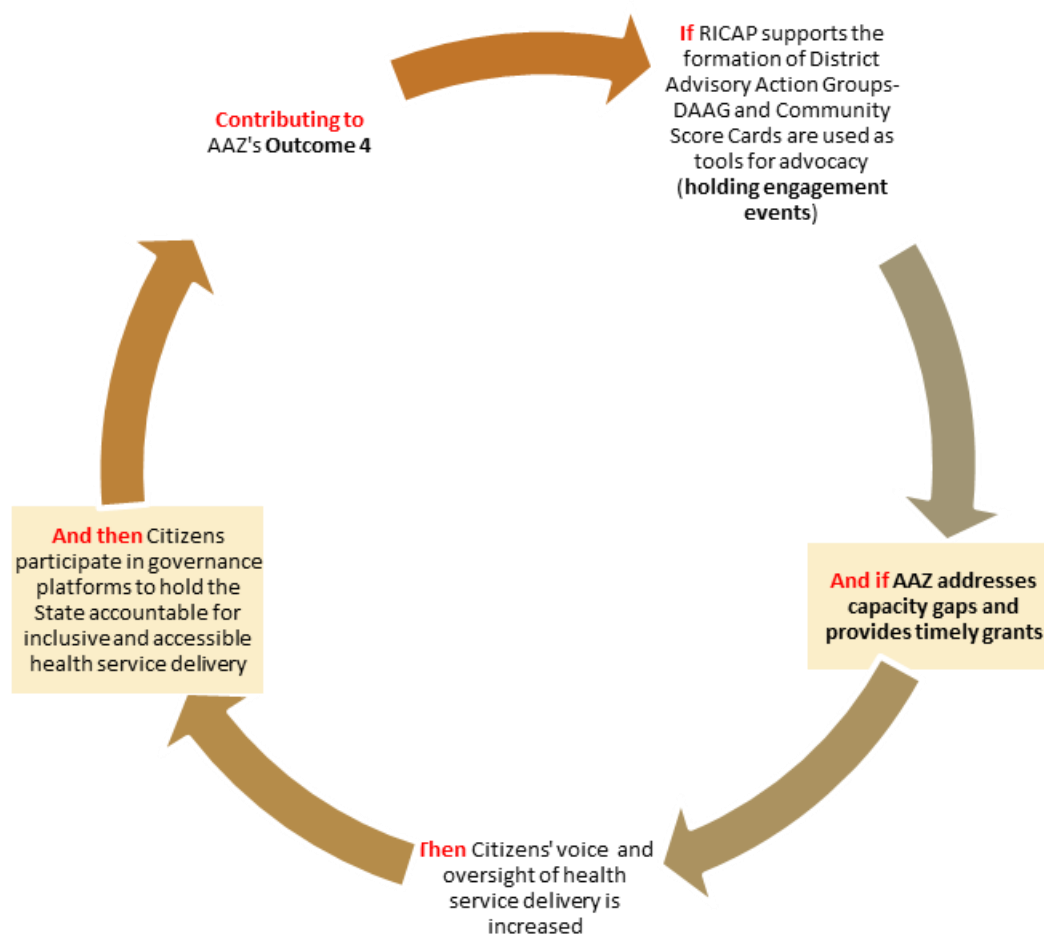
Micro-ToC 2. Alliance for Community Action – Digital #Youth Vote



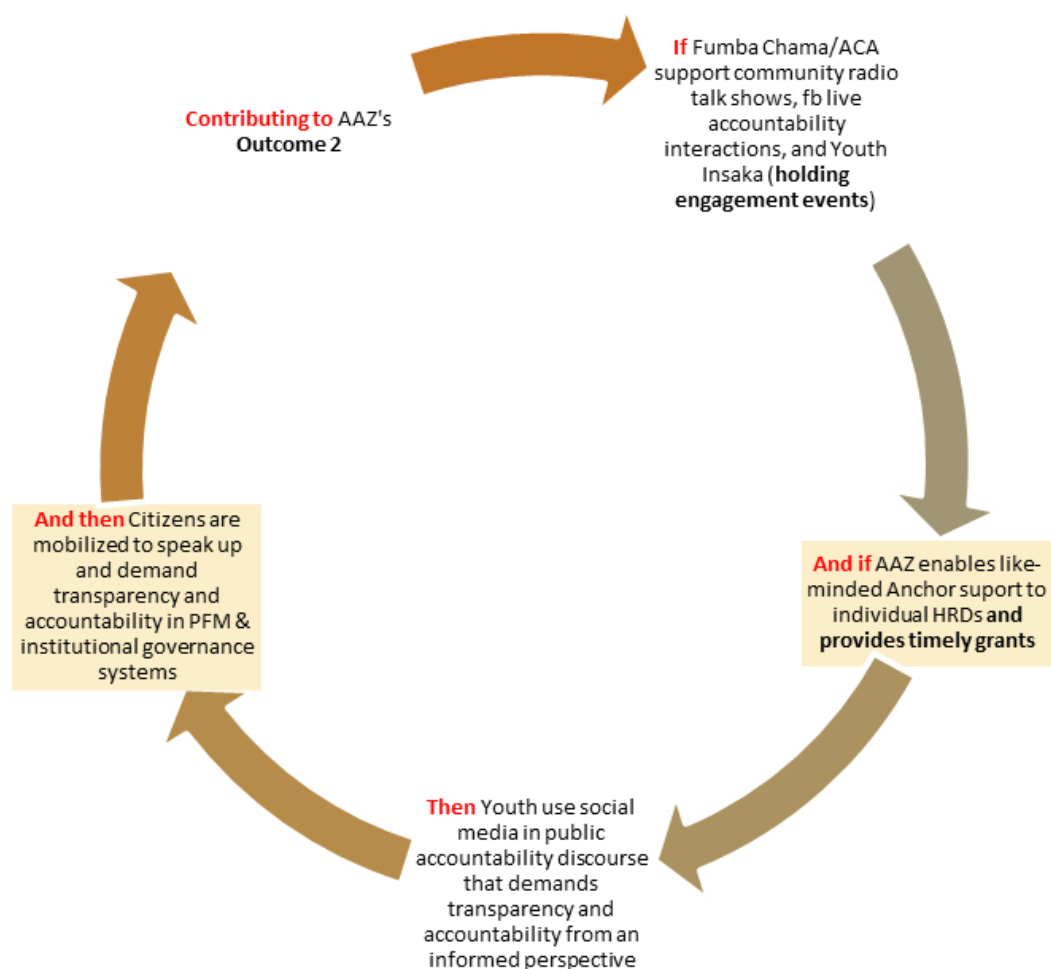
Micro-ToC 3. CFNZ



Micro-ToC 4. RICAP - CAVE



Micro-ToC 4. FUMBA CHAMA - #Be Heard Zambia



Annex 8 – Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights-Based Approaches in the CSSP

When assessing the grant mechanism and to which degree the programme has built on, and/or has promoted gender mainstreaming (GM) and/or a human rights-based approach (HRBA) the following are relevant:

- AAZ need to have systems and resources in place for GM and HRBA, and within its team have sufficient knowledge in GM and HRBA to be able to support the grant partners.
- Grant partners' capacity and ability to gender mainstream and apply a HRBA are crucial for the realisation of AAZ's Theory of Change (ToC) and expected outcomes.
- It is equally important to AAZ's partnership with the Swedish embassy. Sida places great emphasis on gender equality and HRBA in all its support, requires all partners to apply GM and expects funded programmes to contribute to transformative changes benefitting rights-holders exposed to gender and other forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Based on the case studies the evaluation has identified and assessed

PLANET - HRBA at Sida

Participation
Linkage to human rights instruments
Accountability
Non-discrimination
Empowerment
Transparency and access to information

Steps towards a gender transformative approach

Gender negative	activities that aggravate or reinforce gender inequalities and harmful social norms
Gender blind	no attention to gender, fail to acknowledge the different needs of women, men, girls and boys
Gender numbered	focus on the number (50/50) of women and men
Gender responsive	addresses different needs of women, men, girls and boys, addresses equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, but does not address the root causes of inequalities
Gender transformative	contributes to change of social norms, cultural values, power structures, and the roots of gender inequalities and discrimination

1. AAZ selection of grant partners
2. Partners with already good level of gender mainstreaming and/or HRBA.
3. Partners lacking sufficient capacity to gender mainstream and apply HRBA.
4. AAZ level of responsiveness (technical assistance (TA)) on identified capacity needs related to GE/GM and HRBA.
5. Capacity to support partners to strengthen their GM.
6. Capacity to support partners to strengthen their application of HRBA both as an end goal and in putting HRBA principles into practice in the project cycle.
7. Capacity to capitalise on partners GM and/or HRBA skills, by linking their good examples to other GPs.

Despite that the promotion of gender was explicitly mentioned in AAZ's project proposal, gender mainstreaming in the grant management was found to be close to non-existent. The project theory of change does not illustrate how the project will contribute to gender transformative changes. AAZ appears to have had a very light touch in their gender screening of the applications without including all steps of gender mainstreaming (as e.g., outlined in Sida's online Gender Toolbox). We found that the feminist approach of ActionAid was neither put into practice in the grant management.

The AAZ grant management did not reflect a satisfactory level of practice of rights-based principles, here listed as PLANET. Marked by green are examples of good practice, marked with red are examples of insufficient or absence of HRBA practice.

HRBA in AAZ grant management

Participation	<p>Introduction seminars explaining the grants open to a broad range of civil society actors.</p> <p>Weak communication inhibiting a participatory dialogue between AZ and the GPs.</p> <p>Abruptly changing deadlines, not based on a dialogue with GPs.</p> <p>Gaps assessment not taken place and not based on a participatory dialogue.</p> <p>Few monitoring visits, not enabling a participatory dialogue on the progress and challenges of the different initiative. Lack of AAZ's feedback – or reluctant feedback on GPs reports.</p> <p>AAZ not building their own outcome tracking together with partners. Little evidence of learn-and-adapt processes.</p>
Linkage policy/rights to	<p>Existence of a grant management manual outlining procedures and responsibilities.</p> <p>Not following the AAZ grant management principles or inclusive and participatory working methods outlined in the proposal to Sida.</p>
Accountability	<p>The Project Accountability Team (PAT), an internal mechanism used to ensure programme accountability and transparency in the awarding of grants under the CSSP.</p> <p>Delayed disbursements without communication.</p> <p>Abruptly changing deadlines.</p> <p>Not meeting the expectations as partner, not providing needed capacity development.</p> <p>Lack of close field monitoring also meant weak control of the accuracy in the reports. Also, no consistent AAZ's feedback on GPs reports.</p>
Non-discrimination	<p>Biased towards big CSO, not prioritising rights-holder driven partners.</p> <p>Limited access to grants for rural CBO.</p> <p>Weak gender mainstreaming and HRBA throughout the project management.</p> <p>Few identified AAZ actions to meet biased power relations within civil society. No identified efforts to increase GP's understanding of inclusive and rights-based methods, or how to apply gender mainstreaming.</p>
Empowerment	<p>Flexibility to adapt to Covid 19 restraints.</p> <p>Lack of capacity development addressing the GP's needs, having as a consequence that small CBOs did not manage to grow institutionally and qualify for larger grants. The planned support to smaller CSOs and CBOs to develop proposals was not materialised.</p> <p>Limited size/duration of social movement grants. "AAZ did not share the monitoring tools till the end of the project", which means that the GPs did not have access to tools that would helped their own monitoring.</p>
Transparency and access to information	<p>Introduction seminars explaining the grants open to a broad range of civil society actors combined with online information.</p> <p>Easy to access grants.</p> <p>No formal feedback channels. AAZ did not set up formal channels for information/feedback/complaint for unsuccessful and successful applicants alike. No grievance procedure.</p> <p>Limited access to information for smaller CSOs.</p> <p>Weak communication during implementation, which not only inhibited access to information but impacted the quality of the partnership and meant that the management became less participatory and inclusive. This was particularly challenging for small CBO, who should, based on a HRBA be prioritised.</p> <p>"AAZ did not share the monitoring tools till the end of the project", which means that the GPs did not have access to information on how they would be monitored.</p> <p>Little communication after the grant period.</p>

Based on findings presented in chapters 2 and 3.

In contrast to the above, the four case studies show that the four grantees deployed the rights-based principles to a high extent, which indicates that AAZ selected project propels and partners that already had a good understanding of HRBA.

Summary/overview. The GE/HRBA expert’s observations from the four case studies are summarised in the texts below the table.

The four cases demonstrated that these grantees deployed rights-based principles to a high extent in their projects, particularly in relation to strengthen rights-holders participation in accountability claims and monitoring efforts of the commitments and delivery of services of the State and different levels of duty-bearers. However, none of the four cases evidenced gender mainstreaming practice, or that the initiatives were based on a thorough gender analysis.

	GM	AAZ’s capacity and role	HRBA	AAZ’s capacity and role
ACA	Weak: “gender by number” ACA asked for TA in GM	Selected a GP with need of support in GM Did not respond to the capacity needs.	Strong. HRBA both as end goal and process. Applied most HRBA principles in project design and methods.	Selected a GP with no need of support in HRBA. No evidence of sharing ACA’s project as good example of HRBA with other GPs.
COF	Gender blind	Selected a GP with need of support in GM Did not respond to the capacity needs.	Human rights as end goal, strong focus on accountability and rule of law, some focus on transparency and participation	Selected a GP with strong human rights expertise, in general no need of support in HRBA, maybe in process-oriented focus on participation. Did not respond to needs, did not capitalise on the pilot work. On the contrary a case of neglect.
CNFZ	Gender responsive	Selected a GP where no GM needs identified, no TA provided.	Strong HRBA, particularly in process on engaging rights-holders in accountability claims.	Selected a GP with strong HRBA, with strong local presence. No specific needs on HRBA as working methods identified, but as part of institutional development. No such TA was provided. Did not capitalise on the good results. Contradicting signals and abandoning the GPs in future calls.
RICAP	Gender aware to gender responsive	Selected a GP where no GM needs identified, but GM support could have strengthened the project. No TA provided.	Good application of HRBA, part. on inclusiveness/non-discrimination and participatory methods for accountability claims.	Selected a GP with good HRBA. No specific HRBA identified, but RICAP expected technical support in many areas, including advocacy skills. Expectations were not met. Did not capitalise on the good results.

ACA: In the case of *Alliance for Community Action’s (ACA) project Digital #Youth Vote*, ACA applied HRBA with focus on accountability through public resource monitoring, and active and meaningful participation of young people, a group often marginalised in public debate during elections. A gender balanced group of 29 young women and men were trained in advocacy skills and voters education, selected for their previous knowledge in public finance monitoring and strong media presence. Later another group of 34 young people was also trained in advocacy. The project featured the Human Rights Commission, which meant linking to human rights instruments/mechanisms, another HRBA principle. Through the social media platforms, the project also gave room for interactive participation of more than 30,000

users, who in many cases reshared the messages produced by the key participants of the project.

COF: Chapter One Foundation (COF) is a human rights company providing support to strategic litigation, advocacy and capacity building, as well as legal services to rights-holders. The Lawyers for Human Rights project aimed at access to justice (Rule of Law) by discriminated rights-holders, including human rights defenders(HRD). Though public debates (transparency and participation) and a strategic public litigation, COF also focused on defending the system of accountability, and worked with both HRD organisations and linking to governmental institutions and mechanisms on accountability and transparency issues. Through popular civic education the project also contributed to popular access to information and participation in activism. Innovative methods to claim accountability, support HRDs.

CNFZ: Care for Nature-Zambia (CNFZ) is a small CBO focusing on citizen participation in environmental conservation and good governance. The supported project aimed to promote transparent and accountable natural resource management, through rights-holders' claiming of accountability and transparent multi-stakeholder dialogues. CNFZ managed a gender responsive approach highlighting the challenges particularly women small scale minors face, as well as having a specific focus on women's and young people's participation. Rights-holders and the organisation have been able to participate in events beyond the expectations, including regional conferences and in exchange visits. Strong linkage to current and revised legal instruments, including being consulted. Catalytic project resulting in protection of child rights-holders, among others, a group that is often overlooked in these kinds of projects. Community mobilisation and local civil society strengthening by equal numbers of women and men, and increased access to information. Appears to have been an empowering project.

RICAP: Rise Community Aid Programme (RICAP) is a CBO working with marginalised rights-holders to empower them to have a voice in their own transformation. The project aimed at promoting good governance and increasing citizen's awareness and demand for human rights (accountability). The project increased the dialogue with duty-bearers, the understanding of different roles in health service provision, to voice rights-holders concerning claiming accessible quality services, through inclusive and participatory action groups. The project resulted in creation of new platforms and opened spaces for dialogue with local duty-bearers and health service providers. Focus on young people and other groups previously not part(non-discrimination/participation) of the community groups, promoting accountability monitoring.



End of Project Evaluation of “The Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia Project (2018 to 2022)”

With financial support from the Embassy of Sweden in Zambia under a four-year cooperation agreement, the project ‘Strengthening Civil Society Effectiveness in Promoting Good Governance and Increasing Citizen’s Awareness and Demand for Human Rights in Zambia’, was implemented by ActionAid Zambia (AAZ). The evaluation explores the extent to which AAZ has strengthened civil society in Zambia by supporting increased civic participation and accountability for improved governance. More specifically, the evaluation looks at the performance of AAZ as a funding modality (design of grants), and provides reflections on the achievements, challenges and weaknesses to inform the next phase of the support.

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

Visiting address: Rissneleden 110, 174 57 Sundbyberg
Postal address: Box 2025, SE-174 02 Sundbyberg, Sweden
Telephone: +46 [0]8-698 50 00. Telefax: +46 [0]8-20 88 64
E-mail: sida@sida.se Web: sida.se/en

