|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Danish organisation | Dreamtown |
| Title of the intervention | Open Civic Space for Youth |
| Partner name(s) | Network for Active Citizens |
| Amount applied for | DKK 999.982 |
| Country(ies) | Uganda |
| Period (# of months) | 12 |

**1. Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

Dreamtown and Network for Active Citizens (NAC) have built up a strong partnership over the last years around interventions that focus on youth-led community action and the impacts of the climate crisis in Kampala’s informal settlements. This has led to an enormous number of creative initiatives by young people who, through trainings, mentoring, and support, have been able to play an active role in improving the local environment through climate-smart solutions. In August 2021, NAC suddenly saw their name on a list together with 53 other NGOs in Uganda who were called out by the NGO Bureau (an entity mandated to regulate, register, monitor, inspect, coordinate and oversee all NGO activities in Uganda) for not having their registration in order. They were informed to halt activity implementation. NAC registered with the National Registration Service Bureau in 2017, hence are legally established and permitted to operate an office, have bank accounts and offer services to communities. They have engaged relevant authorities and sought to fill the requirements asked by the NGO Bureau – requirements that have been close to impossible to document through COVID-19 and election times where government offices were either closed or out of capacity. Upon NAC’s recent meetings with the Kampala NGO monitoring committee who reviewed their files and recommended areas of improvement, they committed to support them through this process. The situation was regarded by civil society as a strategy to control NGO activities and shrink their space, calling CSOs out for non-compliance with regulations, in a time where organisations have been unable to meet them. This led civil society to voice their concerns and demand the authorities to cancel the decision and end the harassment against CSOs. NAC is an example of a strong and well-connected civil society organisation that has become a network and a platform for others to also grow. Due to their network and capacity, they are able to overcome challenges of registration issues and government requirements. But Uganda’s vibrant civil society consists of a large number of organisations and groups who do not have the same capacity and support. As part of Dreamtown’s programmes with NAC, we partner with smaller community-based organisations in vulnerable urban communities that play a key role as local ambassadors, co-creators and coordinators of our activities. They are essential for creating impact for the youth in the informal settlements. While these organisations do an amazing job in their local communities, they are under immense pressure – due to the shrinking civic space.

Uganda has recently experienced some of the toughest lockdowns in Africa, and COVID-19 has been seen as an opportunity of the government for extensive repression, with a militarized response strategy giving the regime room to perform assaults on citizens’ rights and democratic space[[1]](#footnote-1). Restrictions imposed by the Government in response to COVID-19 have included bans on religious activities, meetings, public transport, closure of educational institutions, and curfews. COVID-19-imposed restrictions, regulations and bureaucratic burdens have (and are still) restraining the room for manoeuvre for civil society organisations (CSOs), including their access to support their target groups and carry out activities. CSOs are greatly affected, especially by disruption in activities, reduced funding, and by staff and people related to the organisations affected by the virus themselves. Since many youth-led CSOs are vulnerable organisations dealing with systemic challenges and inconsistent funding flows, they have been hit the hardest. Therefore, this intervention has a focus on youth-led CSOs. Our geographical focus is Arua City in the Northern Uganda, where young people are highly dependent on support from local civil society actors, where urban dwellers have very limited access to services, and where the city is under pressure from large influx of refugees in the area. This intervention will strengthen urban youth-led CSOs who are operating in a severely constrained civic space with limited capacity to organise demands and advocate for rights and services on behalf of their target groups. We will use existing platforms of district networks and coordination structures of the local NGO Forums to target the critical gaps created as a result of a shrinking civic space, i.e. reduced space for civil society work, increased pressure on human rights, and disproportionate restrictions.

***“Resilience in the face of closing civic space refers to the ability of CSOs to not just survive but thrive and grow in the face of disruption. It’s a strategic capability that allows us to manage imbalances and seek an opportunity in a crisis. CSO resilience is essential to defending democratic principles and achieving social justice, and therefore the need for us to start further investing time and effort in supporting it from within the sector[[2]](#footnote-2)”.***

The project initially applied for in the ‘Rebuilding Civic Space’ modality. In this rewrite of the project as a Development Intervention, we have re-strategized in certain areas of the project in acknowledgement of the good advice given by the Assessment Committee. Aspects that have been taken into account and acted on include risk of duplication of efforts; resource allocation to the project’s technical partner; re-focussed strategy for engaging the target groups; increasing potentials for a spreading effect more widely among youth-led CSOs; selection criteria of the target group; and the sustainability of the project’s strategic services.

**1.1. Main purpose with the intervention and challenges to be addressed**

In this project, we have a focus on the environment for youth-led CSOs, which is under pressure from a shrinking civic space, and has recently been heavily impacted by Uganda’s COVID-19 related response. This includes CSO’s operational environment and rights, and access to resources and support. While there have been initiatives by several organisations to strengthen capacity of local NGOs and CBOs, these have been scattered, uncoordinated and not integrated into an overall sector plan. The main purpose of the intervention is to build capacity, mentor and strengthen youth-led CSOs in the shrinking civic space, and contribute to an effective, accountable and transparent local government in Arua city. This support will consist of capacity building for the CSOs to strengthen their organisations, support their target groups, and advocate for a more responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at local government levels around civic space regulations. The intervention is aimed at building organisational resilience of urban youth-led CSOs through three strategic pillars: knowledge and capacity; network and resources; and advocacy. The intervention has the following objectives:

A key overall challenge addressed is that the operating civic space for CSOs in Uganda is narrowing as a result of government’s strict regulations for CSO activities, with extensive and demanding legal requirements and compliance for CSOs. And many, especially youth-led CSOs, lack the capacity to survive and grow under this pressure. Below is an outline of key cross-cutting challenges that are addressed through the different activities across the project’s objectives.

**Limited capacity and resources of and shrinking space for youth-led CSOs**

Urban youth-led CSOs in Arua face a number of challenges. Most of the organisations lack the capacity to proactively engage and interact with the local government. CSOs can, however, play an important role within the local government youth council structures, district council structures, especially with the office of the district planning unit and the office of community service which hosts the community development officers. Through youth-led CSOs’ participation in these structures, young people’s voice is represented at the decision-making tables. Working within these structures, the CSOs have the potential to enhance the capacity of youth councilors, overseeing and complimenting the programs and services that local government offers to their communities. However, lately, worsened by COVID-19, the shrinking civic space has severely undermined the urban youth-led CSOs potential as proactive partners within these structures. Local youth-led CSOs make up an important support system for the many marginalized youth living in fragile urban communities in Uganda who face a large number of challenges, including unemployment, low education, poor health, teenage pregnancy, violence, and lack of inclusion in decision making processes. Therefore, the shrinking civic space is a severe threat to youth-wellbeing, as it causes limitations of civic and democratic space of youth-led CSOs. They find it increasingly challenging to comply with the policy and regulatory framework for NGOs. COVID-19 has made it even harder for organisations to fulfil their mandate to operate, demanding upgrades to both their administrative and programmatic setup. Due to reduced funding streams, Government is deliberately enforcing stricter non tax revenues such as payment for fees and permits by CSOs. This happens at a time where many are challenged by the demands for social distancing at the work place, lack of virtual working tools, reliable internet, lack of transport opportunities, etc. This means that they face risks of having their operations affected, their registrations recalled, and, in the worst case, being forced to close. In addition, many urban youth-led CSOs face resource and personnel constraints as a direct result of COVID-19. This is due to competitive and dwindling resources from funding partners, forced staff turnover, difficulty in fulfilling contractual obligation of paying suppliers, landlords, and other service providers. The situation is challenging to an extent where it is simply close to impossible for them to uphold their operations and mandate as community support units. While, as we have mentioned, there are a great deal of external threats to CSOs’ resilience in the shrinking civic space, there are also certain internal threats that can hinder oganisations’ resilience, such as dependence on few funding sources, lack of capacity to monitor external threats, inadequate internal structures, weak networks, etc. These will be addressed through the project’s capacity building initiatives and network building (specific objective 1 and 2 in particular).

**Gaps in opportunities for youth-led CSOs and lack of network and collaboration**

In Uganda, the government faces challenges of bringing services close to the people – and Arua is no exception, with extreme pressure on local services due to the growing number of residents in the city of Arua. In this context, CSOs can play a complementary role in social service delivery, and in advocacy on government initiatives to meet citizenry needs and demands. But when the relationship between civil society and government becomes more confrontational than complementary, this can pose a big challenge to both parties. CSOs in Uganda are also instrumental in influencing law and policy. However, for CSOs to fulfil that area of their mandate, they must be able to thrive themselves as organisations. Among government, there is a challenge of lack of trust towards civil society actors, and civil society actors have become increasingly critical of government efforts[[3]](#footnote-3). This situation and the current power dynamics present a challenge, and a big room for improvement – tackling how civil society and government can collaborate on better meeting the needs of the people. In addition, there is lack of collaboration and coordination among the youth-led CSOs. They are in need of supportive platforms to join forces in their advocacy work, so they do not end up operating in silos – which again gives government a reason to attack their work under accusation of duplication of efforts. This project includes activities to strengthen the civil society critical mass to do advocacy for freeing of the civic space in Arua through dialogue, legal and policy advocacy. This is with the purpose of strengthening young voices in engagements with the NGO committee on issues affecting CSOs. At the same time, it will put a much-needed focus on investing into network building among youth-led CSOs, so they can more effectively collaborate and coordinate. While other capacity strengthening initiatives have, and are, working in support of civil society actors in Uganda, we believe this project is unique in a number of ways. NAC have consulted with a range of stakeholders active in the Arua area, including the ongoing GIZ EU funded programme[[4]](#footnote-4) ‘Protecting human rights, tackling corruption and strengthening civil society in Uganda’, the SPACE initiative (Strengthening Performance and Accountability through Community Engagement), and initiatives by Uganda National NGO Forum(UNNGOF). While addressing similar civic space challenges, their strength is engaging with district departments directly and other high-level officials at district, hence less with the youth civil society. For the GIZ initiative, they focus on strengthening internal systems, less so on compliance and engagement on civic space. While capacity strengthening is part of the core mandate for UNNGOF, this is primarily targeted their members. And to qualify as a member, you need to meet the minimum requirements, which include having a functional office, have running programmes, and to meet all the minimum legal requirements to operate as an NGO or CBO. Much as these requirements are seen as minimum requirements to larger organisations, they are seen as maximum requirements for the smaller ones. As an example, most youth organisations do not have the opportunity to carry out institutional audits from licenced audit firms, carry out annual returns, pay local service tax, and comply to statutory duties. In this project, we will strengthen youth-led CSOs’ position and compliance to confidently engage with other development partners and local governments and be able to seek membership with UNNGOF and other regional networks. There is still a gap when it comes to coordination amongst CSOs, which makes a strong case for this project and efforts to strengthen civic space for CSOs in Arua. In addition, there is a need for training and education for CSOs that uses participatory methods and interacts more directly with the organisations’ individual needs, such as internal operational policies, financial setup, organisational strategy, digital literacy, fundraising capacities, etc.

**1.2. Context of the intervention:**

We are considering the context of this project to be stable, however, we are aware of key challenges in the Arua region that must be paid attention to throughout implementation. In the following, we are highlighting some of the key contextual conditions relevant for the project’s civic space focus, its target groups and goals.

***Arua City: Urban and humanitarian context***

The project will take place in Arua City, located in Arua Municipality in the north of Uganda in the West Nile region, close to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. With more than 1.4 million refugees, mainly coming from these neighbouring countries, Uganda is the third largest refugee hosting country in the world[[5]](#footnote-5). Because of its location, Arua has become a hub for trade in the area, and the border proximity has brought Arua an influx of involuntary migrants seeking access to social services, livelihoods, and support. The city of Arua is overwhelmed by refugees leaving the refugee camps in the area to access better opportunities in the urban centre. This movement results in deterioration of quality of services for the population in the city and a shortage of supplies, as these are distributed on the basis of national census numbers that do not take the refugees into account. Arua City has an estimated total population of 61,962[[6]](#footnote-6). The municipality does not know the exact number of migrants in the city, but estimates that self-settled refugees make up 24% of the urban total population. The large groups of refugees lead to overcrowding in schools, health facilities, and other services. And since they are not captured in the population numbers, which are used to plan and budget for services in Arua, services are planned for host communities, and are not considering the high influx of urban refugees[[7]](#footnote-7). With so many people moving to Arua city looking for better education, health, and income opportunities, the situation makes it very difficult for the city to adequately plan for all its residents. Through this project, we seek to support a civil society in Arua that works in support of urban youth, including young urban refugees. This also includes raising awareness and advocating for the crucial role of the youth-led CSOs, as well as a better environment for CSOs to operate, organize, and support government efforts. In the growing city battling social and economic challenges, the role of CSOs is crucial in meeting demands and needs of urban citizens. Within Arua, we are focussing our intervention on those CSOs that provide support and services for young people living in the city’s informal settlements. Amon these are organisations that actively work on peaceful co-existence of urban refugees and host communities in the city, and on joined efforts in advocacy for an increase of resources to cover key services.

***Barriers to civic space for CSOs***

With COVID-19, civil society space in Uganda has undoubtedly worsened, but the space for civil society in Uganda has been complicated and restricted for a long period of time. The NGO Act of 2016 is the primary instrument for governing NGOs in Uganda. This act grants the National Bureau of NGOs wide and discretionary powers in terms of controlling, summoning and disciplining organisations. These include the powers of ‘blacklisting the organisation’, ‘exposing the affected organisation to the public’ or ‘revocating an organisation’s permit’. This means that the government has extensive authority in restricting the space of civil society actors in Uganda. A number of legislative conditions have been enforced towards CSOs that act as different types of barriers to their operating environment, and thus are relevant to address in this project. NGOs face *barriers to entry* related to the mandatory and burdensome registrations and procedures. The National Board for Non-governmental Organisations holds the power to register or refuse the registration of NGOs or even revoke the registration once it has been granted in the case that the board deems it “in the public interest to do so”.NGOs are also expected to register with a range of other bodies including the Financial Intelligence Authority that monitors money laundering, the Uganda Revenue Authority, the National Social Security Fund, remit local service tax and obtain operating license from the National Board for Non-governmental Organisations. NGOs also meet *barriers to activities*, as they have to seek approval from district monitoring committees, local government, and requirements for collaboration with local councils, District NGO Monitoring Committees and Sub-Country NGO Monitoring Committees (SNMCs). *Barriers to speech and advocacy* is another concern for NGOs, since organisations promoting human rights can be subject to intimidation by the government. In Uganda, there is a narrow definition and understanding of NGOs limiting their scope and opportunities to influence civic space. According to the National NGO Forum, this reflects a limited understanding of the work of NGOs, merely emphasizing the service delivery dimensions and deliberately excluding the political scope of NGOs, such as policy and human rights work and the broader governance and advocacy side (Uganda National NGO Forum, 2009). NGOs also face *barriers to resources* which include strict requirements for receiving funding and monitoring of funding flows; and *barriers to assembly*which include requirements for police approval for public gatherings[[8]](#footnote-8). Civil society has remained vibrant despite legal constraints and limited capacity to comply with all the requirements for operation. However, it is still largely up to the Government to decide what are acceptable spheres of activity, themes, and dialogues for civil society actors. Ugandan legislation has in recent years narrowed the legal space for civil society activity. In 2013, the President of Uganda assented to the Public Order Management Act (POMA), in which section 9 granted the police broad powers to prohibit public meetings. After the enactment of this act, disproportionate force has been used against meetings organised by opposition members and civil society representatives[[9]](#footnote-9).

***The impact of COVID-19 on civic space***

Ugandans have experienced very harsh lockdowns and suffered from restrictive responses to the pandemic.People failing to follow COVID-19 guidelines have been met with very harsh responses, as the use of lethal force by law enforcement. Many have reported cases of police brutality, and journalists have been violently attacked for breaking the curfew while on reporting duty[[10]](#footnote-10). The civic space of civil society actors has further shrunk due to COVID-19, especially for those engaged in work on governance, accountability, advocacy, and human rights work. Overall, the relationship between the government and civil society relationship has been conflicted by the restrictive environment put in place by the government to govern and scrutinize the CSOs[[11]](#footnote-11)[[12]](#footnote-12). Measures on organisation’s legal operations, registration processes, and compliance have become even stricter, making it harder for CSOs to survive. An example is that the bank accounts of many NGOs have been frozen on the assumption that the organisations are promoting subversive activities, terrorism, and anti-government programmes. CSOs involved in advocacy related work have been denied mobility permits since their services are not considered as essential, and CSOs involved in budget advocacy have not been able to continue their engagement with the local government officials, as they have been recommended to reallocate their budget to support government responses. At the same time, government has reallocated resources from civic work towards other area, and thus many CSOs have entirely lost their resource base due to shrinking donor funds, and changes in funding priorities. In the election in Uganda in January 2021, COVID-19 measures were taken as an opportunity for repression. Opponents of the Government were accused of irregularities, violent arrest, office raids, and detention due to accusation of breaking restrictions of gatherings in relation to an election rally – restrictions imposed under COVID-19 regulations*[[13]](#footnote-13)*. Pandemic measures were used to justify a ban on public gatherings, making it difficult to campaign or recruit new members, and a ban on assemblies and campaigning events of all opposition parties, with excessive use of force by the police. However, the ruling party continued to campaign without restrictions or safety precautions[[14]](#footnote-14). Many NGOs were denied the permit to observe elections and offer independent reports, and civil society efforts to ensure a free and fair election were met with state repression*[[15]](#footnote-15).* Arua, where this intervention is focused, has always been a stronghold for opposition leaders, and during his campaigning in the early 2021 election, opposition candidate Bobi Wine was arrested in Arua.

**1.3. Strengthening of civil society organising to advance social justice**

The project supports an under-prioritized part of civil society: urban youth-led CSOs. Through the work and support of these civil society actors, urban residents are able to collaborate on what is important for them to improve on in their communities, and in the process develop new capacities, skills, and also tools to interact effectively with local authorities. To make their voices heard. However, in Uganda, this mandate is complicated by government interference, harassment, and regulations, and in some cases even taken from them. This means that those citizens that rely on support from CSOs are left with fewer opportunities, especially in those areas where government is inadequately providing for their needs. This is the case for people living in vulnerable urban communities in particular. So, while this project first and foremost operates at the organisational level of youth-led CSO’s to strengthen their resilience, and improve their network and their collaboration, looking beyond their operations and operational space, promoting provision of civil society services and civic space advocacy also supports the CSOs to better represent their members and target groups’ interests and needs. And since Arua is a context where people in the city are highly dependent on civil society actors to advocate on their behalf, CSO resilience is crucial in the realisation of people’s rights, reducing inequality and fighting poverty, securing people’s participation in decision-making processes, etc.

**1.4. Response to climate- and environmental conditions**

In consideration of climate conditions, we have limited the number of flights included in this project to one trip, since we have the opportunity to combine monitoring activities as part of the already planned visits on our existing projects in Uganda. It is part of Dreamtown’s strategy to keep flights at a minimum and to undertake longer monitoring visits during which we are able to cover more than one project at a time. Although this intervention does not, in itself, address climate- and environmental issues, NAC has vast experience from working on youth-led climate action in Kampala, and recently in Arua by establishing what they call ‘civic green spaces’ in the growing city. These are urban public green spaces where young people can learn about climate innovations in relation to urban agriculture and sustainable resource management. We will incorporate learning from these spaces and from NAC’s Kampala based Youth Climate Resource Centre for integrating green elements in the space that will be developed as the CSO hub.

2. The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)

2.1. Partners’ experiences, capacities and resources, and contributions, roles and responsibilities

**Dreamtown**

***Experiences, capacities, and resources:*** Dreamtown is a Danish NGO that works for the wellbeing of young people in cities, focusing on slum communities in fragile urban settings. A key focus in Dreamtown’s mission is to transform fragile urban areas into safe, green and creative spaces together with young people. Dreamtown currently runs projects across Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Kenya. In all Dreamtown’s projects, including this project, there is an explicit and dominant focus on strengthening the organisational capacity and collaboration of youth-led civil society groups, and supporting these groups to undertake direct action and change in their communities. Thus, Dreamtown has developed a strong set of learning and best practices that helps guide and ensure the quality of the projects that we engage in, which includes using different types of flex fund mechanisms to maximise ownership and empowerment among youth- and community-led civil society structures. Dreamtown’s secretariat is composed of 7 people who run the organisation on a daily basis. The secretariat is comprised of: CEO Rasmus Bering; Programme Director Nina Ottosen; Finance Director Thomas Chandler; Communication Director Simon sticker, Urban Designer, Stine Kronsted; Learning and Partnership Advisor Jakob Falk; and Civic Engagement Office Benedicte Bertelsen. In addition to the paid and professional secretariat, the board, a group of volunteers and one student intern also support the work of Dreamtown. Thus, during the past few years, Dreamtown has grown from being a smaller organisation run by volunteers, towards becoming a professional NGO with a strong Finance-, Programme- and Communication Department who work closely together around quality programme implementation, effective documentation and inspiring communication of results. In relevance to this project, Dreamtown’s team has people with strong knowledge about Uganda and the context of young people in urban communities, and a very close working relationship with our Uganda partner, Network for Active Citizens, which has been developed through the continuous scale up of activities in Uganda since the beginning of 2019.

***Contributions, roles, and responsibilities:***As the main project lead, Dreamtown is responsible for the overall management of the project, which includes regular monitoring of the activity flow and check up with NAC on project progress, disbursement of funds for NAC, and reporting and management of the grant in relation to CISU.From Dreamtown, Programme Director Nina Ottosen will be lead on the project. Nina is also lead on Dreamtown’s other activities and partnerships in Uganda. Dreamtown’sPartnership and Learning Advisor, Jakob Falk, will play a key role in this project. He has more than 10 years of experience in evaluation, policy research, project management and international coordination from an international consultancy. Due to his strong methodological understanding and experience with designing and carrying out evaluation studies, Jakob will be supporting learning activities in this project in close collaboration with the project lead in Dreamtown, and in dialogue with NAC. A key focus will be to look at the learning that cuts across all of Dreamtown’s civic space focused intervention, to document experience across our projects in Uganda and Zimbabwe in particular, where similar challenges are experienced in terms of shrinking civic space. *Justification of payroll costs:* A total of 192,4 hours are allocated towards the necessary Partner Activities and Project Monitoring. These hours will cover one Dreamtown visit to Arua (monitoring activities), hours for Dreamtown’s Programme Director to support the activities, hours for Dreamtown’s Learning Advisor to support cross-cutting learning and the evaluation and documentation, and hours for Dreamtown’s Finance Director to undertake financial monitoring of the project. In addition, a total of 152.5 hours are allocated for Partner Project Support Costs. These costs cover a fair share of the following support costs:  6.2% of Dreamtown’s Finance Director’s yearly salary (supporting general administrative and financial duties); 1.9% of Dreamtown’s CEO’s yearly salary (covering organisational management duties); 1.9% of Dreamtown’s Programme Director’s yearly salary (covering partnership development duties) and 1.9% of Dreamtown’s Learning Advisor’s yearly salary (covering cross cutting learning and documentation duties).

**Network for Active Citizens**

***Experiences, capacities and resources:***Network for Active Citizens (NAC) is the project’s main partner in Uganda and is a non-profit, community-driven development and advocacy organisation working with citizens and community-based organisations to amplify their voice. Working with a community-led social development approach, NAC builds capacities of citizens and civil society partners in vulnerable communities to influence pro-development programmes and policies that affect them. NAC has vast experience of urban programming with a focus on youth livelihood, governance, and community journalism, a good working relationship with local and community-based development partners and with the City Authority. NAC works in partnership with different authorities, including Kampala Capital City Authority, ministries and local government and also engages local leadership composed of local councillors and youth leaders. In Arua, NAC has a good working relationship with the district youth council structures represented by the district youth chairperson, the male and female youth councillors, the community development officer and the district planners office. NAC’s secretariat consists of a programme manager, a programme officer, an administrator, an accountant, and office assistant. The board oversees the work of the organisation, and 20 community journalists work part time, along with a community of over 80 community advocates. Recently,NAC has supported youth-led CSOs in partnership with Civil Society Strengthening Network (CSSN) through support in fundraising, internal systems strengthening and unpacking the existing guidelines for the CSO regulation framework amidst COVID-19. We will build on this experience in this project. NAC has also, in different ways, worked to secure space for inclusion and advocacy during COVID-19, to keep an active civil society going. With CSSN, NAC has supported 10 District Advocacy Networks (DANs) with e-budget consultation toll free systems, encouraging people to communicate their concerns and community wishes to inform position papers of youth priorities for the 2021/2022 district budget. These position papers were used as advocacy documents by the DANs to secure an inclusive budget development amidst COVID-19.

***Contributions, roles, and responsibilities:***NAC is the lead implementing partner in Uganda, in charge of the implementation of project activities, and of coordination of all project stake holders across the project’s locations. This includes the responsibility of the day-to-day project management, organising and mobilising CSOs, facilitating project activities, and coordination with relevant local partners. It further includes engaging the relevant stakeholders and mobilising their network in and Arua. NAC will be responsible for developing narrative and financial reports, which will be shared with Dreamtown, on a quarterly basis. From NAC, a team will be set to manage the project, including NAC’s Executive Director (who will function as the project lead), Project Assistant, Accountant and Accounts Assistant, and Office Assistant in Arua. These persons will run and support the project and coordinate activities to fit into the overall programmes of NAC. In addition, NAC’s Community Journalists play the leading role in the activities in support of specific objective three. The outgoing board chairman of NAC, Rwendeire Peniel, has vast experience in civil society strengthening, youth engagement in governance and democratic processes and has been part of the project design. On an ongoing basis, he will provide technical support and hold an oversight role, especially in strengthening the CSO relationship between the NGOs and government through the NGO Bureau. The team from NAC will keep Dreamtown updated on project progress and challenges on a regular basis. NAC will also be responsible for supporting the target CSOs, mentoring them throughout the project. This will also include giving them support in project and financial management.

**Civil Society Strengthening Network (CSSN)**

***Experiences, capacities and resources:***Civil Society Strengthening Network (CSSN) provides customised training, mentorship and education programmes for early start CSOs with limited capacity, systems, networks and financing, but with deep passion for sustainable development of their communities. CSSN is an NGO established by a network of young advocates as a result of youth groups and community-based organisation calling for technical assistance in strategic organisational systems development, website development, proposal development and financial systems management. Eventually, CSSN was registered to be an organisation in 2020 that runs grant programmes and as well as a social enterprise component to sustain the interventions. The network is composed of a Programmes Coordinator who oversees the overall leadership and management at the head office in Bukoto. The programmes manager is supported by two programmes assistants who coordinate CSSN’s training programmes and consultancy services. So far, CSSN has a pool of five freelance facilitators for their two programmes: *School of Local Governance, Budget Advocacy and Accountability (SLOGBAA),* which is a joint initiative between NAC and CSSN established to build capacity of elected youth leaders at local government; and *The Civil Society Strengthening Academy (CSSA),* which will be a key programme in this project to build capacity of youth-led urban CSOs. CSSA is designed to grow CSOs to become strong and resilient institutions, and in this project will be customized to the context of both COVID-19 and the shrinking civic space in Uganda. CSSN has a pool of highly experienced facilitators/mentors and advocates with different career backgrounds and have capacity to unpack complex documents into simple and soft language. Some of the CSSN facilitators were among key youth that were consulted by Ministry of Gender in Uganda during the review of the National Youth Policy. Under the Ministry of Agriculture, they helped reviewed the National Strategy for Youth Engagement in Agriculture-NSYEA and Climate Change Bill, and they represented the CSO response to the process of the NGO act. In the last 12 months, CSSN have trained 100 youth leaders from three regions of Uganda with financing from PLAN, OXFAM and Action Aid-Denmark through Uganda Youth Network, Youth Advocacy Development Network and Network for Active Citizens.

***Contribution, roles and responsibilities:*** We are describing CSSN as a partner on the project, as they will play a key role as supportive as technical facilitators and mentors across most of the project’s activities, especially giving technical assistance mainly around the development of the civil society strengthening toolkit; facilitation of the CSSA; and development of user-friendly online resources for CSOs. CSSN, however, will be connected to the project through NAC, and therefore, in themselves, do not carry any budget responsibility. CSSN also plays a key role in working with communication of governing policies and programmes relevant to youth-led CSOs, giving support to the advocacy and engagement with government stakeholders, and support the network development as part of specific objective 2, linking CSOs with relevant support networks. CSSN will receive technical consultation fees for their support in the project. CSSN, with funding from Oxfam, is working with youth farmer groups and tax justice alliances in five districts across Uganda, including Arua, to strengthen their voice and influence the unfair local tax services related to agribusiness. Hence, their contacts in Arua will complement the proposed interventions of working with the youth-led CSOs in Arua. The project will also contribute to their role and mandate in Arua as a civil society network, supporting in the coordination processes of the selected youth-led organisations. CSSN already has a contact person based in Arua, which will be useful in the coordination of the project, and they will make use of their consultants who are already engaged in other projects in Arua. Due to a long-standing partnership, and seeing that this project is a great attribute to their work, CSSN is flexible in their support to the projects’ activities across the whole project span. Trainings and mentoring of the youth-led CSOs will be well-planned to be structured and fit with CSSN’s existing work and activities.

**2.2. Experiences, capacities and resources of other actors**

**Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF[[16]](#footnote-16)):**Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) is an independent and inclusive national platform for NGOs in Uganda launched in 1997 to create space for NGOs to reflect strategize and take action on matters of mutual interest. UNNGOF is a membership organization with over 650 members across Uganda, its primary constituency and owners being NGOs and other interest groups within a broadly defined civil society. UNNGOF seeks to mobilize citizens to engage with development processes as part of their civic role in society. They focus on influencing the national and international operating environment issues of CSOs and ensuring positive environments for their operations and engagement in governance processes. They also mobilise their members to coordinate collective policy engagements by NGOs on policy issues of their interest, advocating for the development of citizen responsive policies and practices for the well-being of citizens and their rights. UNNGOF functions as an umbrella organization for all NGOs in Uganda, with a mandate to advocate and strengthen the work of NGOs. NAC is already a member of UNNGOF.

**Arua District NGO Network (ADINGON[[17]](#footnote-17)):** Arua District NGO Network (ADINGON) was formed in 1997 as an umbrella organization for NGOs, CBOs, and Faith Based Organisations working in the then Arua District, which has since been broken into Yumbe, Koboko, Maracha, Madi Okollo, Terego and Arua City. ADINGON has worked with several partners, including Oxfam, Democratic Governance Facility, Inspectorate of Goverment, Uganda National NGO Forum, Arua District Local Government and Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations. Focus areas include governance, environment, health, education, human rights and humanitarian response. ADINGON’s vision is to see empowered CSOs fully achieving their mandate in Arua District, which is done by enhancing their capacity, and strengthen coordination and collaboration with local government, development partners and their representative communities. As part of this project, NAC will register with ADINGON to enhance collaboration.

**NGO Bureau[[18]](#footnote-18):** The NGO bureau is a government arm under Ministry of Internal Affairs whose goal is to set out a framework that strengthens and oversees the relationship between the NGO sector and Government, and enhance capacities and effectiveness of service delivery, advocacy and community empowerment. The National Bureau for NGOs (NGO Bureau) is a semi-autonomous body under the Ministry of Internal Affairs established by the NGO Act 2016. The Act mandates it to register, regulate, coordinate, inspect, monitor and oversee all NGO operations in the country. This means that the National Bureau for NGOs has powers that include refusing NGOs’ registrations or permits[[19]](#footnote-19). The Bureau has a board of directors who oversee implementation of the Bureau’s policies and programmes in the organisations’ sector. Below the board is an Executive Director appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the board of directors, who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Bureau. To fully carry out its mandate, the Bureau works with other stakeholders like the DNMCs (District monitoring Committees), Government ministries departments and agencies, Office of the Prime minister, Media, and Security agencies, among others.

**2.3. Previous cooperation between the partners**

This project is implemented between Dreamtown and Network for Active Citizens (NAC) with technical support from the Civil Society Strengthening Network (CSSN). Elements of civil society strengthening is enshrined in several of NAC’s projects, such as *Ghetto Go Green*, which is an ongoing programme with Dreamtown funded by CISU. Currently, NAC is supporting seven community-based organisations who plays a key coordinating role in the project’s target communities. Through this collaboration, NAC has extensive knowledge about the conditions and challenges of CSOs at the community level – and carry great legitimacy among both other civil society actors and local authorities. Since 2020, NAC has been receiving formal and informal requests from community-based organisations looking for office space to run their activities in the West Nile where they have a regional office. This compelled NAC to extend their existing partnership with CSSN from just working together under the SLOGBAA programme to also support youth-led CSOs to benefit from the knowledge of the Civil Society Strengthening Academy. As a result, NAC, in partnership with CSSN, has been running weekly mentorship support youth-led CSOs in terms of capacity building and institutional resilience, governance of the organisations’ programmes, and basic finance systems development. As a result of these small actions, three of the mentored youth-led organisations have received grants to strengthen their resilience amidst the pandemic. This project builds on and amplifies this experience.

**2.4. Strengthening the collaboration between the partners**

At a thematic level, this project will take the focus of Dreamtown’s and NAC’s collaboration from youth-led actions on climate change to shrinking space for youth-led civil society – and at a geographical level, from a focus on Kampala towards working in Arua. While NAC is already working in Arua, this will be the first project that Dreamtown is collaborating on in this area. The focus on Arua is an important development in the partnership between Dreamtown and NAC. Not only will this project strengthen our current collaboration, but starting up the collaboration in Arua holds the potential of further strengthening the partnership in the future, and expanding to support more urban youth in Arua. Due to the context in Arua, this also means exploring how we can be in a better geographical and strategic position to engage in relevant nexus and humanitarian actions in northern Uganda. With support from the “rebuilding democratic space modality”, Dreamtown already has ongoing collaborations in Zimbabwe focussed on supporting resilience, safety, and livelihoods among urban youth and civil society actors. This project will link to the work with our partners in Zimbabwe, using experience and materials from operating in a context severely challenged by a restrictive COVID-19 response. This also means we are able to generate learning across partners in Zimbabwe and Uganda in the area of civic space and organisational resilience of youth-led CSOs. As a partner in development collaborations is important for Dreamtown to better understand how we can contribute to strengthening the resilience of civil society actors, especially considering recent developments across the places where we work, where many are negatively impacted by the shrinking civic space.

**2.5. Strengthening the partners’ relations to other actors**

This project will further strengthen NAC’s working relationship with CSSN, and the identified youth-led CSOs will be invited to join NAC’s network directly by becoming members of their organisation. Through the development of materials, products and platforms for education on civic space, CSSN will strengthen their own education platforms and online resource base. This will leave them in a better position to train more CSO actors and offer tailor made capacity programmes in other locations in Uganda, as well as among other target groups. On NAC’s part, this project offers an opportunity to implement a full-scale programme in Arua, compared to earlier activities which have been based more on singular activities. That means strengthening their partnership with the local government structures, as well as with the different NGO government structures that mandate and regulate civic space, while also increasing their legitimacy at community level among young people. The project, therefore, is a strategic opportunity for NAC to become a key development partner in the district and build a strong working office and staff group in Arua. For CSSN, this project will help them reach a wider network and expand their experience in other sectors. Furthermore, though this collaboration, Dreamtown and NAC’s relations will also be strengthened in Arua and broaden our reach among organisations that work in support of urban refugees, in the light of the context in the Arua region. These organisations and their target groups represent a really interesting network to work with and learn from. For Dreamtown, there is a lot to learn from the context of urban refugees, seeing how there is a steady increase of urban refugees across the locations where Dreamtown is working.

3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results (our intervention)

3.1. Composition, participation, and benefit of the target groups

The project’s primary target groups cut across 30 identified youth-led CSOs in Arua, young people in the targeted divisions of Arua city, NAC’s community journalists, and targeted National and district NGO forums. Some of these target groups will be intensively trained, some reached through advocacy and community engagements, and some reached through ‘training of trainers’. The most important target group for this project are 30 youth-led CSOs. They will be described in detail below, while the other groups are outlined in the target group table.

*The target group of youth-led CSO:* Through the project, NAC will engage 30 Arua-based youth-led CSOs who are challenged by the shrinking civic space, have been forced to stop implementing programmes due to COVID-19 imposed restrictions, experienced office closure, loss of staff and resources and/or decline in financing, change in donor priorities, etc. The projects’ various activities involving the 30 CSOs will directly engage more than 300 youth.

*Why we are targeting urban youth-led CSOs:* The intervention puts a focus on those organisations that work in urban areas, operating with urban programming that, in different ways, take on the interests of urban youth. The CSOs in Arua work in different thematic areas, including local governance and social accountability, sexual reproductive health and rights, economic governance, agriculture and urban farming, education, tax justice and accountability, urban farming, social enterprise, etc. Urban dwellers are largely left out of development interventions, and, to the specific relevance of this intervention, little is done in these urban areas to address constraints on civic and operating space of CSOs. Therefore, our intervention puts a focus on CSOs that operate in the city. And since youth-led organisations are among those most affected by the shrinking civic space, lacking the capacity and financial resources to cope with it, we are targeting the youth-led organisations. Among these, emphasis will be on inclusion of women-led CSOs to secure an even gender balance and representation.

*Characteristics of the targeted youth-led CSO*: The youth-led COS targeted represent a wide range of different types of organisations. They include youth networks and community-based organisations engaged in e.g. agriculture, health and educational activities; different types of informal sector associations, such as women vender’s association, motorcycle (Boda Boda) rider’s association and women savings and credit cooperatives; refugee led organisations and CSO networks and umbrella organisations. The final selection of the targeted CSOs will be determined at the beginning of the project. However, we see strength in working with different types of youth led CSOs, since they are able to contribute with diverse knowledge to the other participating organisations. Furthermore, by working with different types of organisations, we ensure to represent a broad range of different civil society sectors experiencing a variety of civic space challenges.

*Examples of youth led CSOs:* The project will be inclusive of different types and sizes of organisations, but we see an important point to make sure we include a number of larger CSO networks. As these networks represent several different local organisations, their participation will ensure that the project’s impact is spread to a larger audience around Arua City. A couple of examples of potential networks to engage include: *West Nile Youth Empowerment Centre* is a youth-led nonprofit initiative founded by the Young African Leaders Initiative Alumni members from West Nile Sub-region of Uganda with focus to promote socio-economic development of West Nile youth and empowering youth to improve services and engage in economic and human development, sustainable environmental development and poverty eradication in West Nile region of Uganda. Their vision is to have empowered youth leaders with skills and confidence to actively participate in decision making process and develop self, family and community towards positive change. The center is composed of 25 youth groups and 5 CBOs who are engaged through programmes on governance, peace and human rights, agriculture, health, education, women and girls’ empowerment, and sexual reproductive health and needs. Led by 4 staff members, the center annually reaches approximately 300 people directly and 500 people indirectly. Another example of a CSO is *West Nile Youth Network* - a youth CSO network that seeks to mainstream young peoples’ agenda, engagement in development and governance processes in the West Nile region. It was formed following the need to have a space that unites and advocates for the youth in the region. Their programmes include member capacity development, youth leadership and skills development, youth in agribusiness, and peace and conflict mitigation between the refugees and the host communities in Arua. The network is led by 3 staff members and 3 volunteers who are based in Arua city, reaching around 300 youth directly. Examples of other smaller organisations, which have related interventions, include *Green Leaf Initiative*, *Action for Women and Youth Empowerment Network (AWYEN), South Sudan Refugee Association*, and *Economic Livelihood*.

The table below outlines the composition, participation and benefit of the target groups:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Participation** | **Benefit** |
| **Primary target groups** (Groups directly engaged in activities) | | |
| **30 urban youth-led CSOs in Arua** (90 persons age 18-35; 50 female and 40 male) targeted directly through capacity building and collaboration on action plans and advocacy initiatives. | CSO representatives will be fellows for the Civil Society Strengthening Academy. Representatives from 15 CSOs (45 youths) will take part in the physical CSSA (A. 1.1.2.), and 15 CSOs (45 youths) will take part in the online CSSA (A.1.1.4.). They will all work actively on action plans to strengthen the organisational resilience of their organisations and will give feedback on and help evaluate and adjust the capacity building activities, which will inform the process of creating the online resource centre for youth-led CSOs (1.1.3.) and subsequent virtual facilitation of CSS Academy sessions.  3 persons from each CSO will represent the organisation in the training activities, representing both programmatic and financial units of the organisations. The 30 CSOs will actively engage in network building and engage in the activities around the CSO hub (A. 2.2.1.), CSO cafes (A. 2.2.1.-2.2.2.) and the advocacy engagements (A.3.2.1-3.2.2.). | Will be mentored and strengthen their capacity; Develop plans for and receive support to strengthening their resilience; Institutional strengthening in relation to compliance with NGOs laws; Support given to those without (or with expired) NGO permits; Support given to programme and financial systems (such as policies and financial standards). CSO’s gain access CSO hub in Arua and improve on their network with other youth-led CSOs in the area.  15 of the most vulnerable youth-led CSOs (those that participate in the physical CSSA) will receive flex-funds to support their action plans for organisational resilience. |
| **150 additional CSO staff in the 30 targeted youth-led CSOs** (age 18-35; 82 female and 68 male) (counting 5 persons per CSO) targeted directly through collaboration on action plans and advocacy initiatives. | CSO colleagues of the trained CSSA fellows are engaged through training where those representatives trained will cascade key learning to the rest of their organisations (A.1.1.5.). Therefore, they are directly targeted in follow up transferring of basic principles and most relevant knowledge from the CSSA. They will also work on organisational resilience action plans together with CSO colleagues, whereby the whole organisation becomes active in building organisational resilience. We therefore we consider whole CSOs to be our primary target group. | Will learn about key lessons from colleagues; Will gain knowledge from working on CSO organisational resilience action plans; Will access network through CSO hub and CSO cafés; Enhanced networks and collaboration with civil society, government and community actors. |
| **National and district NGO forums** (4 persons age 35-50; 2 male and 2 female); Youth programmes and partnership and advocacy coordinators. | District NGO forum participates in the identification of youth-led CSOs to take part in the project and support coordination of the first ever youth-led urban CSO cafés comprising of organisations in Arua (A.2.2.1). National NGO forum amplifies policy and programme recommendations generated by the CSOs (A. 2.2.2) and will give input to and participate in the technical review and validation of the CSS tool kit (A.1.1.1). | Their participation contributes to their mandate of CSOs coordination, strengthening and technical oversight for youth-led urban CSOs; Contribute to their mandate of strengthening local CSOs through knowledge and skills development; Increased legitimacy among youth-led civil society. |
| **Community journalists in Arua** (3 persons age 18-35; 2 female and 1 male) | Document the activities (A.3.1.1), especially capturing the stakeholder dialogue meetings (A.3.2.2); Amplify key messages through community radio, newspapers, social media, blogs, tabloids, etc.; Profile and document youth-led urban CSOs; popularise project and civic space issues on social media (A.3.1.2). | Community journalists enhance their capacity and build on their media network. |
| **Community youth** across Arua City (60 persons age 18-35; 30 female and 30 male) | A number of young community members will be targeted through community youth parliaments (A.3.2.1), which will include discussions on civic space issues. Here, they will represent their community together with representatives from the youth-led CSOs. | Community priorities are represented in dialogues about civic space issues; Community youth have their voice heard and get to interact with CSO representatives and local stakeholders |
| **Total primary target group:** 307 persons; 166 female and 141 male | | |
| **Secondary target groups** (people affected by activities, not directly involved) | | |
| **Other youth-led CSOs in Arua divisions** (estimated 150 people age 18-35 across approx. 30 CSOs; 75 female and 75 male) | Operate in same civic space context as those CSOs trained and strengthened. Reached through experience sharing with the trained CSOs; through civic space awareness and information and network activities. | Will learn from the trained CSOs and gain access to new networks and learning materials. Benefit from online learning resources developed and from access to the CSO hub. |
| **5000 youth in target communities** **in Arua** (age 18-35; 2500 female and 2500 male) | Reached throughthe work of youth-led CSOs in Arua and community journalists’ campaigns. | Improve access to support and better services as CSOs become stronger organisations better equipped to represent them and their interests. |
| **Total secondary target group:** 5150 persons; 2575 female and 2575 male | | |

3.2. Strategy for engaging the target groups

At the start of the project, NAC will make a call for CSOs to join the Civil Society Strengthening Academy, which is a training programme to strengthen CSOs’ organisational resilience. NAC will work with Arua District NGO forum, but will also coordinate with the national NGO forum to share experiences and build network. The collaboration with the NGO forum in Arua is a key strategy to root the intervention in the local operating context of the target CSOs. They will recommend organisations to work with based on the criteria that they must be youth-led urban CSOs whose operating space is challenged. Signs of this could include having an increase in staff turnover and seeing their limited options for doing interventions leaving a big gap in the urban youth sector. NAC has followed several community-based CSOs closely and seen a big potential in them to grow to become strong grass rooted organisations, however, from observation, the organisations are struggling in the shrinking civic space, with limited capacity, human resource and office facilities. The 30 CSOs in the primary target group will take part in a range of activities. As outlined above, 15 CSOs will be selected for participating the physical academy, while another 15 CSOs will be selected to take part in a virtual academy. Those reached in the virtual academy will also give feedback to improve the training for online use. They will have access to resource persons available to support them. The online format has a huge potential for reaching a large number of CSOs at a lower cost and with more flexibility in terms of mobility, across the whole of Uganda. In the selection of the 30 youth-led CSOs, we will have a focus on reaching those that have not previously been involved in any similar capacity building initiatives. Part of the selection criteria will be to document active engagement for and with young people in vulnerable communities in Arua and to face challenges for operating as a civil society organisation. In support of these selection criteria, NAC will seek support from Community Development Officers and Arua District NGO Network (ADINGON) in verifying CSOs as fitting participants in the project. In the selection of organisations for the physical and online training, respectively, priority in the physical training is given to the most vulnerable CSOs – and they are also the organisations who will receive flex-funds to support their action plans for strengthening their organisational resilience.

*Spreading effect:* As a strategy to multiply the impact of the project and increase the spreading effect of the results, NAC uses the Training of Trainers model, where participants trained as part of the CSSA will train both other members and colleagues of their own organisations (part of the primary target group) as well as share experiences with other CSOs within their surrounding divisions (part of the secondary target group), using the training material, which will be made available to use for all participants. This will help to create wider knowledge and impact on the training and capacity building efforts. Here, CSSN will play a key role in monitoring how the knowledge transfers which is of great interest for them in building future civic space interventions. In addition, once the online platforms led by CSSN are set up, the online sessions of the civil society strengthening academy will be open to other CSOs that have not been part of the initial training program. Through this approach, people are able to join cohorts of the online training programme and take virtual sessions of the training. More still, the CSO hub developed in Arua City will be open all CSOs in the region to tap in into the available resources on civil society strengthening, compliance to NGO regulations, e-governance and digital media. The CSOs in this project have an important role to play in reaching out to other CSOs under pressure who are lacking similar capacity. Here, we look at the CSO cafés as good platforms to invite those who were trained to share their experience with others. NAC will regularly follow up with the trained CSOs who will give reports on how many other CSOs they have been able to reach, and what has been the outcome. So, while only a number of CSOs are trained in this project and collaborating on organisational plans for resilience, other CSOs will be invited to join the collective activities around the CSO hub, and also the advocacy initiatives.

**3.3. Target groups’ and relevant actors’ involvement in the development of the intervention**

In the process of designing the project and researching the context for youth-led CSOs in Arua, NAC has consulted with a number of civil society actors and networks in order to qualify the focus of this intervention. The activities of the project are inspired by and build on the gaps identified by NAC through continuous engagement and collaboration with youth-led CSOs across Uganda. It is also based on their own experience from operating as a CSO in Uganda’s shrinking civic space. Hence, the intervention is very directly demand-driven and informed by the pressing needs of the target group, and key stakeholders in the CSO environment have vouched that the project is relevant and has an approach that can help fill a gap in the inadequate system of support for youth-led organisations.

**3.4. Partners’ legitimacy to act as champions of the target groups’ cause**

NAC has worked with youth and community-based organizations to amplify their voices in governance and development processes for several years and already enjoy a high degree of legitimate towards young people in Arua, through their work with district youth council structures, district women council structures, production and marketing departments, the community development officers, the district planning unit, and a number of youth-led CBOs. They have built up a strong reputation, especially through their work to empower young people as active citizens. NAC works directly with smaller organisations communities to enhance a community-led social development approach, and build capacities of young people to actively take part in the transformation of their communities. Partnering with CSSN in this project amplifies the intervention’s legitimacy in its civil society strengthening approach. In those communities where NAC is less known among the target group, the team will engage in extra awareness raising activities about the project and possibilities it brings. Due to the nature of the project, dealing with challenges of the shrinking civic space, where CSOs are up against a system which is actively limiting their operating space, we need to be cautious of any misconception/misinterpretation of the project by local authorities. Therefore, NAC will hold inception meetings with Arua district NGO monitoring committee for them to understand the project in detail and how it contributes to their mandate as a committee. Also, as part of strengthening the project’s legitimacy, NAC will collaborate and coordinate with network organisations in the area whose membership is at community level, but who are registered and recognised at district level and beyond. This way, the intervention will keep its legitimacy both towards the systemic level of local authorities, and towards the community level.

**3.5. Strategy and activities of the intervention**

The following presents an overview of the strategic thoughts behind each of the three specific objectives and the project design’s contribution to strengthening the organisational resilience and the operating environment of urban youth-led CSOs in Arua. Under each section is also an outline of the activities that will work in support of each of the specific objectives. A civil society led approach is crucial in Uganda, as CSOs have direct access to grassroots and activities at community levels that are in line and eyesight with people’s priorities. In order to meet the needs and wishes of the people, it is impossible for Government to operate solely on their own, no matter how much the civic space is shrinking. At the beginning of the project, NAC will carry out institutional capacity assessments for the selected youth-led CSOs to know their level of compliance with the existing laws, capacity level in terms of programming, financial management, and coordination. This will help develop a more customized institutional strengthening package and also help predict any gaps that can be used by the district NGO monitoring committee to further shrink the project’s advocacy interventions. In the case of these organisations, key areas of organisational resilience include developing strong organisation systems, good internal governance, compliance with the requirements for CSOs and robust fundraising efforts to sustain their operations. Looking at the challenges of the shrinking civic space in Uganda, strengthened organisational resilience is aimed at improving the CSOs’ capacity to plan, respond, and thrive despite the challenges that emerge in the shrinking civic space in which they operate. In the case of their operating environment, key focus areas will include advocacy for improved space and increased support from and collaboration with the local NGO committee in Arua, along with other regulating authorities.

**Specific objective 1: *Knowledge and capacity***

In order to actively participate as active citizens, make a difference to their target groups, and engage in advocacy on the issues that affect them, CSOs must have a good understanding of the relevant policy environment in which they operate. In the Civil Society Strengthening Academy, as well as through the developed CSO resources and tools, our strategy therefore includes enhancing the capacity of the targeted youth-led CSOs to understand the relevant national and city governing instruments, policies, acts and frameworks they need to know and follow to exist and operate as CSOs in Uganda. This includes participatory analysis on national policies and acts that influence their operating environment, used to determine capacity needs for the CSOs. Due to COVID-19, many CSOs are operating in a ”survival for the fittest” mode. Their economic, social and civic space is very restricted. For any CSO to continue operating in current times and to comply with standing operating procedures and guidelines, it requires tools that used to be a luxury, but are now a necessity. Aware of such challenges for the CSOs, the project includes direct support to a number of the most vulnerable CSOs with flexible funds to enable them to carry out actions that will further strengthen them. They will be lead on plans and concrete interventions that contribute to their resilience as organisations. Examples of interventions are presented in the activity section below.

Activities contributing towards specific objective 1:

**A. 1.1.1. Customise Civil Society Strengthening tool kit:** CSSN and NAC will develop a civil society strengthening (CSS) tool kit to be used in the Civil Society Strengthening Academy (Activity 1.1.2.). Modules will include, but not be limited to i) legal and policy framework for CSO engagement in civic work, exploring the policy framework for CSO operation; ii) governance; strategic planning; principles for CSO effectiveness; and developing thematic strategies; iii) and innovative approaches to CSO resilience and how youth-led CSOs can become more resilient amidst COVID-19 and the shrinking civic space. As part of the academy, CSOs’ capacities and systems will be strengthened to attract more funding from the others partners. Each of the modules will end with CSO self-assignments and put in place, or begin the process of putting in place, mechanisms and initiatives to close the gaps identified at CSO level during the academy. The CSS tool kit will also be informed by a capacity assessment to understand the gaps in detail. Dreamtown will support the development of the tool kit with experience from civic space interventions focused on organisational resilience in Zimbabwe. The CSS toolkit will be popularised using infographics and creative layout.

**A. 1.1.2. Physical Civil Society Strengthening Academy (CSSA):** Using the developed tool kit, representatives from 15 CSOs will be enrolled in the physical CSSA, which will be facilitated as trainings in Arua as a programme of three training weeks. Here, the CSO representatives will both learn and practically train what they are learning to be applied in their organisations. The academy will also be an opportunity for network building among the CSOs. Dreamtown will participate in online sessions throughout the academy, and we will also set up sessions where experience is shared with Zimbabwean youth who are working on similar issues.

**A. 1.1.3. Upgrade CSSN website as a resource centre for youth-led CSOs:** Besides the physical CSSA, CSSN and NAC will develop an online platform for the tool kit and related materials, where resources are open to the public. The flexibility of an online platform will also include a virtual interactive system, which is highly relevant in the context of COVID-19 and CSOs’ general challenges with mobility and access to resources.

**A. 1.1.4. Virtual Civil Society Strengthening Sessions:** In addition to the CSOs that will go through the physical CSS Academy, a group of 15 CSOs will take part in sessions online, where they will be trained virtually in key aspects of the academy, and get access to all the learning resources. This group will help give feedback on the online format of the academy to be developed further. The idea of developing the CSSA online virtual learning system (A.1.1.3.) and facilitating virtual CSSA sessions is based on the assumption that COVID-19 might continue to affect mobility for a while still, and therefor interrupt certain activities. In the event of having to re-strategize training activities, funds can be re-allocated to cover costs of internet connection for the participants. In addition, the option of hosting the sessions online can be a cost-saving way of building capacity, and as well makes the programme easier to replicate for larger and more geographically spread target groups. Furthermore, by developing the learning platform as part of this intervention adds to the sustainability of efforts, as the costs of facilitating the CSS Academy will be much lower in the future once the platform is developed.

**A. 1.1.5.** **CSSA fellows cascade learning to CSO colleagues:** In the 30 targeted CSOs, colleagues of the trained CSSA fellows (in Activity 1.1.2. and 1.1.4.) are engaged through training where those representatives trained will cascade key learning to the rest of their organisations. This will secure a broader reach of the knowledge in the organisations, and will equip the rest of the organisations to engage actively in the organisational resilience action plans (Activity 1.2.1.), whereby the whole organisation becomes stronger.

**A. 1.2.1.** **CSO participatory planning and mentorship for organisational resilience:** NAC will organise peer to peer CSO learning, review, planning and mentorship meetings. Following their participation in the CSS Academy, the CSOs will develop plans for how best to strengthen their organisations based on the course and assignments. A blend of tools will be used, including those used by Dreamtown and PlanBørnefonden in Zimbabwe as part of the project *Urban Justice*. The CSOs will engage and be supported in a process where they develop plans for how to strengthen their organisations in the context of a shrinking civic space in Uganda.

**A. 1.2.2. Civil society strengthening flex funds for CSO:** Based on the plans developed (Activity 1.2.1), the 15 most vulnerable CSOs are supported with flexible funds for initiatives to strengthen their organisational resilience and position as civil society actors. CSO’s initiatives will be supported as a way of strengthening their internal organisational resilience, making sure they can continue to carry out their work in support of other youths. It will be up to the individual organisation to make a strategy for the use of the funds; however, they will be mentored in the process. Examples of relevance for the CSOs include running/maintaining their websites, social media pages and document their interventions; support to administration of the organisations; support to creatively engage with their target groups; access to internet and communication; mobility, etc.

**Specific objective 2: *Network and resources***

There is a huge untapped potential among youth-led CSOs in Uganda, but they lack opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction, network building and collaboration to unleash their potential. Being part of broader networks that promote peer learning and sharing is crucial for CSOs to explore and learn how to become more resilient[[20]](#footnote-20). Opportunities that are severely affected by COVID-19. Additionally, in the past year, organisations in Arua have reached out to NAC as the impact of the pandemic has left them without access to office space; either because they cannot afford it or cannot live up to the operating guidelines during COVID-19. In the current situation, CSOs are forced to lay off staff due to limited financial capacity. Especially the urban CSOs are affected, due to limited access to space. As a network organisation, challenged by this high demand for support and opportunities, NAC has partnered with CSSN to offer capacity building and mentorship sessions to youth-led organisations; helping with things like reviewing draft proposals, reviewing internal programme and finance systems, and providing recommendations letters to funding organisations. Through this support from NAC, 3 organisations have already managed to get grants. Inspired by such results, and equally by the continued challenges for and demand from youth-led CSOs, this project will support the set-up of a CSO hub in Arua. This spatial component of the project is in direct support of the CSOs in Arua by providing a platform for capacity building, mentorship and network building, at the same time addressing the need for resources by enabling a shared conducive work space where the CSOs can meet, interact, and work together. The hub will also enhance potential for shared technical advisors among the CSOs in both programme and finance areas as inter-organisational capacity building, and pooling of resources among them.

Activities contributing towards specific objective 2:

**A. 2.1.1. Establish CSO hub in Arua City:** NAC and CSSN will establish a CSO hub in Arua. The hub is an essential platform for building and sharing networks and resources among the CSOs. It will function as a shared work space with wide rooms with work stations, shared office facilities (such as meeting rooms, internet, printers and utilities). NAC have already explored options for spaces for setting up the hub. In the process of setting up the hub, there will be creative co-creation processes with youth-led CSOs to design a space which is youthful and inspiring. This will also amplify ownership of the space. The CSO hub will be an open space for a broad and large group of youth-led CSOs across Arua.

**A. 2.2.1. CSO cafés:** CSO cafés will be set up at the CSO hub. The cafés enable CSOs to come together and brainstorm ideas and share experience. In free and open events, CSOs from Arua can come and share best practices, jointly brainstorm on emerging opportunities they can apply for as a consortium, pitch different social innovations, ideas and models they have come across - and further reflect on civil society strengthening as a programme beyond this project. Within the project, the CSO cafés will focus on joint brainstorming and pitching of innovations related to rebuilding civic space - guided by NAC and CSSN.

**A. 2.2.2. Joint review meetings between the CSOs and NGO forum and committee:** Together with the participating CSOs, NAC and CSSN will organise joint review meetings between CSOs, NGO forums and committee as platforms for planning advocacy and lobbying activities, in which the youth-led CSOs reach out to government with policy recommendations. The actual advocacy activities are presented below.

**Specific objective 3: *Civic space advocacy***

Through this project, youth-led CSOs are supported to become strong and resilient actors admits a shrinking civic space, so they can continue to support citizens in their communities. Behind NAC’s approach to active citizenship is a hybrid of advocacy and activism. Uganda sees a great deal of regulation for CSOs to operate and maintain their mandate. A regulated and restricted civic space means that CSOs risk their operating mandate if they do not work in alignment with government efforts and regulations. Therefore, a balance is to be found between activism and advocacy, where constructive engagement and relation building with duty bearers is key to secure a civil society platform that can support and protect citizens, even in a shrinking civic space. In its approach to civic space work, the project looks at youth-led CSOs working in collaboration with policy makers, such as the national NGO bureau, with policy influencers, such as the NGO forums, and also with the policy consumers, such as the urban citizens. This collaboration is key to gain influence in the current civic space environment in Uganda. As part of the project, learning and input from the youth-led CSOs will inform policy recommendations which will be gathered in an advocacy position paper used to engage with the policy makers and users (referring back to Activity 2.2.2.). Engagement is done in meetings between CSOs and Government, e.g. the NGO bureau, to advocate for CSOs’ priorities. Although the project operates in a context where advocacy is a difficult exercise, and there are limits to how much is realistic to achieve in the scope of the intervention, certain specific issues will be prioritised. Key advocacy goals which will be addressed through CSO engagement with relevant authorities include i) easing registration processes (reduce bureaucracy) for youth-led CSOs in Arua; ii) easing restrictions in activities; iii) increasing duration of permits and licenses; and iv) easing restrictions on geographical mandates. NAC’s Community Journalists (CJs) will document issues related to civic space and use online and offline platforms to reach as many people as possible. They will promote engagement between CSOs, regulators and beneficiary communities. NAC strategically uses community journalism as an innovative approach to put community issues to the attention of duty bearers. They will document the crucial role of urban youth-led CSOs, along with their issues and challenges. This will feed into advocacy efforts towards duty bearers, for them to appreciate the role of CSOs, support them and engage with them on their issues like regulations and policies affecting their operations.

Activities contributing towards specific objective 3:

A. 3.1.1. Community journalists’ documentation: Community Journalists (CJs) will profile, document and amplify the voice of the youth-led urban CSO and their interventions. Youth opinions will be gathered and communicated in articles, videos, blogs, posts on social media, etc. NAC already has a pool of community journalists who will help popularise the project’s opportunities to attract other CSOs in Arua to the platforms. CJs will develop stories of change with the targeted CSOs, document their successes and challenges to support the advocacy and amplify key emerging issues – e.g. how COVID-19 threatens the civic space in Uganda.

**A. 3.1.2.** **Social media infographics on CSO and civic space relevant policies:** Selected governing policies that directly influence youth-led urban CSOs’ operating environment and shape their advocacy interventions[[21]](#footnote-21) will be unpacked, to create easier access for young people to understand and work with them in practise. This will also feed into the pool of resources developed for youth-led CSOs in the project. Based on this, NAC and their team of CJs will develop creative infographics for social media. NAC has been using “Did you know?” infographics on many different topics on social media with success. This concept has been further used by other youth-led CSOs who have been mentored to unpack information targeting the informal sector.

A. 3.2.1. Community youth parliaments: Community Youth Parliaments are platforms for youth to discuss issues that affect them and possible solutions to deal with the challenges they face. This is intended to motivate young people to recognize their meaningful participating and make their voices heard. Participants will be selected from communities in Arua City and will include CSO youth members, community youth, leaders drawn from the youth council structures, and youth councillors. NGO committee and local government representatives will be invited, such as the division mayors, the head of division administrations, and local councillors, to discuss civic space issues. The idea of the community youth parliaments is to open up and make the discussion available to community members, compared to the more closed forum in e.g. the CSO cafés.

**A. 3.2.2. Stakeholder dialogue meetings:** Following up on the community youth parliaments and the join review meetings, NAC and representatives from the youth-led CSOs will hold dialogue meetings with key stakeholders in Arua in local government and the NGO forums and committees. The purpose of the engagements is to amplify issues discussed at strategic level and follow up on potential collective actions, through the discussion of the developed advocacy position paper on civic space related issues.

**3.6. The Development Triangle**

Below is outlined how the intervention balances between the elements of the Development Triangle; through elements of organisational capacity strengthening, strategic deliveries, and advocacy:

****

**3.7. Objectives, activities, expected results and indicators of the intervention**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Development objective:** Strengthened organisational resilience and eased operating environment of youth-led CSOs in Arua. | | |
| **Specific objective 1:** Increased knowledge and strengthened capacity of youth-led CSOs to operate as effective civil society actors.  ***Indicators: i)*** *30 CSOs remain active and operative throughout the entire project period.* | | |
| **Results** | | **Activities** |
| **Result 1.1.** 240 CSO staff representing 30 urban youth-led CSOs increased knowledge on civil society strengthening. | | **Activity 1.1.1.** Customize Civil Society Strengthening tool kit  **Activity 1.1.2.** Physical Civil Society Strengthening Academy  **Activity 1.1.3.** Upgrade CSSN website as a resource centre for youth-led CSOs  **Activity 1.1.4.** Virtual Civil Society Strengthening Sessions  **Activity 1.1.5.** CSSA fellows cascade learning to CSO colleagues |
| **Result** **1.2.** 15 of the most vulnerable urban youth-led CSOs have implement action plans for organisational resilience. | | **Activity 1.2.1.** CSO participatory planning and mentorship for organisational resilience  **Activity 1.2.2.** Civil society strengthening flex funds for CSOs |
| **Specific objective 2:** Strengthened networks, shared resources and joint actions for youth-led CSOs.  ***Indicators: i)*** *Increase in number of joint initiatives and actions among youth-led CSOs in Arua.* | | |
| **Results** | | **Activities** |
| **Result 2.1.** 1 conducive space for CSOs has been developed and coordinated by NAC and CSSN. | | **Activity 2.1.1.** EstablishCSO hub in Arua City |
| **Result 2.2.** 30 urban youth-led CSOs have improved their network and collaborated on local issues. | | **Activity 2.2.1.** CSO cafés  **Activity 2.2.2.** Joint review meetings between the CSOs and NGO forum and committees |
| **Specific objective 3:** Strengthened capacity of youth-led CSOs to advocate for a freer civic space through dialogue, legal and policy advocacy.  ***Indicators:******i)*** *Increase in number of advocacy issues identified, stakeholders engaged, and commitments given by stakeholders.* | | |
| **Results** | | **Activities** |
| **Result 3.1.** Community journalists have covered issues affecting youth-led CSOs in urban communities through civic journalism. | | **Activity 3.1.1.** Community journalists’ documentation  **Activity 3.1.2.** Social media infographics on CSO and civic space relevant policies |
| **Result 3.2.** Targeted engagements with the NGO committee on civic space issues affecting CSOs in Arua. | | **Activity 3.2.1.** Community youth parliaments  **Activity 3.2.2.** Stakeholder dialogue meetings on civic space issues affecting CSOs in Aura. |
|  |  | **Cross cutting activities in pursuit of all objectives: 0.1.1.** NAC inception workshop; **0.1.2.** Inception meetings with district NGO forums; **0.1.3.** Institutional capacity assessment for selected youth-led CSOs |

**3.8.** **Implementation plan**

**3.9. Contribution to sustainable and lasting improvements for the target groups**

The intervention is expected to contribute to a number of results that create lasting improvements for vulnerable groups in the project area. It is expected that youth-led civil society actors at large, including a broad group of youth-led CSOs, will experience improvements to their operating space as CSOs due to effective advocacy engagements. This will leave them in a better position to support their target groups of urban youth and improve conditions and key services in Arua. The project’s approach is all about strengthening capacities and organisational resilience of the youth-led CSOs to leave them better prepared to support their target groups – also during times of crisis like COVID-19 or election times. After the initial capacity assessment exercise to identify key institutional gaps among the selected target CSOs, CSSN will embark on developing the CSSA toolkit which will have a list of actions for each organisation that will be followed up on regularly. Actions will focus on different components of the organisations, both internal programmes, fundraising and finance, and at the external level compliance to the district, national laws and healthy working relationships with their constituency, including their community and membership base. These are all capacities that will help build their organisational resilience, which they can continue to pass on to others. As a result of specific objective 2, a broader and stronger network of CSOs will be build who will collaborate and pool resources to strengthen their work as community development actors. This is also hoped to create a more positive and inspiring vibe among the CSOs who work in a very challenging context. Creating community around youth-led civil society in Arua will help create cohesion and collaborative spirit. As part of specific objective 3, the goal is to create tangible change by advocating for easing of the operational space of CSOs in Arua. The project has a strong focus on improving collaboration with government authorities on civic space issues. These actions are designed to ensure lasting impacts, also for CSOs in the future. Beyond this project, we also hope to use experiences in other locations, e.g. as part of NAC’s youth-focussed interventions in Kampala.

**3.10. Project sustainability: Strengthening of partners’ capacities, activities, relations with other actors and advocacy after the intervention period**

The project includes elements that require attention to how to secure their sustainability after the end of this intervention period. For the CSO hub in Arua city (Activity 2.1.1.), NAC will explore the possibility of utilising a government facility. In this process, key stakeholders that will be targeted include technical and political district leadership representatives (Town Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer). As part of the project, different strategies for sustainability of the hub are explored. This will include joint fundraising and linking the activities of the hub to other partners, e.g. to initiatives currently run with British High Commission for better youth engagement, participation, voice and inclusion in democratic processes. The sustainability of the hub will, as well, be linked to the continuation of the CSSA in the future. Due to the successful experiences from running the SLOGBAA programme, NAC has high credibility with larger organisations in Uganda. And initiatives like this, and the CSSA, are missing in Arua. Here, NAC is working with Oxfam to amplify green civic spaces, that have been piloted inspired by the Ghetto Go Green programme with Dreamtown in Kampala, as part of the programme “Nourishing Cities”, which is an upstarting collaboration with Irish Aid. The idea of the CSO hub has already been discussed with these partners, who are positive about the idea. Further, there is an opportunity to collaborate around the CSO hub and network with the British High Commission, where NAC has recently secured a new grant focused on community civic spaces which will run for the next year in Arua. NAC sees great potential for extensions of these different partnerships to include support for and collaboration around the CSO hub, linking ongoing projects and expanding the network between youth-led civil society groups. Therefore, a key fundraising strategy is to link existing and future projects to the component of the CSO hub, which aligns with NAC’s strategic focus on scaling up activities and broadening their network. CSSN and the targeted youth-led CSOs will actively work with NAC in this process, and collaborate in fundraising efforts. The collaboration around the CSO hub with local authorities is also seen as an advocacy exercise in itself – as it will be a great success to mobilise support for such a case, which has the potential to create a more CSO friendly environment in Arua. This project is unique in Arua in directly targeting youth-led CSOs. Most past and current interventions either target district level organisations, advocacy networks, and local government organisations – missing the level of the youth-led civil society. This is an essential level to target, seeing that Arua is now a city – which lacks civic space targeted work from in urban perspective. This necessitates the understanding of changing policies and changing civic space along with the process of fast urbanisation. Urban CSOs are those most affected by the shrinking civic space, as government have their eyes on the cities. Arua is no exception – and as a growing city, the pressure on civic space will increase. In the project, we have the opportunity to come in fairly early in the urbanisation process in Arua (compared to Kampala) and support CSOs to navigate the shrinking space, before it is entirely closed down on them. Here, the creation of networks across youth-led CSOs in Arua will be particularly important.

**3.11. Risks and mitigation**

The table below outlines key risks identified in the partnership which can potentially affect project implementation and those involved, along with mitigation actions planned out. We will continuously evaluate the development of these risks, and others that might occur along the way. Especially the COVID-19 situation will be followed closely, as it has a very direct impact on project implementation, context, and the partners.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Risk register** | | |
| **Risk factors** | **Mitigation actions** | **Risk level after mitigation** |
| COVID-19 continues as a health risk.  *Likelihood:* Possible  *Impact:* Major | * Implementation in line with standard operating procedures, and activities conducted considering social distancing, availability of protective gear and hygiene materials * Keep participants well-informed about safety precautions * Use digital tools in case of obstruction of physical activities (this can be supported by scale up of development of online resources and facilitation of virtual sessions; A. 1.1.3.; 1.1.4.) * Re-allocated funds for internet connection for participants * Working with toll free services to ensure access to support and mentoring for the CSOs | Medium |
| Government stakeholders and duty bearers unwilling to prioritise engagement, or feel confronted by advocacy engagements.  *Likelihood:* Possible  *Impact:* Major | * NAC will work with a consortium of organisations, including district NGO forum whose voice and influence is stronger than individual organisations. Therefore, they will help advocate and vouch for the project and partnership * In all activities, focus is on collaboration, engagement and active involvement of duty bearers, rather than confrontational advocacy * Uganda Police and district local leadership informed and involved to secure necessary permits | Low |
| Change of NGO policies that do not favour CSOs.  *Likelihood:* Possible  *Impact:* Major | * Building relationships with duty bearers * Keeping track with CSO regulations | Medium |
| High expectations of community members of benefit from project resources.  *Likelihood:* Almost certain  *Impact:* Minor | * Managing expectations from the beginning * Creation of local ownership * Ensure necessary cost-recovery for project participants | Low |

**3.12. Plans to monitoring and learning**

Below is an overview of Dreamtown’s monitoring, evaluation and learning elements, which cut across all Dreamtown’s projects. Upon project inception, a detailed results framework will be developed between Dreamtown and NAC to monitor project progress according to the indicators, which will be identified at results level as part of the project inception. The indicators and project milestones will be progressively tracked during implementation.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MEL elements** | **Methods used** | **Timing/ frequency** | **Responsible for implementation and processing of data** | **Data shared with** |
| Activity reports | Participant registration; Participant activity evaluations; Activity photos | Weekly | NAC’s project staff and M&E team | Feed into narrative reports to Dreamtown; Photos and updates shared on WhatsApp |
| Narrative and financial progress reports | Dreamtown format for narrative and financial reports | Quarterly | NAC’s project manager | Dreamtown |
| Monitoring visits | Project community visits; Informal interviews with target group; Dialogue with partners | Yearly | Dreamtown project lead | NAC; Feed into reports for CISU and development of documentation for communication |
| Stories of change/community interviews | Community journalists reports and documentation; Photos and videos; Written stories | Ongoing | Community journalists | Feed into development of documentation for communication and advocacy efforts |
| Learning workshops | Online reflection meetings between Dreamtown and NAC | Quarterly | NAC project team and Dreamtown project lead | In NAC and Dreamtown internally |
| End of project evaluation report | Target group interviews and survey; CISU format for final report | End of project | NAC and Dreamtown | CISU; Target groups |

In our efforts to scale up and qualify our MEL work, Dreamtown had employed a Learning and Partnership Advisor, Jakob Falk, who is working to systematise, consolidate, and develop our framework and methods. A key focus is to strengthen our focus on evaluation and learning. By strengthening our MEL framework, we seek to ensure that the projects we do are aligned with our overall Theory of Change and programme strategy. This also includes that evaluations are carried out systematically to assess if our projects contribute with the desired outcomes and to analyse the reasons behind, and that learning is extracted systematically and used to inform our ToC and improve our work. Jakob will also focus on gathering experience across projects – in the case of this project especially with our civic space interventions in Zimbabwe. In this specific project, in addition to the above outlined MEL efforts, efforts will be made to profile and document the most significant changes achieved over time with the participating CSOs. More so, joined monitoring will be facilitated by NAC together with project stakeholders, culminating in stakeholder review meetings where project interventions and strategies will be discussed, along with key learnings and ways forward. These will be reviewed and discussed together with Dreamtown as reflection during the collective quarterly monitoring meetings. Funding is disbursed on a quarterly basis upon receipt of the agreed documentation and reporting. One visit by Dreamtown in Arua is planned in this project, however, opportunities for monitoring with the target groups also exists as part of trips on other projects in Uganda. Dreamtown’s monitoring will be led by the project lead, Programme Director Nina Ottosen, Partnership and Learning Advisor Jakob Falk, and Finance Director Thomas Chandler. Throughout the project, participants will be invited and encouraged to provide feedback through community meetings, and contact information will be shared to both NAC and Dreamtown for project participants to be able to get in touch. In the established CSO hub, NAC will install a feedback box where everyone can, anonymously if they prefer, hand in written feedback or complaints.

4. Intervention-related information work in Denmark

The overall purpose of the information work will be to broaden the understanding among the Danish population about the challenges related to shrinking civic space taking place in Uganda. The final content and formats of the intervention-related information work will be developed in dialogue with NAC’s community journalists, who are already working closely with Dreamtown on communicating stories of change from our projects. Materials could include photos, case stories, and short videos for web and social media – which will feed into Dreamtown’s overall communication strategy. The communication will be directed towards young urban people as well as other organisations, who make up Dreamtown’s two key target groups in Denmark.

5. Supplementary financing

N/A

1. REPRESSION AND RESILIENCE: DIAGNOSING CLOSING SPACE MID-PANDEMIC 11: https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/epd-nimd-repression-and-resilience-diagnosing-closing-space-mid-pandemic.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://civicus.org/index.php/fr/medias-ressources/actualites/blog/3845-the-quest-for-resilience [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Edrine Wanyama. 2016. Towards a Narrow Bridge: A Critical Overview of the Operating Environment for Civil Society Organisations in Uganda. In: Law in Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/81629.html [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/21740 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.citiesalliance.org/newsroom/news/results/film-managing-migration-arua-uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/Project%20Profile\_Arua.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. REPRESSION AND RESILIENCE: DIAGNOSING CLOSING SPACE MID-PANDEMIC 11: https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/epd-nimd-repression-and-resilience-diagnosing-closing-space-mid-pandemic.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/is-space-for-uganda-s-ngos-shrinking--3223748 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Mbazira, C. and Namatovu, T. (2018). Civic space and human rights advocacy in the extractive industry in Uganda: Implications of the 2016 Non-Governmental Organisations Act for oil and gas civil society organisations. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, [online] 18(1), pp.75-99. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2018/v18n1a4>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. https://civicus.org/documents/SOCS2021Part4.pdf#page=15 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. REPRESSION AND RESILIENCE: DIAGNOSING CLOSING SPACE MID-PANDEMIC 11: https://epd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/epd-nimd-repression-and-resilience-diagnosing-closing-space-mid-pandemic.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. https://civicus.org/documents/SOCS2021Part4.pdf#page=15 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. https://ngoforum.or.ug/ [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. http://www.wncard.org/arua-district-ngo-forum/ [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. https://ngobureau.go.ug/ [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. https://civicus.org/index.php/fr/medias-ressources/actualites/blog/3845-the-quest-for-resilience [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Some of these include National Development Plan III, KCCA Act, NGO Act, National Youth Policy, Local government Act and Public Finance and management Act, Public Order management Act, NGO Policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)