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ENHANCING HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY ECOSYSTEM IN TANZANIA

**Capacity Needs Assessment Report
for CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and
Zanzibar**

ENHANCING HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY ECOSYSTEM IN TANZANIA

SURVEY REPORT

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY
GAP ANALYSIS OF CSOs IN TANZANIA
MAINLAND AND ZANZIBAR**



Under the Project of Safeguarding Rule of Law, Civic Space and Accountability in Tanzania – SCATZ Project

JULY 2025, TANZANIA

DETAILED REPORT: NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY GAP ANALYSIS OF CSOS IN TANZANIA MAINLAND AND ZANZIBAR

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We are equally indebted to Adv. Clarence Kipobota the senior consultant from K-CONSULT together with his research team for their meticulous efforts in data collection, analysis, and the development of this support throughout the 30-working-day survey period in May and June 2025. Their professionalism and attention to detail ensured the integrity and depth of the findings presented in this report.

Additionally, with even more weight, we express our heartfelt appreciation to the 201 CSO respondents, focus group discussion participants, and key informants who shared their insights and experiences, enriching this survey with diverse perspectives. Their openness and dedication to promoting rule of law, human rights, and democratic governance inspire the recommendations herein.

Lastly, we acknowledge the views and inputs of individual experts including the anonymous government officials who volunteered to share their inputs without much formalities.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANGOZA	Association of NGOs in Zanzibar
AU	African Union
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCBRT	Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania
CHADEMA	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo
CHRAGG	Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance
CSL	Center for Strategic Litigation
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CWHDs-Tz.	Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders in Tanzania
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
EACSOFF	East African Civil Society Organizations Forum
EALS	East African Law Society
EHAHRDs-Net.	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
EU	European Union
FCS	Foundation for Civil Society
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
HRM	Human Rights Monitors (context of LHRC)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JUWAUZA	Jumuiya ya Wanawake wa Umoja wa Zanzibar
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LGAs	Local Government Authorities
LHRC	Legal and Human Rights Centre
LSF	Legal Services Facility
MELI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Improvement
MUHURI	Muslims for Human Rights (Kenyan CSO, example)
NaCONGO	National Council of NGOs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee

PACSO	Pemba Association for Civil Society Organizations
PALU	Pan African Lawyers Union
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental
PINGO's Forum	Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCATZ	Safeguarding Rule of Law, Civic Space and Accountability in Tanzania
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHIJUWAZA	Shirikisho la Jumuiya za Watu Wenye Ulemavu Zanzibar
SHIVYAWATA	Shirikisho la Vyama vya Watu Wenye Ulemavu Tanzania
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges
TALA	Tanzania Land Alliance
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TAMWA-ZNZ	Tanzania Media Women's Association – Zanzibar
TANLAP	Tanzania Network of Legal Aid Providers
TAPNET	Tanzania Paralegal Network
TCRA	Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority
TEN/MET	Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
THRDC	Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition
TLS	Tanganyika Law Society
TMBs	Treaty Monitoring Bodies
TNRF	Tanzania Natural Resource Forum
TOR	Terms of Reference
TZS	Tanzanian Shilling
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WLAC	Women Legal Aid Centre
ZAFELA	Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association
ZLS	Zanzibar Law Society

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Capacity Gap Analysis of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, commissioned by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) under the EU-funded SCATZ project. Conducted over 30 working days in May and June 2025, the survey aimed to evaluate CSOs' capacities in promoting rule of law, human rights, and civic space.

The survey employed a mixed-methods approach, including an online survey with 201 CSO respondents (81% response rate from 500 targeted), 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) with an average of 15 participants each (150 total), and 15 key informant interviews (KIIs) with CSO leaders, academicians, and activists. The sample was diverse, with 78% of CSOs focusing on human rights, 67% on gender equality, and 54% on youth empowerment; 70% operated nationally, while only 2% were grassroots-based. Organizationally, 41% had 6–10 staff, and 29% had budgets of TZS 10–50 million (USD 4,000–20,000).

Key Findings

- a) **Legal Literacy and Strategic Litigation Capacity:** Only 17.4% of CSOs (12.9% strong, 4.5% very strong) rated their legal literacy as strong or very strong, with 60.2% moderate. Just 12% engaged in strategic litigation, hindered by insufficient financial resources (82.2%), lack of legal expertise (68.9%), and fear of government backlash (42.2%). Strengths include partnerships with legal aid organizations (84.4%), offering opportunities for enhanced advocacy.
- b) **Institutional Resilience and Internal Governance:** Leadership effectiveness in managing external risks was rated moderately effective by 58.7%, with only 20.88% (17.4% effective, 3.48% very effective) highly effective. Only 15.9% had fully implemented risk management strategies, and 48.7% reported weak board oversight. Governance gaps included insufficient skilled staff (65.7%) and unclear policies (63.7%). Strengths were high adoption of financial management and governance structures (both above 70%).

- c) **Scope and Effectiveness of Collaboration and Coalition-Building:** Collaboration was rated moderately effective by 41.3%, effective by 31.9%, and very effective by 19.4%. Competition for funding (77.2%), differing priorities (62.6%), and lack of trust (57.7%) were key barriers. Only 42.3% actively participated in regional/international networks, though 89.6% showed interest. Strengths include diverse coalition forms (thematic, geographic, professional, etc.).
- d) **Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Capacities:** Resource mobilization was moderately effective for 44.8%, with only 20.4% (14.9% effective, 5.5% very effective) highly effective. Over 70% faced funding challenges, with 69.7% lacking proposal-writing skills and 49.8% relying on single donors. Funding sources included international donors (64.7%), local donors (59.7%), and social enterprises (39.8%). Only 5% had resource mobilization strategy documents (FCS 2023).
- e) **Priority Capacity-Building Needs and Institutional Support Requirements:** Top internal gaps were staff training (64.7%), legal expertise (54.7%), and financial resources (49.8%). External challenges included economic instability (59.7%), political interference (54.7%), and restrictive laws (49.8%). CSOs prioritized legal literacy training (64.7%), technical support (54.7%), and networking (49.8%).
- f) **Legal Frameworks:** Presence of restrictive legal frameworks and other related-barriers to CSOs' participation e.g., in elections and governance generally. CSOs play a vital role in promoting democracy, rule of law, civic engagement, and electoral transparency. However, restrictive laws and administrative hurdles limit their participation in governance and electoral processes, undermining democratic principles. Some of barriers are:
 - i) **Complex permit requirements** – CSOs must secure government permits to deliver social services, to conduct research, to conduct voter education, election monitoring, and democracy-related initiatives. These permits are often delayed or denied, preventing effective civic engagement.
 - ii) **Limitations on election monitoring** – Despite the critical role of CSOs in electoral transparency, some organizations have been barred from observing elections, restricting their ability to hold institutions accountable.

- iii) Criminalization of civic education – Certain laws criminalize or impose stringent restrictions on civic and voter education programs, preventing organizations from informing citizens about their rights.
- iv) Political intimidation and legal threats – Organizations engaging in governance and democracy initiatives face harassment, legal threats, and even deregistration, discouraging political engagement.
- v) NGOs in Tanzania face challenges in engaging in democratic governance and protecting civic space due to restrictive laws, including the NGO Act, which limits their ability to advocate for policy reforms, electoral participation, and government accountability.
- vi) Lack of Legal Recognition for CSO Networks and Coalitions: The legal framework does not recognize CSO networks and coalitions as independent entities, forcing them to operate under the same NGO regulations, creating contradictions in governance, reporting, and engagement with government and stakeholders.
- vii) Contradictory Compliance and Reporting Requirements: Some reporting tools require CSO networks to follow NGO compliance frameworks, which contradicts their structural differences, causing inconsistencies in governance, financial accountability, and engagement processes.
- g) Miscellaneous Issues: According to the survey, the civic space is perceived as somewhat or significantly more open by 47.3%, but 35.8% saw restrictions. Only 2% operated at grassroots levels, limiting community reach. Advocacy was daily for 49.3%, but 70% of press releases focused on “soft” issues, with only 30% addressing civil/political rights, reflecting avoidance of sensitive topics. However, there are still some (assortment of) issues that need further reforms, including:
 - i) Human rights defenders and CSOs notwithstanding several challenges, stand as the largest force advocating for justice, rule of law and equal societies. Their ranks have swelled to over 30,000 organizations, a remarkable growth compared to years past. Yet, the strength of their numbers has not translated into an equal strength of resolve. CSOs on the other hand, do a remarkable contribution to service delivery programs. For instance, 40–50% of social services projects such as education and health services are delivered by CSOs in the Country. This

implies that, CSOs have opted mainly to concentrate on few selected areas of human rights promotion at the expense of other areas such as those touching issues of accountability, good governance, elections, criminal justice, corruption, rule of law, freedoms and liberties. These are foundational rights that beacon the enjoyment of other rights.

- ii) Security threats and restrictive legal environments loom large, while fear and disunity propagate unwillingness to continue with human rights work. The cohesion that once united these defenders has fractured, leaving many unwilling to confront human rights violations. For instance, when issues such as the plight of pastoralist communities in Ngorongoro arose, only a handful of organizations dared to defend the community as well to engage and advise the government. Yet, the efforts of CSOs and defenders to shield them fall inadequate and uncoordinated, leaving the nation's youth exposed to the scourge of neglect and abuse.
- iii) The capacity and energy of CSOs/HRDs to establish mutual and strategic partnerships with bar associations, government departments and other key actors is diminishing. The findings of this study indicates that only few CSOs have partnership agreements (MoU) with Bar Associations and other actors of rule of laws.
- iv) Forty years since human rights were inscribed into the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, the pace of human rights advocacy continues to weaken. Though the tools of advocacy have advanced into digital, and the numbers of defenders have grown, the will to act remains insufficient. As further indicated in this report, the decline of CSOs activism is also frustrated by, among other reasons, the lack of human rights grants for human rights protection and advocacy work. As of recent, many donors have shifted their interest to more business support as well as supporting mainly international, UN agencies and their home grown CSOs which by obvious reasons cannot do human right activism in Tanzania. This is why, aid localization agenda must be prioritized as part of improving the state of human rights activism and advocacy in Tanzania.
- v) According to THRDC reports, between 2023 and 2025 years, Tanzania's human rights landscape presented a challenging retrogressive journey to the work of HRDs, lawyers and CSOs. While the nation enjoyed for the first two years (2021 and 2022) a progressive journey in the field of

human rights, rule of law and democracy, the following years' experience significant change of events coupled with escalation of cases human rights violations, suppression of civic space, enforced disappearances and the work of HRDs. For the year 2024 THRDC documented 48 incidents of abductions and attacks of HRDs, political activists and other people.

Conclusion

The THRDC 2025 survey reveals a fragile yet promising landscape for CSO activism in Tanzania, characterized by significant gaps in legal literacy, governance, collaboration, and financial sustainability, offset by resilience in community mobilization and coalition diversity. The overarching lesson emphasizes the need for unified, well-resourced, and legally empowered CSOs to navigate a constrained civic environment. The primary recommendation is to implement targeted capacity-building, foster strategic coalitions, and diversify funding to transform CSOs into robust advocates for human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance, aligning with SCATZ's mission to enhance accountability and justice. This study reminds us that it is crucial to recognize both internal and external challenges facing civil society organizations in Tanzania. The need for strategic engagement and partnerships is important to provide a platform for CSOs, donors, and policy actors to evaluate key issues and develop actionable solutions for strengthening civil society's role in creating a justice and democratic society. THRDC has been calling upon the government, development partners, bar associations and civil society actors; to expand democratic space and remove legal barriers to CSO engagement; to ensure sustainable financing by facilitating direct donor support for local organizations and to enhance collaboration between CSOs, government agencies, bar association and development partners to foster the culture of respecting rule of law, human rights and inclusive governance.

General Recommendations

- a) Short-Term Interventions: Enhance legal advocacy through scenario-based litigation training, strengthen governance via mentorship hubs, and catalyze coalitions with pilot advocacy platforms.
- b) Long-Term Strategies: Reform restrictive NGO laws through multi-stakeholder campaigns, build financial sustainability with social enterprise incubators, and deepen global integration via a CSO hub for international human rights engagement.

- c) Stakeholder-Specific Recommendations:
 - o CSOs: Strengthen resilience with digital risk management tools and institutionalize advocacy units.
 - o THRDC/SCATZ Partners: Develop a digital collaboration platform and revise SCATZ's results framework to align with baseline indicators.
 - o Donors: Pioneer multi-year, flexible grants and invest in CSO tech/social enterprise ventures.
- d) Feasibility and Impact: Optimize resources with cost-benefit analyses, maximize advocacy by aligning with civic dynamics, and ensure sustainability through network-embedded capacity-building.
- e) Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Improvement (MELI): Track progress with SMART indicators, evaluate change via periodic assessments, and adapt dynamically with CSO feedback loops.
- f) Advancing Financial Sustainability:
 - o Advocate for direct donor funding to indigenous CSOs, minimizing over reliance on INGOs and UN agencies in rule of law and governance related projects.
 - o Leveraging on the existing domestic resource mobilization strategies, engaging private sector partners and philanthropists.
 - o Explore innovative funding models, such as impact investing, social enterprises, endowment funds, and blended finance initiatives.
- g) Promoting an Enabling Legal and Political Environment:
 - o Engage in legal reforms to reforms restrictive laws that hinder CSO participation in democracy and governance.
 - o Strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure CSOs can conduct voter education, election monitoring, and civic engagement activities without excessive government interference and restriction to publish information and reports.
 - o Collaborate with international organizations to hold the government accountable for upholding democratic principles and human rights standards.
 - o Advocate for adoption of the proposed HRDs Model Policy submitted by to the government in 2025.
 - o Reform all the laws affecting the rights of HRDs and free operations of CSOs.

- h) Expanding Civic Space and Public Engagement:
 - o Promote policy dialogues between CSOs, government agencies, bar associations, academia, FBOs and donors to foster mutual understanding and collaboration.
 - o Support human rights defenders and grassroots activists by establishing legal protection mechanisms.
 - o Facilitate community-driven initiatives that encourage citizen participation in governance.
- i) CSOs (NGO) law and policy reforms:
 - o There is a pressing need to establish a clear legal framework that recognizes CSO coalitions as independent entities, harmonizes compliance and reporting mechanisms, and expands civic space to enable NGOs and CSOs to effectively participate in democratic governance and advocacy.
 - o Develop new NGOs Policy and reform the current NGOs regulation which restrict NGOs life span to 10 years.
- j) Strengthening CSO-Donor-Government Collaboration:
 - o Advocate for the adoption of OECD-DAC recommendations to ensure direct funding and policy inclusion for CSOs.
 - o Encourage multi-stakeholder platforms that facilitate regular engagements between CSOs, donors, and policymakers.
 - o Improve CSO accountability and transparency, demonstrating the impact of their work to gain donor trust and public support.

PART ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive Needs Assessment and Capacity Gap Analysis of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. The assessment was commissioned by the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) as part of an implementation of the European Union-funded project, “Safeguarding Rule of Law, Civic Space and Accountability in Tanzania through Enhanced Collaboration and Partnerships (SCATZ).”

The survey was conducted over 30 working days in May and June 2025. It employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating a national survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews to engage a diverse range of CSOs across various regions and thematic areas. The survey evaluated critical aspects influencing CSOs’ resilience and effectiveness, including legal literacy, strategic litigation, institutional governance, strategic collaboration, and resource mobilization.

Furthermore, the survey set to identify current institutional, legal , operational, and strategic challenges faced by CSOs while also recognizing their strengths and opportunities for growth. As such, by providing such evidence-based insights, the report establishes a baseline to guide targeted capacity-building interventions, ensuring these are relevant, effective, and aligned with the needs of CSOs operating within a complex civic environment. Moreover, the findings are designed to empower CSOs to address legal and political challenges, strengthen their activism especially through advocacy efforts, and fostering an enhanced collaboration at national, regional, and international levels.

The THRDC and its partners intend to translate the recommendations of this report into actionable interventions that enhance, inter alia, CSOs’ governance, sustainability, partnerships, and collective influence i.e., building a more effective civil society sector that is capable of driving inclusive development and accountability across Tanzania.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

1.2.1 Overall Focus and Rationale

To systematically identify, document, and analyze the institutional, legal, operational, and strategic challenges faced by CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, focusing on their capacity to promote the rule of law, protect human rights, and enhance access to justice within a perceived constrained civic space. This assessment serves as a foundational tool to inform the design of targeted capacity-building initiatives under the SCATZ project, so as to ensure that CSOs' human rights advocacy is invigorated, relevant, effective, and results-driven.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

As per terms of reference, the specific objectives of this survey were:

- a) To evaluate the legal literacy and strategic litigation capacities of CSOs, assessing their ability to interpret and navigate restrictive laws, engage in public interest litigation, and pursue legal advocacy in the current civic environment.
- b) To assess the institutional resilience and internal governance structures of CSOs, examining their leadership, decision-making processes, risk management mechanisms, and operational effectiveness under legal, political, and administrative pressures.
- c) To analyze the scope and effectiveness of collaboration and coalition-building among CSOs, both within Tanzania and regionally, including their coordination with umbrella bodies, networks, bar associations and contributions to collective advocacy on rule of law and human rights issues.
- d) To examine the sustainability and resource mobilization capacities of CSOs, reviewing their approaches to accessing funding, engaging with donors, and developing long-term financial and operational sustainability plans.
- e) To identify priority capacity-building needs and institutional support requirements, providing evidence-based, actionable recommendations to strengthen CSOs' roles in promoting accountability, access to justice, partnerships and democratic governance through constructive engagement with state institutions and legal frameworks.
- f) To examine how the current restrictive legal and policy environment affects the level of activism and human rights advocacy by CSOs in Tanzania.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Study Design

As said earlier, the survey employed a mixed-methods approach to ensure a comprehensive and clear or deeper understanding of CSOs capacities, challenges and some lessons including their aspirations for improvements. This approach combined quantitative data collection through a survey with qualitative insights gathered via focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) that were physically conducted in Arusha and Unguja; and also, through online FGDs and KIIs.

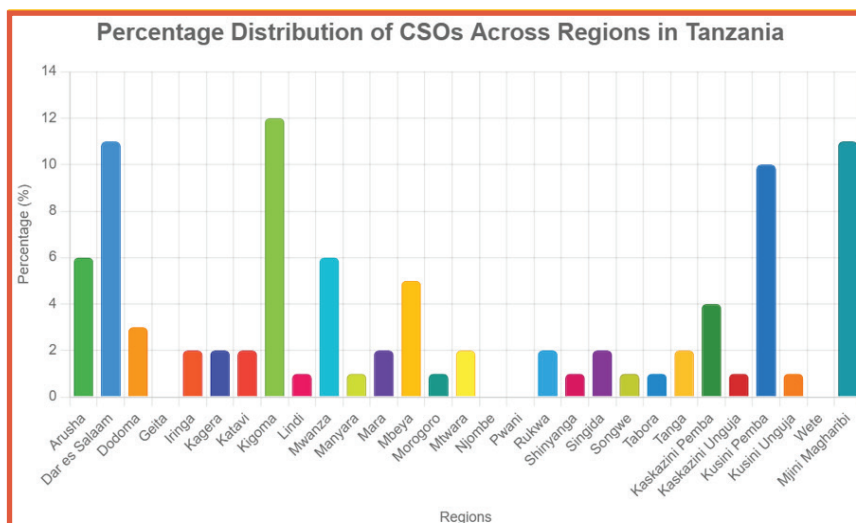
A desk review of relevant documents, including the SCATZ project documents, existing laws, policies, and prior CSO assessments e.g., the FCS' baseline survey of 2023¹ also under EU funding, complemented the primary data collection. The mixed-methods design allowed for triangulation of findings, which in return, enhanced the reliability and depth of the analysis by cross-verifying quantitative trends with qualitative narratives.

1.3.2 Sampling Strategy

The study targeted a representative sample of 201 CSOs, covering all regions including the 11 zones of the THRDC in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.² It also covered member organizations of other CSO networks such as the Association of NGOs in Zanzibar (ANGOZA), the Pemba Association for Civil Society Organizations (PACSO), the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOFF); and, the thematic-based networks (on women, children, disability, etc.). Figure below shows flow of responses per regions.

1 Reference: FCS, Baseline Study on the Policy and Legal Environment for Engagement of CSOs in Democratic Governance in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. July 2023.

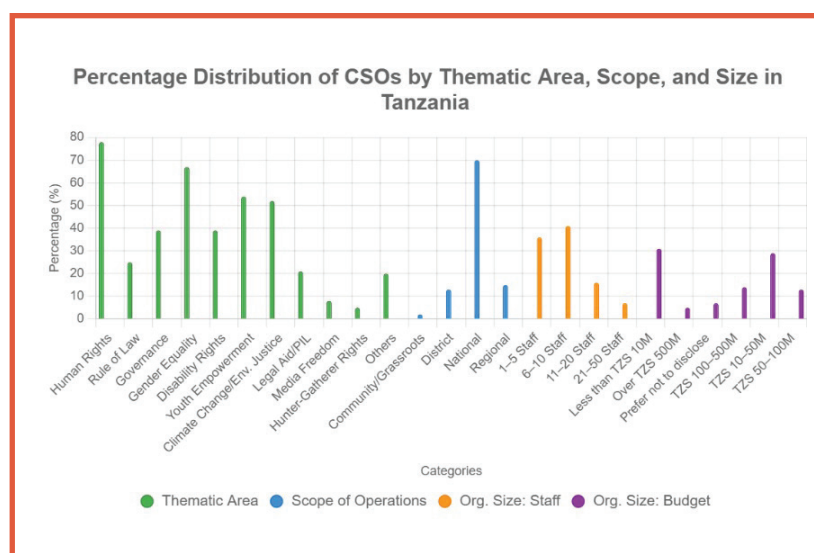
2 The zones included East Coast (Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Coastal Regions), Central (Dodoma, Morogoro, Singida), East Lake (Mwanza, Simiyu, Mara), West Lake (Kagera, Geita, Shinyanga), Western (Kigoma, Katavi, Tabora), Northern (Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara), Southern Coastal (Ruvuma, Mtwara, Lindi), Southern Highlands (Mbeya, Sumbawanga, Rukwa), Southern (Iringa, Njombe), and Zanzibar (Unguja, Pemba).



According to this figure, the regions with higher CSO responses (10%–12%) are Kigoma, Dar es Salaam, Mjini Magharibi, and Kusini Pemba, while those with the lowest responses (0%–2%) include Geita, Njombe, Pwani, Wete, Lindi, Manyara, Morogoro, Shinyanga, Songwe, Tabora, Kaskazini Unguja, Kusini Unguja, Iringa, Kagera, Katavi, Mara, Mtwara, Rukwa, Singida, and Tanga. Reasons for these variations could be internet coverage or connectivity and presence of CSOs' networks.

The sampling strategy ensured diversity across several criteria, including, the thematic focus (e.g., civil, economic, social rights, gender, children, disability, environmental, indigenous population, youth, advocacy, service provision, legal aid, etc.; scope of operation (international, national, regional, and, district); and, nature of registration. Figure below shows responses of CSOs per all these criteria (grouped and narrated below).

The chart here reveals a diverse distribution of CSOs in Tanzania, with 78% primarily focusing on human rights in general, 67% on gender equality, and 54% on youth empowerment, while 5% address hunter-gatherer rights and 8% media freedom. This indicates an inclusive representation of all varied thematic priorities. The scope of operations shows 70% of CSOs operate nationally, contrasting with just 2% at the community/grassroots level. This trend could suggest a broad reach but limited localized engagement. Organizationally, 41% of CSOs have 6–10 staff and 29% operate on budgets of TZS 10–50 million (USD 4,000–20,000), while only 5% exceed TZS 500 million. This one could reflect a modest staffing and financial resources.



Note further that, the sample included both well-established and smaller CSOs (in terms of financial and human resources) to capture a broad spectrum of experiences. The online survey's bio-data section captured all such information.

1.3.3 Data Collection Tools

As said earlier, the study utilized three primary data collection tools, designed to align with the assessment's objectives and ensure comprehensive coverage of CSO capacities and challenges:

- a) Online Survey:** A structured online survey, hosted on eWater platform, was distributed to more than 500 CSOs across Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, of which 201 (81% of target) responded. The online survey, available in English and Kiswahili, was disseminated through THRDC and partner networks and remained open for two weeks to maximize response rates. The survey included Likert-scale questions, multiple-choice selections, and a few open-ended fields to capture nuanced insights.
- b) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Two physical (in Arusha and Unguja) and eight virtual FGDs were conducted, each involving an average of 15 participants. The purpose was to gather in-depth qualitative insights. The participants included CSO leaders and senior program officers. The participatory techniques, such as SWOC analysis and problem ranking, were employed to encourage candid discussions on institutional capacity, advocacy challenges, and collaboration.
- c) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Fifteen KIIs were conducted with diverse stakeholders, mostly being the CSO leaders, academicians and 'veteran' human rights activists who are familiar with Tanzania's civic space. Each interview, lasting 30–45 minutes, followed a semi-structured guide to explore governance, legal advocacy, and partnership dynamics. One KII specifically intended to focus on Zanzibar's regulatory environment especially with regard to the NGOs Bill which has remained pending for over five years.

1.3.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative survey data were cleaned and analyzed using Excel and statistical software (SPSS) to generate descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and correlations as figures in this report show. The qualitative data from FGDs, KIIs, and open-ended survey were manually analyzed e.g., by picking some narrations and quotes presented in this report.

1.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The design, data collection and further analysis of this survey was guided by analytical frameworks (SWOC, PESTLE, OCA,³ and OECD-DAC criteria) to identify key themes, such as critical capacity gaps, institutional strengths, and external factors affecting performance. The OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, etc.), were applied to assess the alignment of identified needs with project objectives (guided by TOR) and the feasibility of proposed interventions. Below is a brief description of each framework and the main issues analyzed, tailored to the study's objectives of promoting rule of law, human rights, and civic space.

1.4.1 SWOC Analysis

The SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) framework, as hinted above, was used to assess the internal and external factors influencing CSO effectiveness in promoting rule of law, civic space, and human rights activism generally. Internally, the analysis examined strengths (and weaknesses), such as availability of all forms of resources, leadership issues, presence of necessary skills e.g., legal literacy and systems e.g., policies and governance structures.

Externally, it explored opportunities, such as emerging policy dialogues or partnerships with legal aid providers, and threats, like restrictive laws or political interference – all PESTLE factors. Key issues analyzed included CSOs' level of activism (e.g., advocacy, litigation, campaigns, etc.), capacity for legal navigation, collaboration effectiveness, and resource mobilization strategies. This framework was applied during FGDs and survey responses to map CSOs' internal capabilities and external constraints.

1.4.2 PESTLE Analysis

The PESTLE (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental) framework evaluated the external macro-environmental factors affecting CSOs' operations and advocacy efforts. Issues analyzed included political factors (e.g., government openness or interference), economic conditions (e.g., funding availability), social attitudes (e.g., public support for human rights), technological access (e.g., virtual collaboration tools), legal restrictions (e.g., regulatory frameworks), etc.

3 That is, consideration of CSOs' interventions and level of activism through an assessment of their internal strengths and weaknesses, also external opportunities and challenges (SWOC); The external opportunities and challenges were assessed by considering a number of factors including the political, economic, social, technologic, legal and environmental (PESTLE). The performance in terms of CSOs' capacity to operate (OCA) was also considered.

These factors were assessed against international legal frameworks governing Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and civic space to gauge compliance and gaps in Tanzania's civic environment. The relevant frameworks included:

- a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948: Establishes the foundational rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association (Articles 19–20), critical for CSO operations.
- b) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966: Guarantees rights to peaceful assembly and association (Articles 21–22), ratified by Tanzania in 1976, serving as a benchmark for civic space.
- c) Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1998: Known as the UN Declaration on HRDs, it affirms the rights of CSOs to advocate for human rights and access resources.
- d) African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981: Protects freedom of association and expression (Articles 10–11), adopted by the African Union and ratified by Tanzania in 1984.
- e) Resolution 68/181 of the UN General Assembly of 2013: Promotes the protection of HRDs, urging states to ensure a safe and enabling environment for CSOs.
- f) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003: Known as the Maputo Protocol, it supports CSO advocacy for gender equality, relevant for organizations focusing on women's rights.

The PESTLE analysis, as said earlier, was conducted through survey questions (e.g., barriers to activism, changes in civic space) and KIIs, identified how external factors align or conflict with these international standards, highlighting areas for policy advocacy.

1.4.3 Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA)

The OCA framework focused on evaluating CSOs' internal institutional resilience and governance structures. It analyzed leadership effectiveness, decision-making processes, risk management strategies (e.g., for security, financial, or legal risks), and financial accountability. Key issues included the presence of formal governance policies, board oversight, staff capacity, and best practices in risk management. The framework was applied to survey responses (e.g., governance gaps, resource

mobilization strategies) and FGD discussions, which explored operational efficiency and resilience under external pressures. The OCA helped identify priority capacity-building needs, such as training in governance or diversified funding models, to enhance CSOs' sustainability and advocacy impact.

1.4.4 OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria

The OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee) criteria, namely; relevance (also coherency), effectiveness, efficiency, results, and sustainability, guided the evaluation of CSO strategies and proposed interventions.

The analysis assessed the relevance of CSOs' main interventions to their mandates and the SCATZ project's goals, the effectiveness of current advocacy and collaboration efforts, the efficiency of resource use (e.g., avoiding duplication) and capacity gaps, the potential results of addressing identified changes being earned, and the sustainability of proposed interventions beyond projects or interventions' supports. These criteria were applied to survey data (e.g., priority needs, intervention preferences) and stakeholder feedback, among other aspects.

1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study adhered to strict ethical standards to protect participants (interviewees) and ensure the integrity of the data. Informed consent was obtained from all survey respondents, FGD participants, and KII interviewees, with clear explanations of the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and data anonymity. The online interviewees were given options to 'accept' or 'refuse' responding to the questionnaires. Moreover, the online survey responses were anonymized, and sensitive information (e.g., CSO names, personal details, etc.) was optional or excluded from reporting even in this report.

The FGDs and KIIs were conducted in secure physical and virtual environments, with recordings permitted only with explicit consent and stored securely. Inclusivity was prioritized by engaging CSOs of varying sizes and other factors mentioned earlier including perspectives from 'special' groups (e.g., disability rights and youth-focused CSOs). There was an effort to mitigate potential biases e.g., over-representation of urban and peri-urban CSOs by engaging a number of geographical and thematic networks with broader outreach to rural and grassroots areas. However, as it is indicated above, limited internet coverage in some of rural areas was a barrier to reach remote-based CSOs.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Scope Constraints

The survey was conducted within a tight 30-working-day timeframe, limiting the depth of in-person engagements. The resource constraints restricted additional site visits beyond Arusha, Unguja and Dar es Salaam. However, virtual consultation sessions were opted and worked relatively perfect.

1.6.2 Data Challenges

The survey response rates varied across regions, with potential under-representation of rural CSOs due to connectivity issues as said earlier. Self-reported data may include biases, such as over- or underestimation of capacities, though triangulation with FGDs and KIs mitigated this.

1.6.3 Contextual Differences

The differences in legal and operational environments between Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar required careful analysis, but time constraints limited exhaustive comparison. This opens a door for similar studies in future.

PART TWO

LEGAL, POLICY, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING CSOS IN TANZANIA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of legal, policy, and institutional frameworks governing Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, as presented in this Part Two, is essential for understanding the systemic constraints and opportunities shaping their activism and operational resilience. These frameworks could, indeed, influence CSOs' ability to register, access resources, advocate for human rights, and engage in governance, thereby impacting civic space, among other aspects as per the SCATZ project's objectives. This Part of the report examines the regulatory environment, with a focus on, among other issues, critical gaps that hinder CSOs' effectiveness in human rights related advocacy. The section also proposes some reforms e.g., to create an enabling environment aligned with international human rights standards.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING CSOS AND HRDs

There is no international or regional legal instrument is dedicated solely or specifically to CSOs. However, as this survey found, an extensive and dynamic body of global (i.e., United Nations (UN)) and regional (i.e., African level) frameworks safeguards the essential freedoms of association, assembly, expression, access to information, and participation in governance, which underpin the work of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and therefore, civil society actors. These frameworks articulate precise obligations for Tanzania to cultivate an enabling environment for CSO activism, resonating with the project's mission to promote human rights, rule of law, etc. The following sub-sections delve into global standards, including key UN resolutions, explore regional commitments, and assess their collective relevance to Tanzania e.g., level of compliance to such standards.

2.2.1 Overview of Global Standards

As it is hinted above – in the introductory subsection, the global legal framework for CSOs or HRDs is anchored in foundational instruments that enshrine fundamental freedoms, which are critical to their advocacy and other mandates. For instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR) establishes a cornerstone by guaranteeing freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly in Articles 19 and 20, affirming the inherent rights of individuals and groups to engage in civic activities without restriction. On the other hand, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 (ICCPR), ratified by Tanzania in 1976, elaborates these protections in Articles 19, 21, and 22, obligating states to ensure that ‘everyone’, in this case, including CSOs, can form, operate, and advocate freely, subject only to narrowly defined limitations necessary in a democratic society. It is noted further that, this covenant also safeguards access to information, vital for evidence-based advocacy, and prohibits arbitrary interference with associational rights.

The Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1998, widely recognized as the UN Declaration on HRDs, is a fundamental instrument as it explicitly endorses the role of HRDs (including CSOs as said earlier) in advancing human rights generally. The declaration articulates their rights to seek, obtain, and disseminate information, access funding, and engage in public advocacy without fear of reprisal, emphasizing state responsibilities to protect these actors from harassment or intimidation.

Complementing such instruments, a series of UN resolutions further strengthens protections for civil society. For instance, Resolution 68/181 of the United Nations General Assembly of 2013 urges states to create safe and enabling environments for HRDs, condemning attacks, arbitrary arrests, and restrictions on their work. Furthermore, Resolution 22/6 of the United Nations Human Rights Council of 2013 specifically addresses civic space, recognizing the critical role of CSOs in democratic governance and calling for the protection of freedoms of association and assembly. Additionally, Resolution 24/24 of the United Nations Human Rights Council of 2013 reinforces the right to peaceful assembly, urging states to facilitate public gatherings and refrain from excessive restrictions, a principle vital for CSO-led advocacy campaigns.

The Resolution 32/31 of the United Nations Human Rights Council of 2016 further emphasizes an importance of an open civic space. It specifically, emphasize that states must ensure CSOs can operate online and offline without undue surveillance or censorship, particularly relevant in the digital age.

2.2.2 Regional Frameworks

Tanzania's regional commitments also reinforce its obligations to support CSOs activism within the African and East African (EAC) contexts. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981, ratified by Tanzania in 1984, guarantees freedoms of association and expression in Articles 10 and 11, which could be interpreted to mean an establishment of the continental standard for civil society engagement. It mandates states to protect these rights, which can then enables CSOs to advocate for governance reforms and human rights protections. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003, known as the Maputo Protocol, enhances protections for gender-focused CSOs by promoting women's rights, equality, and participation in decision-making processes, addressing a critical advocacy area in Tanzania.

The East African Community Treaty of 1999, under Article 6, commits Tanzania to uphold principles of good governance, democracy, and human rights, creating an expectation for an enabling environment where CSOs can engage in regional advocacy on issues such as electoral integrity and cross-border human rights concerns. Similarly, the Southern African Development Community Treaty of 1992 (SADC Treaty), in Article 4, emphasizes democratic principles and the rule of law, encouraging the active participation of CSOs in governance and development processes.

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, through resolutions such as Resolution 69 of 2004 on the Protection of HRDs in Africa, further calls for states to safeguard CSOs and HRDs, urging the adoption of national laws that align with international standards. Other initiatives include the adoption of the Kigali Declaration of 2008 and the appointment of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and the Focal Point on Reprisals of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission) were adopted at the Commission's 60th Ordinary Session held in Niamey, Niger, from 8 to 22 May 2017.

2.3 NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING CSOS IN TANZANIA MAINLAND

According to the stakeholders interviewed during this survey, the current legal frameworks governing CSOs in Tanzania Mainland is 'overburdening' them as it is comprised of a complex web of statutes, regulations, and administrative practices that regulate their registration, operations, taxation, advocacy, access to information, statistics, digital engagement, and exposure to penal sanctions. As it is further described in coming Part of this report, these frameworks, while providing regulatory structure, frequently impose restrictive measures that constrain civic space and limit operational autonomy – among other barriers.

Anchored by the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Act of 2002; and, the Societies Act, Cap. 337 (R.E. 2019); the Trustees Incorporation Act, Cap. 375 (R.E. 2019), the legal environment is further shaped by tax, information, digital, penal, and operational permit requirements. This section (below) offers a detailed analysis of these frameworks, their provisions, challenges, and implications for CSO activism, concluding with actionable recommendations for reform to align with international human rights standards and enhance CSO effectiveness.

2.3.1 Laws Governing CSO Registration and Operations

CSO registration and operations in Tanzania Mainland are governed by four primary statutes, each tailored to specific organizational types but collectively creating a centralized and often burdensome regulatory landscape. The NGOs Act of 2002 defines NGOs as voluntary, non-profit entities established for public benefit, including Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), under Section 2. Registration with the Registrar of NGOs, appointed by the President under Section 3(1) within the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Special Groups, is mandatory per Section 12. NGOs must submit a constitution, work plan, and proof of non-profit status, but the process is marred by 'bureaucratic delays' according to some of the respondents, particularly for rural organizations, often taking months to complete. Section 29 mandates annual reports, financial statements, and activity disclosures, with non-compliance risking deregistration under Section 33.

Note: The 2019's Legal amendments introduced tighter oversight mandates

The 2019 amendments, introduced through the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) No. 3 Act of 2019, intensified oversight by requiring detailed funding source disclosures under Section 31, raising concerns about state interference,

especially for advocacy-focused NGOs. This over-centralization, coupled with vague deregistration grounds, undermines freedom of association, a right enshrined in Article 20 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, and restricts CSOs' ability to operate independently.

According to THRDC reports , the following are some of the stubborn challenges imposed by the NGOs laws and regulations to NGOs in Tanzania.

a) Imposition of Criminal Sanctions

Section 35(1) of the NGOs Act as amended in 2019 through the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act No 03 of 2019, imposes a range of criminal sanctions on NGOs and their leaders.

- i) It criminalizes acts such as making false statements during registration, conducting fundraising activities in violation of the law, and operating an NGO without formal registration.
 - ii) Furthermore, Section 36(1) holds that where an offense is committed by an NGO, individual office bearers can be personally liable and prosecuted. This provision seriously undermines the principle of corporate legal personality, exposing leaders to personal risk even for organizational actions undertaken in good faith.
 - iii) There are also other criminal sanctions under the Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendments) Regulations of 2018. The Regulations introduced several serious administrative and criminal obligations for NGOs. One major challenge lies in Regulation 15(2), which establishes that any act of non-compliance with the provisions of Part IV of the NGO Regulations of 2004 may constitute a criminal offense. The language of this regulation is very broad and vague, making it difficult for NGOs to clearly understand what specific acts or omissions could trigger criminal sanctions. This uncertainty exposes NGOs to arbitrary enforcement and potentially harsh penalties simply for administrative mistakes or delays.
- b) Regulation 13 of the Non-Governmental Organizations (Amendments) Regulations, 2018 adds yet another layer of difficulty by requiring that any NGO receiving funds exceeding twenty million Tanzanian shillings must publish details bi-annually in widely circulated newspapers and other accessible media. In addition, NGOs must submit copies of any contracts or agreements with donors to the Treasury and the Registrar within ten

days of signing for approval. Submitting contracts to registrar of NGOs for records of NGOs contribution and transparency purposes has not been a big problem, but the requirement for approval has been complained to be against standards of NGOs financial independence and autonomy. These requirements not only increase the administrative load but also raise serious concerns about CSOs financial independence, operational independence and donor confidentiality.

- c) Recruitment of Law Enforcement Organs to Assist Registrar to Perform his Functions. Section 4A of the NGOs Act as amended in 2019, authorize the Registrar of NGOs to collaborate with law enforcement organs in the performance of his duties, including the investigation of any matter concerning NGOs. While this provision may be intended to enhance regulatory compliance, it introduces several serious challenges for NGOs. The involvement of police and other law enforcement agencies in matters that are primarily administrative where no crime has been established creates an atmosphere of mistrust and fear, rather than promoting the spirit of mutual partnership envisioned under the Public Private Partnership Policy of 2003.
- d) Certificate Renewal Requirement: The amendments to the NGO Act in 2019 introduced a new requirement for the renewal of registration certificates.⁴ According to Section 17 of the Act, an NGO's certificate of registration must be renewed every ten years, with the application for renewal to be submitted six months before the expiry date. Importantly, the decision to renew or not to renew a certificate rest solely with the NGOs Coordination Board, creating a significant level of uncertainty for NGOs' long-term existence. In effect, this requirement compels NGOs to re-register every ten years, exposing them to the risk of arbitrary denial of renewal based on factors unrelated to compliance or public interest.

The Societies Act, Cap. 337 (R.E. 2019) regulates associations of ten or more individuals formed for professional, social, or cultural purposes, as defined in Section 2. Registration with the Registrar of Societies under the Ministry of Home Affairs, per Section 6, requires a constitution and member list, but administrative bottlenecks frequently delay approvals, disproportionately affecting grassroots CSOs in remote areas as said earlier. Section 11 mandates annual returns, while

⁴ Section 34 of the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act (No. 3) of 2019.

Section 14 empowers the Minister to declare societies unlawful, a provision with broad discretionary scope that threatens survival of CSOs. The lack of effective appeal mechanisms exacerbates this risk, limiting judicial recourse and stifling freedom of assembly, also protected under Article 20 of the Constitution. The societies also lack self-regulatory mechanisms – the like of NaCONGO which is operational under the NGOs Act of 2002.

The Trustees Incorporation Act, Cap. 375 (R.E. 2019) governs trusts established for religious, educational, or charitable purposes, as outlined in Section 2(1). Registration with the Administrator-General under the Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, per Section 3, involves submitting trust deeds and objectives. Section 10 requires annual accounts, with non-compliance risking dissolution under Section 14. However, the narrow definition of “charitable” excludes advocacy-oriented trusts, restricting their applicability for human rights-focused CSOs and creating barriers for organizations seeking to address governance issues.

2.3.2 Taxation Framework and Its Impact

The tax regime in Tanzania does not differentiate between profit-making and non-profit making organizations. They are all consolidated into one group. However, are treated as ‘tax collectors’ on behalf of revenue authority (TRA) e.g., through Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and withholding taxes. The law mandates a newly registered NGOs to have an automated tax obligation after registration without taking into consideration that NGO depends on donor funds to be established and operated.

Apparently, due to such and other legal regime’s approach, the majority CSOs interviewed, as indicated in part three of this report, were of the view that, the taxation laws in Tanzania impose substantial financial burdens on them (i.e., CSOs) by treating them similarly to profit-making entities. ‘This situation threatens our sustainability and operational capacity, as we almost totally depend on donors funds. We are not doing business,’ said the Arusha based CSO representative.

The Income Tax Act of 2004 classifies CSOs as “corporations” under Section 3, subjecting them to corporate tax unless granted charitable status under Section 64(1). Charitable status, narrowly defined under Section 64(8), is limited to organizations focused on poverty relief, education, or public health, excluding advocacy or human rights CSOs. Applications for exemptions, processed under Section 11 of the Tax Administration Act of 2015, face prolonged delays and

ambiguous rejections, with no statutory timeline for rulings, leaving many CSOs vulnerable to unexpected tax liabilities. Section 88 requires quarterly income projections, impractical for donor-dependent CSOs reliant on unpredictable funding cycles, while Section 91(1) mandates certified financial statements, a costly requirement for unfunded organizations. Section 7(2)(h) imposes a 15% withholding tax on directors' fees, despite their often-voluntary roles, further straining CSO budgets and limiting leadership capacity.

The Tax Administration Act of 2015 exacerbates these challenges by mandating automatic issuance of a Taxpayer Identification Number upon registration under Section 22(1), with no grace period for unfunded CSOs. Section 78(1) imposes a TZS 300,000 penalty for delayed monthly returns, including "nil" returns, disproportionately affecting organizations without active grants, which constitute a significant portion of small CSOs. The law requires an NGO to file monthly NIL returns when the NGO has no funds. Due to this practice, the stakeholders urges an amendment of the law so as to allow NGOs which do not have funds to file a formal declaration such as a letter as evidence of their financial status. This provision should apply equally to newly registered NGOs that have not yet received fund. This will definitely ensure fair and inclusive compliance with reporting requirements.

The Value Added Tax Act of 2014 requires CSOs to pay VAT on goods and services unless exempted under Section 6, as amended by the Finance Act of 2021. However, manual approval processes for exemptions, often requiring submission of purchase invoices and ministerial approval, cause significant delays, draining resources and disrupting project implementation. Additional taxes, such as the Skills and Development Levy under the Vocational Education and Training Act of 1994 for CSOs with over ten employees, and PAYE for staff, including volunteers, under Section 5(1) of the Income Tax Act, further constrain operational budgets. Withholding taxes on rent and consultancy services, per Section 7 of the Income Tax Act, add to the financial strain, particularly for grassroots CSOs with limited funding, undermining their ability to deliver community services.

Another concern raised by stakeholders is with the regard to non-inclusion of NGOs' representatives in the National Plan and Budget Guidelines Committee. Under section 15(2) of the Budget Act of 2020, the composition of such committee shall be prescribed by the Minister in the Regulations. The Regulations do not recognize a representative from the NGOs' sector hence NGOs are not necessarily represented.

2.3.3 Access to Information and Statistics

a) Access to Information Act

The access to information and statistics is critical for CSOs' evidence-based advocacy. However, presence of what is perceived as 'restrictive' provisions of some of the laws, significantly limit their ability to obtain and disseminate data, undermining their role in governance and accountability. For instance, the Access to Information Act of 2016 guarantees the right to access information under Section 5, but Section 6 imposes broad exemptions for national security, commercial interests, or public order, creating ambiguity that authorities exploit to withhold data. Section 14 requires written requests, which are often unanswered within the mandated 30-day period, and refusals frequently lack specific reasons, violating transparency principles enshrined in Article 18 of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977. These barriers, in the view of civil society actors, could hinder CSOs' ability to monitor government performance, advocate for policy reforms, or engage communities in civic discourse, particularly on sensitive issues like human rights violations or electoral integrity.

b) Unrecognition of NGOs data as official data under the Statistics Act [Cap 351 R.E 2019]

The Statistics Act was firstly enacted in 2015 and establishes or governs the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) under section 4. Under section 6 of the Act, the Bureau is responsible for the production, coordination, supervision, and dissemination of official statistics, and for the custodianship of official statistics in the country. Section 3 defines official statistics to mean statistics produced, validated, compiled and disseminated by or under the authority of the Bureau. Section 20 places the obligation to produce official statistics to only; the Bureau, the government institutions; and agencies. While this section provides a useful overview, it does not fully acknowledge the role of NGOs in research and data production, potentially overlooking statistics contributed by CSOs.

The Statistics Act of 2015 further constrains CSO research by prohibiting the establishment or operation of data collection systems without NBS authorization under Section 37(1)(b). Publishing unauthorized statistics incurs penalties, including fines from TZS 1 million to TZS 10 million or imprisonment from six months to three years. This restriction stifles independent research on critical issues such as poverty, education, or governance, creating a chilling effect on CSO advocacy.

The broad scope of Section 37 also risks limiting academic freedom and public discourse, as CSOs hesitate to challenge official data or share findings that may conflict with government narratives. These provisions contravene international obligations under Article 19 of the UDHR of 1948, which guarantees the right to seek and impart information, and undermine Tanzania's commitments under Articles 21–22 of the ICCPR of 1966.

2.3.4 Online Content and Media Regulations

The digital and media platforms are vital for CSO advocacy, enabling outreach and public engagement, but stringent regulations suppress these activities, restricting freedom of expression. The Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2017 mandate registration of online platforms under Section 7, with Section 12 prohibiting “disparaging” or satirical content. Violations under Section 16 incur fines up to TZS 5 million or 12 months’ imprisonment. The vague definition of “disparaging” enables selective enforcement, targeting CSOs critical of government policies, particularly during politically sensitive periods like elections. Registration fees and compliance requirements exclude small CSOs from digital spaces, limiting their ability to mobilize communities or amplify marginalized voices.

The Media Services Act of 2016 restricts media operations without licenses under Section 7, while Section 59 criminalizes defamation with fines or imprisonment. These provisions deter CSO collaboration with mainstream media for advocacy, as licensing costs and legal risks disproportionately affect grassroots organizations. The Cybercrimes Act of 2015 criminalizes publishing “false” information under Section 16, with penalties of TZS 5 million or three years’ imprisonment. Its broad scope facilitates harassment of CSOs for critical reports or social media posts, creating a repressive environment for digital activism. These laws violate Article 18 of the Constitution of 1977, which protects freedom of expression, and conflict with Tanzania's obligations under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, undermining CSOs’ ability to engage in public discourse and advance SCATZ’s civic space objectives.

2.3.5 Penal Laws and Criminalization Risks

The penal laws expose CSOs and their personnel to significant criminal liabilities, fostering a ‘chilling’ effect on activism and advocacy. The Penal Code, Cap. 16 criminalizes “unlawful societies” under Section 96, with penalties of up to seven years’ imprisonment, and seditious statements under Section 124. The

vague definition of “unlawful” allows authorities to arbitrarily target advocacy CSOs, particularly those addressing governance or human rights issues. Police discretion in enforcing these provisions intensifies misuse, as seen in cases where CSO leaders face arrests for organizing public events.

The Immigration Act of 1995 regulates permits for foreign CSO staff under Section 10, with non-compliance risking deportation under Section 36. This law has been weaponized to interrogate HRDs expressing critical views, undermining their security and operational freedom, especially for international NGOs. Most relevant incident could be of the number of human rights activists who were denied entry in Tanzania and some, allegedly subjected to torture and other forms of mistreatments as explained below.

Case Study: Some of foreign activists allegedly denied entry into Tanzania and deported



As it was widely reported by several sources,⁵ which this survey relies on, in May 2025, Tanzanian authorities allegedly denied entry to Kenyan human rights activists, including Ms. Martha Karua, Rtd. CJ. Hon. Willy Mutunga, Mr. Hanifa Adan, and Mr. Hussein Khalid, at Julius Nyerere International Airport (Dar es Salaam), detaining and deporting them as they sought to observe the treason trial of CHADEMA chairperson Mr. Tundu A. Lissu, who was arrested on 9th April, 2025, for allegations of treasonous remarks (worth not citing them here). Concurrently, Kenyan activist Mr. Boniface Mwangi and Ugandan lawyer Ms. Agather Atuhaire, also monitoring the trial, were arrested, detained for some days. The duo alleged to have been tortured and sexually assaulted by security officials before being ‘dumped’ at the Kenya and Uganda borders, respectively. These incidents, condemned by a number of human rights institutions including the Amnesty International and the THRDC.

5 Note: Some of the sources are: Reuters, “Kenyan rights activists denied entry to Tanzania for opposition leader’s trial,” published May 19, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/kenyan-rights-activists-denied-entry-tanzania-opposition-leaders-trial-2025-05-19/>; BBC, “Tundu Lissu trial: President Samia warns Kenyan activists against ‘meddling’ in Tanzania affairs,” published May 20, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c4g2rw7zp7no>; Reuters, “Tanzania deports foreign activists supporting detained opposition leader,” published May 20, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tanzanian-police-arrest-foreign-activists-supporting-detained-opposition-leader-2025-05-20/>; Amnesty International, “Tanzania: Torture and forcible deportation of Kenyan and Ugandan activists must be urgently investigated,” published May 23, 2025. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/tanzania-torture-and-forcible-deportation-of-kenyan-and-ugandan-activists-must-be-urgently-investigated/>

The Police Force and Auxiliary Services Act, Cap. 322 requires written notification for assemblies under Section 43, often misinterpreted by authorities as requiring permission. Arbitrary denials of CSO protests or gatherings, particularly those addressing sensitive issues like electoral reforms or land rights, restrict freedom of assembly, guaranteed under Article 20 of the said Constitution of 1977. These penal provisions, combined with administrative directives, create an environment of fear, compelling CSOs to adopt cautious, “soft” advocacy approaches to avoid possible state reprisals. This self-censorship, particularly acute during election periods like this year, limits CSOs’ ability to hold authorities accountable – as the actors in this sector observed during the survey.

2.3.6 Operational Permits and Administrative Requirements

Beyond registration and legal compliance, CSOs face administrative hurdles in obtaining operational permits at the regional and district levels (on part of Mainland Tanzania). The President’s Office, Regional Administration, and Local Government (TAMISEMI) oversees the issuance of permits for CSOs’ projects, a process centralized at its Dodoma headquarters. The applications normally require detailed project plans, budgets, and proof of funding, but the lack of clear guidelines leads to inconsistent requirements across regions.

The permits often take months to process, with some CSOs waiting up to a year or receiving no response. This practice tends to disrupt projects’ timelines (as per agreements with donors) and wasting resources. The conditions imposed post-approval, such as changing project locations or aligning with government priorities, create conflicts with donor agreements, undermining CSO credibility and community trust. The absence of a formalized, transparent permit guideline exacerbates these challenges, particularly for rural CSOs, which face additional travel costs to Dodoma. This bureaucratic inefficiency limits CSOs’ ability to deliver timely development interventions, hindering their contribution to national goals like the Sustainable Development Goals.

2.3.7 Electro Management Laws

The Government of Tanzania has made some efforts to address long-standing political challenges and improve the electoral landscape. Notable among these are legislative reforms intended to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and independence in electoral processes. These include:

a) Enactment of the Independent National Electoral Commission Act of 2024

This law introduced several key changes aimed at reforming the electoral system, including: elimination of unopposed candidates for councilor and Member of Parliament positions, establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to oversee electoral processes, empowerment of INEC to appoint a senior civil servant as an election supervisor, introduction of a new appointment process for INEC Commissioners under Section 5, whereby commissioners are recommended by an interview committee. However, some of these specific reforms will not be applicable for the upcoming 2025 general election.

a) Enactment of the Electoral Regulations for the President, Members of Parliament, and Councilors, GN No. 86 of 2025

These regulations brought some progressive changes, for instance, under paragraph 5 of the Third Schedule, prisoners are now allowed to vote for the President while serving their sentences in prison marking a significant step toward inclusive electoral participation. THRDC conducted an analysis of the Regulations and identified the following challenges and recommendations.

i) Lack of Clarity Between Election Observers and Monitors

Regulations 2 and 13 do not provide clear definitions distinguishing election observers from election monitors. This lack of clarity creates confusion in accreditation and implementation. THRDC recommended that the regulations be amended to define:

- Election monitors as local civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRDs) engaged in election observation.
- Election observers as international organizations, INGOs, HRDs, and representatives from other countries.
- Additionally, we recommended that INEC issue a public notice calling for applications from election observers and, in cases of rejection, provide written reasons.

ii) Absence of Guidelines for Observers and Monitors

Currently, there are no official guidelines from INEC outlining the roles, responsibilities for election observers and monitors. THRDC recommended

that INEC develop and disseminate detailed guidelines for election observers and monitors.

iii) Undefined Functions and Conduct Limitations under Regulation 16

Regulation 16 fails to distinguish the specific functions of election observers versus monitors. It also lacks clarity on prohibited actions (the “don’ts”) for both. THRDC recommended amending the regulation to distinguish the specific functions of election observers and those of monitors

iv) Restrictive Provisions on Public Reporting and Media Engagement by Observers

Regulation 16 prohibits observers from publishing reports or opinions, engaging with media, or sharing information on social media without first submitting such material to INEC and receiving acknowledgment. THRDC recommended amendments to:

- Allow election observers to speak publicly about electoral issues and share findings in real time.
- Permit the release of preliminary or independent reports even before INEC’s formal acknowledgment, to enhance transparency and timely feedback.

v) Disproportionate Sanctions under Regulation 17

Regulation 17 imposes a severe penalty by revoking an observer’s permit for any violation and prohibiting them from participating in future elections, without offering a right to be heard. THRDC recommended amending this provision to:

- Provide a 48-hour notice period to allow the accused observer to submit a defense to INEC.
- Grant the right to challenge INEC’s decision through judicial review at the High Court of Tanzania.

vi) Denial of Access to Polling Stations in Prisons

The Regulations prohibit political party agents and election observers from accessing polling stations located in prisons. THRDC recommended that this restriction be removed to allow transparent observation and safeguard the voting rights of incarcerated individuals.

2.3.8 Other Relevant Laws Impacting CSO Operations

Additional laws further shape the CSO landscape e.g., by imposing specific constraints on specialized activities. The Legal Aid Act of 2017 regulates legal aid providers under Section 10, requiring registration with what the stakeholders perceived as ‘stringent’ staffing criteria, such as two advocates or three paralegals. These requirements exclude small, unfunded CSOs from providing legal aid, limiting access to justice for marginalized communities, a key SCATZ priority.

The Tanganyika Law Society Act, Cap. 307 (R.E. 2019), amended by the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) No. 2 Act of 2018, prohibits Tanganyika Law Society Council members from engaging in political activities under Section 15A, curtailing advocacy by legal CSOs on governance and rule of law issues. This restriction undermines their role as independent voices, particularly in challenging repressive laws or policies.

The National Sports Council Act, Cap. 49 (R.E. 2002) and the Co-operative Societies Act of 2013 regulate sports organizations and cooperatives, respectively, which some CSOs use as their intervention strategies for community-based initiatives. However, these frameworks impose additional compliance requirements, such as annual audits and membership reporting, that strain limited resources. Moreover, the Environmental Management Act of 2004 governs CSOs engaged in environmental advocacy, requiring permits for activities like conservation projects under Section 81. These permits, processed through multiple agencies, add bureaucratic layers, delaying interventions critical to addressing climate change. Collectively, these laws create a fragmented regulatory environment, diverting CSO resources from core activities to compliance and limiting their impact on human rights and development.

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977 and the Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984 including the proposed Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 2014 do not directly guarantee the rights of HRDs. Therefore, lack of specific legal protection renders HRDs vulnerable and easy prey for perpetrators of human rights violations. Moreover, the Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of association and assembly for everyone under article 20. Article 26 imposes a duty of every person to observe and to abide by the Constitution and the laws of the United Republic. It further states that every person has the right to take legal action to ensure the protection of the Constitution and the laws of the land. Despite the guarantees under Article 26 for everyone to take legal action,

however in 2020 the Parliament of Tanzania amended the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement Act which narrowed down the pathways for HRDs to protect human rights in Tanzania. The amendments require one to prove how an action complained of “has affected that person personally for his case to be admitted by the High Court”. The amendments technically bars NGOs and HRDs from instituting strategic cases before courts. However, the recent progressive decision of the Court of appeal in relation to the constitutionality of these amendments has declared those provisions unconstitutional.⁶

2.4 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS GOVERNING CSOS IN ZANZIBAR

The legal and regulatory frameworks governing CSOs in Zanzibar are distinct from those in Tanzania Mainland as this side of the Union, has its own frameworks not aligned to the Mainland’s one in any way. As it is a case for the Mainland one, the Zanzibar’s frameworks also regulate CSOs’ registration, operations, taxation, access to information, and digital engagement. The Societies Act of 1995 serves as the primary legislation for CSOs’ (societies’) registration, while the Income Tax Act of 2004 applies union-wide, supplemented by Zanzibar-specific tax laws.⁷

The said Zanzibar’s Societies Act of 1995 serves as the primary legal framework for registering and regulating societies as said earlier. The ‘societies’ are defined under Section 2 as non-political associations of ten or more individuals formed for social, cultural, or professional purposes. Contrary to the Mainland’s NGOs law which explicitly reflects ‘advocacy,’ The Zanzibar’s Societies Act of 1995 does not do so, posing a gap which could limit the Zanzibar’s CSOs mandates in advocacy interventions. The Zanzibar’s NGO bill which would had, probably, borrowed a leaf from the Mainland’s side, has remained pending for some years.

The societies in Zanzibar are required to be registered with the Registrar of Societies, formally housed within the Ministry of Labour, Empowerment, Elders, Youth, Women, and Children. However, the Zanzibar Business and Property Registration Agency Act of 2012 (BPRA), introduces a parallel regulatory structure by mandating the BPRA to oversee registrations under multiple laws, including societies and business entities, as outlined in its role as a one-stop agency for commercial and non-commercial registrations. This dual oversight creates some confusion for CSOs, as they must comply with both the Societies Act’s

6 THRDC (2025) Tanzania Model Policy for Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

7 Such laws include the Zanzibar Revenue Authority Act of 2022 (Act No. 11/ 2022); the Virtual Fiscal Management System Regulations of 2021; the Marekebisho ya Sheria za Kodi za Zanzibar kwa Mwaka wa Fedha 2022/2023; etc.

requirements and BPRA's business registration processes. Moreover, the BPRA's centralized online registration system, while a step toward modernization, poses accessibility challenges for CSOs in remote areas due to unreliable internet and the need for in-person submissions in Unguja, Zanzibar, leading to delays that can last months and increasing operational costs as the stakeholders interviewed claimed.

The survey found that, the regulatory overlap aggravates challenges posed by restrictive provisions in the Societies law, notably Section 14, which grants the Minister discretionary powers to declare a society unlawful based on what the stakeholders termed as 'ambiguous criteria.' As it is further clarified in part three of this report, this discretionary power threatens CSOs engaged in advocacy or human rights work. Though there have not been sufficient information on the CSOs falling victims of these perceived repressive provisions of the laws in Zanzibar, yet, their presence in the books of law could create a complex and intimidating environment for CSOs, which undermine the freedom of association guaranteed by Article 20 of the Zanzibar Constitution of 1984.

The requirement for annual returns under Section 11 of the Societies law further strains smaller CSOs – as they have financial implications, while BPRA's oversight of business-related activities adds layers of bureaucratic scrutiny, particularly for organizations balancing social missions with economic sustainability.

It is observed further that, recent BPRA reforms, such as digital registration platforms, have not resolved the legal ambiguities or addressed the chilling effect of discretionary powers. As such, in order to enhance the CSO operating environment, Zanzibar could streamline oversight by clearly delineating responsibilities between the Societies Act of 1995 and BPRA of 2012, decentralize registration to improve access, and reform Section 14 to ensure transparent criteria and effective appeal mechanisms.

An attempt to make some reforms in the regulatory framework, especially to enact and enforce the NGOs law as hinted earlier, has so far been impossible. The discussion and other processes around a proposed NGOs Bill, have stalled. The survey team has been told that, this draft legislation has remained pending for over five years or so. The Bill, as inspired, was intended to establish a dedicated regulatory framework for NGOs e.g., potentially streamlining registration and compliance. The causes of such overdue delay are not clear. There is an unverified information that, the Bill is pending at the ministerial level.

Application of other laws including the Zanzibar's Penal Act of 2018; and the laws governing policing work, have the same implications on CSOs operating in Zanzibar in the same manner as it is for the Mainland side. For instance, the said penal law criminalizes "unlawful societies" under Section 74, with penalties of up to seven years' imprisonment, mirroring Mainland's Penal Code, Cap. 16. The vague definition of "unlawful" could allow authorities to target advocacy CSOs, particularly those addressing sensitive issues like political reforms. Moreover, the Immigration Act of 1995, applicable union-wide, regulates permits for foreign CSO staff under Section 10, with non-compliance risking deportation under Section 36.

2.5 NATIONAL POLICIES IMPACTING CSO OPERATIONS

2.5.1 CSO Policy Framework in Tanzania Mainland

In Tanzania Mainland, national policies shape CSOs operations by positioning them as partners in socio-economic development, yet restrictive and outdated frameworks significantly constrain their autonomy and impact. The National NGOs Policy of 2001 aims to create an enabling environment, promoting transparency, accountability, and government-NGO collaboration (through the National Council of NGOs (NaCoNGO)). However, its shortcomings, highlighted in the 2018 CSOs' policy review, include a failure to address modern challenges like digital advocacy, funding diversification, and shrinking civic space. Moreover, vague terms like "political activities" risk misinterpretation, threatening deregistration for human rights advocacy. The policy's lack of harmonization with the NGOs Act of 2002 (R.E. 2019) creates multiple compliance burdens, and the absence of regular government-NGO forums hampers coordination.

On the other hand, the National Five-Year Development Plan 2021/22–2025/26 (FYDP III), which is the country's developmental blueprint, recognizes CSOs as non-state actors in education, health, and governance, encouraging collaboration with Local Government Authorities. Yet, its government-led coordination mandates alignment with sectoral priorities, limiting independent advocacy and prioritizing short-term projects over systemic change. Similarly, the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 tasks stakeholders including CSOs with poverty eradication and social services but lacks mechanisms to ensure financial sustainability, diverting resources to industrial projects and exacerbating donor dependency, with 80% of NGOs relying on foreign funds.

The National Strategy for NGOs Sustainability 2022/23–2026/27 (NSNS) addresses those and other gaps e.g., with strategic objectives (page 30) to create an enabling environment, enhance financial resilience, and build capacity. Moreover, it proposes decentralized registration, tax incentives, and private

sector partnerships to reduce donor reliance, alongside capacity-building in governance and financial management to align NGOs with FYDP III priorities for government contracts. However, there is a need for NSNS to have sufficient monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability (MEALI) mechanisms so to, effectively, map progressive realization of its strategic objectives.

2.5.2 CSO Policy Framework in Zanzibar

In Zanzibar, the policy framework similarly guides CSO operations but imposes constraints that restrict civic freedoms and operational flexibility. The NGOs Policy of 2009 seeks to foster an enabling environment, promoting transparency and government-NGO collaboration via the networks like ANGOZA and PACSO. However, it is outdated, failing to address funding constraints, tax burdens, digital advocacy, or regulatory overreach. The tax regime, as discussed earlier, imposes financial burdens and eventually, makes CSOs heavily donor-dependent. There is also ‘identity’ crisis of CSOs especially in terms of their mandates to implement advocacy interventions.

The Zanzibar Development Vision 2050 envisions CSOs as partners in social equity, economic diversification, and environmental conservation, particularly in education and tourism, but its government-led approach sidelines advocacy on governance or human rights and lacks CSO-specific funding mechanisms. On the other hand, the Zanzibar Development Plan (ZADEP) 2021–2026, which is an implementing mechanism of the vision 2050, operationalizes this vision, fostering CSO roles in poverty reduction and gender equality, but without clear specifics on the practical ways of engaging the CSOs.

2.6 BEST PRACTICES FROM COMPARATIVE AFRICAN CONTEXTS

The operational environments for CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar can benefit from examining best practices in other African countries, where progressive legal, policy, and institutional frameworks stand-in vibrant civic spaces. Countries like South Africa, Kenya, and Ghana,⁸ with strong constitutional protections for freedoms of assembly, association, press, access to justice, fair

8 Learned from their laws (see annex) and these sources: Jonathan Klaaren, The Limits of “Good Law”: Civil Society Regulation in South Africa and Ethiopia, 2020, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-african-law/article/limits-of-good-law-civil-society-regulation-in-south-africa-and-et-hiopia/8C8F0E6B6F8E4D2B8B6E7B2C8F0D7A6E>; - Freedom House, The Spread of Anti-NGO Measures in Africa: Freedoms Under Threat, 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/2019/05/spread-anti-ngo-measures-africa-freedoms-under-threat>; B. van der Wagt, A. de Jager, S. A. Mensah, M. van den Berg, The Role of International Civil Society Organizations in Democratization: A Crisp-Set QCA Approach to Anti-Corruption in Ghana, 2023, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10692507/>

trial, clear separation of powers, and independent judiciaries and legislatures, provide safeguards for activists and HRDs. These nations, somehow, demonstrate effective models for CSO registration, funding diversification, and self-regulation, which Tanzania can adapt to align with the SCATZ project's goals of promoting rule of law and civic space. This section highlights best practices from such countries, focusing on their approaches to CSO governance, civic space protection, and activist support, etc., which could add some values into Tanzania's reform efforts.

2.6.1 South Africa

South Africa's progressive framework, anchored by its 1996 Constitution, guarantees freedoms of association, assembly, expression, and access to justice (Sections 16–18), with an independent judiciary and legislature ensuring robust checks and balances. The Non-Profit Organizations Act of 1997 provides a flexible registration process for CSOs, managed by the Department of Social Development, with voluntary registration incentivized by tax exemptions under the Income Tax Act of 1962 (Section 30). The South African Human Rights Commission, established under the Constitution (Section 184), protects HRDs and monitors civic space violations, while the Public Protector ensures government accountability. CSOs, such as Section 27 and the Treatment Action Campaign, leverage these protections to advocate for socioeconomic rights, supported by diversified funding from local philanthropy and social enterprises. This enabling environment, with transparent reporting and strong judicial recourse, offers Tanzania a model for decentralizing registration and protecting activists, reducing punitive oversight seen in the Non-Governmental Organizations Act of 2002.

2.6.2 Kenya

Kenya's 2010 Constitution enshrines freedoms of association, assembly, expression, and access to information (Articles 36–38), with an independent judiciary and devolved governance ensuring separation of powers and HRD protection. The Public Benefit Organizations Act of 2013, though delayed in implementation, streamlines CSO registration under a single authority, the NGO Coordination Board, offering tax incentives and simplified compliance. Kenya's vibrant CSO sector, including organizations like Kituo cha Sheria, benefits from the National Legal Aid Service (Legal Aid Act of 2016), providing free legal support to activists facing harassment. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights monitors civic space, while self-regulatory bodies like the NGO Council promote accountability. Despite occasional state pushback, Kenya's decentralized registration and constitutional safeguards, as seen in successful litigation by CSOs against restrictive laws, provide Tanzania with lessons for harmonizing Mainland-Zanzibar frameworks and enacting access to information laws to bolster advocacy.

2.6.3 Ghana

Ghana's 1992 Constitution guarantees freedoms of association, assembly, press, and access to justice (Articles 21, 29), with an independent judiciary and Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) protecting HRDs. The Companies Act of 2019 (Act 992) governs CSO registration, managed by the Registrar General's Department, with a streamlined process and tax exemptions for non-profits under the Income Tax Act of 2015 (Act 896). The Right to Information Act of 2019 (Act 989) ensures data access for evidence-based advocacy, enabling CSOs like the Centre for Democratic Development to hold government accountable. Ghana's CSO sector thrives on diversified funding, including local corporate social responsibility, and self-regulation through the Ghana Civil Society Forum. This enabling environment, with minimal punitive oversight, offers Tanzania a model for updating the outdated National NGOs Policy of 2001 and Societies Act of 1995, emphasizing digital reporting and HRD protection to enhance civic space.

2.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGAL AND POLICY REFORMS

Tanzania's legal and policy frameworks impose, what some of the stakeholders perceive it as 'oppressive constraints' on CSOs, shrinking civic space and undermining of human rights advocacy generally. Transformative reforms are suggested. Key among others are the following:

- a) Streamlining CSO registration under the NGOs Act of 2002 and Societies Act of 1995 (Zanzibar) by mandating decentralized, digital-first processes with 30-day approval timelines and eliminating discretionary deregistration powers.
- b) Fast-tracking the Zanzibar NGOs Bill to mirror the Mainland's NGOs Act, explicitly recognizing advocacy roles, and consolidating BPRA and Societies Act oversight into a single, CSO-friendly regulatory body.
- c) Establishing a centralized, transparent permit system under TAMISEMI with mandatory 30-day approval timelines and clear criteria to eliminate bureaucratic delays and ensure alignment with donor schedules.
- d) Revising the Income Tax Act of 2004 to grant automatic tax exemptions for all CSOs, including advocacy-focused organizations, and abolishing withholding taxes on voluntary roles to alleviate financial burdens.
- e) It is important to have a national legal framework that outlines rights, duties, accountability, and responsibilities of HRDs while guaranteeing recognition,

protection, coordination, and creation of an enabling and secured working environment for HRDs to operate freely, transparently, effectively and efficiently. This can be realized by enacting a comprehensive HRDs Protection Law or policy leveraging on the Proposed HRDs Protection Model Policy by THRDC to ensure HRDs' safety, recognition including creating an independent national commission to investigate violations and enforce accountability.

- f) Repealing vague provisions in the Penal Code, Cap. 16 and Zanzibar Penal Act of 2018, such as "unlawful societies" and seditious statements, and eliminating police discretion in assembly approvals to prevent arbitrary arrests and protect freedoms of association and assembly.
- g) Overhauling the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2017 and Media Services Act of 2016 to abolish ambiguous terms like "disparaging" content, waive licensing fees for CSOs, and enshrine protections for online and media advocacy.
- h) Amending the Access to Information Act of 2016 to remove broad exemptions, enforce strict 14-day response deadlines, and establish an independent Information Commission to penalize non-compliance, enabling robust evidence-based advocacy.
- i) The CSOs regulatory framework in Tanzania is operating under four different legislations. The NGOs Act provides for the registration of NGOs, coordination and regulations of their activities. On the other hand, Societies Act provides for the registration of Civil Societies and Faith Based Organisations and regulate their activities. The Legal Aid Act regulate and coordinate the provision of legal aid services by various actors including CSOs, NGOs and FBOs. However, these are generic and regulatory laws which aim to guide registration and management of civil societies. They do not provide legal framework for the recognition and protection of HRDs. Therefore, a separate and specific legal framework is needed to put in place comprehensive legal framework that ensures promotion and protection of HRDs rights. A legal framework that coordinates and closely oversees the work of promoting and protection human rights in the country.
- j) Review the NGOs Act and its regulations to remove restrictive requirements which forces NGOs to re-new registration certificates after every ten years.

PART THREE

KEY FINDINGS OF CONSULTATIONS AND PROPOSED BASELINE INDICATORS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the analytical core of the THRDC 2025 survey report. It provides a comprehensive examination of the operational situations for CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar so as to inform into the SCATZ project's framework. Its rationale lies in synthesizing empirical data to illuminate the dynamics of CSO activism, institutional capacities, and systemic challenges within a complex socio-political environment (among other considerations). By dissecting critical areas such as civic space trends, legal literacy, governance, collaboration, resource mobilization, and capacity-building needs, the chapter aims to offer actionable insights and evidence-based recommendations to strengthen CSOs' roles in advancing human rights, rule of law, and democratic governance, aligning with the SCATZ project's objectives of fostering accountability, and justice through targeted interventions and partnerships.

3.2 LEVEL OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM IN HUMAN RIGHTS GENERALLY

3.2.1 Prevailing Trend of Civic Space and Its Implications to CSOs' Activism

The civic space in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar is, indeed, the lifeline for CSOs' level of activism e.g., to push for stronger rule of law, better governance, and human rights. It is the freedom CSOs need to associate, speak out, gather, and engage communities (as well as other partners) without fear. This survey at hand (i.e., 2025 THRDC survey) paints a mixed picture e.g., 47.3% of CSOs consulted through online questionnaire, say civic space has opened up over the past three years (43.8% see it as somewhat more open, 3.5% as significantly more open), but 35.8% feel it is more restricted (24.9% somewhat, 10.9% significantly). Table below shows more responses.

Table: CSOs' Perceptions of Status or Level of Civic Space in their Operating Area

Perceived Change [Over the Past Three or Four Years]	Percentage [N=201]
Somewhat more open	43.78%
Somewhat more restricted	24.88%
Significantly more restricted	10.95%
No change	7.96%
Not sure	8.96%
Significantly more open	3.48%
Total:	100%

Source: THRDC's Primary/ Survey Data, 2025.

According to this finding, almost 8% noting no change and 9% unsure. "We have seen some breathing room to operate in recent years; but, the rules still feel like a tight leash as the same repressive laws we have been complaining about since last presidential regime are still being in force," said a CSO representative from Arusha. This depicts a picture of the 'cautious hope' among some organizations. The current trend on civic space generally shows promise but remains unpredictable in a way that adversely affect CSOs' ability to drive meaningful change.

Looking back to 2023, the FCS survey on CSOs operating environments also funded by the EU⁹ showed more optimism, with 70% of CSOs reporting a 'brighter' civic environment, including 61% in Tanzania Mainland and 64% in Zanzibar. That was a noted moderate gains. Only 14% (Mainland) and 15% (Zanzibar) felt things had not improved. The 2025 THRDC survey, however, shows a dip in confidence, with fewer CSOs (47.26%) seeing openness and more (35.83%) sensing restrictions compared to two years ago.

That shift, though based on generalized perceptions of CSOs (almost the same sampled groups), hints at a possible rollback of earlier progress, where fewer harassment cases gave CSOs hope. "The space we gained in 2021 when 'Mama' came into power, is slipping; new barriers keep popping up," shared a CSO leader from Dar es Salaam, capturing the growing unease e.g., limitation of some of civil groups like opposition political parties to freely engage without undue harassments by the police, registrar of political parties, etc. During this survey at hand (i.e., of THRDC), the Unguja CSOs allegedly to have been censored on

⁹ FCS, Baseline Study on the Policy and Legal Environment for Engagement of CSOs in Democratic Governance in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. July 2023.

grants received from some donors, apparently, following such donors' recent remarks (through the EU's forum in Europe in April 2025) on perceived deteriorated democratic governance in Tanzania.

The contrast between the two almost similar surveys (i.e., of THRDC 2025 and FCS 2023) points to a civic space that is fragile, with initial steps toward openness now clouded by renewed challenges. As it is pointed elsewhere in this report, this trend of perceived shrinking of civic space, could continue making it harder for CSOs to plan and engage confidently in their activism mandates.

Several factors are shaping this unsteady civic space. In 2023, the FCS survey noted fewer crackdowns on CSOs from the period beginning 2021, with relaxed enforcement of tough laws creating a sense of relief. But the 2025 THRDC survey suggests those gains are shaky, as strict regulations like the 2019 NGO amendments in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar's stalled NGO Bill since 2020 continue to burden CSOs with heavy or complicated compliance demands e.g., securing permits from local government authorities (LGAs) to implement projects in the districts.

Misunderstandings of the identity and work of CSOs by some of the leaders especially the politicians and community members (as 2025's survey respondents said) e.g., often seen as troublemaking, cut into such stakeholders support, while digital threats like enforcement of online contents regulations, add new risks.

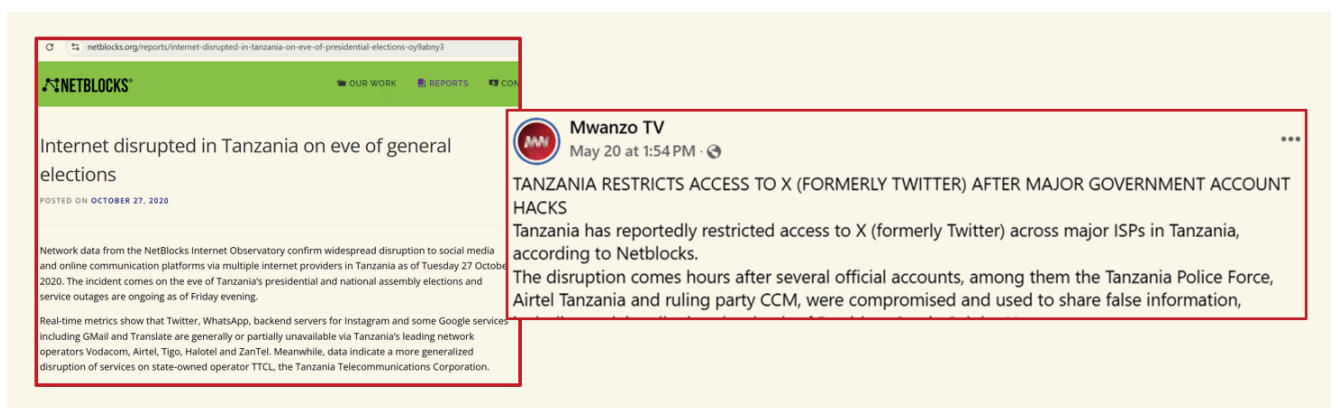
Live Case: Weaponizing Oversight? MP's Remarks Signal Pressure on NGOs



Just recently, specifically on 4th June 2025, Special Seats Parliamentarian, Ms. Riziki Said Luhinda was quoted by several media outlets, including Jambo TV, stating that Tanzania has approximately 9,840 NGOs, which collectively handle around TZS 2.4 trillion. She raised a concern in Parliament, asking whether government authorities conduct audits on these funds. She further inquired whether the financial resources managed by NGOs are aligned with national development priorities such as agriculture and fisheries. Ms. Luhinda also referred to the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where, according to her, similar funds have allegedly supported groups like M23. She cautioned that, if not properly monitored, such funds could be diverted to movements such as "No Reform, No Election," which is associated with the main opposition party, CHADEMA.

Overall, Ms. Riziki Said Luhinda's remarks emphasized the need for stricter oversight of NGO funding, citing concerns about potential threats to national security. Her position (like of many other politicians of her nature) could, however, appear to reflect broader political or personal interests rather than those of the majority especially by considering the massive support and contributions to the micro and macro socio-economic developments in the country.

Connecting to what said above is an incident that happened on 20th of June 2025 whereby, Tanzania started experiencing a significant disruption when access to the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) was restricted. Seemingly, this followed the compromise of several official accounts, as reported by local media. This incident was not isolated, as similar restrictions on social media occurred during the October 2020 general elections, a period often marked by heightened political tension. The sources quoted below (i.e., Netblocks and Mwanzo TV) reflect such incidents.



Additionally, just recently (first week of June 2025), the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) directed some of the social media platforms, including AYO TV, to remove specific content or posts related to allegations by Bishop Josephat Gwajima, leader of the Glory of Christ Tanzania Church (Ufufuo na Uzima Ministry), about 'disappearances' and other human rights or accountability concerns. A need to have balanced reporting was mentioned as a ground for that decision. These actions reflect a broader pattern of media oversight that intensifies during politically sensitive periods, such as in 2020 and the lead-up to the 2025 general elections.

Indeed, the implications of these restrictions are profound, particularly for CSOs and the broader civic space. During election periods, social media platforms like X serve as vital tools for CSOs to amplify advocacy, monitor human rights violations,

and engage communities in promoting rule of law and civic rights. However, restrictions on these platforms limit CSOs' ability to disseminate information, mobilize support, and document abuses, effectively silencing critical voices. A Dar es Salaam-based youth CSO representative noted during this survey in May 2025 that, "when platforms like X are restricted, our outreach is crippled, leaving communities uninformed and vulnerable."

Moreover, the targeted removal of content, such as posts related to Bishop Gwajima's allegations, raises concerns about freedom of expression and the ability to address human rights issues openly. In Zanzibar, where political sensitivities are heightened, these restrictions can alienate communities and exacerbate tensions, as seen in past election-related crackdowns. For instance, a Unguja CSO leader shared his view during survey that, "censorship makes it harder to raise awareness about disappearances, forcing us to operate in fear." This environment 'chokes' CSOs' watchdog role, weakening their capacity to hold authorities accountable and protect civic space.

Best Practice: Namibia's open digital spaces have enabled CSOs to advocate effectively without fear of censorship



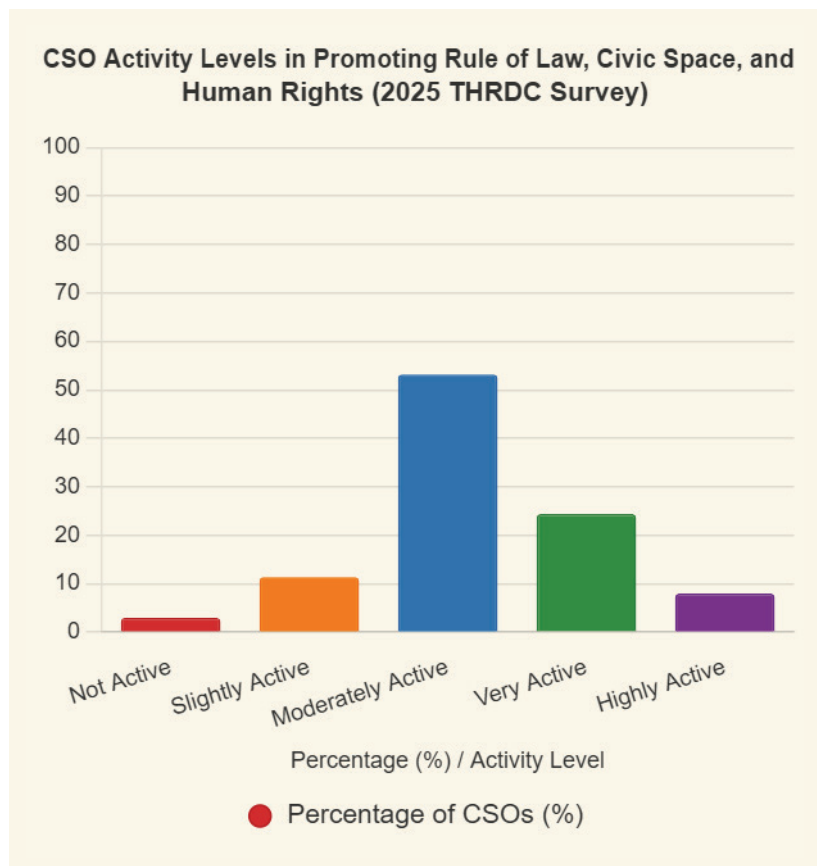
The THRDC survey team is of the view that, the recurrence of such restrictions, as evidenced by the 2020 and prior election periods, suggests a systemic challenge that could escalate ahead of the 2025 elections. In Ghana, where media freedom has been supported through legal protections, CSOs like the Media Foundation for West Africa have successfully used digital platforms to enhance voter education and monitor elections, offering a slight (or huge) contrast to Tanzania's approach (basing on the current trend mentioned above). Similarly, Namibia's open digital spaces have enabled CSOs to advocate effectively without fear of censorship. Suggestively, adopting similar practices could help Tanzania enforce a more inclusive civic environment. Without urgent steps to safeguard digital access and freedom of expression, the ability of CSOs to promote human rights and democratic governance will remain almost severely constrained.

All such and other hurdles mean CSOs struggle to advocate for justice and transparency, as the space to operate freely is likely to continue shrinking or remain uncertain as it is a case at the moment. The implications are clear, including (a) a constrained civic space weakens CSOs' role as governance watchdogs; (b) slowing progress on human rights, safeguarding of rule of law and accountability; and, (c) calling for urgent efforts to stabilize and expand their operating environment – for them to have impactful activism.

3.2.2 Perceived Current Levels of CSOs' Activism

The CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar are crucial drivers of change, using activism to strengthen rule of law, expand civic space, protect human rights, and build strategic partnerships for accountable governance.

The 2025 THRDC survey, however, reveals a sharp decline in their efforts, with only 8% of CSOs highly active and 24.4% very active in these areas, while 53.2% are moderately active. Figure below shows more responses.



In Tanzania Mainland, CSOs face barriers like restricted community access, as a pastoralist organization in Arusha shared, “We are blocked from meeting Maasai communities in Ngorongoro and Loliondo to discuss their land rights; authorities limit our interactions, fearing we’ll stir unrest.”

In Zanzibar, activism is perceived as being, in some way, constrained, e.g., with CSOs nudged toward non-advocacy roles.

“When you try to register an NGO here, they tell you to add objectives like building schools or health centers. If you focus on civic empowerment, they reject it, thinking you have a political agenda,” said a CSO leader in Unguja. That perspective, if it true, can illustrate a relatively heavy restrictions to engage in advocacy interventions.

It seems that, a lot of effort and sensitization is needed for some of public officers in charge of oversight responsibilities of NGOs in Zanzibar to understand the mandates of non-state actors who are NGOs. There is also a need to continue pursuing for the reforms to ensure that, both Zanzibar and Mainland’s laws provide clear identification of NGOs.

Observation: Legal Identity ‘Crisis’ of CSOs Zanzibar and Mainland Tanzania

This survey noted that, Section 3 of the Zanzibar’s Societies Act of 1995 (Act No. 6) offers kind of ‘blurred’ definition of ‘Society’, providing that, ‘Society means any society for the time being registered under this Act, but does not include a society the registration of which is for the time being suspended, cancelled or revoked but may, where appropriate, include unregistered society applying for registration.’ On the other hand, the Tanzania Mainland’s Societies Act, Cap. 335 and the NGOs Act of 2002 both amended in 2019 through the Written Laws (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act of 2019 (Act No. 3), had the identity of ‘Societies’ and ‘NGOs’ changed a bit. For instance, the NGO is now defined under Section 2 of the amended NGOs law to mean (wholly quoted here-in-under) as “‘NGO” which includes Community Based Organization (CBO) means a voluntary grouping of individuals or organizations which is non-partisan or non-profit sharing established and operates for the benefit or welfare of the community or public, organized at the local, national or international levels for the purpose of enhancing or promoting economic, environmental, social or cultural development or protecting environment, good governance, law and order, human rights and lobbying or advocating on such issues.’ [Emphasis added]. As for the ‘societies’, unlike the Zanzibar’s law which does not offer a specific meaning, the Mainland’s Societies law defines ‘Society’ under Section 2 to mean, “a non-partisan and non-political association of ten or more persons established for professional, social, cultural, religion or economic benefits or welfare of its members, formed and registered as such under this Act.” In the Zanzibar’s and Mainland’s societies laws do not explicitly mandates such CSOs to do ‘advocacy’ interventions. But, the Mainland’s NGOs law is very explicit. If then, ‘advocacy’ includes ‘activism’, then, it is sanctioned under the said NGOs law. The long waited Zanzibar’s NGOs Bill could have similar definition as what the Mainland’s law provides. But it is uncertain when this will be enacted into law. Further and more specific interventions on this are urged.

The perceived decline in CSOs’ level of activism, driven by multiple barriers (both internal and external), has serious consequences for CSOs and Tanzania’s development goals – owing to the huge contributions that the civil society sector is offering to the country. For instance, as the a lady parliamentary quoted above said in May 2025, NGOs alone attract circulation of at least TZS 2.4 trillion per annum e.g., through salaries, taxes remitted, purchase of goods and services as well as other expenditures.

The THRDC 2025 survey ventured to understand attributing factors to the decline of activism – basing on CSOs own experiences. On that, the said survey (as figure here shows) identifies limited funding (74.6%), security risks to staff/members (44.8%), and restrictive laws/regulations (37.8%) as the top barriers.



Alongside political interference (35.8%), insufficient CSO collaboration and partnerships with key actors (34.8%), lack of legal expertise (33.8%), and limited public awareness/support (13.93%).

The laws like the NGOs Act of 2002, the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations of 2018, and Media Services Act of 2016 impose tight controls e.g., on publicizing some contents relevant to CSOs' activism.¹⁰ There are also some administrative directives or restrictions e.g., permits for implementing projects and limitation of accessing Ngorongoro and Loliondo (for anti-eviction interventions) as said earlier, which complicate the operations of CSOs. With 53.2% of CSOs only moderately active as figure above in this subsection shows, their push against civic space and other issues of concern stalls realization of their vision.

Compared to other African countries e.g., Kenya and South Africa,¹¹ Tanzania's CSOs can draw valuable lessons. In Kenya, CSOs like MUHURI leverage community networks for voter education, supported by the clear Public Benefit Organizations Act of 2013¹² (came into operation in 2024), unlike Mainland Tanzania's cumbersome NGOs law or Zanzibar's outdated legal framework of 1995. Moreover, the South Africa's Equal Education uses protests and litigation to secure school infrastructure, backed by an effective Constitutional Court, contrasting with Tanzania's restricted legal advocacy for the reasons indicated above. These examples suggest that clearer regulations and bolder collaboration could help Tanzanian CSOs revive their activism, heightening their fight for their operating space and working agenda.

10 Read THRDC Reports produced every year about the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and Civic Space.

11 Sources: CIVICUS. (2024). State of Civil Society Report 2024. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/reports-publications>; and, ICNL. (2024). Civic Freedom Monitor: Kenya. <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/kenya>

12 Note the said PBO law of Kenya, establishes a transparent framework for registering and PBOs. It replaces the NGOs Coordination Act, 1990 (Section 70). It defines PBOs as autonomous, non-partisan, non-profit entities serving public good (Section 5) and mandates registration with the PBO Regulatory Authority within 60 days of application (Section 8). The Act promotes governance and accountability through requirements like a board of directors and annual financial reporting (Sections 24-31), ensures freedoms of association and expression (Section 3), and facilitates government collaboration, including tax exemptions and funding (Section 67).

3.3 CSOs' INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES AND MAIN INTERVENTIONS THROUGH ACTIVISM

In the context of this survey, the CSOs institutional capacity refers to their ability to effectively mobilize resources, implement programs, and influence policy through structured organizational frameworks, skilled personnel, and sustainable funding. This capacity is critical for activism, as it determines CSOs' ability to advocate for human rights, rule of law, and civic space while navigating restrictive environments and systemic barriers. The assessment of CSOs' capacities in this report draws on the SWOC and OCA criteria, which evaluate governance, human resources, relevancy of skills in activism, financial management, and programmatic impact as outlined in Chapter One of this report.

3.3.1 Thematic Focus of CSOs: Relevancy to SCATZ Project

The thematic focus of CSOs, based on the THRDC 2025 survey's random sampling, reveals a broad spectrum of priorities – most of which with direct relevancy to the EU-funded SCATZ project. This gives a leeway for the project implementers to effectively interact with such stakeholders. The human rights in general (78%), gender equality (67%), and youth empowerment (54%) dominate the thematic focus of most of CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. However, when 'human rights' is unpacked to specifics, data shows that less than 30% of CSOs engage on civil rights issues, which normally appear to be 'risky' advocacy areas. A mere 25% directly address rule of law issues. The other responses on thematic focus are presented in the table below.

Table: Main Thematic Focus/ Areas of CSOs – Multiple Responses

Types of Thematic Areas of CSOs [N=201]	Percentage
Human Rights in General	78%
Rule of Law	25%
Governance	39%
Gender Equality	67%
Disability Rights	39%
Youth Empowerment	54%
Climate Change/Environmental Justice	52%
Legal Aid/ Access to Justice	21%
Media Freedom	8%
Hunter-Gatherer Rights	5%
Others	20%

Source: THRDC Primary/ Survey Data, 2025.

The EU-funded SCATZ project emphasizes partnerships in human rights advocacy to promote rule of law, public interest litigation, civic space enhancement, and human rights, all of which are aimed at bridging those gaps through targeted support. However, it seems that, some of the CSOs lack sufficient capacity in terms of relevant skills, ability to create strategic partnerships including legal background. For instance, a CSO in Mwanza noted, “we understand the importance of advocacy interventions through strategic litigations like what Msichana Initiative organization did some years back and won a landmark case requiring amendment of the law of marriage legislation; but, unfortunately, legal aid or rather, legal advocacy, requires specialized skills such as having retained or experienced lawyers. At the moment, we lack such skills, which limits our engagement into such advocacy options.”

The SCATZ project could venture to enhance CSOs’ capacity to engage in legal advocacy by equipping them with required skills and other technical supports e.g., connect them with bar associations and litigant lawyers available in their vicinities. Further analysis and suggestions on this matter are indicated in coming sections of this report.

3.3.2 CSOs’ Organizational Capacities in Relation to Activism/Human rights advocacy

The organizational size can significantly influences CSOs’ activism levels e.g., the scope of operation and type of issues to pursue. According to the responses to THRDC survey of 2025, most CSOs (77%) operate with small teams of 1–10 staff, including full-time, part-time, and volunteers, while only 7% employ 21–50 staff. Financially, 31% have annual budgets below TZS 10 million (USD 4,000), and just 5% exceed TZS 500 million (USD 200,000). Figure below, presents more findings.

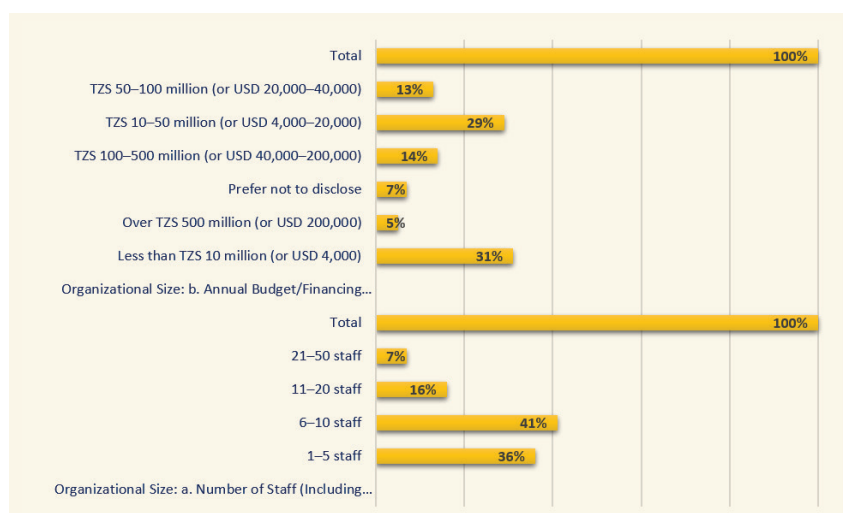


Figure:
Organizational
Capacities –
Human Resources
and Finance

As said earlier, these constraints limit CSOs' ability to hire legal experts or pursue strategic litigation which normally demand not less than TZS 10 million according to one litigation lawyer based in Dar es Salaam. Meaning that, an organization will need to have sustained funding to engage in meaningful advocacy like strategic litigations and others. On the other hand, the low budgets also hinder operational interventions, such as monitoring human rights violations or running advocacy campaigns, as seen in the case of a certain women-rights network of Dar es Salaam that reduced its outreach due to funding shortages following the pulling away of USAID from February 2025. In Tanzania, CSOs like the Legal and Human Rights Center (LHRC), THRDC, TLS, the Msichana Initiative and the Women Legal Aid Center (WLAC) – which had and have financial muscles and lawyers, have really tried their best in pursuing advocacy agenda including through strategic and public interest litigations. There is now established Center for Strategic Litigation (CSL)¹³ of Tanzania.

Complimenting to such findings and observations on CSOs' institutional capacities especially in terms of financial resources, is the recent 2023 FCS baseline survey report (mentioned earlier). That EU-funded initiative also highlighted concerns on limited financial resources. According to the said FCS' survey, a striking 71% of the 195 surveyed CSOs identified inadequate financial resources as their primary limitation in engaging with the government, hampering their ability to conduct advocacy, engage lawyers, research, and participate in policy dialogues. Moreover, 68% of CSOs rely heavily on local grant-making organizations like the FCS and Legal Services Facility (LSF), with only 36% accessing international funding and a mere 8% receiving government support, primarily in Zanzibar for disability organizations. As said elsewhere in this report, suspension or cutting of funds like USAID as it happened in February 2025, could have more adverse effects as a separate survey conducted by THRDC in June 2025 shows.

Regarding the capacity to mobilize resources which the THRDC inquired through FGDs and KIIs, the findings show that, it the critical gap to address with immediate effect. Majority of CSOs lack resource mobilization skills. The FCS 2023 baseline survey cited earlier, indicated that, less than 5% of CSOs have developed a resource mobilization strategy document, with only 1 (only 2.2%) out of 45 mapped CSOs possessed such strategy document.

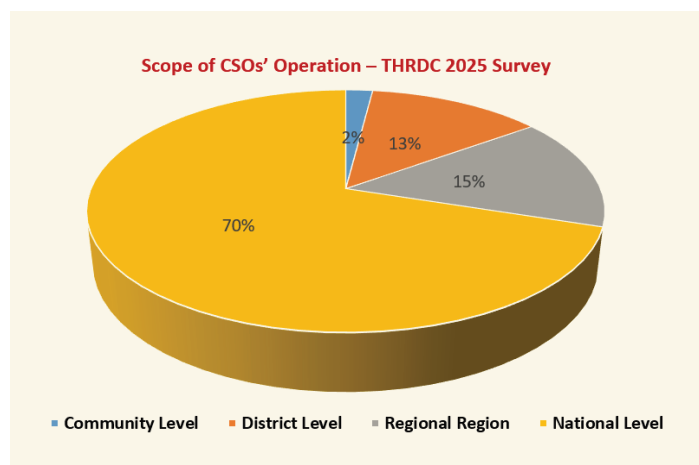
13 Note: According to its website, the CSL is a Tanzania based not for profit organization that seeks to advance the vision of a just and tolerant society, and a vibrant and inclusive democracy grounded in respect for the rule of law and justice for all. The Center works at the interface of advocacy and litigation. Source: <https://strategiclitigation.org/>

This lack of diversified funding strategies, combined with donor packages that rarely support institutional development, limits CSOs' financial resilience. Both THRDC and FCS surveys (of 2025 and 2023 respectively), suggest that without enhancing the resource mobilization skills (among other capacity gaps), CSOs' ability to sustain operations including influencing promotion of rule of law, civic space, etc., will remain constrained. The THRDC survey team suggest a specific capacity needs assessment on funding and other resource mobilization so as to have a very comprehensive capacity building programs on this institutional aspect.

3.3.3 Scope of CSOs Operations and Grassroots Gaps – Implications to Activism

The operational scope of CSOs in Tanzania generally reveals a significant concentration in urban centers and a marked underrepresentation at grassroots levels. Approximately 70% of national-level CSOs, particularly those with substantial technical expertise, are headquartered in Dar es Salaam and Mjini Magharibi regions. Other regions with relatively large CSOs, include Arusha, Mwanza, Dodoma, Chakechake, and Mbeya. However, these organizations typically operate at regional or zonal levels, covering an average of three to five regions, rather than engaging deeply at the grassroots.

The THRDC 2025 survey data indicates that only 2% of CSOs operate at the ward, village, or remote shehia level, while 70% (as said earlier) focus on national-level advocacy, engaging with central government, judiciary, and parliament. Additionally, 15% cover specific regions, and 13% operate at the district level.



These findings may be influenced by limited internet coverage, as noted in Chapter One of this report, which likely hindered responses from CSOs in remote wards, villages, or shehias.

Nevertheless, thematic and geographical networks, including regional ones, demonstrate limited capacity to extend operations to grassroots levels. The regions or locations such as Njombe, Songwe, Katavi, Wete, and Manyara have notably few CSOs, with major networks like the THRDC reporting fewer than 10 member organizations in these areas. Similarly, some districts, even those not particularly

remote, face a scarcity of active CSOs. For example, a senior district officer from Mpwapa District Council reported that the district has approximately 20 CSOs, but fewer than 20% of them maintain physical offices or grounded operations. The majority (at least 70%) operate remotely from Dodoma or other locations. According to the same officer, the district has a total of 33 wards of which, more than 50% have never being reached by any CSO interventions including paralegals (who are currently available in only 8 wards).

This national-level ‘bias’ and insufficient grassroots presence limit CSOs’ engagement with rural and remote communities, where human rights violations often go unreported. A Tabora-based CSO representative highlighted this challenge in the survey, stating, “we struggle to reach remote villages due to high transport costs and limited donor grants. Tabora is geographically vast, likely the largest region, leaving many villagers underserved.” This gap undermines community mobilization, grassroots civil movements, and localized advocacy, all of which are critical for expanding civic space.

Moreover, there is no effective mechanism to prevent duplication of efforts in activism, which leads to inefficiencies. The connection between grassroots, national, and international advocacy interventions remains weak, further exacerbating the disconnection. Without a stronger presence at the grassroots, CSOs risk losing legitimacy and effectiveness, as they become detached from the communities they aim to serve. The survey team is of the view that, human rights advocacy normally becomes powerful and impactful as well as sustainable if it is inclusive and supported by the public – so as to have ‘public ownership.’

3.3.4 Main Types of CSOs’ Advocacy Interventions on Human Rights Generally

The survey found that, CSOs in Tanzania employs several strategies such as public awareness campaigns, community mobilization, policy advocacy, and (a few) strategic litigations. These interventions aim to influence systemic change by amplifying marginalized voices, engaging stakeholders, and holding duty-bearers accountable. However, their effectiveness hinges on inclusivity, resource availability, and alignment with grassroots needs and broader human rights frameworks as it is explained above. The THRC 2025 survey (multiple responses allowed on this particular issue) provides insight into the primary advocacy activities CSOs undertake, as summarized in the table below.

Table: CSOs' Responses on their Main Advocacy Intervention Strategies

Main Advocacy Interventions [N=201]	Percentage (%)
Public awareness campaigns (e.g., workshops, media)	72%
Direct advocacy for policy/legal reforms	61.33%
Community mobilization and engagement	82.67%
Strategic litigation/public interest lawsuits (litigations)	12%
Monitoring and reporting human rights violations	56.7%
Coalition-building with other CSOs/networks	56.6%
Training/capacity-building for stakeholders	64.67%
Other e.g., dialogues.	6%

Source: THRDC Primary/ Survey Data, 2025.

The survey reveals a strong focus on community mobilization (82.7%) and public awareness campaigns (72%). This could reflect CSOs' efforts to engage in the community-driven action especially through mass media. However, as said earlier on, capacity to reach the grassroots is an issue of concern. On the other hand, according to such findings, the training and capacity-building (64.7%) and direct advocacy for policy or legal reforms (61.3%) e.g., engaging with ward decision makers directly, are also prevalent. However, only 12% of CSOs engage in strategic or public interest litigations. As it is further discussed below, there a lot of barriers to use strategic litigation as an advocacy tool. For instance, a Arusha-based CSO representative noted, "filing a public interest lawsuit is costly and risky; we lack the resources and fear government backlash. Also, nothing normally happen even if our side wins the case. You know well the issue of Loliondo. You were part of the litigation team in 2009 I think. Nothing positive happened. Instead, the eviction was enforced."

Monitoring and reporting human rights violations and coalition-building (both 56.7%) are moderately common but under-resourced. Only a few CSOs like LHRC and THRDC have strong human rights monitoring mechanism e.g., for LHRC through its Human Rights Monitors (HRM) scattered all over the country.

These findings have significant implications for human rights advocates. For instance, the low uptake of strategic litigation limits CSOs' ability to challenge systemic human rights violations through judicial processes – which, sometimes is more effective than 'endless' dialogues. This problem is further complicated by the facts that there are few number of trained advocates in rural areas who are ready to litigate human rights cases. Many CSOs except few like LHRC, THRDC and TAWLA have not established direct partnerships with lawyers and bar associations.

3.3.5 Perceived CSOs' Fragmented Advocacy Ecosystem and Avoidance of 'Tough' Issues

In relation to the findings immediately presented above, a major challenge of CSOs' advocacy interventions, is the weak linkage between grassroots, national, and international advocacy efforts. With 70% of CSOs focusing on national-level advocacy (e.g., engaging with central government, judiciary, and parliament) and only 2% operating at the ward, village, or remote shehia level, rural communities are often underserved. A Tabora CSO representative highlighted logistical barriers, stating, "we struggle to reach remote villages due to transport costs and limited grants. Tabora is geographically vast, leaving many locations and persons underserved, also lot of human rights issues unresolved." Indeed, as CSOs themselves told the survey team, this fragmented advocacy ecosystem undermines cohesive, multi-level strategies, requiring improved communication channels and resource-sharing to align grassroots priorities with national and international goals including HRDs' frameworks, SDGs, etc.

Internationally, apart from just a few, many local CSOs rarely engage with global platforms. Apparently, this tends to limit their ability to amplify local issues. Meaning that, the Tanzanian CSOs underutilize regional and international human rights frameworks, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights or the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. The attributing factors – according to FGDs include limited expertise and awareness (i.e., exposure). The survey team brings this matter onboard because the said frameworks could enhance accountability and attract international support especially when the local 'remedies' are not sufficiently effective. Moreover, their (CSOs') absence from advocacy strategies reduces the global visibility of local struggles.

Similarly, CSOs lack sufficient mechanisms to track and follow up on UN treaty body decisions, such as UPR recommendations – some with issues pertaining rule of law and civic space. Without a centralized system to monitor implementation, opportunities to hold the government accountable are missed. As such, a broader strategic planning for international advocacy of the local CSOs is highly recommended especially under leadership of network organizations and national human rights institution (CHRAGG). THRDG could address this by developing tracking platforms and training CSOs to engage with UN, African Union (AU), SADC and the East African Community's (EAC) mechanisms.

Moreover, despite efforts by Tanzanian CSOs to advance human rights advocacy as this survey observed, a significant trend has emerged where organizations increasingly prioritize “soft” issues, such as gender equality and girls’ rights, over critical civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, assembly, association, allegations of extrajudicial killings by unknown criminal commonly termed as ‘Wasiojulikana’, and mysterious disappearances. All these are critical rule of law and human rights issues of concern prevailing at the moment according to several remarks by religious leaders.

Observation: CSOs avoid critical issues. Their inherent mandates are gradually replaced by religious groups

A mapping conducted as part of the THRDC 2025 survey, analyzing a random sample of at least 120 press releases on human rights issues issued by approximately 30 major CSOs between January 2021 and June 2025, found that only about 30% (36 releases) addressed civil and political rights, with over 98% of these originating from Tanzania Mainland CSOs, primarily the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), and THRDC. The remaining 70% (84 releases) focused on socio-economic and cultural rights, driven by organizations like the Msichana Initiative, WILDAF, and the TAMWA. In the view of survey team, this cautious approach stems from a perceived restrictive civic environment, where repressive laws like on media and online contents mentioned earlier, coupled with government actions such as warning and orders against media outlets for airing some statements e.g., recently of Bishop J. Gwajima (mentioned above), deter CSOs from addressing politically sensitive issues. In Zanzibar, only TAMWA-ZNZ seems to be active in addressing critical issues of concern. This seems to be a notable exception probably because the organization is a media-savvy membership of several professional journalists to frame advocacy in ways that reduce political risks while maintaining visibility. As for the case of LHRC, TLS and THRDC these ones maintain strong backup of legal experts and experience. This survey also observed an increased vibrancy of religious groups in addressing such critical issues through religious platforms. Just between January and June 2025, over 20 remarks on current state of affairs of civic space (among other issues) were heard from Bishops and other clergies. Apparently, the NGOs could find ways of borrowing a leaf of addressing critical matters in a soft way in the manner some of the religious leaders are doing at the moment. Otherwise, there is a high possibility that, mandates of CSOs on civil matters will soon be replaced by bold religious groups. If that happens, NGOs will lack sufficient legitimacy in the eyes of communities and funding partners.

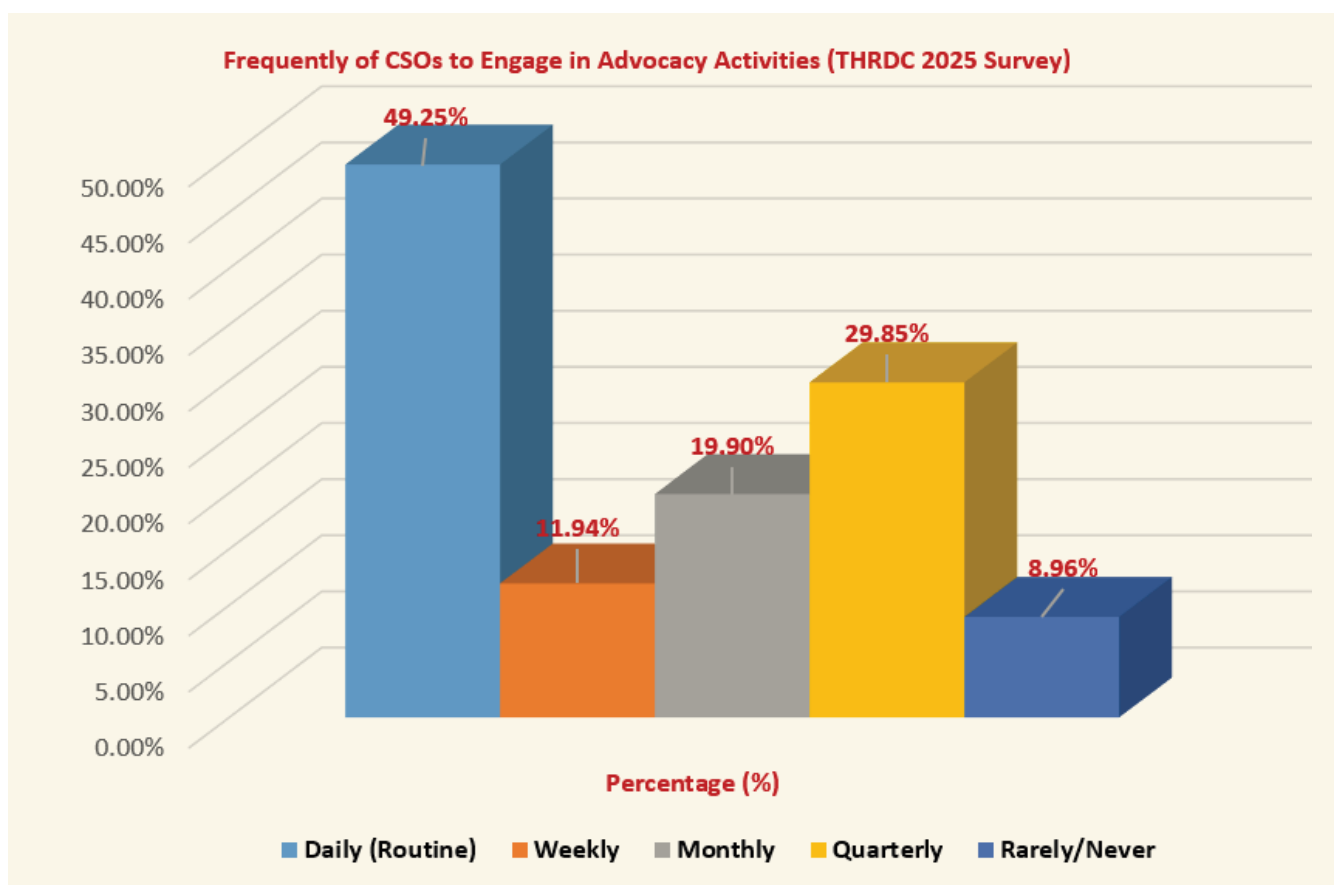
The fears of being labeled as politically affiliated, which could invite government scrutiny or deregistration, drive that cautious approach. The physical FGDs in Arusha and Unguja both noted that, CSOs avoid civil and political rights issues because they can be misinterpreted as anti-government. That, the gender programs are safer and attract more donor funding. This focus weakens the advocacy ecosystem, as critical issues underpinning civic space remain unaddressed, while CSOs compete for funding in oversaturated areas.

As such, it is suggested that the project at hand adopt a specific intervention aimed at fostering environments where CSOs can safely engage with sensitive issues, possibly through coalitions, partnerships with bar association, religious groups and international support to mitigate risks. Otherwise, the 'fear' amongst CSOs is very high at the moment. If this situation remain unattended many HRDs will drop out while the up coming young HRDs will be scared to joint human rights activism.

3.3.6 Frequency of Specific Advocacy Actions

The frequency of advocacy activities indicates effective engagements by CSOs, with 49.3% of them responding to the online survey claiming to have been conducting some interventions on advocacy almost on daily basis i.e., routinely especially when they have funds. The rest of responses are indicated here-in-under.

The daily interventions in the context of the CSOs interviewed means all activities which often involve community outreach, distribution of fliers or other publications, consultations with decision makers, mass media and meetings with different stakeholders intended to address some changes. However, more strategic advocacy sessions or interventions are normally on quarterly or bi-annual basis depending on the nature of the project.



During the FGDs carried out as part of this survey, the CSOs mentioned critical gaps in their advocacy efforts. Apart from financial resources, most of the 'small' CSOs lack advocacy personnel, advocacy strategy documents or guidelines to systemize their engagements also, feedback mechanisms to map the impact of their engagements e.g., of media programs aired, press releases issued, and fliers distributed. Moreover, there has been some limitations of digital advocacy approaches due to lack of officers with such specialized skills and also, fear of the online content regulations. Meaning that, the SCATZ project will have really capacitate these partners to address all such issues.

As for the issue of 'capacity' mentioned above, the THRDC 2025 survey did not dwell much on the specifics regarding CSOs' capacity to engage in advocacy interventions, knowing that there were already such findings under the FCS 2023 baseline survey on civic space (also under EU funding, as noted earlier). According to this 2023 report, only 13% of the 195 CSOs surveyed had written advocacy strategy documents. This could indicate a significant gap in structured advocacy planning. This means that, 77% of CSOs were engaging in advocacy haphazardly without clear guidance (which could also be a case to date).

Furthermore, the said FCS 2023 baseline survey highlighted that 71% of CSOs identified inadequate financial resources as the 'primary barrier' to effective engagement, including advocacy, while 7% cited insufficient skills in advocacy and policy analysis. Additionally, only 25% of CSOs reported having effective, institutionalized capacity-building programs to address advocacy skills, with 54% possessing some programs that were not systematic and 21% lacking any such initiatives.

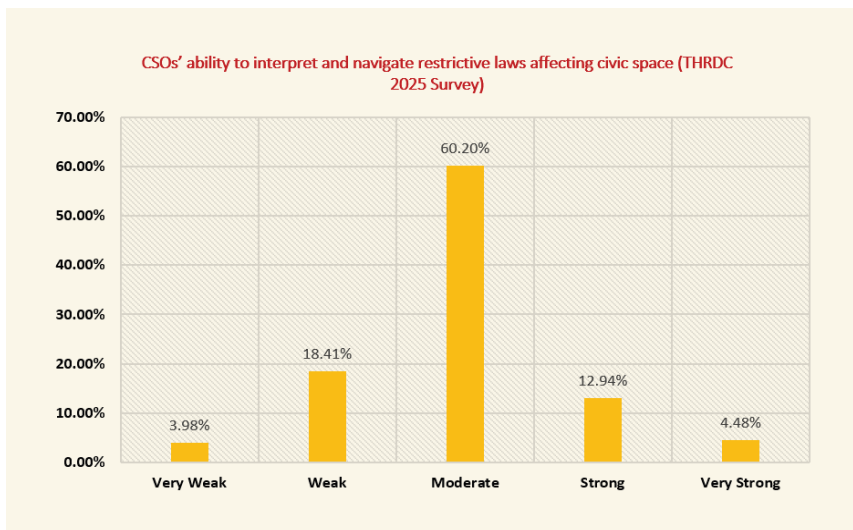
The THRDC and FCS findings of 2025 and 2023 respectively, suggest a need for targeted capacity-building e.g., under SCATZ project, to enhance CSOs' advocacy effectiveness, particularly in developing strategic frameworks and securing sustainable funding to address critical issues like civic space as per project's performance indicators.

3.4 LEGAL LITERACY AND CAPACITY OF CSOs TO ENGAGE IN STRATEGIC LITIGATIONS

3.4.1 Ability to Interpret and Navigate Restrictive Laws on CSOs

The ability of Tanzanian CSOs to engage in strategic litigation and navigate restrictive legal frameworks (among other setbacks), is essential for advancing

human rights and expanding civic space. The THRDC 2025 survey provides crucial insights into CSOs' legal literacy, expertise, challenges, as well as some lessons and opportunities for enhancing advocacy through legal avenues. While isolated successes demonstrate potential, systemic barriers such as limited resources, legal limitation, expertise, and government reprisals severely constrain CSOs' capacity, particularly in addressing constitutional and sensitive civil or political rights issues.



The survey reveals a moderate level of legal literacy among CSOs, with 60.2% rating their ability to interpret and navigate restrictive laws affecting civic space as 'moderate' e.g., at least knowing that there are some legal avenues to follow once a need arises.

Only 12.9% and 4.5% rated their legal literacy as 'strong' or 'very strong', respectively. The rest of the responses are presented in the figure here.

This distribution suggests that only around 15% of the CSOs had strong or very strong (basic) understanding of legal frameworks with also an advanced knowledge needed for strategic litigations. Most of such CSOs with highest level of understanding are actually national based CSOs with legal experts and direct access to national bar associations.

From 1995 to 2025, a select group of organizations and individuals in Tanzania have pursued strategic or public interest litigations and constitutional petitions to address human rights violations, media restrictions, gender inequality, electoral laws, land rights, and civic space constraints. For instance, THRDC alone, for past 12 years was involved directly and indirectly in more than 80 public interest litigation and human rights cases at national and regional courts. Some of the specific cases or issues pursued supported by THRDC, LHRC and other CSOs are (randomly list below):

- a) Adv. Onesmo Olengurumwa:¹⁴ Pursued *Onesmo Olengurumwa v. Attorney General* (Civil Appeal No. 134 of 2022) to challenge the 2020 amendments to Section 4 of the Basic Rights and Duties Enforcement Act, Cap. 3 (BRADEA) as amended by Act No. 3/2020, which had imposed restrictive conditions on public interest litigation, including the requirement to demonstrate personal interest and to exhaust non-existent alternative remedies. On 13th June 2025, the Court of Appeal (CAT) of Tanzania reaffirmed the earlier decision of the High Court of Tanzania which declared such amendments as being unconstitutional i.e., barrier to justice.
- b) LHRC, THRDC and TLS: In *LHRC and TLS v. Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania* (Reference No. 2 of 2020) [2021] EACJ, decided on March 31, 2021, by the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) First Instance Division, the LHRC and the TLS challenged provisions¹⁵ of Tanzania's Media Services Act, 2016, arguing they violated freedom of expression and press freedom under Articles 6(d), 7(2), and 8(1)(a) of the East African Community (EAC) Treaty. The EACJ declared several provisions unconstitutional¹⁶ and therefore, ordered Tanzania to amend the Act to align with EAC Treaty principles.
- c) Msichana Initiative: Challenged the Marriage Act of 1971 in 2016 at the High Court, contesting provisions allowing child marriage; ruled unconstitutional, upheld by Court of Appeal in 2019.
- d) PINGO's Forum (and others): Pursued a number of strategic litigations on indigenous land rights in Loliondo (Ngorongoro) between 2000s and 2010s in the local and regional judicial bodies.
- e) LHRC: Pursued *Ndyanabo v. Attorney General* in 2002 at the Court of Appeal, balancing individual liberty and social control, reinforcing constitutional protections.

14 Adv. Onesmo Olengurumwa is a renowned young human rights activist and human rights defender in Tanzania. He is the founder of the authoritative Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC). Before founding THRDC of which he now serves as the National Coordinator, Adv. Olengurumwa served as senior human rights officer and researcher at the LHRC where he was part of the team of a number of strategic or public interest litigations pursued by the LHRC.

15 Note: Specifically sections 7(3)(a), (b), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), 19, 20, 21, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 50, 52, 53, 54, 58, and 59 of the said Media Services Act of 2016. The applicants contended these provisions imposed excessive restrictions on journalists and media houses, undermining democratic governance. The EACJ declared several provisions unconstitutional, including those requiring mandatory accreditation and criminalizing defamation, as they unjustifiably restricted media freedom.

16 That is, including all provision that require mandatory accreditation and criminalizing defamation, as they unjustifiably restricted media freedom.

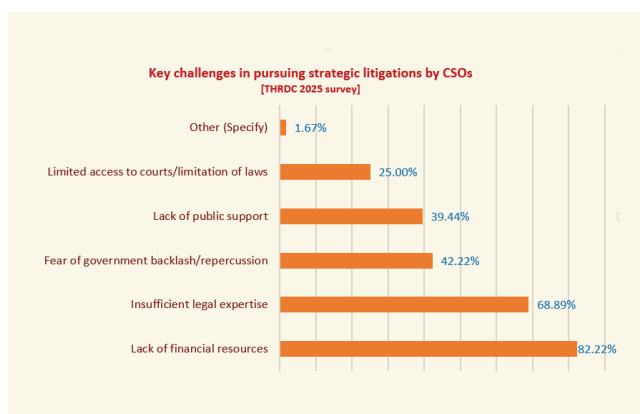
- f) Center for Strategic Litigation (CSL): Litigated cases on constitutionalism and freedom of expression from 2019–2023 at High Courts and EACJ, challenging civic space constraints.
- g) Adv. Jeremia Mtobesya: In *Jeremia Mtobesya v. Attorney General* (and also, *Attorney General v. Jeremia Mtobesya*), Civil Appeal No. 65 of 2016, (2018) TZCA 347, decided on January 31, 2018, the Court of Appeal of Tanzania limited the Director of Public Prosecutions' (DPP) power to deny bail via a certificate under Section 148(4) of the Criminal Procedure Act, Cap. 20. The court ruled that the DPP's certificate is not absolute, requiring compelling evidence to deny bail, thus reinforcing the constitutional right to bail under Article 13(6) (b) and judicial discretion.
- h) LHRC: Co-filed Application 036/2020 in 2020 at the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, seeking to allow independent electoral candidacy.
- i) Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) and Others: Filed a constitutional case against the Media Services Act of 2016 in 2017 at Mwanza High Court, dismissed on technical grounds.
- j) Dr. Willy Mutunga, Martha Karua and others: Co-filed a 2025 EACJ case against Tanzania's government, alleging unlawful detention and deportation of regional activists, violating EAC Treaty rights.
- k) Adv. Tito Magoti: In *Tito Magoti v. Hon. Attorney General* (Misc. Civil Cause No. 18 of 2023) [2024] TZHC 1939, decided on May 8, 2024, by the High Court of Tanzania, Tito Magoti challenged the constitutionality of multiple provisions of the Personal Data Protection Act, Cap. 44 of 2023 (PDPA), arguing they violated constitutional rights, including privacy under Article 16. This landmark decision was the first to scrutinize the PDPA's constitutionality, affirming its validity while highlighting specific flaws, setting a precedent for data protection law challenges in Tanzania.¹⁷
- l) Onesmo Olengurumwa Vs. the Attorney General [Civil Appeal No 165 of 2021 originating from Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 36 of 2019]
- m) Director of Public Prosecutions versus Oloomu Kursas, Sinjore Maitika and Ndagusa Koros [Criminal Application No 10 of 2023]

¹⁷ Note: The court dismissed most claims as speculative, requiring concrete evidence of violations, but declared sections 22(3) and 23(3)(c) and (e) unconstitutional due to vague language that risked legal uncertainty and abuse.

- n) Attorney General versus Boniface Mwabukusi [Application No 10 of 2023]
- o) Republic versus Francis Siwonike Godwin [Criminal case no 12602 of 2024]
- p) Attorney General versus Peter Michael Madeleka [App No 02 and 07 of 2024]
- q) Peter Michael Madeleka vs National Advocates Commitee & Three Others (Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 7817 of 2024) [2024] TZHC 7841 (30 August 2024)
- r) Deusdedith Soka & Jacob Mlay and Frank Mbise v. Inspector General of Police & 6 Others (Misc. Criminal Application No. 23998 of 2024) [2024] TZHC 7625 (28 August 2024)
- s) Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU), Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), and Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL) versus the Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania [Reference No 25 of 2020]
- t) Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU), Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), and Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL) versus the Attorney General of the United Republic of Tanzania [Reference No 27 of 2020]

As this survey found, most of CSOs reached out would wish to engage in strategic or public interest litigations at the national (local) or international judicial bodies the way the individual activists and organizations mentioned above (and others not in the list) have dared to do.

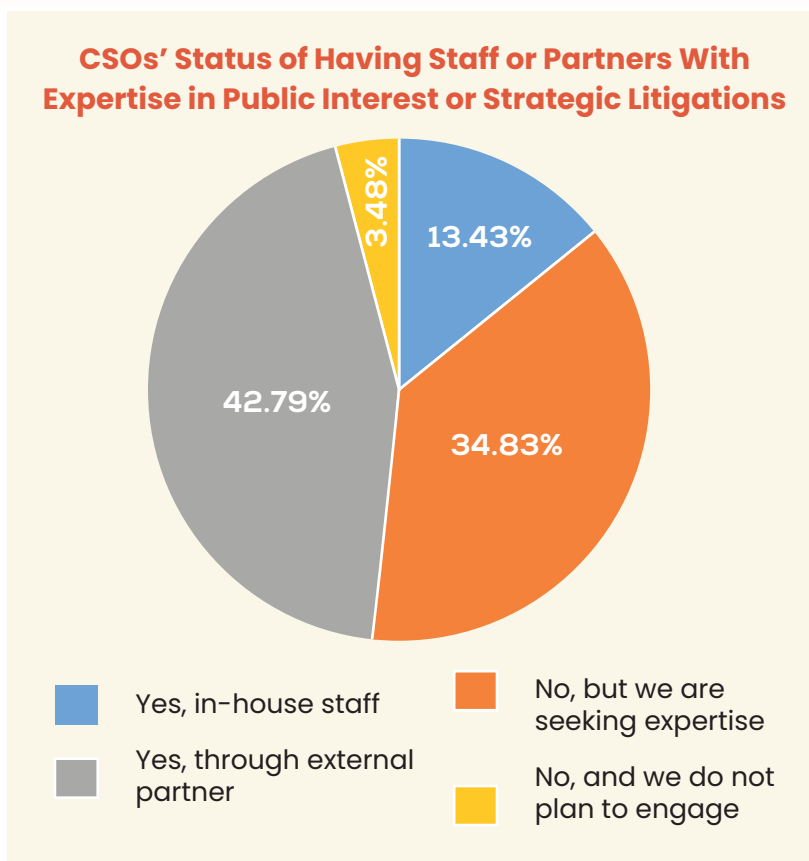
However, such CSOs claim to have limited capacities especially, lack (or insufficiency) of in-house legal expertise. On that, according to this survey only 13.4% of CSOs (27 out of 201) sampled said to have in-house staff with expertise in public interest or strategic litigation, while 34.8% (70 CSOs) rely on external partners.



Alarminglly, 42.8% (86 CSOs) lack (legal) expertise but are seeking it, and 8.9% have no plans or capacity to engage in litigation.

3.4.2 Other Key Challenges to Pursue Strategic Litigations

Other key challenges in addition to lack (or insufficiency) of in-house legal expertise that limits CSOs from opting to pursue strategic litigations were explored by this THRDC 2025 survey. According to the findings (see figure here), lack of sufficient financial resources was cited by 82.2% of respondent CSOs, reflecting the high costs of legal proceedings and limited donor funding for governance-focused litigation as said earlier on.



Insufficient legal expertise mentioned earlier on, was a concern for 68.9%. This one reinforces the survey's findings on limited in-house capacity already discussed above.

On the other hand, the fear of government 'backlash', reported by 42.2% of CSOs sampled. The said fear of repercussion (i.e., counter-reaction in adversarial way), is particularly acute when addressing sensitive issues like land rights e.g., of Loliondo and Ngorongoro as Arusha's CSOs said or electoral integrity as the Mjini Magharibi and Dar es Salaam CSOs said.

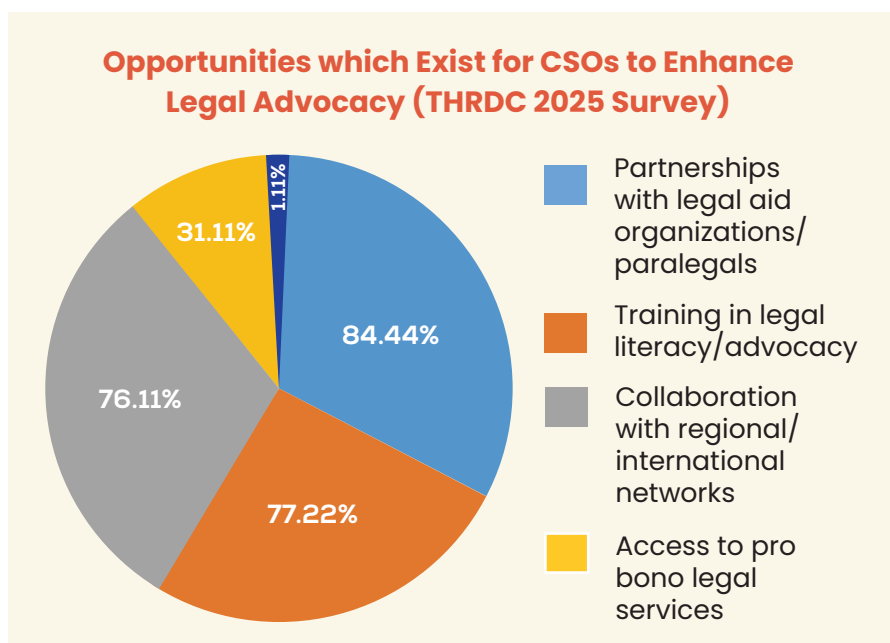
'Issues of political interest normally cause high sensitivity. Just look even how Tundu Lissu's case was being handled recently, where authorities barred public even Kenyan former Chief Justice and other observers, access to a court hearing, until when TLS and others intervened with strong statements questioning the independence of the Judiciary ...' said one CSO leader based in Dar es Salaam.

Other challenges include lack of sufficient public support (39.4%) and limited access to courts or restrictive laws (25%), which further entrench CSOs' hesitancy to engage in litigation.

3.4.3 Identified Significant Opportunities to Enhance Legal Advocacy

Despite these constraints, CSOs identified significant opportunities to enhance legal advocacy, as shown in figure here. The partnerships with legal aid organizations or paralegals were favored by 84.4%, offering a pathway to access expertise and resources.

Training in legal literacy and advocacy was prioritized by 77.2%, addressing the need for advanced programs beyond THRDC's current rudimentary offerings, which fail to cover complex issues like digital rights under UN General Assembly Resolution 68/167.



Collaboration with bar associations, regional or international networks, cited by 76.1%, could enable CSOs to engage regional courts like the East African Court of Justice, aligning with African Charter Article 7, to bypass domestic judicial 'inefficiency' as alleged or observed by some respondents.

Moreover, an access to pro bono legal services, noted by 31.1%, remains underutilized but holds potential, as demonstrated by successful regional human rights cases supported by the regional and global entities of legal experts like the East African Law Society (EALS), the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU), and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ).

Insights: PESTLE factors shaping CSOs' legal advocacy

The PESTLE factors shaping CSOs' legal advocacy further compound the challenges mentioned above. For instance, politically, Tanzania's "silent totalitarianism," as described by some of CSO respondents in Tanzania Mainland, could undermine the judicial independence, defying the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary of 1985. In Zanzibar, perceived political discrimination, such as requiring affiliation to a ruling party for voter education permits, violates freedom of association. Economically, allegation of some government officials' scrutiny of donor funds and absence of automatic charitable status for CSOs limit resources. Socially, public misconceptions labeling CSOs as 'political actors' could confuse their neutral mandates to the communities. Technologically, digital insecurity, including hacking and surveillance, threatens

operations as reported by some of CSOs especially in Arusha, make it difficult for such CSOs to operate freely. Legally, the stalled NGO Bill since 2020 and presence of laws with some provisions which are regarded by CSOs as being repressive, also, absence of HRDs protection law, tend to defy international frameworks including the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998. Environmentally, advocacy on natural resources, as in the Loliondo and Ngorongoro areas, faces risks to huge vested interest in land between indigenous communities, government authorities and the investors.

The survey team is of the view that, in order to address these gaps, CSOs emphasize the need for advanced legal literacy training and grassroots education to boost community engagement, among other interventions. A need for unified actions and sustained investment in capacity-building, is highly urged to challenge restrictive frameworks and expand civic space in Tanzania.

3.5 INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

3.5.1 Rationale of Considering Institutional Resilience and Internal Governance

The survey team is of the view that, the institutional resilience and internal governance are fundamental for CSOs in Tanzania, especially to effectively promote rule of law, expand civic space, fostering strategic partnerships, and advance human rights generally. That is, an effective leadership, clear decision-making processes, proactive risk management, and strong governance structures enable CSOs to withstand all forms of pressures while maintaining operational integrity. With that perception, the THRDC 2025 survey considered critical insights into these areas. It is generally revealed that, there is perceived relatively 'moderate' institutional capabilities alongside significant some gaps that limit CSOs' advocacy impact.

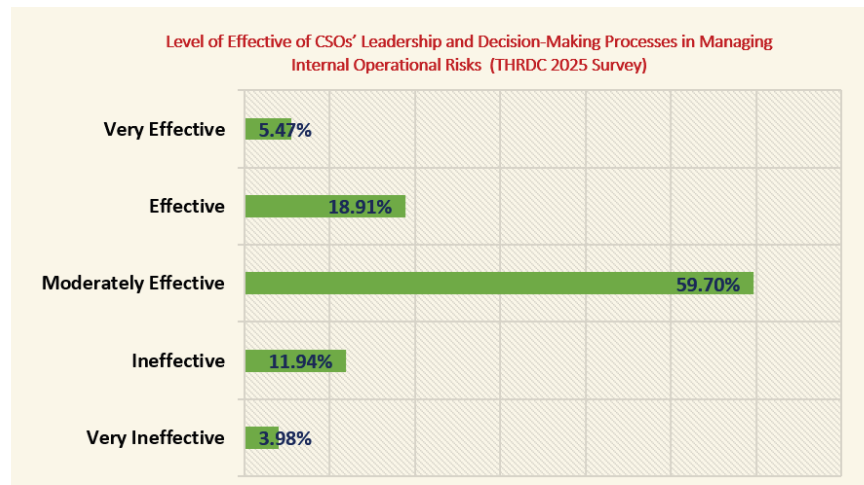
The following sub-sections analyze organizational leadership, decision-making effectiveness, risk management strategies, and governance challenges, integrating survey data and regional perspectives to discuss findings and their implications for CSO activism.

3.5.2 Organizational Leadership and Internal Decision-Making

As said earlier on, an effective leadership and decision-making are essential for CSOs' external operations e.g., on issues of focus under this project at hand. Such governance aspects ensure (among other issues) strategic direction, internal cohesion, and accountability in advocacy efforts.

The THRDC 2025 survey shows that nearly 60% of CSOs rate their leadership and decision-making processes as moderately effective in managing internal operational risks, with around 19% rating them effective and 5% very effective, as presented in figure here.

According to the findings presented in the figure, nearly 16% (3.98% very ineffective and 11.94% ineffective) report significant weaknesses. This trend could indicate inconsistent leadership capacity.



The said 'moderate' performance could, analytically, suggest that while many CSOs have functional structures, they often lack the expertise or clarity needed to address internal challenges swiftly, limiting their ability to coordinate advocacy or maintain staff morale. As it was almost predicted by the survey team, the claim of not receiving donor support on institutional enhancement, was loudly heard throughout the survey. It is a common trend over years which had never received a hearing ear of the funding partners. The governance bodies lack trainings due to limited funding, among other reasons.

In Kagera, a respondent shared, "transparent leadership elections help, but our board lacks training to guide monitoring, evaluation, fundraising and even the civic space initiatives we are discussing here now." Similar remarks on having regular boards' meetings in place, but with limited expertise on some issues, were heard across almost all CSOs responded to the survey.

On the same matter, FCS 2023 baseline study on civic space (cited earlier), which surveyed 195 CSOs of Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, also noted that governance structures, including board oversight, are a critical component of CSO operations. The said 2023 report indirectly highlighted board-related issues within capacity challenges, indicating that 54% of CSOs had some form of governance programs (e.g., board meetings and Annual General Meetings) that were not well institutionalized e.g., having board charters or operationalized e.g., meeting regularly; and that, only 25% of surveyed CSOs had effective programs.

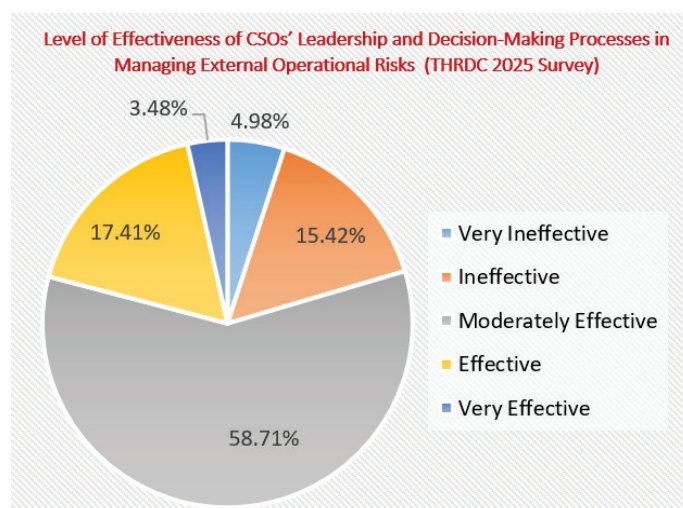
In relation to that, this THRDC 2025 survey found that around 49% of CSOs reported weak board oversight as a key governance gap. Thus, the FCS and THRDC's findings are almost having same findings. That is, nearly half of CSOs struggle with ineffective board leadership or engagement.

Such weakness impacts CSOs' ability to advocate for human rights and civic space, as boards often fail to offer strong strategic leadership on interventions especially when there are potential risks that would cost the entire operation or existence of the CSOs.

3.5.3 Leadership Response to External Operational Risks

The CSOs' leadership must effectively manage external risks such as legal restrictions, political pressures, and funding uncertainties in order to sustain activism for human rights and civic space in general. The strategic decision-making in this context enables organizations to mitigate all potential risks e.g., possibilities of government reprisals, secure resources, and build resilient partnerships – all which were mentioned as critical issues of concern by CSOs during the survey.

On that particular issue i.e., capacity of leadership to 'absolve the shocks,' the THRDC 2025 survey reveals that 58.7% of CSOs rate their leadership as 'moderately' effective in managing external operational risks, with only 17.4% effective and 3.48% very effective, as shown in figure here.



Furthermore, basing on such findings, around 21% (4.98% very ineffective and 15.42% ineffective) report 'significant' shortcomings, which could suggest presence of high vulnerability to external pressures for almost quarter of CSOs sampled.

In Dar es Salaam, a CSO stated, "sudden USA's funding policy shifts, like suspension of USAID globally including Tanzania, catch our leaders unprepared, hindering alternative options to sustain the shocks. We are now at the critical financial situation, failed even to pay salaries and consultancy fees."

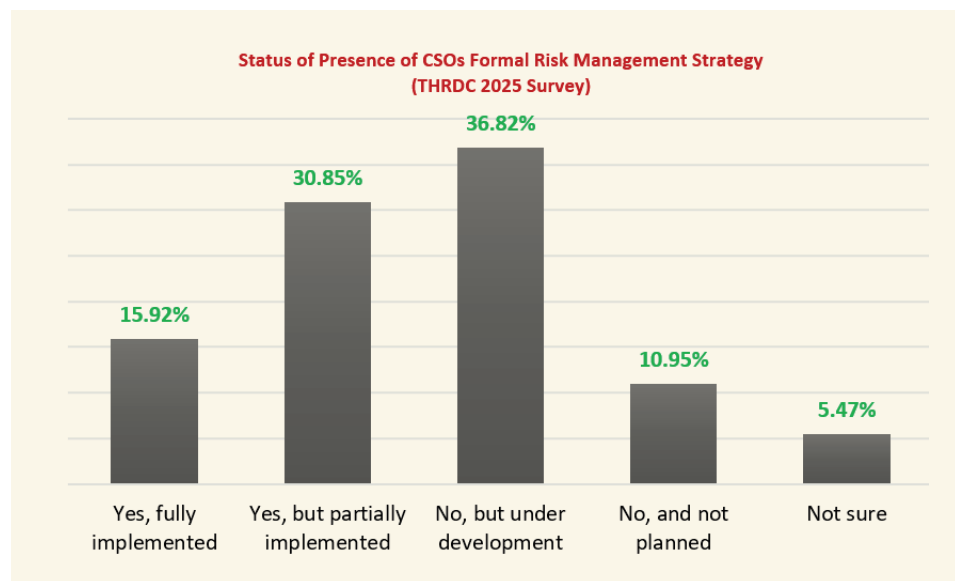
It is generally found that, there is a critical capacity gap or weaknesses to manage or address external risks in a way that undermines CSOs' advocacy resilience. The review team urge this project to ensure that, capacity building programs on risk management (as further discussed below), sustainability e.g., succession plan, etc., are ensured.

3.3.4 Risk Management Mechanisms

This survey was guided by an understanding that, the proactive risk management mechanisms are crucial for CSOs to operate under legal and even political or other forms of pressures while maintaining the noble course of advancing human rights agenda. For instance, these mechanisms allow organizations to anticipate and mitigate threats, such as deregistration, funding cuts, or digital surveillance e.g., as reported by the respondents of Arusha during the survey in May 2025.

The THRDC 2025 survey indicates that only 15.9% of CSOs have a 'fully' implemented formal risk management strategy e.g., having checklist of compliance requirements and trainings on digital security, while 30.9% have partially implemented ones.

Concerningly, as indicated in this figure, nearly 11% of CSOs have no such plans at all, and 5.5% are unsure.



Such trend could imply presence of a significant gap in risk preparedness. That is, weaknesses leave CSOs vulnerable, particularly in a "repressed" civic space where government reprisals are perceived to be common as almost all CSOs observed. The CSOs cited an example of some of the religious and CSOs leaders who have found themselves in legal wrangle with the state authorities due to their remarks or actions not pleasing the decision makers. Moreover, the US-grant cut of February 2025 could easily illustrate the said vulnerability especially for the CSOs which predominantly depended on US-grants.

As for the status of implementation of the risk management strategies, the THRDC 2025 survey reveals that CSOs in Tanzania exhibit ‘moderate’ institutional resilience, with leadership effectiveness rated moderately effective by 58–59% and only 15.9% having ‘fully’ implemented risk management strategies as said earlier.

Conclusively, it is observed that, the limited adoption of an effective risk management strategies hampers CSOs’ ability to sustain activism and forge partnerships. This brings a need for THRDC and other partners to continue supporting comprehensive risk planning and resource allocation.

3.3.5 CSOs’ Perceived Governance Weaknesses or Gaps

As hinted earlier on, the strong internal governance is vital for CSOs to maintain legitimacy and effectiveness in advocating for all issues of concern, including human rights and rule of law. Indeed, clear policies, skilled staff, and effective stakeholder engagement ensure accountability and alignment with advocacy objectives.

The THRDC 2025 survey identifies some governance gaps, with 65.7% of CSOs reporting insufficient skilled staff e.g., due to funding issue, 63.7% citing a lack of clear policies/procedures, 48.7% noting weak board oversight, 40.8% highlighting poor financial accountability, and 38.8% mentioning limited stakeholder engagement, as shown table here shows more.

Perceived Main Governance Gap CSOs	
Governance Gap	Percentage
Insufficient skilled staff	65.67%
Lack of clear policies/procedures	63.68%
Weak board oversight	48.76%
Poor financial accountability	40.80%
Limited stakeholder engagement	38.81%
Other(Specify)	1.49%

Source: THRDC Primary/Survey Data, 2025

These gaps erode CSOs’ credibility and operational resilience, limiting their capacity to challenge restrictive frameworks or build coalitions. A Kaskazini Unguja CSO shared, “weak board oversight limits our community engagement in gender equality and other advocacies. Most of board members are affiliated to the government entities and they lack sufficient knowledge or experience of this (civic) society sector.”

The high prevalence of staffing and policy gaps suggests that CSOs struggle to maintain effective governance. This too will definitely need a tailor-made capacity-building to strengthen structures and support strategic partnerships.

3.3.6 Best Practices in Governance and Risk Management

Adopting best practices in governance and risk management is crucial for CSOs in Tanzania to effectively promote rule of law, expand civic space, etc., were also inquired by this survey at hand. Basing on the literature review of empirical studies, at least five criteria were picked for the CSOs to assess themselves. Such criteria of best practices criteria and the responses are summarized in the table below.

Table: Best Practices in Governance or Risk Management that CSOs Adopted
[Thematic analysis of the best practices mentioned]

S/N.	Theme	Overall Status/ Rating
1	Presence of Financial Management	High (Above 70%)
2	Presence of Governance Structure	High (Above 70%)
3	Capacity Building (Generally)	High (Above 70%)
4	Level of Stakeholder Engagement	High (Above 70%)
5	Policies, Laws and Compliance	Moderate (Around 50%)
6	Adoption of Risk Management Strategies	Moderate (Around 50%)
7	Use of Skillful Advocacy for Human Rights	Moderate (Around 50%)
8	Use of Digital and Other Data Security	Low (Below 50%)
9	Presence of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	Low (Below 50%)

Source: THRDC Primary. Survey Data, 2025.

The survey is informed that, CSOs in Tanzania have adopted a range of best practices to strengthen governance and manage risks effectively. A key area of focus is sound financial management and accountability, where many organizations report using internal financial controls, conducting regular audits, and ensuring transparent reporting to stakeholders. For instance, one CSO mentioned adopting “a simple but functional financial tracking system and community feedback mechanisms to ensure accountability and responsiveness.”

Another major theme is the establishment of governance structures, including active board oversight – as said earlier, defined roles and responsibilities, and regular meetings. Most of the organizations (nearly 50%) claimed to have been conducting board meetings quarterly and holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to ensure broad stakeholder participation.

Moreover, several CSOs noted the importance of internal policies and legal compliance, such as adopting procurement, finance, and data protection policies. One Mbeya-based CSO shared that it developed “a whistleblowing policy and compliance mechanisms with national laws and donor regulations.”

On the other hand, the risk management practices were also mentioned, with CSOs referencing tools such as risk registers and SWOC analyses to identify and respond to threats. A respondent explained that their organization uses a Risk Management Matrix as an oversight tool to track and respond to risks in a timely manner.

The CSOs are also investing in capacity building for staff and community members. Examples include “security and capacity training for staff” and “training local government leaders and ward councilors.” Additionally, many organizations reported strong stakeholder engagement, emphasizing collaboration with local government, development partners, and community groups.

Some responses also highlighted low adoption and use of digital security practices, such as protecting data and securing digital devices. Moreover, a few CSOs described monitoring and evaluation systems as essential for tracking progress and maintaining accountability, especially in project implementation.

3.6 STRATEGIC COLLABORATION AND COALITION-BUILDING

3.6.1 Scope and Effectiveness of Collaboration and Coalition-Building

The collaboration and coalition-building are essential for CSOs to strengthen their advocacy the agenda they pursue e.g., in the context of this EU-funded project, intervention pertaining enabling collective actions to challenge repressive frameworks, promoting rule of law, civic space, etc.

The survey at hand observed that, currently, in Tanzania, these partnerships take various forms, including thematic (e.g., gender-focused networks like WILDAF, CWHDS-Tz., JUWAUZA, TGNP, TALA, TNRF, TEN/MET, PINGO’s Forum); geographic (e.g., regional networks like MTWANGONET, NGONEDO); vertical (e.g., grassroots-to-national linkages through THRDC, ANGOZA, PACSO); horizontal (e.g., peer CSO alliances like TANLAP, SHIVYAWATA, TAPANET, SHIJUWAZA); professional-related (e.g., ZAFELA, TAWLA, NaCONGO, TAMWA); statutory ones (e.g., TLS, ZLS); and, inter-state ones (e.g., EALS, PALU, EACSO, EHAHRDs-Net.).

Such coalitions, if utilized effectively and strategically, could enhance resource-sharing, amplify policy influence, and strengthen resilience against political and legal pressures – as they are survival strategies to spread the risks. There are a lot of reforms which were instigated in Tanzania by coalitions in the past including on land matters, gender, natural resources, etc. This study also encourages CSOs to forge mutual and strategic partnerships with bar associations and religious organizations as the collective way to mitigate the current human rights advocacy challenges.

During the time (prior to 2019), the legal frameworks condoned operations of the ‘loose’ or unregistered networks e.g., FEMACT to operate. However, the 2019 amendments to the laws governing CSOs (cited earlier), introduced mandatory registration and oversight of CSOs activities, which automatically prohibit loose networks. There was a time between 2015 and 2020 when the oversight bodies even attempted or tempted to control CSOs’ whatsapp-coordinating groups or platforms e.g., the ‘directors’ forum’ whatsapp group.

Observation: Laws do not support CSOs’ cross-border operations between Mainland and Zanzibar

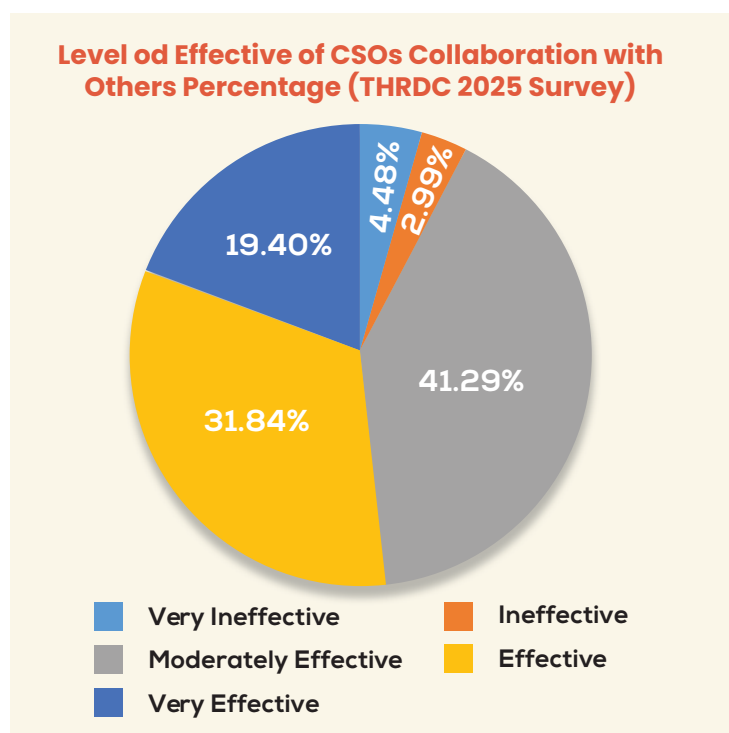
The THRDC 2025 survey also reveals that the legal frameworks governing CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar do not permit cross-border operations e.g., formal networking between the two sides of the United Republic of Tanzania, a situation which create some obstacles for (formal) joint interventions even on common issues, such as the bills of rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977. This restriction also poses technical challenges for Mainland and Zanzibar CSOs to collaborate on union matters, such as international relations, which may encompass interactions with international human rights platforms like the EAC, SADC, AU, and UN, including the UPR mechanism. The survey noted that, as a way of addressing this, some CSOs, such as THRDC and WILDAF (all being local CSOs), had to register (re-register) under Zanzibar’s Societies Act of 1995 in order to ‘legally’ operate in both union sides. Apparently, this practice increases operational costs due to dual accountability to oversight bodies, including revenue authorities. These legal barriers hinder CSOs’ ability to form unified teams for collective advocacy and therefore, limiting their effectiveness in promoting human rights and civic space across the two sides of the union.

The limiting of limiting flexible coalition-building and limitation of cross-border practices of the CSOs between Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar offers an opportunity for THRDC and other SCATZ project’s partners to take this as one of the core advocacy agendas. These partners may also team up with the regional networks like EALS, PALU and EACSOFF to see a possibility of having a unified compliance standards in the spirit of the EAC’s treaty (cited earlier).

3.6.2 Effectiveness of CSOs' Collaboration and Coalition-Building

The effective collaboration among CSOs is vital for collective advocacy, pooling expertise to challenge restrictive laws and promote human rights and rule of law. In the context of this survey, the 'effectiveness' was analyzed on the basis of, among other factors, ability to engage into joint activist-actions and earn some changes.

Basing on CSOs' own appraisals on this, as it is for the rest of survey questions, the THRDC 2025 survey indicates that 41.3% of CSOs rate their collaborations with other CSOs, networks, or coalitions as 'moderately' effective, 31.9% as effective, and 19.4% as 'very' effective. Nearly 8% of sampled CSOs considered their collaborations as being either ineffective or very ineffective as Figure here shows.



The predominance of 'moderate' effectiveness suggests that while CSOs participate in coalitions like THRDC, ANGOZA, PACSO and others, their impact is constrained by resource and structural limitations e.g., absence of operational policies to guide engagements with stakeholders.

On that same particular matter, the FCS 2023 survey findings on CSOs' civic space indicated that, only 5% of CSOs had formal partnership strategy documents. This limits their ability to mount cohesive interventions in strategic manners e.g., understanding who and who to engage with, when, how and for what specific purpose. The 2025 THRDC survey findings on partnerships and collaboration indicate that, not more than five CSOs have formal partnerships (MoU) with TLS and ZLS respectively.

Basing on such perspectives, it could mean that, currently, at least 90% of the CSOs engage in networks, partnerships and coalitions almost haphazardly. Other networking 'hiccups' heard during the survey (further discussed below)

included resources, skills and trust. For instance, a Singida-based CSO noted, “we join local coalitions on education rights, but inconsistent coordination weakens our advocacy impact.” In Manyara, a CSO shared, “our network on land rights is active, but limited resources hinder collective policy influence.”

It was also observed by this survey that, most of the CSOs have at least three different networks which could have financial implications e.g., payment of annual membership fees. On the other hand, it seems that, there is still a critical ‘tag-of-war’ e.g., competition of resources from the same sources (donors) between individual organizations and their networks or coalitions’ secretariats. In most cases, as it was heard in Unguja and elsewhere, the secretariats implement what ought to have been mandates of their member organizations. In most cases, whatever, they do together was not co-created. In Kilimanjaro, a CSO remarked, “we work with THRDC and other networks on human rights; but ad hoc partnerships limit our long term efforts. They come to us for specific activities and mostly as participants of the workshops or studies they are carrying out.”

3.6.3 Barriers to CSOs’ Effective Collaboration

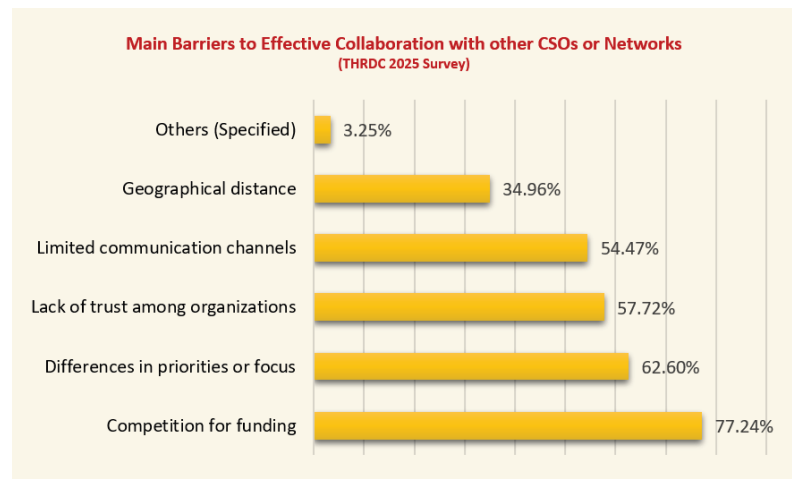
The remarks on the perceived current highest level selfishness of CSOs was heard throughout the survey. ‘Sisi wana AZAKI, tumekuwa wabinafsi sana. Tunachati mambo mengine, ila siyo kuonyeshana fursa. Kila mtu anapambana kivyake. Kuna watu wamevamia hii sekta kwa maslahi binafsi, hasa kutumia sekta kama ngazi ya kupata fursa za kisiasa. Baadhi ya wabunge wa jamii zetu, Ngorongoro, Kiteto na kwingine, wamefanya hivyo. Walipofika Bungeni, wamekaa kimya kuhusu sisi na watu wetu. Ndiyo ubinafsi ninaousema’,¹⁸ said a lady CSO director based in Arusha.

That is obviously a critical barrier because collaboration as an indication of presence of partnership, normally starts with trust and then, sharing common interest. In the view of the survey team, addressing barriers to collaboration, is necessary for CSOs to build stronger and effectual coalitions that advance their agenda, including on human rights and civic space advocacy.

18 Literally translate that: “We, the members of CSOs, have become very selfish. We chat about other things, but not about sharing opportunities. Everyone is struggling on their own. Some people have infiltrated this sector for personal gain, especially using it as a stepping stone to access political opportunities. Some MPs from our communities, like Ngorongoro, Kiteto, and elsewhere, have done this. Once they reached Parliament, they remained silent about us and our people. That’s the selfishness I’m talking about.”

The THRDC 2025 survey identifies key obstacles or barriers to effective collaborations or coalitions, with 77.2% of CSOs citing competition for funding (i.e., ‘selfishness’) and the main barrier.

As it is further indicated in the figure here, other barriers mentioned and ranked were differences in priorities or focus (62.6%), lack of trust among organizations (57.7%), limited communication channels (54.5%).



The geographical distance (35%), was also mentioned especially by the grassroots based CSOs. This one is perceived as a barrier especially because alternative methods of interactions such as use of digital platforms, are hindered by low accessibility and use of ICT.

Despite the fact that it is not feasible for the SCATZ project’s partners to pursue for broader accessibility of telecommunication facilities in rural setting, this could be taken as long term agenda. At the moment, use of ICT is inevitable as it also offer much safer ‘space’ for activism than meeting in-person which is both cost-full and ‘precarious.’ The enabling environments for CSOs to operate should include presence of accessible and secured digital spaces down to the remote areas. This reality can justify CSOs’ interventions on ICT policy reforms.

The THRDC 2025 survey is of the opinion that, competition for funding, the most significant barrier as indicated above, echoes the FCS 2023 survey finding (cited above), that 71% of CSOs face financial constraints, fostering kind of rivalry that fragments advocacy efforts. This fact, as said earlier, is mentioned by almost all CSOs sampled for this survey, especially during FGDs.

There is a need for networks like THRDC to team up with local grant making organizations like FCS and LSF so as to come out with reliable models of grants to CSOs. Apart from guiding member CSOs to adopt alternative sources of funds e.g., engage in social enterprise schemes as suggested in THRDC’s analysis report on USA’s grant cut of June 2023, it is high time that advocacy is also directed to the funding partners to offer long-term and mega-funding which support broader inclusion of more CSOs down to the grassroots.

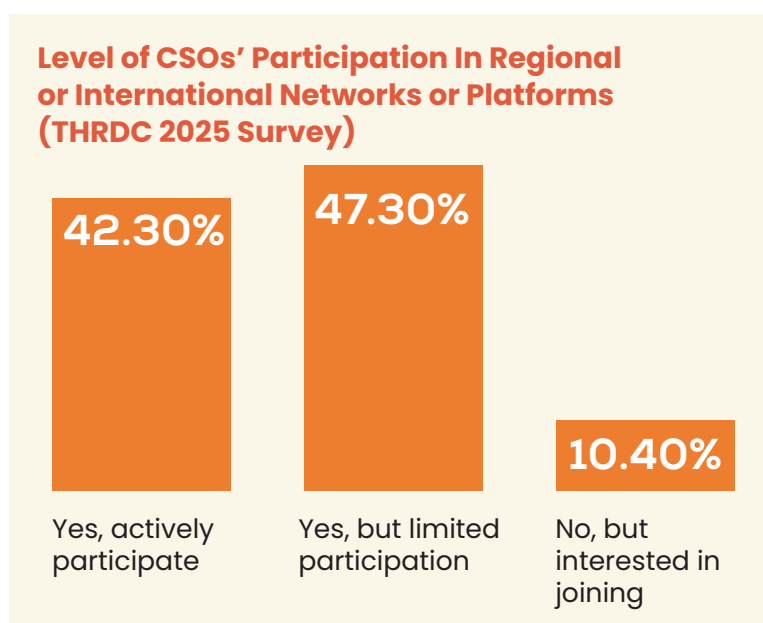
3.6.4 Engagement with Regional and International Networks and Platforms

Logically, participation in regional and international networks enhances CSOs' advocacy by providing access to global platforms, expertise, and funding. Furthermore, that can strengthen their influence on needed changes especially when local remedies turn dumb to the demands. As said earlier, some of the CSOs have ventured to make use of the international networks and platforms including the EACJ and UN-based treaty monitoring bodies (TMBs) such as Human Rights Council (HRC).

On this particular inquiry, the THRDC 2025 survey shows that 42.3% of CSOs actively participate in such networks (directly or through their networks' secretariats); while 47.3% claimed to have limited participation, and 10.4% are interested but not engaged. Figure here offers a pictorial presentation of these findings.

As per this figure, the high participation rate (89.6% combined) reflects strong interest in platforms mentioned earlier, yet nearly half report limited engagement, likely due to resource constraints and insufficient data to make their participation credible, as per the FCS 2023 survey finding that only 5% conduct of CSOs normally conduct researches on civic space and human rights prior to interventions.

A Singida CSO noted, "we join regional education networks, but funding shortages to have sufficient data and logistics, limit our active role." The 10.4% interested in joining indicate untapped potential, but the 2019 NGO Act's oversight requirements and other barriers mentioned below, deter international linkages.



3.6.5 Factors Influencing Network and Coalition-Building

Identifying factors that influence CSOs' coalition-building capacity is essential for overcoming barriers and strengthening advocacy interventions.

The THRDC 2025 survey highlights key factors, with 54.7% noting access to technology, 49.8% mentioning leadership commitment, 47.3% pointing to funding availability, 44.8% referencing the political environment, and 39.8% identifying legal limitations. Table below shows findings clearer.

Table: Factors Most Influence CSOs' Ability to Build Networks or Coalitions

Multiple Responses (N=20)	Percentage
Access to technology (e.g., virtual meeting platforms)	54.7%
Social/cultural alignment with partners	64.7%
Political environment	44.8%
Legal Limitations	39.8%
Availability of funding for joint initiatives	47.3%
Leadership commitment to collaboration	49.8%

Source: THRDC Primary/Survey Data, 2025

According to the table here, 64.7% citing social/cultural alignment with partners.

That is the most influential factor, which fosters trust in networks. However, lack of trust (57.7%, said in earlier in sub-sections above) undermines this.

Moreover, leadership commitment and funding, cited by nearly half, are constrained by weak leadership e.g., board oversight (48.76%, THRDC 2025 survey) and financial challenges (71%, FCS 2023 survey). All these and other critical issues should be in the list of matters that the SCATZ project's framework to address.

3.7 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.7.1 CSOs' Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Capacities

The aspects of financial and other resource capacities, including expertise and technology, have been extensively discussed in prior sections of this report, which drew on findings from this THRDC 2025 survey and the said FCS 2023 baseline study (cited earlier), both funded by the European Union and focused on civic space and CSO activism.

These discussions highlighted critical constraints, such as 71% of CSOs citing inadequate funding (FCS 2023) and weak governance structures limiting advocacy effectiveness. The sustainable resource mobilization, as it is well

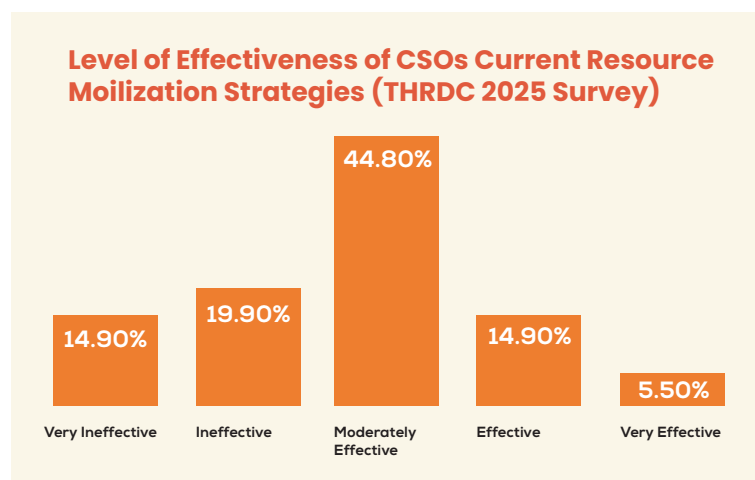
understood, is vital for CSOs in Tanzania to maintain long-term operational and financial resilience, which eventually facilitate consistent advocacy interventions.

As it is suggested elsewhere in this report, the strategic partnerships with donors and innovative funding models e.g., social enterprises, endowment funds, are essential to reduce dependency and enhance activism impact. Turning to the specifics of the THRDC 2025 survey, it is observed that, funding challenges, current sources, and sustainable models, revealing moderate effectiveness and significant barriers, exacerbated by events like the USAID funding suspension in February 2025. Generally, according to this survey, majority of CSOs, over 70% (including the large and experienced ones), are in critical funding challenge at the moment.

3.7.2 Effectiveness of Resource Mobilization Strategies by CSOs

The effective resource mobilization strategies in the context of this study include an ability of CSOs to secure diverse funding so as to sustain their internal and external operations. That could also mean reducing reliance on volatile donors' support.

On this particular issue, the THRDC 2025 survey shows that 44.8% of CSOs rate their resource mobilization strategies as moderately effective, 14.9% as effective, and only 5.5% as very effective, while 34.8% (14.9% very ineffective and 19.9% ineffective).



Those claimed to have relatively effective strategies mainly mentioned ability to write proposals and mobilize members to pay their membership fees.

Moreover, as said earlier on, over 70% of local CSOs predominantly rely on local grant making organizations like FCS, LSF and Tanzania Women Fund which, may be, could have lenient grant conditions reflecting the capacity of such local organizations.

Moreover, despite of perceiving themselves as being moderately effective in resource mobilization, only 5% of surveyed CSOs in 2023 has resource mobilization strategy document as said earlier.

The February 2025 USAID funding suspension or cutting, have further strained CSOs which were previously reliant on such particular grant. The 20.4% combined effective and very effective ratings mainly suggest potential in urban-based CSOs with proposal-writing skills, but rural CSOs struggle due to limited exposure to potential sources of funds.

3.7.3 Primary Challenges in Securing Long-Term Funding for CSOs

Identifying funding challenges is essential for CSOs e.g., through this SCATZ project, to develop sustainable models that support long-term human rights activism. The THRDC 2025 survey highlights key barriers, with 69.7% citing lack of proposal-writing skills, 59.7% noting limited donor interest in their thematic areas e.g., indigenous pastoralism, 49.8% reporting high dependence on single donors, 44.8% mentioning regional economic constraints e.g., challenges facing donor countries, and 39.8% pointing to restrictive donor conditions.

3.7.4 Current Funding Sources for CSOs and Sustainable Funding Models

The THRDC 2025 survey shows that 64.7% of CSOs rely on international donors, 59.7% on local donors, 49.8% on membership fees, 39.8% on income-generating activities or social enterprises, and 34.8% on government grants.

As for the sustainable funding models, the survey team is of the view that, developing sustainable funding models is essential for CSOs to achieve long-term operational stability and advance their agenda including the ones relating to human rights advocacy. On this, the THRDC 2025 survey indicates that 49.8% of CSOs are exploring or implementing social enterprise models, 44.8% partnerships with the private sector, 39.8% crowd-funding, and 34.8% endowment or charity funds, as shown in figure here.

The private sector partnerships, pursued by nearly half, is a growing trend, tapping mainly into corporate social responsibility as CSOs like CCBRT are doing e.g., being supported by Vodacom Foundation among other corporate companies.

These models offer potential to reduce donor dependency, as seen in the USAID suspension's impact. THRDC should support training in social enterprise development and private sector engagement to reinforce activism resilience.

3.7.5 PRIORITY CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS AND SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Virtually every gap identified in the THRDC 2025 survey points to the urgent need for tailor-made capacity enhancement to empower CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar to advance their agendas, especially which mirror the focus of this SCATZ project.

Regarding the critical capacity gaps affecting CSOs' impact in rule of law, civic space and human rights, the survey's findings reveal internal operational constraints, with 64.7% of CSOs citing staff training/capacity as the top gap, followed by legal expertise (54.7%), financial resources (49.8%), advocacy skills (44.8%), and technology/infrastructure (42.3%).

Externally, the CSOs mentioned economic instability (59.7%) e.g., unreliable funding support, political interference (54.7%), restrictive laws/regulations (49.8%), security risks to staff/members (39.8%), and negative public perception on CSOs (34.8%).

These findings resonate with earlier sections of this report, which highlighted CSOs' struggles with regulatory compliance, limited operational resilience, and weak state engagement amid Tanzania's restrictive socio-political environments.

The survey's short-term intervention priorities align with these gaps, with 64.7% of CSOs emphasizing training in legal literacy and advocacy, 54.7% seeking technical support (e.g., IT and data management), 49.8% valuing networking opportunities, 47.3% needing project-specific funding, and 44.8% requesting leadership mentorship. These preferences echo earlier findings on CSOs' challenges, such as presence of repressive legal framework governing the civil society sector, leveraging digital tools for advocacy, and securing sustainable funding.

Note: Implications of perceived CSOs' capacity gaps

The implications of these gaps are significant – as said earlier on. For instance, limited legal expertise and advocacy skills hinder CSOs' ability to challenge restrictive regulations or engage state institutions, undermining access to justice. Moreover, insufficient financial resources and technological infrastructure curtail outreach to marginalized communities and innovation in advocacy. On the other hand, political interference and security risks shrink civic space, deterring public participation in democratic processes. These challenges could threaten the SCATZ project's focus, particularly in in this year 2025, where political sensitivities are acute.

As a way of addressing such issues of concern, the survey's emphasis on practical interventions offers a pathway forward – mostly basing on CSOs' own suggestions.

The table below outlines evidence-based recommendations to address priority capacity-building needs and institutional support requirements. Each recommendation is practical, aligned with the SCATZ project's results framework, and designed to maximize relevance, feasibility, impact, and sustainability.

Table: Evidence-based recommendations to address priority capacity-building

Recommendation	Descriptions	Rationale [& Baseline]	Deliverable/ Result	Sustainability	Feasibility
Develop Targeted Legal Literacy and Advocacy Programs	Implement workshops and online courses on legal literacy, human rights advocacy, and NGO regulatory compliance, using case studies and mock negotiations. Partner with legal aid organizations and universities.	Addresses 64.7% demand for legal literacy training and 44.8% need for advocacy skills to navigate restrictive laws (49.8%).	Enhances CSOs' ability to advocate for legal reforms and protect civic space.	Builds in-house expertise, reducing reliance on external legal support.	Leverages THRDC's training infrastructure and existing legal networks.
Upgrade Technological and Data Management Capacity	Provide micro-grants for IT equipment, data management software, and cybersecurity tools, paired with training on digital advocacy and secure communication. Collaborate with tech NGOs for cost-effective solutions.	Responds to 54.7% need for technical support and 42.3% technology gap, addressing security risks (39.8%).	Improves operational efficiency and enables data-driven advocacy.	Durable infrastructure ensures long-term benefits.	Fits SCATZ's budget for capacity-building grants
Foster CSO Networks and Coalitions	Establish/ improve regional CSO platforms e.g., THRDC zonal desks via SCATZ-funded forums to share resources and conduct joint advocacy. Include Zanzibar-specific networks for tailored support.	Meets 49.8% demand for networking and builds on need for collective action against political interference (54.7%).	Amplifies policy influence and resilience.	Networks sustain collaboration post-project.	Utilizes THRDC's coordination role e.g., zonal desks.

Enhance partnerships with human rights and rule of law actors	Establish and enhance partnerships with rule of law, access to justice and human rights actors such as Bar associations, government institutions including Judiciary, Director of prosecutions, Attorney General, the Parliament, CHRAGG, responsible ministries for justice etc.	Responds to the existing gaps in relation to strategic partnerships between rule of law actors in Tanzania. There is a need to establish mutual and meaningful partnerships among actors of rule of law, access to justice and accountability.	Enhanced strategic engagement and partnerships	Build a collective and coordinated efforts in access to justice sector and improving human rights accountability mechanism	Using the existing MoU and relationship between THRDC/ CSOs and other rule of law actors
Introduce Flexible Funding Mechanisms	Launch a small grants program for projects enhancing accountability and justice, with simplified applications to ease administrative burdens.	Addresses 49.8% financial resource gap and 47.3% funding need, mitigating economic instability (59.7%).	Enables rapid, targeted interventions.	Encourages diversified funding sources.	Aligns with SCATZ's funding framework
Support Leadership Mentorship and Resilience Training	Create a mentorship program pairing experienced and emerging CSO leaders, focusing on strategic planning and managing political interference. Include media engagement to counter negative perception.	Responds to 44.8% need for mentorship and addresses political interference (54.7%).	Builds resilient leadership for sustained impact.	Develops a pipeline of skilled leaders.	Leverages THRDC's network of experienced leaders.

Source: THRC Primary/ Survey Data, 2025.

3.8 PROPOSED BASELINE INDICATORS FOR SCATZ PROJECT

The THRDC 2025 survey provides critical data to establish baseline performance indicators for the SCATZ project, enabling the measurement of progress in strengthening CSOs' capacities in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar.

The tables below present quantitative and qualitative indicators aligned with the project's (TOR's) objectives: enhancing legal literacy and strategic litigation capacity, improving institutional resilience and governance, expanding collaboration and coalition-building, bolstering sustainability and resource mobilization, addressing priority capacity-building needs, and capturing miscellaneous factors.

These proposed indicators are derived from the survey's findings and are designed to track progress in promoting accountability, access to justice, and democratic governance. The objectives are also construed from the TOR – therefore, subject to any adjustment in the opinion of project's implementers.

3.8.1 Legal Literacy and Strategic Litigation Capacity

Objective: Enhance CSOs' ability to interpret restrictive laws and engage in strategic litigation to advance human rights and civic space.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs with strong or very strong legal literacy	17.4% (12.9% strong + 4.5% very strong)	30%
Quantitative	# of CSOs with in-house legal expertise for strategic litigation	13.4% (27/201 CSOs)	25% (50/201 CSOs)
Quantitative	# of CSOs engaging in strategic litigation cases	12% (24/201 CSOs)	20% (40/201 CSOs)
Quantitative	% of CSOs partnered with legal aid organizations or paralegals	84.4%	90%
Qualitative	CSO narratives on confidence in navigating restrictive laws	Limited confidence due to moderate literacy (60.2%)	Increased confidence in challenging laws like NGOs Act
Qualitative	Case studies of successful strategic litigation	Few successes (e.g., LHRC, THRDC, Msi-chora Initiative)	Document 5+ replicable litigation strategies
Qualitative	Perceived reduction in fear of government backlash	42.2% fear backlash	Reduced fear, increased willingness for sensitive cases

3.8.2 Institutional Resilience and Internal Governance

Objective: Strengthen CSOs' leadership, decision-making, risk management, and governance structures to withstand external pressures.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs with fully implemented risk management strategies	15.9%	30%
Quantitative	% of CSOs rating leadership as effective or very effective in managing external risks	20.88% (17.4% effective + 3.48% very effective)	35%
Quantitative	% of CSOs with effective governance programs (e.g., board charters, regular meetings)	25% (FCS 2023)	40%
Quantitative	% of CSOs reporting weak board oversight	48.7%	30%
Qualitative	CSO feedback on governance improvements	Weak board oversight (49%) and limited training	Enhanced board oversight and staff morale
Qualitative	Documentation of risk management adoption	Limited use of risk registers (15.9% fully implemented)	Widespread use of tools like SWOC analyses
Qualitative	Leadership perspectives on external risk navigation	21% report significant shortcomings	Improved adaptability to funding cuts, political pressures

3.8.3 Scope and Effectiveness of Collaboration and Coalition-Building

Objective: Expand CSOs' collective advocacy through effective networks and coalitions to challenge restrictive frameworks.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs rating collaborations as effective or very effective	51.3% (31.9% effective + 19.4% very effective)	70%
Quantitative	# of CSOs actively participating in regional/international networks	42.3% (85/201 CSOs)	60% (120/201 CSOs)

Quantitative	% of CSOs citing competition for funding as a barrier	77.2%	60%
Quantitative	# of CSOs in joint advocacy initiatives by coalitions	56.6% (114/201 CSOs)	75% (151/201 CSOs)
Qualitative	Narratives on coalition impact	Moderate impact due to ad hoc partnerships	Document successful joint advocacy (e.g., THRDC-led)
Qualitative	Feedback on cross-border collaboration barriers	Legal restrictions on Mainland-Zanzibar networking	Progress toward unified advocacy platforms
Qualitative	Perceived trust and coordination in coalitions	57.7% cite lack of trust	Increased trust and communication channels

3.8.4 Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Capacities

Objective: Enhance CSOs' financial resilience and diversified funding strategies to sustain advocacy efforts.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs with resource mobilization strategy documents	5% (FCS 2023)	20%
Quantitative	% of CSOs rating resource mobilization as effective or very effective	20.4% (14.9% effective + 5.5% very effective)	35%
Quantitative	% of CSOs relying on single donors	49.8%	35%
Quantitative	% of CSOs implementing social enterprise models	49.8%	65%
Qualitative	CSO stories on funding diversification	Limited diversification, reliance on local grants	Adoption of social enterprises, private partnerships
Qualitative	Feedback on proposal-writing skill improvements	69.7% lack proposal-writing skills	Enhanced access to new donors post-training
Qualitative	Perceived resilience to funding shocks	Vulnerable to USAID suspension (Feb 2025)	Improved preparedness for funding disruptions

3.8.5 Priority Capacity-Building Needs and Institutional Support Requirements

Objective: Address critical capacity gaps to empower CSOs in rule of law, civic space, and human rights advocacy.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs receiving legal literacy and advocacy training	64.7% prioritize this	80% trained
Quantitative	% of CSOs with access to technical support (e.g., IT, data management)	54.7% prioritize this	70% supported
Quantitative	% of CSOs engaged in networking opportunities	49.8% prioritize this	65% participating
Quantitative	% of CSOs reporting insufficient skilled staff	65.7%	50%
Qualitative	CSO feedback on training impact	Limited skills in advocacy, technology	Enhanced engagement with state and communities
Qualitative	Stories of networking outcomes	Moderate networking impact (49.8%)	Stronger advocacy via networks like THRDC
Qualitative	Perceived reduction in capacity gaps	Gaps in legal expertise (54.7%), finance (49.8%)	Progress in addressing financial, technical constraints

3.8.6 Miscellaneous Indicators

Objective: Capture other contextual factors affecting CSO activism and civic space.

Indicator Type	Indicator	Baseline (THRDC 2025)	Target
Quantitative	% of CSOs perceiving civic space as somewhat or significantly more open	47.3% (43.8% somewhat + 3.5% significantly)	60%
Quantitative	% of CSOs reporting political interference as a barrier	54.7%	40%
Quantitative	% of CSOs engaging in daily advocacy activities	49.3%	60%
Quantitative	% of CSOs operating at grassroots levels (ward/village/shehia)	2%	10%
Qualitative	CSO narratives on civic space trends	Cautious hope, dip from 2023 optimism (70%)	Increased optimism, reduced restrictions
Qualitative	Feedback on public perception improvements	34.8% cite negative perception	Improved community trust via engagement
Qualitative	Stories of grassroots engagement	Limited reach (2% at grassroots)	Enhanced mobilization in remote areas

PART FOUR

KEY LESSONS, CONCLUSION AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Part Three of the survey report makes the critical lessons, conclusions, and strategic recommendations derived from the comprehensive needs assessment and capacity gap analysis of CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. This section distills the survey's findings into actionable insights, highlighting key challenges, strengths, and opportunities to inform the SCATZ project's interventions.

4.2 KEY LESSONS FROM THE SURVEY

This, THRDC 2025 survey, sheds light on the number of challenges and opportunities which the CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar could pick as lessons going forward. These lessons, drawn from the survey's findings presented in details in the previous chapter of this report. It is, generally learnt that:

- a) When CSOs lack strong legal skills as it is a case at the moment, they struggle to challenge unfair provisions of the laws. This implies a need to train them in legal know-how to fight for change through court cases. Several activists have successfully utilized this advocacy method..
- b) Poor leadership training and weak board guidance tend to hurt CSOs' stability. Therefore, this provides an importance of building solid management systems to keep advocacy strong e.g., during tough times.
- c) Lack of meaning partnerships and scattered teamwork in coalitions weakens group efforts and bigger results of human rights activism. This suggests the value of united, trusting partnerships to push for bigger policy and legal changes. They also need to establish mutual partnerships with bar associations
- d) Relying on one funding source risks financial collapse e.g., recent case of U.S. grant cut. The situation points to the benefit of new funding ideas like social businesses to keep operations going long-term.

- e) The existing civic space challenges have adverse impacts on the state of human rights advocacy by CSOs. Several CSOs and HRDs have developed self-censorship and fear to protect rule of law and human rights.
- f) The state of CSOs human rights advocacy is affected by both internal and external challenges analyzed in this report.
- g) Institutional human rights advocacy and activism on sensitive issues such as rule of law, governance and democracy is declining while community and online activism is gaining momentum. This poses a challenge to CSOs of being seen or perceived irrelevant by the community. A serious and an urgent intervention is important to remind CSOs their primary and traditional goals and roles as watchdogs and actors of rule of law and accountability.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The THRDC 2025 survey reveals critical capacity gaps, strengths, and lessons that could shape the activism of CSOs in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. Indeed, all these could provide a strong foundation for the SCATZ project e.g., the baseline surveys and recommendations reflected in this report. The key gaps include limited legal literacy, with only a small fraction of CSOs equipped for strategic litigation, weak governance structures marked by inadequate board oversight, fragmented coalition efforts hindered by funding competition, and financial instability due to reliance on single donors, as evidenced by the USAID suspension in February 2025. Despite these challenges, CSOs demonstrate strengths such as strong community mobilization and engagement with thematic networks, alongside opportunities like partnerships with legal aid providers and bar associations. External pressures, including restrictive laws like the 2019 NGO amendments, political interference, and digital restrictions, further constrict civic space, underscoring the fragility of Tanzania's advocacy environment. Furthermore, these findings align with the SCATZ project's focus by identifying precise areas for capacity-building to enhance CSOs' ability to promote rule of law and expand civic space through targeted interventions in legal advocacy, governance, and sustainable funding.

The survey's insights have far-reaching implications for human rights, governance, and accountability in Tanzania. By addressing identified gaps, CSOs can strengthen their role as watchdogs, challenging systemic violations and fostering inclusive development. Again, as said earlier, the findings support SCATZ's aim to invigorate CSO activism, ensuring they can navigate legal and political barriers to advocate for justice and democratic governance through formal partnerships with various actors including bar associations.

An enhanced collaboration and resource diversification will amplify CSOs' collective influence, while improved legal and advocacy skills will empower them to engage state institutions constructively. Ultimately, implementing the survey's recommendations promises to bolster Tanzania's civil society, driving progress toward a more accountable, rights-respecting society, particularly in the context of heightened political sensitivities in 2025.

4.4 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the comprehensive insights and targeted recommendations woven throughout this survey report at hand, the following strategic recommendations aim to, among other reasons, revolutionize CSO activism in Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar:

4.4.1 Short-Term Interventions

- a) Enhancing legal advocacy capacity through intensive, scenario-based training programs in strategic litigation and legal navigation, equipping CSOs to effectively challenge restrictive laws and pursue public interest cases within a year.
- b) Strengthening governance structures by establishing mentorship hubs pairing experienced leaders with emerging CSOs, improving board oversight and decision-making effectiveness in the near term.
- c) Catalyzing coalition-driven advocacy by launching pilot platforms for joint campaigns, enabling CSOs to co-create and execute high-impact policy advocacy initiatives swiftly.
- d) Building strong and formal partnerships with bar associations and other legal institutions.

4.4.2 Long-Term Strategies

- e) Reforming restrictive legal frameworks by spearheading a multi-stakeholder advocacy campaign with regional networks to amend outdated NGO laws and enact enabling legislation, achieving policy shifts over time.
- f) Building financial sustainability through the creation of a CSO-led social enterprise incubator, supporting organizations to develop revenue-generating models that reduce donor dependency in the long run.
- g) Deepening regional and global integration by establishing a CSO hub for engagement with international human rights mechanisms, ensuring active contribution to global platforms over the next decade.

- h) Enhance partnerships and collaboration with actors of rule of law and access to justice like the judiciary, law reforms commission, Bar associations, state attorneys etc.

4.4.3 Stakeholder-Specific Recommendations

a) For CSOs

- i) Bolstering operational resilience by adopting digital risk management tools and compliance frameworks, reducing vulnerability to external pressures like deregistration or funding cuts.
- ii) Institutionalizing advocacy expertise by embedding dedicated advocacy units within organizational structures, enabling sustained evidence-based campaigns on civic space and rule of law.

b) For THRDC and Other SCATZ Project Partners

- i) Orchestrating a unified CSO ecosystem by developing a digital collaboration platform that integrates organizations into real-time knowledge-sharing and joint advocacy networks.
- ii) Revising the SCATZ project's results framework to incorporate proposed baseline indicators, aligning project outcomes with survey findings to enhance measurability and impact.

c) For Donors – Development Partners

- i) Pioneering transformative funding models by establishing multi-year, consortium-based grants that provide flexible, core funding, fostering resilience against funding shocks.
- ii) Investing in CSO innovation by creating a venture fund for tech and social enterprise solutions, empowering organizations to scale sustainable operations.

4.4.4 Feasibility and Impact

- a) Optimizing resource allocation by conducting a cost-benefit analysis to prioritize high-impact interventions, ensuring funds target legal literacy, governance, and sustainability.
- b) Maximizing advocacy impact by aligning interventions with civic space dynamics, achieving significant increases in CSOs' policy influence through coalition-led reforms.

- c) Ensuring long-term sustainability by embedding capacity-building within CSO networks, enabling organizations to self-sustain advocacy efforts post-project through diversified funding and partnerships.

4.4.5 Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Improvement (MELI)

- a) Tracking transformative progress by implementing an effective MELI system with SMART indicators, ensuring comprehensive data collection on legal literacy, governance, and coalition effectiveness annually.
- b) Evaluating systemic change by commissioning independent impact assessments periodically, documenting improvements in CSOs' resilience and civic space expansion.
- c) Adapting dynamically by establishing a feedback loop with CSOs, ensuring recommendations are iteratively refined based on real-time advocacy outcomes.

3.4.6 Advancing Financial Sustainability

- a) Advocate for direct donor funding to indigenous CSOs, minimizing over reliance on INGOs and UN agencies in rule of law and governance related projects.
- b) Leveraging on the existing domestic resource mobilization strategies, engaging private sector partners and philanthropists.
- c) Explore innovative funding models, such as impact investing, social enterprises, endowment funds, and blended finance initiatives.

3.4.7 Promoting an Enabling Legal and Political Environment

- a) Engage in legal reforms to reforms restrictive laws that hinder CSO participation in democracy and governance.
- b) Strengthen advocacy efforts to ensure CSOs can conduct voter education, election monitoring, and civic engagement activities without excessive government interference and restriction to publish information and reports.
- c) Collaborate with international organizations to hold the government accountable for upholding democratic principles and human rights standards.
- d) Advocate for adoption of the proposed HRDs Model Policy submitted by to the government in 2025.
- e) Reform all the laws affecting the rights of HRDs and free operations of CSOs.

3.4.8 Expanding Civic Space and Public Engagement

- a) Promote policy dialogues between CSOs, government agencies, bar associations, academia, FBOs and donors to foster mutual understanding and collaboration.
- b) Support human rights defenders and grassroots activists by establishing legal protection mechanisms.
- c) Facilitate community-driven initiatives that encourage citizen participation in governance.

3.4.9 CSOs (NGO) law and policy reforms

- a) There is a pressing need to establish a clear legal framework that recognizes CSO coalitions as independent entities, harmonizes compliance and reporting mechanisms, and expands civic space to enable NGOs and CSOs to effectively participate in democratic governance and advocacy.
- b) Develop new NGOs Policy and reform the current NGOs regulation which restrict NGOs life span to 10 years.

3.4.10 Strengthening CSO-Donor-Government Collaboration

- a) Advocate for the adoption of OECD-DAC recommendations to ensure direct funding and policy inclusion for CSOs.
- b) Encourage multi-stakeholder platforms that facilitate regular engagements between CSOs, donors, and policymakers.
- c) Improve CSO accountability and transparency, demonstrating the impact of their work to gain donor trust and public support.

ANNEXES

Annex I: References and Bibliography

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- o East African Community Treaty of 1999
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- o Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003
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Annex II: Glossary of Terms

In the context of this survey report, the key words used can bear the following meanings:

- o **Advocacy:** The act of promoting or supporting a cause or policy through actions such as public campaigns, lobbying, or engaging with stakeholders to influence change or raise awareness.
- o **Capacity Building:** The process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes, and resources of organizations or individuals to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability in achieving their objectives.
- o **Civic Space:** The environment where individuals and groups can freely exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly, and engage in public participation without fear of repression or undue restrictions.
- o **Civil Society Organizations:** Non-governmental, non-profit entities formed voluntarily by citizens to advance common goals, such as promoting human rights, social justice, or community development, including NGOs, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups.
- o **Collaboration and Coalition-Building:** The process of organizations working together through networks or alliances to enhance advocacy, share resources, and amplify influence on policy or social issues.
- o **Human Rights Defenders:** Individuals, groups, or organizations that actively promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms through advocacy, monitoring, or public action.
- o **Institutional Resilience:** The capacity of an organization to withstand external pressures, such as legal, political, or financial challenges, while maintaining effective operations and achieving its objectives.
- o **Internal Governance:** The structures, policies, and processes, including board oversight, decision-making, and financial accountability that guide an organization's operations and ensure its legitimacy and effectiveness.

- Legal/Policy Framework: The body of laws, regulations, and policies that govern the operations, rights, and obligations of organizations or individuals within a jurisdiction.
- Legal Literacy: The ability to understand, interpret, and navigate legal frameworks to engage in advocacy, comply with regulations, or pursue legal remedies effectively.
- Policy Advocacy: The strategic effort to influence public policy or decision-making processes through research, dialogue, or campaigns to achieve systemic change.
- Resource Mobilization: The process of securing and managing financial, human, and material resources to sustain an organization's operations and achieve its strategic goals.
- Risk Management: The process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential threats, such as legal, financial, or political risks, to ensure an organization's stability and continuity.
- Rule of Law: The principle that all individuals, institutions, and entities are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated, consistent with international human rights standards.
- Social Accountability: The process by which citizens and organizations hold public institutions accountable for their actions, ensuring transparency, responsiveness, and effective resource management.
- Strategic Litigation: The use of legal action to achieve broader human rights or policy changes, often through public interest cases aimed at setting precedents or influencing systemic reform.
- Sustainability: The ability of an organization to maintain its operations and impact over the long term through diversified funding, effective governance, and adaptive strategies.

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