

BASELINE REPORT

# EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS IN AN UNEQUAL, MULTI-POLAR WORLD

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## SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME

The Empowering Civil Society Networks in an Unequal Multi-Polar World (ECSN-BRICSAM) is a three- year programme that aims to strengthen the collective capacity of multi-thematic civil society organisation (CSO) networks across Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa, and Mexico (collectively referred to as BRICSAM countries). The programme objective is to ensure that policy-making processes in global institutions are influenced by civil society networks of emerging economies to take account of the needs of poor and marginalised people.

To achieve its objective, the programme integrates CSOs' perspectives into global policy-making processes by influencing:

1. Global governance structures, by expanding the presence and formal role of civil society;
2. Agenda setting (at national and global levels), by influencing the issues under discussion to include development and inequality; and
3. Policy commitments made by these institutions.

The programme has four expected results:

1. Networks' ability to represent their national constituencies reinforced.
2. Close linkages and coordination established, both physically and virtually across the networks.
3. Networks have an in-depth understanding of inequality issues across the countries.
4. Networks are facilitated and provided with the skills to jointly engage with international institutions and in global fora.

ECSN-BRICSAM works with CSO networks in each of the countries as follows:

**Brazil** - Brazilian Network for the Integration of Peoples (REBRIP)

**Russia** - Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP Russia)

**India** - Keep Your Promise Campaign Network (Wada Na Todo Abiyhan WNTA) and sub-network, People's Budget Initiative (PBI)<sup>1</sup>

**Indonesia** - International NGO Forum on International Development (INFID)

**China** - Global Call for Action Against Poverty (GCAP China)

**South Africa** - Economic Justice Network (EJN) and the recently constituted South African Network on Inequality (SANI) which is chaired by EJN

**Mexico** - El Barzon

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<sup>1</sup>Please note that in India, the programme works with two overlapping networks. Our partner organisation is founding member of the broader Wada Na Todo Abihyan network, and also coordinates the Peoples Budget Initiative network. Both networks were consulted in the national consultation, and indeed most members of PBI are also members of WNTA. In the baseline report, we refer to both networks separately, although in practice they overlap.

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents aggregated data and analysis from seven national baseline studies conducted between June 2013 and February 2014 in Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa, and Mexico.

The baseline study used a participatory approach in which hundreds of CSO leaders, staff, and multiple grassroots organisations -members of the CSO networks in the seven BRICSAM countries- shared their views, conclusions, and knowledge by engaging in national workshops and answering multiple surveys, including a network capacity assessment. This invaluable input helped the ECSN-BRICSAM programme to collate a vast amount of information. The report includes a synthesis of findings and conclusions, focusing on cross-country results and the most significant trends across the whole programme, without dismissing examples useful for understanding specific characteristics of the partnering networks. The report also includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of data against all the logframe indicators, as well as signs of impact statements that reflect how the programme will make progress from the baseline towards achieving the desired objective. This report was authored by Cecilia Milesi with the supervision and support from the ECSN-BRICSAM programme Global Programme Unit (GPU).

Based on the results from the baseline, Oxfam and its partner CSO networks will be able to monitor and assess the programme's achievements in relation to the specific objective and expected results as set out in the project narrative and logframe. Furthermore, the baseline will serve to inform programme implementation decisions on: establishing better mechanisms for member engagement, identifying thematic areas for knowledge sharing and research, identifying capacity building needs, and developing policy recommendations to influence global dialogues, among others. It will enable individual CSO networks to better tailor their internal activities and advocacy, and will guide the strategy of the cross-BRICSAM network.

In short, the most significant findings at the overall and strategic objective levels and the expected results are as follows:

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE:** Policy-making processes in global institutions are influenced by civil society networks of emerging economies to take account of the needs of poor and marginalised people.

Today, BRICS and G20 as well as other global forums such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the United Nations (UN) have emerged as important spaces for BRICSAM and other Middle Income Countries (MICs) to influence or block on issues of global importance such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. However, CSOs from the Global South, where the majority of the poor and marginalised people live, have little influence in these global policy-making processes. In particular, the BRICS Summit does not have a formal space for CSO participation. Other global spaces, including the G20 (C20), are dominated by International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) from the Global North and a few influential academic and economic actors. Where there is some level of engagement from the Global South, it tends to be limited, ad-hoc, and a last-minute push just prior to a major event such as a summit, and too late to influence the agenda in any meaningful way. Nevertheless, there are opportunities to change this reality: the BRICS countries have demonstrated a strong interest in issues

such as poverty, reform of the financial system -including control of tax havens and trade- as well as development issues, which are some of the areas of work of Global South CSOs, INGOs, and the ECSN-BRICSAM networks.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE:** Multi-thematic CSO networks across Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa and Mexico have collective capacity to engage in multi-stakeholder dialogue and influence global policy-making forums, with a particular focus on issues of inequality

Most ECSN-BRICSAM networks have medium or weak capacity for engagement at the global level, with the exception of REBRIP (Brazil) and INFID (Indonesia), which have engaged extensively at the global level in forums such as the WTO, G20, and the UN General Assembly Meetings on the Post-2015 agenda. To a certain extent, the other networks do have international relationships, but with other CSOs rather than with policymakers from global institutions. The lack of stable platforms in global processes for civil society from across the BRICSAM countries limits the capacity of CSO networks to work together from summit to summit. Spaces to convene civil society around BRICS and G20 have tended to be short term and with limited capacity to take stock of previous discussion and learning, vital for establishing a longer-term advocacy agenda. Recently, the establishment of the C20 process yields potential to improve civil society interaction around the G20. It is too soon to tell, however, whether this channel will be used meaningfully by CSOs, and whether policy recommendations from it will actually make it onto the official G20 agenda. Despite the fact that inequality is growing in most BRICSAM countries, the CSOs understanding of inequality is diverse and strongly interlinked with a more traditional poverty-reduction agenda in which activities around access to services for marginalised groups prevail. Most of the CSO networks do not place inequality as central to their strategies. Nevertheless, the ECSN-BRICSAM national consultation process demonstrated that there is an increasing interest in working collectively to tackle the structural causes of inequality.

**EXPECTED RESULT 1:** Network's ability to represent their national constituencies is reinforced

The ECSN-BRICSAM networks formally represent around 4000 CSOs working on diverse issues across the seven countries. However, active participation decreases to almost 400 CSOs (10%). Some of the broad reasons behind this reality include: a) Lack of funding in order to strengthen institutional capabilities and to organise more and better actions to engage its members; b) Internal management practices that hinder membership participation -for example, irregular communication, complex and centralised governance models, lack of strong fundraising plans and strategies including M&EL plans to demonstrate impact; and c) Restrictive political context for civil society organisations in some countries. Because each CSO network has a specific model of operation, the ECSN-BRICSAM organisational development and capacity building plans will be tailored to each partner.

**EXPECTED RESULT 2:** Close linkages and coordination is established, both physically and virtually, across the networks

Most of the CSO networks do not have regular communication with CSOs in other BRICSAM countries. Before the ECSN-BRICSAM programme was set up, the partner networks never worked jointly on policy or similar projects. However, there is interest in establishing more links. Where a degree of cross-BRICSAM solidarity does exist between CSO networks, it does not reach civil society writ large in these countries. More broadly, civil society finds it difficult to see the potential that forums such as the G20 or BRICS have in influencing domestic agendas, and as a result, fails to see the importance of those advocacy opportunities. To increase connection and collaboration, it will be vital to focus considerable efforts at the outset of the programme in forming the ECSN-BRICSAM global steering committee and the three thematic policy working groups with the support of various online tools managed by GPU.

**EXPECTED RESULT 3:** Networks have an in-depth understanding of inequality issues across the countries

The ECSN-BRICSAM networks understand inequality in very different ways, mostly associating it with poverty and access to services projects attending the most urgent needs of the countries' populations. None of the networks incorporates inequality as part of their organisational narrative and strategies, nor has a strong focus on research and advocacy capability in this area. Nevertheless, we consider that REBRIP, INFID, WNTA, and EJN/SANI are ECSN-BRICSAM networks with a real potential to develop a sound understanding of inequality during the ECSN-BRICSAM programme timeframe. Most networks manifested the need to learn more about inequality and, during the national consultation processes, shared initial reflections on the structural causes of inequality, including unequal access to education, services, and benefits from economic growth. The programme will undertake more cross-country research on selected global topics, and will support the CSO networks in achieving a similar level of understanding and common approach in order to effectively influence policy-making.

**EXPECTED RESULT 4:** Networks are facilitated and provided with the skills to jointly engage with international institutions and in global forums

Most networks have advocacy and some research capacity and experience, although this is mostly for work at the national level. As noted above, REBRIP and INFID are the exceptions. The diverse set of approaches and tools used and known to promote bottom-up influencing and mobilisation at the national level could be a good springboard as the networks collectively increase their capabilities to operate in global spaces. That said, strategies to influence global forums can be very different, more complex, and more difficult to measure than traditional national-level targets. Consequently, influencing strategies need to be undertaken at different levels, from the national, to the regional, and then the global. The programme will focus on capacity development within this complex advocacy context.

## 2. BRIEF CONTEXT ANALYSIS

### **BRICSAM, A PLATFORM FOR A NEW WORLD ORDER**

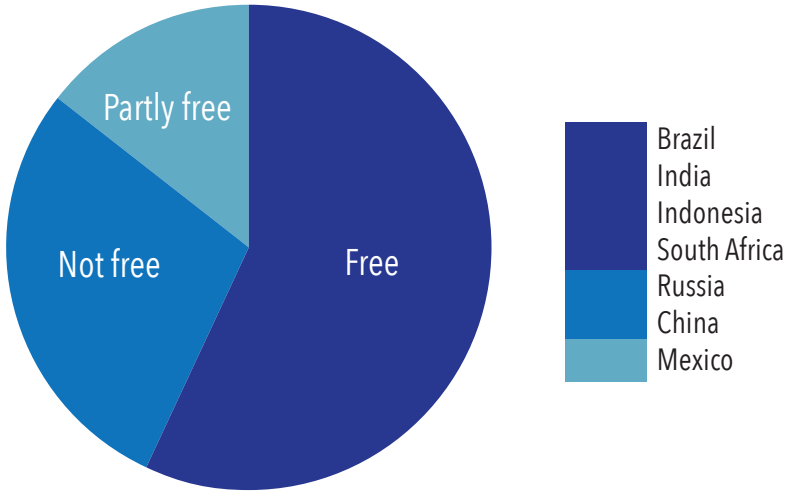
In recent years the world has changed rapidly, with the rise of the emerging powers, in particular the BRICSAM countries: Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa, and Mexico. As they also participate in the G20, the ability of these countries to help deliver on, influence, or block issues of global importance - such as poverty, inequality, and development - increases. Further, BRICS countries have access to at least 10 key regional bodies including the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), Mercosur, the African Union (AU), the South African Development Community (SADC), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Their unity - if used effectively - will allow them a strategic advantage across a range of global forums, including the UN Security Council, the G77, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Importantly, this grouping represents more than 50% of the world’s population. It is also relevant to note that the BRICSAM countries are all Middle Income Countries (MICs), and that MICs have a particularly important role in global policy-making processes that affect poor people: Today, 75% of the world’s 3bn poor live in MICs, compared to an estimated 7% in 1990<sup>2&3</sup>. Furthermore, in most G20 countries economic inequality has increased. A recent report by Oxfam shows that the most unequal G20 countries now include Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, and Russia.

In a context in which governments are increasingly aligning in order to address inter-dependent global problems and solutions to them, civil society needs to develop common positions, at least on specific issues such as inequality, as part of a medium-term strategy of influence. However, in all the countries, the national consultation process evidenced the current lack of articulation within the civil society sector and the multiple hindering factors affecting a robust joint national and international approach towards policy influencing. The CSOs’ capacity to engage in policy-making also depends on various broad contextual challenges, including the freedom to operate and advocate.

According to independent watchdog Freedom House, most of the BRICSAM countries are now generally considered to be functioning electoral democracies, with the exceptions of Russia and China, which are considered “not free”, and Mexico, which is considered “partly free” (Figure 1). In some national consultation workshops, the networks mentioned a specific challenge not always measured in traditional “democracy barometers”: in most democratic countries the media is controlled by economic elites. The CSOs explained how this undermines democracy and the chance to share diverse ideas to overcome problems. The freedom to work that CSOs and activists enjoy (or not) has a direct impact on their ability to influence policy-making and structural change. This needs to be taken into consideration when measuring progress in relation to the programme’s overall and specific objective and expected results. Context information for each ECSN-BRICSAM country is included in Table 6 of Expected Result 1 (below).

FIGURE 1: BRICSAM COUNTRY BREAKDOWN BY STATUS, AS DEFINED BY FREEDOM HOUSE



<sup>2</sup> For more information, see Oxfam’s policy brief: ‘Working for the Few’ and ‘Left behind by the G20’

<sup>3</sup> Summer A (2010) Global Poverty and the New Bottom Billion: What if Three Quarters of the World’s Poor Live in Middle Income Countries? IDS, Sussex, September 2010



### 3. BASELINE FOR OVERALL OBJECTIVE INDICATORS

**OVERALL OBJECTIVE (OO): POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES IN GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS ARE INFLUENCED BY CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORKS OF EMERGING ECONOMIES TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE NEEDS OF POOR AND MARGINALISED PEOPLE.**

Three indicators will help to assess impact at the higher level of the programme's results chain. Below, we present contextual analysis against the relevant indicators for assessing progress.

**OO INDICATOR 1. AGENDA SETTING:** Global institutions discuss issues relevant to the needs of poor and marginalised people.

The historical experiences and contemporary discourse of the BRICSAM countries suggest the potential for them to shift traditional development paradigms of the Global North to better address the needs of poor and marginalised people living in the Global South. Issues of development, macroeconomics, and how the international financial system is affecting world stability and poverty have in fact been at the top of BRICS and G20 Summits, something that is a promising factor in terms of agenda setting. For example, in various BRICS communiqués, there is analysis and call for action on issues related with the structure, governance, and purpose of International Financial Institutions (IFIs), including the need for greater and more transparent decision-making, while asking for increased resources to achieve the MDGs. So far, Oxfam and a few other Global North INGOs have engaged more regularly, particularly with the G20. Key achievements include: a win on development finance at the G20 London Summit in 2009; the adoption of the Seoul Development Consensus in 2010; and the wins on Agricultural Market Information System and price volatility at the Agricultural Ministers Meeting in Paris in June 2011, among others. Within BRICS there are specific issues on the agenda, such as the BRICS Development Bank, where CSOs can play an important influencing role. Since these discussions tend to be largely technical, with little apparent focus on ensuring that investment criteria supports sustainable and equitable development, there is an acute need for CSOs to get involved. Particularly in terms of providing recommendations on how inequality -besides attention to poverty- should be addressed, as well as providing clarity on how new ideas may have a direct positive impact on the lives of the poor and marginalised. Examples of CSO recommendations for these forums include: provision of public services financed through fairer tax systems, particularly as a way to reduce women's unpaid care work and expand public sector opportunities for female employment; systematic measuring and reporting of inequality as a means to account for progress; promotion of universal social protection, among others.

**OO INDICATOR 2. POLICY ADOPTION:** Global institutions commit to policies that address the needs of poor and marginalised people.

The global institutions and forums identified as key influencing opportunities, namely BRICS and the G20, are informal forums (no home or a secretariat) with flexible mandates. Despite this informality and lack of accountability, the blocs' geopolitical weight means that influencing their joint positions can have a significant impact on policies adopted at a national level, and ultimately on development outcomes for poor and marginalised people. As mentioned, BRICS and G20 communiqués show a certain level of commitment to addressing common development challenges; however these have not necessarily translated to commitment to -and adoption of- related policies. Closer scrutiny and influence by CSO networks could ensure that policy translates into real improvements in the lives of poor and marginalised people. For example, with regard to climate change, the BRICS countries have committed to fulfilling at least one of the commitments from the Cancun Agreement, and CSOs need to play a role in ensuring this commitment is upheld.

**OO INDICATOR 3. GOVERNANCE:** Global institutions have formal mechanisms to include civil society in governance processes.

There is currently no formal mechanism for CSO involvement in BRICS processes and CSOs have not yet been directly mentioned in the communiqués. A few think tanks -for example, the BRICS Academic Forum- have been engaged from the outset. In the G20, a mechanism for CSO participation now exists -the C20- however the sense is that this space has largely been dominated by Global North INGOs. Furthermore, despite increasing levels of global participation, the difficulty of CSOs to deliver joint statements has been noted. Oxfam has been engaged in BRICS and G20 processes since 2010. However, this participation has largely been limited to Oxfam staff, from both the Global North and Global South. ECSN-BRICSAM is an opportunity to increase direct representation from CSO networks from the BRICSAM countries, and for them to establish joint positions.

## 4. BASELINE FOR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE INDICATORS

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE (SO): MULTI-THEMATIC CSO NETWORKS ACROSS BRAZIL, RUSSIA, INDIA, INDONESIA, CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA AND MEXICO HAVE COLLECTIVE CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE AND INFLUENCE GLOBAL POLICY- MAKING FORUMS, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON ISSUES OF INEQUALITY.**

Three indicators will help the programme to assess impact at the Specific Objective Level. Below, we present baseline information against the indicators relevant to assess progress.

**SO INDICATOR 1:** Number of interactions between networks and global institutions (written and in-person communication with policymakers, press releases, number and type of institutions).

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. Some networks had previous experience; however the programme provides the opportunity to interact as a collective in formal policy spaces and institutions.

**QUANTITATIVE-QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** Overall, the ECSN-BRICSAM networks have a relatively good level of international interaction. This generally involves interaction with other CSO alliances more than engagement with global spaces such as UN conferences, G20, and BRICS blocs.

- Seven out of Eight of the ECSN-BRICSAM Networks said that they have strategic relationships with international stakeholders. India- PBI is the only network that did not note any international relations.
- Moreover, most networks (six out of eight) have clear advocacy strategy targets. The networks manifested that these targets include global institutions such as UN bodies, Post-2015 MDGs, WTO negotiations, G20, and BRICS.
- However, when networks were asked to explicitly list the international relations they have, it became more evident that these are mainly civil society networks/alliances such as Beyond 2015, Asian Democracy Network, Asia Development Alliance, Oxfam, GCAP Asia, GCAP Global, CIVICUS, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, ACT Alliance, Our World is not for Sale, African Trade Network, Tax Justice Network Africa. Overall, the responses don't demonstrate direct participation and engagement with global institutions and forums. Given the civil society alliances listed, it appears that the interaction with such global policy-making spaces has been largely through international networks based mostly in the Global North, rather than through South-South cooperation, as proposed through ECSN-BRICSAM. There are a couple of exceptions to this, notably due to the substantive engagement at the global level sustained by REBRIP, Brazil and INFID, Indonesia.

#### **SO INDICATOR 2:** Breadth and Quality of engagement<sup>4</sup>

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** This indicator is considered to be largely qualitative. As such, monitoring progress against this indicator will be a chance for the networks and GPU to assess more intangible and policy-process incremental achievements. This information will be combined with the quantitative data referred to in SO Indicator 1.1.

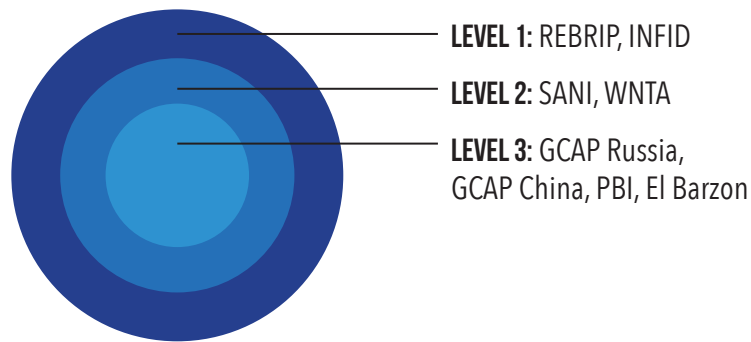
**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** By "Breadth of Engagement" we understand the quality and extent to which the ECSN-BRICSAM networks get involved and actively participate in spaces where global policies are drafted, endorsed, changed, and monitored, as well as the incremental results arising from this policy work to transform the root causes of inequality. We want to measure the effectiveness of participation in global forums in terms of agenda-setting and policy adoption. The central premise is that the CSO networks' participation will become more meaningful over the course of the programme. We also want to show how the nature and themes in which the CSO networks engage become more coherent and sophisticated over the duration of the programme, particularly in terms of how they inter-relate with inequalities, and influence prevailing agendas in global forums such as the G20 and BRICS.

Taking this into account, in the section below, we analysed the networks' most substantive and broad qualitative information, distinguishing three current levels of engagement and present reflections on CSOs level of influence, including enabling and hindering factors towards influencing power. Afterwards, we specifically assess the extent to which the ECSN-BRICSAM networks work at the policy level on inequality matters. Inequality analysis is further developed in Expected Result 3 (below).

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<sup>4</sup>We suggest considering this indicator to be largely qualitative. In the approved logframe the indicator reads "Breadth of engagement (number of issues, number and type of institutions)". We added the word "quality" to highlight our measurement focus. The quantitative aspects (number of issues and type of institutions) will be measured in SO Indicator 1.

FIGURE 2



**LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT:** The graph emphasises gradation in terms of current interaction with global spaces by each CSO network. Level 1 encompasses the two networks that currently have the highest level of interaction with global spaces. For example, REBRIP was conceived with the vision of influencing global and regional policy-making and is constantly operational in international forums. Meanwhile 80% of INFID member CSOs consulted said they understand the importance of engaging with global forums such as G20, BRIC, ASEAN; and around 70% believe the organisation has the capacity to influence international spaces. Level 2 includes the two networks that seem to have medium level of interaction at the global level, and which more explicitly manifested an interest in increasing global work. In the next two years, SANI and WNTA will have the capacity to engage more strongly, as they have experience in pursuing advances in their domestic agendas within global forums. Nevertheless, both of them will benefit in learning from exchanges with REBRIP and INFID, for example. Finally, Level 3 contains the four CSO networks with no/low level of engagement at the international level. For example, El Barzon members did not mention “International Actors” to be important interlocutors in order to undertake activities and achieve results. In the case of GCAP Russia and China, the only spaces enabling worldwide collaboration seem to be GCAP Global Assemblies and Oxfam. GCAP Russia in particular is cautious of becoming more involved: at present they do not clearly envisaged the benefits of such a global work.

TABLE 1: CURRENT LEVEL OF INFLUENCE IN GLOBAL POLICY-MAKING

More Influence	Less Influence
<p><b>Enabling Factor:</b> In policy circles it is increasingly believed that CSOs add value in terms of representation: for some they directly represent the voices of the most marginalised sectors of the population.</p>	<p><b>Hindering Factor:</b> In order to engage in ‘high-level’ policy discussions, there has been an increased ‘professionalisation’ of CSOs and a higher demand for results. There is pressure to recruit technical staff rather than activists, and, unfortunately, a lack of resources to build the capacity of the grassroots constituency in order to influence global policy making from the bottom-up.</p> <p>CSOs highlighted that today professional researchers and the “wealthy” (people/think-tanks/INGOs) are those with more “power” to connect the global level.</p>

<p><b>Case Example:</b> In Indonesia 73% of INFID members feel that the CSOs currently play a strong role in the formulation of policies nationally. 53% think they have capacity to influence at the international level.</p>	<p><b>Case Example:</b> In Mexico El Barzon seems to be influential in policy-making and demonstrates a great capacity to mobilise at the grassroots level. However it finds it difficult to reach the global arena, relying more on academic input and evidence-based proposals, which are not necessarily legitimised by citizens.</p>
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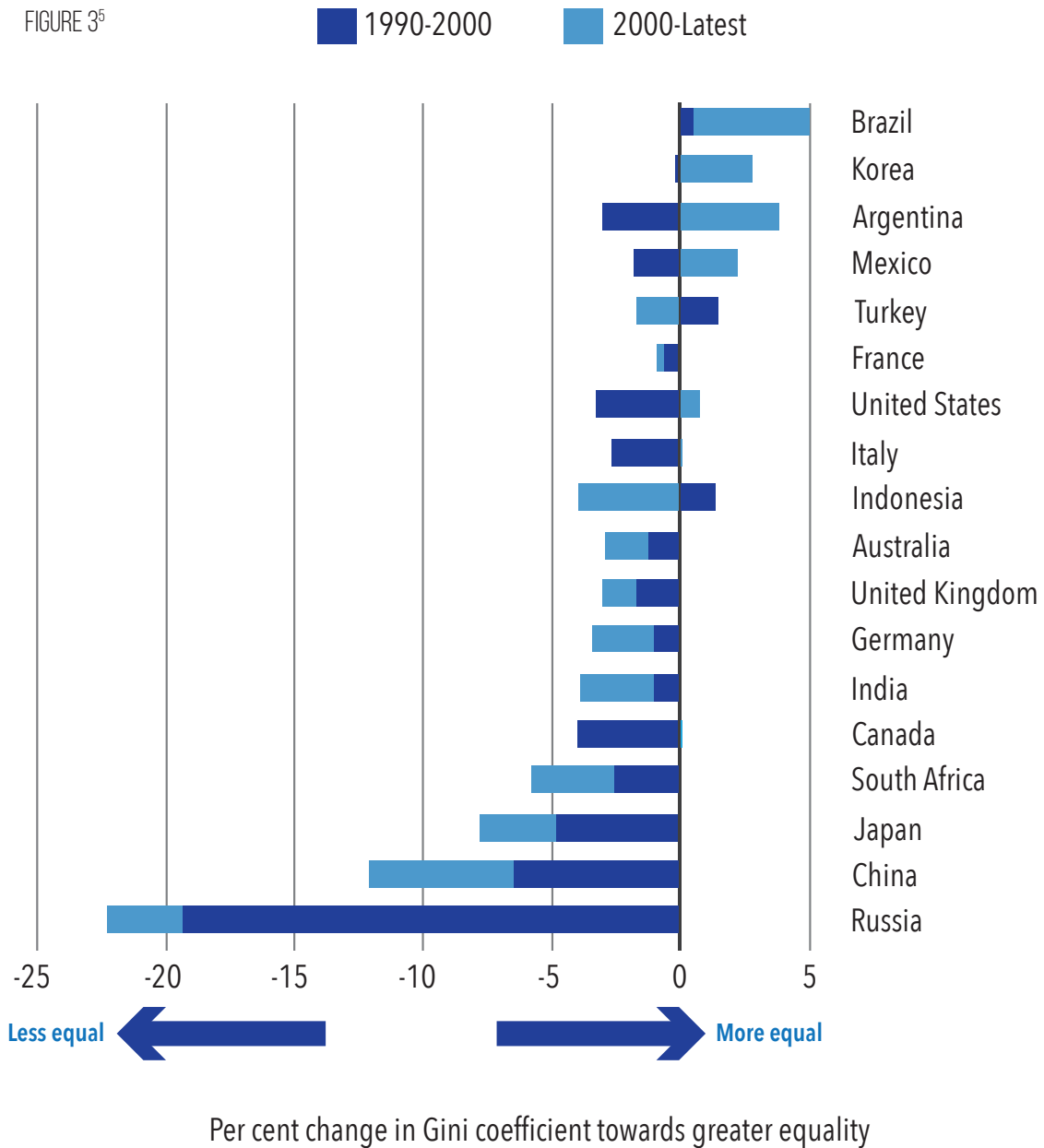
As highlighted by the CSO networks, there are signs of them coordinating more frequently and effectively in order to increase engagement BUT taking joint positions requires a lot of effort. CSOs need a new set of skills and to construct new types of relationships in order to engage with actors who are influential in the global policy-making arena. This also involves better knowledge of how global policy-making forums work, and an increased understanding of the channels – both formal and informal – that exist for exerting influence.

TABLE 2

<b>More Influence</b>	<b>Less Influence</b>
<p>There is increased government interest in hearing “the voices of the marginalised” in some countries: which provides an opportunity for broader networks to participate.</p>	<p>BUT not always: In some countries the low level of influence on policy-making was attributed to the fact that often CSOs could not legitimately claim to represent the most marginalised. It is also not clear to them why certain INGOs/CSOs representatives are invited to the global forums.</p> <p>They also highlighted the issue of political connections: Influence can be achieved through informal relationships with decision-makers within political parties and international organisations.</p> <p>In some countries, this interest can be only superficial and unauthentic, with CSOs reporting persecution and threats when they develop more political activities such as advocacy and mobilisations.</p>
<p><b>Case Example:</b> In South Africa, India, and Brazil, steps have been taken to institutionalise the participation of civil society in policy-making, with public consultations and on-going forums that include CSOs as well as representatives from the government and other sectors.</p>	<p><b>Case Example:</b> 24% of GCAP China felt that policymakers did not trust CSOs and did not want them to participate in decision-making. CSO participation in the policy processes has yet to be officially recognised.</p>

**THE QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT IN RELATION TO INEQUALITY:** With the exceptions of Mexico and Brazil, income inequality is increasing in all of the BRICSAM countries, as well as most of the other countries in the G20 (graph). Yet Mexico and Brazil still remain among the more unequal countries, with the richest 10% of the population controlling over 40% of the national income.

FIGURE 3<sup>5</sup>



“From the early 1990s to the late 2000s, China, India, the Russian Federation, and South Africa all saw steep increases in income inequality. During the same period, Brazil was the only BRICS country in which income inequality had decreased”<sup>6</sup>. Indonesia is a key example in that it faces a “development paradox”: the country has become the world’s 16th economic power yet inequality continues to worsen.

The evidence and information provided by the ECSN-BRICSAM partners during the national consultations indicate that one of the key driving forces of inequality is the current global economic model organised around

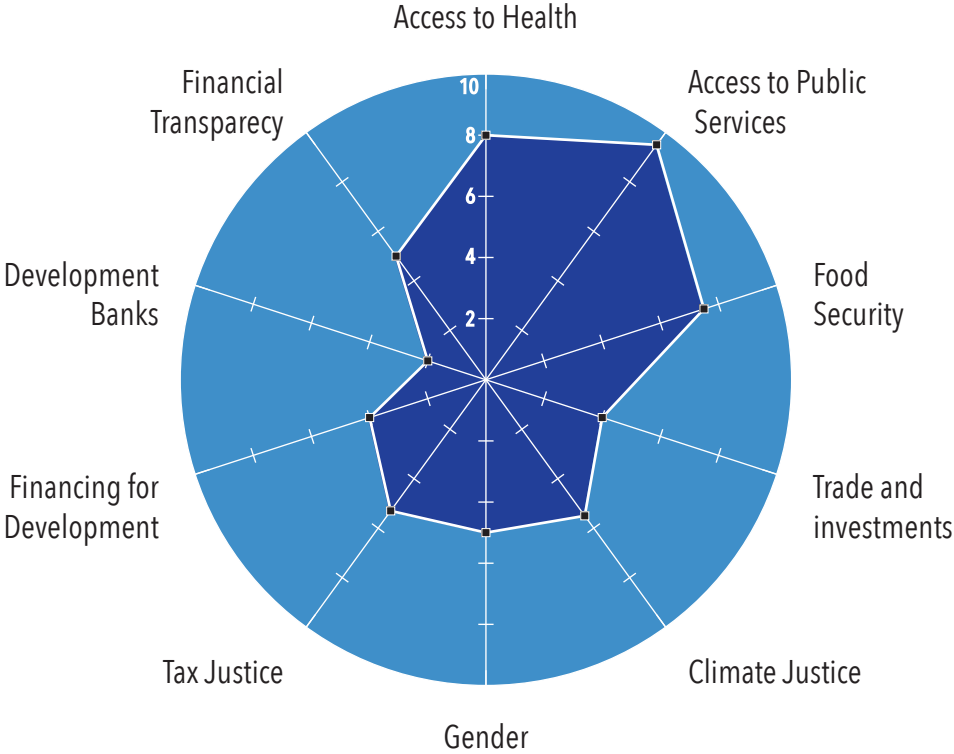
<sup>5</sup> “Left behind by the G20?": Oxfam, 2012: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp157-left-behind-by-the-g20-190112-en.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> “Inequality Matters”: BRICS Inequalities Fact Sheet, by Courtney Ivin, BRICS Policy Center Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas – BRICS and Oxfam, 2013: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/brics-inequality-fact-sheet-oxfam-03-14-2013.pdf>

an unregulated and concentrated financial system, global and national unjust tax systems, and economic and political oligopolies all working in detriment of the most marginalised communities. In fact, the CSO networks collectively prioritised influencing change in the economic model as a condition to promote equality. Furthermore, the ECSN-BRICSAM networks' also focused on food systems and inequality, with land reform, fairer trade rules, and regulation of large corporations seen to be key enablers of equality. This prioritisation, based on joint analysis, was reached despite the fact that many of the networks' partners are not currently working on these matters directly: as the following spider diagram shows, most networks are presently focusing on other core themes, notably, access to services and access to health. In Expected Result 4 we will provide more information on the networks' current approaches and levels of understanding of inequality issues. It is worth noting that the ECSN-BRICSAM programme will need to undertake substantive work in order to increase the level of understanding of inequality across all countries, as well as facilitate a joint global approach to tackle it.

**SO INDICATOR 3:** Improvement in quality of engagement (cross BRICSAM engagement with global spaces) ("how would you rate the quality of cross-BRICSAM civil society engagement in X" - five-point Likert scale from superficial to meaningful; "how would you characterise the quality..." - open-ended question)

FIGURE 4: CURRENT PRIORITY THEMES ACROSS THE CSO NETWORKS IN ECSN-BRICSAM



**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** With this indicator we assess progress in terms of joint BRICSAM networks influencing work at the international level: this will reflect the emerging powers' collective capacity to work together to affect the policies that maintain and increase inequality worldwide. From the reflections shared in the national consultations, as well as the triangulation of data related to other expected results, we conclude that at present there is no systematic cross-BRICSAM engagement aimed at influencing global policies in forums such as BRICS, G20, and Post-2015. The existing engagement is either country-to-global level (for example Brazil engaging in global forums) or regional-to-global

level (for example, Asian networks engaging in global forums). There is no evidence as yet of BRICSAM collaboration and advocacy work as a robust bloc with the power to challenge the international status quo, so as to give a voice to civil society from the Global South.

**SIGNS OF IMPACT:** By the end of the programme, the ECSN-BRICSAM networks will have engaged more consistently and collectively with official global spaces for policy-making in order to influence global policies aimed at transforming the structural causes of inequality. In practice, this means that when the final evaluation of the programme takes place, the ECSN-BRICSAM programme evidence will show that the networks that are currently considered as part of "Level 2" and "Level 3" will have moved one level up (see previous diagram presenting current level of global engagement). This also means that the spider diagram presenting current thematic focus across networks will be more complete, showing that networks will complement current thematic areas of work with those more related with structural issues affecting inequality such as trade and investments, financial transparency, financing for development, and tax justice. Finally, this means that the engagement and work on inequality will be done across all BRICSAM countries. Unlike today, the ECSN- BRICSAM networks will present concrete examples of systematic cross-country collaboration relevant to policy change as well as being able to testify how they proactively addressed the "hindering factors" stated above, which jeopardise meaningful joint work. Finally, they will also manifest that there were substantive improvements in BRICSAM CSO collaboration. Importantly, the programme advocates research-based analysis of the partners' direct practices, therefore ensuring that the results are aligned with BRICSAM realities and the multiple interpretations of inequality.

## 5. BASELINE FOR EXPECTED RESULTS INDICATORS

### EXPECTED RESULT 1: NETWORKS' ABILITY TO REPRESENT THEIR NATIONAL CONSTITUENCIES IS REINFORCED.

The CSO networks in ECSN-BRICSAM are diverse in their nature. The baseline study intended to increase understanding of the structure and capacity of each of the CSO networks involved in the project. This helped us identify areas of expertise (also in relation to advocacy – see Expected Result 4), and particular characteristics in terms of their respective relationships with their constituencies.

**INDICATOR 1.1:** Improvement in member assessment of network performance<sup>7</sup> (representation of diverse interests and groups – gender, ethnicity, geography, etc).

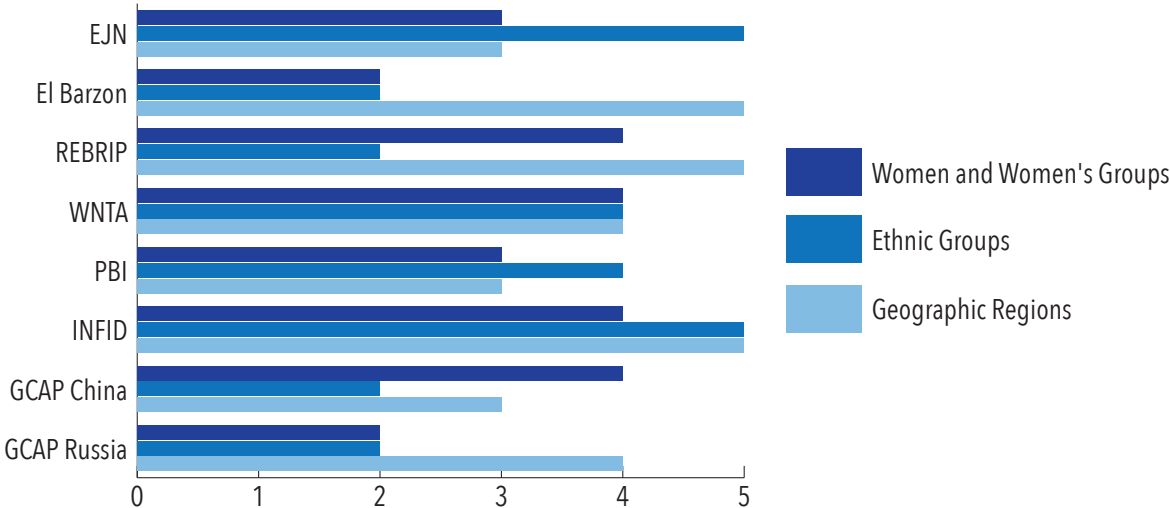
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<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that whilst the national consultations conferred widely across the networks' constituencies, the capacity assessment on which the baseline data for this indicator is based focused largely on the perspectives of the network leadership, often staff working within their respective network secretariats. Therefore, it is not a complete representation of the membership's assessment.



This indicator intends to assess the networks' performance considering the members' point of view. In the first section, we show to what extent they represent national geographic diversity, ethnic groups and women's interests (graph). In the second section, we assess the networks' internal performance as a means to reinforce constituencies' representation.

FIGURE 5: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE NETWORK REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERESTS OF:



**GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION:** The ECSN-BRICSAM countries are vast and diverse; each geographic region is hugely different in terms of socio-economic development. In all the countries, the development gap between rural and urban populations is prominent, with native communities mostly settling outside of main urban areas. Considering this, at the design stage of the ECSN-BRICSAM programme, it was thought that assessing geographic representation within the networks would help in judging the level of participation of multiple national groups, as well as people affected by poverty and inequality due to power and economic concentration in certain areas.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** The average score for all the ECSM-BRICSAM CSO networks in terms of national geographic diversity is 3.9. The CSO networks in Brazil, Mexico, and Indonesia were rated to be the most representative of the geographic regions within their respective contexts. This indicates that the CSO networks are fairly strong in terms of geographical reach within their respective countries.

**GENDER REPRESENTATION:** Gender is a key factor perpetuating inequality. As such, assessment of gender issues was one point of the baseline study, in line with Oxfam's commitment to gender equality around the world. The following paragraphs show broad data in relation to the "Gender Gap" in BRICSAM countries, followed by a brief summary of the current situation in the ECSN-BRICSAM networks. The Global Gender Gap Index<sup>8</sup> shows that the BRICSAM countries have seen a positive trend since 2006 in terms of their overall scores, with the exception of

<sup>8</sup> Since 2006, the Index has been compiled by the World Economic Forum. The scores are based on a variety of indicators related to health, education, economics, and politics. It bases the score on the relative gaps between women and men in these domains

Indonesia, which has remained stable during this period, and Russia, which has seen slightly increased inequality in the last two or three years. However, when BRICSAM countries are compared to the global ranking, only Mexico and Brazil show slight improvements<sup>9</sup>. The other BRICSAM countries have shown downward declines in their ranking, suggesting that gender inequality is reducing more quickly in other countries.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** The findings from ECSN-BRICSAM baseline study shows that most networks struggle to ensure women's representation internally: the average score across the ECSN-BRICSAM CSO networks in terms of female representativeness is 2.9 (one point lower than geographic representation). It is important to note that Russian and Mexican networks scored the lowest (2). In Mexico, for example, 75% of the local delegates of the CSO network are men. Meanwhile, Indonesia scored fairly well (4) in terms of gender participation within the network despite the fact that the CSOs consider that Indonesian women are marginalised and usually relegated to the domestic space<sup>10</sup>. This seems to suggest that organisational strategies to promote women's participation could counteract the sometimes discriminatory prevailing national status quo.

**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** The baseline study findings suggest that most CSOs networks constituencies seem not to be informed enough on gender-specific challenges and how they interlink with other dimensions of inequality. Moreover, the reflections show little specific analysis and work on gender issues as a pivotal area to address inequality: gender seems to disappear within a diverse agenda and the pressing needs of groups of people usually categorised around economic variables (for example: types of workers, employment situation, access to resources, income, etc.). That said, the CSO networks have all agreed that gender should be a transversal theme across the programme.

#### ETHNIC REPRESENTATION:

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** All seven countries are highly ethnically diverse, and in terms of ethnic representation, the average score across the ECSN-BRICSAM CSO networks is also 2.9. Ethnic minority groups -and sometimes even majority ethnic groups- have suffered from historical ethnic inequality, closely intertwined with economic inequality. We note the high performance of Indonesia and South Africa (both with 5) and the challenges at this level in Mexico, Russia, China, and Brazil (all rated themselves 2). INFID (Indonesia) seems to be the network most robustly enabling diverse participation from across the country, including diverse ethnic groups and women.

In the baseline study, all the networks distinguished internal organisational challenges as a barrier to sustain and improve efforts towards better collaboration and representation of national membership. In the following paragraphs we examine quantitative and qualitative information provided in relation to these matters.

#### PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES DUE TO DECREASING FUNDING:

**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** During the national consultations, all networks explained how the decline in international funding is a major obstacle to increasing performance and developing more and better

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<sup>9</sup> In Russia, the national consultation described the current state of affairs in relation with women's participation in public life as follows: "The Kremlin -highly associated with the Orthodox Catholic Church- promotes the idea that the only and primary purpose of women's life is motherhood and taking care of the family, and there have been regressive messages in order to ensure that feminist organisations don't operate."

<sup>10</sup> 70% of CSOs consulted said that "women's participation in Indonesian political life remains insignificant".

advocacy activities. As such, it could be argued that the current funding context is detrimental to ensuring better growth rates (more active members), and better collaboration and diversity.

The BRICSAM countries fall under the middle-income or high-income categories. Thus, they have seen financing from overseas development cooperation decline rapidly over recent years<sup>11</sup>. In this context, there was an assumption that CSOs would gain access to domestic sources of funding (governmental, private sector, or donations from the general public). However, the findings of the national consultations suggest that for the majority of the network structures, new sources of funding have yet to materialise. In terms of governmental funding, the baseline study findings suggest that there are often political constraints, as well as a national government tendency to subcontract CSOs for the delivery of services, combined with a reluctance to fund core costs for the delivery of CSO-specific missions such as advocacy objectives. Unsurprisingly, governments are unlikely to fund advocacy work which could call into question their own policies and programmes. There is little private sector funding available, and even less for long-term policy projects. For many CSOs, private companies continue to be viewed as opponents rather than allies – in many cases with good reason, evidenced when the root causes of inequality are studied<sup>12</sup>. In this context, partnerships with national governments or private companies are sometimes seen to be a significant risk to a CSO's reputation and its ability to promote change. Funding from the growing middle and upper classes in the BRICSAM countries appears to be largely uncharted territory, at least for the CSO networks involved in ECSN-BRICSAM. Whilst the term middle class can be debated, the general sense is that along with the rapid economic growth in the BRICSAM, there has been an increase in the number of households with incomes that allow for a level of consumption beyond basic necessities as well as the choice to donate to various causes. This appears to be an opportunity for further exploration in BRICSAM countries in order to enable CSOs to operate more freely and transparently; however CSOs face the challenge that the middle class does not tend to fund explicitly political causes but rather welfare projects. It suggests CSOs in the BRICSAM need to become more astute in how they communicate their objectives. Finally, a particular area that CSOs viewed to be problematic is the emergence of private charitable foundations and national and international corporations developing CSR initiatives: in many countries, corporations and rich individuals create their own foundations which deliver programmes directly, instead of supporting existing CSOs with relevant expertise and trajectory.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Despite this context, the capacity assessment shows that most networks don't have a resource mobilisation strategy, half of them don't have a strategic plan, and less have designed a M&EL plan to demonstrate impact and improve performance. These could be relevant factors in promoting organisational development, sustainability and increasing reach and impact.

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<sup>11</sup> According to OECD-DAC ODA data (<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data.htm>) between 2011 and 2012 there was a decrease in ODA country by country in USD millions: a) India-from USD 3228 to 1668, b) Indonesia- from USD 419 to 68, c) South Africa- from USD 1403 to 1067, d) Mexico- from USD 971 to 418. Brazil is the only country which seems to experience some increase (from USD 460 in 2010 to USD 815 in 2011 and USD 1288 in 2012; China is -194 USD millions while the Russian Federation is not listed, In fact, most of the governments of the BRICSAM countries are in the process of institutionalising and expanding their own overseas aid programmes.

<sup>12</sup> For example, during the national consultation in South Africa, in relation to the issue of food security, it was suggested that procurement policies for both public and private sectors need to be strengthened in favour of small producers. In relation to issues related to the current economic model, the common practice of private companies avoiding tax through transfer pricing was raised. Also poor labour regulations, and exploitative wages and working conditions were discussed.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Despite this context, the capacity assessment shows that most networks don't have a resource mobilisation strategy, half of them don't have a strategic plan, and less have designed a M&EL plan to demonstrate impact and improve performance. These could be relevant factors in promoting organisational development, sustainability and increasing reach and impact.

TABLE 3: NETWORK STRATEGY AND FUNDRAISING

The network has a clear vision and mission	87.5%
The network has a strategic plan	50% (1 developing)
The network does NOT have a resource mobilisation strategy	87.5%
Adequate steps are being taken to diversify the network's sources of income	43% (1 skipped)
Existence of M&EL plan with indicators linked to the strategic plan	37.5%
There is an annual budget for the network that covers all activities	87.5%

#### PERFORMANCE CHALLENGES DUE TO INTERNAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

**QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Performance difficulties also arise due to the intrinsic complexities related to internal communication and network management practices. During the baseline study, the CSO networks provided information on how, for example, decisions around creating working groups, coordination practices, and investment in central staff, as well as expensive governance models, are enabling or impeding increased representation and joint work towards impact. Thus, it appears that there is also a relation between strengthening internal organisational development and the chance of improving members' assessment of the networks performance.

In the analysis below (Tables 3, 4, and Indicator 1.2), we examine current networks' organisational characteristics and level of members' participation, while also considering the political context in which CSO networks operate. This baseline information will enable the ECSN-BRICSAM programme to develop tailored capacity building plans to strengthen the networks' ability to represent national constituencies.

**GOVERNANCE AND NETWORK COORDINATION:** As findings in the table below show, the CSO networks appear to have solid governance bodies and practices in place. However, complementary findings suggest that the formal structures and systems are not necessarily working to the highest standards. For example, in Mexico, El Barzon seems to be highly reliant on the figure of the network's president while there is little interaction among regions. In the case of GCAP Russia, there is a high level of dependency on Oxfam's staff and its role in the country, while in REBRIP, Brazil, there is potential for increased impact only if more members work together more consistently (at present there is only 10% active participation). More information about each network is provided in Table 6 below.

TABLE 4: ORGANISATION OF NETWORKS' GOVERNANCE

Existence of a governing body <sup>13</sup>	100%
Existence of governing documents/Terms of Reference (ToRs) stipulating the roles of governing body and members	62%
Governing body holds regular meetings and minutes them	75%
There is a current organogram for the network	62.5%
Governing body reviews and authorises network's finances	75%
Governing body has clear roles and responsibilities	85%
Network's governing body delegates effectively and appropriately to network members	75%

**INDICATOR 1.2:** Increase in number of members engaged in network activities (participating online, groups, attending assemblies)

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** In Tables 5 and 6 below we capture cross-country data on the number of CSOs that are formally members of the networks, in contrast with the real number of CSOs actively participating.

TABLE 5: CROSS BRICSAM MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

(see details per country in Table 6 below)

Total Members (CSOs) across countries	3964 CSOs
Total CSO Members actively participating across countries	405 CSOs
Cross-Country % Active Members Participation	10%
Number of countries facing political risks to citizens' participation	3 (Russia, China, Mexico)

In relation to the information in Table 5 above it is important to note the following so as to provide a more nuanced picture on membership and participation: 1) India-WNTA: participation of members drops to 5% - only 200 of the total 3500 formal member CSOs are actively engaged in national campaigning. Both GCAP China and SANI estimated 100% member participation, yet these are both relatively newly-established networks, and as such active participation of members is unsurprisingly higher. 2) Mexico, El Barzon is counted in terms of "states chapters" and active participation at a rate of 20% aligned with figures of individuals' active participation provided by the network. Table 6 and Figure 6 describe and show membership participation country by country:

<sup>13</sup> Only 37% of the networks are legally registered. It seems that being legally registered is not a condition to increase a network's performance. They have good arrangements to apply, manage, and monitor funds through one of the CSO members. Therefore, the governing bodies and other audits and checks-and balances procedures are not written down in organisational statutes but in Terms of References and strategies governing and guiding the network's life, which are re-edited mainly in national assemblies.

TABLE 6: DETAILS COUNTRY BY COUNTRY – NETWORK MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION CONSIDERING POLITICAL CONTEXT

Country/ Network	No. of Members	% / Number Active participation <sup>14</sup>	Internal Participation Qualitative Analysis	Context enabling/hindering participation
Brazil REBRIP	67	22% (15)	<b>REBRIP</b> is an independent network formed by CSOs and social movements. Currently, social movement participation is weak. Governing body meets regularly and members' assembly takes place every two years. Recent makeover of "working groups" allowed for renovated coordination (emphasis on International Financial Architecture- GT AIE). Good delegation on networks in order to undertake joint activities. However, REBRIP would like to continue enhancing communication with membership. REBRIP stated this is a matter of needing more funds.	Democratic republic with a presidential system. World's fifth most populous country. No restrictions to CSO participation: vibrant, strong access to government and participatory approaches to policy-making. However, CSOs face the challenge of how best to walk the thin line between being critical of government positions and supporting its social victories
China GCAP	30 (org and indiv.)	100% (30)	<b>GCAP- China:</b> Since its foundation, an evolving and complex network governance situation in conjunction with an unfavourable context has jeopardised participation, and internal organisation. Currently, it has a strong Secretariat, informal leadership and alliance with Oxfam HK. GCAP China builds connections with NGO partners based on advocacy service and joint projects. GCAP staff considered that there is no good delegation of activities on members, and communication with membership happens only every six months. Main issue is shortage in funding and human resources.	Single party state governed by the communist party. Most populous nation in the world. Difficult political context limiting CSO participation. Some restrictions on NGOs which started working in 2011 <sup>15</sup> . NGOs not regarded as actors in foreign policy. Civil society focused on domestic issues, less active in relation to China's role in the world. Domestic NGOs tend to be separate from international NGOs, who are perceived as too Western. Restrictions on internet use.

<sup>14</sup> When referring to 'active' members, 'active' was defined as members who, for example, regularly attend network assemblies and meetings, participate in online discussion groups, Respond to network e-mails, etc. There was still space for network representatives to have interpreted this slightly differently nonetheless. For instance, some of the networks have until now largely been based around specific projects and activities, which mobilise members, yet once these projects/activities end, the network vibrancy may subside. Yet the network representatives still describe these all as 'active members'. In other cases, the networks have been more stringent in their definition, referring to members as 'active' only if they participate actively on a more regular basis, irrespective of specific projects.

<sup>15</sup> However, in China, more than half of the national survey's respondents (58%) mentioned that they can carry out the project activities without or with just little intervention.

South Africa EJN/SANI	SANI: 30 founding members.	100% (30)	<b>EJN</b> forms part of the Fellowship of Christian Councils in East and Southern Africa. The EJN Steering Committee entrusts its work to the executive director and staff. As mentioned, above, SANI was recently formed (which explains the high rate of active participation) with the main objective of working on issues of inequality. EJN has considerable international experience; SANI members distinguished key opportunities for global advocacy at the end of the national consultation workshop.	Democratic republic that transitioned from an apartheid regime just 20 years ago. 24th most populous country in the world. Slow progress made after apartheid: South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, due to weak state, rampant corruption, discrimination, and ineffective mechanisms for citizens in decision-making (example NEDLAC). CSOs are in early phase of international engagement and overwhelmed by domestic issues.
Indonesia INFID	71	45% (31)	<b>INFID</b> was founded in 1985 on the initiative of several Indonesian NGOs and their Dutch-based partners. INFID represents an open and plural network with an interest in - and commitments to - Indonesia. The national consultation showed that CSO members seem to believe in the internal capacity of member organisation to actively transform unequal realities based on "data" gathered by them. 50% of surveyed members felt that INFID consistently engages members in decision-making processes and establishes priorities with them.	Democratic republic with presidential system. World's fourth most populous nation. Mixed perception: 65% INFID members consulted think they are free from fear of threat or intimidation while 30% did not. Furthermore, 61.5% of CSOs considered that Indonesia's legislative and policy framework restricts activities. There are spaces for policy consultation.
Russia GCAP	40	45% (18)	<b>GCAP Russia</b> is a network of CSOs founded in 2006 working with the purpose of protecting the rights of poor groups to basic social services. It appears that members are involved in decision-making only during the national assemblies or specific projects. Informal leadership (some long-standing leaders) and Oxfam's role seem to be important characteristics of the network. Establishment of more transparent mechanisms towards participation has been delayed. Network members felt that communication within the network was insufficient and inefficient. As an example, some did not know that there is a steering committee; they thought that Oxfam was the governing body.	Semi-presidential multiparty republic. World's ninth most populous nation. The state started making it difficult for NGOs to obtain foreign financing and created system of pro-Kremlin NGOs. There's a growing number of CSOs, mainly providing services to vulnerable people. Few civil society groups work on international development issues; those that do are predominately academic institutes. Pressure on journalists is intensifying.

India PBI WNTA	PBI: 200  WNTA: 3500	PBI: 25% (75)  WNTA: 5% (200)	<b>People's Budget Initiative (PBI):</b> is a coalition that works towards strengthening the participation and capacity of relevant stakeholders to engage on issues of public policy and budgets. Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA): is a national campaign consisting of grassroots organisations, people's movements, advocacy, and resource organisations from over 20 Indian states. WNTA aims to hold the government accountable to deliver on its promise of ending poverty and social exclusion. WNTA is coordinated by a group of 150 CSOs, a steering committee and six-staff secretariat.	Democracy. Second most populous country in the world. CSOs and government hold a cooperative relationship, with CSO activity called "social politics"; however systematic access to the government is variable. Increased government funding to CSOs as international resources decrease. Indian civil society is beginning to deal with its role and terms of international and G20 engagement.
Mexico El Barzon	State chapters in 26 states (representing 50,000 individual members)	20% (10,171 individuals)	<b>El Barzon</b> was founded as a national "agrarian" movement during the 1994 Mexican economic crisis. Originally it was formed to demand policy and economic changes at local and national level. Coordinated through a national office that brings together an extended network of state and municipal delegates. Most members feel informed about its mandate and participate in local projects. However, leaders feel that communication is better with the national coordination team, the state, and the president of the network, than with their local leaders. There is no clear mechanism to select either state or municipal leaders, nor a standard way to define who attends national assemblies. It seems that El Barzon is a highly centralised network, despite its capacity to work at the grassroots level around the country.	Democracy and 13th most populous country in the world. High level of persecution and repression of activists. Violence against human rights defenders and journalists is increasing due to the "war on drugs". Many El Barzon leaders have been threatened. CSOs at risk of fragmentation. Information exchange rather than meaningful dialogue with government. Within civil society itself there tend to be weak links between grassroots, national, and international CSOs, and some factionalism between "negotiators" and "protestors".

**INDICATOR 1.3:** Increase in network communication with members on global policy issues

**QUANTITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** In line with the data above, all networks concluded that they have a clear system for sharing information on global policy issues with national members. All partners mentioned that they communicate monthly or weekly except INFID (Indonesia) and PBI (India), which appear to contact the membership only every 3-6 months. However, it is not clear if this question was well interpreted and if this information refers to global policy issues or to communication in general. As such, the Global Programme Unit (GPU) observed through the first year of the programme, that the frequency noted by the networks here is likely to be an over-estimation, precisely for that reason. Whilst



the networks regularly communicate with their members (mainly by e-mail), this is not necessarily on issues of global policy. Secondly, it is likely to be one-way communication like newsletters or information-only e-mails, rather than a meaningful dialogue with their constituency. The latter might be more possible through forums such as interactive web platforms, webinars, or in-person meetings and workshops. This is changing through ECSN-BRICSAM. For instance, in Mexico, El Barzon has started producing a regular newsletter for its members on issues emerging from the programme, as well as creating a special section of the website including videos of secretariat staff members explaining certain aspects of global policy-making. In Indonesia, INFID has arranged regular radio talk shows focusing on issues of inequality and global policy engagement. Such new initiatives will need to be monitored closely in order to ascertain how effective they are in engaging the membership in global debates, and making the link back to their local and national work.

#### OVERALL CONCLUSIONS IN RELATION TO NETWORK PERFORMANCE AND REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL CONSTITUENCIES

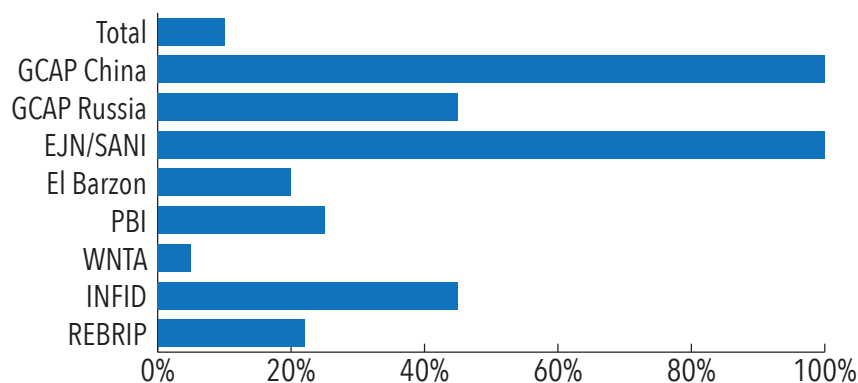
Considering the findings presented above, we need to consider the fact that, at present, only 10% of the CSO networks' members actively participate in the networks' internal organisational life. This is the case even when all the networks seem to be organised around governing bodies and terms of reference outlining how to ensure member participation – for example through the organisation of national assemblies. This indicates that the existence of formal structures is not sufficient to maintain participation. How the governance structures serve the purposes of the membership and agilely promote interaction on a daily basis appears to be as important as having in place formal arrangements. Moreover, participation drops to 10% even when 100% of the networks considered that they have clear communication systems to share information with the membership (websites, mailing lists, social media, and regular meetings are the most common). In contrast with this optimistic figure on communication systems, most reflections from national consultation workshops and complementary baseline findings clearly highlight the gap in terms of sound engagement and collaboration with the membership. This also indicates that the existence of systems per se is not sufficient in enabling increased collaboration and interaction. Thus, we could conclude that there is more to be done in order to improve how the systems, tools, processes, and various governance and management practices work in order to better reinforce national constituency participation. Given the diverse nature and level of development of each network, in-depth individual assessments and plans are necessary. Importantly, and considering the reflections from the national consultations, it seems that the network leaders and staff are aware of the challenges and have assessed specific factors that make participation difficult. They seem open to exploring options to address this in a creative manner.

Finally, we would like to note the importance of assessing progress in terms of membership participation in relation to vicissitudes in the political context. Just to note three examples: In China the political challenges are not detrimental to membership participation. This might be because the members are organised around service-delivery and specific projects, which are not necessarily seen as a threat to the government. This could change if other types of actions, like advocacy on inequality issues, are considered a central part of the network's agenda. In Russia the buy-in to the ECSN-BRICSAM programme objectives has been challenging due to the political context. CSO participation is not necessarily supported there, and participation is 45%. In the case of Mexico, the high risks faced by activists might be one of the factors against active membership participation.

**SIGNS OF IMPACT.** At the end of the programme, the networks' ability to represent their constituencies will be reinforced. This means achieving several interconnected intermediate outcomes: a) Gender: the networks will provide evidence of how they enabled and increased female participation within their structures and leadership roles; as such, the overall score will increase at least by one point.

Additionally, gender analysis and work demonstrate more consistently how gender and other forms of inequality are connected. Proof of incremental success on gender work could be a possible meeting of women’s organisations that are part of the CSO network to coincide with the forthcoming BRICS summit in Brazil. The sustainability of links between organisations brought together at such initiatives will be a key sign of impact. b) Going forward, inequalities along lines of ethnicity and geography have been noted as central by all seven countries, particularly in terms of how they interact with economic inequality. As each network will continue to build relationships with their constituencies through outreach and communication work, they will be able to show examples on how these activities enable them to connect more across their countries and with multiple groups. c) The networks will devise organisational development and capacity- building plans, and as a consequence they will be able to point out concrete institutional decisions enabling the improvement of internal performance as a means to do more and better with their membership. For example, we could expect to see more networks having developed fundraising strategies and demonstrating how governance enhancements allowed for more transparent participation. Therefore, we hope to see a substantive increase in the rate of active participation, which is today only 10% (Table 6 and Figure 6), with those networks that seem to be more successful on membership mobilisation being able to demonstrate the “how”, and if this engagement also increases when the thematic work areas are advocacy and inequality.

FIGURE 6: % ACTIVE PARTICIPATION



**EXPECTED RESULT 2: CLOSE LINKAGES AND COORDINATION ARE ESTABLISHED, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND VIRTUALLY, ACROSS THE NETWORKS.**

**INDICATOR 2.1:** Establishment of at least three cross-BRICSAM working groups

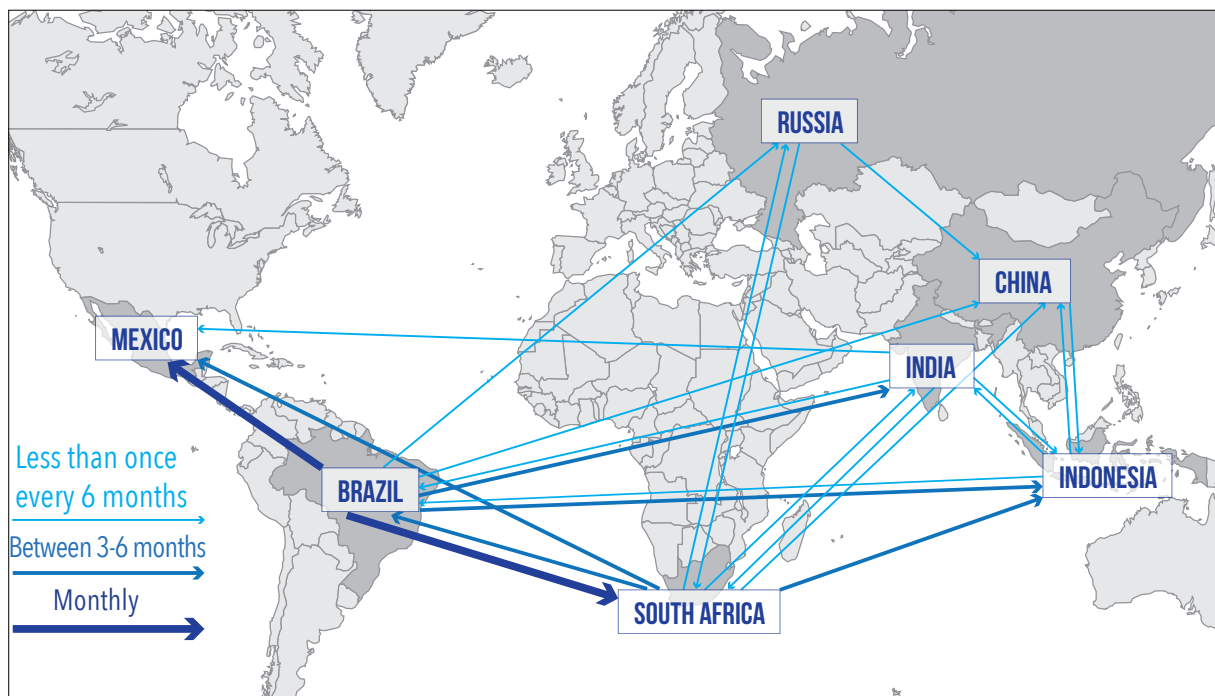
**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. The establishment of working groups on: 1) Access to Services (Health) and Inequality; 2) Food Systems and Inequality; and 3) Economic Model and Inequality occurred following the first face-to-face meeting of the seven networks in December 2013. These WGs will take forward the research and advocacy agenda for the programme. Whilst main focal points for each of the CSO networks are active in these WGs, a more effective measure of their success will be to assess to what extent they are able to engage other members of the networks, in the regular teleconferences or the discussion forums on the programme website.

**INDICATOR 2.2:** Establishment of a BRICSAM website, increase in visits over time

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. The website was recently established (<http://csnbricsam.org/>). In the coming months, the GPU will measure proxy indicators such as: Number of visits from BRICSAM countries per month; number of unique visitors per month; number of blog posts; and number of retweets of blogs/articles; number of Facebook shares in order to assess the effectiveness of this key cross-country communication tool.

**INDICATOR 2.3:** Change in partner rating of quantity and quality of cross-BRICSAM links ("how often do you communicate with CSOs in X country?", "how would you rate the strength of the relationship between your network and X network?")

FIGURE 7



**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** The graph above and Table 7 below summarise the findings in relation to the frequency with which each CSO network communicates with CSOs across the BRICSAM countries (not necessarily with the ECSN-BRICSAM CSO networks, but also more broadly, with any CSOs in these countries). A thick arrow means at least monthly communication (high), an arrow of medium thickness means communication every 3-6 months (medium), and a thin arrow means less than every 6 months (low). Brazil and South Africa are leading in communicating with other BRICSAM countries prior to the start of ECSN- BRICSAM. On the other extreme, El Barzon and India-PBI partners never communicate with other BRICSAM CSOs.

TABLE 7: COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY WITH OTHER BRICSAM CSOS

Communication Frequency	Country	With
High Frequency	Brazil	Mexico, South Africa
Medium Frequency	Brazil	Indonesia, India
	South Africa	Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia
Low Frequency	Brazil	Russia, China
	South Africa	India, China, Russia
	Indonesia	India, Brazil, Russia
	India/WNTA	Brazil, South Africa and Mexico
	Russia	China, South Africa
	China	Indonesia
No Communication	Mexico	No Communication
	India/ PBI	

**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** the baseline study also aimed to assess the quality of the links among BRICSAM countries. As mentioned above, ECSN-BRICSAM partners have some strategic relationship with international stakeholders, particularly global CSO coalitions, such as Tax Justice Network, Our World is Not for Sale, and Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, or with INGOs like Oxfam. However, when the networks answered specifically about the quality of the relationship among BRICSAM countries stakeholders and CSOs, their views varied:

- **GOOD QUALITY:** Brazil, Indonesia, and South Africa highlighted the importance of the engagement and tend to describe it as “good” while valuing its importance. India-WNTA response provided ideas for further engagement (information sharing and events) suggesting a forward-looking and positive approach.
- **POOR QUALITY:** On the contrary, Russia and China noted the weakness of their engagement and how un-integrated they are in relation to BRICSAM CSOs and global policy-making processes. This is not surprising given the context in Russia and China as well as the level of development of these networks. Similarly, Mexico remarked that their engagement is weak.

**EXPECTED RESULT 3: NETWORKS HAVE AN IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF INEQUALITY ISSUES ACROSS THE COUNTRIES.**

**INDICATOR 3.1:** Publication & dissemination of one inequality report for each country.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. The CSO networks are in the process of preparing these national-level reports in collaboration with Oxfam offices in each country. They will form the empirical basis for the analysis of inequality in each of the BRICSAM contexts.

**INDICATOR 3.2:** Publication and dissemination of at least two in-depth case examples of policy successes

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. CSO networks have led on the production of policy analyses of existing policies at a national level in the first year of the programme. For some of the networks this is the first time they have conducted evidence-based policy analyses, and the process in itself has been a learning experience. At a global level, the Working Group on Access to Services and Inequality (India, Russia, Indonesia, and China) and the Working Group on Food Systems and Inequality (Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, and India) have planned and will commission two cross-country comparative studies of existing public policies and their impacts on gender, geographic, and economic inequalities.

**INDICATOR 3.3:** Publication and dissemination of at least two research reports.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. Several pieces of new cross-country research on inequality are planned for the second year of the programme. The three working groups will manage these processes, with support from Oxfam. As research capacity has been identified by most of the networks as a particular gap, the process of designing the research questions, preparing terms of reference, identifying, selecting, and managing researchers will be as important as delivering the research pieces themselves. It will be important to document this capacity-development aspect of the programme both quantitatively and qualitatively as the programme progresses.

**INDICATOR 3.4:** Identification of evidence-based policy recommendations.

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. In the lead up to the key influencing moments agreed upon through ECSN-BRICSAM, the CSO networks will identify a set of policy recommendations and positions to present to policy-makers, through the three thematic working groups and based on the research developed and the perspectives of their constituencies. These will be presented simultaneously to national policy-makers, as well as disseminated widely through different communications methods. They will then also form the basis of direct advocacy at global forums, such as the C20, G20, and BRICS summits.

**NETWORKS' REFLECTION ON THEIR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF, AND LEVEL OF WORK ON, INEQUALITY**

**QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** All the indicators for this expected result are quantitative; nonetheless, all national baseline studies were also oriented towards the analysis of the networks' understanding of inequality as well as their current level of work on inequality. Below we first outline the most significant findings country by country and then overall ECSN-BRICSAM conclusions in relation to the current understanding of inequality.

**PERCEIVED LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP AND COUNTRY BY COUNTRY SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF INEQUALITY:** In the baseline capacity assessments, the networks were asked whether they would define themselves as civil society leaders in the area of inequality and also the networks' specific approach and ways of working on issues linked with inequality. Below, we rank the countries (from one to seven) as per our assessment of highest to lowest level of understanding of inequality, benchmarked against how the ECSN-BRICSAM programme aims to approach inequality matters at the global level. The individual baseline information and reflections shared during national consultations are the foundation, allowing the ECSN-BRICSAM programme to progressively develop a joint and collective understanding of inequality and formulate a global approach towards influencing global

policy.

1) **INDONESIA, INFID** considered itself to be a leader in relation to inequality. This is because the network is a reference in terms of data on inequality and poverty. For example, the government uses INFID to consult with CSOs, and since 2012 the network has developed a database on poverty and inequality. From the national consultations focus groups, it seems that members have a good understanding of inequality, which encompasses structural drivers of economic inequality. For example, they noted that unemployment and poverty remain unresolved problems because the financial sector solely benefits powerful international capital owners.

2) **BRAZIL, REBRIP** did not categorise itself as a “leader” in matters of inequality. This is because REBRIP uses social justice as the concept that encompasses inequality, that is to say defending people’s rights over private interest. With this in mind, it is important to note the outstanding work that the network develops in order to challenge the systemic global causes generating the conditions that limit people’s development, with a clear propositional message over the need to construct an alternative development model. REBRIP has a strategy pursuing an alternative hemispheric integration opposed to the logic of the prevailing trade and financial liberalisation on which current economic agreements are based.

3) **INDIA- WNTA and PBI**: CSOs concluded that there is a deficiency in systematically addressing inequality within their programmes which focus more on issues like poverty, education, health, gender and access to resources. Most people referred to the fact that the issues they work on have close ties to inequality but only 16 organisations stated that they have a concrete programme focused on inequality per se. Conversely, the consultation showed that there is more familiarity among CSOs on MDG and poverty reduction issues: for instance, 76% have worked around the Post-2015 agenda. PBI noted key initiatives indicating some level of expertise and focus on inequality as they are engaging with key policymakers in the Finance Ministry and other ministries to share PBI’s Charter of Demands for Union Budget 2013-14 and the National Convention on the same budget. Yet, inequality is not part of PBI strategic plan.

4) **SOUTH AFRICA, EJN / SANI** considered themselves to be leaders in inequality issues. During the ECSN- BRICSAM national consultations, participants identified the need to deepen the level of understanding on inequality, analysing trends and overall development of an “inequality” focus to support policy strategy. As a consequence, there was consensus over the need to convene a multi-stakeholder network of CSOs working on inequality: the South African Network on Inequality (SANI) was established and now they work together with inequality as the core aspect underlying all their work including advocacy. This proactive response to the opportunity offered by the ECSN-BRICSAM Programme is an indication of how the network is ready to lead on inequality matters.

5) **MEXICO, EL BARZON** does consider that the network is leader on inequality matters. However, it does not use inequality as a main narrative for its advocacy efforts, nor is this included as part of its strategic plans. The network gives greater importance to diverse economic and social problems through productive, service-delivery projects, and mobilisations to attend the most pressing needs faced by members. Nevertheless, through the national consultation process, El Barzon identified the need to influence on the global level the dynamics that condition the producers at the local level, namely through advocacy on issues of food security, trade, biodiversity, income distribution, and climate change. However, it was also evident that the network lacks a clear understanding of inequality, and of global processes and forums around these issues.

6) **GCAP CHINA** considers itself to be a leader on inequality issues in the country. According to the network leadership, this is because, for example, they had organised conferences on poverty-related issues like MDG,

and had undertaken an evaluation of the national plan on poverty reduction. As such, it could be concluded that GCAP China is a leader on poverty issues rather than inequality per se. Members noted that there is a high level of awareness around the increasing levels of inequality in Chinese society, and the risks that this implies. Nonetheless, inequality is not part of the main agenda when approaching social issues, and indeed the concern has been raised that tackling inequality head on through advocacy in China is unlikely to yield good results, as the government is not open to this type of direct challenge from civil society, particularly as it will be seen to interfere with prevailing power structures.

7) GCAP RUSSIA does not think they are leaders in the area of inequality. Their focus is almost exclusively on the issue of access to quality health services; however this is not from an inequality perspective, but rather awareness-raising among service users. In the focus group discussions, participants were unable to distinguish between poverty and inequality: poverty is a more mainstream concept. Nevertheless, respondents considered inequality to be a very important issue, which encompasses many different social dimensions and causes that need to be understood more profoundly. The national consultation identified unequal access to income and to public services as the most prominent forms of inequality in Russia. There was also a firm understanding that taxation is central to tackling economic inequality, despite a generalised lack of understanding of how to engage in work on tax justice.

#### OVERALL CONCLUSIONS: CROSS-COUNTRY UNDERSTANDING OF INEQUALITY

Each ECSN-BRICSAM network approaches inequality in a different way. Despite the fact that the general perception among the CSO networks is that social inequality is worsening (increasing disparities in income, wealth, or unequal access to essential services), most of the networks do not use inequality as their main advocacy narrative, nor do they have a particularly sophisticated approach to inequality as part of their programme work. Overall, we can draw the following conclusions from the national consultation processes:

- There is a need to develop a common framework to build understanding of inequality on empirical data based on common metrics, in order to better understand the nature and trends in inequality.
- There is a lack of command over hard indicators on inequality: the baseline study helped to identify the need for more research within networks, notably on structural causes and relationships between variables.
- In general, perhaps with the exception of REBRIP and INFID, there was some lack of understanding as to what are the structural causes of inequalities – i.e. the variables that have a greater determinant on inequality. In fact, the structural causes and symptoms of inequality came up in a mixed way. In Table 8 below we distinguish key reflections in relation to the structural causes of inequality, which indicate the need to increase cross-country knowledge and joint work on these matters.

TABLE 8: CROSS-NETWORK ANALYSIS ON STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF INEQUALITY

Gender	Emerged as a cross-cutting and structural cause of inequality, however not strongly when devising the advocacy agenda for the programme.
Education	Emerged strongly as a cause and consequence of structural inequality, together with the notion that there has been progress in terms of access across the BRICSAM countries.
Unequal access to health	Emerged as a major consequence of structural inequality. Public investment and provision of healthcare was identified as a possible solution to reduce geographic, gender, and economic inequality.
Redistributive income policies and taxation	Emerged as a cause of inequality but less strongly (exceptions of REBRIP and INFID). However, the networks agreed to focus on the economic model as one priority for advocacy agenda. <sup>17</sup> They all have an interest in developing their knowledge in this regard.
Wealth concentration at the global level	Did not emerge as a cause or as a perceived strong inequality trend in the national consultations, although it has since been discussed at the first steering committee meeting in December 2013. <sup>16</sup>
The political domain of inequality	Did not emerge in a strong way through the national consultations, although at the first steering committee meeting, the CSO network representatives agreed that the various dimensions of inequality in their respective countries are a major factor undermining democracy. They also spoke of the informal and unjust influence the wealthy have over political decision-making.
Spatial inequalities	Emerged strongly as a type of inequality present in all of the BRICSAM countries, particularly Russia, China, and Indonesia, but not as an explicit area of work for any of the networks.

**EXPECTED RESULT 4: NETWORKS ARE FACILITATED AND PROVIDED WITH THE SKILLS TO JOINTLY ENGAGE WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND IN GLOBAL FORUMS.**

**INDICATOR 4.1:** Number of training and peer-learning sessions

**QUANTITATIVE BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. These will be developed both at a national level for CSO network members, as well as at a global level with webinars, in-person training sessions, and peer-to-peer exchanges between the networks.

**INDICATOR 4.2:** Improvement in network advocacy capacity (“how would you rate your organization’s current capacity in conducting policy analyses?”).

**QUANTITATIVE-QUALITATIVE BASELINE:** In order to analyse information against this indicator, we assessed several components of CSO networks’ activities each providing insights on their current advocacy

<sup>16</sup> Although one of the major trends of income and wealth concentration is taking place at the global level, as the richest 1% has 43% of the global wealth.

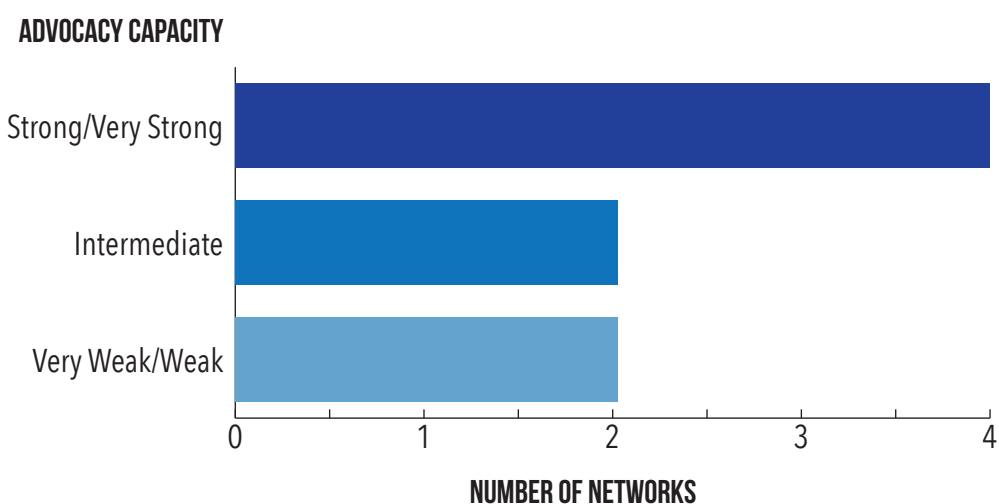


capacity. It should be noted that the ECSN-BRICSAM programme understands that sound and effective advocacy at the global level must be backed by empirical data. "Evidence-based" influencing seems to be one of the key pre-conditions of success when engaging with global institutions. Therefore, the baseline study included questions assessing both research and advocacy skills as interlinked factors and, consequently, considered the networks' current level of knowledge in relation to advocating at the international level. Information is provided in relation to the group of CSO networks as a whole and per country/network when relevant.

## ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH CAPACITY OF NETWORKS

Half of the networks rated themselves as "Strong" in terms of overall capacity to undertake advocacy work; these are: REBRIP, El Barzon, WNTA, and PBI. INFID and EJN considered themselves "intermediate/developing" while GCAP China and Russia described themselves as "weak".

FIGURE 8



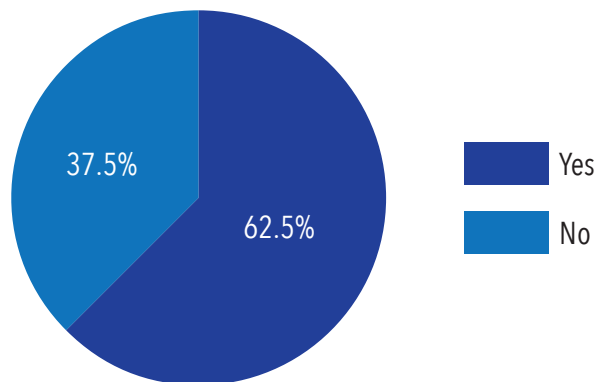
- Existence of an advocacy strategy and targets: All of the networks include policy engagement and advocacy as part of their strategic plans. Moreover, and as mentioned before, six out of eight networks said that these strategies have clear targets including UN bodies, Post-2015 MDGs, WTO negotiations, G20, and BRICS. Only GCAP Russia and EJN said they have no targets.

- Advocacy and research Staff: Only five networks have staff dedicated to advocacy activities and only two networks have staff dedicated to research. Research tends to be outsourced to external consultants and academic partners, as the networks don't have staff dedicated to this area of work. Interestingly, REBRIP is one of the strongest networks of the ECSN-BRICSAM group in terms of research and advocacy, yet it does not have staff dedicated to these areas. All work in these areas is undertaken by the members, following a joint agreement. This suggests the importance of strong internal organisation, and clear roles and responsibilities among the membership as a means to achieve policy impact. REBRIP members often undertake particular activities under their own name, and also under REBRIP's name. They see no detriment to doing this, in fact the opposite. The REBRIP name allows them to access stakeholders and networks that they would not necessarily be able to access directly as individual organisations.

- Evidence-based advocacy: The baseline study also asked about research capacity, with the aim of understanding the networks' level of experience in undertaking "evidence-based" advocacy.

All networks, except El Barzon, said they had undertaken research in the past and that work has been published. All of them, except PBI, currently have strategic relationships with academic-research organisations that can or could support in research activities.

FIGURE 9: DID THE NETWORK UNDERTAKE RESEARCH IN THE PAST?



Five out of eight (62.5%) considered that they develop policy recommendations after identifying gaps, and develop ideas based on evidence. Not surprisingly, China and Russia scored themselves at a lower level in relation the rest of the group.

However, it is important to note that the questions in the capacity assessments did not explicitly ask if advocacy and research work referred to the local, national, and/or international policy influencing levels. With this mind, it is important to note the key areas where the networks are less strong, particularly if policy influencing is to be done based on robust empirical data, as expected by global institutions:

- Only one organisation considered that it was able to define a research question (REBRIP). None of the networks considered themselves to be strong in conducting literature reviews; most of them rated as weak with the exceptions of INFID, WNTA, and PBI scoring intermediate.
- Importantly, five networks think they are "very weak or weak" on undertaking quantitative analysis, an area that is relevant for assessing and monitoring inequality issues. The situation improves slightly with regard to conducting qualitative research
- Finally, report writing and copy-editing and, to some extent, the dissemination of recommendations are also areas that can be strengthened over the course of the ECSN-BRICSAM programme.

**APPROACHES TO INFLUENCING POLICY CHANGE:** Most networks seem to employ a very diverse set of approaches towards policy influencing. They include:

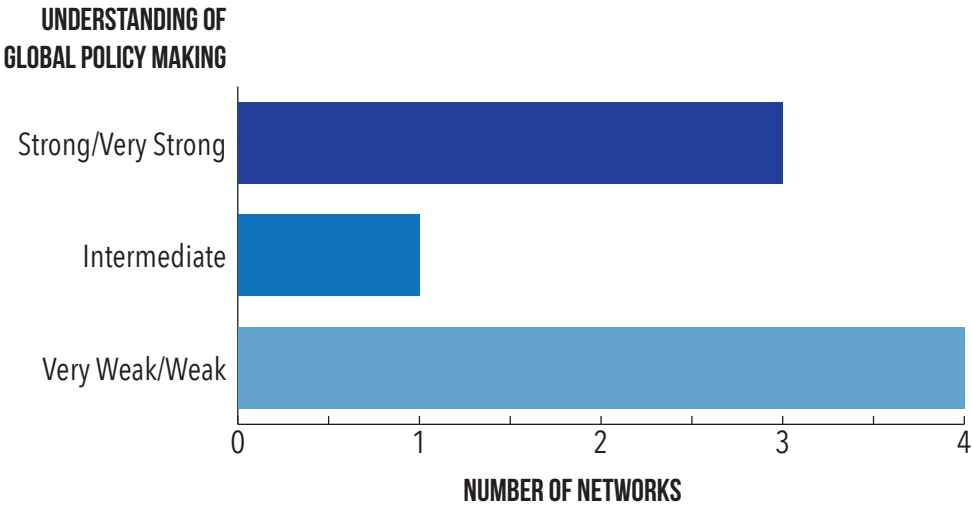
- Capacity Building / Knowledge sharing
- Round Tables / Seminars / Policy Working groups
- Outreach to policymakers including face to face submissions (correspondence) and direct lobbying
- Public Campaigning and Social Mobilisation
- Media and Communication work (including press and website for example)

What is clear is that the CSO networks have proven experience in using any of these methods within national policy-making with the exception of REBRIP, INFID and, to some extent, WNTA and EJNI. In the next section we aim to highlight the ECSN-BRICSAM networks' current capacity in global policy-making based on:

**SKILLS TO ENGAGE WITH INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND GLOBAL FORUMS**

- Understanding of Global Policy Making: when asked about their understanding of global policy-making processes, we find that the majority of the networks considered themselves "Weak/Intermediate". Only REBRIP, INFID, and WNTA believe they have a strong understanding of global policy making.

FIGURE 10



- Network's ability to link local issues to the global policy-making sphere: Only three networks rated themselves as "Strong/Very Strong" (REBRIP, INFID, and WNTA) in their ability to link local issues with global policy-making processes. Two regarded themselves as "Intermediate" (PBI and EJNI/SANI) and, finally, three considered themselves "Very Weak/ Weak" (GCAP China, GCAP Russia, and El Barzon). Therefore, the majority of the networks seem to be in need of improving their advocacy and research capabilities for investigating global policy and linking local realities and evidence with the international sphere, particularly through comparative research across countries. Several networks commented that sharing the cases of other BRICSAM countries with their own national policymakers could be an important advocacy strategy, as government officials are often more open to hearing about what is working or not working in other contexts, rather than being criticised directly.

- We can conclude, with the exception of REBRIP and INFID, that there was a general lack of clarity over what the added value was in working on inequality issues at a global level, rather than simply at a national level.

- However, there is a sense that under the current global economic development model these disparities will increase if specific policies are not put in place. A clear message coming out of the consultations is that national economic growth is not enough and that systemic change at both the national and global levels is required if inequality is to be tackled effectively.

## BASED ON THE FINDINGS ABOVE, WE SHARE THREE INITIAL CONCLUSIONS:

- **Advocacy and research capacity:** the capacity assessments findings indicate that the networks don't have a strong capacity, knowledge, and experience when operating at global policy level. The advocacy and research skills and knowledge they do have when working at local and national level might need to be transferred, consolidated, and strengthened when working collectively at global level. Tailored capacity-building plans are necessary in order to consolidate diverse capacity levels, as well as addressing common capacity gaps across the networks, for instance knowledge of global policy-making and how it works in practice, including options on how best to engage.
- **Currently, only three networks -REBRIP, WNTA, and INFID- seem to have strong understanding of global policy making dynamics.** They use their fairly robust advocacy skills to operate at the international level. This could be applied further and shared with other ECSN-BRICSAM networks in order to increase collective impact. Nevertheless, their research capacity could also be further strengthened, ensuring that their policy recommendations have a sound base in evidence.
- **The cross-country perception that the current global economic model will increase inequality can be used as a "catalyst" to continue building the joint capacity to influence global policy-making on inequality issues.**

**SIGNS OF IMPACT.** At the end of the programme, the ECSN-BRICSAM networks will have increased their advocacy and research capabilities, in particular, when using them to influence policies at the global level. We could expect to see an overall increase in the current ratings from the capacity assessments and, in particular, explicit examples of application of learning after the capacity-building activities funded by the ECSN-BRICSAM programme have been organised. ECSN-BRICSAM policy recommendations will be based on the research undertaken by the programme with vital input and support from all the BRICSAM CSO networks, which will ensure that the "voice of the marginalised" is integrated into the data set and evidence backing positions. This will provide legitimacy and extra added value that think tanks and academia institutions engaging with BRICS, G20, and other global spaces don't seem to have.

**INDICATOR 4.3:** Number of interactions between networks and policymakers (written and in-person communication with policymakers, press releases)<sup>17</sup>

**BASELINE:** Zero at the start of the programme. Through this indicator, the ECSN-BRICSAM programme particularly aims to measure the networks' policy interactions at the national level, with the aim of influencing global policy processes. For example, ensuring that the CSOs' positions are known, valued, and integrated through dialogue with national authorities and representatives in preparation of global summits and conferences. At the Specific Objective Level (SO Indicator 1) we will measure the ECSN-BRICSAM programme joint work in global policy spaces.

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<sup>17</sup> This indicator refers to interaction between networks and policymakers at the national level in order to influence global policy-making processes. Therefore, here data will be aggregated and analysed in relation to national achievements adding value to the global and collective ECSN-BRICSAM advocacy work.

## 6. MOVING FORWARD

Setting a baseline for a complex, multi-country, multi-partner programme such as ECSN-BRICSAM is challenging. This is because the programme has the ambitious objective of influencing global policy-making forums, and also aims to substantially increase the participation and strength of Global South CSOs at both national and cross-country levels.

Thus, we consider that the indicators set out in the logical framework will inevitably fall short in terms of demonstrating change. It is for that reason that this report has set out to include the extensive qualitative and contextual information gathered through the national consultations and capacity assessments. As the programme moves forward, we aim to continue monitoring, evaluating, and learning against the indicators and, importantly, complement them with substantive reflection and documentation of concrete qualitative examples and process gains, which will constitute the programme's developmental signs of impact. For each level of the result chain we will track progress, debating attribution and contribution, but with the understanding that it will be virtually impossible to attribute changes in global policy-making forums and the discourse of national level stakeholders leading the negotiations to the work of the CSO networks and the specific actions from this programme. The ECSN-BRICSAM programme will systematically debate our contribution and record how we work more and better as a collective in order to support a complex change process.

The very process of measuring change simultaneously at these different levels will be a learning experience for Oxfam and its partners. Monitoring, evaluating, and learning from our work will help us better understand the links between the struggles of poor and marginalised people and how Global South civil society influence global policy-making forums, where decisions can have a huge impact in the creation of a more equal world.