Content

1. Introduction 3
2. Context for program implementation 4
3. Program implementation, results and midterm review 5
4. Cooperation Alliance, local partners and stakeholders 8
5. Inequality and inclusiveness 9
6. Theories of Change, monitoring and learning 10

Annex 1 Summaries of country results
Bangladesh 12
Benin 13
Bolivia 14
Cambodia 15
Central America 16
Ethiopia 17
India 18
Indonesia 19
Kenya 20
Mali 21
Myanmar 22
The Netherlands and international lobby 23
Uganda 24

Annex 2 stories of change
Benin: Lobby for better working conditions in the shea sector 26
European Union: European Union support to agroecology: moving from policy to practice 27
Guatemala: Young Leaders School: New opportunities for youth 28
India: How a self-help group made its business sustainable 29
The Netherlands: Faith based organizations indispensable in sustainable development 30

Photo cover: Cecilia Wambui, dairy farmer in Kenya.

© Utrecht, May 2019

Civic Engagement Alliance is a joint collaboration between 7 Dutch non-governmental organizations in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.
1. Introduction

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Civic Engagement Alliance are involved in a Strategic Partnership ‘Dialogue and Dissent’ which aims to ensure that in and by this partnership civil society organizations (CSOs) and civil society at large, both in the ‘global south’ as well as in the overall global context, can contribute to decreasing inequality and injustice in societies and work towards inclusive development.

The alliance, collaboration between Dutch and Southern CSOs, is made up of trade unions, education and development organizations that have a link to [faith based] organizations and constituencies in the Netherlands and other similar international networks. The Alliance’s members contribute their expertise in the fields of inclusive development, capacity development, labor rights, strengthening small-scale farmers, vocational training and working with the private sector, with a focus on the agri-food sector.

In October 2015, the Civic Engagement Alliance published the Convening and Convincing Program Document. In this program document, we concretized our Theory of Change [with its four thematic pathways of change] and we introduced our strategies on capacity development, lobby & advocacy, inclusivity and sustainability. We also listed the countries where the program is implemented.

In this annual report 2018 we pay attention to the context in the program countries and how changes in these contexts have influenced program implementation (chapter 2). In chapter 3 we describe program progress and some main results. During the year 2018, we did a midterm evaluation and in this chapter we will reflect on the main outcomes of this review and the way we will use these outcomes to improve program implementation.

We provide insight in our cooperation as an Alliance and cooperation with local partners and stakeholders in chapter 4. In chapter 5, we highlight how we address inequalities in our program and how we work towards inclusiveness. By the end of 2018, the country-specific Theories of Change have again been discussed and reviewed; outcomes of this process are described in chapter 6.

In annex 1 we include more specific information on context changes and main results for each program country. Annex 2 consists of some stories of change, to illustrate program results. More information and stories can be found on the Civic Engagement Alliance website, civicengagementalliance.org
In our last Civic Engagement Alliance global learning workshop, we identified main issues that surpass the country contexts and should be jointly taken up in our lobby work. Political space for civil society organisations and individuals (freedom to act and unite, and freedom of speech) was mentioned by almost all countries as an area of growing concern and an issue we should all continue lobbying for. Some stunning examples from the environment of our own program were shared in the course of the learning week. One colleague told that two of his friends has been arrested because of posting some information on Facebook. Others shared experiences of social media being controlled, NGOs being threatened, political unrest in some countries that made it impossible to meet with partner organizations or go to the office for work. These are all examples of what is high on the agenda of the Dutch government: shrinking space for civil society. The common feeling in the learning workshop, reflecting on experiences in all the program countries was a bit more pessimistic compared to the workshops in 2017. Taking these experiences seriously commands respect for all those partner organizations who take the risk to raise their voices and urge us, Alliance members in the Netherlands, to continue this lobby for civic space together with the Dutch government and many other strategic partners and allies.

In some countries, the situation was rather unstable and influenced program implementation. In Cambodia, due to elections, we had to suspend meetings and lobby interventions, but after September 2018 there again was room to go on. In Central America the political unrest strongly hindered lobby and capacity development activities. In Bangladesh, elections impacted negatively on civic space, in addition to the unrest caused by the presence of the many refugees from Myanmar. Mali has not seen an improvement of stability and security in 2018, making it very hard to cooperate with civil society organizations in different [and more remote] parts of the country and also leaving less room for policy influencing since government is not in control. In Ethiopia, we have observed a growing space for civil society in legislation and at national level. At the same time however we see the country struggling to really translate these developments into a more positive and inclusive environment for civil society at local and regional levels in the country. We realize that these changes will take a lot of time.

It was useful to cooperate with many other platforms and organizations in assessing these developments with regard to civic space and discuss possible strategies and opportunities to influence. ACT Alliance [and ACT EU] have given priority to lobby and advocacy for civic space in their new multi annual strategy. Within Partos this issue has been often discussed in 2018, also involving representatives from the Ministry and CIVICUS. Within the broader theme of civic space we are focusing in particular on diversity within civil society and the space for and role of faith-based organizations and trade unions, as well as local community based organizations such as farmers and women’s groups. In the countries where political space was under pressure, trade unions were severely constrained in their space to operate [Central America, Cambodia]. For local organizations and also faith based organizations political unrest seemed to influence their space in less direct ways but in all cases the freedom to speak out is hindered.
3. Program implementation, results and midterm review

3.1. General program process
In this chapter we give a global overview of our progress in program implementation in 2018. We also summarize the outcomes and recommendations of the external midterm review that was done this year. For more detailed information, we provide short overviews for all countries, describing changes in the context and main program results [annex 1]. In addition, we have included five stories of change in annex 2, to illustrate the results. More stories and resources can be found on our program website.

3.2. Capacity development
Capacity strengthening for lobby and advocacy within the Civic Engagement Alliance and the networks of our partner organizations is one of the goals of our program. Therefore, Alliance member Wilde Ganzen has developed the Change the Game Academy, a learning platform consisting of trainings, e-courses, coaching and exchange. Key elements in this Academy are ‘Mobilizing Support’, a training for lobby and advocacy, and ‘Local Fundraising’, helping organizations to build a local support base which strengthens their legitimacy and credibility.

In 2018, 54 organizations in India and Bangladesh have been trained on Mobilising Support. During the training, participants have developed an action plan for local lobby interventions. For 157 organizations that were already trained in 2017, refresher sessions were organized. In countries where there were no specific refresher trainings (Uganda, Mali, India), the post-training follow-up was conducted through quarterly partner meetings or regular federation meetings. In addition, 72 organizations in Ethiopia, Mali and Benin have been trained on Local Fundraising. We have launched the e-learning course Mobilising Support on the online portal. End of 2018, the first four modules of the course were available in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Portuguese). Module 5 and 6 will be added in 2019.

In addition to Change the Game, we have been involved in the ACT Advocacy Academy, a global advocacy platform for exchange and learning. In many countries, partners have also been trained in specific thematic areas, as a basis for more evidence based lobby and advocacy.

Midterm review Change the Game
INTRAC has conducted a midterm review of Change the Game Academy globally, based on survey data and interviews in four countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya and India. Although it is too early to assess the longer-term impact, the report states: “The Change the Game Academy is on track to have longer-term outcomes in terms of strengthening the ability of civic society organizations in raising resources…”

Monitoring data show that the ability to mobilize support improved across all areas, in the perception of participants. Their answers ranged from ‘I am able to tell local government about the importance of our work’ to ‘I have the relevant skills and expertise for lobby and advocacy activities’. The report concludes: “The courses have helped participants and their organizations in several ways, including (...) building the credibility, image and legitimacy of civic society organizations to the general public and local authorities.”

An important recommendation is to ensure more follow-up and consolidation of work with participants, through a program of refresher/follow-up courses, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning. To some extent, this is already incorporated in the alliance as this is a five year program with continued support of ICCO country offices and/or Change the Game Academy national partners. However, consolidation needs continuous attention. In two country reports, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso, the evaluator recommended to also train government officials.

3.3. Lobby and Advocacy for the thematic goals
In our lobby for civic space (pathway 1) we participated in networks and coalitions in many countries (India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya) to support civil society organizations to cope with often changing legislation and regulations. Being able to comply to these regulations is crucial when civic space is shrinking. Access to information is often difficult for small organizations working in rural areas.

In the Netherlands, our specific focus in 2018 was the role and importance of faith based organizations as actors in development. We engaged in several public debates on the role of religion in development, and the need for more ‘religious literacy’, resulting in a letter to Parliament by minister Blok expressing commitment [and concrete financial support] for religious literacy for civic
servants. We collected evidence by doing research on the role of faith based organizations within civil society in Ethiopia, Kenya and Indonesia, resulting in the report ‘If you need us, allow us’. The importance of diversity within civil society, cooperating with different types of organizations (such as local groups, faith based organizations, trade unions, national platforms etc) remains important, since this diversity reflects the diversity of interests and opinions of our beneficiaries. We started research on the effects of local fundraising, to test our assumptions that local resource mobilization will increase the legitimacy of civil society organizations [research results expected in 2019].

In pathways 2 and 3, we have been lobbying for food security and the rights of smallholder farmers and workers. In pathway 4, we influenced private sector actors to respect human rights, in particular women’s and children’s rights. Linking our work and results to the Sustainable Development Goals, we contributed mainly to SDG 2 [zero hunger], SDG 5 [gender equality], SDG 8 [decent work and economic growth], and SDG 12 [responsible production and consumption]. SDG 17 [partnerships for the goals] characterizes our way of working. In the Netherlands, our Alliance participated in the Building Change campaign, resulting in more attention for and commitment to the SDGs and monitoring.

Part of our annual plan 2018 was doing research and collecting evidence to strengthen our lobby. The midterm review confirmed the importance and positive results of this strategy. We started research in Mali to collect food security data at household levels in specific areas, paying attention to diversity of food and inequalities in access to nutritious food [SDG 2]. In Benin we started research on shea trees, collecting and using geodata to monitor the number of trees, to support tree protection. In South East Asia, research has been done and published on the role of ASEAN in promoting human rights [UNGPs] in agricultural value chains. In Ethiopia, an analysis was done on access of malt barley smallholder producers to agro-chemicals and sustainable use of these products, informing multi stakeholder platforms in their lobby to improve the malt barley sector. These are just some examples of research that informs our lobby and we will continue to follow this strategy of evidence collection. Research strengthens our lobby in various ways, sometimes opening doors, sometimes making lobby possible in a difficult political context where ‘objective’ research outcomes are less sensitive compared to more political lobby messages, sometimes creating opportunities to link lobby at national and international level. In the Netherlands, we have been participating in several meetings and conferences, sharing our experiences with data collection and the use of new technologies, such as geodata, for lobby.

3.4. Communication

In the course of this year, communication of first program results and stories of change received increasing attention. We decided to launch a program website, www.civicengagementalliance.org, providing global program information and specific country
The Civic Engagement Alliance program had a slow start. Although the year 2016 was foreseen as inception year it took time as well in 2017 to define concrete lobby results and strategies in some countries and narrow down the scope of the Theory of Change at country level. Factors contributing to this slow start are the complexity of the program and the transitioning from MFS2 to Dialogue and Dissent (new roles for local partners and Alliance members, less funding). Frequent staff changes have been problematic as well in some regions.

Despite this slow start, many concrete stories of change have been reported and the contribution of the program can be made plausible. The researcher mentions some reasons for success. The first reason is that in most countries the program invested a lot of energy in supporting and training local groups at community and district levels (farmer groups, women’s groups, self help groups), resulting in many lobby results at lower administrative levels (such as local government). Even in situations of shrinking space for civil society in terms of legal and regulatory frameworks at national level, at local level there is often some space to interact, leading to some positive changes sometimes rather easily. The second reason for success is the use of constructive methods, methods of dialogue, in multi-stakeholder platforms that already existed or were set up as a result of the program. The third success factor is the use of evidence in lobby.

In many countries research has been done and relevant data and analyses was presented to decision makers, to make lobby claims stronger and more concrete. Finally, in the first program years we have invested a lot in capacity development and this also leads to clear results. At the other hand, it is mentioned in the review that the relationship between capacity development and lobby and advocacy is pluri-form and it would be good to reflect further on this relationship and how capacity development contributes to lobby and advocacy at different levels and with different organizations involved. Based on these early results, the researcher concludes that there is a groundswell of activity that could lead to positive changes in the years to come.

The midterm review mentions a couple of issues for further reflection and improvement. The first one is on ‘stand-alone or top-up’. Our program has been designed as a ‘top-up’ program, meaning that in the program countries lobby and advocacy strategies are linked to broader programs (and other funds), using evidence from broader programs in our lobby and at the same time creating more impact by influencing policies and policy implementation. Not in all program countries, these linkages have been created effectively and the linkages should be strengthened. This issue is related to a second issue, ‘breadth or depth’. The overall Theory of Change is very broad and all countries have chosen their own country focus (Plus Theory of Change) within this broader framework. From the point of view of local ownership and relevance in the context, this is a strong point. At the other hand, this leads to a broad range of issues for lobby, and it is not possible to have sufficient expertise on all these topics. It is recommended to look at least for some issues that can be focused on in different countries, creating a certain level of coherence.

Another observation is that pathway 1, civic space, is not clearly linked to the more thematic pathways of change in many countries. In some countries, pathway 1 issues seem to be a bit isolated [e.g. working on land rights or youth rights], in other countries the specific contribution to civic space is not clearly visible and not explicitly mentioned in the program documents. Both in the learning workshops and the global face-to-face meeting this observation has been discussed and we concluded that we should prioritise civic space issues to work and communicate on globally.

Furthermore, connecting lobby interventions at different levels (local, national, international) is something that can be further improved, by using more concrete evidence from countries in our lobby efforts and also to involve partners or individuals from program countries in lobby at EU or Dutch level. The midterm review also includes some observations with regard to the roles of Alliance members, that are mentioned below in chapter four.
The Civic Engagement Alliance consists of six organizations at global level. At country level the number of Alliance members involved differs, as well as the number of local partners and other stakeholders. In the overall program plan and in the country plans the specific contribution and added value of Alliance members has been defined, based on partner networks, expertise and international lobby opportunities. In the course of program implementation we feel that roles have become more clear and the level of trust between Alliance members is high.

In the midterm review the question is raised if working as an Alliance has an added value comparing it to a hypothetical situation where ICCO would be the sole implementer. This hypothetical situation would probably benefit from less complexity and many of the current activities could be implemented in the same way, sometimes involving others [on a consultancy basis] to provide trainings and expertise. Working in an Alliance however adds value, is the conclusion of the review and our own experience, by creating joint responsibility and commitment for the overall program, making networks available to each others and by creating new partnerships, for example with the trade unions, that would be difficult without this Alliance. The Dutch lobby team, in which all Alliance members take part, is a good example of joint ownership and working towards common goals making use of networks, expertise and skills of different members. The review also points to different levels of added value, with regard to specific expertise [capacity development, disability inclusion, lobby for skills] or roles [program management, linkages to specific partners such as faith based actors and trade unions].

At local levels, we have a diverse network of partner organizations. The midterm review states that not in all cases, the partner choice has clearly been done based on lobby capacities of the partners. In some cases partners were also selected because of earlier involvement in MFS programs [but sometimes more for service delivery] or strong connections with one of the Alliance members. In our annual report 2017 this has also been mentioned. By the end of 2018 we observe that the relationships between local partners in the program countries are much stronger and that partners led discussions on defining the priorities for lobby in their countries. This is underscored by the remarkable change in level of strategic involvement of partners we have observed in the learning workshops in 2018, where they also took leading roles in the discussions on the Theory of Change. Another good result here is that in many countries lobby interventions at local and national levels have been connected, leading to policy influencing at national and regional levels based on very concrete evidence and contributions from local groups, such as women’s groups and youth groups.
5. Inequality and inclusiveness

In our Theory of Change we have defined smallholder farmers and workers in the agri-food sector as our main beneficiaries. These groups are very diverse, and working towards a more inclusive agri-food sector is a key element in our strategies. Gender equality, inclusion of people living with disabilities and increasing space for young people to speak out are at the core of our program. Gender, more space for young people to speak out and inclusion of people with disabilities.

To enhance and lobby for the inclusion of people living with disabilities, our alliance members Light for the World and Leprazending [members of Prisma] have been contributing their expertise, advice and training in different country programs. Many local partners have been trained and supported in making their own program and strategies more inclusive. In the course of the year 2018 we concluded that during the remaining program years we should focus more on the political context in the program countries, influencing specific policies and policy implementation to create a more inclusive policy environment for people living with disabilities.

Gender strategies, working towards gender equality and inclusion of female and male voices in our lobby interventions are part of the country programs. Examples of these female voices are the fact that many of the community-based organizations and local groups in our program are women’s groups and in some of the value chains the targeted producers and workers are women. Increasing their access to skills, services and markets and improving their labor conditions are at the heart of the programs, for example in India [tea sector], Benin [shea sector], Bangladesh and Uganda. We observe, however, and this was also highlighted in the midterm review, that gender strategies are too much hidden in our work, or at least in the communication and reporting about our work. Therefore, we collected stories of change that have an explicit gender component during the learning workshop early 2018 and in our learning workshop in 2019 we organized a mini gender workshop. In this workshop participants discussed how they can work towards gender equality in more visible and explicit ways, realizing that gender is not about numbers [numbers of women trained etc] and not about women only. They realized as well that the group of women is very diverse in itself and there are no simple ways to change power relations. We also concluded at the end of this workshop that we can improve our program in working towards gender transformation and equal power relationships. We formed a small taskforce to support all country teams in designing more gender sensitive lobby plans.

In our annual report 2017 we mentioned that inclusion of children’s and youth rights and voices received more and more attention. In 2018 this was an ongoing trend in the program. Preventing child labour and working towards child labour free zones was part of the lobby agenda in Indonesia, India and Kenya. Promoting youth rights and supporting young people to be active in advocacy and lobby work is core in the country programs in Latin America but also in most of the African program countries the youth perspective is becoming part of the strategies. Lobby for youth employability and decent work within the agri-food sector and also access for young people to relevant skills and services are the main lobby goals.
6. Theories of Change, monitoring and learning

In 2018 we organized another collective round of learning workshops in all the program countries. The local partner organizations and the Alliance staff in the country and some representatives from our international lobby team participated in these workshops. Based on discussions with our external reference group this year's emphasis was on the review of the Theories of Change, a further deepening of the stories of change and a discussion about the use of the lobby logbooks. Working with a modular set-up with possibilities to adapt for each country really worked well in 2017. Therefore, the existing general set-up of the learning workshop -to be adapted on country needs- was updated for the 2018 round.

A few things stood out in the 2018 learning workshops which really impressed us. First, the participatory set-up of the workshop has been taken up very well. Our local partners often took the lead in the discussions on the Theory of Change and its assumptions. During the start of the program we needed to invest much time and effort to make the Theories of Change concrete. We explained how to use them as a learning tool and a living document [not only a document that is elaborated for the donor]. Now, partners have gained good insight in the dynamic processes leading to their results, and the choices along the way through the use of the Theories of Change at country level and in the discussions we had every year in the learning workshops.

The discussions had in most countries a more strategic character, compared to 2017: partners discussed about how to slowly move upward from outputs toward results and impact in the remaining time for the program. Another issue that came up in many countries, moving towards the last phase of the program, is how to sustain the results on the beneficiary level and how to phase out.

Secondly, we saw that big steps were made in the use of our monitoring tools: more stories of changes being written, lobby logbooks being filled and used. Continuous attention for and guidance on working with the logbook has paid off. Partners value using it since they see that logbooks give them insight in strategies used and assessing their results. And finally, we had several interesting discussions on the outcomes of the midterm review of the program, which was presented in each workshop.

To conclude this years' harvest: southern partners didn’t see a need to change the overall country theories based on the results of their 2018 work. Where they proposed changes, these were made in the assumptions formulated or in some specific result boxes (precondition boxes). In a few countries (like Myanmar and Mali) partners decided rather to invest in more coordination amongst themselves than to integrate pathways in the Theory of Changes.

The 2018 learning workshops were concluded with a face-to-face meeting for the country coordinators and the Alliance members in the Netherlands in May 2019. Main points on the agenda of the week were: exchange of results [through presentations of stories of change], the linking of local/national lobby interventions to NL/EU lobby, a mini gender workshop on gender focusing on seeing possibilities to surface gender work that is being implemented in the program and in the end a glimpse into contours of a new program based on current lessons.
Annex 1

Summaries of country results

Bangladesh 12
Benin 13
Bolivia 14
Cambodia 15
Central America 16
Ethiopia 17
India 18
Indonesia 19
Kenya 20
Mali 21
Myanmar 22
The Netherlands and international lobby 23
Uganda 24
Bangladesh

**Alliance members:** ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Wilde Ganzen, Light for the World, LepraZending.

**Pathways 1, 2 and 3:** focus on access to land, food and nutrition, empowerment of smallholder farmers, in particular women and people with disabilities.

**Context and program**

The situation in Bangladesh was far from stable. The influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar asked a lot of attention from government and aid agencies. The process of repatriation and relocation still has to start. After the national election in 2018 the country became a single party state and civil organizations experience limited freedom to speak out. The new Digital Security Act is used by the government to limit freedom of speech. As an example, a human rights activist was detained under this act for 107 days. Our partners protested against this situation, together with many other civil organizations.

Within civil society we have seen upcoming social movements, led by students who are able to connect to broader society. These are interesting movements that are influential and already gained concrete results with regard to road safety (a Road Transport Act was now drafted) and the quota system for civil services. The alliance might connect more to these kinds of movements.

**Main results**

**Land rights and access to government khas land and water bodies**

Landless groups established their entitlement to 17 acres water bodies for three years, resulting in access for 200 landless families. Our partner Nijera Kori has trained these groups how to claim their rights, and collectively gain confidence and dignity. After policy dialogues, three Members of Parliament have agreed to continue to support Nijera Kori in this land rights issue.

**Increase of the bargaining capacity of women**

During the Rural Women’s Day a seminar has been organized by the alliance on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the agricultural sector. Key conclusion was that women as farmers and their access to land are not recognized in Bangladesh and continued lobby is necessary to change this, to contribute to the country’s food security and economic development.

**Members of the CSA-SUN movement integrated nutrition in their projects**

Members of the CSA-SUN platform have been informed on the governments’ nutrition plan and roles for civil society organizations and private sector in implementation.

**National level policy makers are sensitized to implement the nutrition policy at field level**

The alliance contributed to the Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition campaign, which encourages poor people to hold the state more accountable for their right to adequate food and nutrition. 2.9 million People signed the declaration. Three political parties adopted the ‘right to food act’ in their political manifesto, as a result of round table discussions. The national media reported about them.

**Producers trained on lobby & advocacy for value chain development**

75 members from smallholder’s organizations received training on lobby & advocacy. These organizations are now involved in platforms on financial inclusion and access to markets. They organized meetings with the agriculture department, medicine companies and financial institutions.

**Producers (including people with disabilities) have access to services from public and private sectors**

Producers groups now have access to loan facilities from a large public bank for farming enterprises, without a personal asset guarantee. 71 smallholders from a producers’ organization claimed and achieved their rights on access to finance and indeed received loans that were inaccessible before, thanks to lobby by our partners, and this pilot will be expanded. Two partners conducted studies to review opportunities and gaps for inclusive agriculture. Disabled People’s Organization [DPO] and an organization for leprosy jointly engaged media and local politicians to favor access for smallholders, people with disabilities and women to agriculture and livestock services. Media published about 75 reports. An “Agro Producers Platform” was established. President Krishok League recommended a district department to extend their services to the DPO. 69 DPO members received government trainings and 14 members became representatives in the local government.
The year 2018 marked a profound transformation of the regulatory framework for the management of cashew and shea sectors in Benin, that have been raised to the flagship sectors in agricultural development in Benin by the government. The government created a formal inter-profession platform, with state and private members, for decision-making within the cashew sector, the so called Cashew Interprofession (IFA). Members of the cashew coalition sit on this inter-profession. From the alliance, we have actively contributed to these results, in cooperation with the German organization for international development (GIZ) and some other NGOs.

**Lobby with platforms for cashew and Shea**

Alliance members participate in the interprofession platforms for cashew and shea. This has resulted in the drafting of two decrees on marketing modalities for shea and cashew products in Benin and on the organization of the sectors.

**Lobby for access to skills**

The alliance undertook additional study on strengthening farmers' technical skills in the shea production and processing chain (post harvesting losses) and on local financial mechanisms of agricultural activities to support skills development. These two studies will generate elements to strengthen our lobby for access to skills for local producers.

**Lobby for decent work**

The trade union, COSI, used the DEDRAS and AKB cashew nuts and shea nuts producer and supplier groups to enter into discussions with FLUDOR BENIN, the largest shea and cashew processing plant in Benin. COSI and FLUDOR agreed on:
- Statements on improved living and working conditions
- Provision of collectors with cooking materials and rollers that prevent snake bites
- Training on the best practices of shea and cashew processing
- 200 agricultural workers (166 women) sensitized on labor legislation

The context has been validated and published. It will serve as a compass for the coming two years for lobbying and dialogue at both national and local levels.

**Transformation of the cashew and shea sectors**

The context is roughly favorable to lobby & advocacy. The government is open for dialogue with NGOs and associations to boost the sectors for economic growth. Shea and cashew are commodities that contribute largely to the country’s budget and the interest for these sectors has been growing. Therefore, we have seen positive results in favor of sector regulations and the working conditions for farmers and producers.

In the alliance program, local partners are the leaders of all lobbying and dialogue activities COSI, DEDRAS, AKB & PASCiB. The alliance takes the role of facilitator and seeks to develop synergies with other international NGOs to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. During the 2019 learning workshop, the Theory of Change has been reviewed and is still valid, with a few changes in the stakeholder and power analysis for the cashew sector.

**Main results**

**Partners develop effective lobby and advocacy**

Change the Game trainings have been organized for lobby and advocacy [24 participants] and local fundraising [six community based organizations]. During the trainings, lobby plans have been made that led to direct improvements for shea and cashew marketing and regulation of the sectors.

**Civil society organizations validated positions and themes for campaigning**

Synthesis of the findings from different studies on shea and cashew sectors combined with other studies carried out by alliance members were encompassed into a position paper that
Alliance members: ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Edukans.
Pathways 1, 2 and 3: focus on access to land, nutritious food, empowerment of indigenous smallholder farmers, youth in particular.

Context and program
In 2018, no significant changes occurred in the context. Political influence is achievable, but the opportunities to have meetings or interviews with local authorities are scarce if you do not have a personal or political link with the person of influence. This might be even harder in 2019, since the authorities are on political campaign for the National Elections.

During the learning workshop, no main changes were needed in the Theory of Change. The focus on opportunities for young people to work and engage in civil society is becoming clearer. This has led to a few reformulations in the Theory of Change and intended results.

Main results
Lobby on land rights and land use
We advocated for sustainable territory management of the Chaco region. Attention was asked in different forums for governments’ and private sectors’ violence towards indigenous peasants and activists. A youth contest was organized collecting ‘life stories that survive violence and persecution in the field’, in which 25 young people participated [see www.ipdrs.org for materials].

Lobby for youth empowerment and skills education
Global Campaign for Education - Bolivia (GCE-Bolivia) has been lobbying for the importance of (in)formal technical education, closely linked to the SDG agenda. An Employment and Entrepreneurship Forum (Manq’a Tinku) with more than 130 participants was held for La Paz and El Alto.

In the Chaco region, a skills assessment has been done, to identify gaps in [access to] skills education, validated by 26 people from several local governments, civil society partners and educational units. Local stakeholders (government, education) are interested to discuss the integration of agro ecological production and healthy gastronomy in curricula.

Advocacy for healthy diets
Young people (27 members of the Manq’a Youth Collective) have been trained in lobby and advocacy skills to promote healthy diets in their families and communities.

The alliance published two public policy papers directed at the Youth Unit Offices of the El Alto municipal government. The first was on the integration of healthy eating and youth employability in the municipal Youth Law, leading to a review of the draft of that law. The second was advocating for a ‘Comprehensive municipal program to improve eating habits in families and young people in the city of El Alto’. The discussion of this policy paper with the Secretary of Health led to a concrete agenda 2019, including awareness raising activities such as a march for healthy eating in El Alto, involving alliance partners.

The alliance lobbied for the municipal policy ‘Healthy Schools Program’ to be implemented and is now recognized by the local government as an ally in implementation. To influence the population of the cities of El Alto and La Paz, youth of Manq’a participated in massive gastronomic events such as the Fair ‘La Paz Expone.

In the Chaco region the alliance has generated six media reports [written publications and broadcasting] promoting the value chains of locally produced products, to improve food security in the region. A training course in gastronomy was organized [with participation of the local government], based on local Chaco products, motivating women and young entrepreneurs to try new combinations and preparations.

Lobby for small producer empowerment
In the Chaco region, partner Centro de Estudios Regionales para el Desarrollo de Tarija (CERDET) has been influencing local governments and other stakeholders to create a more enabling environment for smallholder farmers and indigenous women in particular. The indigenous association of beekeepers lobbies for innovative and resilient production techniques at public events and fairs. As a result of advocacy actions by indigenous women, schools now promote more healthy snacks and food, for example peanut-based products produced by women’s associations are being sold in a school now.
**Context and program**

In the election year civil society has been increasingly scrutinized by the authorities, both through the enforcement of stricter laws as well as through tighter control of field activities by local authorities. It has become more difficult to organize lobby on topics such as land rights, labor rights and transparency. It hampered Civic Engagement Alliance implementation in Cambodia.

The trade union law threatens their status within companies. These partners therefore avoid organizing large-scale gatherings and demonstrations and seek other, more informal ways of conducting lobby & advocacy activities with companies and government officials. Their focus is on women workers, since a large share of employees in the agricultural sector is female.

It is crucial to work with local partners who understand the political climate and have the right contacts to maneuver within this limited space for civil society. We have decided to make our expected results more within reach. In working together with the government more emphasis was put on the production and consumption of safe vegetables, as part of the policies and goals for the upcoming years.

**Main results**

**Farmer groups and unions gain bargaining power**

Seven trainings for 200 participants resulted in the establishment of three rubber plantation unions. 400 farmers in three communities have joined Farmer Association for Peace and Development (FAPD).

Cambodian Agricultural Workers Federation (CAWF) and FAPD’s lobbying resulted in the inclusion of workers into the National Social Security Fund, which includes health care and work accident protection. Efforts have been made to reinstate union activists with the companies and negotiate to improve working conditions and wages.

**Research on working conditions and labor rights**

This research has not been conducted because at the desk sufficient research is available. Instead, a more specific research has been conducted on the role of ASEAN in promoting business and human rights in Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar.

**Organizing training on lobby & advocacy**

Partners were trained at national level to provide lobby and advocacy trainings themselves to target communities. 31 people from farmer federations, labor unions, producer groups, other NGOs, private sector and the university were trained in our program. The alliance has also organized a training for most of the union and community leaders and activists in CAWF and FAPD. We provided a Khmer-translated version of our lobby & advocacy guide.

ICCO and The Leprosy Mission Myanmar/Cambodia partnered up to provide a two-day ‘disability Inclusion’ training for partners. This has significantly increased knowledge and awareness on disability inclusion and enables partners to lobby for inclusion.

**Select farmer representatives to join dialogues**

ICCO conducted a consultation workshop where leaders of agricultural cooperatives got the chance to express their concerns towards government officials. Discussed were concerns relating to water and irrigation, access to markets and financial accessibility.

**Lobby support to improve the vegetable sector**

The Policy Recommendations report on the Current Situation of Vegetable Sub-Sector has been completed. This will be used in CEA for lobby & advocacy activities towards local government bodies and the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Strengthen and improve relationships among stakeholders**

A training has been conducted together with UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Action Aid and the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia to approximately 25 NGOs and civil society organizations. The government has not been trained due to the restrictive climate.
**Alliance members:** ICCO, Kerk in Actie, CNV Internationaal, Wilde Ganzen.

**Pathway 1:** focusing on youth participation and indigenous land management

**Context and program**

Violence is a big problem in Central America and homicide numbers are high. Worrisome are the migrant caravans, perhaps representing the biggest people displacements since the armed conflicts in the region.

In Guatemala the State of Right has been systematically undermined by the Guatemalan state. ‘Instrumentalization of the law’ undermines the full exercise of human rights, the fight against corruption and impunity; institutions in the justice sector have been weakened. The agenda in favor of youth is relegated. At least 21 environment and human rights defenders were assassinated.

In April forest fires in Nicaragua were followed by manifestations, developing into a crisis. Most worrisome is the number of assassinations (481 citizens) and the negative impact on the economy. Migration flows to Costa Rica and Mexico increased. A FUNIDES’ report mentions that between 2001 and 2016 more than one million forest hectares have been lost, of which 70% in indigenous and afro descendent territories. Program implementation in these unstable contexts was not always easy; it was not necessary, however, to make changes in the Theory of Change.

**Main results**

**Youth Empowerment and inclusion**

Youth leaders in Guatemala organized in the National Youth Front have been lobbying for the approval of youth law # 3896 and advocacy activities in Congress have taken place. Before approval, however, this youth law has been replaced by law #5208, incorporating sexual and reproductive health and rights, but due to large pressure from conservative forces (including some churches) this law has not been approved yet. The participation of local indigenous and female youth leaders at local levels but also at national level within the National Youth Front has been actively supported (Alta Verapaz, San Marcos). Local youth leaders have lobbied at municipal levels for youth employability and decent labor conditions for rural young people.

The campaign ‘Being young is a right’ was continued, youth-friendly messages were disseminated through [social] media and opinion influencers supported the campaign. 90 young people from different youth organizations completed the lobby & advocacy training process with the support of the Central American Institute of Political Studies INCEP and the Santiago Development Project.

**Indigenous and forest dependent people in Central America**

The Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests (AMPB) continued to be a strategic partner to realize lobby & advocacy actions to achieve inclusion of indigenous peoples and forest communities and the respect of their territorial rights in Mesoamerica.

Eleven indigenous people organizations and community based organizations (representing at least 140 communities) have increased their capacities to influence public policies (natural resources, land rights) at national levels in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. AMPB members were supported to engage in local processes to promote indigenous peoples’ rights and position. Examples of local results are: establishment of clear rules for public policy and investment and private sector engagement in indigenous territories in Costa Rica; renewal of forest concessions for communities in Guatemala, and documentation of best practices of community forest management; a roundtable to consolidate territorial rights of community forest organizations with the National Forest Institute in Guatemala; regulations for communal land ownership in Nicaragua; consolidation of land deeds for the Territorial Councils in Honduras and the implementation of a Consultation Protocol among Miskitu communities. Our members supported the creation of a space for women territorial leaders; within AMPB a gender commission has been created to strengthen participation of women in territorial governance processes.

The Mesoamerican Leadership School was implemented with support from ICCO. The objective of the Program is to contribute to the formation of a group of young professionals with the research capacities and working methods to promote the existence of spaces for analytical, dialogue and interdisciplinary reflection on territorial rights in Mesoamerica.
Context and program

In Ethiopia, the space for civil society has been restricted since the start of the Civic Engagement Alliance and it is not possible to work openly on lobby & advocacy. Dialogue with government however is possible, and in particular at lower administrative levels, it is possible to influence and obtain results.

In 2018 Ethiopia experienced serious political unrest: public disobedience, ethnic conflicts and protests against the government. The unrest significantly affected the program in different places. As an example, Amaro area persisted ethnic conflict has forced partner Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church Development Commission (EKHC-DC) to withdraw.

The unrest also initiated reforms; in April the ruling party promised to improve the situation. A new law was prepared which is expected to increase the space for civil society organizations. Nevertheless the reforms didn't address different competing interests.

Main results

Capacity development and local dialogue

Partner organizations EKHC-DC and WKHC-TDA (Wolayta Kale Heywot Church - Terepeza Development Agency) have implemented in Amaro, Darashe, Adama, Offa and Kindo-Koysha:
- Training on mobilization of support and local fundraising for 230 cluster level associations leaders in collaboration with Development Expertise Center.
- Training on inclusion of people with disabilities in collaboration with the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development.
- Coaching on dialogue activities for the leaders of associations and self-help groups in the implementation of their lobby plans. At these levels, often at community levels, results in attitude and also concrete results in favor of community and self-help groups have become visible, e.g. in better access to productive resources, improved seeds, access to markets and finance.

Dialogue for small producer empowerment

The Agri-Skills and Access to Extension Service Research identified that extension agents have limited outreach to model farms where poor farmers are educated. Another conclusion was that the Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training centers have a poor level. The role of civil society organizations and the private sector is limited.

A refresher training for the representatives of potato producer organizations on mobilizing support has been given, and partners' staff has been trained in local fundraising (Change the Game Academy). In addition to the trainings, leaders of producers' organizations have discussed the inclusion of people with disabilities with the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development.

On the malt barley value chain another research was conducted as well. The Access to and Sustainable use of Agro-Chemicals Research identified limited availability and high prices for appropriate agro-chemicals, and limited skills of producers on how to apply them. More inspection of chemicals is needed.

Potato value chain implementers have taken seed supply and access to market as important issues. The malt barley value chain partners focused on both access to market and price setting. The producers’ organizations of malt barley participate on the price setting platform. Two youth groups (44 members) and two groups of people with disabilities (75 members) engaged in producers organizations.
Context and program
The government increased the monitoring of civil society activities. This further narrowed their space and liberty. The update of the National Register of Citizens in Assam caused severe religious intolerance, ethnic tension and political instability which resulted in civil protests and incidents of violence, impacting our intervention area. The Theory of Change remains the same, apart from a few changes in stakeholders and assumptions.

Main results

Capacity strengthening of civil society organizations and private sector
A total of 77 trainings, roundtables and consultations were done at national level in New Delhi, at state and district level in Assam and Jharkhand. Priority was given to female leaders and marginalized groups, including minorities and disabled people. The network in Jharkhand at present consists of more than 45 non-governmental organizations. It has given input regarding various government rules.

The Change the Game Academy trained a total of 20 women federations, five farmer producer organizations (FPOs) and one tea plantations women group, on mobilizing support. In December before the Panchayat election in Assam, community institutions (including 3,600 women) demanded candidates to include issues of child labor, malnutrition and farmers’ matters in their election manifesto. 112 Panchayats candidates signed a joint appeal submitted by women.

Voluntary organizations ensure compliances to the legislation
Series of events in the state of Jharkhand and Assam helped 90% of the civil society organizations overcome the hurdles to comply with the stringent and complicated taxation laws. Trainings were conducted on the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, Goods and Service Tax and taxation laws with 89 civil society organizations in Assam and Jharkhand. This strategy has systematically ensured civil society space in India and has averted critical risks.

A study of VANII and Civic Engagement Alliance on ‘Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations’ in India has been published. The study will assist organizations to become sustainable and to have an enabling environment.

Women federations have proper understanding on disability inclusion
Five women federations have started dialogue at local levels to facilitate inclusion. They lobbied with the district level officials of the State Government to help left-out beneficiaries to get a onetime grant of Rs 5,000 and also facilitated in obtaining necessary disability Identity Cards.

Smallholders participate in relevant forums to articulate their need of finance
Nine FPOs effectively participated in the process of FPO forum formation at state level.

The alliance developed a training manual on access to financial institutions and invited financial institutions (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, United Bank of India, Small Farmers Agri Business Consortium) to deliver speech on their financing pattern, methods and rules and regulations. Accordingly seven FPOs were trained. Two FPOs have received the assurance from a government program. Four FPOs were trained on skills, inviting experts from concerned departments like Horticulture, Agri Research Centre and Fishery Departments. These institutes now have agreed to support the FPOs.

Capacity building and learning to understand Human Rights & Business
Multi-stakeholders groups have been brought under an umbrella to create ‘human rights and business’ awareness and advocate for social protection programs for people living and working in tea plantations.

Four consultations and two workshops were conducted on ‘human rights and business’. In one workshop 110 stakeholders from the tea sector took participation. It was for the first time that responsible business behavior in the tea sector was discussed. A video documentary on situations in tea gardens, a publication on life skills, a training of a youth drama group, posters and child protection guidelines were developed.
Context and program
In general there were no main changes in the political context. Civic space in Indonesia is under pressure but organizations have room to act and influence. The Ministry of Law and Human Rights is still working on the Human Rights National Action Plan. It focuses on plantations, mining and hospitality/tourism. Lack of coordination between key ministries involved is one of the challenges.

The Civic Engagement Alliance focuses on plantations. During the learning workshop and the Theory of Change review, we further decided to focus on the spice sector. The program, which before also included rice and vegetables, was too broad. At the same time the potential for impact in the rice sector was very small. In spices, we have a good track record and entrances for dialogue.

Main results
Analysis of five different CRS standards
A study was finished on the compliance between UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and three standards ISO 26000, ISO 9001, and the Indonesian National Standard (SNI). The conclusion was that human rights principles are not respected in the SNI. In 2019 we will use the study to lobby SNI.

Lobby towards the National Commodity Council
Local partners Penabulu and PSNI represent civil society organizations in the National Spice Council. The Council agreed upon sustainable production, smallholder fair prices and capacity building as important keywords in the Indonesian spices industry. ICCO’s ‘nutmeg farmer profiles’ were acknowledged as an important agenda for the National Spice Council.

Lobby towards the Ministry of Agriculture
A study on the quality standard and criteria for nutmeg, resulted in a draft policy paper and a film that has been presented to National Spice Council and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Further conceptualization of ‘Child and Corporate Social Responsibility’
After consultations palm oil growers are willing to give space to CSR and grant access to the alliance to work on children’s rights in their estate in 20 villages (North Sumatra and Central Kalimantan). Civil society organizations recognized the importance of a strategic network and in December the Business and Child Rights Working Group was launched, with ICCO’s partner PKPA as the co-chair.

Lobby for the importance of due diligence principles
We worked together, with Komnas HAM (National Human Rights Commission) and the Ministry of Law and Justice, under acknowledgement of the Embassy of the Netherlands, sharing our experiences in working with the palm oil sector and the risks with regard to human rights and due diligence. The NGO Council and members of Civic Engagement Alliance are positioned to use the human rights audit toolkit (due diligence tool) when new plantation permits are requested.

Lobby for safer work environment in the palm oil sector
A video documentary about world’s largest palm oil company was produced by local organizations PKPA, Hukatan and Wilmar. This video has been publicly shared on the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) meeting in Paris and also used to various meetings and trainings and became an effective tool to explain how the alliance works.

CNV/HUKATAN supported JAPBUSI, the merge of five trade union confederations and ten trade union federations on the palm oil sector. JAPBUSI consists of 10 million members. As a network it addresses social dialogue and freedom of association.

Dialogue with companies in the palm oil sector
After trainings on UN guiding principles a civil society coalition for Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) was established. These enterprises start to see compliance with UN guiding principles as a business constraint for their own activities. CNV Internationaal and partner Hukatan formed lobby teams of trade union workers.

Lobby towards Roundtable Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)
RSPO principles and criteria have become more aligned to the principles of the Child Rights International Convention and the United Nations Guideline for Business & Human Rights, as a direct result of our lobby.

The alliance was as a non-member influential in putting a new stream on the RSPO table: company and NGO dialogue building.
Alliance members: ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Edukans, Red een Kind, Wilde Ganzen

Pathways 1, 2 and 3: focus on civic space, food and nutrition security, youth and children's rights, smallholder empowerment.

Context and program
The Kenyan civil society continues to face constraints from the state which has made several attempts to install punitive and prohibitive governance frameworks since 2013, to limit the influence of the civil society and other non-state actors.

Kenya held its general election in August 2017. However, the results were disputed which led to a re-election following civil society petitions. The atmosphere is changing, now the leaders of the opposition and the ruling party have reconciled and a change in the leadership of the NGO Coordination Board took place. Many representatives of civil society organizations hope that the Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) ACT of 2013 will be commenced in 2019.

Main results
Capacity development of civil society
We have conducted a Change the Game follow-up training, focusing on preparing for the PBO Act. Clear results of the trainings became visible in 2017 and 2018, in the mobilization of support for strong engagement of civil society organizations in processes of policy setting, annual planning and budgeting at county level in five counties. This led to inclusion of several policy issues such as food security and opportunities for smallholder farmers in County Integrated Development Plans.

The partners in the alliance that were trained have in turn trained local farmer groups. They also raised awareness about registration requirements for civil society organizations and the need to observe government regulations and provisions of the PBO ACT, in collaboration with the Kenya Community Development Foundation.

Strengthening the political space of civil society led to the revival of a network of 143 organizations in Busia County and enhanced vibrant child right networks in Kisumu, Bungoma and Busia Counties.

Promotion of sustainable and inclusive food systems
Within the child rights networks, awareness campaigns were conducted on food and nutrition, as well as campaigns against child abuse and child labor.

In five counties, partners have been successfully lobbying for inclusion of food security and nutrition in the County Integrated Development Plans. In Kakamega, our partner ADS-W initiated a county agri-nutrition plan which has been drafted through a stakeholder’s platform. We were not successful however to put in place strong nutrition policies at county level, so this will be further pursued in 2019.

Strengthening position of small-scale farmers and producers
The alliance supported the creation of an independent, accountable and self-regulating community based organization for farmer’s advocacy in one county. Over 150 farmers have been trained as change agents. Advocating as a group led to better access to extension services from private sector players such as Kenya Seed Company.

In three counties, the Child Rights Network has been strengthened and supported in advocacy. The network members in Kisumu were involved in the revision of the child labor bill that now has included a proposal for a total ban on child labor. In Bungoma, network members contributed to the development of a Child Protection Policy and in Busia members raised awareness amongst parents and schools to prevent child labor.

In three counties, partners have been influencing County Integrated Development Plans to include extension services [including budget for these services]. Partners have also successfully been lobbying for inclusion of important value chains in these development plans, such as maize, poultry and soya [Kakamega] and sorghum [Busia]. In Homa Bay County, community based organization Gwasi lobbied for improved access to fair markets, so an increased number of smallholder farmers can benefit from higher income levels. The farmer’s networks also lobbied for budgetary allocation of farm inputs and for youths agricultural skills improvement.
Alliance members: ICCO, Kerk in Actie, Edukans, Wilde Ganzen.

Pathways 1 and 2: Focus on food and nutrition security, in particular for women, and youth’s rights.

Context and program

The increases of the inter-community conflicts in the north of the country and the intervention of radical groups have led to the worsening of Food and Nutrition Security (FNS). This food crisis leads to starvation and [internal] migration of large groups of people. The newly elected President (2018) declared in his installation speech: “...ending the food insecurity and starvation through the pacification of the country will be our core priority”. This commitment by the government resulted in the establishment of a separate Ministry for Food Security and creates a favorable environment for lobbying and dialogue with the government on these issues.

However, the priorities of the government can easily change in this unstable context. To adopt the right to adequate food in the constitution was unsuccessful as the government failed to organize the referendum. The persistence of the armed security crisis could make the government less sensitive to the call of civil society organizations for FNS. In our program learning workshop, reviewing the Theory of Change, we have discussed new strategies to cope with these challenges, for example the creation of the network of parliamentarians for FNS.

Main results

Capacity development

The Change the Game refresher trainings for lobby & advocacy had to be postponed to 2019 due to the context of insecurity and elections. Participants from eight community based organizations have been trained in local resource mobilization.

Development of FNS lobby strategy

The main findings of our studies on food security and sustainable consumption and on access to skills have been translated into a joint CEA position paper that has been validated by local partners and government representatives and published. The paper highlights the arguments and reasons for engaging rights holders in changing the legislative and regulatory frameworks for FNS.

Creating commitment of government officials for FNS

The findings of our FNS studies [2017-2018] have been discussed with regional government officials in different meetings as well as in informal discussions. Commitment for FNS is increasing, in particular in the actual context of Mali. Representatives of the Ministry of Food Security attended the alliance' meeting to discuss our position paper on FNS in September.

Since the Mali government has not been able to adopt the right to food in the constitution the alliance and local partners have decided to change their strategy. Civil society organization partners have induced a Parliamentarian's Network on the Right to Food and Food and Nutrition Security and have trained members of this network, consisting of 45 out of 147 members of parliament. Working with this network will create further opportunities for policy influencing in 2019.

Lobby results for FNS

Our partner ASCOMA (Regional Council of Civil Society) was trained in lobby & advocacy and successfully lobbied to decrease the cost of fresh fish which leads to a reduced price for the consumer in Kayes, Mali.

The District of Koulikoro obtained financial support for the construction of a modern market. However, it did not take into account vegetables. Given the importance of vegetables in balanced diets, we advocated for vegetables in the market, ultimately resulting in the construction of a vegetable pavilion.

Further research on FNS and access to skills

We have started data collection on food security (focusing on women and children) in Sikasso region, a region with severe malnutrition rates and poorly diversified food consumption. Final goal of this research is to use these data as evidence in lobby towards the regional government and to support local actors and stakeholders, including local government. Further research has been done identifying gaps in agricultural education programs to improve youth entrepreneurship and employment and assessing apprenticeships for young people in agricultural mechanization programs.
Context and program
In the past year dynamic, and in many ways problematic, political and economic developments in Myanmar have been reported. A fragile national peace process followed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement negotiations, during which media were constrained to speak out; journalists were imprisoned. The controversy and tragedy around the Rohingya crisis caused widespread international concerns and the European Commission initiated a mission to explore sanctions, including the possible withdrawal of the Everything But Arms treaty.

Another challenge is the new Vacant, Fallow, and Virgin Land Act Amendment, negatively affecting land rights for smallholders. In an attempt to stop the legislation, we join hands with a group of (international) civil society organizations who push to halt of the amendment.

Other developments appear to be more promising. The Myanmar government’s promotion of good and inclusive agricultural practices is a good entry-point to lobby for better opportunities for smallholder farmers. The government’s push to meet ASEAN market standards and ensure food safety for domestic consumption provides opportunities to enter into dialogue with the private sector.

Main results
Improved technical knowledge and lobby & advocacy capacities of organizations that aim at a more favorable enabling environment for mung bean farming and trade

We trained more than 70 farmer, women and labor groups in the 10-step approach to lobby & advocacy. The groups implemented 38 action plans. For example: one partner lobbied for better information on land registration. This led to more accessible land registration forms.

Research has been conducted on pulses [beans]: Pulses, People, Planet, Profit [2 papers], farmer return on investment, value chains and gender strategies. These papers have been used in discussions with parliamentary committees, by regional directors of agricultural departments and several multi-stakeholder meetings. Partners have contributed to several consultation sessions to influence agricultural policies such as seed improvement criteria.

In 2018 CEA worked in cooperation with ACT Alliance members to monitor the negotiations on the EU trade agreements and organize consultation sessions to assess risks and consequences of EU decisions.

Improved lobby & advocacy capacities of organizations aimed at responsible agribusiness

ICCO is chair of the Myanmar Agriculture Network Pulses and Oilseeds working group, driving the agenda and organizing meetings and dialogue with government officials. Based on mung bean value chain research and our lobby & advocacy work, we were invited to give recommendations to a parliamentary committee on the negative effects of pesticides. As result of an intensive lobby 672 mung bean farmers have received a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certificate granted by the Myanmar Department of Agriculture. It is the first time in Myanmar that mung bean farmers have received GAP certification as a group. As a result they can produce quality products, get better prices and increased market opportunities.

Partner Karuna Social Solidarity Mission (KMSS) successfully campaigned a fair market price for paddy rice. Based on the collection of strong evidence, KMSS recommended the government to regulate the price and set measurement standards. Two weeks later this recommendation was adopted.

Training of people with disabilities

Partners have been trained in Business & Human Rights, Inclusive Business models and EU Food Safety. A report has been published on the role of ASEAN in promoting UN guiding principles in agricultural value chains in the region. Our partner Ratana Metta Organization has given awareness raising sessions on child rights, protection and child labor to promote children’s rights. About 2,000 community members of ShweKyin Township participated.

Master trainers on inclusion - supported by The Leprosy Mission Myanmar- have been coaching partner organizations in inclusion strategies. Two partners have embedded inclusion strategies into monitoring, human resource and project implementation processes.
The Netherlands and international lobby

**Alliance members:** all members.
**Pathways 1, 2, 3 and 4:** focus on lobby in the Netherlands and on EU level, connecting to southern lobby.

**Context and program**

Minister Kaag’s policy note ‘Investing in Prospects’ includes priorities and goals that we have welcomed. However, because the balance between ‘aid’ and ‘trade’ is too much towards promoting trade, we have been lobbying for more integration of responsible business principles. The alliance successfully lobbied to include education again as one of the development issues.

**Main results**

**Lobby for space for civil society organizations**

In the Partos Civic Space Platform, ACT Alliance and ACT EU working groups we contributed our knowledge on diversity of civil society and space, involvement of faith-based organizations and labor unions.

The alliance lobbied for acknowledgement for the role of religion and faith-based organizations in development cooperation. Case studies have been done in Kenya, Ethiopia and Indonesia, resulting in the report: ‘If you need us allow us’. Our member Prisma was engaged in a public debate with minister Kaag and parliamentarians in the national media. However, a motion about this topic was declined. We lobbied at the budget debates in the parliament, resulting in a letter of Minister Blok on religious literacy.

**Lobbying for food and nutrition security**

The alliance contributed to the Netherlands Working Group on Nutrition (NWGN) expert meeting on ‘Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture and Improved Metrics’. Presentations were based on participatory household level research in Ethiopia. A next step was the mapping of four communities in Mali to promote so-called ‘zero-hunger’ zones.

Awareness has been raised among policy makers for continuous attention for food and nutrition security. This has contributed to the request for a specific policy brief, involving both two ministries (Foreign Affairs and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality). Together with AgriProFocus the alliance hosted meetings on the assumption that youth unemployment is causing migration.

**Lobby for inclusive and global value chains**

At EU level we have successfully advocated for more focus in the food security policy on smallholder farmers and agro-ecology, clearly visible in Food Security Policy Framework, a report of the European Commission.

With the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), we have developed a business case for gender equality and women empowerment in the Ethiopian floriculture sector. We have also successfully advocated for a continuation of the Sustainable Initiative Fruit and Vegetables program beyond 2020.

**Lobby for responsible business and respecting UNGPs**

CNV Internationaal joined a trade mission of the government to Colombia and raised issues on corporate social responsibility and labor rights. This has led to the adoption of two motions in the Dutch parliament, offering opportunities to influence diplomacy and trade missions.

The International Responsible Business Conduct Agreement for the Food Products Sector was signed in June. Since then Woord & Daad, ICCO and CNV Internationaal are involved in the implementation.

At EU level CONCORD’s ten point roadmap has been used in ongoing debates about corporate accountability.

In the Netherlands, we jointly organized two HUMAN collegial roundtables to support companies in translating UN Guiding Principles in business practice, particularly focusing on due diligence and reporting processes.

The process of updating the National Action Plan hasn’t showed any progress, partly because the MVO Platform prioritized to develop a vision on corporate social responsibility and SDGs, and partly because the political attention focuses on the upcoming evaluation of the International Responsible Business Conduct sector agreements.
Context and program
Legislation in recent years has narrowed the legal space for civil society in Uganda. The Public Order Management Act and the NGO Act (PBO/NGO) are a hindrance to its freedom. Organizations engaged in advocacy and monitoring of government activities have been subject to pressure. There are ongoing discussions on the room for the Citizens' Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) to observe forthcoming municipal by-elections and pressure from the Uganda Electoral Commission.

For the Civic Engagement Alliance we have not experienced important threats. However we have slightly reviewed our Theory of Change for civic space issues, defining more concrete advocacy goals and allies to influence PBO/NGO act implementation. At district levels, however, there was room for dialogue and lobby with government and other stakeholders on concrete issues affecting the position of smallholder farmers and we did not change our Theory of Change for pathways 2 and 3.

Main results
Lobby for space for civil society organizations
In cooperation with the National NGO Forum, we have been monitoring the implementation of legislation and we engaged our partners in the local NGO Monitoring committee. We organized clinics for partners to assess and follow their level of compliance. Our partners and the NGO Forum also engage in dialogues with governments to promote an enabling environment for civil society, within the legislative boundaries.

Capacity development for lobby & advocacy and inclusion
Follow up meetings for Change the Game have been organized. They further helped partners to strengthen linkages, come up with a common lobby agenda, agree on joint activities and organize peer support. Four partners trained their staff members on disability inclusion with support from Light for the World, resulting in an action plan and a disability inclusion audit in their organizations.

Lobby for access to seeds for smallholder farmers
In Teso sub region our partners have involved seed companies in dialogues with local farmers, leading to provision of better quality seeds. Government and agricultural extension workers have been involved, to support farmers to better recognize and control seed quality and enhance preservation of their own seeds, strengthening their position towards private seed companies. In Lango Sub region farmers, local leaders and the Uganda bureau of statistics came together with agro-input dealers and agreed that all agro-input dealers selling fake seeds or counterfeit must be taken to court. Regular inspections by government officials have been started, leading to concrete actions and police reports.

Lobby for enhanced commitment to provision of better services to farmers
Within our program, cooperation between different farmers groups has led to coordinated lobby agendas, resulting in a stronger bargaining position towards private sector actor, better market conditions and higher prices. To influence the Market Act at national level, partners have been lobbying together resulting in support of Members of Parliament to review parts of this act.

In Lango, farmers addressed the poor performance of the Operation Wealth Creation Program (government program for farmers’ supplies) resulting in access to faster input supplies in 2018.

To promote ongoing dialogue between farmers, district leaders, private sector and civil society actors, CEA Uganda organized the People’s Parliament, broadcasted at national television.

Lobby for access to quality skills
The alliance focused on the importance of agricultural extension workers, to improve access to skills for smallholder farmers and youth. In some counties, this has led to improved government support and higher budgets for extension workers. In Lango, Teso and Karamoja, farmers were supported to actively engage the extension workers in dialogue with government and private sectors.

Partner organization Advance Africa conducted research on the agricultural sector as a potential source of jobs for the growing number of Ugandan youth.
Annex 2

stories of change

Benin: Lobby for better working conditions in the shea sector 26
European Union: European Union support to agroecology: moving from policy to practice 27
Guatemala: Young Leaders School: New opportunities for youth 28
India: How a self-help group made its business sustainable 29
The Netherlands: Faith based organizations indispensable in sustainable development 30
Lobby for better working conditions in the shea sector

COSI and the management of FLUDOR Benin, a company processing cashew and shea nuts, have signed a memorandum of understanding to improve the living and working conditions of the 1,000 employees of the factory and 3,000 shea growers. COSI is a trade union in Benin, and partner in the Civic Engagement Alliance.

Thanks to the actions carried out by the alliance, COSI Benin has found FLUDOR Benin prepared to commit itself to a constructive social dialogue. At first, the management of Fludor Benin was reluctant to cooperate, as it had a negative experience with a trade union that, during a demonstration, burned the company’s packaging manufacturing unit.

Win-win strategy
To circumvent the reluctance of the company, COSI Benin adopted a win-win strategy, showing the management of FLUDOR the advantage that the company can draw from a constructive dialogue, in terms of performance and training for the workers. Amongst their actions were training on good agricultural practices and referencing workers to the health system for subsidized care.

Workers in the shea sector are confronted with wounds and the risk of snakebites or scorpions on a daily basis. The lack of protective equipment against occupational hazards is only one of many challenges the workers face: low income, hard work, and lack of a health insurance system.

Improved labor conditions
As a result of discussions within the Civic Engagement Alliance in Benin, in which different partners working in the shea and cashew sectors are involved, COSI Benin conducted a contextual study in 2016 in cooperation with CNV International about the challenges of the two sectors in connection with decent work. Since 2017, COSI Benin started to raise awareness on labor legislation in the agricultural sector amongst workers, collectors and primary processors of shea nuts. Also addressed were health and the safety of work. Thanks to its interventions, at least ten groups of producers of shea have been formalized and 200 workers are already in a process of registration in a mutual health insurance to through the ‘Caisse Mutuelle de Prévoyance Sociale’ (CMPS).

Another happy prospect is organizing the dockworkers union of the Common Organization Benin Niger (OCBN) of the railway, located in Parakou, in the north of the country. These workers evolve in very difficult conditions in the shea transport chain, at the service of the company Knar Benin. They do not have reliable work contracts, have no stable income and do not benefit from sick leave. Today, thanks to the interventions of COSI Benin, these workers are aware of their conditions and are determined to organize themselves into a union to better defend their rights.
Agroecology in the European Union: from policy to practice

Following the new Consensus on Development the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DG DevCo) appears more open towards evidence from civil society about agroecology, and is preparing concrete implementation of its recommendations. The latest progress report of the commission about the implementation of its food security policy testifies to this change. As stated in our 2017 outcome story about EU support to agroecology, the second EU Consensus on Development expresses a commitment to support the agro-ecological approach. 2018 is the year to move from commitment on paper towards commitment in practice. This is not evident, given the tendency of the European Commission and its member states to prioritize more industrial, large-scale approaches to agriculture in developing countries.

The European Commission seems more open to agroecology following a number of interventions from the Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), representing 2600 NGOs. The commission wants to explore the agro-ecological approach by supporting EU Delegations in developing countries.

Resistance
The European Commission has made an inventory of agro-ecological projects that are already supported via EU Delegations, and has requested CONCORD to provide evidence of what works and what doesn’t. We need to operate carefully, as there is still resistance towards agroecology, both within the European Commission and among certain member states.

A public proof of the described change is the European Commission’s third progress report on the implementation of its food security policy (October 2018). It states: “Through sustainable management of natural resources, agro-ecological intensification for family farming, sustainable planning of rural areas and risk management, climate-resilient approaches are integrated in programmes.”

The data in this report were provided by the Commission and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the EU member states. It is notable that the most concrete data were provided by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The latter specifically reports on farmland that was improved with more eco-efficient practices (27% of the total number of hectares). The progress report was endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council in its Conclusions of 26 November 2018.

Contribution of the Civic Engagement Alliance
The alliance contributed directly to this change. One of the members of our lobby team actively engages in CONCORD and has been clearly influencing their documents. Indirectly we contributed through ICCO’s support to ACT Europe, one of CONCORD’s members with expertise in this area. A small group of lobbyists and food security experts within CONCORD (the so-called Sustainable Consumption and Production work stream of Hub 1) co-organised an expert meeting in the European Parliament on 20 March. This was crucial to open up the minds of DG DevCo officials to the agro-ecological approach. In the following months DG DevCo participated in lobby meetings with small groups of experts. These meetings will continue in the next months.

Up to now, it is not possible to publicly claim any of the results mentioned above. As we are in the middle of the process, our focus is on increasing political support within the European Commission and among member states.
Guatemala

Young Leaders School: New opportunities for youth

The Young Leaders School has trained 45 young leaders from indigenous communities and cities in Guatemala. They graduated from a sociopolitical training course, developed by local organization SODEJU. This course, supported by the Civic Engagement Alliance, is the beginning of a learning process that allows young people from traditionally excluded communities to foster citizen participation spaces and become actors of change.

Reclaiming spaces
The young leaders who have participated in the sociopolitical training course have great potential to generate changes in their communities, since they already have experience in organizations and social movements and are active in the National Youth Assembly of Guatemala, the National Youth Front and other organizations. During the course, they studied the structure and functioning of the Guatemalan State; they learned to use strategic analysis and planning tools to formulate projects.

In addition to attending face-to-face classes, students developed advocacy and activism projects in their territories, such as the Walk for Peace in the municipality of Chimaltenango, where more than 50 young people demonstrated against sexual violence and human trafficking, and presented a document with their demands to the local authorities. They also held artistic festivals to promote the rights of youth in San Juan Sacatepéquez, Chiquimula and Retalhuleu.

In countries such as Guatemala, traditional actors such as political parties, the Catholic Church and large commercial companies have maintained control over the use of public spaces. With these activities, young people take ownership of these spaces, recovering them as platforms for expression and visibility.

“An enriching experience”
The Young Leaders School is endorsed by the School of Communication Sciences of the University of San Carlos, the most important university in Guatemala. Being trained at the School represents a significant growth opportunity for the young leaders.

Velveth Mijangos graduated from the Sociopolitical Training Course: “It was an enriching experience; by meeting other young leaders, you get to know the various problems that exist in their contexts, and how they are working to change their realities”.

Mildred Abigail, another girl who took the training course said: “It was important for me to meet new people and learn new ways of working with youths. This helped me to take responsibility, and organize a specific activity within my organization, a march of young people to commemorate the day of nonviolence against women”.

Consensus for youth
In addition to being affected by Guatemala’s persistent social problems, young people’s rights are constantly violated; civil society organizations ask the State to promote comprehensive development policies for youth and allocate resources to respond to their demands.

The Young Leaders Schools joins the voices from civil society that advocate for better conditions and opportunities for youth in Guatemala. Within the framework of Civic Engagement Alliance, scholarships are provided to train and reinforce the capacities of young leaders and design study programs relevant to their needs.
How a self-help group made its business sustainable

A group of small tea growers decided to form a collective, called “Kuhipat”. Initially, the group couldn’t achieve much success because of lack of leadership and management skills. It almost got dissolved. But then the Civic Engagement Alliance jumped in. Now the group thrives. It has realized much better tea prices, and the confidence to advocate better education and health care.

Livelihoods tea growers threatened
Small tea growers are often based in very remote areas and are scattered. Even as their numbers swell, they lack organizational and negotiating capacity. They depend on exploitative trade channels to sell their produce. A range of other issues threaten their existence and livelihood: low levels of technical knowledge and business skills, shortage of funds and lacking awareness about government support.

Unfair and fluctuating price of green leaves impacts the business adversely, so the workers in the small tea growers industry are in even poorer state in comparison to those of big plantations. The small tea growers pay lesser wages to their workers. Nor do they have capacity to provide housing, rations, or healthcare.

From capacity to business
In 2015 a group of 17 small tea growers in Dibrugarh District decided to form a self-help group, called “Kuhipat”. In 2018 the group got contact with Save the Children and the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), an alliance member.

It took many visits of SEWA staff members to gain the confidence of the group. At the initial stage, the group was resistant to communicate and divulge any information, fearing repercussions from middlemen. However, at one point the group decided to attend consultations to learn how to increase profitability and how to do responsible business. SEWA gave capacity building trainings about business management, negotiation skills and leadership.

The progress Kuhipat is making, motivated other growers to join in. Now the group has 30 registered members and associated about 300 other growers. With the collective output of green leaves the small growers were able to eliminate the middlemen between the production factory and them. Until 2018 the growers got 5-16 rupees per kg of green leaves. Now they negotiate prices directly with the factories [Bought Leaf Factories], they get a constant price throughout the season, of 22 rupees per kg. This allows them to create a working capital, and to pay higher wages to their workers. Also, wages for female worker were made equal.

Support from Tea Board
Because we knew the Tea Board had been trying to promote self-help groups but hadn’t made much progress, we started advocacy with Tea Board officials to collaborate with us in this matter. The Tea Board came forward and supported the group with a vehicle on 50 % subsidy to carry the leaves to the factory and with a revolving corpus fund of INR 6,00,000 [six lakhs].

The group members are now full of hope for the future. Also they are now sensitized to arrange better welfare to their workers and treat them as assets rather than as hired labors. At the same time the group has become very active in advocating better education and healthcare.
Faith Based Organizations, religious institutions and religious leaders have an indispensable role to play in sustainable development. The Civic Engagement Alliance has put this notion higher on the agenda of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its Minister and the Dutch parliament.

The notion that religion is an important actor of change has already been adopted at international and multilateral level. However, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) seems to struggle with recognizing and utilizing Faith Based Organizations (FBOs). As the alliance is convinced that their role is indispensable -especially in the context of shrinking civic space- the alliance has started conversations with MOFA on this topic.

Evidence based research
First, we identified and approached an ally within the Ministry who shared our view on the importance of religion for sustainable development. We built a relationship with him, supported him with his work by providing input etc. The fact that we had started conducting an evidence based research on this topic in Ethiopia, Kenya and Indonesia further raised the interest within the Ministry.

When we realized religion was not mentioned in the new policy, we decided to write an opinion piece. This essay has been published in three national newspapers. Minister Kaag felt compelled to react in two national newspapers. In addition, parliamentarian Joël Voornewind and two other civil society organizations (Cordaid and Mensen met een Missie) responded in the media. It is not common that the Minister responds publicly through a letter in a newspaper: this is an important sign that the Ministry now takes this topic very serious.

Discomfort
We wanted to use this momentum and lobbied for a motion within parliament. As a result, two coalition (!) parties jointly handed in a motion drafted by us. Unfortunately, this motion has not been adopted, which shows again the Dutch discomfort with this topic. In the secularized Dutch society religion is often seen as an issue related to the private sphere, which does not belong in the political arena. In many countries, however, the context of civic engagement can not well be understood without paying attention to religion and religious actors. Therefore, ‘religious literacy’ is necessary.

As a spin-off, we are now leading a new working group consisting of knowledge institutions and other civil society organizations. Together we take follow-up actions. We wrote a letter to the Netherlands Foreign Affairs Secretary General Yoka Brandt, offering our knowledge and support to incorporate religion and the role of Faith Based Organizations in the operationalization of the new policy for development cooperation: ‘Investing in Global Prospects’. In reaction we are now organizing together an expert meeting on the role of religion for peace and just societies, for experts within the academic world and the government, followed by a public event.

By working together we are not only creating momentum for the importance of religion, we are also building a sustainable relationship to improve our development and diplomatic work.
Civic Engagement Alliance is a joint collaboration between 7 Dutch non-governmental organizations in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Address:
% ICCO Cooperation
P.O. Box 8190
3503 RD Utrecht, Netherlands
T: + 31 30 69277911
E: e.urban@icco.nl
I: www.civicengagementalliance.org