

DRAFT: CISU STRATEGY 2022 - 2025

Consultation: Submit comments to akc@cisu.dk no later than 23 January 2022

WORKING TOGETHER
FOR A BETTER WORLD



ABOUT CISU

CISU - Civil Society in Development is an association of approximately 270 civil society organisations in Denmark that are all actively engaged with international development work to some degree.

CISU's member organisations are the basis of the association and determine the direction of CISU's work. CISU's role as a platform for networking, exchanging experience and capacity building for its member organisations is the essence of CISU's mission and vision.

CISU works to provide its member organisations with the best possible conditions to work with partners across the globe in order to improve the lives of people living in adverse circumstances.

CISU's member organisations are diverse and range from traditional development organisations, to religious, diaspora and sector organisations, trade unions, political parties, scout organisations and much more. CISU's member organisations come in many different sizes and are represented in all regions of Denmark.

CISU's values underpin our day-to-day work. These values express CISU's worldview and the way in which we want to collaborate and engage in dialogue with member organisations and cooperation partners.

CISU'S VALUES

- Diversity**
We wish to ensure a wide array of approaches to civil society work because differences in methodologies and types of stakeholders are the hallmark of a thriving civil society.
- Transparency**
We strive for transparency in all our actions and decision-making.
- Accountability**
We take responsibility for our own actions and decisions, and we expect others to do the same.
- Participation**
We offer everyone an equal opportunity to participate, because everyone has something valuable to contribute.
- Respect**
We deal with people on their own terms, supporting them in pursuing their own goals. We welcome challenges to our viewpoints and opinions, always learning along the way.
- Cooperation**
We cooperate with a wide range of stakeholders, because this is an inspiring, necessary and constructive path to sustainable results.
- Volunteerism**
We create space for voluntary involvement in civil society, because people's free will and volunteerism drives engagement in civil society work.

BACKGROUND AND CONTENTS

About CISU's strategy:

- The strategy is **based on** CISU's statutes, vision and mission.
- The strategy is the **foundation** for CISU's work in 2022-2025.
- The strategy is a tool to help **develop and measure the results** of work by CISU, grant holders and their partners.
- The strategy is for use in CISU's **dialogue** with Danish and international cooperation partners.

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1. THE WORLD AND CISU



OPPORTUNITIES

In recent years, we have seen international support for agreements such as the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** and the **Paris Agreement**. Agreements with ambitious objectives that require immediate action. These global agreements are important for CISU's work.

Great progress has been made. The world has become a better place in a number of important areas. For example, infant mortality rates, extreme poverty and starvation have been reduced, and access to education has been increased. **Taking action works.**

Initiatives across the globe have shown positive results. **Sharing knowledge and experience increases learning** in organisations. Creating alliances and exchanging experience creates an opportunity for innovation and for jointly developing and strengthening new approaches for future work.

Civil society is taking action; locally, nationally and globally. We are experiencing ever more social protest all over the world. People are engaged and mobilising to forge change and improve conditions for vulnerable groups.

Changing lives is best achieved when **people rally to common causes.** This is why it is important to establish a societal foundation in which everyone has the opportunity to organise, assemble and express themselves.



CHALLENGES

Many parts of the world face **unjust and unequal access to resources.** The consequences of the **Covid-19 pandemic** have particularly affected those who live in poverty. **Fundamental freedoms** and civic space **are under pressure,** while we see an increase in **humanitarian crises.**

The effects of **climate change and the deterioration of nature and the environment** exacerbate inequality and risk undermining efforts towards an equitable distribution of resources.

Vulnerable groups are more severely affected by these challenges. Gender and unequal power structures in particular affect people's position.

Political micromanagement of the development area has increased, and Danish domestic policy interests are also influential. **Changing political priorities** requires readjustment. This is burdensome to both Danish organisations and their partner organisations. It is not good for long-term results. Development takes time.

Engagement is hampered by increased **administrative requirements.** It complicates the goal of increased local ownership and leadership. Administrative requirements for development efforts should be reasonable, and there should be a fairer allocation of risk and responsibility. Unnecessary and changing requirements make it more difficult to exploit expertise, develop innovative solutions and motivate engagement.



CISU'S APPROACHES

Rights as a foundation: CISU's work is rights-based and takes outset in the UN international declarations on human rights. We must remember the most vulnerable people and groups, and leave no one behind.

Fair distribution of resources: CISU believes that a fair distribution of resources of all kinds is crucial for society and human development: locally, nationally and globally.

People should have control over their own lives: Better and long-term results are forged when people can determine and influence the changes in their lives.

Cooperation for better results: The challenges faced by the world are complex. New knowledge and ideas for solutions are generated through people-to-people encounters. The challenges faced by the world are therefore best solved by organisations working with partners, networks and alliances, including collaborations with social movements, authorities, the private sector or research and educational institutions.

Room for diverse initiatives: Civil society motivates change through humanitarian efforts, efforts in fragile contexts and initiatives with focus on long-term development. We use the term development cooperation as an umbrella term for various types of initiatives.

2. CISU's OBJECTIVES

CISU's vision and mission

Vision

Strong popular organisations and communities working together to secure people's rights, promote global justice and sustainability, and combat the causes of poverty.

Mission

CISU supports Danish organisations' work, both nationally and globally, for a just and sustainable world. CISU is a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences. We build capacity, foster mutual learning and new thinking, and strengthen popular participation in development cooperation. We manage public funds and seek to secure resources for a diversity of organisations and interventions. CISU champions the common interests of its member organisations and the space for civil society work.

CISU's two strategic objectives 2022-25

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

WORKING TOGETHER

Social and economic justice for people living under inequitable conditions.

Resilient local communities that can withstand and prevent the effects of changes to **climate, nature and the environment.**

Diverse engagement contributes to global solidarity and action.

Interpersonal and locally led partnerships and alliances contribute to strong local communities.

CISU's Theory of Change

Shows the links between CISU's specific initiatives and work methods and the strategic objectives. See Annex.

How CISU creates change

+ an annual focus chosen by the general assembly

Strengthen civil society

Make room for a wide range of sustainable initiatives

Build bridges, disseminate and develop new knowledge

Inform and support better conditions for civil society organisations

The annual focus: CISU's strategy aims to lay the groundwork for the next four years. However, we realise that the world is constantly changing. So we must be ready to act on whatever comes our way. For this reason CISU member organisations select a focus for CISU's work in the forthcoming year at the general meeting.

Objective 1: Sustainable livelihoods

CISU will work towards a world where everyone has a sustainable quality of life. We will strive for social and economic justice for those who live under inequitable conditions. We will create robust local communities that can withstand and prevent the effects of changes to climate, nature and the environment.



1.1: Social and economic justice for people living under inequitable conditions.

Social and economic justice is achieved when people can enjoy their rights, have equal access to resources in a broad sense, and are able to change the conditions they are living under. To achieve this, partnerships must help people and groups demand their rights. Partnerships should also influence people's opportunities to participate as active citizens in their society. In fragile contexts, partnerships should lay the foundations to enable social and economic justice in the long term. To achieve this, emergency aid and support should be provided to the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups during a crisis. This is why emergency aid should be distributed through local stakeholders with access to the most vulnerable groups.

CISU will work to ensure that civil society stakeholders have the capacity to mobilise and organise civil society and to influence policy-makers and other duty bearers. CISU will ensure that civil society stakeholders have access to important resources. CISU will also work to ensure that local and Danish organisations have the necessary experience and capacity to perform humanitarian work, and that there is flexible and rapid access to support in the event of a crisis.

1.2: Resilient local communities that can withstand and prevent the effects of changes to climate, nature and the environment.

If local communities are to withstand and prevent the effects of climate change and deterioration in nature and environmental conditions, they need local knowledge about how to do so. Furthermore, local climate, the environment and nature must be a priority for local decision-makers. This requires that this area based on local needs is an integral part of development cooperation in all relevant contexts. This in turn requires that civil society partners have the knowledge, capacity and resources to integrate climate change adaptation and local climate, nature and environmental considerations into their work and activities.

CISU will therefore work towards grant structures that support the integration of climate-change adaptation and climate, nature and environmental concerns into all relevant initiatives. Furthermore, CISU will provide knowledge and advice on climate change adaptation, nature and the environment in development cooperation. CISU will also focus on reducing its climate footprint and motivate its member organisations to do the same.

Objective 2: Working together

CISU will strive for a world where people work together to enact positive change. We will strive towards diverse engagement in civil society that contributes to global solidarity and action. We will strive towards interpersonal and locally led partnerships and alliances that contribute to strong local communities.



2.1: Diverse engagement contributes to global solidarity and action.

When a diversity of people and civil society stakeholders are involved in creating better conditions at global level, it contributes to global solidarity and more action. In order for this to happen, Danish civil society organisations must have adequate terms to engage people in global issues. Furthermore, civil society stakeholders in the rest of the world must be able to organise and get involved. To achieve this, civil society organisations must share knowledge and help each other in their efforts to improve conditions across the globe, and partnerships must work actively to secure basic rights and conditions for civil society organisations throughout the world.

CISU will therefore work towards ensuring that Danish civil society organisations have the capacity and resources to engage Danish citizens in their work. CISU will also focus on gaining political support for the involvement of Danish civil society in development cooperation. CISU will also strive to create networks and opportunities to exchange experience both in Denmark and across national borders.

2.2: Interpersonal and locally led partnerships and alliances contribute to strong local communities.

Strong local communities are built when local partners take leadership and change processes are locally anchored. This requires partnerships based on trust, reciprocity, respect and co-creation. In order to achieve this, Danish organisations must be able to support their partners on the basis of their partners' needs and wishes. Furthermore, partnerships and initiatives should focus on mobilising, organising and involving local communities in order to generate ownership of changes. It is also crucial that civil society stakeholders work together and share their knowledge through networks and alliances.

CISU will therefore strive to increase access to capacity building for partnerships. The aim of this capacity building is to encourage involvement and introduce approaches to create durable and strong local communities. CISU will also strive to ensure that grant structures encourage involvement and allow for capacity building of the organisations and people involved in initiatives. CISU will also support the collaboration in networks and alliances at the national, regional and international levels.

3. HOW CISU CREATES CHANGE

CISU will work to ensure that the strategic objectives can be achieved through the four core services presented in the four boxes.

CISU's theory of change (see Annex) shows some of the many links between the work done by CISU and the achievement of CISU's strategic objectives:

CISU supports, connects, communicates and safeguards interests in order to achieve the desired results through the important work carried out by CISU's member organisations, grant holders, partner organisations and other stakeholders.

Strengthen civil society

We strengthen the capacity of Danish organisations to cooperate in locally led and equal partnerships. We do so through organisational development and by supporting networks and the exchange of experience.

We support rights-based civil society work.

We support the increased accountability of civil society organisations; with regard to the people they work with and their own climate footprint.

Make room for a wide range of sustainable initiatives

Via capacity-building services and pooled schemes, we provide support for development and humanitarian efforts that create durable and sustainable change, social and economic change, as well as changes in connection with climate, nature and the environment.

We work towards a wide range of support schemes.

We focus on cohesion between short-term and long-term humanitarian efforts.

Build bridges, disseminate and develop new knowledge

We support knowledge sharing and learning from experience and global trends, all of which can lead to new, creative approaches in development cooperation.

We build bridges between our member organisations and enable them to exchange experience and establish networks.

We build bridges to other players in civil society, the private sector and research institutions in Denmark and abroad.

Inform and support better conditions for civil society organisations

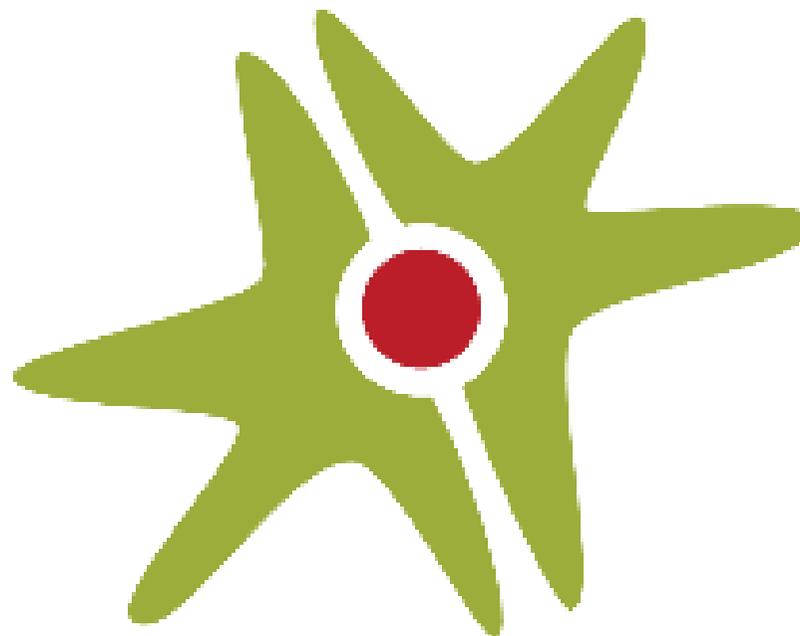
We motivate the global commitment of Danes by disseminating information about global conditions.

We communicate the results of collaboration between member organisations and their partners and the results of CISU's services.

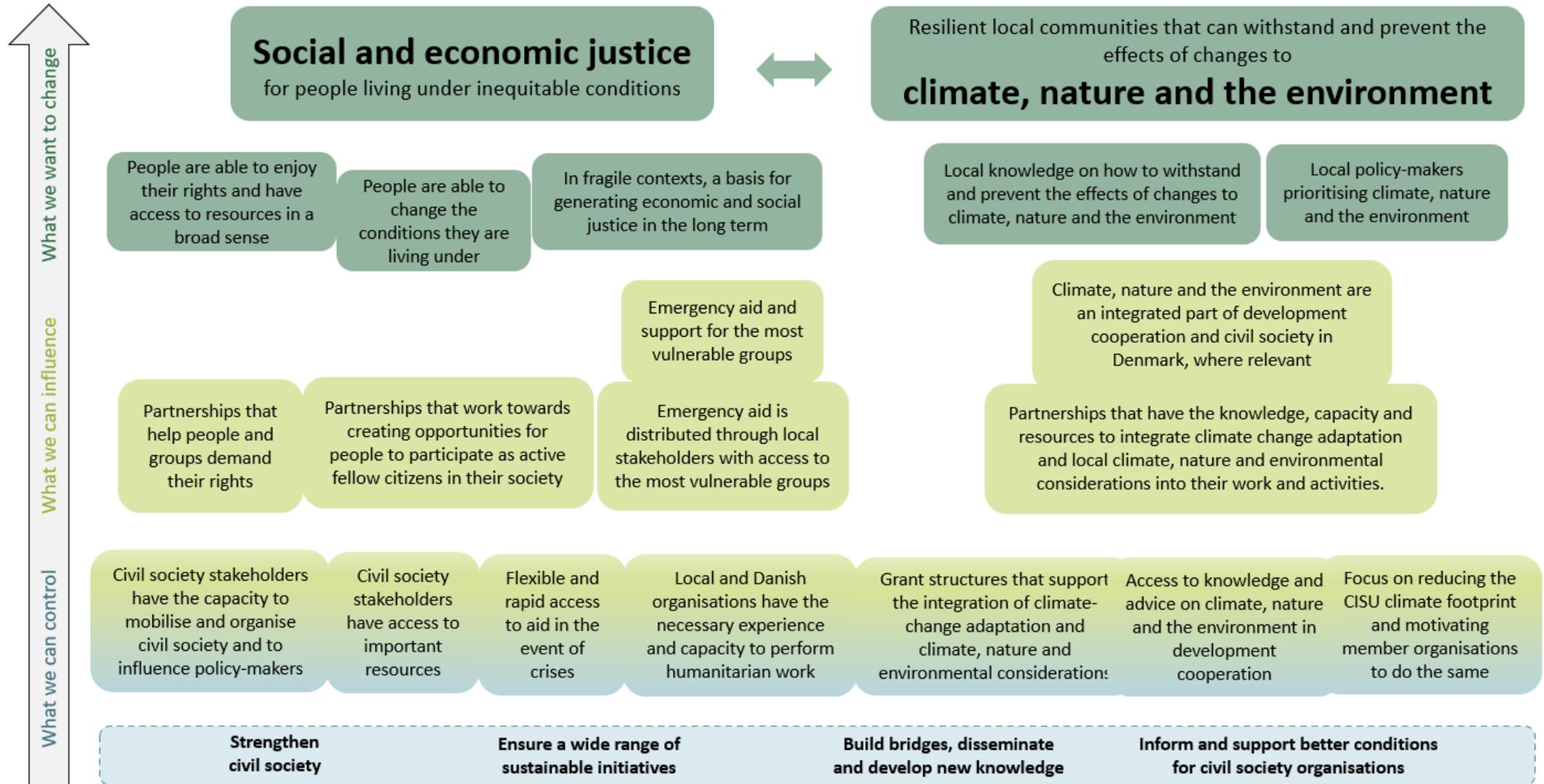
We strive to create the best possible conditions for work by Danish organisations and greater latitude for their partners by safeguarding their interests in relevant fora.

ANNEX: CISU'S THEORY OF CHANGE

CISU's theory of change presents some of the many links between CISU's specific initiatives and work methods (section 3) and its overall strategic objectives (section 2). The visualisation below differentiates between what we can control, what we can influence, and what we want to change.



OBJECTIVE 1: SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



OBJECTIVE 2: WORKING TOGETHER

