



Regional PGE F2F: Contested Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, Locally-led Responses?



Capitalization of Experiences of Social Accountability Programs, OSA & HoA, November 30, 2023



Synthesis Report/Annonciate Ndikumasabo – Rahel Fischer

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1. Introduction

In the framework of the PGE F2F on “Contested Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, Locally-led Responses”, The OSA Governance Community of Practice, including Horn of Africa, organized a side-event meeting on November 30, 2023. As recommended by Heads of Cooperation of the region, the focus was on the capitalization of experiences in social accountability interventions.

The overall objective was to contribute to internal reflections on how to adapt governance programming in general and social accountability interventions in particular, for a good articulation between current contexts and SDC work. Specifically, the learning process sought to get an overall understanding of context dynamics in the region, assess the relevance of social accountability programs, reflect together on success and challenges, and explore adaptive measures both at strategic level (Sections) and operational level (individual Coofs) to increase effectiveness.

The workshop was a learning event. As almost all the offices work on this topic, experience sharing on designs, approaches and pathways to results has been instrumental for peer learning. It enabled learning on the types of activities, approaches, results and grasping explanatory factors of success or failure. It was also a good opportunity to get insights on rival hypotheses and feed needed actions to adapt as a community of practice (CoP) and individual Cooperation offices (CooFs).

The methodology used aimed at making the workshop interactive, practical while creating room for inspiration from inputs by experts. Exchanges were done through different forms of conversation: talk shows, fishbowl, panel discussions, plenary discussions as well as networking outside the conference room. A prior work was done by each cooperation office’s governance team and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) was commissioned to give an update on context dynamics in the region, showing evolution in terms of democratic trends for each partner country.

We are very thankful to the SDC Management at different levels that offered this opportunity, to the steering group (Andrea IFF, Sidonia Gabriel, Lydia Wetugi, Gerard Babalola, Rahel Fischer and our facilitator Nadia von Holzen) that made it possible and our esteemed Community of Practice for the wealth of knowledge shared.

Focus

Overarching questions: Are we doing the right thing ? in the right ways?

- 1) Context (key elements of the context of programs + evolution),
- 2) Program components and logic
- 3) partnerships
- 4) Successes and challenges
- 6) Relevance of our levers: localization, support to CSOs, Thinking and Working Politically
- 7) Ways forward

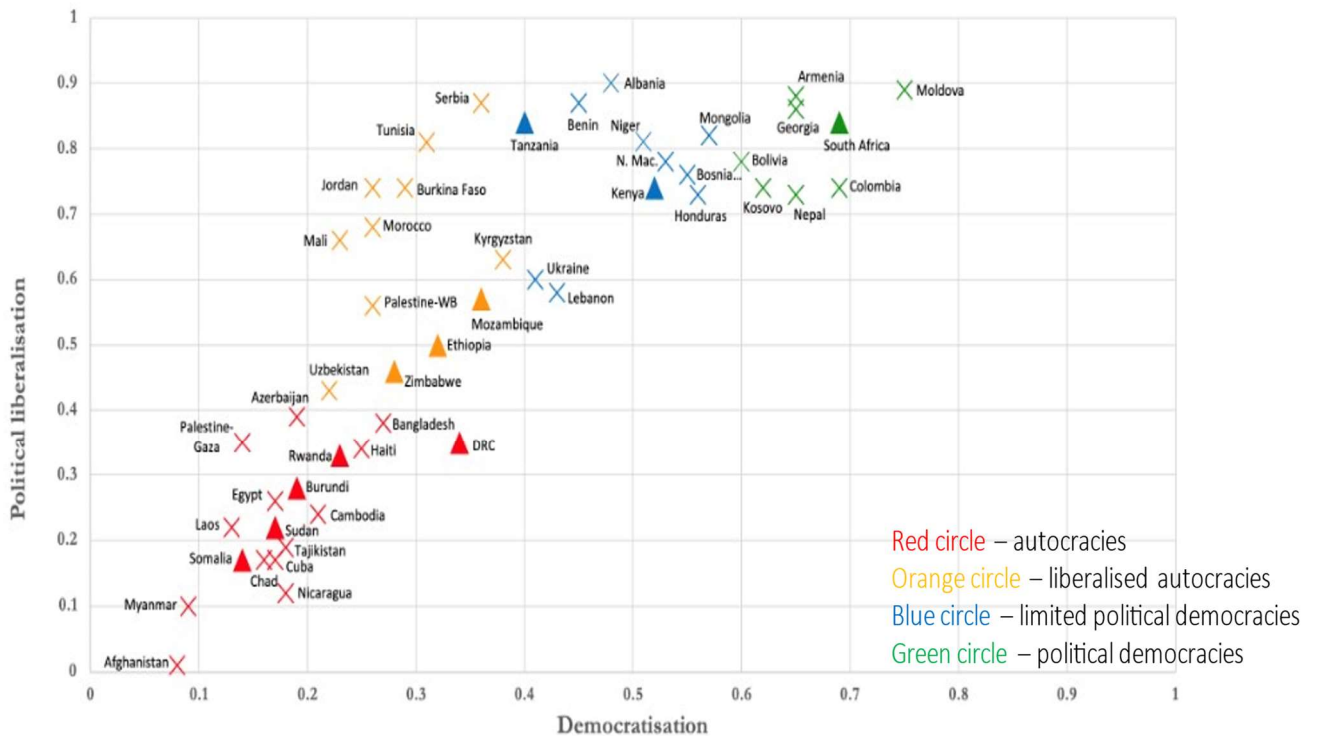
2. Key Learnings

- The contexts are changing at a high pace. Interventions at the local level are no more enough.
- Countries are following different trajectories:
 - Burundi, Somalia and DRC are among the countries in autocratic traps, with ups and downs within autocratic boundaries
 - Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Ethiopia are in the rising liberalization group with trends towards political liberalization, offering greater rights and inclusion to broader sections of the population, but political competition is limited. They are sometimes classified in
 - Tanzania and Mozambique fall into Democratic Swing groups which are liberalized politically and are moving to and from along toward greater democratization. They are more or less limited political democracies.
- Even in challenging contexts, social accountability actions can occur. SDC interventions and approaches are relevant. However, the issue of sustainability still requires full attention.
- Going beyond technical work, investing in results-oriented policy dialogue and finding a balance between working on governance principles and supporting programs that respond to real needs of citizens are more needed than never before with current debates on Pan-Africanism and decolonization of aid.

2.1. Context dynamics in OSA and HoA Regions

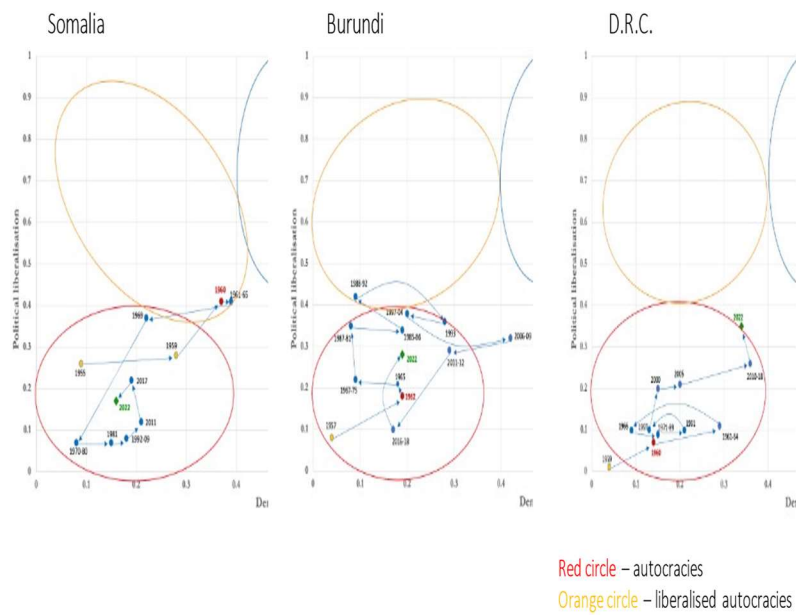
The Eastern, Southern and HoA regions have witnessed significant shifts in the degree of authoritarianism of countries. While some appear to be slowly moving towards greater democratization and/or political liberalization in the last decade, others are experiencing significant backsliding. In this context, almost all of the SDC offices in the region are using social accountability approaches as a way of improving service delivery, governance, and citizen-state relations.

SDC partner countries in these regions have experienced different paths towards their current locations on the democratization and liberalization axis according to V-Dem

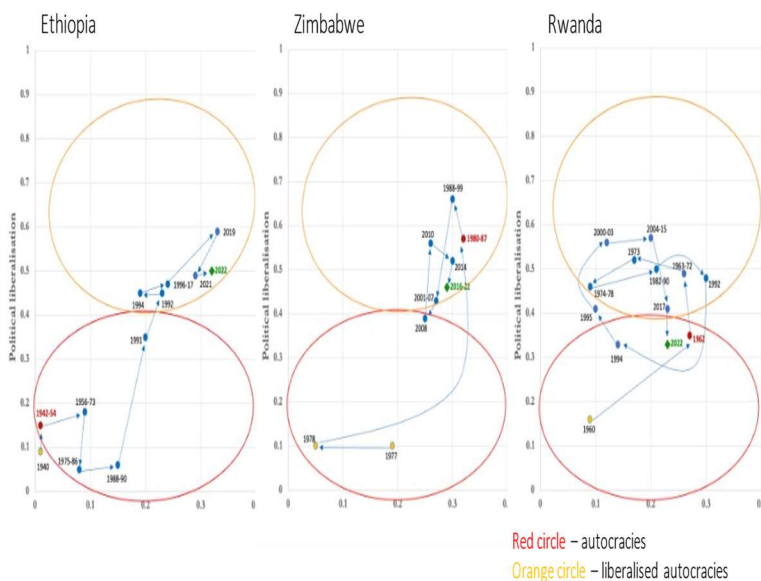


Autocratic traps: Somalia, Burundi, D.R.C.

Countries in this group seem to make incremental moves towards political liberalization or democratization, but overall, they remain within autocratic boundaries.

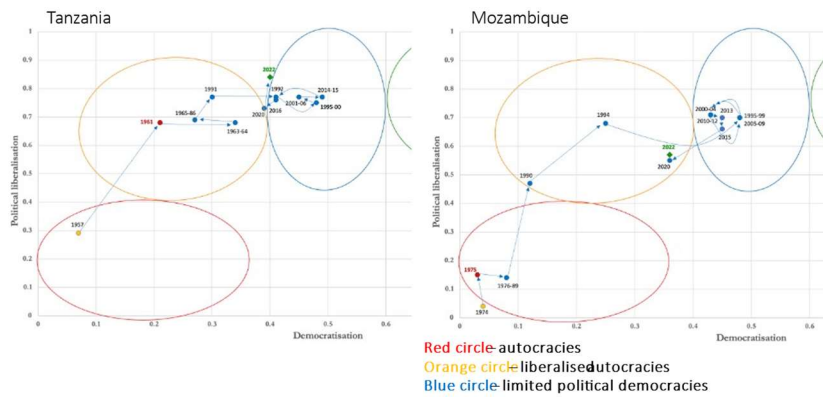


Rising liberalisation: Ethiopia, Zim, Rwanda



Countries in this group seem to have escaped the autocratic trap by increasing trends towards political liberalization, offering greater rights and inclusion to broader sections of the population, but political competition is limited. Rwanda is put in this group because it is at the edge with the preceding one. It navigates between the two. The Reality in the field presents a negative picture of Zimbabwe with the last electoral process, corruption and human rights situation.

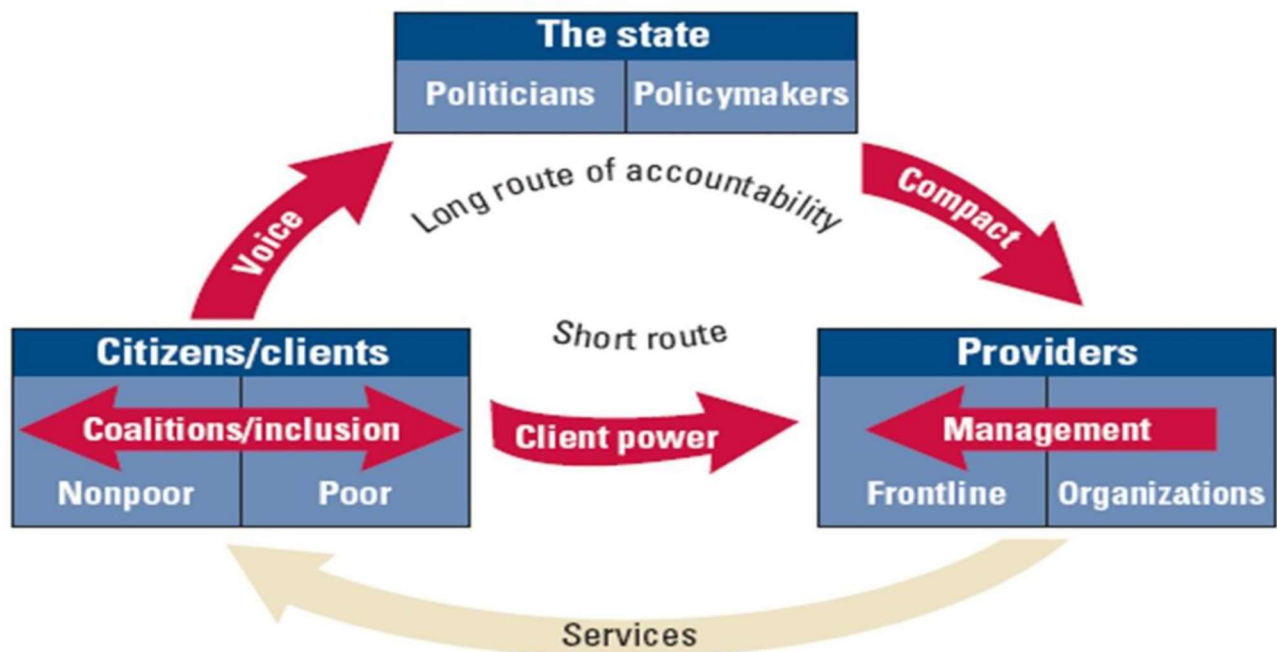
Democratic Swings: Tanzania & Mozambique



These countries had politically liberalized a while ago and seem to be moving to and fro along the x axis, towards greater democratization. Political competition has been increasing or decreasing over the past couple of decades. Tanzania and Mozambique fall into this category.

2.2. SDC understanding of Social Accountability

For SDC, accountability is very important. It is one of its guiding principles of good governance that are based on Swiss constitutional values and the international human rights framework. Social Accountability is one of the various entry points for SDC to strengthen accountability. It refers to the engagement between duty bearers (state-service providers) and right holders (citizens). It is an approach to governance that involves citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) in public decision making. It has most commonly been applied to relationships between service users and service providers, since, even though not all providers are state bodies, they should be overseen by the state. The chart below summarizes SDC understanding of social accountability and conceptual framework that underlies its interventions.



The long route implies too great a distance between citizens and providers, which more often than not leads to non-responsiveness. In an attempt to reduce this distance, many development actors promote the short route – within which providers are directly accountable to citizens. Many of SDC interventions go through the short route, which might pose a problem of sustainability.

2.3. Are we doing the right thing?

- **Types of programs** : SA in decentralization, wash, culture, land governance and health projects in Mozambique engaging citizens and duty bearers; support to CSOs in Tanzania to empower them for improved service delivery; support to both supply side and demand side in Zimbabwe for service delivery that is both human right-based and gender responsive; multistakeholder approach in DRC to promote governance for a broader end of sustainable peace; funding different stakeholders particularly think tanks and CSOs groups in Somalia to enable their voice in the overall political and peace process; support to both supply side, oversight institutions and CSOs in Rwanda for a constructive engagement between CSOs and duty bearer in the implementation of socio-economic policy; support to CSOs and local authorities for constructive engagement in service delivery.
- **Successes**: vary from a country to another. Overall, we note the following : empowerment of CSOs and media organizations; improved dialogues between

stakeholders and positive influence on service delivery; inclusion, leaving no one behind (LNOB)

- **Common challenges:** the shrinking of the civic space though experienced differently by different countries; issue of trust between stakeholders; sustainability of social accountability interventions and CSOs' work; legitimacy of CSOs actors oftentimes accused of being more accountable to donors than to governments and their constituencies; disconnection between national elite-driven CSOs and their constituency at grassroot level.

Key Messages from discussions

- Overall, we are doing the right thing in supporting space for engagement between the supply side and demand side and in building the capacities for both sides for CSOs to hold service providers and policy makers accountable and the latter to be responsive.
- However, we should find a balance between promoting horizontal accountability and vertical accountability. Local is not enough for policy influencing. SDC should not shy away from national level and a more political approach
- SDC is oftentimes the only donor to support social accountability. We should invest time in political thinking to mitigate the risk of instrumentalization
- The legitimacy of CSOs is often questioned? Their link with citizens is not always evident
- The issue of CSOs sustainability cannot be entirely solved. However, SDC can review the requirements for funding local NGOs and include in its funding seed money for institutional support. SDC Nairobi has a good practice where it funded assets that generate money (ex. conference room) and could progressively reduce its contribution to the functioning of partner CSOs.

2.4. Are we doing it in the right way?

SDC uses different modalities to increase effectiveness of social accountability interventions. The discussion on localization, support to the sustainability of CSOs and thinking and working politically resulted in the following conclusions

- Any of these modalities or their combination can foster the culture of accountability;
- However, we should review our approaches and adopt participatory collaborative approaches in our programming involving multiple stakeholders

including the community level. Quite often, our program design is elite-driven, with good rhetoric in credit proposals and less engagement of key stakeholders;

- We need to do more with localization of aid by reviewing our policies and requirements. It is very difficult for local CSOs to have 50% contribution to qualify for our funding;
- We should apply localization and thinking and working politically to all our programs;
- It is important to link the local support to CSOs and local governance to national interventions for a systemic impact. It is very difficult to get it if we limit our support at local level.

3. Way forward: Actions to undertake

From experience sharing and discussions, concrete actions for further steps were defined for both the Community of Practice (CoP) and each office individually.

Actions for CoP (OSA Level)

- Document the learning. It has been very instrumental in our work
- Organize next year a joint learning on result-oriented policy dialogue and localization
- Organize peer-to-peer mutual learning through project visits
- Advocate to HQ to reduction of requirement for CSOs contribution to SDC funding
- Organize regional exchanges (Zimbabwe-Mozambique and Tanzania)
- Facilitate the cross-fertilization of experiences online
- Enhance knowledge management/space for learning/rethink

HQ (All)

- Improve requirements for localization
- Reduce the bureaucracy to allow space for deeper reflections on our credit proposals

Zimbabwe

- Take into account the learnings from the F2F in the development of the Governance portfolio

Rwanda

- Further institutionalization, linking local to national
- Organize a peer learning event with Tanzania Team

RDC

- Conduct a Political Economy analysis in governance domain
- Enhance coordination between CH instruments (WoGA)

HoA

- Strengthen Governance as a transversal theme in other domains. Not only on paper
- Look deeper at local institutions

Tanzania

- Reflect on our support to local institutions in light of upcoming projects
- Include more local views
- Link local support to national engagement
- Reinforce existing synergies within the governance domain and with other programs
- Trust for new partners/approaches and flexible funds to better respond to an evolving context;
- Pay more attention to emerging trends (demographic growth, climate change, ...)

Mozambique

- Analyze our support to CSOs and social accountability projects
- Think more on localization, adaptation, flexibility
- Improve data use methodologies: IDPs, Social cohesion to quantify the results.

Burundi

- Apprendre d'avantage du Mozambique et appliquer Social accountability comme thème transversal

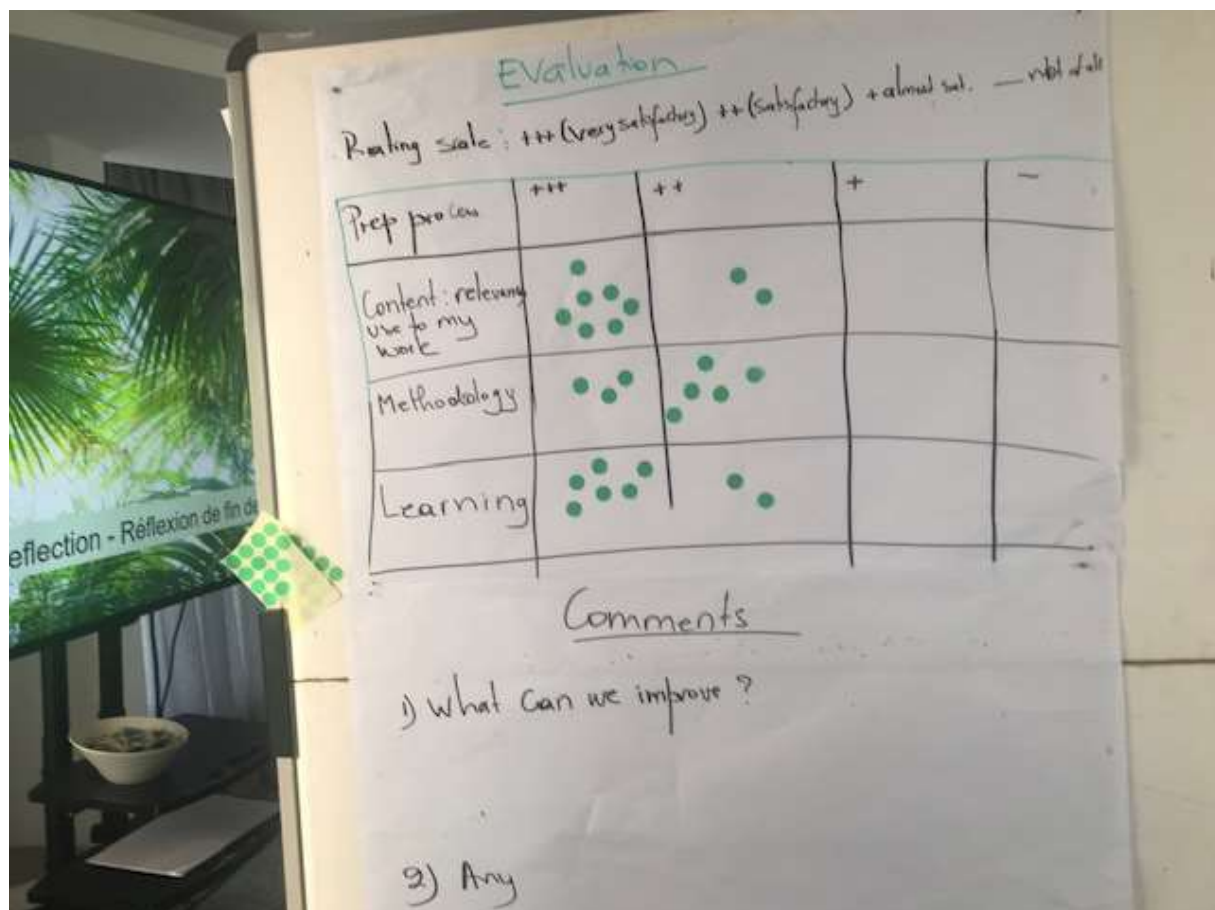
4. Conclusion.

SDC's and OSA-HoA endeavors in promoting social accountability are tangible. However, in current programs, there is still room for improvement in linking the

local to the national, conducting a more political work for systemic and sustainable results, increasing their support to institutionalizing social accountability work both for CSOs and state institutions/service providers.

The F2F was very much appreciated by the Governance Community of Practice in Eastern and Southern Africa section and HoA. It offered a learning space that is much needed by peers. It confirmed the fact that even in challenging contexts, governance work/social accountability actions can occur. There is a need for appetite and willingness to invest time and resources in political work.

The event provided room for discussions on: successful strategies and challenges, strengths and limitations of SDC in the sector; options for ongoing programs; and future plans in the countries represented. For both organizers and participants, the session was a success as reflected in the chart below.



Annex 1 : Workshop program: *Are we doing the right thing in the right way?*

Objectives

- Updates on overall context dynamics in the region and relevance of Social accountability interventions
- Learning on current SA interventions: Contexts, types of activities, intervention strategies and results
- Common understanding of current challenges and successful coping strategies/best practices
- Deepening certain topics considered by SDC as levers for impact and finetuning our assumptions

Overall Moderation: Kanyange Nadège, Liliane Tarnutzer & Annonciate Ndikumasabo

Schedule	Timing	What	Why	How	Who
Part I : Capitalization of experiences of Social Programs					
08.30	10'	Welcome and introduction	Get clarity on purpose from institutional perspective	Welcome address Introduction by facilitation	IFA NAN
08.40	10'	Collective check- in	Clear the air and set up a constructive spirit for the workshop as a network	Netweb Greetings : <i>How are you this morning?</i>	NAN
8:50	20'	Setting the scene: Short input by IDS (online) Context dynamics in our region: Understanding the contexts of our programs and locating our countries on V-Dem map (democratization-political liberalization)	Set the scene. Situate the contexts of our programs and learn on normative relevant entry points/empirical successful practices from other donors	10' : short inputs by IDS 10' Q&A	NAN
9 :10	20'	Institutional framework	Sharing SDC understanding of social	Input IFA /10' Q&A: 10'	NAN

				<p>approaches, Challenges? Successful strategies? assess context evolution and needed adaptations, if any</p> <p>- 15' Q&A</p>	
11 :25	20'	<p>Convergent thinking : So what ?</p>	<p>Identify what is emerging, common challenges, gaps; collect new ideas how to plug the gaps and update hypotheses</p>	<p>Fish bowl, overall (20'): what stood out? are we doing the right thing? What are the common challenges (contexts & Programs); what are the gaps? best practices? How can we plug the gaps (new ideas)? What hypotheses can we make?</p> <p>- Who in the fishbowl (brief inputs) Edson, Lydia, Dominique, Eric</p> <p>Each participant can move in the fish bowl to complete/Suggest new ideas</p> <p>5' wrap-up</p>	<p>KANNA</p> <p>NAN</p>
11 : 45	5' Energizer → Part II : Thematic Discussion, sharing experiences on our levers				
11 :50	60'	<p>Our current levers/our modalities ,are we doing it in the right way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Localization of aid - Support to CSOs, sustainability issue 	<p>Share experiences Learn on strengths and limits</p> <p>Make hypotheses if needed</p>	<p>Panel discussion (keep the link with SA) :</p> <p>Speakers: (5' each) Tanzania, Rwanda, Mozambique, Somalia</p> <p>Why have we adopted this modality? How are we doing it?</p>	<p>TARLI</p> <p>NAN</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to CSOs in anti-corruption efforts - Thinking and working politically 		<p>What are the strengths? What are the limits? Where do I need new ideas (1-2 main challenges)?</p> <p>30 'Q&A , Six thinking hats, /complements/ new ideas</p> <p>20' wrap-up</p>	
13 :00	Lunch Break				
14 :00	45'	Peer Coaching on specific challenges	Generate new ideas/new approaches to respond to challenges or questions	<p>Case Clinics:</p> <p>2 volunteers to be case givers</p> <p>20' per each including (presentation & Coaching)</p> <p>5' Wrap-up</p>	<p>Nadia</p> <p>NAN</p>
14:45	30'	Now What?	Update our hypotheses and joint actions that make sense	1-2-4 all method tbc	Nadia
15:15	15'	Closing & Evaluation	Forward looking	Next steps	FISRA-NAN
15:30	END				

Annex 2. List of participants

	1	Bloch Jean Mathieu
	2	Canhanga Nobre
	4	Durrer Martina
	6	Frei Natalie
	8	Habimana Dominique
	9	Iff Andrea
	10	Issanda Tabena Marie-Louise
	11	Jirdeh Nimo Mohamoud
	12	Kalunga Eric
	13	Kanyange Nadège
	14	Lévy Guillaume
	15	Mugore Edson
	16	Natale Consuelo
	17	Ndikumasabo Annonciate
	18	Ngoma Jacqueline
	19	Nshimirimana Donna-Fabiola
	20	Nyamweno Cyprian
	21	Randin Nicolas
	22	Schneeberger Christine
	23	Tarnutzer Liliane
	24	von Holzen Nadia
	25	Wetugi Lydia Nginya