



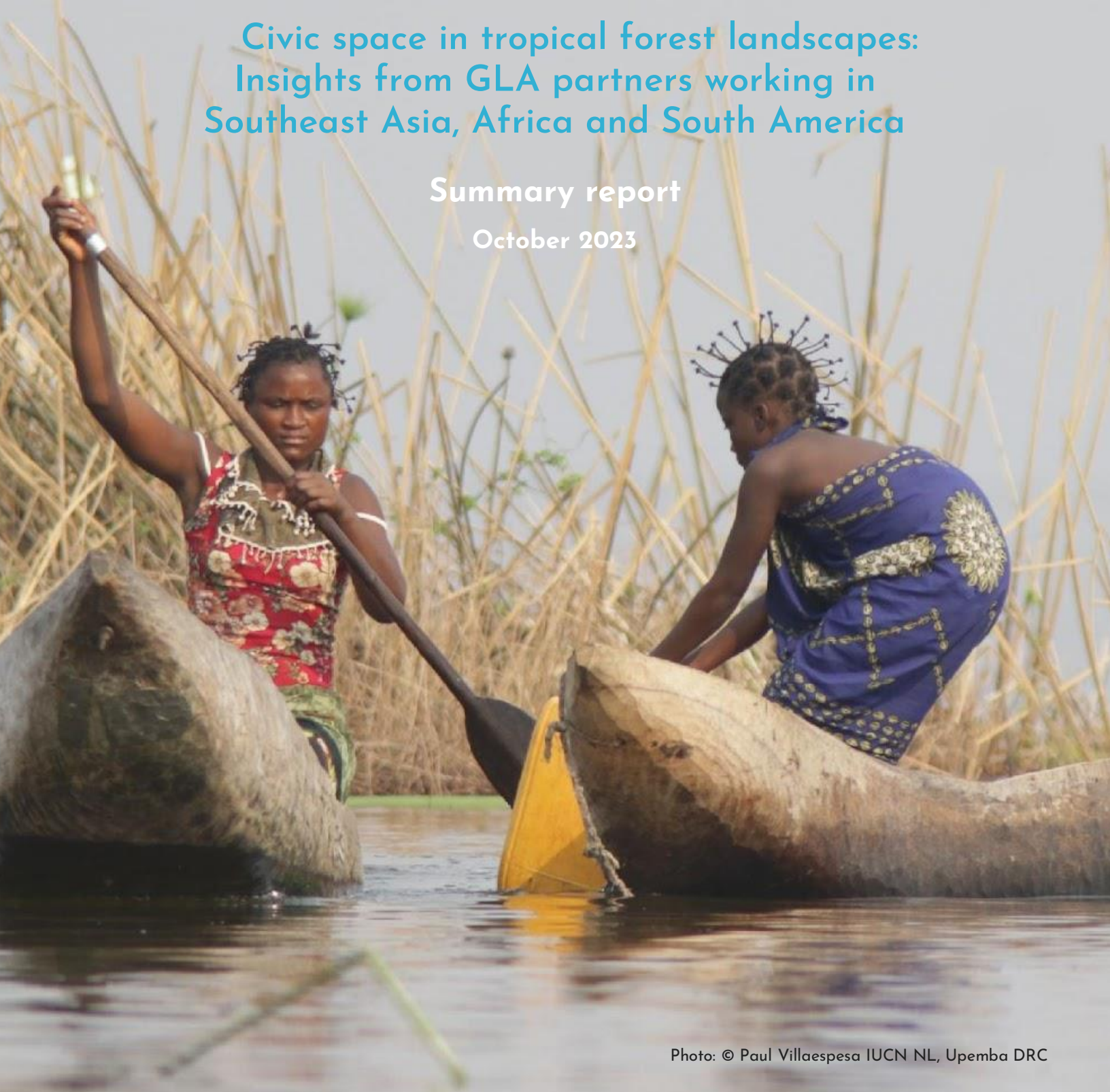
Green
Livelihoods
Alliance

Forests for a Just Future

Civic space in tropical forest landscapes:
Insights from GLA partners working in
Southeast Asia, Africa and South America

Summary report

October 2023





This is a Report Summary of a more extensive internal report commissioned by the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) in the context of the Forests for a Just Future programme.

Information on the original report (internal):

Team of consultants: Yasmin O. Hatta, Elizabeth Y. Pua, Edwin O. Hatta, Aimee Ting.

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The report was developed based on input from many stakeholders that work directly or indirectly with the FfJF programme. This includes members of GLA partner civil society organisations, other NGOs and government officials. We deeply appreciate their time and insights.

This summary was developed under the lead of Antoinette Sprenger (IUCN NL). Special thanks also to the contributions of Ruth Canlas, Maartje Hilterman, Tedros Medhin and Eva Duarte Davidson. And to Daphne van den Heuvel, for helping us with the layout and graphic design of the final report. To all other team members and staff, thank you, your insights, knowledge, advice and comments made this report possible.



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In addition to the above, three additional (internal) annexes are available to GLA alliance members and partners. These are not for wider distribution but may be shared externally on request. The additional annexes are:

- Annex D - Regional context and situation GLA South America region
- Annex E - Regional context and situation GLA Southeast Asia region
- Annex F - Regional context and situation GLA Africa region



Introduction

Background

The Forests for a Just Future (FfJF) programme of the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) (<https://greenlivelihoodsalliance.org>) aims to ensure that tropical forests and forest landscapes are sustainably and inclusively governed to mitigate and adapt to climate change, fulfil human rights and safeguard local livelihoods. The programme's Theory of Change (ToC) takes an intersectional and gender transformative approach and revolves around three mutually reinforcing pathways of change:

- Pathway A: Strengthening indigenous peoples and local communities (IP&LC) governance over increased areas of forest.
- Pathway B: Government and agro-commodities, extractives, energy and infrastructure sectors no longer drive deforestation.
- Pathway C: Citizens enjoy human and women's rights and safely participate in social movements.

The FfJF programme is implemented in 11 countries: Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Uganda and Vietnam. In addition, we connect local actions to global policy arenas, and vice versa, through regional work, specific international policy dossiers and thematic programmes as well as by influencing relevant Dutch and EU policies. Regionally we work at EU and ASEAN level, supporting our GLA African, Southeast Asian and South American partners to collaborate in their respective regions.

The programme, particularly through its work in pathway C, is a rich case for observing and studying civic space, the situation of civil society actors and particularly the situation of (women) environmental human rights defenders (W/EHRDs). At the programme development stage, a context analysis was carried out per country that included a reading into the situations of civil society and civic space in each country and when possible, the different landscapes. On approval, however, all partners agreed that it was important to gain greater insights and understanding of how CSOs experience civic space in their respective countries, and if/how this varies over time. The GLA programme monitoring framework included an indicator (#6): "Extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/gender justice approach, and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights and women's rights".

For a number of reasons, it was not possible to gather information on this during the FfJF programme baseline assessment carried out in 2021. The Alliance decided to carry out a survey and invite all the GLA CSO partners to respond. Additional insights into civic space in the areas of intervention of the programme would serve to further guide our work in general, and particularly in relation to pathway C.

Aim and scope of the report

A team of external consultants was contracted to carry out the survey and develop a report bringing together the findings and corresponding analysis of the data gathered. This report was developed by the GLA team based on a longer and more detailed internal report that the consultants presented to the Alliance. It summarises the most relevant findings and conclusions to provide insights into how GLA partners in the 11 countries of implementation of the FfJF programme currently experience civic space and exercise rights (linked to programme indicator #6). It also identifies areas where the Alliance could strengthen capacity building within the programme to further contribute to enabling coalitions, social movements, groups (programme indicator #10), through joint advocacy on civic space.

The data and visuals were extracted directly from the original report with minimal adjustments to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the organisations that participated in the survey.

Based on the survey's findings, the consultants also formulated a set of general and region-specific recommendations to the GLA. Since these are programmatic in nature, they are out of scope in this summary report but can be shared on request.



Key takeaways from the report

A key assumption in the Theory of Change () of the GLA Forests for a Just Future programme is that effective forest conservation and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LC)-led forest governance **can only be achieved in a context where civil society organisations (CSOs) and IP&LCs can act in a safe operational space**. The survey looked into the OECD dimensions of open civic space: civic freedoms; citizen/CSO participation; CSO-enabling environment; media and digital rights, and freedom and security of those who speak up. It provided useful insights into how GLA partners in the 11 countries of implementation experience civic space and the ability to exercise their human rights.

This summary report highlights the main findings from the survey. We would like to highlight the following key take-aways:

- The survey showed that GLA partners experience difficulties in all their civic freedoms, in particular Access to Information, (Women) Environmental Human Rights Defenders ((W)EHRDS) Protection, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Assembly. GLA partners and communities experienced all types of retaliation, ranging from physical attacks to political repression. Some pressing issues include restrictive legislation (e.g. on foreign funding), red-tagging, Strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPPs) (cases filed against individuals or organisations who speak out on issues of public interest or concern to intimidate them and inflict costs), negative framing, misinformation / fake news and cyber bullying.
- GLA partners face many types of restrictions, both formal (legal, regulative, administrative) and informal (e.g. intimidation, stigmatising, loss of legitimacy). Many IP&LC leaders and (W)EHRDs are subject to arbitrary arrests and assault, retaliatory litigation and even death. The top three difficulties experienced by GLA partners are Access to Information, Threats to (W)EHRDs and Loss of Legitimacy and Criminalisation.
- An aspect that is very important to understand in this regard are the power inequalities that GLA partners deal with. Combating deforestation and related human rights violations requires the ability of CSOs and IP&LCs to stand up against vested interests. Structural power inequality between corporate actors (e.g. mining and plantation companies) and government elites on the one hand, and IP&LCs on the other, is a major underlying cause of deforestation, displacement of people from their lands and human rights violations.
- Although GLA's work on civic space is mainly captured under Pathway C (civic space) in our ToC, a lot of our activities under Pathway A (IP&LC forest governance & rights) and B (addressing drivers of deforestation) also contribute to 'enhancing civic space'. GLA's approach is multi-faceted, both preventive and responsive and despite the very challenging context, **the Alliance's efforts towards securing the civic space for CSOs and (W)EHRDs, so that they can stand up for their rights, livelihoods and forests, have in many cases enhanced the safety & security of our partners**. We also prevented the adoption of several laws and policies that would have further restricted civic space in some countries, and have made progress at the EU level, for instance on due diligence legislation for companies.

As a result of the report and additional reflections during the midterm review process, the Alliance set up an internal civic space task force in January 2024 to discuss the recommendations, to suggest which are most relevant and feasible to address during the second half of the programme and to provide guidance on how they may be put into practice. In this sense, the information presented from the survey has served to inform the FfJF programme going forward.



The GLA civic space survey

The civic space survey was conducted by the Green Livelihoods Alliance (GLA) between November 16, 2022 to February 17, 2023. Initial findings were validated through a set of key informant interviews that took place between December 2022 and April 2023. The consultants also shared and validated their findings in three webinars carried out with GLA partners based in each of the regions (Southeast Asia, Africa and South America) that took place in May 2023.

Main areas of enquiry

The questions identified by GLA centred on the following four main areas of enquiry:

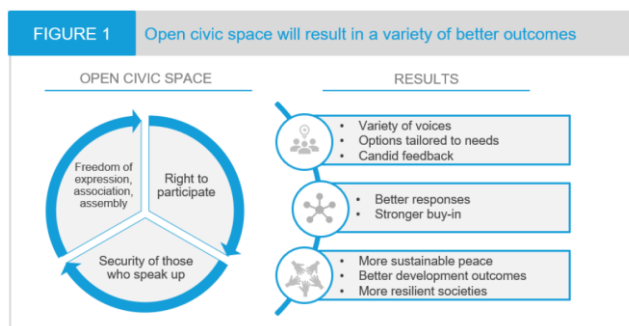
1. Civic space dimensions
 - a. Civic freedoms
 - b. CSO enabling environment
 - c. Citizen/CSO participation
 - d. Digital rights and digital security
2. Safety and security
3. Participation
4. International trajectory

Questions around COVID-19 were covered in the above sections.

Methodology, scope and limitations of the survey

More detailed information on the methodology used is available in [Annex C – Methodology](#)

The survey used the [UN OHCHR Guidance Note on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space](#) which used the OECD dimensions of open civic space: 1) civic freedoms; 2) citizen/CSO participation; 3) CSO-enabling environment; 4) media and digital rights, and freedom and security of those who speak up. Each section of the survey is based on a particular dimension of civic space in the guidance note. The reason for using this as the basis of analysis and structuring the survey is that reverting to the UN standard allows for a broader more widely accepted standard of understanding civic space.



GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF CIVIC SPACE



The CIVICUS¹ ratings are used as a reference point in analysing aspects of civic space within the survey. In the table are the Civicus ratings of the countries where the GLA programme is being implemented by its GLA partners between November 2022 and March 2023.

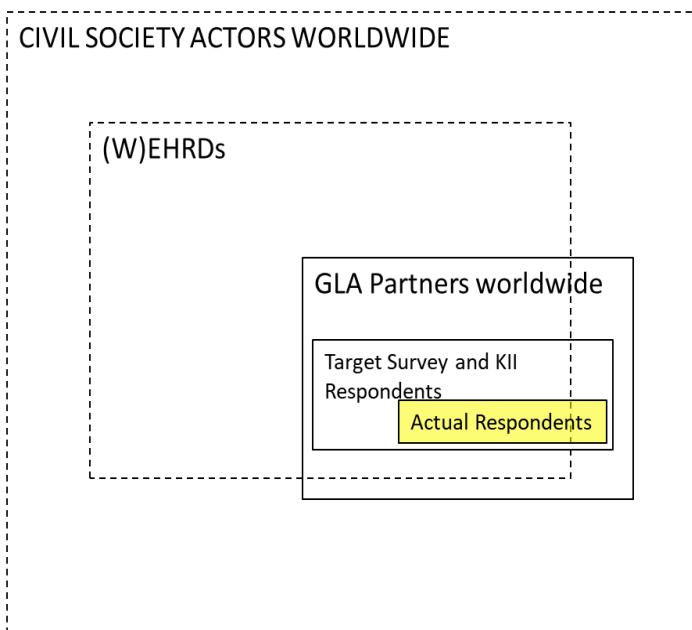
CIVICUS RATING	Nov 2022	Mar 2023
Bolivia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Cameroon	Repressed	Repressed
Colombia	Repressed	Repressed
DRC	Repressed	Repressed
Ghana	Narrowed	Obstructed
Indonesia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Liberia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Malaysia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Philippines	Obstructed	Repressed
Uganda	Repressed	Repressed
Vietnam	Closed	Closed

For trends on a global and regional level, see [Annex A - Dashboard global](#) and [Annex B - Dashboard regional](#).

The target population of the survey were all staff and officers of the 67 GLA partners located in 11 countries. The target respondents (sample size) of the survey were 134 staff/officers from the 67 partners, where the quota set for each GLA partner was two respondents, and the two respondents would be one male and one female.

The survey intended to look at the situation of all GLA in-country partners and was structured to try to ensure proportionality between the number of respondents per organisation as well as a gender balance. It used network sampling since the selection of the actual respondent is based on the recommendation/selection of the GLA partner. The team administering the survey accepted the respondent based on this.

The total number of actual respondents of the survey was 97 (eight from a pilot run and 89 from the survey). Out of the 19 who were not able to complete the survey, the majority (15) answered until Q16, three (3) answered until Q24 and one (1) answered until Q51. The incomplete responses were included in the data analysis since it is possible the respondent only wanted to answer up to the question where they stopped.



¹ CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world. CIVICUS has set up a monitor, which includes the situation regarding civic space in countries around the world.



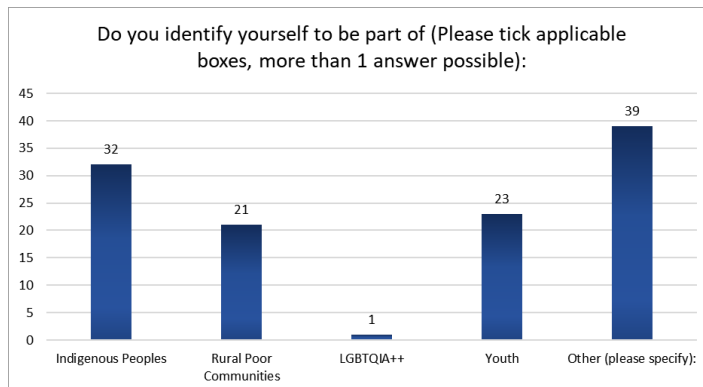
Characteristics of survey participants

The respondents

The total number of GLA partner respondents in the process is 97 from 11 countries across three regions (Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia).

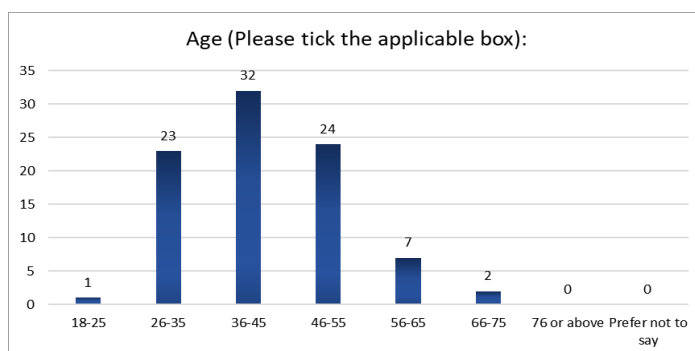
Almost all the respondents identify themselves as **(women) environmental human rights defenders ((W)EHRDs)**, or view their colleagues or organisation as (W)EHRDs. Given this demographic, the response to questions around civic space trends, security, participation and international lobby trajectory essentially describe the situation of (W)EHRDs covered by the GLA programme.

Respondents also identify themselves to be part of sectors which are often considered as vulnerable.



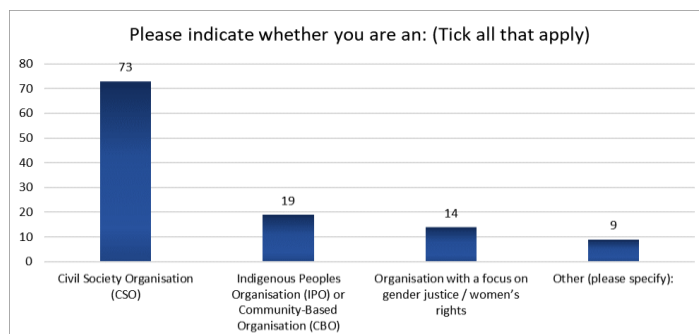
* other respondents identify as Civil Society Organizations (12), Professional (2), Adult (1), Human/Citizen (3), Environmentalist (1), Foreigner (1), Secondary stakeholder (1)

In terms of age demographic, a majority of the respondents are from the 36-45 age range, followed by 46-75 age range, with the minority from 35 years and below.



Their organisations

Most respondents qualified the organisation they are associated with as a civil society organisation (CSO). Note that multiple options were possible.



* Other refers to non-government organisations (NGO) learning / knowledge organisations, biodiversity conservation organisation, environmental organisation, not-for-profit media and organisation with a focus on disaster management, community development and forest management.



When asked about the main work or activity of the organisation, 39% said community strengthening and support.

The group of respondents working on a combination of work types (two or more) include those working on activism, campaigns and lobbying and advocacy work, supporting social movements, community strengthening, popular environmental education, research, empowerment of IP&LCs,

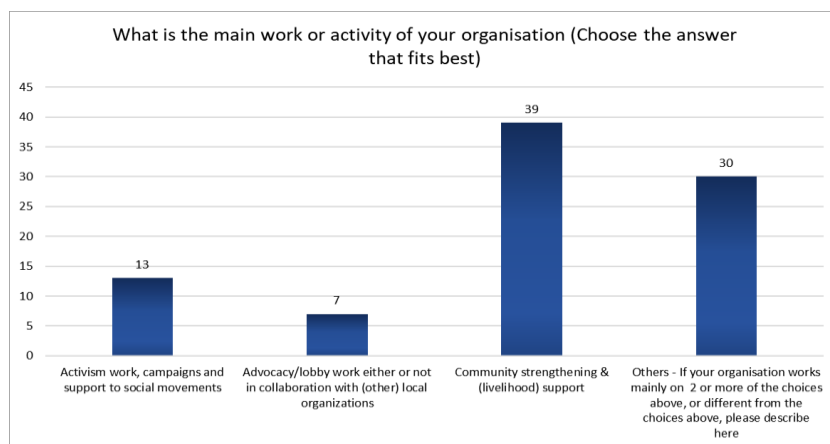
governance strengthening of indigenous knowledge systems, customary land formalisation, defence and protection of communities and territories, consolidation of indigenous autonomy, capacity building of women and youth organisations, strengthening of civil society, strengthening livelihoods (communities, women, youth), building capacity to recognise false solutions, anti-corruption work, militant action, and support to protected area management committees.

Activism work and campaigns are mostly done in the urban areas, outside the vicinity where the actual forests that need protecting, monitoring and ongoing sustainable management are located and where constant vigilance is necessary.

Most of the respondents' main work relates to community strengthening and (livelihood) support. This may be because most of the GLA partners work on community strengthening/(livelihood) support, but it could also be because these GLA partners were more responsive to the survey than other GLA partners that are not active in that work. It is important to bear in mind when reflecting on this civic space report since the approach taken in this report is numerical in nature; i.e. the graphs show the numerical responses of the respondents. When interpreting the graphs, most of the respondents' work is relating to community strengthening and (livelihood) support.

Finally, when focusing on the size of the organisation, the majority of the respondents (40) belong to organisations that are small (both by the number of staff of 10 and less, and by designation within their country). Next would be medium sized organisations which are usually 11 to 25 staff members (34). The rest of the respondents belong to organisations which are considered large in their country - organisations which have 26 or more staff (14). There was one respondent from a network.

This size demographic (predominantly small up to 10 members) and type of work being done by the GLA partner of community level work, makes them susceptible to a multitude of complex challenges including difficulties in participation, inaccessibility of support when faced with harassment and other retaliatory actions, an inability to answer multiple and simultaneous challenges to civic space, an inability to pose an effective legal defence when faced by legal action/lawsuits, and a high tendency towards closure (freedom of association) when faced by sharp volatility in the economic crises.





Trends in civic space

A note on gender

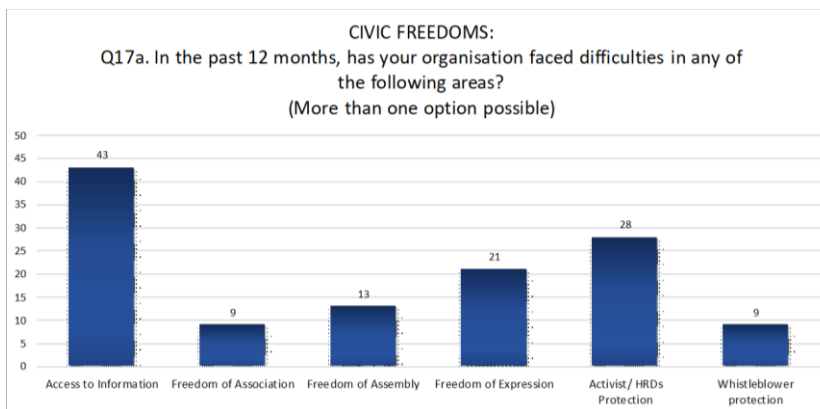
Gender justice and inclusion are important aspects of the GLA programme. For the purpose of the survey and the longer (internal) report, the consultants made a conscious decision not to have a specific section on gender but rather, highlight within each section any findings that may be relevant for further differential analysis as linked to gender. As this is a summarised version of that report, it follows the same structure.

General trends in the past 12 months

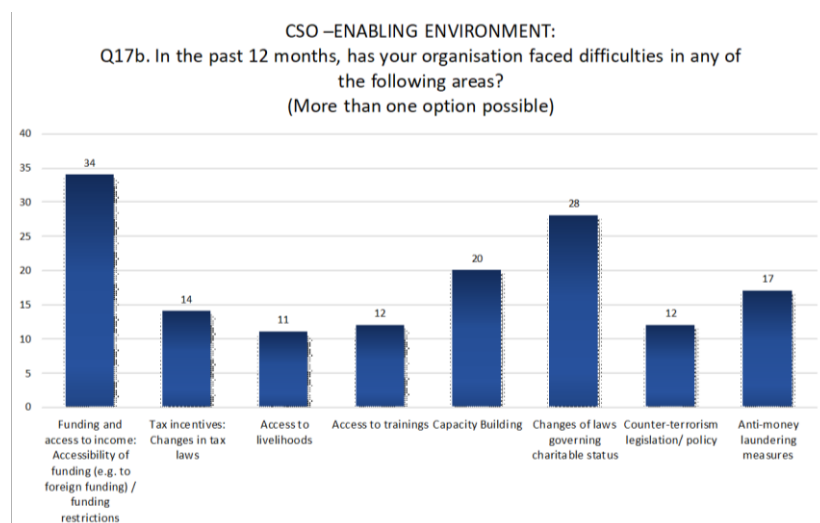
The review on general trends covers the 12 months between **November 2021 to November 2022**. Globally, most measures relating to the COVID-19 pandemic came to an end before November 2021. In many GLA countries restrictive laws were implemented and were still in force at the time the consultants wrote their report. Also, the economic and social effects of the pandemic were still being felt in most countries.

During this period, collectively, GLA partners from all 11 countries experienced difficulties in the four dimensions of civic space (civic freedoms, CSO-enabling environment and citizen/CSO participation).

The following graph shows the GLA partners experienced difficulties in all aspects of the **CIVIC freedoms** dimension of civic space.

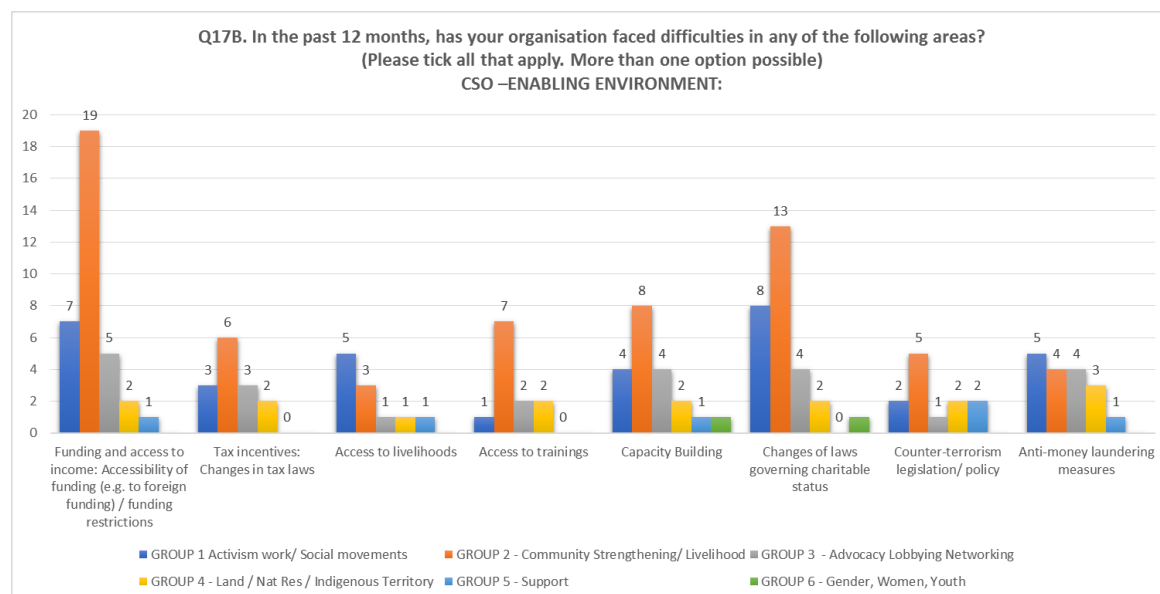


For a **CSO-enabling environment**, the following graph shows the difficulties faced by the GLA partners in that period.



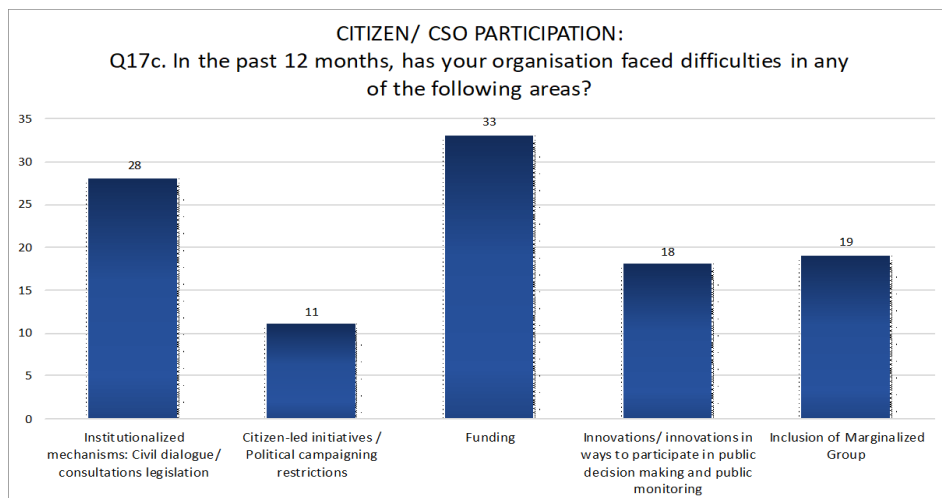


Breaking this graph down to **the type of organisation of the GLA partner**, the following picture arises.



It is interesting to note that GLA partners working on **community strengthening/livelihood** are experiencing the most difficulties within the CSO-enabling environment in comparison to the other GLA partners. This may be because most of the GLA partners work on community strengthening/livelihood. However, it could also be that these GLA partners were more responsive to the survey than other GLA partners not active in that line of work.

For **citizen/CSO participation**, the following graph shows the difficulties faced by the respondents in the 12 month period.



The GLA partners also encountered other difficulties (94 incidents) in this period. These included:

- difficulties in access to/participation in decision-making processes (30)
- conflicts between allocating time for defending land/territories and time for generating income for their household (23)
- (indirect) threats to them or their family due to their work (16)
- difficulties in communicating with other members of the group or other groups (15)
- gender-based challenges which impeded them to continue their activities (10).

It is also worth noting 23 respondents indicated they did not face difficulties.



The table below is a summary of **the top three difficulties** experienced in civic space by GLA partners in the period **November 2021 to November 2022**.

	Civic Freedoms	CSO enabling Environment	Citizen CSO participation	Other difficulties
1	Access to information	Funding and access to income	Funding	Difficulties in access to/participation in decision-making processes
2	Activist/HRDs protection	Changes of laws governing charitable status	Institutionalized mechanisms: Civil dialogue/consultations legislation	Conflicts between allocating time for defending land/territories and time for generation income for your household
3	Freedom of Expression	Capacity building	Inclusion of marginalised group	(Indirect) threats to you or your family due to your work

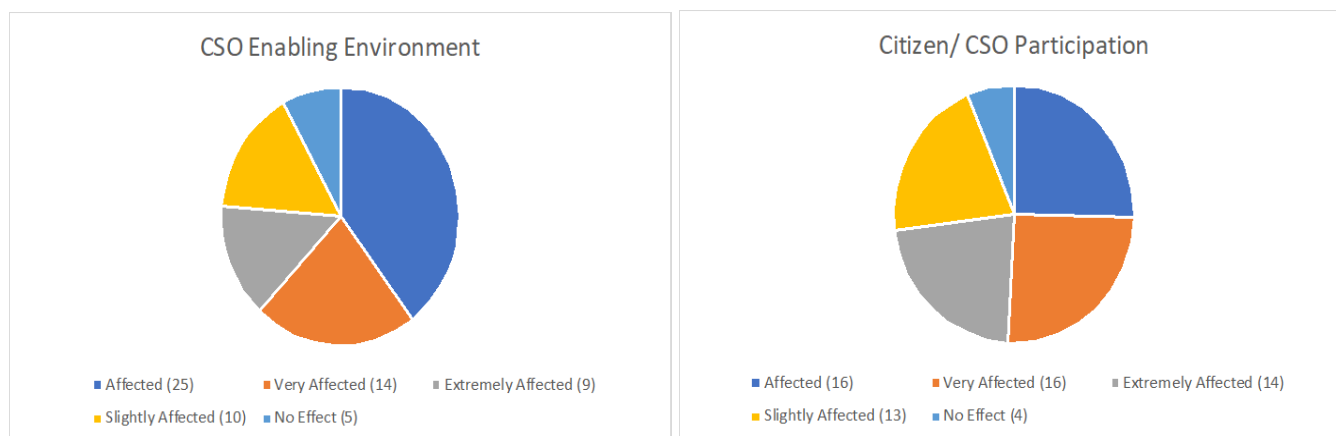
Globally, funding, access to income, time for generating income and changes in tax laws and tax incentives are top ranked concerns along the different strands and questions on civic space. These concerns can be linked to the (lack of) financial stability, tax incentives and financial flows of the organisations and the individuals that affect the capacity of the organisations to continue work, and for individuals to carry out family duties/obligations and organisational responsibilities. From key informant interviews, concerns around income and funding are also related to inflation and expanding poverty especially during the pandemic.

Regionally, the respondents from the African region reported the largest number of difficulties in civic freedoms, CSO-enabling environment and other. Respondents from the Southeast Asia region indicated they encountered more difficulties in citizen CSO participation.

Generally, based on the perspective of the respondents, the enabling environment in countries and/or landscapes where GLA partners operate has improved or remained the same in the period November 2021 to November 2022. There are 27 partners who reported that the situation in their country improved and 21 where the situation remained the same. However, a third of GLA partners reported a deterioration (15) or strong deterioration (11) of the situation in their countries. The GLA partners working on community strengthening/livelihood showed the most number of incidences and/or difficulties encountered. This is followed by activism work/social movements, and an advocacy and lobbying network. As stated earlier this may be because a high number of the GLA partners work on community strengthening/livelihood. Alternatively, it could also be that these GLA partners were more responsive to the survey than other GLA partners not active in that line of work.

COVID-19

A substantial majority of the respondents believe **their country's civic space was affected by the COVID-19** pandemic ranging from affected to extremely affected on their civic freedoms. Taking a closer look, the following picture appears:





Regionally, the respondents located in Southeast Asia were the most affected followed by those in Africa and Latin America.

Among the difficulties generally encountered by CSOs in civic space, the respondents noted that COVID-19 made things much more difficult especially in:

- access to/participation in decision making
- conflicts between allocating time for defending land/territories and time for generating income
- communicating with other members of the group or other groups.

For gender based challenges and (indirect) threats to respondent or respondents' family, there is still a significant number who are affected or extremely affected due to COVID-19.

The survey clearly demonstrates that concerns to not spread the virus to communities, together with COVID-19 measures, impacted GLA partners and limited their ability to go to the communities and carry out their work. In addition, given that most GLA partners work on community strengthening/(livelihood) support, their work was much impeded due to the restrictions to group gathering and travel. In the event of (protest) gatherings, GLA partners indicate the governments responded with a repressive and violent response and made many arrests. It was also mentioned that COVID-19 allowed individuals subject to exemptions from some of the restrictions to movement (e.g. the military), to use patrols for illicit purposes harmful to the environment such as illegal logging and commercial charcoal trade.

It is also clear from the survey that although COVID-19 restrictions were in place, illegal activities (i.e. illegal deforestation/extractive activities) did not stop. On the contrary, some GLA partners indicated an increase in these activities. Also governments used the COVID-19 pandemic to implement new guidelines and directives for CSOs. Due to COVID-19 measures, there was no place for consultation and inclusion of the views and input of CSOs. Some regulations were implemented under the cover of anti-money laundering laws, but ended up with new directives and restrictions for non-profit organisations.

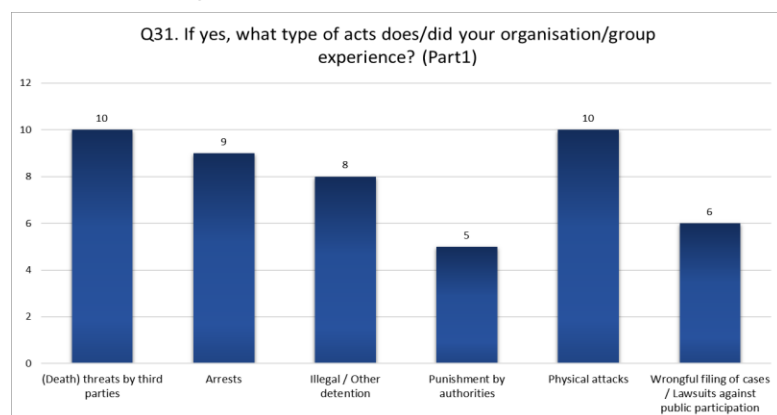
Safety and security

GLA partners

The GLA partners experienced difficulties in civic space as well as **actual direct physical and political retaliation (107 incidents) for their work under the GLA programme**. The graphs below show the types of retaliation experienced by the GLA partners.

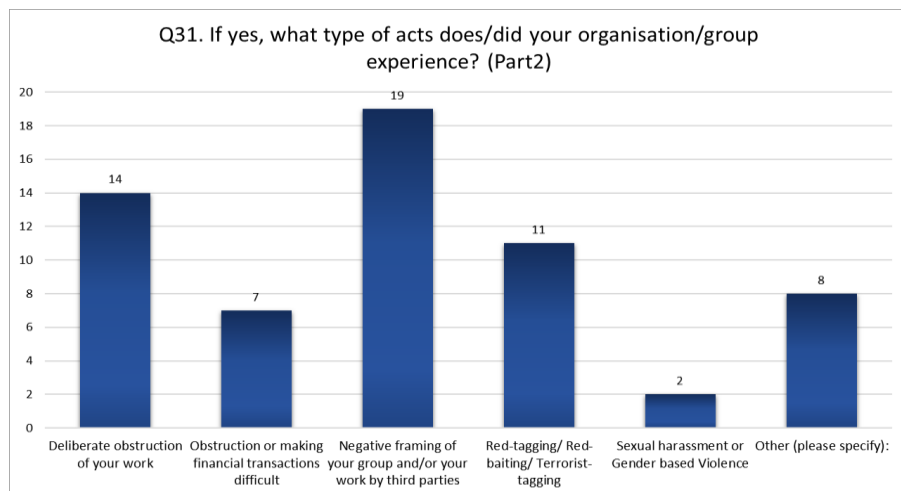
Part 1 graph shows direct **physical and bodily harm** on the GLA partner organisation. Part 2 graph typology of retaliation shows **political repression**.

Part 1: Typology of retaliation - physical harm





Part 2: Typology of retaliation - political repression



Other types of retaliation specified were:

- threats of violence by community members
- expropriation of documentation, threats to burn archives, political trials disguised as administrative trials, limitation of labour rights, etc.
- the uninvited presence of national security operatives in some of our meetings without our knowledge
- partners' communities experiencing arrest on illegal activity on their ancestral domain
- harassment
- political trial, disguised as a trial with a public entity.

Most GLA partners that experienced retaliation were aged between 36-55. A majority of those who experienced retaliation are male (68% or 64%), with females also affected in smaller numbers (39% or 36%).

The **top four retaliation mechanisms experienced by men** are deliberate obstruction of their work (10); negative framing of their group and/or their work by third parties (10); (death) threats by third parties (7); and arrests (7).

The **top four retaliation mechanisms experienced by women** are negative framing of their group and/or their work by third parties (9); red-tagging/red-baiting/terrorist-tagging (5); physical attacks (4); deliberate obstruction of their work (4) and others specified (4).

Both female and male respondents reported their organisation experienced all the types of retaliation mentioned. More male respondents reported incidences of physical retaliation than female respondents. In terms of political repression, both female and male respondents reported a similar number of incidents, except for the deliberate obstruction of work.

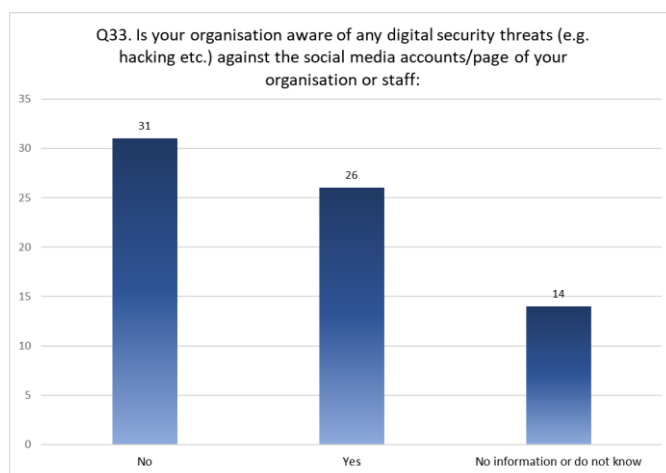


The following table gives an overview of the types of retaliations reported per country.

(Death) threats	Bolivia, DRC, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Philippines
Physical attacks	Bolivia, DRC, Indonesia, Liberia, Philippines, Uganda
Arrests	Bolivia, DRC, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Philippines, Uganda
Illegal /other detention	Bolivia, DRC, Liberia, Philippines, Uganda
Negative framing	Bolivia, Cameroon, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, Liberia, Malaysia, Philippines, Uganda
Red tagging/terrorist tagging	Bolivia, Liberia, Philippines, Uganda
Punishment by authorities	Bolivia, Liberia, Uganda
Wrongful filing of cases (SLAPP)	Bolivia, Cameroon, Malaysia, Philippines, Uganda
Deliberate obstruction of work	Bolivia, Cameroon, DRC, Ghana, Liberia, Uganda
Obstruction/making financial transactions difficult	Bolivia, Ghana, Uganda, Vietnam
Sexual harassment/GBV	Philippines, Uganda

It is interesting to note that only the Philippines and Uganda are mentioned as countries where sexual harassment and gender based violence (GBV) were experienced. However, since the surveys are anonymised, it is unclear if this might also be linked to factors such as the number of females that responded to the survey and whether this varied per country. The manner of responding to such questions may also be culturally determined.

With regard to **digital security**, the following graph shows that most GLA partners are not aware of digital security threats (e.g. hacking) against their organisation. One of the respondents shared that there has been a hacking of donation websites and of social media and WhatsApp accounts. However, as the surveys are anonymised, it is unclear if this might also be linked to the respondents not having access to this kind of information because it is outside the scope of their role within their organisation.



There were 36 GLA partners who have taken digital security measures to counter digital security threats. Twenty five (25) have not taken digital security measures, and 10 have responded with no information or do not know.

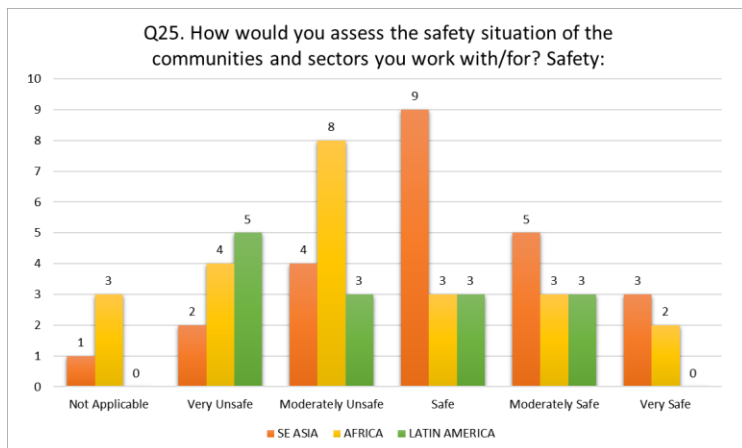
Digital security measures undertaken were orientation/training on digital security, identification of staff or experts to help in digital security, and implementing password and email security measures. Also the use of platforms for virtual meetings or conversations with higher degrees of security than those commonly used, such as Zoom. The more expensive digital safety measures can only be implemented if sufficient funds are raised (off site, out of the country information storage).



GLA partner communities

Half of the respondents observe that their partner communities and sectors they support in the GLA programme (e.g. indigenous peoples & local communities, women etc.) are safe, moderately safe or very safe. The other half, however, observes that the communities and sectors are moderately unsafe or very unsafe.

Regionally the following picture arises.



Almost half of the respondents report that their partner communities and sectors are exposed/very exposed to dangerous situations. Thirty percent of the respondents report that their partner communities and sectors are not exposed/slightly to moderately exposed.

Less than half of the respondents observed that their partner communities/sectors also experienced actual retaliation ranging from physical attacks to political repression.

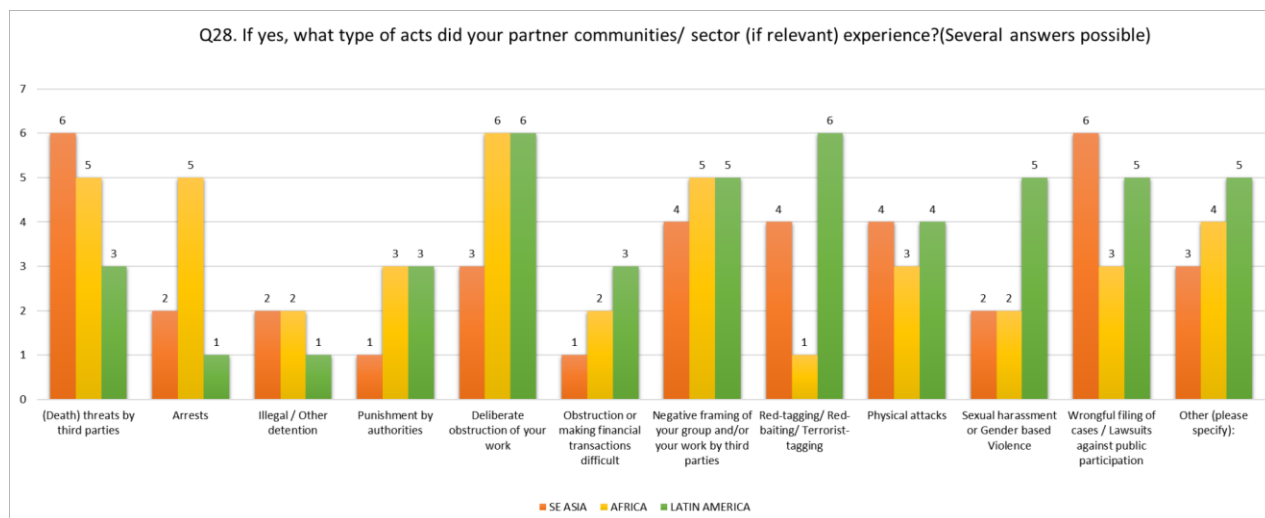




The table below sets out the kind retaliation acts experienced by GLA partner communities.

Retaliation acts experienced by GLA Partner Communities in the past 12 months	
(Death) threats by third parties	14
Arrests	8
Illegal / Other detention	5
Punishment by authorities	7
Deliberate obstruction of your work	15
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	6
Negative framing of your group and/or your work by third parties	14
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	11
Physical attacks	11
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	9
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	14
Other (please specify):	12

Regionally, the following picture arises.

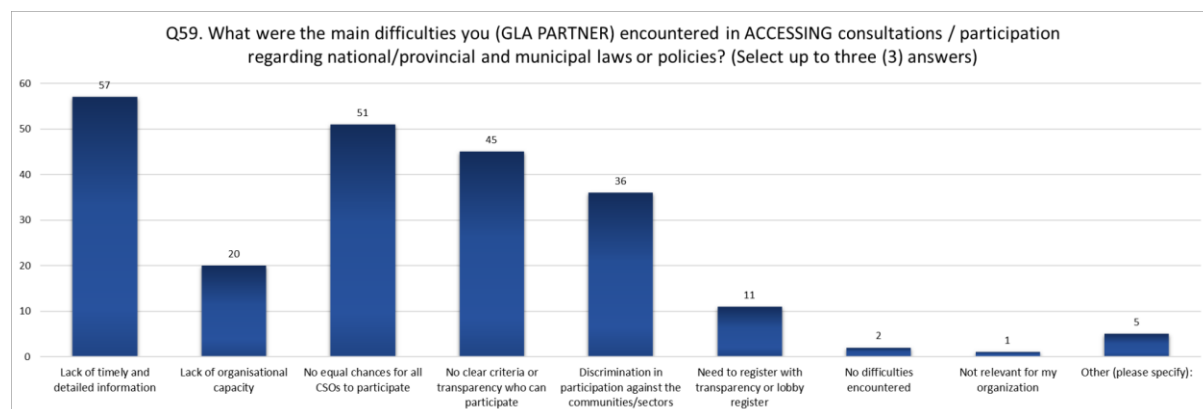




Participation in public decision-making processes

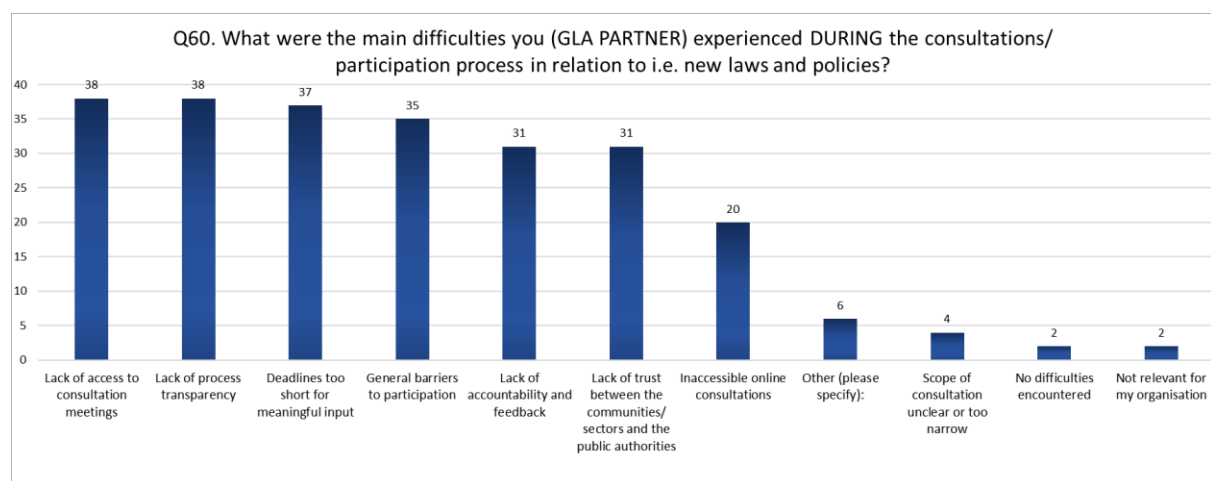
GLA partners

The graphs below set out the responses of the GLA partner with respect to their difficulties in relation to **accessing** consultations/participation regarding national/provincial and municipal policies, and also the difficulties **during** these consultations/participation processes.



Other difficulties in accessing consultations/participation mentioned by the GLA partners were the lack of financial resources to initiate dialogues and consultations especially on urgent and emerging critical issues. It was also mentioned that consultations are totally manipulated and controlled by the ruling power, that consultations are devalued, reduced to administrative rituals and far removed from the fulfilment of rights. Also, consultations were not convened and a GLA partner was discriminated against due to their ongoing campaign in the GLA landscape.

During the consultations/participation, the following picture arises.

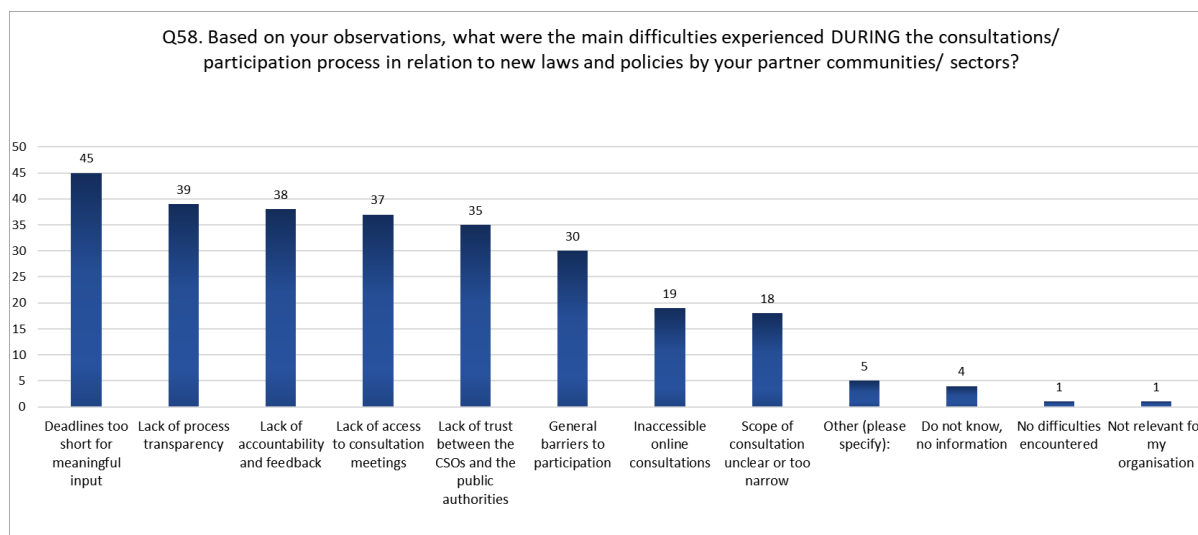
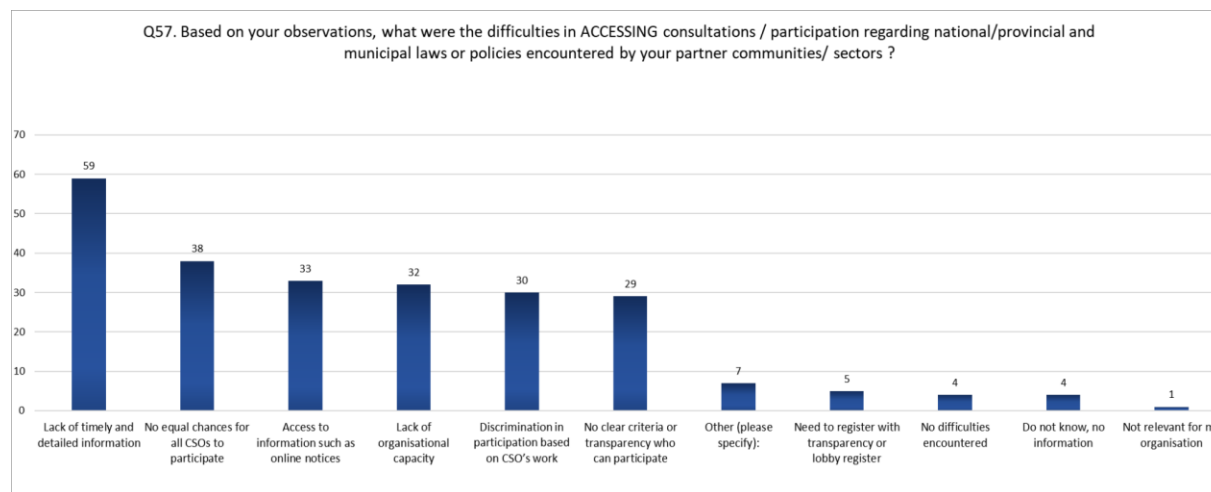


The survey results show that the consultations/participation process for the GLA partners in the countries where the FfjF programme is implemented leaves much to be desired.



GLA partner communities and sectors

Difficulties encountered by GLA partner communities and sectors are shown in following graphs.



Once again, the survey results make it clear that consultations/participation processes for the GLA partner communities and sectors of the countries where the FfJF programme is implemented leaves much to be desired.

National role versus local government/administrations

The survey also delved into respondents' perception of the relationship of their organisation with the different governing bodies and the role they take in enabling civic space. Feedback on the national government was negative but a look at local and sub-national government/authorities gives a mixed picture. Some respondents indicated to have a normal or good relationship with the local authorities that allows them to engage and discuss issues. Some respondents thought this could be because the local authorities are required to work with local communities and are more open to dialogue. Another reason respondents suggested was that local authorities are also more interested in improving the livelihoods of their communities. However, a substantial part of the respondents were not positive about the role and relationship they had with local



government/authorities. For example, one respondent cited that during meetings with local authorities, these did not accord a space to the leader of IP&LCs. Another said their local authority did not recognise indigenous peoples' cultural aspects in environmental protection.

Emergency funding mechanisms

The programme does not have a central emergency fund to support (W)EHRDs of CSOs in need. It was agreed at the beginning of the programme that individual Alliance members and technical partners would ensure they had some financial space within their own budgets to provide immediate strategic support to CSO partners/partner IP&LCs and (W)EHRDs in their network in case of emergencies. The emergency funds are managed in a decentralised way, with each Alliance member and technical partner responsible for defining the funding modality. Each GLA member is also responsible for ensuring their partners are aware of how to access emergency funds, and the steps they need to take to access them. In addition to these emergency funds, mechanisms such as the FoE Internationalist solidarity system are in place to support the (W)EHRDs in different ways.

When asked about **emergency funding within the GLA programme**, more than half of the respondents knew of the mechanisms available but had not (yet) felt the need to access them. Almost 30% of respondents reported they had no knowledge of the funds.

Eleven (11) respondents had experience in accessing emergency funding. Of these, half found the funds very accessible. Two thirds of the respondents that indicated they had received emergency funds stated that the amount was insufficient to fully address the issues.

Rule of law

Most GLA partners are not involved in legal cases. Eighteen organisations indicated they were involved in legal cases as a defending party, of which nine experienced obstacles because of it. Thirteen organisations responded that they are involved in legal cases as plaintiffs, of which five experience hindrance.

Relating specifically to GBV cases, a GLA partner responded that these cases were delayed due to the failure of the court clerks to place rape and GBV cases on the docket of circuit courts and specialised courts in some counties across the areas they are active. Another GLA partner explained that they have come under scrutiny from all the NPO (non-profit organisation) licensing agencies and pension and tax authorities since they started a legal case against the government to secure an important biodiverse forest. The GLA partner had to open a harassment file at their office. Also, one respondent shared that their organisation went to court to challenge the government's discussion of illegal halting of CSO activities. Since then the government and oil companies perceive their organisation as enemies.

What is also hindering the work of GLA partners is the wrongful filing of lawsuits, the so-called SLAPPS. A SLAPP is a lawsuit brought solely with the aim of intimidating and silencing a critical party. In the previous chapter on safety and security it became clear that GLA partners and communities are faced with these SLAPPS. The complainant party's strategy may include forcing the accused party to incur legal costs so high that they have to give up criticism or opposition. This intended goal may be achieved by the complainant through multiple lawsuits. The complainant's starting point is not always to win the lawsuit. The threat of lawsuits themselves can have a chilling effect.

A Bolivian partner indicated there is a national law on legal entities (Law 351) that gives the government the power to dissolve NGOs and other organisations in a discretionary manner, when - at the discretion of any authority or public official - the organisation does not comply with the obligation imposed on it in the aforementioned law to submit to governmental plans.

Almost 70% of the GLA partners involved in a legal case feel that it will not be resolved by the court or government agency in a fair way. Most of these partners indicate that the national judiciary courts tend to



side with the government and rule in its favour. Other concerns raised by respondents that could also impact the decision were practices of corruption and impunity within these institutions.

Media and social media

Freedom of expression was identified as an area of difficulty by the GLA partners. This is echoed by the situation of the media as observed by the GLA partners.

The graph below sets out what type of acts the media experienced regionally according to the GLA partners.

Q51. If yes, what type of acts did the media /press/ journalists in your country experience? (Several answers possible)	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
(Death) threats by third parties	13	12	11
Arrests	13	18	7
Illegal / Other detention	10	17	8
Punishment by authorities	9	11	5
Deliberate obstruction of their work	9	13	13
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	4	1	2
Negative framing of their group and/or their work by third parties	10	9	7
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	11	3	9
Physical attacks	12	13	8
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	6	1	3
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	9	9	4
Do not know, no information	2	2	0
Other (please specify):	0	2	4
Total Incidence	108	111	81

A substantial majority of the GLA partners did not experience any (retaliatory) acts on social media because of the work they are doing. However, 15 respondents cited acts ranging from death threats, negative framing, physical attacks, GBV and wrongful filing of cases (SLAPPS). More specifically, it was indicated that social bots/internet trolls responded to posts, and cyberbullying was experienced.

International contacts and lobbying

Most GLA partners are either already engaging in international lobby trajectories related to civic space or are considering becoming engaged. Trajectories mentioned by the respondents were:

- sending reports to special rapporteurs of the UN (28)
- universal periodic review with the Human Rights Council of the UN (27)
- participating in cycles of UN convention such as CEDAW, CCR or ESCR (25)
- other UN lobby trajectories (e.g. UN binding treaty on business and human rights) and EU lobby trajectories (17).

The survey also found that for the GLA partners, **foreign embassies** located in their country are considered valuable allies in the context of civic space. Almost 25% of the respondents answered that the actions of the **foreign embassies** were effective or very effective. Some respondents also mentioned that approaching an embassy should only be done for certain cases. Accessing the embassy of any foreign country is not always seen as positive and could bring risks.

Of 70 respondents, one third said they were aware their organisation was related to the **embassy of the Netherlands** in relation to civic space. Almost half of the respondents said they did not engage with the embassy or did not have knowledge of it. The lack of information may be because it is not within the role of the respondent to engage with the embassy. In some cases, it may relate to the fact that not all GLA countries have a Dutch embassy.



Some examples of positive experiences with the Dutch embassy in their country that were highlighted by respondents include:

- In some countries, regular updates take place in relation to the situation of (W)EHRDs and the protection of the environment.
- A dialogue with the Dutch embassy was held in one country regarding cases of conflict between the community and investors from the Netherlands. Working sessions with the Dutch embassy and a GLA partner were held to defend land rights for indigenous peoples.
- One partner responded that when one of the other GLA partners was under pressure of arrest and in hiding, they engaged with the Dutch embassy to use its powers to share the right information to exonerate the member as well as put pressure on various media houses to convey the right information.

Conclusions

Forests for a Just Future (FfJF) programme indicator six refers to the "extent to which men and women IP&LCs, men and women EHRDs, groups that work with a gender transformative/gender justice approach, and other CSOs experience increased civic space, human rights, and women's rights."

The survey and report provide insights into how GLA partners in the 11 countries of implementation currently experience civic space and exercise rights. The findings confirm the narrative and assumptions on the subject of civic space and power inequalities set out in our ToC. The findings suggest that GLA partner CSOs face many types of restrictions, both formal (legal, regulative, administrative) and informal (e.g. intimidation, stigmatising, delegitimisation). Many IP&LC leaders and W/EHRDs are subject to arbitrary arrests and assault, retaliatory litigation and even death.

This context affects the enabling environment needed to implement the GLA programme since combating deforestation and related human rights violations requires the ability to stand up against vested interests. It is apparent that the ability to do this is heavily impacted by the complex context in which the GLA partners have to operate.

Based on the survey's findings, the consultants also formulated a set of general and region-specific recommendations to the GLA. Since these are programmatic in nature, they are not included in this summary report but can be shared on request.

The GLA has used the main findings summarised in this report, and results from midterm review (MTR) that took place in 2023, to carry out further analysis of the situation.

Taking into account the findings from the civic space report and additional insights from the MTR, the GLA had set up an internal civic space task force. It has been asked to discuss the recommendations, to suggest which are most relevant and feasible to address during the second half of the programme and to provide guidance on how they may be put into practice. Updates on progress of this taskforce and throughout the programme in general will be presented in our annual reports going forward.



Annex A - Dashboard global

Civic eating of GLA programme countries

CIVICUS RATING	Nov 2022	Mar 2023
Bolivia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Cameroon	Repressed	Repressed
Colombia	Repressed	Repressed
DRC	Repressed	Repressed
Ghana	Narrowed	Obstructed
Indonesia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Liberia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Malaysia	Obstructed	Obstructed
Philippines	Obstructed	Repressed
Uganda	Repressed	Repressed
Vietnam	Closed	Closed

Difficulties experienced by GLA partners

Civic Freedoms		CSO Enabling Environment	
Access to Information	46	Funding and Access to income	34
Activist HRD Protection	32	Changes of laws governing charitable status	26
Freedom of Expression	28	Capacity Building	20
Freedom of Assembly	15	Anti Money Laundering measures	16
Whistleblower protection	11	Tax Incndtives/ Change in bank laws	14
Freedom of Association	9	Counter terrorism legislation/ policy	14
		Access to trainings	12
		Access to livelihoods	10
Citizen CSO participation		Digital Security	
Funding	33	Awareness on digital security threat to organisation	26
Institutionalized mechanisms/ civil dialogue/ consultations legislation	28		
Inclusion of marginalised groups	19		
Innovations/ innovations in ways to participate in public decision making and public monitoring	18		
Citizen-led initiatives	11		

Retaliation acts experienced by GLA Partners in the past 12 months

(Death) threats by third parties	10
Arrests	9
Illegal / Other detention	8
Punishment by authorities	5
Deliberate obstruction of your work	14
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	7
Negative framing of your group and/or your work by third parties	19
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	11
Physical attacks	10
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	2
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	6
Other (please specify):	8

Retaliation acts experienced by GLA Partner Communities in the past 12 months

(Death) threats by third parties	14
Arrests	8
Illegal / Other detention	5
Punishment by authorities	7
Deliberate obstruction of your work	15
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	6
Negative framing of your group and/or your work by third parties	14
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	11
Physical attacks	11
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	9
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	14
Other (please specify):	12

Difficulties experienced by GLA Partner DURING consultations/ participation process in relation to i.e. new laws and policies?

Deadlines too short for meaningful input	37
General barriers to participation	35
Inaccessible online consultations	20
Lack of access to consultation meetings	38
Lack of accountability and feedback	31
Lack of process transparency	38
Lack of trust between the communities/ sectors and the public authorities	31
No difficulties encountered	2
Not relevant for my organisation	2
Scope of consultation unclear or too narrow	4
Other (please specify):	6

Difficulties encountered by GLA Partner in ACCESSING consultations/ participations regarding national/provincial & municipal laws or policies

Lack of timely and detailed information	57
Lack of organisational capacity	20
No equal chances for all CSOs to participate	51
No clear criteria or transparency who can participate	45
Discrimination in participation against the communities/sectors	36
Need to register with transparency or lobby register	11
No difficulties encountered	2
Not relevant for my organization	1
Other (please specify):	5



Annex B - Dashboard regional

When interpreting the graphs below, the total number of respondents by region is Africa (36), Southeast Asia (35), and Latin America (18). This includes those who were able to complete the survey in full and those who were not able to complete it in its entirety.

Difficulties in the period November 2021 to November 2022.

Q17A. In the past 12 months, has your organisation faced difficulties in any of the following areas? CIVIC FREEDOMS:	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Access to Information	15	17	11
Freedom of Association	1	5	3
Freedom of Assembly	6	4	3
Freedom of Expression	11	7	3
Activist/ HRDs Protection	10	12	6
Whistleblower protection	2	4	3
Total Incidence	45	49	29

Q17B. In the past 12 months, has your organisation faced difficulties in any of the following areas? CSO –ENABLING ENVIRONMENT:	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Funding and access to income: Accessibility of funding (e.g. to foreign funding) / funding restrictions	15	13	6
Tax incentives: Changes in tax laws	3	6	5
Access to livelihoods	6	4	1
Access to trainings	1	10	1
Capacity Building	6	14	0
Changes of laws governing charitable status	12	7	9
Counter-terrorism legislation/ policy	6	3	3
Anti-money laundering measures	8	7	2
Total Incidence	57	64	27

Q17C. In the past 12 months, has your organisation faced difficulties in any of the following areas? CITIZEN/ CSO PARTICIPATION:	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Institutionalized mechanisms: Civil dialogue/ consultations legislation	14	7	7
Citizen-led initiatives / Political campaigning restrictions	4	6	1
Funding	11	18	4
Innovations/ innovations in ways to participate in public decision making and public monitoring	8	6	4
Inclusion of Marginalized Group	12	5	2
Total Incidence	49	42	18



Q18. In the past 12 months, has your organisation faced difficulties in any of the following areas:	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Difficulties in access to/participation in decision-making processes	10	12	8
Conflicts between allocating time for defending land/territories and time for generating income for your household	9	9	5
Gender-based challenges which impeded you to continue your activities	3	5	2
(Indirect) threats to you or your family due to your work	5	8	3
Difficulties in communicating with other members of the group or other groups	3	7	5
None	11	9	3
Other (please specify):	2	3	3
Total Incidence	43	53	29

Retaliation Acts Experienced By GLA Partner in the past 12 months	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
(Death) threats by third parties	3	6	1
Arrests	2	6	1
Illegal / Other detention	2	5	1
Punishment by authorities	0	3	2
Deliberate obstruction of your work	0	9	5
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	1	3	3
Negative framing of your group and/or your work by third	7	8	4
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	5	2	4
Physical attacks	3	5	2
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	1	1	0
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	3	2	1
Other (please specify):	2	3	3
Total Incidence	29	53	27

Retaliation Acts Experienced By GLA Partner Communities in the past 12 months	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
(Death) threats by third parties	6	5	3
Arrests	2	5	1
Illegal / Other detention	2	2	1
Punishment by authorities	1	3	3
Deliberate obstruction of your work	3	6	6
Obstruction or making financial transactions difficult	1	2	3
Negative framing of your group and/or your work by third parties	4	5	5
Red-tagging/ Red-baiting/ Terrorist-tagging	4	1	6
Physical attacks	4	3	4
Sexual harassment or Gender based Violence	2	2	5
Wrongful filing of cases / Lawsuits against public participation	6	3	5
Other (please specify):	3	4	5
Total Incidence	38	41	47

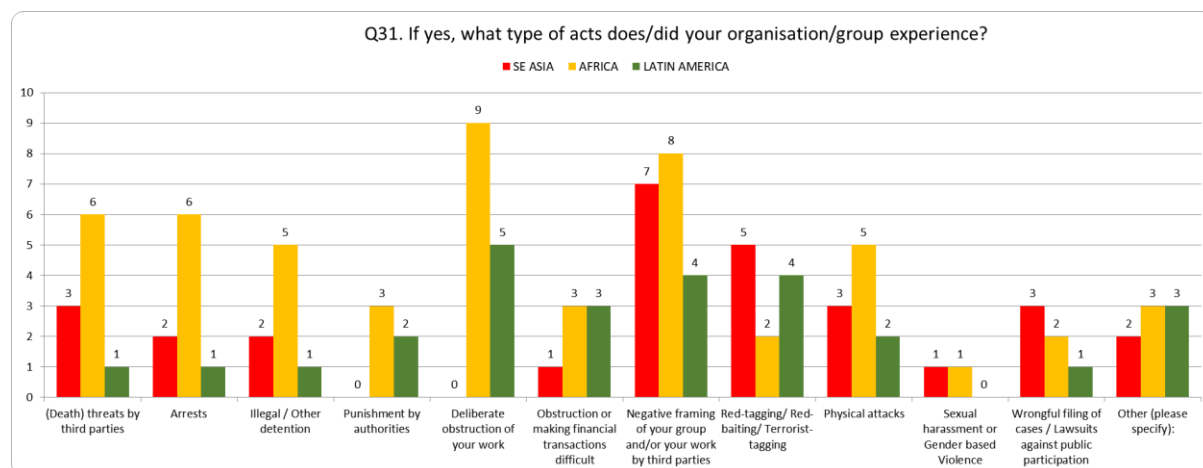


Difficulties - consultations/participation.

Difficulties encountered by GLA Partner in ACCESSING consultations/participations regarding national/provincial & municipal laws or policies	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Lack of timely and detailed information	23	20	14
Lack of organisational capacity	12	6	2
No equal chances for all CSOs to participate	19	22	10
No clear criteria or transparency who can participate	21	15	9
Discrimination in participation against the communities/sectors	13	18	5
Need to register with transparency or lobby register	6	3	2
No difficulties encountered	2	0	0
Not relevant for my organization	0	0	1
Other (please specify):	1	1	3
Total Incidence	97	85	46

Difficulties experienced by GLA Partner DURING consultations/participation process in relation to i.e. new laws and policies?	SE ASIA	AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA
Deadlines too short for meaningful input	16	14	7
General barriers to participation	16	10	9
Inaccessible online consultations	7	13	0
Lack of access to consultation meetings	16	15	7
Lack of accountability and feedback	18	11	2
Lack of process transparency	17	12	9
Lack of trust between the communities/ sectors and the public authorities	11	12	8
No difficulties encountered	2	0	0
Not relevant for my organisation	1	1	0
Scope of consultation unclear or too narrow	1	1	2
Other (please specify):	2	1	3
Total Incidence	107	90	47

Other difficulties.





Annex C - Methodology

- The methodology is a mixed method, with aspects of qualitative and quantitative analysis.
- The method used in analysing quantitative aspects of the survey results is looking at frequency. The qualitative aspects focused on critical case sampling, extreme case sampling and expert sampling (key informants). Below are the definitions of each sampling method.
- As indicated in the terms of reference, the baseline is primarily a qualitative study which employed a survey as a means of gathering the information. In selecting the respondents of the survey, the baseline essentially used non-probability sampling² (not random sampling) that is a combination of quota and network sampling. Non probability sampling does not use a complete survey frame, is less expensive and easier to implement. However, it works on the assumption that those selected to be respondents are representative samples of the target population.
- Critical case sampling³
 - > *"Critical case sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique that is particularly useful in exploratory qualitative research, research with limited resources, as well as research where a single case (or small number of cases) can be decisive in explaining the phenomenon of interest. It is this decisive aspect of critical case sampling that is arguably the most important. To know if a case is decisive, think about the following statements: If it happens there, it will happen anywhere? or If it doesn't happen there, it won't happen anywhere? and If that group is having problems, then we can be sure all the groups are having problems? (Patton, 2002, p.237). While such critical cases should not be used to make statistical generalisations, it can be argued that they can help in making logical generalisations. However, such logical generalisations should be made carefully."*
- Extreme case sampling⁴
 - > *"Extreme (or deviant) case sampling is a type of purposive sampling that is used to focus on cases that are special or unusual, typically in the sense that the cases highlight notable outcomes, failures or successes. These extreme (or deviant) cases are useful because they often provide significant insight into a particular phenomenon, which can act as lessons (or cases of best practice) that guide future research and practice. In some cases, extreme (or deviant) case sampling is thought to reflect the purest form of insight into the phenomenon being studied."*
- Expert sampling⁵
 - > *"Expert sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique that is used when your research needs to glean knowledge from individuals that have particular expertise. This expertise may be required during the exploratory phase of qualitative research, highlighting potential new areas of interest or opening doors to other participants. Alternatively, the particular expertise that is being investigated may form the basis of your research, requiring a focus only on individuals with such specific expertise. Expert sampling is particularly useful where there is a lack of empirical evidence in an area and high levels of uncertainty, as well as situations where it may take a long period of time before the findings from research can be uncovered. Therefore, expert sampling is a cornerstone of a research design known as expert elicitation."*

² www.questionpro.com/blog/non-probability-sampling/

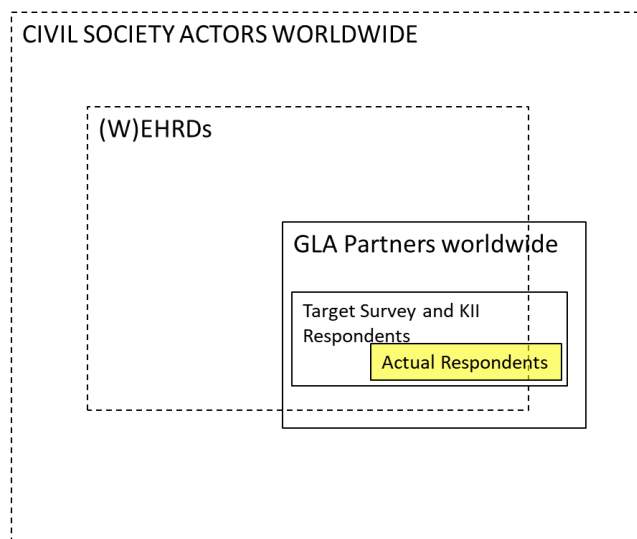
³ Purposive Sampling. www.dissertation.laerd.com/purposive-sampling.php#:~:text=Expert%20sampling%20is%20a%20type,individuals%20that%20have%20particular%20expertise

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*



Scope and limitations of the survey



- The target population (P) of the survey are **all staff and officers of the 67 GLA partners located in 11 countries**. The target respondents (sample size) of the survey are **134 staff/officers from the 67 GLA partners**, where the **quota set is each GLA partner would have two respondents, and that the two respondents would be one male and one female**.
- While the survey intended to look at the situation of GLA partners, there was a clear intent to ensure proportionality - ensuring one male, one female or at least 50-50 representation among the respondents, and that all GLA partners would be represented meaning all 67 partners would have two representatives/respondents. It used network sampling since the selection of the actual respondent is based on the recommendation/selection of the GLA partner itself and the team administering the survey accepted the respondent based on this.

Pilot	8		
Actual respondents	19	incomplete	3 up to 24, 1 up to 51
	70	complete	

- The total number of GLA partner respondents in the process is 97, composed of eight involved in the pilot and 89 involved in the main survey.
- The pilot survey was conducted with the Philippines GLA partners. There were a total of eight completed pilot survey responses. This was supplemented with key informant interviews with those involved in the pilot to gather feedback on the survey questions. The survey questions were then updated based on the recommendations of the GLA partners in the pilot. The data from the pilot is not included in the survey data analysis.
- The total number of actual respondents of the main survey is 89. The data analysis covered the results of the main survey. Out of the 19 who were not able to complete the survey, the majority answered until Q16, three (3) answered until Q24 and one (1) answered until Q51. The incomplete responses were included in the data analysis since it is possible that the respondent only wanted to answer up to the question where they stopped.



Explanation on varying totals

- The following reasons explain the varying total responses per question.
 - > 70 respondents were able to complete the survey, and 19 respondents were able to answer some but not all of the questions.
 - > Some questions allowed the respondent to proceed/skip since it was not a required question.
 - > Some questions were not translated in full (not all multiple choice options were translated).

Method for determining sample size

- In determining whether the total number of respondents fall within the acceptable range of the minimum sample size, we used [Slovin's Formula](#). It is a general equation used when the total population is known but does not know how a certain population behaves. As the project is primarily a qualitative information gathering baselining activity, the Slovin Formula may suffice in justifying sample size.
- For the 70 completed survey responses, the confidence level is 91.74%. For the total respondents of 89 completed and incomplete survey responses, the confidence level is 93.86%. The generally accepted confidence level is 95%. Given these numbers, it is important to supplement the information with the key informant interviews to ensure the data analysis is a better representation of the characteristics of the target population.
- Given that the selection of respondents was done through non-probability or purposive sampling, the best method of analysis for this would be descriptive statistics rather than inferential statistics. Review of literature on survey interpretation and survey protocol would show that the use of inferential statistics is best done when the sampling undertaken is random in the population. The short time allocated, the minimal changes allowed to the survey tool and the prohibition imposed on the survey team from knowing who the respondents would be posed as challenges in employing random sampling.
- In analysing the quantitative data within the survey, the survey team explored the viability of using the Pearson, Spearman, and/or Kendall correlation coefficients. Due to the unequal number of respondents in each country and each GLA Alliance partner, these correlation coefficients cannot be used. A problem will arise in the weight of the responses and would result in skewed analysis in favour of the group with the *bigger* weight.
- The results are analysed using descriptive statistics centering on frequency tables and relating the information to the data gathered via key informant interviews.