

# Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity in Europe

## The sustainability of CIGSs development interventions

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### 1. Introduction

This document presents the research proposal for the second phase of the study 'Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS) in Europe'. The first phase of this study, which ends in July 2022, examines the identity, role and position of CIGS in the Global North and studied CIGS in France, Belgium and the Netherlands via a mixed methods research design (survey, interviews & focus group discussions). The second, and final, phase (July 2022 – June 2023) will zoom in on the (different) role and position of CIGS in the Global South<sup>1</sup>. More precisely, we will study the sustainability of their development interventions, by assessing 1) the type of interventions they undertake and 2) how they interact with other stakeholders in the South. The main underlying assumption is that the (different) identity and role of CIGS in the Global North as identified in the first phase of the study affects their role in the Global South. Via a case study approach, northern based CIGS, their counterparts and partnerships and their development interventions, will be studied in two countries in the global south where a relatively large number of CIGS is active (e.g. Kenya and India).

While respecting the academic quality and independence of the research, the second phase will (like the first phase) be designed and implemented in close collaboration with participating CIGS support organisations. This is done to ensure that study aligns with actual policy questions of these organisations and can feed into their policy and practice and that of CIGS and their counterparts. The second phase is still open for organisations that consider to participate in the study as partners. Partners provide financial and where of relevance non-financial (e.g. network, research interns) support to the study. This documents sketches the relevance and goal of the study, the research design and its deliverables.

### 2. Relevance and Goal

Small-scale, voluntary development organisations, here referred to as Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity (CIGS), are certainly not a new actor in the playing field of international development cooperation. While some date back to colonial times, their number has increased considerably since mid-2000. Their emergence is resulting from macro-processes such as globalisation and individualisation. Consequently, CIGS are playing an increasingly prominent role in civil society in many countries in the global north. While scientific interest into CIGS increased over the past years, our understanding on the role of CIGS as development actors still leaves some important questions unanswered, of which some are being dealt with in the 'CIGS in Europe' study.

The 'CIGS in Europe' study is being conducted in close cooperation and with support of the 'Research & Action Network on European Citizen Initiatives for Global Solidarity'.<sup>2</sup> The study contributes to one of the cornerstones of the network, which is joint research. It is expected to foster joint learning, evidence based

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<sup>1</sup> Depending on the time to fundraise the necessary budget, the study might start in August and ends in July 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Within this network, civil society organisations from ten European countries are currently active and the aim is to expand this network further during the coming years. The network resulted from the two first editions of the European conference (2014 & 2019). For an overview of the participating organisations see:

<http://europeannetworkforcigs.eu/members/>. Radboud University is involved in the network as an academic partner.

policy making and spotlighting the work of CIGS enabling lobby for increased recognition and a strengthened position of CIGS at EU level.

Overall, the 'CIGS in Europe' study aims to obtain a deepened understanding of the CIGS landscape in each country and to unravel the (different) identity of CIGS as development actors, including both their role in the global north and their role in the global south. The first phase of this research project was initiated in June 2021 and will be completed by the summer of 2022. This part focused on 1) the characteristics of the organisations and of their development interventions, 2) the position in and relationship to the wider field of international cooperation (legitimacy), and 3) the role of CIGS in the global north (global citizenship). The study results in a CIGS typology.

Building on phase I of the study, the second phase will zoom in on the role and position of CIGS in the Global South. Key research questions are: what characterizes CIGS' development interventions, their role in the Global South, and their position in and relationship to other actors in the field (e.g., local counterparts)? To what extent are their interventions and partnerships sustainable? Building on the typology, we will increase our understanding on how the identity of CIGS, their role and position in the Global North (e.g., contribution to global citizenship) affects their role and position in the Global South (e.g., contribution to SDGs). The study approach will enable CIGS support organisations to come up with support for CIGS, that better recognizes the differences among CIGS in terms of identity and role and the impact these differences have on their impact in the global south.

Particular attention will be paid to the (global) context in which the study takes place and how CIGS respond to some key developments taking place. Three developments in the field of international development are considered. First, in view of the renewed call for *Shifting Power* and *decolonising development*, which results in a push to re-evaluate and re-think the structure of international development, special attention will be paid to relationships between CIGS and their local counterparts and participation of beneficiaries and other local actors. Second, the worldwide trend of *shrinking civic space*, especially in countries in the global south, is considered of relevance to the study. How does this affect the 'room to manoeuvre' of CIGS and, more importantly, their counterparts? And how does it shape their role and positioning (e.g., does it result in a tendency to operate under the radar, isolated from other actors)? In addition, where of relevance, the study will consider the consequences of *the (post-) COVID context* and *the war in Ukraine* for (the development interventions of) CIGS.

### 3. Research Design

#### *Joint efforts*

Building on the experience of the first phase of the 'CIGS in Europe' study, we are convinced that continuing CIGS research via a country-comparative design will result in the most optimal results. By having CIGS from various countries in the global north participate in the same study, the study can be carried out:

- Efficiently: one research design, one set of research tools, one centrally led (international) research team
- Effectively: previous studies confirmed the idea that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts", allowing to gain insights not within reach of individual country studies. In addition, a study with this scope enables us to get a proper understanding of the scale of the phenomenon. Which could strengthen the position of the network in, for example, it's future lobby efforts at EU level.

#### *Case study approach*

The objective of this phase is to provide an in-depth analysis of (the sustainability of) CIGS' development interventions. We understand sustainability as interventions that are locally led and aimed at system change. We hence apply a two-dimensional approach, considering both 1) the type of interventions CIGS undertake ('what is it that they do') and 2) how they give shape to their role ('how do they intervene').

To meet the research objectives, a case study approach will be adopted. Data collection will consist of project visits and in-depth interviews with CIGS and their counterparts. Although the actual scope of the

study depends on the available budget, we aim to include approximately 60 CIGS projects and partnerships operating in two different countries in the global south (30 per country)<sup>3</sup>. In the global north, we initially target those countries that participated in phase I of the study and/or in the COVID-19 study (Belgium, Denmark, France and the Netherlands, with possible extension to Germany and the UK). In the global south, we will select countries where a (relatively) large number of CIGS is active (e.g., Kenya and India). Country selection will be discussed in more detail with the funding organisations.

The study will be:

- Country specific: the study allows for different countries/support organisations to include country specific research topics in the research agenda
- Comparative: while allowing for a country specific focus resulting from contextual differences, a country comparison perspective is being pursued
- Retrospective: where possible, we aim to adopt a long-term perspective by building on previous CIGS' studies (include organisations that participated in earlier CIGS studies) and/or by looking back with respondents on the changes their organisations and interventions underwent.
- Future oriented: the study aims to disentangle trends in the diverse field of CIGS.
- Multi-cited: the research will study the identity and role of CIGS both in the context of the global North and the global South

#### **4. Deliverables**

The results of the study will be presented in an (English) report and an academic publication. The report will include policy recommendations for CIGS, their counterparts and CIGS support organisations. In addition, the findings will be discussed and shared via an online webinar inviting all participating organisations and, on request, during physical events of the co-funders. To guarantee that the study does not interfere with the partnerships between CIGS and CIGS support organisations, CIGS and their counterparts will be guaranteed anonymous participation. Therefore no specific information on organisations and their development interventions can be shared with co-funders.

#### **5. Collaboration & funding**

As in phase one, while persevering the academic independence, the study will be designed and conducted in cooperation with the co-funding organisations. It is aimed to conduct the study among CIGS (their partners and interventions) from Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom. However, in each country, cooperation is searched with CIGS support organisations.

The study will be coordinated by Radboud University, with Sara Kinsbergen as principal investigator and Lonneke Jansen as researcher and overall coordinator. They will conduct the study in close cooperation with academic partners in the participating countries. Research assistants in the different countries of study will be employed as part of the research team. In addition to this, the study aims to allow for qualified (master) students in the respective countries to participate in the study.

The total estimated budget for the study (see tentative budget Annex I) is 58.300 euro, of which 31.666 euro is already committed by a private donor and La Gulde. The remaining (tentative) amount for which funding is still required, concerns 26.634 euro. Organisations that consider co-funding the study, can express their interest to sara.kinsbergen@ru.nl. A separate meeting will be planned for with the funding organisations to agree on the research agenda and plan.

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<sup>3</sup> In consultation with co-funders, we can expand the study to 3 countries (20 projects and partnerships per country), this will affect the budget lines international travel and *Travel & accommodation field visits*.