

Policy development forum

Case study from the Arab region

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1- EE has five main dimensions:

- a. Formation, which is related to the legal framework
- b. Operation , where there are enabling and restraining factors
- c. Access to resources mainly financial resources
- d. Freedom of expression
- e. Right to peaceful assembly

One can add the CSO –state relations, and the relations among CSO themselves

2- Our area of focus

The efforts that we do are mainly focusing on “enhancing the advocacy role of CSO on economic and social policies”

This means tackling policies that are in direct relation with the individual and collective interests of the decision makers and their allies

We focus on a) macroeconomic policies b) redistribution c) social justice and inclusion in the decision making

How we do this?

3 levels:

- 1) national level , targeting CSO to develop the capacities, raising awareness and bringing the likeminded CSO to work together to target the decision makers at different levels,
- 2) Regional level, mainly the league of Arab states, looking for the right moments of interventions, including the ministerial meetings, economic and social summits etc.
- 3) global level, targeting the global actors including the IFI and the EU that are affecting the decision making processes and influencing national, regional and global contexts
With the EU we do the monitoring and follow up of the implementation of the National Action plans, the EU communications on various issues and negotiations with our governments including free trade and other staff
We are also interested in monitoring the EU positions at different global forums mainly in the UN and IFI

We were also engaged in the different format of structured dialogue

As for the results:

There is s tangible result

- 1- in terms of increase in number of CSO interested and working social and economic policies and engaged with global and regional activities
- 2- In terms of topics tackled such as the emergence of a regional group working on tax justice, and on social protection policies less CSO are interested with trade and development (investment, bilateral and multilateral agreements etc.) and public private partnerships

The challenges we are facing

- 1- shrinking space for CSO as a result of the mounting feeling of threats from CSO in addition to the realities of instability that we are witnessing in many countries of the region
- 2- weak capacity of CSO especially when tackling these topics, the need to shift from protesting to engaging in the public policy making
- 3- limited resources especially the cut in funding , the shift of funding towards emergency and relief as well as the technical and bureaucratic challenges to access funding from the donors

We need to:

- 1- enhance common work, networking and coalition building to empower CSO role
- 2- create space for civic engagement by creating channels and structured dialogue
- 3- Protect independent CSO by providing independent funding and untied aid

The relation between CSO and LA can be important in certain area such as:

- 1- Legal framework for decentralization and local and domestic resource mobilization
- 2- Water and sanitation, as well as solid waste management
- 3- Local and rural development and addressing urban poverty