2022 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

SIERRA LEONE

OCTOBER 2023
2022 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

For Sierra Leone
October 2023

Developed by:
United States Agency for International Development
Bureau of Development, Democracy, and Innovation
Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Center

Acknowledgment: This publication was made possible through support provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-LA-17-00003.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A publication of this type would not be possible without the contributions of many individuals and organizations. We are especially grateful to our implementing partners, who played the critical role of facilitating the expert panel meetings and writing the country reports. We would also like to thank the many CSO representatives and experts, USAID partners, and international donors who participated in the expert panels in each country. Their knowledge, perceptions, ideas, observations, and contributions are the foundation upon which this Index is based.

LOCAL PARTNER

CAMPAIGN FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE (CGG)

Marcella Samba Sesay
Amasara Jalloh
Bernadette French

PROJECT MANAGERS

FHI 360

David Lenett
Alex Nejadian

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW (ICNL)

Catherine Shea
Jennifer Stuart
Marilyn Wyatt

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Kellie Burk, Frank Brumfit, Irene Petras, and Aliou Demba Kebe
When the Sierra Leonean president Julius Maada Bio announced on March 14, 2022, that general elections would take place in June 2023, many people expressed hope that the elections would be free and fair. The parliament’s passage of the Public Elections Act in July 2022 and the Political Parties Regulations Commission Act in November 2022 were seen as progressive reforms fulfilling recommendations from national and international observers to give election management bodies the necessary authorities to fulfill their roles. But preparations for the 2023 elections were not without controversy. In 2021, when Statistics Sierra Leone, the national coordinator of official statistics, took a mid-term population and housing census to use in delimiting boundaries and allocating parliamentary and local council seats in the elections, the main opposition party had questioned the credibility of the census-taking process and urged its supporters not to participate. After the release of the census results in June 2022, some political commentators and civil society groups doubted the accuracy of data showing, for example, that Kenema District in Eastern Province had a larger population than the capital city of Freetown. Another controversy concerned voter registration, which took place from August to December 2022. Data were alleged to be garbled or missing and underaged citizens were allegedly added to the rolls. The Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone was accused of trying to fix the system in favor of the ruling party. In a contested move in October, the commission announced that the existing first-past-the-post system for local council and parliamentary seats would be replaced by proportional representation. Disagreements over the change aroused public concern and even led to a fistfight in the parliament. Throughout the pre-election period, CSOs played a vital role in registering voters and ensuring passage of the Public Elections Act of 2022.

Several demonstrations raised public tensions in 2022. Protesters decrying the high cost of living during the summer accused the police of using excessive force and restricting freedoms of expression and assembly. In July, the police arrested scores of participants in a women’s “Black Monday” protest in Freetown, and in August, several protests turned violent, resulting in the deaths of twenty-five civilians and six police officers as well as the vandalization of public property. The government refused to hand over the bodies of dead protesters to family members, some of whom claimed that the bodies were unceremoniously buried in unmarked graves. Many CSOs condemned the violence and encouraged the government to promote national unity by conducting a thorough investigation and engaging in dialogue with the public. An investigatory committee set up by the government blamed the opposition party for the violence.

In this highly polarized atmosphere, the state auditor general remained under investigation on charges of professional misconduct after the 2020 Annual Audit Report alleged financial misappropriations, including in the Office of the President. In 2022, the acting auditor general did not conduct audits of the offices of the president and the vice president, claiming that they did not meet the required minimum number of recorded financial transactions to trigger an audit.
Sierra Leone’s gross domestic product grew by 3 percent in 2022, down from 4.1 percent in 2021, according to World Bank estimates. Statistics Sierra Leone reported inflation at 40 percent at the end of the year, driven by the steep depreciation of the leone, the national currency. Sierra Leone continued to spend about 20 percent of total revenue on external debt servicing in 2022. Several CSOs intensified calls to cancel the country’s debt, which they tied to the effect of climate change on low-income economies in Africa.

The overall sustainability of the CSO sector was unchanged in 2022. The legal environment deteriorated slightly in 2022 as organizations were increasingly harassed. Advocacy improved slightly as CSOs’ policy initiatives and lobbying efforts resulted in significant legal advances for women. All other dimensions of sustainability were unchanged.

Available data on the number of registered CSOs remained inconsistent and fragmented in 2022, in part because of the number of entities authorized to register CSOs. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), the oversight body for CSOs, reported that 300 national and 93 international organizations registered or renewed their registrations in 2022. The Sierra Leone Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (SLANGO), a government-affiliated umbrella organization, listed 386 registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a distinct legal form. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) does not disaggregate data about not-for-profit companies (NPCs) in its nationwide registry of companies. The Ministry of Social Welfare, line ministries, and local councils register CSOs but do not release data. An unknown number of unregistered organizations also operate in the country.

**LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 6.0**

CSOs’ legal environment deteriorated slightly in 2022 as organizations faced increasing harassment.

CSOs are governed by the Development Cooperation Framework (DCF), which was adopted in 2020. Many CSOs view the DCF as having problematic provisions that hinder their operations. These include the need for organizations to have four paid employees at the time of registration, align their projects with government priorities, and work in no more than two sectors. After delaying a review of the DCF in 2021, the government finally undertook consultations with CSOs about the framework in 2022, which were still underway at the end of the year.

CSOs may register with the CAC as NPCs limited by guarantee; with MoPED as NGOs, defined as independent, not-for-profit, non-partisan, charitable organizations working on behalf of communities; or with a number of other government agencies. Most CSOs register as NPCs as the requirements are fairly simple. Organizations seeking to register as NGOs, which establishes eligibility for tax waivers, face a more complicated registration process. Although registration with SLANGO is supposedly voluntary, MoPED often demands it as a condition for issuing registration certificates to NGOs and does not publish the names of NGOs that have not registered with SLANGO in the National Gazette. These practices are tantamount to denying NGO status and undermine organizations’ relationships with potential donors. Both NPCs and NGOs must register and re-register annually with all government agencies with which they will work and with local councils in all geographic areas in which they will operate. Unregistered organizations operate freely, but without legal status they may not interact formally with other entities.

In practice, the registration process is problematic for nearly all CSOs because of a lack of uniformity in the laws governing registration and ineffective communications between the numerous registering entities. Organizations complain that neither the government nor SLANGO has clearly defined registration processes and that the need to register with multiple national and local offices is time consuming and expensive. For example, for a project in 2022, ActionAid Sierra Leone was required to register with every district council in the communities in which it would work despite having already registered with SLANGO, MoPED, the CAC, and the relevant line ministries.
The cost of the multiple registrations came to about $2,000. MoPED and SLANGO have recently made some effort to ease the registration process. They now grant initial registration licenses for a two-year period, and MoPED has granted some renewals for two years (as provided in the DCF). However, NGOs continue to have doubts about SLANGO’s commitment to promoting their interests rather than those of the government.

Several CSOs received notices from the Audit Service Sierra Leone that they would be audited in 2022. The audits were justified on the grounds that the organizations received money for and on behalf of the public and thus their incomes were equivalent to public funds. The notices baffled most recipients, as the choice of organizations to audit seemed arbitrary and the request to hand over their financial accounts was without legal basis. Although they complied, the audited organizations never received the final audit reports despite numerous requests. CSOs viewed the audits as an illegal attempt to tighten regulation of the sector.

More than ten NGOs received summons to appear before the parliamentary committee overseeing the National Commission for Social Action in 2022. The committee indicated that it needed to scrutinize the NGOs’ activities because they receive money on behalf of Sierra Leone. The organizations saw the summons as overstepping the committee’s mandate and a ploy to consume their time and resources by demanding, for example, the submission of seventeen printed copies of requested documentation and requiring the representatives of the CSOs, all of which complied with the summons, to wait five hours for a ten-minute meeting. International CSOs such as ActionAid Sierra Leone and International Christian Aid also received summons and wrote a joint letter of complaint to the vice president. Later, the speaker of the parliament cautioned the parliamentary committee not to summon NGOs and to refer any query about NGOs to MoPED.

Other harassment in 2022 included the forceable removal from office of the executive directors of the Sierra Leone Commercial Motor Bike Riders Union and the Market Women Association by the Ministry of Transport and Aviation. The stated reason was that their mandates had expired, but they had recently demanded better working conditions for their members and protested rises in the price of fuel and other basic commodities. Interim executive directors were appointed, allegedly by officials in the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Trade and Industry, in violation of procedures defined in the organizations’ bylaws. In addition, the executive director of the Campaign for Good Governance, the head of the Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice (ILRAJ), and other CSO leaders were attacked on social media after criticizing government actions. The head of the Native Consortium and Research Center (NCRC) was detained by police after discussing economic issues such as the hike in fuel prices. The government accused CSOs of cyber bullying, stalking the president, and breaching national security on online platforms under expanded powers granted by the draconian Cyber Security and Crimes Act 2021.

NGOs may be granted duty waivers for goods and services imported to realize their objectives. The waivers are awarded on a discretionary basis and do not go to organizations that are critical of the government. CSOs are otherwise not exempted from taxes.

CSOs may accept foreign funding, earn income from their activities, fundraise locally, and generate funds through business activities provided they use the income for development purposes. CSOs may bid on government contracts. In 2022, the National Civil Registration Authority contracted with the Institute of Governance Reform and Society for Democratic Initiative to provide research and policy papers on social enterprises, a concept that is starting to gain hold in Sierra Leone.

CSOs continued in 2022 to have access to pro bono legal services from organizations such as ILRAJ and the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL). These services are generally available only in Freetown. Civil society activists who are lawyers often provide pro bono services to CSOs and community-based organizations.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.7**

CSOs’ organizational capacity was unchanged in 2022.

CSOs’ engagement with their constituencies improved during the year. Even when faced with funding shortfalls, most organizations sought to maintain regular contact with the communities with which they work so that they could step in to help when needed. For example, the Village and Savings Association Initiative, funded by ActionAid Sierra Leone, and the Cash Box Initiative of the Market Women Association, extended their strong grassroots relationships by helping beneficiaries cope with financial challenges during the post-pandemic period. CSOs
continued to involve constituents in funded activities. For instance, GOAL Sierra Leone’s beneficiaries operated and managed water wells that the organization is constructing in their communities. Many organizations conduct beneficiary assessment surveys to encourage constituents’ identification with and ownership of activities after a project ends.

Most registered CSOs have clearly defined missions as they are a requirement for registration. Established CSOs usually have strategic plans, which, if they are followed, help them measure their results and identify successes and areas for improvement. Smaller CSOs rarely engage in planning. In 2022, in a European Union (EU)-funded project, ActionAid Sierra Leone helped about fifteen organizations acquire planning skills and develop simple, achievable strategic plans.

Many registered CSOs operate openly and transparently to demonstrate functioning systems of accountability and ensure their credibility with donors. For instance, Campaign for Good Governance (CGG) and Rainbow Initiative provide project reports and audits to their funding partners, which helps build the basis for onward support. Service-level agreements with government entities similarly outline clear reporting requirements to ensure transparency. They typically include a community awareness component that allows the government to track project implementation and confirm that expected services have been delivered.

Registered and established organizations usually have well-defined internal management systems spelling out expectations in areas such as leadership, administration, financial and human resources, and programming. Less established organizations, including informal professional associations such as the Commercial Motor Bike Riders Union, often lack established procedures and clearly defined responsibilities. Nevertheless, even smaller organizations seek to manage themselves efficiently to resist control by government agencies and other external actors. Although boards are a requirement for registration, their engagement is not enforced, especially in smaller organizations.

Maintaining staff was an acute concern in 2022. High inflation forced many CSO employees to leave for better paying jobs, often with international organizations, severely undermining the capacity of the organizations that they left. Organizations such as Human Rights Defenders Network–Sierra Leone (HRDN–SL) and NCRC turned to interns and volunteers, but some of these, after gaining experience, also left for international CSOs offering higher pay. Some larger organizations, such as the Sierra Leone Labor Congress, Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU), and Budget Advocacy Network (BAN), were able to maintain professional staff in key positions. However, such arrangements are becoming increasingly uncommon, and many organizations now recruit only when they need staff to perform specific short-term duties, which makes it difficult to recruit professionally qualified staff and adversely impacts the quality of an organization’s work. There were reports in 2022 that a major international donor, when unable to obtain financial reports from its local partners in a timely manner, provided its own staff to help the organizations complete project activities and develop the required reports.

Because of the leone’s steep depreciation, many CSOs did not have sufficient funds to purchase equipment and cover basic operating costs in 2022. Property owners often quote rental prices geared to the leone-USD exchange rate, which has made their facilities unaffordable for many organizations. CSOs’ overall access to technology did not improve in 2022. Most organizations continued to access the internet through employees’ mobile phones and remained unable to afford the cost of hosting and maintaining websites. Larger CSOs’ use of social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, continued to increase. Smaller groups communicated with their members mostly through community meetings.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.9**

CSOs’ financial viability was unchanged in 2022, despite the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had diverted the resources of many donors.
Most CSOs rely on international support. The EU, Irish Aid, USAID, and German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) are among the few donors known to have supported CSO projects in 2022. Funding from international CSOs, such as Christian Aid, Trócaire, and Catholic Relief Services, helped keep several major CSOs from closing their doors. However, after funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic discontinued, many organizations, including the Center for Human Rights and Development International (CHRDI), Inter Religious Council Sierra Leone, and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), were forced to shut down or abandon their mandates to venture into areas more likely to lead to funding. As donors such as the EU shifted their support to infrastructure projects in 2022, funding was particularly scarce for advocacy CSOs.

The government funds CSOs through service-level contracts. These contracts usually go to organizations that are loyal to the governing party. Many CSOs complain that the government’s calls for proposals are not publicized and funding is not awarded in a fair and competitive process.

Another concern among local CSOs is that international organizations serve as implementing partners for government programs. For example, Welthunger Hilfe, Catholic Relief Services, Plan International, Save the Children, and the United Nations Population Fund worked as implementing partners in the health, education, and social service sectors in 2022. Local CSOs view this arrangement as forcing them to compete unfairly against international organizations for funding. There is little follow-on benefit to this arrangement, as the international CSOs tend to implement projects directly without sub-contracting to local CSOs and often poach their staff. In response to complaints, the government said in 2021 that it would review arrangements allowing international organizations to serve as implementing partners, but this did not happen in 2022.

In a related concern, the localization of international CSOs came to the fore in 2022 as donor funding decreased and some organizations working in Sierra Leone considered closing down their programs. While local CSOs view international organizations operating in Sierra Leone as depriving them of funding and other resources, the closure of their programs poses the separate problem of lost employment and decreased capacity in the sector. Talking Drum Studio Sierra Leone, a peacebuilding and conflict-transformation program of Search for Common Ground, localized in 2022 and, building on a well-established presence, was seen as a strong example of productive localization. However, there was no evidence that other international organizations intended to provide for the continuation of their programs after they withdrew.

Other sources of local support continued to be modest in 2022. Corporate funding for CSOs is rare as companies usually prefer to implement corporate social responsibility programs themselves so as to maximize tax deductions. In-kind volunteer support is difficult to obtain as, in a practice introduced by international CSOs, beneficiary communities usually expect remuneration for any volunteer assistance that they offer. For example, Restless Development had to provide transportation and food in exchange for community leaders’ participation in a meeting to discuss a health-care project that would benefit their families. GOAL SL brought laborers from Kenema City to a remote area in Kenema District to help construct a water well because of a lack of local community support.

Many membership-based organizations did not raise funds from their members in 2022 because of the country’s declining economic condition. For example, Sierra Leone Market Women Association did not collect membership dues, which lowered self-generated revenue and made it difficult for the organization to support members in physical or medical distress.

CSOs rarely earn revenue by selling products and services, as people assume that they have already received funding for their activities. Among the few organizations able to generate revenue in 2022, 50/50 Group and SLTU rented out their facilities and Propel Organization sold wares made from reusable waste. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society sells souvenirs to fund the provision of humanitarian aid, while the Gigibonta Foundation operates restaurants that generate funding to sustain an orphanage. Although not widespread, the idea of social enterprises...
The Kambia District Agricultural Development Organization operates a village savings and loan scheme as a social enterprise, with the profits helping its members assume larger loans to upgrade their businesses.

CSOs may publicly fundraise, and the Sick Pikin Foundation and Thinking Pink Foundation regularly do so. Except for Sick Pikin, Street Child, and the Breast Cancer Foundation, no organization is known to have used crowdsourcing in 2022, mainly because of a lack of know-how.

Established CSOs, such as Rainbow Initiative and Focus 1000, generally operate transparently to maintain their credibility with partners and donors and fulfill government re-registration and reporting requirements. Their financial management practices include the submission of regular financial and audit reports prepared by skilled staff in cooperation with professional service providers. Smaller organizations tend to have limited or insufficiently qualified staff to perform other than rudimentary financial management.

**ADVOCACY: 3.2**


Strong CSO advocacy to protect and promote women’s rights has been underway for many years. In 2022, the parliament finally passed the GEWE Act, which extends maternity leave, institutes gender-responsive and gender-sensitive budgeting, and mandates that women occupy at least 30 percent of cabinet, parliamentary, and high-level appointed positions. Broad-based coalitions, including CGG, 50/50 Group, Women’s Forum Sierra Leone, Manor River Union, and Women Peace Network, worked alongside informal groups such as the He-for-She and Yellow Ribbon campaigns to ensure the law’s approval. CSOs regard passage of GEWE as one of civil society’s most important victories in recent years. CSOs also contributed to passage of the Customary Lands Right Act and National Land Commission Act, which provide women with equal rights to land ownership, prohibit customary practices that restrict women’s access to land, and require regional and local governance structures established under the act to consist of at least 30 percent women. A four-way working group on the draft law brought together CSOs, the government, paramount chiefs, and the private sector in an exemplary illustration of the way that sectors can work together to advance civil rights. CSOs involved in the working group included Land for Life, Network Movement for Justice and Development, Green Scenery, Namati, Women’s Network for Environmental Sustainability, and Sierra Leone Land Alliance.

CSOs and community-based organizations continued to cooperate with the government through policy initiatives and lobbying in 2022. Many organizations took part in national and local budgeting processes, which allowed them to raise concerns and inform the public about aspects of some agencies’ budgets. Organizations such as Defence for Children International and HRDN–SL contributed to the work of the Committee on Trafficking, which arranged the safe repatriation of more than 100 Sierra Leoneans trafficked to work in Lebanon and Kuwait. BAN and other CSOs implemented a public campaign calling for Sierra Leone’s public debt to be cancelled by international partners such as the IMF and World Bank. They took the campaign to an international level by partnering with CSOs from other African countries to lobby the G20 summit of leaders in October. The campaign was unsuccessful, but the government expressed gratitude for CSOs’ effort to help alleviate the country’s dire economic situation.

Two international mechanisms allowed CSOs to hold the government to account in 2022. The National Coalition on Mining and Extractives and the Network Movement for Justice and Development cooperated with the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources through the Sierra Leone Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which promotes the accountable management of oil, gas, and mineral resources. In 2022, the initiative sought to improve
The 2022 CSO Sustainability Index for Sierra Leone

public outreach to increase understanding of its work. CSOs and the government also cooperated through the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which fosters transparency and citizen engagement in governance. CSOs taking part in OGP meetings included the National Council for Civic Education, CGG, and Women’s Forum Sierra Leone. OGP interventions led to the creation of a CSO desk in the parliament in 2022. While still new, the desk began to facilitate interactions between CSOs and the parliament by sharing information about legislation.

Discussions between CSOs and the parliament also led to the establishment in 2022 of the Parliament and Civil Society Network, which intends to work on policy and legal reforms and citizen engagement. CSOs taking part in OGP meetings included the National Council for Civic Education, CGG, and Women’s Forum Sierra Leone. OGP interventions led to the creation of a CSO desk in the parliament in 2022. While still new, the desk began to facilitate interactions between CSOs and the parliament by sharing inf...
parliament and the minister of gender and children’s affairs publicly acknowledged CSOs’ contributions to the passage of the GEWE Act, while the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone acknowledged CSOs’ support in the passage of the Public Elections Act. The Ministry of Finance expressed gratitude to BAN for its campaign calling for the cancellation of Sierra Leone’s international debt.

### SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.2

The infrastructure supporting CSOs was unchanged in 2022.

With the ongoing closure of resource centers in Sierra Leone, no local organizations offered library services or technical assistance to CSOs in 2022. The popularity of resource centers has declined since information became easily accessible through the internet. CSOs also rely on their networks and partners for information about their areas of specialization. A few organizations, such as CARL, CHRDI, and 50/50 Group, offer research collections in their offices on specific topics.

No Sierra Leonean organizations offer grant funding to CSOs. Modest project support was available from some international CSOs, such as Trócaire, GIZ, and Amnesty International, which are estimated to have provided $100,000 to CSOs in 2022.

CSO networks and coalitions grew in 2022, mostly around thematic topics. For example, NEW coordinated organizations working on the elections and provided training for its members on basic computer skills and election observation reporting. The working group on the GEWE Bill trained members on lobbying and strategies for targeting community-level leaders to build support for the bill. Other networks in areas such as water and sanitation and education shared information and best practices with members so that they could work toward their common goals.

Training opportunities were very limited in 2022. They included capacity building for the National Association of Farmers offered by Solidaridad under the RECLAIM Sustainability! program, sessions on overcoming barriers affecting women offered by CARL and SEND SL, and workshops to engage communities to support the GEWE Act offered by CGG with funding from Trócaire. Materials in local languages are largely unavailable except as audio and video messaging.

CSOs pursued many productive partnerships with other sectors in 2022. IGR worked with the Ministry of Finance on the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey; Rainbow Initiative provided training to the Sierra Leone Police on investigating gender-based violence; and Legal Access for Women Yearning for Equality and Rights (LAWYERS) cooperated with the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs on the prevention of rape and gender-based violence. Sick Pikin Project partnered with the National Revenue Authority and Vista Bank on a marathon to raise funds for children needing critical surgery. Epic Radio worked with CHRDI to air a discussion about the state of human rights in the country after the August protests, and AYV Media engaged with HRDN–SL, Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations on a similar effort.

### PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.0

CSOs public image was stable in 2022.

CSOs enjoyed positive coverage, particularly in private and social media. For example, Epic Radio frequently invited organizations such as CARL and IGR to discuss their activities and comment on current events. Online platforms run by journalists frequently covered civil society interventions. These stories were shared widely on WhatsApp, sometimes leading to online attacks on organizations that were critical of government actions.
The public is generally supportive of CSOs. It identifies easily with organizations that are close to local communities and make visible, relevant contributions. At the same time, the public is aware and disapproves of organizations that were once credible but have become government mouthpieces. Some CSOs providing educational and health services alongside government ministries have met with allegations of collusion or conflict of interest. In the polarized political environment, advocacy organizations are either appreciated or disparaged depending on individual biases regarding their work.

CSOs providing services get along easily with the government because their work is seen as non-political and adding value to government activities. The private sector similarly appreciates the services that CSOs provide. Advocacy organizations have more mixed reputations with both sectors depending on their positions. Both government and business users rely on the resources and information that CSOs provide, particularly technical assistance in hard-to-reach communities. In 2022, the government recognized the need to improve its relationship with the CSO sector, and the vice president hosted a dialogue between the two sides in an attempt to restructure their relationship. No tangible results came out of the discussion, although some CSOs were seen as more sympathetic to or at least less critical of the government after taking part in the meeting.

CSOs usually engage in public relations and maintain good relationships with journalists. Some organizations factor journalists into their activities and budgets to ensure positive, accurate coverage. For instance, Fambul Tok International and SEND Foundation included journalists in teams implementing activities in the field in 2022. Organizations must sometimes reimburse journalists for covering their work. CSOs’ access to television and radio is gradually waning as programming costs rise. Organizations are turning instead to WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to express their views, tell their stories, and publicize their work. CGG, CHIRDI, NEW, and IGR regularly post on social media about their activities and positions on national issues.

Although no umbrella body oversees CSO self-regulation in Sierra Leone, many organizations abide by codes of conduct promoted by their networks and membership organizations. NEW, NACE, and BAN have codes that members subscribe to and observe, with punishment for noncompliance ranging up to expulsion for particularly grave breaches. Larger organizations such as ActionAid Sierra Leone, CGG, CARL, Legal Link, LAWYERS, and SEND Foundation publish their reports and other materials on public platforms and social media, particularly Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Smaller organizations do not generally have to capacity to prepare or publish materials for public consumption.