



Who We Are

CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation is an international alliance of members and partners which constitutes an influential network of organisations at the local, national, regional and international levels, and spans the spectrum of civil society. CIVICUS includes the following in its definition of civil society: civil society networks and organisations; trade unions; faith-based networks; professional associations; NGO capacity development organisations; philanthropic foundations and other funding bodies.

CIVICUS has worked for nearly two decades to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association are threatened. CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is based on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society.

CIVICUS provides a focal point for knowledge-sharing, common interest representation, global institution-building and engagement among these disparate sectors. It acts as an advocate for citizen participation as an essential component of governance and democracy worldwide. CIVICUS seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary people and it gives expression to the enormous creative energy of the burgeoning sector of civil society.

Mission

CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

Vision

A worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

CIVICUS seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary people. It recognises that for effective and sustainable civic participation to occur, citizens must enjoy rights of free association and be able to engage all sectors of society.

Values

- **Justice and Equality** - CIVICUS believes in the equality and dignity of every person, and that all people should be free to exercise their rights as citizens as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Reciprocity** - CIVICUS exists to ensure that people treat one another with the respect with which they themselves wish to be treated. Civil society cannot thrive without mutual respect.
- **Knowledge** - CIVICUS recognises that to increase its global awareness of civil society and before it can assist or take action, it needs to form alliances with other concerned bodies to increase its influence and knowledge.
- **Vision** - CIVICUS is realistic about conflict in today's world, but remains optimistic that most people, organisations, governments and businesses will work together for the benefit of all.
- **Principled Courage** - CIVICUS will always promote civil justice and pledges to act in a manner that honours the principles of democratic civil society.

Objectives

The three main objectives that inform our mission are:

Influence – to ensure that civil society is taken seriously and is able to have a stronger influence on the making of decisions that matter to people's lives;

Connect – to connect the different sources and forces of citizen action so that citizen action as a whole becomes more robust and effective;

Enable - to promote better conditions for civil society to do its work, and to enhance and protect optimal standards for all civil society.

Our Members

Our strength lies in our diverse global membership. CIVICUS proudly represents members from over 175 countries and territories. To join the CIVICUS alliance in working to strengthen civil society around the world, click [here](#) or email us at membership@civicus.org for more information.

History

The fundamental building block for CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation was the 1991 decision of a group of civil society leaders from across the world to reinforce and support the virtual expansion of citizen participation in every region of the globe. This 20-member group, serving as a steering committee for translating this idea into organisational reality, included Miguel Darcy of Brazil, Horst Niemeyer of Germany, Eddah Wacheke Gachukia of Kenya, Tadashi Yamamoto of Japan, Farida Allaghi of Saudi Arabia and Brian O'Connell of the United States. They agreed to test the potential for a global alliance of individuals and organisations which might strengthen civil society institutions, advocate for the cause of civil society among the world's decision-makers and stimulate dialogue among civil society organisations and across the nonprofit, business and public sectors.

By mid-1993, the formative work was completed at Barcelona, marked by the first meeting of the founding Board of Directors of CIVICUS, which was composed of distinguished figures in civil society drawn from 18 countries on six continents.

Since 1993, CIVICUS has built successively on important achievements. These include the preparation of regional reports on the status of civil society (1994); publication and global distribution of *Citizens -Strengthening Global Civil Society* (1995), the organisation's first world report on the state of civil society; regional consultations of members; two World Assemblies (Mexico City in 1995 and Budapest in 1997) of members and allies; an expanding membership (400 by end of 1997) of organisations and individuals across the world; a growing publications record and groundbreaking work by three special Task Forces in 1996 and 1997 on increasing the understanding and visibility of the sector, the legal principles necessary for the sector's empowerment and enhancing the sector's resource base.

CIVICUS has worked ever since to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizens' freedom of association

are threatened. CIVICUS has a vision of a global community of active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more just and equitable world. This is premised on the belief that the health of societies exists in direct proportion to the degree of balance between the state, the private sector and civil society.

Originally based in Washington, DC, USA, CIVICUS established its global headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002.